



Recreation, Parks, and Trails Strategy

January 2026

**MONTEITH
BROWN** ▶
PLANNING CONSULTANTS

LEES
+
ASSOCIATES



Recreation, Parks, and Trails Strategy

January 2026



Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Purpose of the Strategy.....	1
1.2. Objectives.....	2
1.3. Strategy Process.....	3
1.4. Benefits of Recreation, Parks, and Trails.....	4
2. Community and Planning Context.....	8
2.1 About Penetanguishene.....	8
2.2 Penetanguishene’s Population.....	9
2.3 Future Growth.....	14
2.4 Lifestyle, Participation, and Service Delivery Trends.....	17
2.5 Municipal Constraints and Opportunities.....	23
2.6 Policy Scan and Document Review.....	27
3. Public and Stakeholder Input.....	29
3.1 Approach to Community Engagement.....	29
3.2 Information Sessions and Pop-up Engagements.....	30
3.3 Community Survey.....	32
3.4 Stakeholder Engagement.....	46
3.5 School Engagement.....	48
3.6 Public Information Session.....	49
3.7 Summary of What we Heard.....	51
4. Vision and Goals.....	53
4.1 Vision.....	53
4.2 Mission.....	53
4.3 Goals.....	54
5. Service Delivery and Programs Assessment.....	55
5.1 Departmental Role.....	55
5.2 Staffing & Volunteers.....	56
5.3 Marketing & Communications.....	60
5.4 User Fees & Access to Affordable Recreation Policy.....	61
5.5 Programming.....	63
5.6 Events Assessment.....	66
5.7 Advisory Committees.....	69
5.8 Partnerships.....	70

6. Facilities Assessment	72
6.1 Existing Inventory	72
6.2 Arena, Program Space and Multi-use Recreation Centre.....	75
6.3 Aquatics	81
6.4 Sports Fields.....	83
6.5 Playgrounds	92
6.6 Skateboard Park / Pump Track.....	94
6.7 Off-Leash Dog Areas.....	96
6.8 Public Beaches and Waterfront Amenities	97
6.9 Community Garden.....	99
6.10 Specialized and Other Facility Types	100
7. Parks and Open Space Assessment.....	101
7.1 Parkland Supply & Classification	101
7.2 Parkland Policy & Dedication	105
7.3 Parkland Needs.....	108
7.4 Parkland Design.....	111
7.5 Park and Trail Maintenance.....	117
8. Trails Assessment	119
8.1 Existing Trail Network Review	119
8.2 Vision and Goals for Penetanguishene Trails.....	123
8.3 Creating Welcoming and Enjoyable Trail Experiences.....	123
8.4 Building a Connected Trail Network.....	139
8.5 Making Trails Easy to Navigate	144
8.6 Showcasing Nature and Scenic Experiences.....	146
8.7 Leveraging Collaboration and Partnerships	149
9. Implementation and Capital Plan	151
9.1 Monitoring and Updating the Plan.....	151
9.2 Funding Considerations	152
9.3 Timing and Priority of Recommendations	155
Appendix A: Document Review.....	A-1
Appendix B: Record of Public Input.....	B-1
Appendix C: Affordable Access Policy Case Studies	C-1
Appendix D: Park and Trail Maintenance Standards (Draft).....	D-1

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of the Town's Recreation, Parks, and Trails Strategy. This strategy is a product of the vision and dedication of the community, the Project Team, and Council. We also extend our thanks to the many residents and community groups within Penetanguishene whose feedback has made the Strategy a document that embodies the core values, beliefs, and priorities of the community.

Members of Council

Doug Rawson, Mayor
 Dan La Rose, Deputy Mayor
 Bonita Desroches, Councillor
 Doug Leroux, Councillor
 Suzanne Marchand, Councillor
 George Vadeboncoeur, Councillor
 Bill Waters, Councillor

Staff Project Team

Sherry Desjardins, Director of Recreation & Community Services
 Marla Bailey-Viscoff, Recreation Supervisor
 Roy Patenude, Facilities Manager
 Andrea Betty, Director of Planning & Development
 Nicole Jackson, Museum Curator/Supervisor
 Cole Belcourt, Events Coordinator
 Jeff Lees, Chief Administrative Officer
 Owen Taylor, Planner

Land Acknowledgement

Penetanguishene respectfully acknowledges that we are on the traditional and Treaty territory of the Anishinabek people and their ancestors, now known as the Williams Treaties First Nations territory. This includes Chippewa Tri-Council comprised of Beausoleil First Nation, Rama First Nation, and the Georgina Island First Nation, Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nations. Also, once the home of the Huron-Wendat and more recently the historic settlement of the Metis, Penetanguishene is now home to many Indigenous peoples.

Penetanguishene is proud of its Indigenous name and more importantly, that for thousands of years it has been and will continue to be an important homeland and gathering place for Indigenous people.

We recognize that we are the stewards and caretakers of these lands and waters, and are responsible to ensure that our Mother, the earth, is here for future generations.



1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Strategy

Penetanguishene’s recreation, parks, and trails are some of the town’s most loved features, attracting local residents, visitors from neighbouring municipalities, and beyond. These public spaces are important places for people to visit, offering respite and a sense of calm to an otherwise busy lifestyle. Investing in public and natural recreational spaces and services are what makes a community like Penetanguishene thrive and enable all people to access and act on opportunities to reach their full potential.

The purpose of this **Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy** (“The Strategy”) is to serve as a planning framework for recreation, parks, and trails until 2035¹. The foundation for this document builds on the 2014 Recreation and Community Services Master Plan, which successfully guided the Town through a variety of improvement projects and studies. However, between 2016 and 2021, the population of Penetanguishene grew by 12%, and additional growth is forecasted into the future. This forward-looking Strategy will respond to this growth and establish priorities to work towards over the next ten years.

This Strategy offers a defined vision for the Town to strive towards when making decisions that impact the future of recreation, parks, and trails in Penetanguishene. To facilitate the Town’s progress in these pursuits, this Strategy recommends short and long-term goals and actions, as well as an implementation plan to achieve these goals. The intent of the document is to guide the time, resources, and budgets of staff and Council recreation, parks, and trails in a strategic, coordinated manner.

Recommendations provided in this Strategy were informed by community input, current conditions, emerging trends, best practices, and growth forecasts. The success of the Strategy will require an ongoing commitment and coordination between Town officials and staff, affiliated agencies, local organizations, and community organizations.

Recreation (noun)
re-kree-a-shun

The voluntary participation in any activity or experience for enjoyment, contributing to the physical, social, intellectual, creative, or spiritual sense of personal and community wellbeing

“Framework for Recreation in Canada: Framework Update,”
Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.

¹ While the scope of this project excludes “culture”, the Town hosts recreational programs, festivals, and events that contribute to Penetanguishene’s culture, and therefore, will be relevant to the Strategy. Where applicable, this Strategy will consider ways to coordinate with relevant stakeholders and enhance culture services.

1.2. Objectives

This Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy will serve as a short- and long- term guide for associated capital projects, services, and programs provided by the Town’s Recreation and Community Services Department. Specifically, the scope considers Penetanguishene’s recreation facilities, amenities, services, parks, trails, open spaces, and programs and events. Specific objectives for this Strategy include:



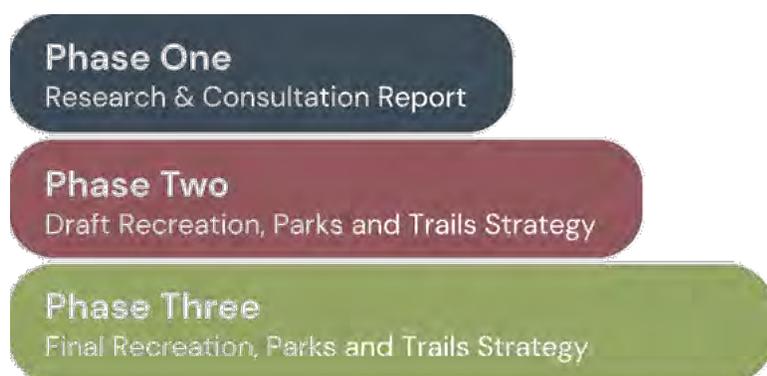
Table 1 Objectives of Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy

Key Objectives of this Strategy	
<p>Objective # 1</p> <p>Address Existing & Future Needs</p>	<p>Anticipate emerging and future trends to ensure responsive programs, amenities, and services.</p> <p>Address demographic patterns and changes to meet the diversity of needs and interests of all residents.</p> <p>Identify existing and potential gaps in recreation, parks, and trails. Review existing service levels and trail design principles and guidelines.</p> <p>Consider the availability and access to resources in North Simcoe in the assessment of local needs.</p> <p>Consider the needs of residential development, allowing the Town to position itself in advance of the demands brought by future growth.</p> <p>Review parkland policies and classification systems, with recommendations for Official Plan updates.</p>
<p>Objective # 2</p> <p>Encourage Healthy Living and Equitable Access</p>	<p>Identify opportunities to bolster recreation, parks, and trails and encourage residents of Penetanguishene to live a healthier, more connected life.</p> <p>Promote recreation, parks, and trails as a driver for local growth, community investment, and tourism.</p> <p>Consider affordability for community recreation and competitive sport, including a review of the Access to Affordable Recreation policy.</p> <p>Review and assess the annual special events process and permit system.</p>

<p>Objective # 3</p> <p>Enhance Financial Sustainability and Efficiency</p>	<p>Ensure that recreation, parks, and trails services are sustainable for residents and that investments are financially responsible.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to improve the quality and efficiency of recreation, parks, and trails services, including the Town’s use of recreation software.</p> <p>Review and assess advisory committee and volunteer engagement approaches.</p> <p>Complement and align with other guiding plans and strategies such as the Official Plan, Local Climate Action Plan, Cycling Strategy, and Age Friendly Plan.</p>
--	--

1.3. Strategy Process

Guided by a Terms of Reference prepared by the Town, the development of the Strategy began in Spring 2025 and was divided into three phases, each culminating in a phase-specific report.



Phase 1 of the Strategy involved a review on the current and future factors that may influence the direction of recreation, parks, and trails. For example, local demographics were studied to understand who currently lives in Penetanguishene, and the general characteristics that might describe the average resident both now and in the future. Another factor included emerging trends experienced across Ontario, influencing what actions and demands may be prioritized. The current inventory of Penetanguishene’s assets, programs, and services as well as that of neighbouring municipalities was also considered.

Phase 1 also included gaining insight from the community using a variety of methods such as pop-up engagement sessions, an online survey, public input sessions, and input from key stakeholders. Additionally, a workshop was facilitated with the Town’s Recreation and Community Services staff to inspire a departmental vision statement. To conclude Phase 1, a Research and Consultation Report was finalized and presented to Council.



Building on the previous phase, **Phase 2** of the Strategy involved assessments of the provision, distribution, and gaps of the existing parks, trails, and open spaces. A needs assessment of existing amenities and review of service levels provided insights into the opportunities and deficiencies of the Town's spaces and services. Further, assessments of the Town's program delivery model, annual events, and customer service was used to produce the Draft Strategy.

During **Phase 3**, an implementation plan was prepared and tested with the public during a second public input session. Guided by the public's feedback, a Final Strategy was prepared and presented to Council for final approval.

This project was led by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and Lees + Associates under the guidance and assistance of the Town of Penetanguishene's Project Team, which consisted of key municipal staff.

1.4. Benefits of Recreation, Parks, and Trails

Recreation, parks, and trails are some of the features that make a place desirable to live. But the impact these spaces can have on people go far beyond just aesthetic appeal. Investments in recreation, parks, and trails can support the health and wellbeing of individuals, build stronger community relationships, reduce government spending for preventable illnesses, and spur local economic activity.

Improved Physical Health

Recreation, parks, and trails spaces are free to access environments that encourage people to live healthier lifestyles, prevent chronic illnesses and infectious diseases, and restore health. Ideally, engaging in these spaces can:

- Provide free, 'active-friendly' environments to run, play, and exercise, reducing the causes for obesity and supporting children, youth, and adults to meet recommended levels of daily physical activity.
- Lower the risk of illnesses and conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, declining memory, attention, cognition, and can even reduce mortality. Movement helps to manage stress, strengthens the immune system and helps individuals recover faster from illness or injury.
- Encourage play that improves cognitive development in children, such as creativity and problem-solving.



Supported Mental Health & Wellbeing

Spending time in outdoor spaces like parks and trails can also improve the mental health and the perceived quality of life and wellbeing. These spaces can:

- Inspire introspective activities like reflecting and meditating, which can reduce depression and anxiety.
- Lower the likelihood of suffering from poor mental health by 9% (on average). This is true for all people, regardless of ethnicity, income, age, and where they live².

² Trust for Public Land. "The Power of Parks to Promote Health: A Special Report", *Trust for Public Land*, May 2023.

Stronger Communities

In the age of social media and the internet, polarization and loneliness has become an epidemic with impacts that deteriorate the satisfaction of interpersonal relationships³. Recreation, parks, and trails are key facilities that can bring people together. Engaging in recreational activities and programs, visiting parks, and walking through trails can:

- Connect neighbours and fellow community members, offering organic opportunities for people to meet and form relationships.
- Promotes a sense of belonging, safety, and trust within the community.
- Expose people to different ethnicities, beliefs, and ideas, softening the polarization that stems from social media.



Economic Impacts

In Ontario, the recreation, parks, and trails sector is a significant driver of local economic growth. It can also minimize the need for government spending for issues that can be addressed by offering high-quality, distributed public spaces. Investments in recreation, parks, and trails can:

- Increase users and the time spent in these public spaces. This can thus reduce the prevalence of physical inactivity and the consequential illnesses that government spending seeks to address through the health care system.

³ Wu, P., Feng, R. & Zhang, J. The relationship between loneliness and problematic social media usage in Chinese university students: a longitudinal study. *BMC Psychol* 12, 13 (2024).

- The Trans Canada Trail attracts tourists and residents, which spurs economic activity for local businesses⁴.
- Hosting sporting events, games, and competitions can spur sport tourism and generate local economic growth.

Environmental Benefits

Investments in outdoor recreation spaces like parks, trails, and green spaces can also have beneficial effects on the environment. As climate events like heavier, more intense storms, wildfires, droughts, floods, and other natural disasters loom, parks and green spaces can mitigate these events. These outdoor recreation spaces can improve air quality, reduce the urban heat island effect, provide drainage and prevent major flooding, serve as noise buffers, and more⁵. Not only can these effects benefit human health and reduce the suffering caused by natural disasters, but it can inspire people to live healthier lives, and as a result, value outdoor spaces more.



⁴ Trans Canada Trail. "The Conference Board of Canada: New Report Outlines Economic, Health, Conservation Benefits of Trails". *Trans Canada Trail*, September 2020.

⁵ Public Health Agency of Canada, "Commentary – Climate Change, Health and Green Space Co-Benefits," Canada.ca, August 23, 2021.

2. Community and Planning Context

This section identifies notable findings describing the Town of Penetanguishene and the people who live here, where they live, and how the community might change in the future. Additionally, key trends that are influencing the demand for and delivery of recreation, parks, and trails services are discussed. Along with a policy scan of key supporting documents.

These insights are important in understanding how recreation, parks, and trail facilities and services will be used and provided, both now and in the future. This information is balanced against other study inputs (such as public engagement and local usage levels) through the Strategy's upcoming development stages.

2.1 About Penetanguishene

Located along Ontario's western shoreline, Penetanguishene boasts a striking natural landscape. The shoreline curves around the waters of the Georgian Bay – an inlet extending from Lake Huron, positioning much of the town along the water's edge. Penetanguishene is part of the Huronia region in Central Ontario, historically inhabited by the Wendat people and enriching the history that weaves through it. In fact, the name *Penetanguishene* by the Algonquin people was given to describe "the place of the white rolling sands."

Penetanguishene is a vibrant community known for its rich history, natural beauty, and welcoming small-town atmosphere. As a popular destination for tourists and residents alike, the town offers a wide range of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, explore local heritage, and participate in community events. Penetanguishene's charm is complemented by a strong commitment to providing residents with accessible and high-quality recreation and community services.

The Town is one of 16 municipalities belonging to Simcoe County spanning a large geographic area, thus the Town is more informally referred to as part of North Simcoe County which includes Penetanguishene and its three neighbouring municipalities: Midland, Tay, and Tiny, as depicted in the map on the right. Regional collaborations, shared services, and general geographic proximity ensure that a wide range of recreational programs, sports leagues, and cultural activities are accessible to all.



Penetanguishene offers a variety of parks, waterfront trails, and recreational facilities that provide diverse options for leisure and wellness. Parks such as Rotary Champlain Wendat Park offer spaces for family picnics, walking, child and youth play, and community gatherings. The trails network connects people to the natural beauty of the region while promoting active transportation. Facilities such as the Penetanguishene Memorial Community Centre host ice sports, fitness programs, seniors' activities, and community events throughout the year. Another important contributor includes the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care, which offers an indoor pool and health-related programming.

The Town has also completed a variety of updates to their recreation, parks, and trails network, following the recommendations from the 2014 Recreation and Community Services Master Plan. Key accomplishments include (not a complete list):

- The Champlain-Wendat Rotary Park, the Town's major park, was redeveloped to introduce improvements and a splash pad.
- A Cycling Strategy was completed in 2019 to develop an active transportation plan for local trails and bike lanes.
- An Arena and Recreation Study was completed in 2021, which has guided plans for a new multi-use recreation centre (currently targeted for 2033).
- Tennis courts at McGuire Park have been resurfaced, with one court converted to four pickleball courts.
- Trail improvements, including the development of a multi-use trail connecting to Midland.
- Provincial funding for the establishment of a Seniors Active Living Centre at the PMCC in 2025.

2.2 Penetanguishene's Population

Population Levels

According to the 2021 Census, Penetanguishene was home to 10,077 people, representing growth of 12.4% since 2016. This is slightly higher than the growth rates observed within the town's neighbouring municipalities during the same period. Despite the faster growth rates, the town has the smallest population among the four area municipalities. Penetanguishene also experienced higher growth rates when compared to the rest of Simcoe County (11.2%) and the Province of Ontario (5.8%).

Figure 1. Percentage Change in Population from 2016 to 2021 (2021 Census)



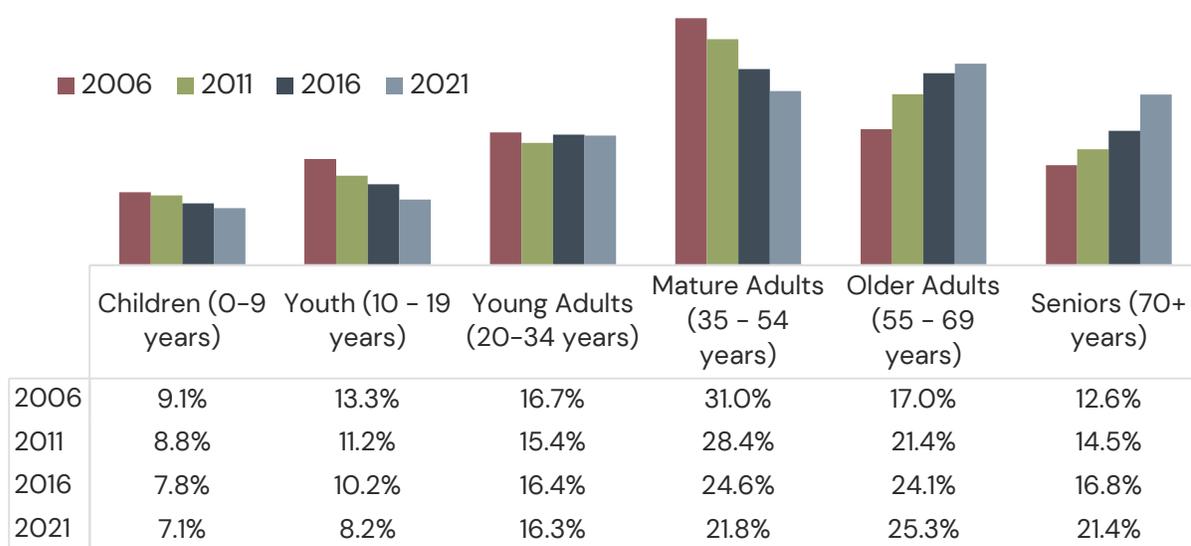
Growth in the town has continued to be strong since 2021 and Penetanguishene has outpaced previous population projections. As of July 1, 2024, Statistics Canada estimated Penetanguishene’s population at 10,921 persons. **A population of 11,000 persons will be used as the baseline for this Strategy.** As population continues to grow, so will demand for recreation, parks, and trails, therefore it is necessary to understand the changes that are occurring.

Age and Household Composition

The average Penetanguishene resident was 48.8 years in 2021, an increase over the average of 46.1 years in 2016. The average age of town residents was significantly higher compared to the rest of the County (42.6 years) and the Province (41.8 years) in 2021, suggesting that Penetanguishene has a higher proportion of older adults than its counterparts, on average.

The figure below compares the number of people in Penetanguishene who fall within each age group over the span of 15 years (2006 to 2021).

Figure 2. Percentage of people within each age category over time (2006 to 2021) (Census)



- Children (0 to 9 years):** The population of children within this age category has decreased slightly every Census year since 2006. This age group remains an important target market to engage through the implementation of this Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy as key users of parks, playgrounds, splash pads, and open spaces.
- Youth (10 to 19 years):** Similarly, the population of youth has also experienced a proportional decline, dropping by nearly 5% since 2006. Teens are uniquely important users of recreation, parks, and trail spaces because they benefit from having free spaces like skate parks or sport courts to learn new sports or activities, engage in social activities with peers, and find creative spaces and outlets for art and music.

- **Young & Mature Adults (20 to 54 years):** The population sizes of young adults and mature adults have remained relatively stable, with slight decreases since 2006. Lifestyle choices are some of the main influences for these age groups when it comes to using recreation, parks, and trails spaces, and can therefore be variable. For some, outdoor spaces can be flexible ways to fit in healthy activities into a busy schedule. Young families are showing an increased interest in recreational hubs, where a variety of facilities and programs (like swimming, childcare, and other activities) can facilitate concurrent activities for both parents and children. These opportunities allow for all members of the household to reach their health goals at convenient times.
- **Older Adults and Seniors (55+ years):** Overall, the largest cohorts are mature and older adults. 2006 saw the greatest proportion of mature adults (31%) and the lowest proportion of older adults (17%) compared to the years that would follow. In 2011, the percentage of mature adults began to decline while older adults began to increase, a trend that continued to 2021. Finally, 2021 marked a shift in which the percentage of older adults (25.3%) outweighed mature adults (21.4%). Additionally, the number of residents who are 70 years and older in Penetanguishene (according to 2021 Census data) is 29.5%, which is significantly higher than both Simcoe County (19.9%) and the Province of Ontario (18.5%). This suggests that the town's population is characteristically older and is experiencing an aging population. Thus, creating age-friendly recreation, parks, and trails spaces and services will be an important factor to consider when engaging with not only the older adult population, but participants of all ages. These age groups prioritize health and wellbeing and require accessible facilities that offer both passive and active opportunities like walking tracks, pickleball courts, wellness spaces, and more. Multi-use hubs that expand access to more services are preferred.

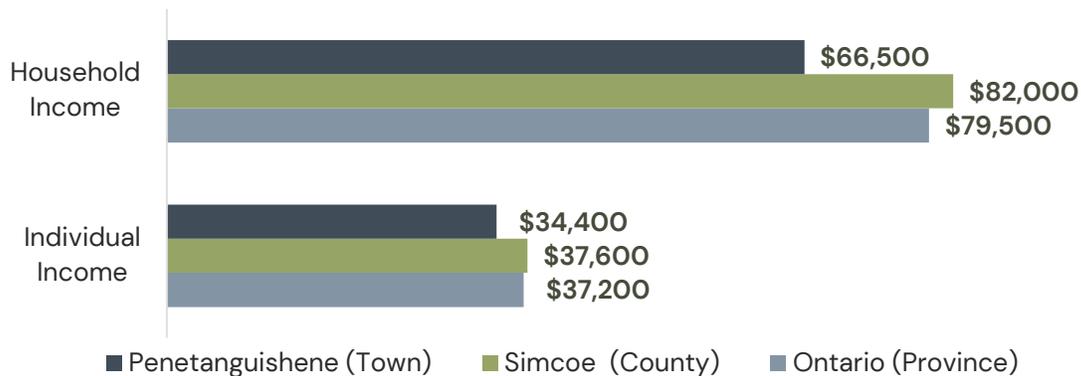


Income

There have been numerous studies within the sector correlating income and participation in recreation and parks activities. These studies suggest that when residents belong to higher-income groups, there is a greater likelihood that they are able to participate in elective, leisure activities because they can afford the associated registration fees, necessary equipment, and travel to the sites that can accommodate their leisure activities.

The median income (after tax) for households in Penetanguishene was \$66,500 annually, which is much lower than the median household income across Simcoe County (19% higher than Penetanguishene) and across Ontario (16% higher). When examining individual, median incomes, Penetanguishene fared better at \$34,400 a year, which is 9% lower than the median income in Simcoe County and 8% lower than in the Province. Penetanguishene's lower income levels can be partially attributed to the higher proportion of retirees.

Figure 3. Household income versus individual income, 2021 (Census)



Further, the percentage of Penetanguishene's population who live below the low-income cut-off (LICO) measure as of 2021 is approximately 3.4%, which is slightly greater than in Simcoe County (2.8%) but much lower when compared to Ontario (5.3%). These findings suggest that cost-related barriers to participation in recreation, parks, and trails activities may be higher for some residents in Penetanguishene compared to the average resident in other parts of the County. Continuing to provide low-cost options or removing financial barriers altogether will be important for residents – particularly those in low-income households – to have opportunities to participate in recreation, parks, or trails activities.

Diversity & Language

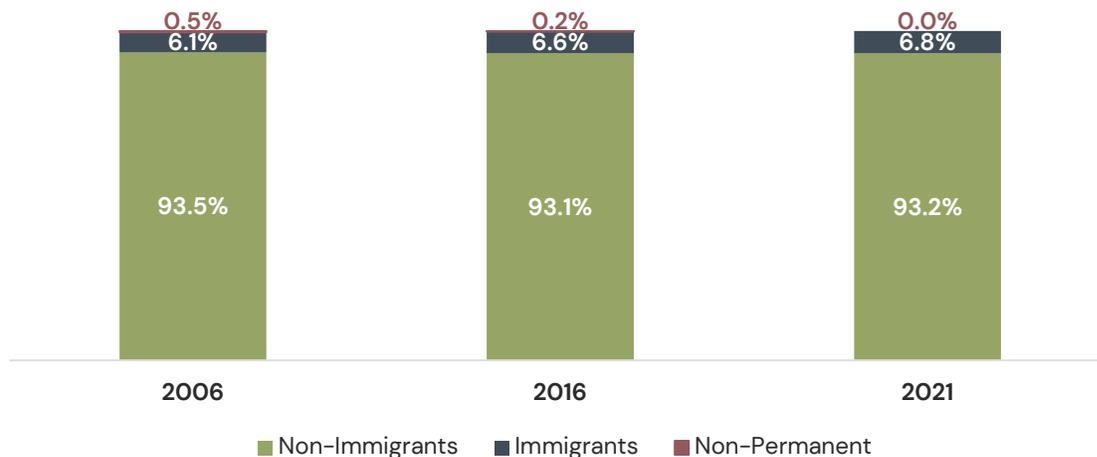
Most of Penetanguishene's people (97%) are not considered to be visible minorities. In fact, most residents (64%) have grown up and continued to live in the town, suggesting that there is a more unified cultural makeup.



As the historical home of the Huron-Wendat peoples, Penetanguishene continues to be home to many Aboriginal groups including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit groups. According to Statistics Canada, 19% of the town’s population is of Métis identity, while 3% are First Nations people.

There are small populations of immigrants and non-permanent residents who live in Penetanguishene as depicted in the following figure.

Figure 4. Proportion of residents who are immigrants, non-immigrants, or non-permanent residents, 2006 to 2021 (Census)



Note: Statistics Canada did not measure immigration status for 2011

To further demonstrate, the languages that the people of Penetanguishene know are mostly English and French as shown in the table below. While 100% of people know English, French is also well known, making up the second-most popular (17%) language in town.

Figure 5. Knowledge of Languages in Penetanguishene in Private Households (Census)

Languages Known	%
English	100%
French	17%
English and French	2%
Non-official languages	6%
Germanic Languages	1%
Polish	0.4%
Italian	0.2%
Spanish	0.2%
Portuguese	0.1%

Recently, the town has become home to an increasing number of new residents. Nearly 9% of current residents have moved to Penetanguishene between 2016 and 2021, with 96% of these new arrivals coming from elsewhere in Ontario. This indicates that the majority of the population is either locally rooted or already familiar with Ontario’s cultural and regional context.

2.3 Future Growth

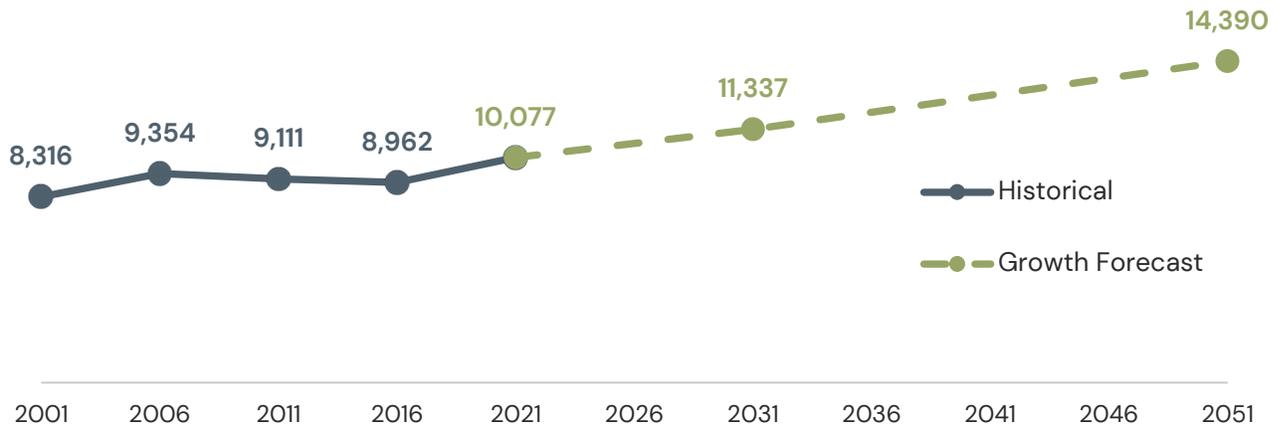
Simcoe County is part of the Greater Golden Horseshoe and its growth is directed by the Provincial Growth Plan.⁶ Penetanguishene is identified as one of six primary settlement areas in the County and is expected to absorb a share of growth in the County’s northern market area.

Residential and employment growth is governed by the Town’s Official Plan, which has been informed by the County’s Municipal Comprehensive Review and Official Plan. Based on Simcoe County’s planning forecasts and provincial growth strategies, Penetanguishene is expected to experience steady and sustainable growth to 2051.

⁶ “A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.” 2019.

Forecasts indicate that Penetanguishene is expected to reach 11,337 people by 2031 and 14,390 people by 2051. This translates into growth of 3,390 persons by 2051 over a current estimate of 11,000 persons today – this represents an increase of 31% over this 26-year period, for an average increase of 130 residents per year.

Figure 6. Town of Penetanguishene historical and forecast population, 2001 to 2051



Note: Forecast includes the net Census undercount of 2.7%.

Source: Statistics Canada Census, (2001 to 2021). Growth forecasts from County of Simcoe Growth Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment (2022) by Hemson Consulting Ltd.

The town’s residential growth will be achieved through both intensification (e.g., infill and redevelopment) and future settlement boundary expansions. Extensions to the urban area boundary are likely to be modest due to the area’s environmental and servicing constraints. This may create challenges in establishing new park blocks as smaller development sites do not typically yield sufficiently-sized parks. Recreation, parks, and trails are critical components of a complete community and should continue to be supported and expanded as the town grows.

Many services and organizations have a regional catchment, thus it is important to understand the broader growth trends in North Simcoe. When compared to its neighbouring municipalities, Penetanguishene is projected to experience a slightly greater rate of growth at 32%. Overall, the combined growth among the four neighbouring municipalities is expected to increase by 21%, which is primarily driven by growth in Penetanguishene and Midland.

Table 2 Population Changes Across Neighbouring Municipalities

Municipality	2024 Population Estimate*	2051 Population Forecast	Population Growth (2024 to 2051)	Population Change (%)
Penetanguishene	10,919	14,390	3,471	32%
Midland	19,318	24,290	4,972	26%
Tiny	13,557	16,010	2,453	18%
Tay	12,232	13,130	898	7%
Total	56,026	67,820	11,794	21%

Source: Growth forecasts from County of Simcoe Growth Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment (2022) by Hemson Consulting Ltd.

*2024 Population based on Census Canada population estimates.



2.4 Lifestyle, Participation, and Service Delivery Trends

The following trends and demands are increasing in municipalities across Ontario. These and others are expanded upon further in the pages that follow.

SPENDING
20-30 minutes
of time in green spaces can improve health and wellbeing

Nature is an important
"Third Space"

Parks and green spaces can mitigate the impacts of
CLIMATE CHANGE

Penetanguishene is committed to offering programs and services that are
AFFORDABLE

Higher costs of living have inspired a shift towards
EVOLVING INTERESTS IN NEW ACTIVITIES
such as pickleball

People are preferring flexible, drop in programs that suit their schedules

Penetanguishene is committed to ensuring that that Recreation, Parks and Trails are
ACCESSIBLE & BARRIER FREE
for all residents

Promoting Health and Wellbeing



Parks, trails, and other natural amenities play a critical role in protecting and enhancing human health and wellbeing by encouraging physical activity, reducing stress, and supporting mental health. Regular visits to green spaces have been linked to lower risks of developing chronic illnesses, improved mood, and enhanced cognitive function⁷. Studies show that spending even 20 to 30 minutes in nature can drop the body's cortisol levels (also known as the stress hormone), control blood pressure, and reduce blood sugar levels⁸. Recent trends show a growing recognition of these benefits, with 97% of Ontarians agreeing that recreation, parks, and green spaces play a critical role in improving their quality of life. As a result, municipalities across Ontario are investing in park development, trail networks, and "Healthy Parks Healthy People" initiatives to promote better health outcomes in residents⁹.

Connecting People & Nature



Nature is being understood as the ultimate "third place" – a space beyond home and work– to improve the quality of life among many spheres of an individual's life¹⁰. This idea (promoted by Ontario Parks, for example) emphasizes the role of parks and natural landscapes in providing spaces for relaxation, social interaction, and personal health. The value and interest in parks and natural spaces grew clearer during the COVID-19 pandemic, and demand for parks and outdoor spaces continues to remain high post-pandemic. Many municipalities are building on this momentum by expanding the opportunities available, including providing outdoor recreation, parks, and trails use for a variety of activities year-round.

Impact of Climate Change

Climate change presents gradual barriers to participation by increasing the intensity and occurrence of disruptive weather events. Within the past ten years, the number of annual weather advisory alerts have more than doubled¹¹. The occurrences of heat waves, heavy rainfall, strong winds, flooding, and smoke-filled air can hinder users

⁷ Jeffrey Wilson and Xiao Xiao, "The Economic Value of Health Benefits Associated with Urban Park Investment," MDPI, March 9, 2023, www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/20/6/4815.

⁸ "Why Nature?," PaRx: A Prescription for Nature, accessed June 9, 2025, www.parkprescriptions.ca/en/whynature.

⁹ "Healthy Parks Healthy People," Healthy Parks, Healthy People – Engage, accessed June 9, 2025, www.ontarioparks.ca/hphp/engage.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Environment and Climate Change Canada, "Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators: Temperature change in Canada," published 2024.

from engaging in outdoor activities. For example, in Ontario, outdoor tennis is already restricted to the warmer months, and frequent weather conditions like rain further reduce these opportunities by making courts slippery and increasing the risk of injury.



The Measuring Impact report states that strategically incorporating parks and green spaces into urban areas can help lower air pollution, support urban cooling, and improve the overall wellbeing of citizens¹². Many communities are seeking opportunities to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change so residents can continue to participate in parks and recreation. Examples of some techniques include:

- Adding more environmentally friendly, nature-based elements to outdoor playgrounds (e.g. sensory gardens);
- Adding shade structures, wind-mitigating structures, and cooling stations to outdoor recreation spaces and parks; and
- Avoiding the use of dark colours for playground equipment and surfaces to reduce the absorption of heat from the sun.

Affordability



A trend among municipalities is to implement methods or policies that reduce financial barriers to recreation. These policies may include subsidies for low-income families to enroll in various recreational programs. The Town of Penetanguishene has an Access to Affordable Recreation Policy that promotes the full participation of all residents in recreational programs and services regardless of financial circumstances. Other measures have resulted in partnerships between municipalities and community organizations to offer opportunities for underserved communities. For example, some municipalities have outlined goals to work with residents, businesses, and other partners to implement recommendations from their master plans, aiming to ensure inclusion and access to recreation for everyone, regardless of income.

Further investments in the sector include the Province of Ontario, which has announced funding worth more than \$200 million over the next three years. The funding is intended to support municipalities, indigenous communities, and non-

¹² "Placemaking," Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, accessed June 9, 2025, www.cpra.ca/framework_placemaking.

profit organizations to upgrade existing sport and recreation facilities or to support the construction of new ones¹³.



Evolving Interests and New Activities

Following the COVID-19 pandemic and the higher costs of living, some communities have seen a shift in the activities people are participating in. For example, there is an overall decline in hockey participation due to the high costs of equipment, ice rental fees, and demographic shifts. More affordable sports including basketball, soccer, pickleball, and volleyball are growing in popularity as alternatives¹⁴.

Flexibility & Drop-In Programming

Municipalities across Ontario are increasingly embracing flexibility in their parks, recreation, and trails programming to better meet the evolving needs and lifestyles of residents. These trends reflect a broader shift toward accessibility, no-commitment registrations, and convenience such as the following:

Drop-in and Pay-as-You-Go Programs

Municipalities have seen an interest in drop-in classes and unstructured recreation times, such as open gym sessions, public swims, and drop-in fitness classes. These options remove the need for long-term commitment and allow residents to participate on their own schedule. Penetanguishene offers a variety of drop-in programs including preschool programs for toddlers and parents, and fitness classes for adults (which include dance classes, high-intensity classes, and aquafit).

Self-Guided and On-Demand Activities

There is a growing emphasis on self-directed recreation, including marked fitness trails, interpretive walking routes, and outdoor exercise equipment in parks. The Town of Penetanguishene offers similar activities by adding statues and memorials along the Trans Canada Trail route, to commemorate the history of the town while also providing opportunities for self-guided learning.

¹³ "Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund," Ontario.ca, August 2024, www.ontario.ca/document/community-sport-and-recreation-infrastructure-fund.

¹⁴ Stephen Whyno, "Steady decline in youth hockey participation in Canada raises concerns about the sport's future" *CBC Sports*, published June 11, 2024, www.cbc.ca/sports/hockey/youth-hockey-canada-declining-participation-1.7231607.

Seasonal and Pop-Up Programming

Municipalities are introducing seasonal offerings like winter trail maintenance to accommodate snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, or pop-up skating rinks. These programs are often location-flexible and respond to seasonal interests or weather conditions.



All-Ages and Multi-Use Spaces

Parks and trails are being designed or retrofitted to be used simultaneously by a variety of users and age groups participating in different activities. For example, trails may accommodate walking, biking, and mobility devices, while park spaces might host both family play zones and fitness circuits.

Extended Hours

By extending the hours of recreation use, offering weekend programs, and implementing outdoor lighting enhancements, residents can engage in recreational activities outside of traditional daytime hours. This helps accommodate populations who may have time constraints including shift workers, students, and busy families.

Access to Recreation, Parks, and Trails

It is becoming more important to municipalities to ensure that people of all ages, abilities, gender, ethnic backgrounds, income levels and other characteristics can use and access the services and facilities available. The following trends identify the potential barriers and strategies to improve access to recreation, parks, and trails services and facilities.



Barriers for Persons with Disabilities

According to the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, 27% of Ontarians ages 15 and over self-reported at least one form of disability¹⁵. Youth between the ages of 15 and 24 experienced the greatest increase in disability rates since 2017, increasing by 7%. As a whole, older adults are more likely to suffer from some form of disability compared to younger age groups. According to Penetanguishene's Age Friendly Report, older adults reported enjoying the waterfront walking trails, the public library, and that the parks are generally accessible, however, a lack of a contemporary seniors centre, fitness facility, aquatic centre, or multi-use facility was identified as a challenge.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada, "Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017 to 2022," published December 1, 2023, www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231201/dq231201b-eng.htm.

The most prevalent type of disability was pain-related (61.8%), mobility-related (39.2%), and mental health-related (38.6%). For people with disabilities, 7% reported experiencing at least one type of barrier to accessibility as it pertains to indoor and outdoor public spaces. Some of these barriers include entrances, exits, or sidewalks (56%), communication barriers (48%), social barriers related to the misconceptions or assumptions associated with behaviours (37%), or technology-related barriers (17%). Recreation, parks, and trails are critical public spaces that support physical, social, and mental wellbeing; therefore, it is important that all persons have accessible opportunities to participate.

Participation of Women and Girls in Sports

In 2024, a study on girls' participation found that in Canada, more girls are playing sports now than ever before. However, findings suggests that girls (63%) are still less likely than boys (68%) to participate in sports or even reach their daily physical activity thresholds, a major contributor being that girls viewed sports as an activity for boys. By the age of 16, young women tend to drop out of sports at accelerated rates while young men's participation remains relatively stable until their mid to late twenties. For girls who do participate in physical activity, motivators included the feelings of fun and enjoyment, the ability to socialize with friends, and an appreciation for the positive impacts to their physical health. These insights demonstrate the importance of considering recreation, parks, and trails provisions for women and girls. As an example, the Framework for Recreation in Canada Update recommends that facility allocation and policies should align with the needs of women and girls to ensure that they have access to quality facilities and programs at peak times.¹⁶ Additionally, encouraging coaches and instructors on how to communicate with and support young girls in sports can make these environments more welcoming and can encourage participation to continue into later adult life¹⁷.

The 2SLGBTQIA+ Community

For members in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, feelings of discrimination can be barriers to their participation in sports and physical activity. Studies have shown that 2SLGBTQIA+ boys participation rates are around half that of their heterosexual peers¹⁸. Thus, providing spaces and policies that reflect the needs of all gender identities and sexual identities can help encourage 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals to feel welcome and able to participate in recreation, parks, and trails offerings. Some

¹⁶ Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, "Framework for Recreation in Canada," *Canadian Parks and Recreation Association*, published March 2024, tinyurl.com/RecreationFramework.

¹⁷ Canadian Women & Sport, "Rally Report 2024," published 2024, womenandsport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Rally-Report-2024_Canadian-Women-Sport.pdf.

¹⁸ Out on the Fields, "Gay boys play team sports at half the rate of their peers," published December 3, 2020, outonthefields.com/male-sport-participation/.

strategies to encourage all members is to train coaches to support 2SLGBTQIA+ participants or even offer mixed gender teams.

Indigenous People

Penetanguishene's history began with the indigenous communities of the Huron-Wendat tribes. Currently, 22% of residents are considered to be of indigenous identity. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) identified 94 calls to action to foster reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. Many of these calls can be addressed through the recreation, parks, and trails sector. Further, the 2024 Framework for Recreation in Canada Update recommends that municipalities work with Indigenous communities to address the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action. Some strategies to encourage participation of Indigenous people includes supporting the long-term success in Indigenous athletes, supporting traditional, indigenous sports and activities, and facilitating environmental stewardship.

2.5 Municipal Constraints and Opportunities

Municipalities are frequently influenced by a combination of internal and external trends and challenges. These may include the need to manage aging infrastructure, shifting expectations around service delivery and opportunities, staffing shortages, limited budgets or funding, and prospects for partnerships or shared facilities. The following are some notable trends.



Aging Infrastructure and Limited Capital Budgets



Staffing and Volunteer Shortages



Municipal Budgets and Funding Sources



Multi-Use and Co-Location



Parkland Dedication and Land Assembly

Aging Infrastructure and Limited Capital Budgets

Many of the parks and recreation facilities of the late 1960s to the 1980s are now aging infrastructure in need of life cycle repairs¹⁹. The 2019 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card found that one in three recreational or cultural facilities will require repair or financial investment within the next 10 years and approximately 30% of all facilities are in fair condition (requiring attention and showing signs of deterioration) or worse²⁰. As recreation facilities and infrastructure age, they become less efficient, require greater investments and renovations, and they become more expensive to maintain and operate. Specifically, indoor ice rinks often have a lifespan of around 45 years, while indoor recreation spaces typically last around 35 years²¹. Additionally, many of Ontario's facilities were constructed more than 50 years ago, when construction did not consider the standards in the more recent *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* or some amendments to the Ontario Building Code. Thus, these older facilities require investments in repairs or renovations to make them barrier-free.

Aging infrastructure is an issue that Penetanguishene is currently facing. For example, the Penetanguishene Memorial Community Centre (PMCC) was built in 1954, making it more than 74 years old, and has surpassed the typical lifespan of an arena or indoor recreation space. The Penetanguishene Curling Club (PCC) was built in 1973, making it more than 52 years old, and is also in need of investment, particularly as the facility does not meet accessibility standards. As a result, a new Multi-Use Recreation Centre (MURC) as a replacement and enhancement to current recreation and community spaces is in the planning stages.

Staffing and Volunteer Shortages

As demands for recreation, parks, and trails increase, many municipalities across Ontario are experiencing the strains of staffing shortages in the sector. In 2023, data showed that job vacancies in Ontario's recreation sector rose by 18.6% compared to 2022²². A contributing factor to this may be that municipal positions in the field tend to offer lower

¹⁹ "Facility Toolbox – Aging Recreation Infrastructure," Ontario Recreation Facilities Association Inc., 2025, orfa.wildapricot.org/page-1865318.

²⁰ Canadian Infrastructure, "Canadian Infrastructure Report Card," published 2019, <http://canadianinfrastructure.ca/downloads/canadian-infrastructure-report-card-2019.pdf>.

²¹ Parks and Recreation Ontario, "Beyond the Boundaries: The Untold Value of Parks and Recreation Infrastructure", *Parks and Recreation Ontario*, June 2025

²² Budget Consultation, "Parks and Recreation Ontario", published January 2024, portal.prontario.org/public/PRO%20Submission%20-%202024%20Pre-Budget%20Consultation.pdf.

salaries compared to the provincial average, and therefore, a significant labour shortage is anticipated to continue by 2030 if liveable wages cannot be provided²³.

The municipal provision of programs and services has traditionally relied on volunteers to help maintain and deliver programs, foster community engagement, and provide other resources to the community. Many municipalities are finding that their volunteers are aging and are struggling to attract and retain new volunteers. The SPARK Evaluation Report found that younger volunteers are interested in short-term, flexible volunteer arrangements, resulting in a shift towards micro-volunteering and episodic participation. For example, traditional models of volunteerism included roles such as coaching a sports team for the duration of the sports season. However, due to busier lifestyles, lack of time, generational preferences, and fear of experiencing burnout, younger volunteers are more likely to participate in task-based roles such as signing up for a one-hour shift at a festival booth.

To encourage volunteerism, some municipalities are exploring recommendations to incorporate volunteer recognition initiatives, provide volunteers with opportunities to contribute to decision-making, and foster public partnerships with community-based organizations and service clubs.

Municipal Budgets and Funding Sources

Capital projects related to facility revitalization and replacement are primarily funded through property taxes, while growth-related projects receive funding from development charges and other growth-related fees. Municipal parks and recreation departments across Ontario have faced significant financial challenges in recent years, primarily due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising inflation. While participation in recreational activities has rebounded and, in some cases, surpassed pre-pandemic levels, municipalities are grappling with escalating costs that hinder the progress of essential capital projects. As a consequence of rising costs, traditional streams of funding are no longer sufficient to address the financial needs. For many municipalities, achieving large-scale capital projects is only possible with the financial cooperation and support from all levels of government (supplemented by approaches such as naming rights, operating partnerships, land deals, etc.). It is likely that outside funding (e.g., senior government grants) and/or partnerships will be necessary to achieve the planned MURC.

²³ Parks and Recreation Ontario, "2025 Ontario Pre-Budget Consultation," *Parks and Recreation Ontario*, January 2025, www.prontario.org/_files/ugd/50cfa2_547ec4739d204cdaa17427f0a8217a4c.pdf?index=true

Multi-Use Facilities and Co-Location

Multi-use facilities have become increasingly popular and even preferred among municipalities due to their ability to meet growing and diverse programming needs within a single location, which helps improve operational efficiency and share resources. Similarly, co-location models typically bring together services like recreation centres, libraries, schools, seniors' centres, and/or childcare facilities into larger-scale, shared community hubs²⁴. These integrated spaces offer significant advantages, including reduced land use and lower capital and operating costs, as they make use of shared infrastructure such as entrances, mechanical systems, elevators, and storage. Both multi-use and co-located facilities support inclusive service delivery, enabling municipalities to offer a broader range of programs that are accessible and relevant to residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. The MURC is proposed to follow this multi-use model to address multiple pressure points for the Town in one facility, such as ice activities, indoor sports, community gathering space, program space, and more.

Parkland Dedication and Land Assembly

To address the demand for land and housing, the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* (Bill 23) was one of several pieces of legislation that introduced changes to the parkland dedication standards in Ontario. These changes include limiting the amount of parkland that municipalities can require from developers and allowing techniques such as encumbered lands to be considered towards the total parkland supply. These changes can place additional strains on municipalities' ability to secure land for the future of their parks, recreation, and trails systems, affecting both the quantity and quality of the land available. The Town has a new Parkland By-law that reflects many of these realities.

As municipalities continue to grow through intensification – building upwards and inwards – securing land for new parks and recreation facilities has become increasingly difficult due to limited availability and rising land values. In response, some municipalities are adopting land banking strategies, which involve purchasing large parcels of land – often from other public entities like school boards – with the intent of using part of the site for public amenities such as parks or recreation centres (as was the case with 51 Dunlop Street in Penetanguishene). Where appropriate, the remaining portions may then be sold or leased to help offset the costs of developing the new facilities.

²⁴ Sean Regan, "Colocation in Municipal Construction," *Urban Land Institute*, published June 15, 2011, urbanland.uli.org/planning-design/colocation-in-municipal-construction.

2.6 Policy Scan and Document Review

Recreation, parks, and trails facilities and services are developed and provided within the context of an extensive web of local, municipal, provincial, and federal laws, strategies, plans and reports. To ensure that it forms part of an integrated decision-making framework, this Strategy has regard for other municipal plans, studies, reports and policies. Key documents are summarized in **Appendix A: Document Review**, with a focus on those with relevance to recreation, parks, and trails.

Findings and recommendations from the following studies have been incorporated within this Strategy, where appropriate:

1. 20 Year Community-Based Strategic Plan (2023)
2. Town of Penetanguishene Official Plan (2019)
3. Recreation and Community Services Master Plan (2014)
4. Arena and Recreation Centre Study (2021)
5. Trails Strategy (2017)
6. Development Charges Background Study (2024)
7. 10 Year Capital Plan (2023-2032)
8. Asset Management Plan (2024)
9. Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2024-2026)
10. Age Friendly Community Plan (2022)
11. Cycling Strategy (2019)
12. Climate Change Action Plan (2019)
13. North Simcoe Service Delivery Review (2021)
14. Service Delivery Review (2017)

Two of these notable guiding studies are summarized below.

20 Year Community-Based Strategic Plan (2023)

The 20 Year Community-Based Strategic Plan approved by Council in 2023 guides the Town's decision making and community engagement, and encourages sustainable growth. The Strategic Plan is intended to help drive community success, growth, and investment for a 20 year planning period, and to provide accountability and transparency to residents.

Vision: "Our waterfront community is a destination and a starting point, respectful of its history and natural environment, offering a rich culture, active lifestyle, well-planned growth, employment opportunities and a wonderful opportunity to live one's dream."

Mission: "The Town provides its residents and businesses with high quality services and sustainable infrastructure in a financially responsible manner, fostering an engaged community and a diversified economy, while preserving our distinct heritage and natural environment."

Themes:

- Penetanguishene: A Vibrant Community with a Small-Town Feel.
- Stronger Together: Think Regionally to Increase Efficiencies.
- An Inclusive Penetanguishene: Community Celebrations and Volunteerism.
- Healthy Community: Promote Healthy Living, Wellbeing and an Active Lifestyle for All Ages.
- Celebrate Penetanguishene: Highlight its Unique Heritage and Culture.
- Corporate Initiatives

The Strategic Plan includes several objectives and supporting actions relevant to recreation, parks, and trails, including prioritizing the development of this updated Strategy. Key actions are identified in **Appendix A**.

Recreation and Community Services Master Plan (2014)

The 2014 Recreation and Community Services Master Plan was intended to guide the planning, budgeting and implementation of stated goals and objectives through 2029. This Master Plan provided the Town with 93 short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations and sub-recommendations. Currently, 30 (32%) of these recommendations have been completed and 27 (28%) are ongoing. The balance of these recommendations are either incomplete (26, 27%), have experienced a change in direction (6, 6%), or have not reached their desired timeframe (3, 3%).

Appendix A contains the full list of recommendations. Key recommendations with an incomplete status include creating a Park Design Strategy, adopting a trail classification system and hierarchy, developing a youth drop-in program, partnering with the Midland YMCA to develop satellite youth leadership and wellness programs in Penetanguishene, and working with other North Simcoe municipalities to develop a recreation passport program. This Master Plan and its outstanding recommendations will be considered when assessing recreation, parks, and trails through this 2025 Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy.

Table 3. Report Card of 2014 Master Plan Recommendation Status

Action (to date)	Recommendations	Percent
Complete	30	32%
Ongoing	27	28%
Incomplete	26	27%
Change in Direction	6	6%
Timeframe not reached	3	3%
Total	95	100%

3. Public and Stakeholder Input

3.1 Approach to Community Engagement

Several engagement tactics were used to solicit input from the community and ensure that this Strategy is reflective of local needs and priorities. The purpose of the varied methods was to ensure that people from all ages, abilities, incomes, and backgrounds were heard. A comprehensive public engagement plan was prepared and followed to solicit input from members of the public, stakeholder groups, local organizations, Council, and Town Staff.

The various consultation techniques included:



The anticipated outcome for these initiatives was to gain insight on the Town's strengths, challenges, needs, and opportunities involving recreation, parks, and trails. Public engagement opportunities were advertised through the Town's webpage

(connectpenetanguishene.ca), social media accounts, posters and signs, email networks, and more. The following sections summarize the consultation findings and results.

3.2 Information Sessions and Pop-up Engagements

Two pop-up engagement sessions were held at the Penetanguishene Memorial Community Centre on June 5, 2025 to introduce the Strategy process to the Penetanguishene community. Discussion about the Town's recreation, parks, and trails were had with approximately 85 to 100 people.

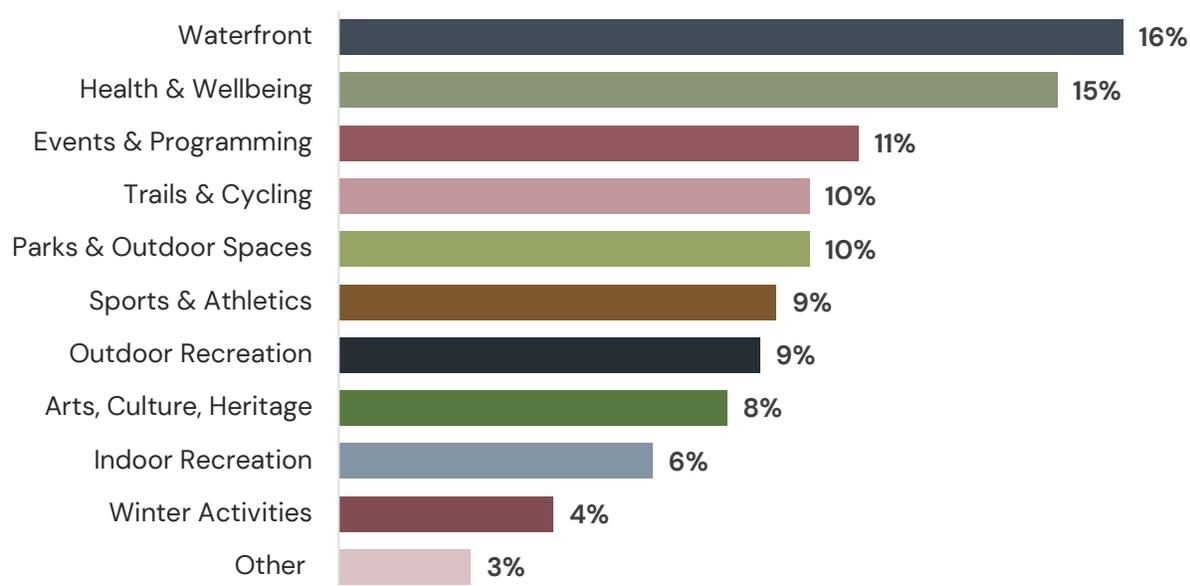
The first pop-up event was held at the Senior Information Day, which consisted of booths from various organizations, clubs, and service providers to promote opportunities for older adults to get involved. The booth to represent this Strategy received good attention from Penetanguishene residents, as well as many residents from other Simcoe County municipalities. The second pop-up event was held in the evening during the youth Ball Hockey event. The booth for this Strategy was present during two games and mainly attended by parents and youth players, however received less attention compared to the senior's event.

Residents who walked by the booth or stopped to read the display boards were able to read more about the Strategy. A QR code to take the survey was also available to be scanned.



A **polling activity** allowed participants to place five blocks into jars that represented the answers to the question: “When it comes to Recreation and Community Services, what is most important to you?” Examples of some of the options included: parks & outdoor spaces; sports & athletics; and health & wellbeing. The feedback is summarized below.

Figure 7. Straw Poll Results: When it comes to Recreation and Community Services, what is most important to you?



A display board with four questions was set up at the booth, with sticky notes available for people to record their ideas and input. The feedback is summarized below.

Tell us what you love about recreation, parks, and trails in Penetanguishene.

- The most common response was that the Town’s trails were appealing and enjoyable to use.
- Events, festivals, and concerts hosted by the Town.

How can we improve our parks and open space?

- Better access to outdoor and indoor pickleball courts.
- All tennis courts at McGuire Park should be converted to pickleball courts.
- Better maintenance at certain parks such as Ecology Garden and the beach dog park.
- More seniors’ spaces at parks (including shuffleboard and bocce ball courts).

How can we improve our recreation programs, events, and facilities?

- The Town needs facilities such as a gymnasium, pool, and a new arena.
- More programming for seniors.

- Until the new arena is constructed, add two additional dressing rooms and other major upgrades to the Arena.
- A greater emphasis on the Town's heritage, arts, culture, events, and festivals.

How can we improve our trails and overall connectivity (sidewalks, cycling routes, etc.)?

- Sidewalks need to be maintained and lit for visibility at night, particularly a concern for seniors who worry about the risk of fall.
- Trail entrances are missing signs and maps that inform people of whether the trails are public or private, or how long the trail might be.
- The planned MURC project should be reconsidered to include an aquatic facility to support the Town's many swim programs.

Other resident submissions noted the following:

- It was suggested that the Rolling Sands / Church Street open space properties be dedicated as a major town park destination with connection to the Payette Trails because it is already cherished by so many for its unique location, natural beauty, and it overlooks the waterfront.

3.3 Community Survey

To support the development of this Strategy, a community survey was available over a period of over five weeks in May/June 2025 to engage residents and non-residents. The purpose of the community survey was to solicit input regarding aspects of Penetanguishene's recreation, parks, and trails system including participation preferences, barriers, service gaps, priorities for investment, satisfaction levels, opinions on various statements, and more.

The survey was promoted through a variety of means (e.g., web content, social media, pop-up engagement events, targeted invitations, etc.) and was available through the project webpage. The survey was made available both online via the project webpage and through hard copies available at Town facilities.

A total of 460 unique responses were received (representing approximately 1,159 residents as respondents were asked to reply on behalf of their entire household). When combined with other consultation tactics and inputs, these responses provide a solid basis for future planning. Being a voluntary, self-directed survey, response rates varied by question and this survey is not considered statistically significant. It is noted that equity-deserving populations are often under-represented in public surveys.

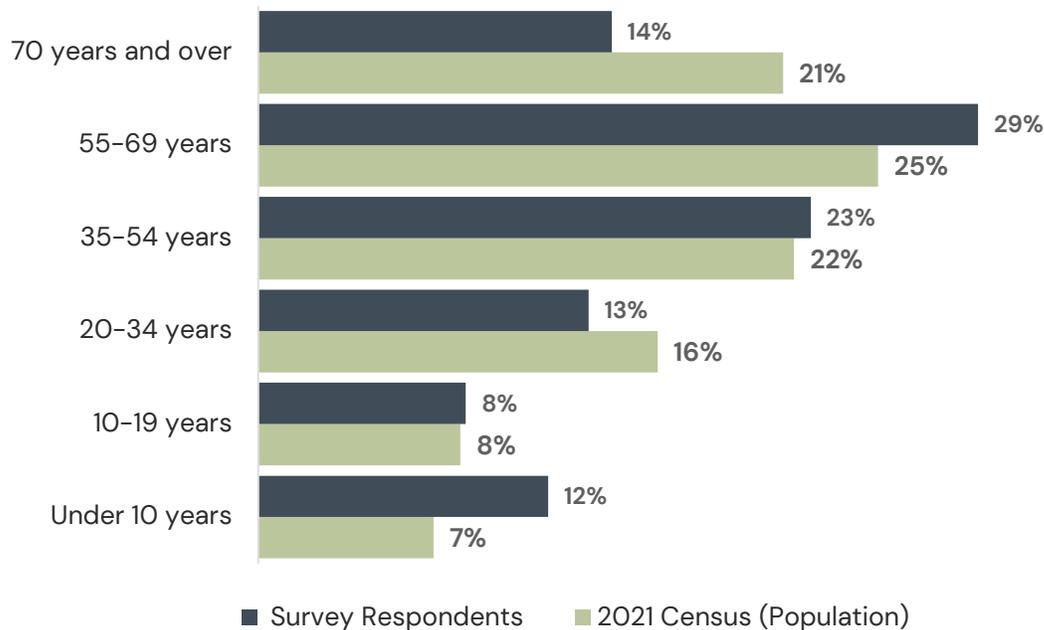
The key findings from the survey are summarized below. Full survey results have been provided in **Appendix B**.

Respondent Profile

The following provides a demographic profile of those that completed the survey (all responses were optional):

- The average birth year of respondents was 1968 (57 years of age), and three-fifths (61%) of respondents were aged 56 years or older.
- Compared to Statistics Canada’s 2021 Census, the average household size (2.9 persons) of respondents was higher than the Town’s average per private household (2.3 persons).
- The age profile of respondent households was generally proportional to Penetanguishene’s population, but did attract slightly more younger families, most of which are more frequent users of recreation, parks, and trails services.

Q19. Including yourself, please indicate the number of people within your household that fall into the following age categories. (n=398)



- Over three in four respondents (76%) were permanent residents of Penetanguishene, and 3% were seasonal/part-time residents. The one in five respondents (20%) who do not live in Penetanguishene indicated that they live in Tiny (11%), Midland (7%), and Tay (1%).
- Over half (50%) of permanent and seasonal/part-time residents indicated that they have lived in Penetanguishene for more than 20 years, while 15% are considered newer residents (less than 5 years). One-third (34%) have lived in Penetanguishene between 5 and 20 years.

Participation

To establish a participation profile, respondents identified recreation, parks, and trails activities that their household participated in over the past 12 months in Penetanguishene or elsewhere. At least half of respondents identified walking on paved trails (74%), enjoying parks and natural areas (67%), attending a local event (e.g., Winterama) (67%), walking on unpaved trails (63%), and gardening (50%). These top activities indicate that casual, self-directed activities are among the most accessible for Penetanguishene residents.

Figure 8. Most Popular Recreation, Park and Trail Activities in Penetanguishene (household participation, past year)



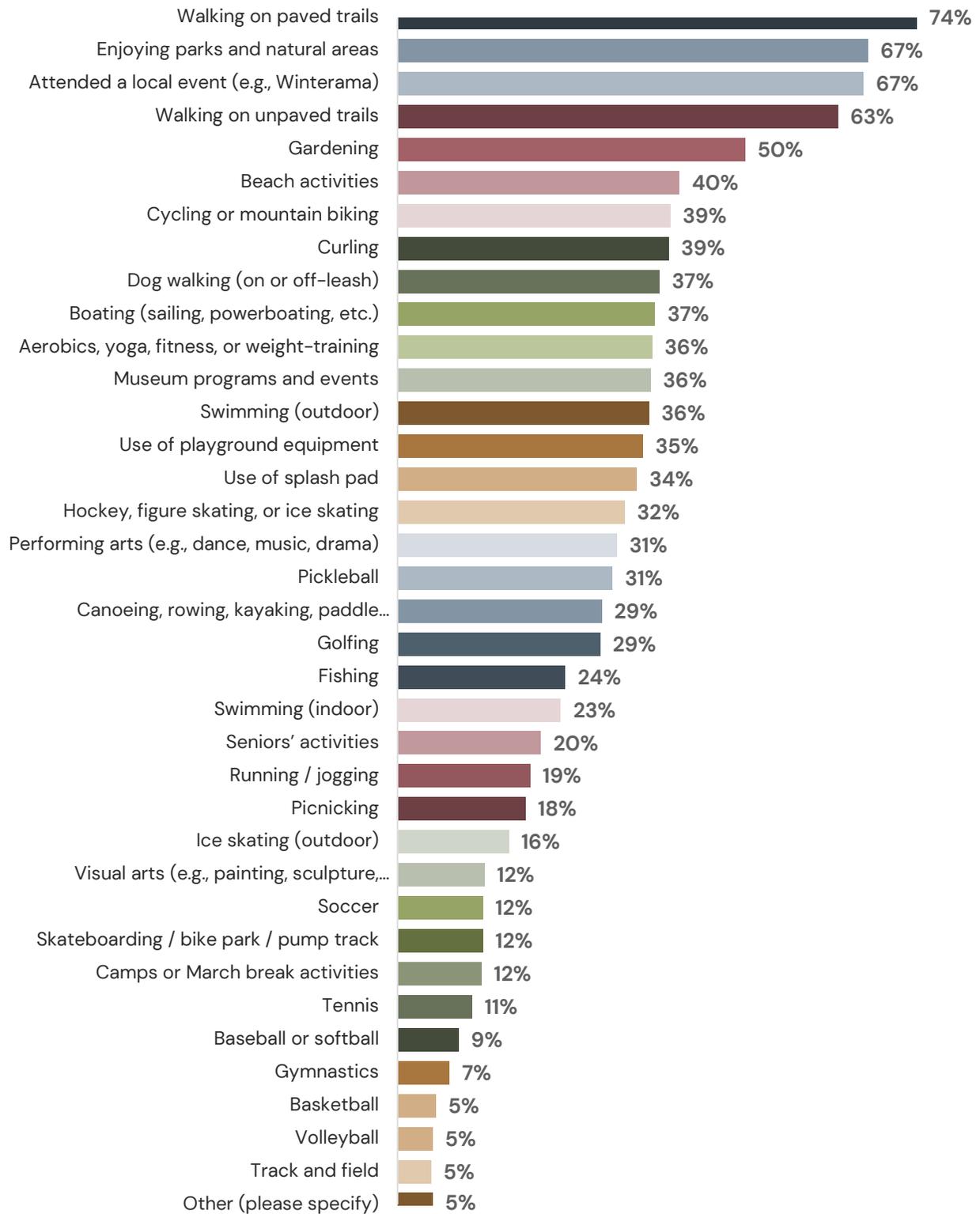
Respondents who are seasonal and non-residents are more likely to participate in walking on unpaved trails.

The following figure displays the full list of activities and household participation rates. In addition to the top five activities identified, the following pursuits were mentioned by at least one in three responding households:

1. Beach activities (40%)
2. Cycling or mountain biking (39%)
3. Curling (39%)
4. Dog walking (on or off-leash) (37%)
5. Boating (sailing, powerboating, etc.) (37%)
6. Aerobics, yoga, fitness, or weight-training (36%)
7. Museum programs and events (36%)
8. Swimming (outdoor) (36%)
9. Use of playground equipment (35%)
10. Use of splash pad (34%)

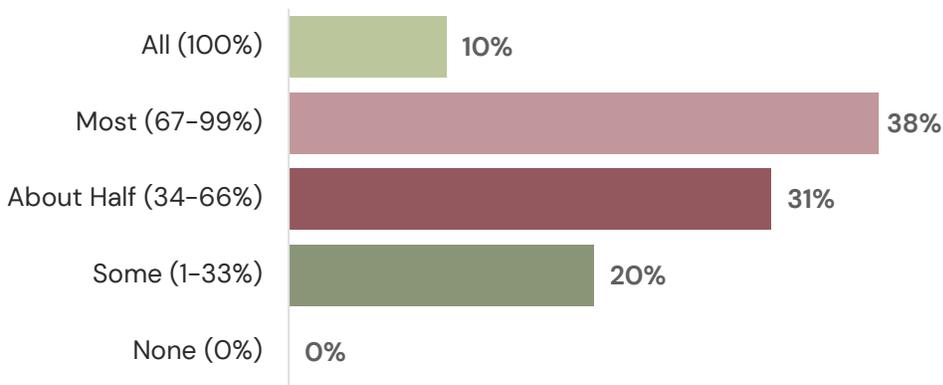
This indicates a demand for unstructured outdoor activities amongst respondents, as well as for curling and museum programs and events. Curling participants appear to be over-represented in this survey as the 39% participation rate in this activity is higher than what the Town's club membership levels would suggest. Fewer people reported participating in team sports such as hockey, figure skating or ice skating (32%), soccer (12%), and baseball (9%). Of the 5% of respondents who identified an activity that was not listed, the most common responses consisted of cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, downhill skiing, and lawn bowling.

Q1. In the past 12 months, which of the following activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in Penetanguishene or elsewhere? (select all that apply) (n=460)



Nearly one-half (48%) of respondents indicated that “all” or “most” of their household’s recreation and parks needs are met within Penetanguishene. Conversely, one-fifth (20%) indicate that only some of their activities are hosted locally, while 31% suggest that “about half” of their activities are offered locally. It is clear that the majority of residents also rely on facilities and programs outside of Penetanguishene.

Q2. Generally, what proportion of your household’s recreation and parks needs are met within Penetanguishene? (n=458)



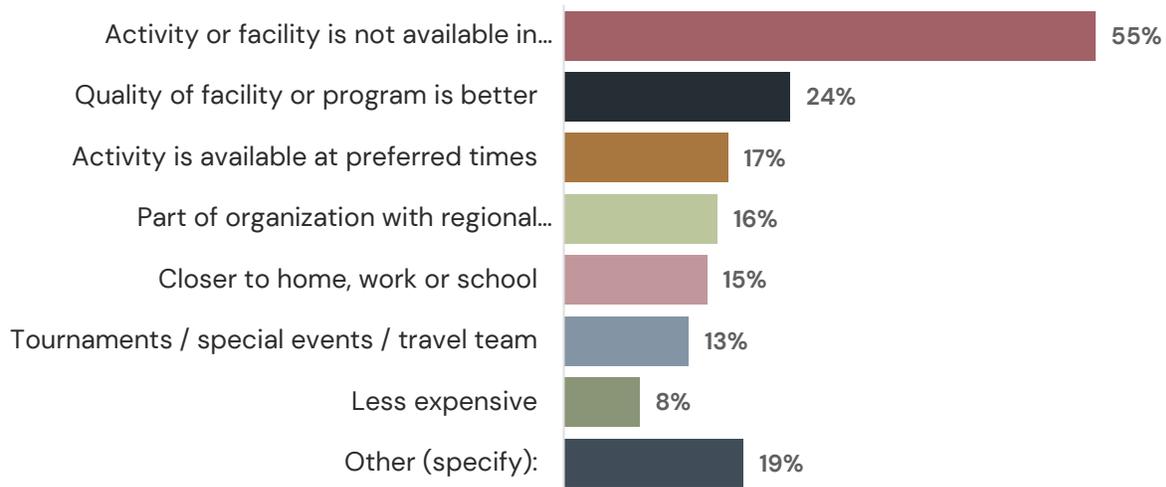
Respondents with all or most of their needs met locally are more likely to participate in curling. Respondents with none to half of their needs met locally are more likely to participate in walking on unpaved trails.

Respondents who participate in recreation and parks activities outside of Penetanguishene were asked to identify the top activities they or members of their household participated in most frequently outside of town. The top five activities identified by respondents (n=370) as taking place outside of town were:

- Pickleball (47 mentions)
- Golf (37)
- Walking (32)
- Swimming (29)
- Cycling (26)

Over half (55%) of these respondents identified that their household participates outside of Penetanguishene because the activity or facility is not available in town. Only 24% indicated that the activity/facility is better elsewhere, suggesting that the quality of Penetanguishene’s offerings is satisfactory. The one in five respondents who selected “Other” indicated a change of scenery and variety, swimming and water quality, alternative trail systems, pickleball court access, and golf memberships as the top reasons why their household participates in activities outside of Penetanguishene.

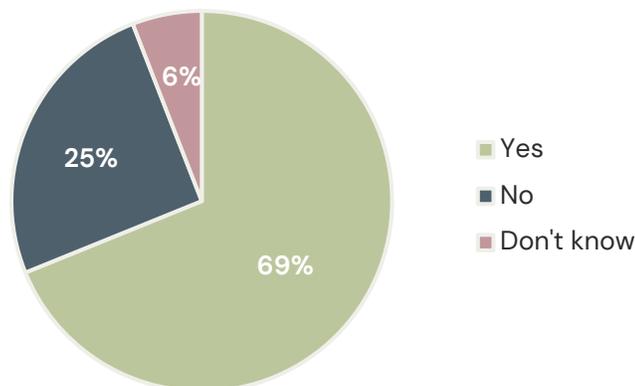
Q4. Why does your household participate in these activities outside of Penetanguishene? (select all that apply) (n=369)



Barriers

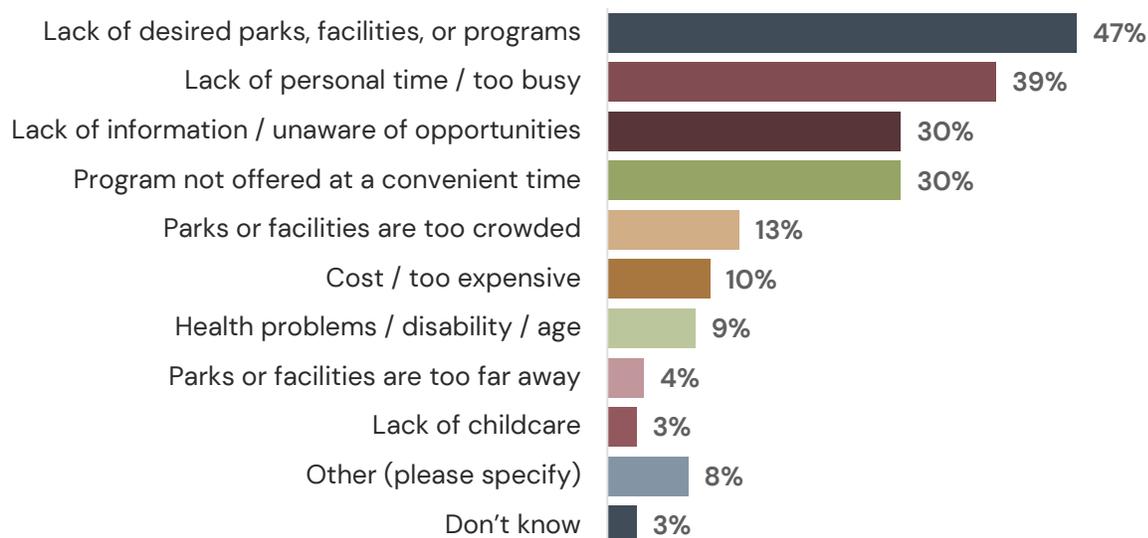
Over two in three respondents (69%) identified that they and members of their household are able to participate in recreation and parks activities as often as they would like. Only one in four respondents (25%) identified barriers keeping them or members of their household from participating.

Q5. Are you and members of your household able to participate in recreation and parks activities as often as you would like? (n=440)



In terms of barriers, nearly one-half (47%) of respondents indicated a lack of desired parks, facilities, or programs and nearly two in five (39%) respondents indicated a lack of personal time / too busy as the reasons why. Additionally, three in ten (30%) respondents indicated a lack of information / unaware of opportunities and programs not being offered at convenient times.

Q6. Why are you and members of your household not able to participate in recreation and parks activities as often as you would like? (select up to three) (n=135)



Respondents that are unable to participate in activities as often as they would like are more likely to be unsatisfied with outdoor recreation facilities (i.e., sports fields, courts, playgrounds) and be kept from using trail more often because of safety concerns.

Program & Activity Gaps

Nearly two in five respondents (39%) identified specific recreation and parks activities that they or members of their household would like to see offered in Penetanguishene. The top suggestions are listed in the table below. It is noted that many of these activities are currently offered in the town, suggesting that respondents are seeking additional opportunities to participate or may not be aware of current programs.

Q8. What activities would you like to see offered that are not currently available? (Open-ended) (n=183)

Top “Drop-in” Activity Requests	Top “Registered” Program Requests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pickleball (30 mentions) • Swimming / Aquatic Activities (19) • Fitness / Exercise Classes (12) • Arts & Crafts / Art Classes (10) • Walking (8) • Youth / Teen Activities (8) • Seniors’ Programs (7) • Gymnasium Activities (6) • Basketball (4) • Dance / Movement (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming (31 mentions) • Pickleball (16) • Hockey (14) • Fitness / Exercise Classes (11) • Arts and Crafts (11) • Dance (9) • Yoga (8) • Curling (4) • Soccer (4) • Gymnastics (2)

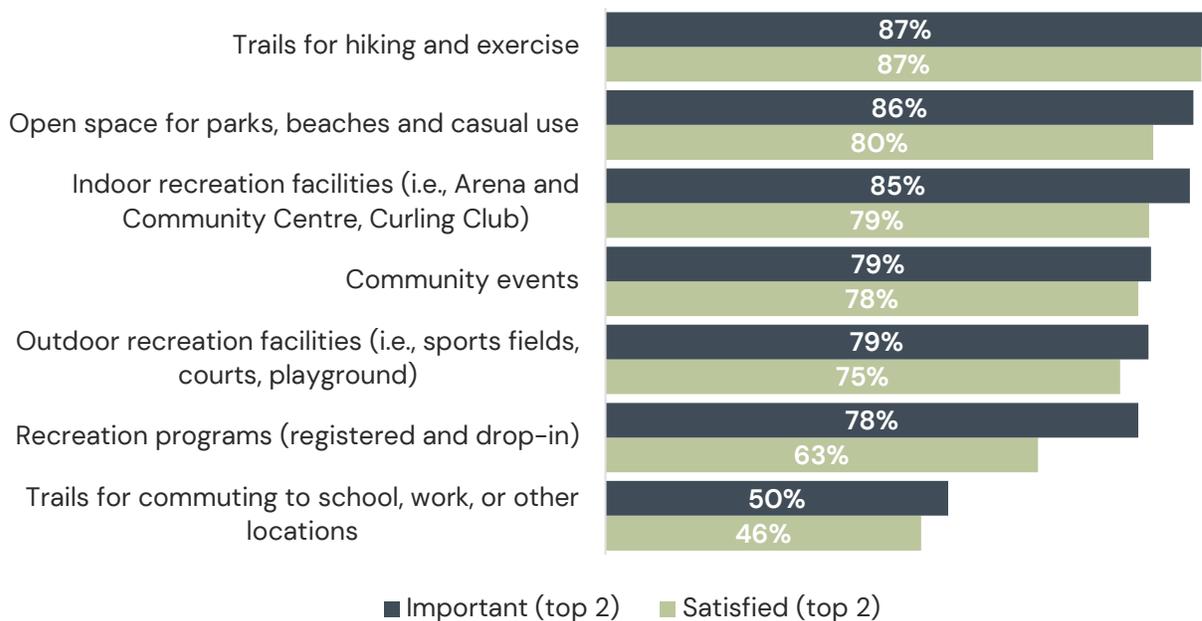
Importance & Satisfaction

High levels of satisfaction were expressed for nearly all recreation, parks, and trails services. For example, nearly nine out of ten (87%) respondents indicated that they are satisfied with Penetanguishene’s current trails for hiking and exercise and that that they are important to their household.

Respondents generally indicated lower levels of satisfaction for recreation programs (registered and drop-in) (68%) and trails for commuting to school, work, or other locations (46%), although many (42%) don’t use the latter which is the reason for the low satisfaction figure.

Importance ratings that are higher than satisfaction ratings are indicative of areas where expectations are not being met. Recreation programs (registered and drop-in) had the largest gap (15%) between level of importance (78%) and satisfaction (63%) and may be a focus for improvement in the future.

Figure 9. Importance and Satisfaction (n=401 to 426)



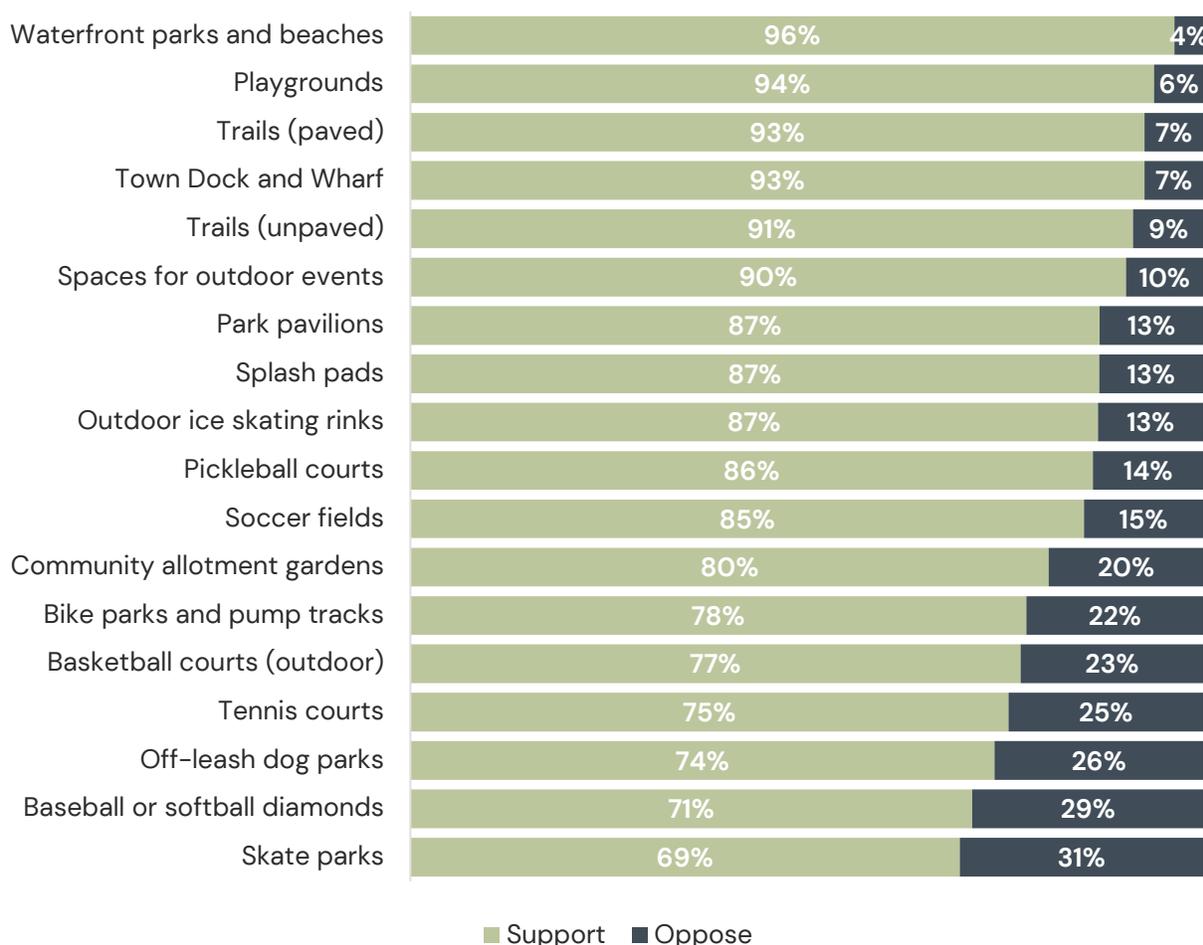
Facility Investment

Respondents were asked to what degree they oppose or support the Town and/or community spending additional public funds to improve or build more park facilities. Levels of support and opposition generally aligned with household participation rates asked earlier in the survey.

The highest levels of investment support were expressed for the Town’s waterfront parks and beaches (96% support), playgrounds (94% support), trails (paved) (93% support), Dock and Wharf (93% support), trails (unpaved) (91% support), and spaces for outdoor events (90% support). These spaces are all highly accessible and affordable to a wide range of users.

Conversely, support for investment was lowest for sports facilities and youth recreation, including skate parks (31% oppose), baseball or softball diamonds (29% oppose), outdoor basketball courts (23% oppose), and bike parks and pump tracks (22% oppose). Off-leash dog parks (26% oppose) and tennis courts (25% oppose) also received high levels of opposition and low levels of support. This suggests that the quality and/or provision of these facilities in the community is relatively high with little latent demand.

Q11. To what degree do you oppose or support the Town and/or community spending additional public funds to improve or build more of the following types of park facilities? (n=390 to 404)



Trails Usage & Priorities

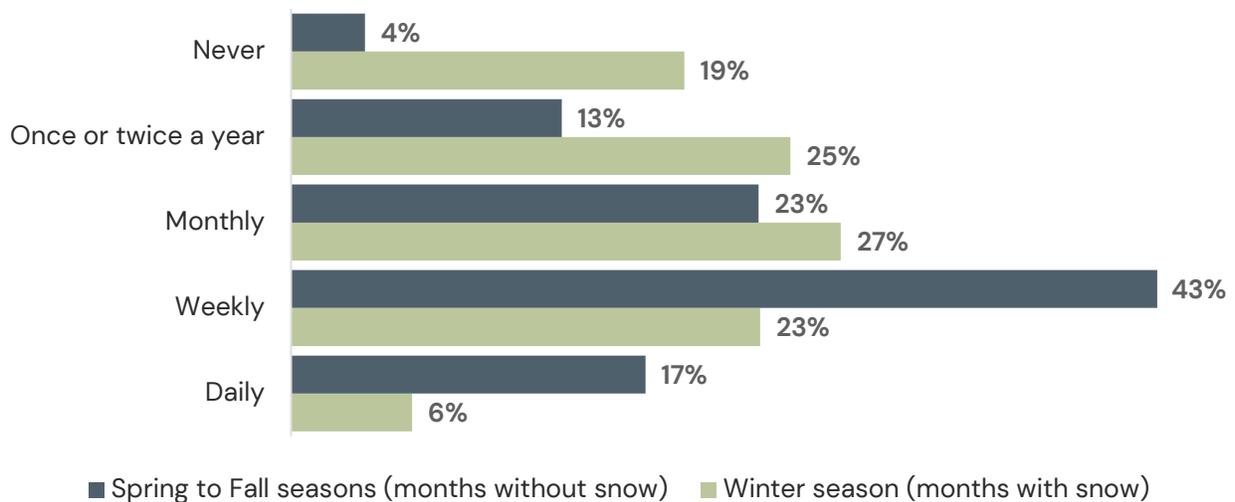
As noted earlier, 74% and 63% of households have used paved and unpaved trails in the past 12 months, respectively. Further, investment in the trails system was noted as a public priority. A series of questions were posed to learn more about trail use and satisfaction.

Respondents were asked on average how often they use Penetanguishene’s trails during each of the spring to fall seasons (months without snow) and winter season (months with snow):

- Nearly one in five (17%) respondents indicated that they use Penetanguishene’s trails daily during the spring to fall seasons, compared to over one in twenty (6%) using them daily during the winter season.
- Over two in five (43%) respondents indicated that they use Penetanguishene’s trails weekly during the spring to fall seasons, compared to over one in five (23%) using them weekly during the winter season.

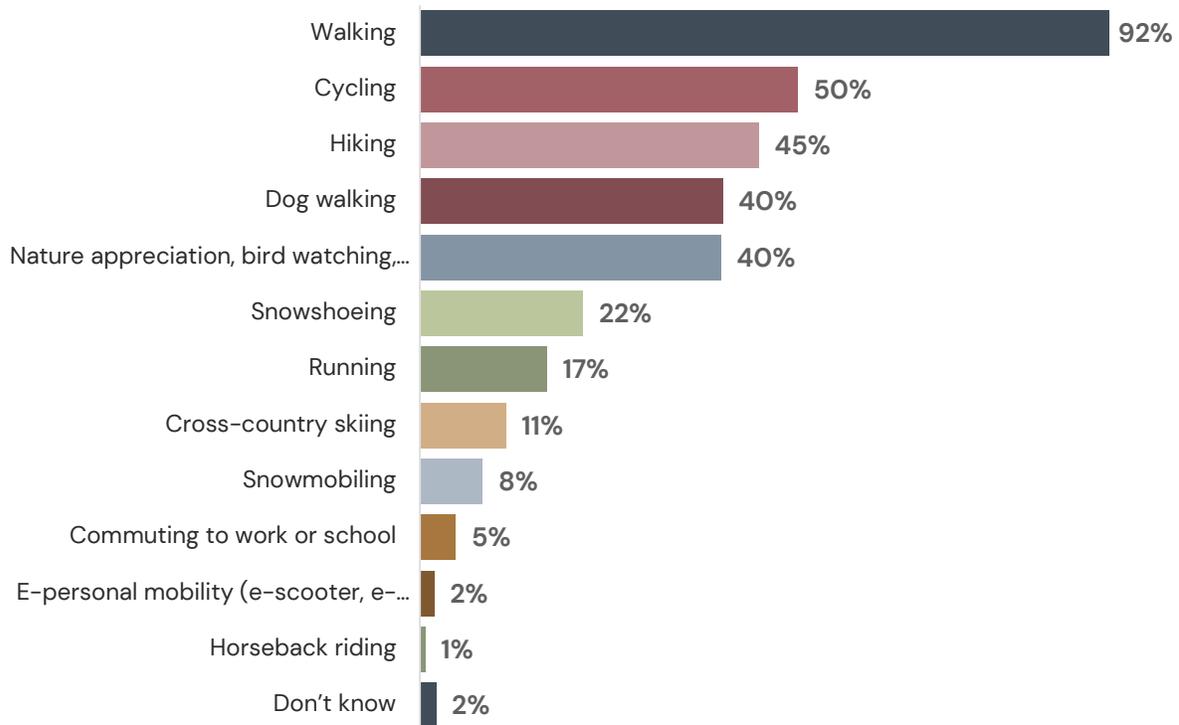
These comparisons suggest that the trails are used by two to three times as many users in the spring to fall seasons than they are during the winter season.

Q12. On average, how often do you use Penetanguishene’s trails (select one per season)? (n=403 to 413)



In terms of trail activities, over nine in ten (92%) respondents indicated that they or members of their household use trails in Penetanguishene for walking. Additionally, half (50%) of respondents use trails for cycling and at least two in five use trails for hiking (45%), dog walking (40%) and nature appreciation, bird watching, and wildlife viewing (40%).

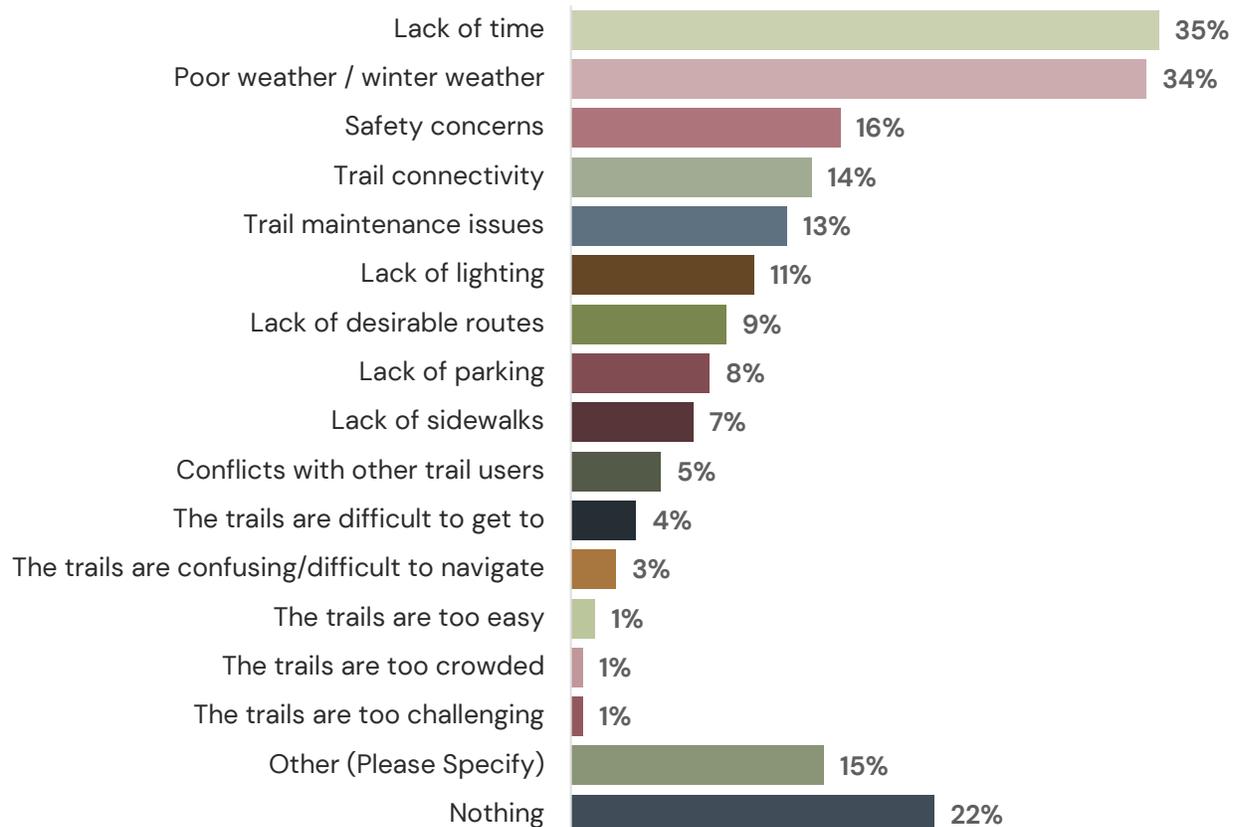
Q13. What types of activities do you or members of your household use trails in Penetanguishene for? (select all that apply) (n=418)



Over one of five (22%) respondents indicated that there no barriers keeping them from using trails more often. Barriers that the Town cannot control (e.g., lack of time, poor weather / winter weather) were rated higher than barriers that the Town can control (e.g., safety concerns, trail connectivity, trail maintenance issues, lack of lighting, etc.), suggesting that trail design and maintenance is effective.

The 15% of respondents answered "other" indicated off-leash / irresponsible dog owners, smell from sanitation plant, awareness / don't know where trails are, accessibility issues (age, health, stroller), motorized vehicles, and natural deterrents (goose waste, bugs, ticks) as the most common reasons keeping them from using trails more often.

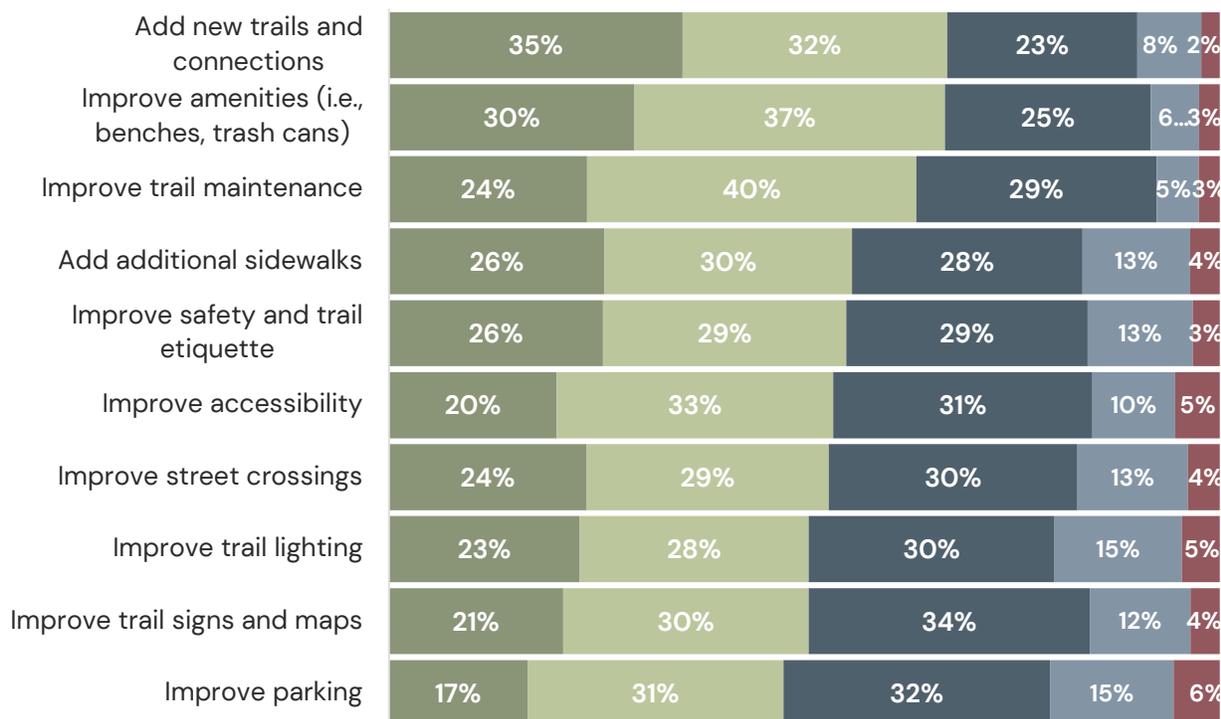
Q14. What keeps you from using trails more often? (select all that apply) (n=412)



Respondents were asked how important the following priorities for investment in local trails are. At least half of respondents identified the following items as being very important or important:

- Add new trails and connections (67%)
- Improve amenities (e.g., benches, trash cans) (67%)
- Improve trail maintenance (64%)
- Add additional sidewalks (56%)
- Improve safety and trail etiquette (55%)
- Improve accessibility (53%)

Q15. How important are the following priorities for investment in local trails? (n=391 to 402)



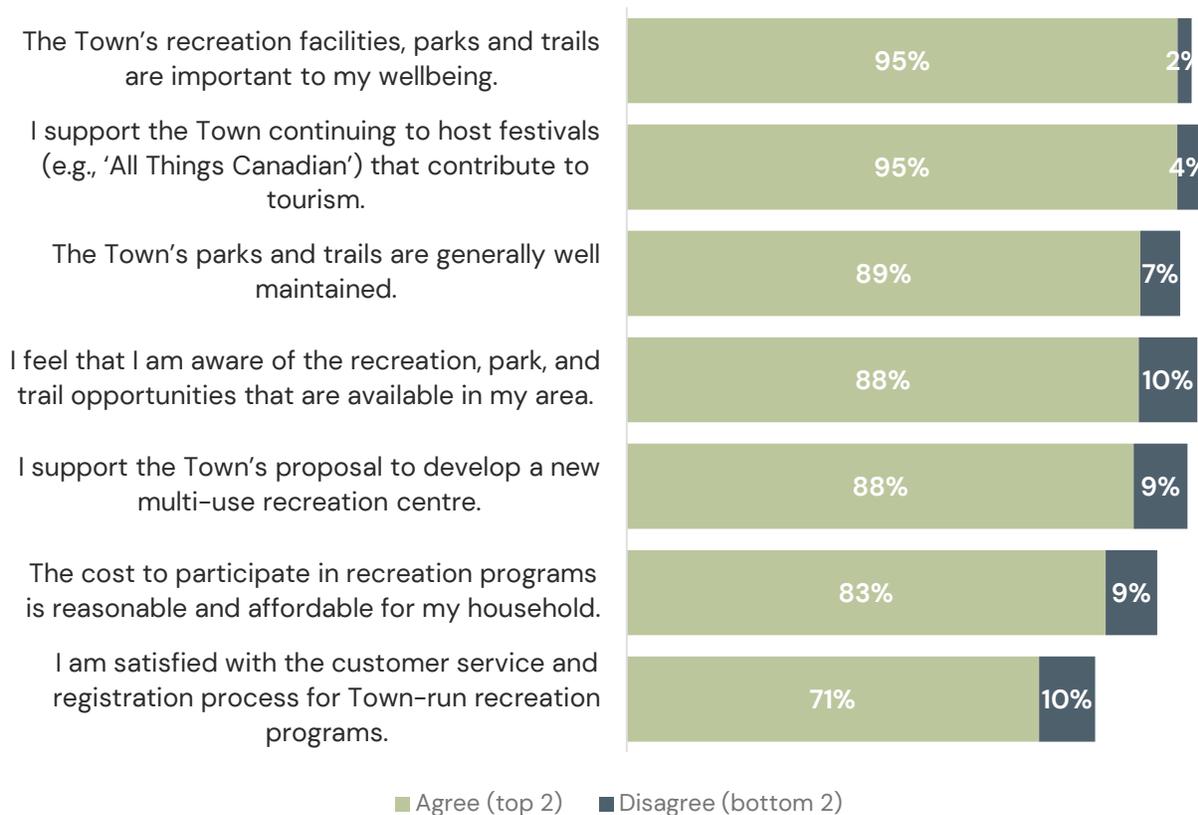
■ Very important ■ Important ■ Somewhat Important ■ Not at all Important ■ Don't know / Don't use

Statements

Respondents indicated their level of agreement with several statements. At least four in five respondents strongly agree or agree with:

- 95% agree: "The Town's recreation facilities, parks and trails are important to my wellbeing."
- 95% agree: "I support the Town continuing to host festivals (e.g., 'All Things Canadian') that contribute to tourism."
- 89% agree: "The Town's parks and trails are generally well maintained."
- 88% agree: "I feel that I am aware of the recreation, park, and trail opportunities that are available in my area."
- 88% agree: "I support the Town's proposal to develop a new multi-use recreation centre."
- 83% agree: "The cost to participate in recreation programs is reasonable and affordable for my household."
- 71% agree: "I am satisfied with the customer service and registration process for Town-run recreation programs."

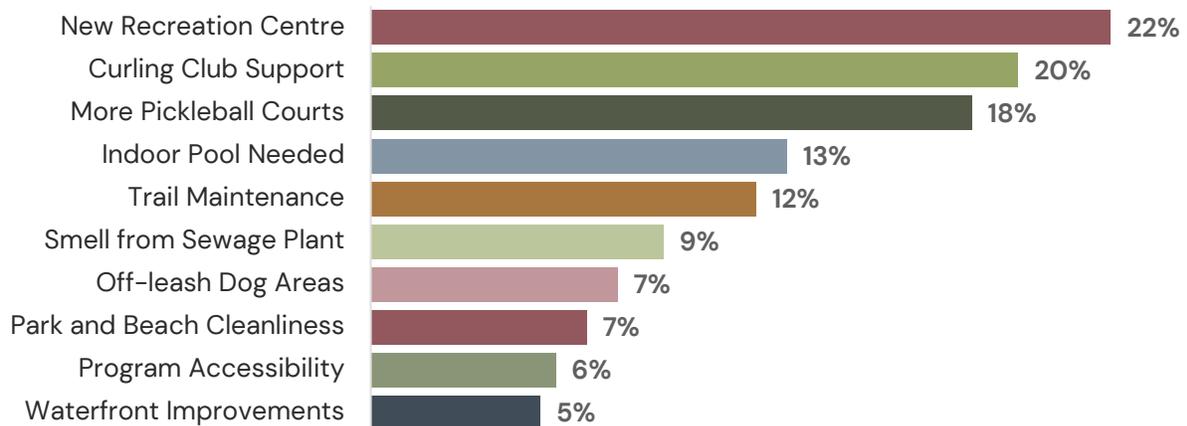
Q16. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. (n=403 to 410)



Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional open-ended comments or suggestions regarding recreation, parks, and trails within Penetanguishene.

Q17. Common themes from open-ended comments. (n=215)



Quotes provided by respondents that represent some of the most common themes include:

- "We need a community recreation centre that has a pool and indoor track and board rooms and an arena."
- "Continue to maintain the Penetanguishene curling club facility and support the growth and expansion of its usage."
- "Need new/more regulation sized pickleball courts to meet current and future demands."
- "Would like to see trail area developed off of Payette Drive and sand pit area behind the fire department connect to waterfront park trails."
- "Odour from sewage plant must be addressed! Goose droppings are an issue, but staff work diligently to keep it under control."
- "You can't reinvent waterfront space. It's wonderful to have waterfront parks, open space vistas, and trails to walk."
- "Suggest low-cost fees for low income families, people with disabilities and 55+. Expand fitness programs for 55+."

3.4 Stakeholder Engagement

Sessions were held with key stakeholder groups to gain crucial insight into the issues and points of interest relating to recreation, parks, and trails in Penetanguishene. These stakeholders included sport groups, community organizations, non-profit organizations, advisory committees, and others.

All groups that offer related services and/or use the Town's recreation, parks, and trails facilities to host their programs and events were invited to participate. Many of these organizations serve regional markets including, but not limited to, Penetanguishene. A total of 13 organizations participated through two sessions in June 2025, including:

- Askennonnia Seniors Centre
- BGC North Simcoe
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Discovery Harbour
- Economic Development Committee
- Penetanguishene Lions Club
- Penetanguishene Minor Hockey
- Penetanguishene Rotary Club
- Pickleball Convenors (2)
- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
- Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care
- Wellbeing and Accessibility Committee
- YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

The following is a high-level summary of the common themes expressed during these sessions:

The Beauty of Penetanguishene

A shared appreciation for the beauty of Penetanguishene's natural landscapes was frequently mentioned throughout the discussion. The town's waterfront and trails in particular were highlighted as a strength, offering attractive spaces for visitors or new residents.



Limited Programming Activity Space

Program providers often cited a lack of available indoor space (e.g., meeting rooms, bookable halls, event spaces) as a main hindrance for organizers and members. To secure space, some groups have shifted between bookable rooms in many of Penetanguishene's neighbouring municipalities, however, there is preference for a home location. Many organizations have also expressed a need for storage space to store frequently used supplies, equipment, and material.

Accessibility & Visibility

Participants suggested efforts to improve accessibility within recreation facilities, parks, and trails. A notable example being Rotary Champlain Wendat Park, which has accessibility and visibility barriers in its entry from Main Street. Signage at trails and routes is one way to improve visibility.

Despite plans for a new recreation centre in the future, concerns about the accessibility of the current arena were expressed, including conditions such as the uneven surface, which can pose fall risks for those with mobility issues. Alternatively, the elevators in the facility are not located near the stairs, creating challenges for those who cannot use the stairs. The curling club was also identified as a facility that was aging and lacking many accessibility features.

Volunteer Expectations

While demand and interest in certain programs are present, community and volunteer groups pointed to challenges to grow and retain their volunteer base, which is crucial to running programs and activities for the community.

Future-Focused Planning & Town Support

Participants commended the Town for past actions (such as the purchase of the 51 Dunlop property) in anticipation of future needs and residents. Growing the Town's recreation facilities and supporting its volunteers and organizations were mentioned as an important way to ensure recreation is supported. Sport and recreation groups have added that the support of the Town, whether financially, administratively, or other forms of involvement, has been invaluable to the provision of events and programs.

Participation Trends

Some organizations that cater to youth and children have found that membership and participation in programs have decreased since the COVID-19 Pandemic, attributing a likely cause to the pandemic's increased use of technology and the lifestyle changes that prevented people from participating in group activities. On the other hand, sport groups like hockey organizations have seen a rise in youth participation.

For groups and organizations serving older adults and seniors, membership has largely increased following the pandemic. It was discussed that seniors felt especially disconnected during lockdowns as a generation that did not rely as much on technology or social media to engage with others. As a result, participation following the pandemic increased as the need and desire for human connection became clearer.

3.5 School Engagement

The community and Town of Penetanguishene frequently use local schools (gymnasiums, fields, and classrooms) for recreational programs, meetings, and sports. Input was sought from all area schools to solicit ideas about how the Town, schools, and the community can work together to meet local needs, particularly those that would benefit youth. Three schools responded with feedback (Burkevale School, Canadian Martyrs Catholic School, École élémentaire catholique Saint-Louis).

All three schools indicated that Town-owned parks are often used by schools for outdoor learning, sports, field trips, or play. For example, McGuire Park is used as a space for cross country and running while the PMCC is visited for skating in the winter. The Champlain Wendat Park was mentioned as a place to visit during the spring and fall seasons, with children enjoying the outdoors and the splash pad. Additionally, students often spend their after-school hours at parks, fields, ball diamonds, and other spaces that are located close to the school properties. Participation in Town-wide events like Winterama and the tree lighting already occurs, with feedback that communication with the Town regarding these events is effective.

When asked whether schools would be interested in working together to deliver recreation and cultural services, all three schools were open to further discussion, with Burkevale School identifying the potential for shared gymnasium use following the construction of their new school.

The schools suggested that providing free transportation or more sidewalks along major routes would allow children and youth to better access programs, events, facilities, parks, and trails more. Similarly, free programming was identified as a way reach children and youth looking for extra-curricular activities.

3.6 Public Information Sessions

A public information session was held on July 23, 2025 to engage with the general public on interim project findings and to gather additional input. Survey results, demographics, trends, and maps were shared and participants provided comments and feedback. Approximately 20 residents attended the session. The following themes and insights were discussed:

- There were suggestions for more spaces and amenities for seniors. For example, implementing benches at popular walking trails would allow seniors to take a moment's rest and to enjoy the park and views.
- Investments into trails were a common discussion. Some suggestions included improvements to trail and bike lane connectivity, surface accessibility, and trails maps and resources online for people to access and plan their trail visits.
- Ecology Garden is a great location and space for residents to grow their fruits and vegetables, but the produce is sometimes stolen before it can be harvested.
- Interest was expressed for additional and/or improved outdoor pickleball courts, including adding lights to the existing courts and converting the remaining tennis court at McGuire Park to pickleball to allow for 6-8 dedicated courts.
- Support was expressed for protecting and formalizing the Payette trails/woodlot, Rolling Sands, and Church Street properties as a public open space. These sites are well used for walking/hiking, tobogganing, and nature appreciation, plus provide ecological value to the community. Modest improvements such as signage, parking, benches, trail delineation, etc. were suggested.

A second public information session was held on January 13, 2026, to present the Draft Strategy to the public and to seek feedback on preliminary recommendations.

Approximately 15 residents attended the session. The following input was received during this session and through written submissions:

- Support for the Strategy's mission, vision and goals.
- Support for the Strategy's recommendations related to developing trails and improving signage, connectivity and active transportation, and developing and designating Rolling Sands property as open space.
- Support for recommendations highlighting the importance of affordable Town recreation programs.
- A desire for additional and improved pickleball courts and amenities, including dedicated courts, screens, lighting, and improved fencing, court gates, and pathways. Some community members also expressed a willingness to fund fencing and screens.
- Distinguishing hiking and walking trails in the Strategy, as well as continuing to work with the Trails Committee to ensure that a snowmobile trail can always be safely and appropriately brought through Town where feasible. Coordinating with Simcoe County to provide more parking at Thompson Tract.
- A desire for the ecology gardens to be further developed (with additional security measures) and be used as a resource for food in the community.
- Improved water access for canoes and kayaks, including a launch and additional parking spaces.
- Prioritizing equity deserving areas, including when securing parkland.
- Supplemental information was provided by the Penetanguishene Curling Club regarding the condition and uses of the curling facility as well as the health of the Club's membership.
- Supplemental information and suggestions were submitted by the Simcoe–Muskoka District Health Unit through the lens of their Healthy Community Design Municipal Assessment Tool. The Health Unit commended the Town of Penetanguishene for giving priority to affordable and accessible recreation opportunities and a well-managed network of parks, trails and facilities that support physical activity for residents of all ages and abilities.



3.7 Summary of What we Heard

The following key themes and items have been identified throughout the public engagement program for further consideration during the development of this Strategy.

1. **Recreation, parks, and trails are valuable!** Residents appreciate recreation, parks, and trails as main features that make Penetanguishene a desirable place to live and visit.
2. **Penetanguishene is an active community.** Health and wellbeing are also defining aspects of the town's high quality of life. Aside from walking on trails, residents noted that they also enjoy other activities such as visiting parks and natural spaces and attending community events like festivals. There is also a demand for more casual, leisure activities (e.g., beach activities, cycling, dog walking, or exercise and fitness classes).
3. **The waterfront is a defining feature of Penetanguishene.** Many residents agreed that the waterfront is the most important feature of the Town, and there is overwhelming support (96%) among residents to see more investments or projects at waterfront parks or beaches.
4. **Town trails are appealing and easy to use.** More than half of residents reported using the trails at least once a week (which was the most participated in activity). Residents also reported that there were few Town-controlled barriers preventing them from

accessing trails. Added trail connections, signage, online resources, and maps were identified as a way to improve existing trails.

5. **Residents rely on programs, facilities, and services both within and beyond Penetanguishene.** The town's proximity to surrounding communities provides added value and access to a wider range of leisure experiences. Residents identified pickleball, golf, walking, swimming, and cycling as main activities participated in elsewhere, largely because they are not provided within the town.
6. **Programs and events are affordable, but more municipal and volunteer resources are needed to keep pace.** Satisfaction levels with Town recreation programs and events are strong, with many residents noting their affordability. The Town's rental rates are among the lowest in the region as Council has prioritized community access and participation. Residents have a desire to see more events and programming offering a wider array of activities, however, barriers preventing this include limited programming space (especially indoor spaces) and a lack of staff and/or volunteers to help run events and activities.
7. **There is strong support for the new Multi-Use Recreation Centre, as well as interest in a municipal aquatic facility.** 88% of survey respondents support the Town's proposal to develop a new multi-use recreation centre. This is underscored by nearly half (47%) of respondents identifying a lack of desired facilities/ programs as keeping them from participating in activities as often as they would like. Aside from pickleball, the top activity that that people would like to see more of was swimming programs. Many also emphasized the need to continue investing in the Penetanguishene Memorial Community Centre until the new facility is open.
8. **Pickleball is a popular local activity.** Residents frequently mentioned a need for improved access to pickleball courts by increasing the supply of pickleball courts and/or adding lights. In fact, pickleball was the most common reason people participated in activities outside of Penetanguishene. The demand for pickleball also included a desire for more drop-in and registered pickleball programs.



4. Vision and Goals

The following vision, mission, and goals will serve as a roadmap that will guide the Strategy's recommendations and implementation, enabling Council, staff, partners, and the public to understand where the Town is going and how it intends to get there.

4.1 Vision

The following vision has been established to serve as an overarching expression of the desired future – a compelling statement that captures the community's aspirations for its parks, trails, facilities, and recreational experiences. It paints a clear picture of what the Town is striving to become, guiding decision-making and aligning stakeholders around a common long-term direction. The vision has been derived from internal and external input and is reflective of the Town's Strategic Plan.

"Where active and healthy living is a way of life."

4.2 Mission

A mission statement explains the core purpose of the Recreation and Community Services Department, essentially why it exists and what it does on a day-to-day basis. The mission defines the Town's commitment to residents and users, clarifies the core functions of the department, and provides a foundation for operational and customer service decisions.

The mission for the Recreation and Community Services Department is as follows:

"To coordinate, maintain, and provide quality accessible and affordable recreational facilities, community programs, events, parks, trails, and open spaces that benefit the wellbeing of Penetanguishene residents and visitors."

4.3 Goals

The following goals translate the aforementioned vision into more specific priority areas for action and investment. They provide a framework for decision-making by outlining the Town's core responsibilities and the main outcomes to be achieved through the Strategy.

Goal 1 – Affordable and Accessible Recreation Opportunities for All

Provide equitable access to affordable recreation, parks, and cultural experiences that encourage participation by people of all ages and abilities – especially children, youth, seniors, and families.

Promote vibrant and inclusive opportunities that reflect the community's unique culture and heritage, foster social connections through events and shared spaces, and remove barriers so everyone can enjoy active, healthy lifestyles.

Goal 2 – A Well-Managed Network of Parks, Trails, and Facilities

Enhance parks and waterfront spaces, community facilities, and trail connections so that residents and visitors can enjoy a broad range of active and passive recreation opportunities.

Invest in areas that will deliver wide community benefits, improve equity to under-served populations, and aligned opportunities for grants and external funding.

Goal 3 – Working Together to Deliver on Community Priorities

Build strong partnerships with community organizations, volunteers, regional allies, and the tourism sector to support shared recreation, parks, and trail objectives.

Leverage collaboration and resource-sharing to enhance service delivery, build local capacity, celebrate local strengths, and respond to emerging community priorities.

Goal 4 – Responsible Governance and Financial Management

Provide effective leadership and stewardship in the planning, delivery, and funding of recreation, parks, and trail services.

Embrace progressive approaches that support high quality service delivery, organizational capacity, continuous improvement, and long-term financial sustainability.

5. Service Delivery and Programs Assessment

The Town of Penetanguishene aims to facilitate quality accessible and affordable recreational programs and community events that benefit the wellbeing of residents and visitors. This is achieved through the collective efforts of staff, community organizations and providers, and volunteer groups.

This section contains a high-level assessment of the Town's program delivery model and levels of service, including considerations related to roles and responsibilities, programming and events, staffing levels, fees, partnership development, and more.

5.1 Departmental Role

The vision and goals of this Strategy provide focus to the Town's role in supporting recreation and community services in Penetanguishene. All actions and initiatives should support the vision ("active and healthy living") and one or more of the goals.

The Recreation and Community Services Department plays a vital role in ensuring that residents have ample opportunities to lead healthy and active lifestyles. This department is responsible for the planning, development, and maintenance of local parks, trails, playgrounds, and other recreational assets. It also oversees a variety of programming and community events that cater to all ages and abilities, including youth sports, seniors' activities, cultural events, and fitness classes.

The department's mandate extends to supporting volunteer organizations and fostering partnerships that enhance local offerings. The relationships with providers are paramount to the successful delivery of quality services. Through a combination of these approaches, the Town will strive to ensure a diverse and accessible range of opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Within this context, the suggested roles identified below may be used to guide the Town in its responsibilities relative to recreation and community services:

- a) Understanding the growth of the municipality and planning for adjustments in service provision based on changes to demographic and socio-economic factors;
- b) Ensuring that infrastructure and amenities are in a state of good repair and flexible in terms of their uses;
- c) Incorporating quality assurance measures and legislative compliance in the delivery of service;
- d) Providing a full range of activities based on the needs of the general population and within specific age groupings;
- e) Incorporating program/service approaches that can address social development initiatives within the community, such as youth engagement, isolation in older adults, and improving physical activity levels;
- f) Articulating levels of service and testing satisfaction levels on a regular basis;

- g) Supporting staff and volunteers in the delivery of service;
- h) Enabling partners and other providers to excel and play their part in complementing a full range of services;
- i) Working collectively with partners and stakeholders in addressing needed improvements;
- j) Supporting local efforts to boost tourism and visitor spending where public spaces are involved;
- k) Promoting the benefits of being engaged in recreational pursuits and communicating current health and stewardship priorities, such as getting more time outdoors, increasing physical activity levels, etc.;
- l) Communicating and sharing knowledge with partners;
- m) Seeking out alternate revenue sources to expand services efficiently; and
- n) Measuring the efficiencies and effectiveness of the Town-wide parks, recreation and trails system.

To effectively fulfill this role, it is recommended that decision-making be aligned with the vision and goals of this Strategy. The Town can create alignment with this strategic framework in several ways, such as:

- Formally endorsing the vision and goals at a Council level;
- Referencing them within staff reports;
- Using the framework to evaluate submissions to the partnership and grant programs;
- Informing the annual budget process; and
- Embedding the vision and principles within staff training, policy development, etc.

Recommendations

1. Align service delivery priorities and decision-making with the **vision and goals** of this Strategy.
2. Regularly undertake **internal reviews of existing services and emerging pressures**, with comparisons to benchmark municipalities and promising practices.

5.2 Staffing & Volunteers

The Recreation and Community Services Department is currently led by a Director that oversees a Facilities Manager (oversees Facility Operators, Labourers, etc.), Recreation Supervisor (oversees an Events Coordinator, Aquatics Supervisor and Instructors, and 55+ Recreation Programmer), Curator Museum Supervisor, Harbour Master, and Service Administrator.

The Department is a notable employer within the community, with staff teams responsible for parks and trails maintenance, facility operations, event support, programming, and more. As the community grows, more residents will be seeking access to these spaces and services, requiring investment in additional staff and capital resources. Further, many

actions identified in the Town's Community-Based Strategic Plan have been linked to the Department, but will require additional resources to implement.

The breadth of duties and services being asked of the Department are also evolving. Demand is not just more of the same, it is also more diverse – newcomers, older adults, and young families bring varied recreation needs. Staffing needs are highest in the summer, but demands are increasing the spring and fall when student labour is not as available.

There is currently no unallocated capacity to expand programs, undertake new projects, or maintain new spaces. Further, analysis of the Department's current operations did not reveal any major gaps or duplications that would result in reductions to staffing levels, with all Departmental functions generally being considered to be "core services". While new technologies may lead to new efficiencies, recreation, parks, and trails are very public-facing services that demand personal attention and resources.

Looking to the future, an emphasis must be placed on increasing staffing in step with the enhancement of services and development of new parks, facilities, and programs. The risk of maintaining existing staffing levels in the face of growing demands include program waitlists, reduced quality and public satisfaction, staff burnout and turnover, project delays, and missed opportunities. **These risks have the potential to lead to not only reduced service levels, but also higher costs in the long-term due to emergency fixes, inefficient use of resources, and the need to later "catch up" with larger, more expensive investments in infrastructure, staffing, and corrective measures.**

On this basis, it is recommended that, in the short-term, the Recreation and Community Services Department seek to bolster its staffing in four key areas (see below). Budget requests should be established and advanced as appropriate to identify and support implementation strategies.

- 1) **Special Projects and Strategy Implementation (short-term need):** Full implementation of this Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy and the Community-Based Strategic Plan will require additional resources. Several recommendations speak to expanded programs, new facilities, trail networks, and special projects that require ongoing planning, coordination, and maintenance. A full-time position (such as a Special Projects Coordinator) would be ideally suited to support and advance these initiatives. Examples include (but are not limited to):
 - Volunteer management (recommendation #5)
 - Public and community engagement (recommendation #'s 6-8)
 - Arena allocation policy review (recommendation #12)
 - Advancement of the MURC project, including project support, community engagement, etc. (recommendation #30)
 - Parks and trails signage program (recommendation #59, 75)
 - Parks By-law (2013) update (recommendation #60)
 - Pursuit of grants and partnerships (recommendations #80, 88, etc.)
 - Capital improvement projects

- Special projects that may arise from time to time, potentially including some for other Town departments
- 2) **Community Programming (short- to medium-term need):** The Department's programming staff complement is lean, but very responsive to community needs and high quality service. This includes a summer Recreation Assistant to support the planning and supervision of recreation programs and events during a three-month period, as well as a new 55+ Programmer. Community input suggested a need for expanded program opportunities and it is anticipated that additional funding will be needed over time to expand offerings; several suggestions are provided in Section 5.5. The Town is encouraged to reassess staffing needs as programming needs evolve, including prior to the opening of the MURC.
 - 3) **Parks and Trail Maintenance (medium term need):** An adequate complement of operations staff is necessary to maintain the high levels of public satisfaction with Penetanguishene's parks and trails system. This Strategy recommends formalization and expansion of the local trails network, which was identified as a priority by residents. Doing so will require additional resources, either in-house or contract. An assessment of specific resourcing requirements is recommended to identify potential impacts on staffing and equipment. Maintenance levels are discussed further in Section 7.5.
 - 4) **MURC Team (short- to longer-term need):** In the short-term, additional staff time will be needed to support the MURC roadmap and overall project advancement. This will require time from across various levels of existing management. Project coordination requirements are likely to increase over time to a point where part-time support may be considered. Further, a ramp-up of staffing will be needed to support MURC operations once the facility opens.

To inform longer-term decisions relating to staffing levels and skill alignment, the Department should continue to document maintenance standards and resultant service levels – a task specifically recommended for parks and trails maintenance. Updates to the Department's staff development, training, and succession plans should also continue to be a priority to ensure that services are delivered by a qualified and high performing staff team.

Volunteers are critical to the delivery of community-based parks and recreation activities and events; however, research indicates that the number of volunteers and their commitment are declining. The Town does not have any formal policies for recruiting, managing, or training volunteers. The Town's approach is currently decentralized – the museum, recreation, events, parks recruit their own volunteers, plus many others that serve on advisory committees. Service Clubs are also actively recruited to support events in place of individual volunteers and calls for assistance are common for community clean-ups, etc.

The Town's Community-Based Strategic Plan recommends that volunteer management efforts be centralized to assist in the coordination of volunteer efforts and implementing recognition and recruitment strategies. The 2014 Master Plan recommended that the Town appoint a part-time Volunteer Coordinator and Programming Assistant for volunteer recruitment and event coordination. As a starting point, it is recommended that the Department take the lead in establishing a Volunteer Management Policy or Charter that outlines the Town's commitment to supporting volunteer efforts²⁵. Specifically, the policy would provide a framework/standards for managing volunteers, including roles, responsibilities, rights of volunteers and staff, screening, etc. Additional staff resources will be required to develop and implement the policy.

Also noted in the Community-Based Strategic Plan is the role of younger volunteers in supporting the sustainability of sport and recreation. The Town is encouraged to expand its leadership programming and expanding volunteer opportunities so that they have an inter-generational focus (e.g., youths volunteering with seniors) to help build this capacity. Engaging younger volunteers must continue to be a priority as it not only helps to develop skills but can also lead to future volunteer and employment opportunities within the sector.

Recommendations

3. Full implementation of this Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy and the Community-Based Strategic Plan will require additional resources. Increase **Departmental staffing levels** in a targeted and phased manner to align resources with current and future service demands, including program delivery, trail and park maintenance, and special projects. In the short-term, develop budget requests for a **Special Projects Coordinator** and additional **program staff**.
4. Develop a **staffing plan** to support the opening of the new MURC prior to the start of the facility's construction phase.
5. Develop a **Volunteer Policy/Charter** that encourages local contributions and outlines the Town's commitment to supporting volunteer efforts. Support initiatives that expand leadership training, mentorship, and volunteer opportunities to build the next generation of community leaders.

²⁵ Example: Town of Kincardine Volunteer Management Policy: www.kincardine.ca/be-active/volunteer-opportunities/

5.3 Marketing & Communications

Effective communications and marketing are essential to the Recreation and Community Services Department as they ensure residents are aware of programs and facilities, drive participation and revenue, and help build community understanding and pride in municipal investments. The Town uses several mediums and tactics to engage with the community.

For example, the Town's website identifies the various recreation program opportunities available to the public, with online registration enabled for many services. Facilities and parks are identified, including descriptions of notable amenities. An online calendar promoting a wide range of local events is also provided. The Town also maintains social media accounts that are used to highlight local news and initiatives; this is a corporate-level function and not led by the RCS Department. These efforts are generally well received by the public, although it is recognized that residents access and consume information in many different forms. The Town should regularly evaluate online registration and program access to ensure that it is easy for people to participate.

As the population grows, Penetanguishene will attract more newcomers that are not familiar with all the Town has to offer, thus communications and marketing will require greater emphasis. It will be important for the Town and Department to stay nimble in how it disseminates information, using a variety of communication and marketing tactics that are appropriate for each circumstance.

Suggestions received from the public included greater use of social media, digital billboards, direct links to organization websites (e.g., minor sports, clubs, etc.), an online map of park/trail sites, and leveraging registrant profiles from the Town's recreation management software for more targeted marketing. The key is to ensure that messaging is consistent, accurate, and accessible to as many residents as possible, including messaging around the benefits of participation. The Town relies on digital media for most of its marketing – this should continue as print media can be costly and does not offer the flexibility typically required for community programs as information must be finalized well in advance.

Furthermore, an open line of communication with community organizations would also help to proactively address issues, ideas, and concerns. Several municipalities have had success with regular open forums to discuss initiatives and topics of broad appeal within the parks and recreation sector. Furthermore, public and stakeholder engagement should continue to be a mandatory requirement for all major capital projects and policy decisions that impact the community.

Recommendations

6. Regularly review **public communication and marketing strategies** to guide the use of various tools (mostly digital) in promoting and gathering feedback on recreation and community services and initiatives.

7. Run **awareness campaigns** about the benefits of recreation and parks in contributing to health, wellbeing, environment, etc.
8. Convene bi-annual **information-sharing forums** involving Council, Town staff, and the community on recreation and community service topics, such as capital projects, policy development, maintenance practices, activity and sport trends, Strategy implementation, and more.

5.4 User Fees & Access to Affordable Recreation Policy

As Penetanguishene grows and demand rises for access to facilities, it is vital that the Town have appropriate policies and practices in place that fairly and transparently set fees and promote access across priority groups to maximize participation.

User Fees

The Town sets fees and charges for all fee-based municipal services, including park and facility rentals, admissions, and programs and camps. These fees are documented in a Fees and Charges By-law that is reviewed and approved annually, allowances for inflation. Recognizing the broader community benefits of participation, these rates rarely recover their full costs and are typically subsidized by general taxation and other funding sources, while still ensuring that a portion of direct costs are borne by users.

Town Council has prioritized affordability and community access and Penetanguishene's rates and fees are generally among the lowest in North Simcoe. This approach would appear to be effective as stakeholder and public input indicated that most local activities are relatively affordable and there is a desire to ensure that costs are not a barrier.

Given the close geographical and historical connections in the area, residents of adjacent municipalities often use Penetanguishene's facilities and programs and vice versa. The Town does not currently apply surcharges for non-residents, thus registration and access is not strictly restricted by one's place of residence. Non-resident surcharges are extra fees – often in the range of 10% to 50% – charged to people who live outside the municipality when they register for recreation programs, purchase an admission, or rent facilities. They are intended to make up for the fact that non-residents do not contribute to the operation of Penetanguishene's recreation facilities and services through their taxes. In the past, this approach has been supported by contributions from area municipalities, however, the Township of Tiny recently withdrew its funding.

Given the strong inter-relationship and participation patterns between Penetanguishene and Midland, the two Towns have considered the development of a joint user fee study; however, this project is currently on hold. It is recommended that the Town of Penetanguishene only pursue non-resident surcharges if coordinated with the Town of Midland, informed by an understanding of the cost-benefit, administrative complexity, and potential impact on participation.

Access to Affordable Recreation Policy

The Town's Access to Affordable Recreation Policy allows for all residents of Penetanguishene to participate in local recreation program opportunities provided by the Town and the third-party partners (minor ice sports and the BGC North Simcoe). Program eligibility is confirmed by a letter of referral from an approved agency through a confidential application process. The availability of financial assistance is communicated to residents via the Town's website, program guides, social media, and school newsletters. The Town also works with the community to share the program with organizations and potential candidates.

Residents can apply to receive one subsidy per child for each season for recreation programs (max 4 subsidies annually), and one subsidy per month/per child for weekly day camp registration. Council has allocated \$6,000 annually to the Access Policy, which generally covers most participants' program costs. The Access Policy has seen fluctuating participation since its inception, generally ranging from 13 to 32 participants. Excluding the pandemic impact years, 91% of allocated funding has been used, maxing out in 2024. As this program is nearly fully subscribed, it is recommended that the annual budget allotment be increased annually (at minimum by the rate of inflation).

Penetanguishene's Access Policy was reviewed against those in other municipalities (see case studies in **Appendix C**). The Town's policy is very similar in most respects as it prioritizes access to those in greatest need. The following differences were noted – the Town's policy:

- extends to designated partners, expanding the reach of the policy to more activities;
- generally covers most of the participants' fee costs, but does not specify subsidy amounts or rates, leaving the amounts to the Town's discretion while keeping within the overall annual budget;
- uses a third-party to determine eligibility, rather than requiring Town staff to administer using a low-income threshold or other means; and
- does not have its own webpage from which to link or describe the policy as many other municipalities do, which may result in lower visibility and uptake of the Town's subsidy program.

The aforementioned findings should be considered by the Town as it administers the affordable access program.

Recommendations

9. Pursue **non-resident surcharges** for recreation fees and charges only if coordinated with the Town of Midland and informed by a study that considers the cost-benefit, administrative complexity, and potential impact on participation.
10. Continue to review recreation **rates and fees** annually, while ensuring that recreation programs and facilities remain affordable and inclusive. Consideration should be

given to a three-year schedule for facility rentals to provide short-term cost certainty for user groups.

11. Evaluate annual funding levels needed to support the **Access to Affordable Recreation Policy** and reduce participation barriers to low-income residents. Broaden promotion of this program to reach more audiences.
12. Review and update the **arena allocation policy** with the goal of enhancing fairness, transparency, and community access. Involve affected organizations in the review of these policies to ensure that they reflect standards of play, gender equity requirements, access for priority populations, and implementation practices.

5.5 Programming

Quality recreation programs that are affordable and accessible are essential for fostering a healthy, active community. These activities engage residents, support skill development and active lifestyles, and build important relationships within the community.

The Town – in partnership with the community (public library, minor sports, service clubs, community organizations, non-profit and private sectors, etc.) – offers a wide range of recreation programs and services to its residents. The Department has shown that it is nimble enough to respond to new trends and interest in each age group where capacity exists. Town recreation programs and services are provided with a view to being affordable while delivering high quality and safe services that foster strong levels of public participation and satisfaction. A scan of available programs is summarized below.

Children and Youth Programs

The Town hosts programs and activities, both registered and drop-in, for children and youth for varying areas of interest. The primary age groups for these programs span from toddlers to teens 14 and younger. Some of these programs include swim and aquatics, soccer, tennis and pickleball, and track and field. Other activities like kickboxing, dance, and art are also available, along with educational extra-curriculars like coding and first aid courses.



Camps are operated by BGC North Simcoe and are well attended. Special events for children are offered throughout the year, and some occur during holidays and other celebratory dates like Easter and the March Break holidays, hosting activities like scavenger hunts, magic shows, and slime-making workshops.

Locations for these activities vary and rely on the sharing of space with other organizations and entities. For example, the Town does not have a pool facility, and thus children and youth aquatic programs occur at the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care. Additionally, indoor pickleball programs are currently offered at two local schools. Most indoor recreational programs and camps however are hosted at the PMCC and Penetanguishene Centennial Museum.

Adults & Seniors

Programs available to the wider audience (above the age of 15) also include registered and drop-in opportunities. Strength training, aerobics, and other low-impact exercise classes comprise the majority of adult exercise programs. Examples of these programs include Kettlebell Sweat Fest, Aquafit, Zumba, Karate, Gentle Yoga, Circuit Force, and Step Aerobics. Other recreational opportunities include pickleball, bocce, line dancing, shuffleboard, walking groups, and Digital Device Coaching for Seniors.

The PMCC hosts the majority of these events, with the exception of Aquafit (located at the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care), and line dancing (located at a local school). The Curling Club has also recently introduced indoor pickleball at the PCC during summer months.

The Town also hosts annual events like group cycling trips to promote cycling and active transportation, Track & Field Day filled with a variety of competitions open to all ages, and group exercise challenges.

Emerging Opportunities

Although general barriers to participation are low in Penetanguishene, the online survey identified demand for a wider variety of recreation programs, both registered and drop-in. Nearly two in five respondents (39%) identified specific recreation and parks activities that they or members of their household would like to see offered. Key requests include:

- Indoor swimming (note: currently offered at the Waypoint Centre on weekends);
- expanded sport opportunities (pickleball and other gymnasium sports);
- fitness activities;
- arts and creative classes (note: classes are offered at the Museum with plans for more in the future);
- programs for youth/teens, including after-school programming; and
- programs for seniors (note: expanded opportunities will be available through the Town's new Senior's Active Living Centre).

Many program suggestions were also advanced in the Town's Age-Friendly Community Plan, such as intergenerational activities, outdoor programming, youth programming, virtual learning workshops for older adults, and more.

However, the expansion of these opportunities is limited by space and staffing resources. The proposed MURC will offer tremendous opportunity for expanded year-round programming for all ages through the provision of a gymnasium and several multi-purpose rooms. In the meantime, it will be important for the Town to optimize its existing spaces (including parks) and to continue to foster relationships with other spaces providers. On the latter point, it is noteworthy that the Town and local organizations currently work in partnership with others (such as schools) to offer programming beyond municipal facilities; however reliable and affordable access is a growing challenge.

In making decisions to support existing or new services and programs, the Town should prioritize those that align with the guiding principles of this Strategy and the Framework for Recreation in Canada. This includes programs that:

- maintain or enhance existing levels of service;
- focus on children/youth and older adults/seniors;
- are affordable and accessible;
- incorporate physical literacy;
- support healthy living and healthy aging;
- strengthen community partnerships;
- support unstructured and self-scheduled activities;
- promote the appropriate use of parks and facilities for special events;
- optimize the use of municipal parks and facilities; and
- allow people to connect with nature and be good stewards of their environment.

The Department is encouraged to track registration and participation data as a way to analyze trends and identify gaps. Regular reviews and satisfaction surveys should also be completed to assist the Town in identifying key priorities for improvement.

Recommendations

13. Expand **affordable drop-in and registered recreation opportunities** for priority population groups by offering more programs within parks and trails. Pilot programs to test demand.
14. Seek to expand **multi-use programming space** through major infrastructure renewal and development projects.
15. Continue to expand **seniors programming** within the Senior's Active Living Centre and implement initiatives from the Age-Friendly Community Plan.
16. Engage youth (e.g., youth expo) and seek options for expanding **youth programming** in collaboration with other providers.

17. Engage and partner with **Indigenous communities** to support programs or events that respect Indigenous culture and needs.
18. Partner with **public health units** to promote physical activity, active transportation, and wellness programming.
19. Continue to partner with **community providers** to support vital programs that are not otherwise attainable through municipal spaces, such as swimming at the Waypoint Centre.
20. Gather **continuous feedback** from program participants and residents to test satisfaction and identify new ideas for programming.
21. Prior to the development of new major facilities, prepare a **Programming Strategy** to establish program priorities, identify ways to engage under-represented groups, define the role of partners, and inform staffing and budget needs.
22. Identify and track **key performance indicators and targets** that illustrate the value of parks and recreation services, such as (but not limited to) participation data from programs and satisfaction levels for activities offered and enabled by the Town.

5.6 Events Assessment

Annual events hosted by the Town occur throughout the year, in addition to events hosted by third-party groups. These events are guided by a Special Event Policy that outlines the process to be followed to ensure that all special events held on municipally-owned property are in keeping with these standards and minimize risk to the municipality and its residents.

Notable annual or seasonal events hosted by the Town include:

- **Winterama**, considered the 'longest running winter carnival in Ontario', is a popular event for residents and tourists to celebrate winter activities. The event occurs for a weekend in mid-February and spans multiple locations across town, including both indoor and outdoor venues like parks and community centres. Winterama showcases activities through shows and competitions like ice fishing, axe throwing, snowshoeing, horse and wagon rides, log sawing competitions, The Great Canadian



Lumberjack Show, fireworks, and more. Local vendors can also be found at some locations, offering food and drink for purchase, fundraisers, and other activities.

- **Festival of Lights** occurs on the first Friday in December at the Town Dock to celebrate the holidays, which includes a tree lighting ceremony, live caroling, and a welcome speech by the Mayor. Community members are then invited to walk together, led by a candle light, towards the Penetanguishene Memorial Community Centre for more festivities like a bonfire, visits with Santa, photo booths, free hot chocolate and goodies, crafts, live music, carnival performances, and face painting.
- The **Bayside Summer Soiree** hosts a weekly outdoor event involving live music, entertainment, outdoor movies, and more. The event occurs every Friday starting in June and ends in August. The event is hosted at the Amphitheatre at the Rotary Champlain Wendat Park.
- **Canada Day Fireworks** are held by the Town in conjunction with the Town of Midland at the Rotary Champlain Wendat Park (every other year).
- **All Things Canadian** is an outdoor festival, bringing together residents and visitors to celebrate what it means to be Canadian while enjoying fun activities, food, culture, and entertainment. The heritage that makes Penetanguishene so unique is explored, highlighting the Francophone, Anglophone, and Indigenous cultures that built the Town.
- From October 1st to November 1st, **Pumpkinferno**, is a community experience that transforms Discovery Harbour into a fall celebration, decorated with hand-carved pumpkins, food, lights, music, and activities like escape rooms, haunted ship displays, and other spooky-themed things to explore. The event is hosted by Discovery Harbour but sponsored by the Town of Penetanguishene.



The Town of Penetanguishene supports tourism by operating the Tourist Information Centre, collaborates with partners such as Huronia Historical Parks, and participates in regional tourism initiatives with Tourism Simcoe County and the Regional Tourism Organization (RTO7). Town events are leveraged to highlight the community as a tourism destination, while key attractions including the Town Dock, Rotary Champlain Wendat Park, and the Museum are actively promoted to enhance the overall visitor experience.

At their core, the Town's events bring the community together through shared experiences that celebrate Penetanguishene. They are valued by residents and contribute to a vibrant Penetanguishene by fostering local pride, attracting visitors, and supporting the local economy. Many of these events are longstanding traditions, such as Winterama. The Town's waterfront and local attractions support local events and provide additional opportunities to engage residents and visitors, showcase community assets, and enhance the overall tourism and cultural experience.

The Town is committed to expanding vendor participation and increasing product variety across all events, while ensuring that growth remains balanced with financial accessibility for residents. At the same time, residents' expectations for events have grown, but municipal resources may not always be sufficient to meet them. One of Penetanguishene's greatest challenges is securing volunteers, which is a common issue in many communities as younger generations are generally showing less interest in volunteering. The Town could work toward addressing this need by strengthening partnerships with community organizations and local event stakeholders to attract and engage volunteers. There may also be opportunities to increase smaller-scale events to further engage the community. Collaborating with Advisory Committees helps the Town advance these initiatives and ensure they reflect community needs.

Recommendations

23. Work with community partners and advisory committees to **expand, enhance, promote, and deliver town and third-party events**, while ensuring that they remain financially accessible to residents. Link events to local culture and heritage to boost tourism and support the local economy.
24. Prepare a **Tourism Strategy** in the longer-term to guide how Penetanguishene develops, manages, and markets tourism. Ensure coordination with the broader North Simcoe region.

5.7 Advisory Committees

The Town of Penetanguishene is supported by several advisory committees, comprised of citizens who volunteer their time and expertise. These committees provide input and make recommendations on matters that impact the entire community.

Several of Penetanguishene's advisory committees play an important role in guiding recreation, parks, trails, and community events and strive to enhance the quality and inclusivity of local recreational and community initiatives.

- **Wellbeing & Accessibility Committee:** Develops work plans and provides recommendations to ensure that the Town's recreation programs, facilities, and parks are accessible and inclusive for all resident
- **Trails Committee:** Advises on the development, maintenance, and promotion of the Town's trail system, including regional connections such as the TransCanada Trail, and supports events that encourage trail use.
- **Museum & Heritage Committee:** Focuses on preserving the Town's history while engaging the community through educational programs and heritage-related events.
- **Transit Committee:** Contributes to discussions around community connectivity, active transportation, and accessibility.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee:** Provides recommendations, advice, and information to Council and staff on matters pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The advisory committees provide valuable guidance, but there is some overlap in their mandates, particularly in areas such as accessibility, community engagement, and event planning. For example, both the Wellbeing & Accessibility Committee and the Trails Committee contribute to making outdoor spaces accessible and inclusive, while the Trails Committee and Transit Committee both focus on active transportation initiatives. Furthermore, recruiting volunteers for these committees and meeting rules around quorum have been notable challenges.

There may be an opportunity to improve efficiency, coordination, and meaningful input opportunities through a strategic amalgamation of selected committees. For example, a single Recreation and Community Services Advisory Committee responsible for recreation, parks, trails, and events could consolidate expertise while maintaining specialized sub-groups or working groups for heritage, accessibility, or event-specific planning. The consolidation of multiple committees could reduce administrative burdens, streamline reporting to Council, and foster more holistic planning for community recreation and events. Furthermore, several municipalities have had good success with committee mandates that are more closely aligned with Departmental functions, such as those of the

Town's Recreation and Community Services Department²⁶. Combining committees could also enhance volunteer engagement by offering residents a broader platform to contribute without requiring them to participate in multiple separate groups.

Recommendations

25. Undertake a **review of advisory committees** (e.g., mandates, structures, recruitment, meeting times and frequency, attendance expectations, staff time) with a view toward streamlining and consolidating those committees with overlapping mandates.
26. Consider the consolidation of multiple existing committees into a new **Recreation and Community Services Advisory Committee** focused on departmental lines of business (recreation, parks, trails, events, etc.). Establish sub-committees or working groups dedicated to specific topics or events as required.

5.8 Partnerships

The Town works with community partners to provide the highest level of service to the public while maximizing resources. Examples of successful partnerships include strategic alliances with local service clubs for fundraising and event support, rental agreements with organizations (e.g., minor sports, etc.), and service agreements with program providers (e.g., BGC North Simcoe, Waypoint Centre, concessions, etc.). The Town does not employ a standard approach for developing arrangements with outside groups or for responding to unsolicited proposals.

Partnerships are key to creating a versatile range of parks and recreation services in Penetanguishene. They allow the Town to leverage outside resources and maximize public funds, while meeting gaps and needs that are not traditionally within the municipal mandate. The community engagement program identified general support for more multi-sectoral partnerships that leverage resources, avoid duplication, accelerate innovation, and enhance user convenience.

From time to time, the Town may consider various arrangements with the private sector, non-profit sector, or other levels of government to develop and/or operate various facilities and services to achieve the desired community and municipal benefits. The goal is to maximize the community's assets and increase service levels while sharing an appropriate balance of costs and risks.

²⁶ Example of consolidated Community Services Committee: Municipality of Middlesex Centre. www.middlesexcentre.ca/services/residents/boards-committees

Relationships with outside groups may be considered when:

- the Town does not have capacity or budget for direct program delivery or facility management;
- there is an established provider/partner already working with the Town;
- the provider fills or augments service gaps that are a priority to the Town; and/or
- the provider is the preferred/specialist for program delivery.

In all partnership arrangements, specifications and requirements must ensure that the partner respects and aligns with the Town's key goals and objectives. The value in seeking out and formalizing partnerships provides a net benefit to both organizations and reduce costs to the municipality. Where possible, the Town is encouraged to work with community partners and in coordination with other public entities to implement recommendations contained in this Strategy that would benefit from shared roles, responsibilities, and resources. It is recommended that staff develop written agreements with community partners who may share public spaces or work collectively to offer programs and services.

To assist the Town in evaluating current and future partnerships, the following criteria may be considered:

- a) The partnership outcome should be aligned with municipal values, mandate, and priorities.
- b) There should be an articulated local need for the proposed program/service in the community.
- c) The financial and liability risks to the Town should be shared or reduced.
- d) The partner should be equipped and qualified to deliver the service through identified efficiencies, with the ability to reach an identified segment of the population.
- e) The quality of the proposed program/service should meet municipal quality assurance and risk management requirements and complies with legislation.
- f) Unsolicited for-profit partnership proposals should be dealt with transparently and through a competitive process as identified in a procurement process.
- g) Accountabilities and responsibilities should be clearly defined and complied with.
- h) Annual reporting requirements should capture participation levels, cost reduction or revenue enhancement, and are clearly aligned with Departmental objectives.

Recommendations

27. Work with **schools, community groups, and non-profits** to share resources, expand programming, and gather resident input on future facility use and planning.
28. Strive to develop and maintain strong relationships with **neighbouring municipalities** (Midland, Tiny, Tay) through information sharing, collaborative events, coordinated marketing, optimization of parks and facilities through scheduling, and more, where appropriate.
29. Regularly review **partnership agreements** to ensure an appropriate and sustainable distribution of operational and financial responsibilities.

6. Facilities Assessment

The Town of Penetanguishene provides a diverse range of recreation facilities that support year-round community participation, active lifestyles, and social connection. From arenas, sports fields, and playgrounds to waterfront amenities, trails, and cultural spaces, these facilities play an essential role in enhancing the quality of life for residents and attracting visitors to the community. While these facilities are well used and valued, some are aging and require reinvestment to ensure they remain safe, accessible, and responsive to evolving recreational needs.

This section reviews the current state of the Town's recreation facilities, identifies opportunities and challenges, and outlines recommendations to guide future planning and investment over the next ten years.

6.1 Existing Inventory

To provide a basis for the needs assessments, the following tables summarize the indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in Penetanguishene and North Simcoe, as well as a comparison of provision levels. These assets are described further throughout this section.

Table 4. Inventory of Outdoor and Indoor Recreation Facilities, Town of Penetanguishene

Recreation Facility	Supply	Location(s) / Assets
<i>Indoor Recreation Facilities</i>		
Penetanguishene Memorial Community Centre (Arena)	1	Arena, Spectator Seating, Halls (2), Dressing Rooms (5), Boardroom, Kitchen
Penetanguishene Curling Club	1	Curling Sheets (5), Event Rental Lounge
<i>Outdoor Recreation Facilities</i>		
Baseball Diamonds	3	McGuire Park (2), Phil Marchildon Park
Basketball Courts	3	Gendron Park (0.5), Martin Valley Park (1), Rotary Champlain Wendat Park (1.5)
Beach Volleyball Courts	2	Rotary Champlain Wendat Park (2)
Bocce Courts	4	McGuire Park (4)

Recreation Facility	Supply	Location(s) / Assets
Community Gardens	1	Ecology Garden (18 plots)
Adult Exercise Equipment	1	Rotary Champlain Wendat Park
Outdoor Skating Rinks	1	St. Ann's Church (non-municipal, Lions Club partnership)
Pickleball Courts	6	McGuire Park (4 dedicated, 2 shared)
Playgrounds	8	Charles Scott Memorial Park, Gendron Park, Huronia Park, McGuire Park, Martin Valley Park, Rotary Champlain Wendat Park, Therrien Park, Tom Coffin Memorial Park
Pump Tracks	1	Martin Valley Park
Running Tracks	1	Former PSS Site [51 Dunlop]
Skate Parks	1	Rotary Champlain Wendat Park
Soccer Fields	1	Former PSS Site [51 Dunlop] (full sized field, can be divided into smaller fields)
Splash Pads	1	Rotary Champlain Wendat Park
Tennis Courts	3	Memorial Park (2), McGuire Park (1)

To complement the recreation opportunities available through the town, there are several third-party facilities across Penetanguishene that also offer programs, events, and other activities, such as:

- The Penetanguishene Centennial Museum & Archives (operated by RCS) offers exhibits and events throughout the year as well as bookable spaces to host parties and events.
- Waypoint Centre for Mental Health has partnered with the Town to offer community access to their indoor pool on weekends. The agency also hosts a variety of health and wellbeing programs for youth, healthcare workers, and other populations at risk for mental health concerns.
- Canadian Martyrs Catholic School and the James Keating Elementary School host Town-led, indoor pickleball programs and line-dancing in gymnasiums. Community use of gymnasiums at other schools may also be available from time to time, in addition to playgrounds and schoolyards after school hours.

- Discovery Harbour provides science camps for children in the summer, guided tours, escape rooms, and other events.
- King’s Wharf Theatre is a 364-seat performing arts venue located in Discovery Harbour and operated by Drayton Entertainment since 1999.
- Located outside of Penetanguishene, the Midland YMCA provides infant, toddler, and preschool childcare programs, camps, and adult health and fitness classes such as Zumba and swimming.

Residents of North Simcoe often share in the resources offered within the region, summarized in the following table. On average, Penetanguishene offers a higher per capita provision level of outdoor recreation facilities and the region’s only splash pad, bocce courts, outdoor exercise equipment, and municipal running track.

Table 5. Comparison of Recreation Facility Provision, North Simcoe Municipalities

Facility Type	Midland	Tiny	Tay	Average	Penetanguishene	
2024 Population (Rounded)	19,400	13,600	12,300	15,100	11,000	
Arenas (Ice Pads)	2	1	0	1: 15,100	1	1: 11,000
Curling Facilities (Sheets)	5	0	2	1: 6,500	5	1: 2,200
Baseball Diamonds	3	10	7	1: 2,300	3	1: 3,600
Basketball Courts	3	0	0	1: 15,100	3	1: 3,600
Beach Volleyball Courts	9	0	3	1: 3,800	2	1: 5,500
Bocce Courts	0	0	0	N/A	4	1: 2,800
Community Gardens	6	0	1	1: 6,500	1	1: 11,000
Adult Exercise Equipment	0	0	0	N/A	1	1: 11,000
Outdoor Skating Rinks	0	4	3	1: 6,500	0	N/A
Pickleball Courts	8	5	15	1: 1,600	6	1: 1,800
Playgrounds	11	9	10	1: 1,500	8	1: 1,400
Pump Tracks	0	0	0	N/A		
Running Tracks	0	0	0	N/A		

Facility Type	Midland	Tiny	Tay	Average	Penetanguishene	
Skate Parks	1	1	0	1: 22,700		
Soccer Fields	3	2	1	1: 7,600		
Splash Pads	0	0	0	N/A		
Tennis Courts	6	5	1	1: 3,800		

6.2 Arena, Program Space and Multi-use Recreation Centre

This assessment builds on the 2021 Arena and Recreation Centre Study and examines current demand by analyzing facility schedules, participation levels, and community input, with the goal of identifying locally appropriate solutions to address the Town's indoor recreation facility needs.

Multi-Use Recreation Centre (MURC)

Current Supply

The Town is pursuing the development of a Multi-Use Recreation Centre (MURC), which would replace the current Penetanguishene Memorial Community Centre and potentially the Penetanguishene Curling Club. The Town's Long-Term Financial Plan, expected to be completed later in 2025, will help guide next steps. If the project moves forward, the new MURC is planned for 2033 (funding dependent) at 51 Dunlop Street, giving the community a modern, versatile space for programs, sports, and events.

Market Conditions and Trends

A future MURC will be vital for keeping Penetanguishene active, healthy, and connected. Across Ontario, community recreation spaces are recognized for promoting physical activity, social connections, and overall well-being. They also provide inclusive spaces that support equity-deserving groups and help reduce stress. MURCs are more than just places to play, they act as "third spaces" where people of all ages can gather, learn, and connect. Providing barrier-free, inclusive spaces that meet modern standards is a key priority, especially as the number of residents with disabilities continues to grow. These facilities can also serve the community during emergencies or extreme weather events, while contributing to sustainability and environmental goals.

Analysis

As supported by the 2021 Arena and Recreation Centre Study, a MURC would help address some of the limitations of Penetanguishene's current facilities, most notably modernization

and expanded lifecycles, barrier-free accessibility, and the provision of much needed spaces such as a gymnasium, walking track, expanded program rooms, and potential re-location of the Hall of Fame. In the long-term, bringing arena pads and curling sheets together in a single facility would make operations more efficient and convenient for the community.

Since the MURC is not projected to be built until 2033 due to funding limitations, the Town should continue investing in the PMCC and PCC to ensure they remain safe and functional. In 2025, the Town set goals to build reserves for replacing the aging arena while maintaining the community centre, and to work closely with the Penetanguishene Curling Club on ongoing maintenance. Residents should also be invited to share ideas on the future of the PMCC property, including potential uses or even a sale to help fund the new MURC.

When built, the MURC would provide a modern, flexible space for sports, programs, and community events. Unlike the existing PMCC and PCC, it would include a year-round gymnasium and dedicated dryland space, with accessible areas that welcome people of all ages and abilities. Residents could enjoy activities such as basketball, volleyball, pickleball, fitness classes, and community gatherings.

Recommendations

30. Continue to pursue the development of a modern, accessible, and flexible **Multi-use Recreation Centre (MURC)** with an arena, gymnasium, dryland space, indoor walking track, multi-purpose rooms, etc. to meet the evolving needs of residents of all ages and abilities.
31. Minimize municipal **investments in the PMCC and PCC** in the lead up to the new MURC, but ensure that these facilities remain safe and functional.
32. Evaluate and announce a decision about the future use of the **PMCC building/property** prior to opening the new MURC. If declared surplus and put on the market, this site has the potential to contribute to the financial strategy associated with the new MURC. Consideration should be given to the potential to maintain a parkette (playground, etc.) on the site to serve the surrounding neighbourhood.
33. If construction of the MURC is delayed beyond the 2033 target, commission a **follow-up study to re-evaluate the state of the PMCC and PCC** and to confirm Penetanguishene's indoor recreation needs and future strategies.

Arena

Current Supply

The Town's arena is located at the Penetanguishene Memorial Community Centre (PMCC), built in 1954 and containing a single ice pad. The most recent structural assessment conducted by Pretium Consulting Engineers in 2019 confirmed that the facility is in good condition and has been well maintained. However, as few arenas of this era remain operational, the Town recognizes that future major maintenance costs may eventually exceed the benefits of deferring replacement. To extend the facility's lifespan, a grant has been secured for the replacement of key components of the ice plant, scheduled for 2025/26. Beyond the Town's arena, the Town of Midland offers a twin-pad facility at the North Simcoe Sports & Recreation Centre and there are several covered outdoor ice rinks within surrounding communities.



Market Conditions and Trends

Over the past 15 years and leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, minor hockey registrations in Canada and Ontario experienced a general decline. Although nationwide registrations have since rebounded to approximately 95% of their 2019 levels, they remain below historical peaks.

In Penetanguishene, prime time ice usage is driven largely by four primary minor organizations: Penetanguishene Minor Hockey Association (PMHA), Penetanguishene Skating Club (PSC), Penetanguishene Kings, and North Simcoe Girls Hockey Association (NSGHA). Some groups, like the PMHA and PSC, rely mainly on the PMCC for their activities, while the NSGHA uses arenas in Midland as their home base. Participation in these organizations has increased 25% since 2019, indicating growing demand; however, most of these users are residents of municipalities other than Penetanguishene (Table 6).

Table 6: Residency of Youth Ice Users

Year	Penetanguishene Residents	Total Youth Players
2019/2020	233	529
2024/2025	265	661
Change	+32 (14%)	+132 (25%)

Includes players with the Penetanguishene Minor Hockey Association, Penetanguishene Skating Club, Penetanguishene Kings, and North Simcoe Girls Hockey Association.

The youth capture rate for ice sports in Penetanguishene is about 22%, meaning that more than one in five youth participate in organized ice activities. Additionally, some residents may play with the Midland Minor Hockey Association (particularly now that boundary restrictions have been lifted) or rep hockey with the Georgian Bay Islanders – these groups predominantly use the North Simcoe Sports and Recreation Centre. Through the consultation program, the Islanders indicated that they have approximately 550 players across 35 teams from across the region and that they would use more ice time if it were available.

Beyond minor hockey and skating programs, the Town operates parent-and-tot skating, public skating, private rentals, and adult open skates, providing additional community access to the facility. The PMCC also accommodates adult ice users and community rentals, mostly during shoulder and on-prime hours. In the spring and summer months, when the ice is removed, the PMCC continues to support activity through ball hockey, with approximately 747 registered participants from three ball hockey organizations.

Community engagement has highlighted strong local support for a new Multi-use Recreation Centre (MURC). Participants specifically suggested that the Town should build a new arena as part of the MURC; if not, upgrades to the PMCC are sought, including adding two new dressing rooms and improving overall accessibility.

Analysis

The Town should continue to maximize arena usage and strengthen partnerships with regional organizations to support participation. The PMCC remains a vital facility for the Town and surrounding region not only for ice sports, but for community events and varied recreation activities. Its age indicates a long-term replacement will eventually be needed, even with planned ice plant upgrades.

Both the PMHA and NSGHA have been experiencing growth in recent years. These organizations serve a broader region and use a network of facilities, notably arenas in both Penetanguishene and Midland. Planning for new or replacement arenas must give consideration to regional needs and should be accompanied by strategies to optimize allocation and maximize use across these facilities. As a rule of thumb, one ice pad is generally able to accommodate 400 to 450 youth registrants based on typical standards of play; this measure may be adjusted based on local factors. The PMCC remains below this threshold in terms of local participants, but is at the high end of this range when including the primary groups that use this facility (PMHA, PSC, and Kings; approximately 456 players in 2024/25).

While participation levels are strong, current demand continues to support the need for only a single ice pad in Penetanguishene and the Town's population forecasts are not sufficient to sustain a second ice pad. Working together with adjacent municipalities to optimize existing rinks is recommended. Future replacement through the proposed PMCC (once ice pad) is recommended, coupled with greater coordination of ice usage across the region.

Recommendations

34. Work together with neighbouring municipalities to **track and coordinate arena usage**, with the goal of offering equitable access for affiliated youth ice organizations.

Curling Facility

Current Supply

The Penetanguishene Curling Club facility, owned by the Town and operated under agreement by the Club, was constructed in 1973 and renovated in 2001. The facility includes five curling sheets (expandable to six), a lounge, meeting rooms, kitchen, bar area, change rooms, washrooms, and a parking lot shared with Rotary Champlain Wendat Park.

Market Conditions and Trends

Curling participation in Canada is mixed, with some clubs thriving and others closing due to declining membership and aging infrastructure. Curling Canada's 2024 Annual Report recorded a record 2.3 million participants across more than 800 clubs, 14 provincial/territorial associations, and 11 affiliates, ranging from grassroots programs to frequent members. National organizations continue to focus on growing participation, advancing inclusivity, and developing future athletes.

Locally, the Penetanguishene Curling Club reports 210 members and 30 junior curlers in the Little Rocks program. While the PCC building is 52 years old, it has received substantial investment over the years with many components being replaced at the end of their useful life, although the building is not fully barrier-free. With the PCC also being used for gatherings and celebrations, the Club views the PCC as a critical community asset.

Analysis

The Town's previous strategic plan, along with the 2021 Arena and Recreation Centre Study, had supported the eventual relocation of the PCC to broaden public waterfront options, as curling was not considered the highest and best long-term use of the existing site. The Club has emphasized that curling requires a dedicated ice surface and could not share ice with arena users, but has expressed openness to participating in a new multi-use recreation centre if it included dedicated curling space with lounge and locker rooms that could be shared with other users. The Club lacks financial reserves to fully contribute to a new facility, though a new recreation centre could allow shared use of services such as the ice plant, lounge, concession, storage, and parking.

Given the proximity of the historic Midland Curling Club, the 2021 Arena and Recreation Centre Study had encouraged the Town to support discussions about amalgamating the two clubs to combine and strengthen membership bases for continued success. A vote on amalgamation took place in 2024, but the Midland Curling Club did not achieve the 70%

threshold required for approval. Nevertheless, there remains a potential opportunity in the future, as amalgamation would strengthen the case for a single, appropriately-sized curling facility. In the meantime, the Town and the Penetanguishene Curling Club are working on a new short-term lease agreement for the existing facility, with major capital investment deferred until a long-term site decision is made. Future planning for a new recreation complex could include a five-sheet curling facility designed for potential permanent conversion to ice hockey (if required), contingent on suitable terms with the Club.

Recommendations

35. Continue to work with the Penetanguishene Curling Club to determine a **long-term accommodation plan** for curling in North Simcoe, including the potential for re-locating the Club to the future MURC.
36. Encourage a closer working relationship between the **Penetanguishene and Midland Curling Clubs**, allowing them to work towards a common vision for a new or redeveloped facility in the long-term.

Program Space

Current Supply

Municipal spaces for meetings, programs, and rentals, are limited to two rooms/halls at the PMCC and a lounge at the PCC. The largest space in Town is the Brian Orser Hall at the PMCC, which can host up to 244 people, with an additional 118 in the adjoining room when extra space is needed. The hall also includes a commercial kitchen, making it a well used location for community events, celebrations, and gatherings.

The Town does not currently have its own municipal gymnasium, but residents do have some options through local schools and nearby facilities. Gym spaces at Saint Louis, Canadian Martyrs, and James Keating schools are rented by the Town for municipal programming. There is also occasional access to the gymnasium at the Waypoint Centre. However, school rentals can sometimes be limited, unpredictable, and costly. In Midland, the gymnasium at the North Simcoe Sports & Recreation Centre is another option, though it is busy most weeknights and mainly available on Fridays and weekends.

Market Conditions and Trends

Program rooms are an important part of community facilities, offering flexible spaces for a wide range of uses like Town-led programs, meetings, events, and gatherings. When program rooms are located alongside other amenities like a gymnasium or arena, they open the door to even more possibilities, such as dryland training for sports teams, group fitness classes, children's activity programs, workshops, or even birthday parties. These versatile spaces truly make it easier for everyone in the community to come together, learn, and have fun.

Analysis

Promoting active living and recreational opportunities for people of all ages is a key focus for Penetanguishene. Well-designed multi-purpose spaces with the right flooring, ceiling height, and storage can host a variety of programs, rentals, and events while making the most of available resources. Existing spaces, like the Brian Orser Hall, are already popular and are under pressure for expanded use as this space is now also being used as the Town's Seniors Active Living Centre. There is strong community interest in a municipal gymnasium to support youth, adult, and senior programs, including pickleball, basketball, volleyball, and other group activities, since arena and curling floors are not available year-round or designed for all types of sports. By offering a variety of multi-purpose spaces, the Town can address community needs and offer even more recreational opportunities for everyone.

6.3 Aquatics

Indoor Pool

Current Supply

The Town does not operate its own public indoor pool, but residents have access to swimming lessons through a partnership with the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health, where the Town provides staffing on weekends. The Town has also expanded hours at Waypoint and introduced aquafit programs to meet growing interest. Additional indoor swimming options include the Midland YMCA and the small therapy pool at Georgian Village and Manor (both membership-based). Outdoor lessons are also offered near Moonstone through a private provider, though these programs often fill quickly and are seasonal. Swimming remains a popular activity for all ages and is particularly important in waterfront communities like Penetanguishene, as it helps residents develop a vital life skill.

Market Conditions and Trends

While the Waypoint Centre and Georgian Village meet many instructional and therapeutic needs, weekday availability is limited, and these facilities cannot fully accommodate larger seniors' swims or expanded aquafit programs. Some community members have raised concerns about the long-term suitability of the Waypoint Centre setup, including restricted access, inadequate family washrooms, and safety considerations. The Midland YMCA provides an alternative, though the facility is aging and its membership model is not accessible for all potential users.

Analysis

The need for a municipal indoor pool was evaluated through the 2021 ARC Study and not supported at the time due to high capital and operating costs and inadequate demand. Lifeguard staffing is also a challenge in smaller communities. With a projected population of

11,400 by 2031, Penetanguishene is well below the 40,000–50,000 residents typically needed to support a municipal pool. Most small to mid-sized municipalities operate indoor pools at a significant operating deficit, if at all. While the broader North Simcoe area has a population of approximately 57,000, these needs are partially met by other providers (YMCA, Waypoint Centre, etc.). As the smallest municipality in the area, it would not be appropriate for Penetanguishene to bear the financial burden of providing and operating a municipal indoor pool as these costs would have a significant impact on the local taxbase. Should they arise, future opportunities to work with other providers to expand resident access to indoor aquatic services may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Through community engagement, participants highlighted that residents rely on swimming programs, facilities, and services both within and beyond Penetanguishene. At least one in three survey respondents (36%) reported participating in outdoor swimming, and swimming and aquatic activities were among the most commonly mentioned “drop-in” and “registered” programs. It would appear that other local and regional pool providers are adequately addressing the majority of needs.

Given these factors, a municipal indoor pool is not recommended at this time. The Town should continue its successful partnership with the Waypoint Centre for swimming lessons, encourage ongoing access to the Georgian Village therapy pool, and communicate to residents why a new municipal indoor pool is not a viable service level for the community.

Recommendations

37. Continue to partner with the **Waypoint Centre** to provide community access to swimming lessons and programming. Should opportunities arise, consider mutually beneficial partnerships with other providers to enhance access to indoor aquatic activities for Penetanguishene residents.

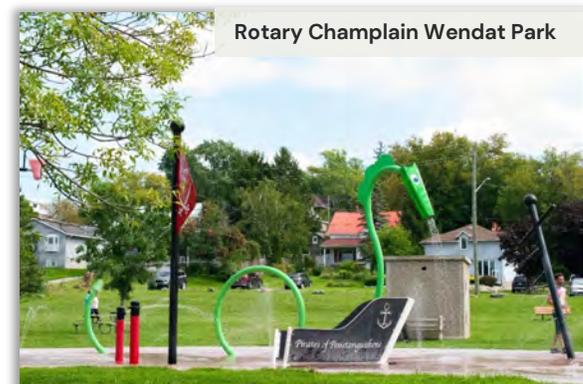
Splash Pad

Current Supply

The Town currently operates one splash pad, located at Rotary Champlain Wendat Park.

Analysis

Splash pads are unstaffed park amenities that spray and/or dump water from a variety of features activated by the user; they are available within the warmer weather months. These features predominantly serve children, and with 720 children between the ages 0 to 9 (2021 Census), the Town is providing a relatively high level of service for this age group. Despite this, the current facility serves a single location, which may limit accessibility for residents in other parts of the community, particularly



where parking and proximity to residential areas are concerns. Adding a second, smaller splash pad at the future MURC site (51 Dunlop St) would help distribute aquatic recreation opportunities more evenly across the Town and better meet the needs of families with young children.

Recommendations

38. Install a **splash pad at the future MURC site** in the long-term to provide accessible aquatic recreation in a location with supporting infrastructure (parking, washrooms, etc.).

6.4 Sports Fields

Soccer Fields

Current Supply

The Town currently provides one unlit soccer field at 51 Dunlop Street (former Penetanguishene Secondary School), which can be divided into two or more smaller fields. The naturalized stormwater retention pond field at J.T. Payette Park was previously permitted for soccer, but is no longer used for this activity due to poor field conditions.

Beyond the municipal supply, area schools also offer soccer fields that could support community programming. For example, James Keating Public School has previously been used for soccer programs.



Market Conditions and Trends

Soccer is among the most popular organized sports in Ontario, driven by its global appeal, strong fitness benefits, and relatively low cost to play. This popularity has contributed to high demand for soccer fields in most communities. The Huronia District Soccer Association (HDSA) (which includes players from North Simcoe) recorded 10,941 players in 2023, up 6% from 10,297 in 2019. Historical data indicates that HDSA's participation peaked in 2008 with 18,153 players. This suggests that interest in the sport (although currently stable) has shifted and that there is likely low demand for additional soccer fields.

In Penetanguishene, the Town delivers a non-competitive "learn to play" youth soccer program, running for several weeks in the summer. The program focuses on age-appropriate skills, gameplay strategies, and fostering lifelong enjoyment of the sport. Additional house league and competitive (rep) soccer is offered through the Midland

Soccer Club and North Simcoe Soccer Club and played outside Penetanguishene. Since the resumption of mini and youth soccer after the pandemic, participation in the Town's programs has increased steadily between the 2022 and 2024 seasons by 20%. Based on Statistics Canada data, Penetanguishene had 1,100 residents aged 14 and under in 2021, suggesting that roughly one in four children and youth (26%) take part in the Town's summer soccer programming. This is a strong participation rate and reinforces how important affordable local activities are to the community.

Table 7 : Youth Soccer Participation In Penetanguishene

Year	2022	2023	2024	Change (%) 2022 to 2024
Registered Participants	239	285	287	+20%

Analysis

Currently, the only organized use of the Town-owned soccer field at 51 Dunlop Street is for Town programming. The Town's focus is on fostering affordable introductory soccer services as there is no need to duplicate the programs being offered by others within the region. While there is strong interest in this program, there is additional capacity at this field for greater use.

One idea that was identified through the public engagement program was for the use of this site for a cricket field – demand is growing for this sport in the region and there are currently no suitable facilities in the area. While there may be the potential for shared use of this field between cricket and soccer (depending on the overall design and dimensions of play), this field is not wide enough to safely support full-size cricket and still allow for use of the perimeter track and other spaces (cricket generally requires an oval field that is a minimum of 100-metres wide and up to 150-metres long). Another option is to consider converting an existing ball diamond to allow for a modified form of cricket (see next section).

Should demand for soccer fields increase in the future, there may be opportunities to strengthen the use of existing school board fields for community soccer or to repurpose under-utilized space for soccer fields (e.g., Phill Marchildon Park). The Town already partners with schools to provide other recreational programs (e.g., gentle yoga, Zumba, etc.) and is encouraged to continue fostering these relationships to support access to additional field space as required.

Recommendations

39. Maintain a minimum provision level of **one full size soccer field** (divisible into smaller fields) within the Town's parks system to support local play opportunities; this may be supplemented by access to school fields. Where appropriate, soccer fields may be designed for shared use, such as event space and other field sports.

Ball Diamonds

Current Supply

The Town supplies a total of three ball diamonds, consisting of one full size lit diamond and one unlit junior diamond at McGuire Park, and one full size unlit diamond at Phil Marchildon Park. At McGuire Park, the adult/lit ball diamond is typically used three days a week, and the junior ball diamond is typically used one day a week. The ball diamond at Phil Marchildon Park is adjacent to Saint-Louis Catholic Elementary School and is available for programming; however, it is reportedly used mostly for casual play.



Market Conditions and Trends

Baseball and softball are cyclical sports that have rebounded recently and remain important options within many small towns and rural communities. This growth is being driven by expanded grassroots programs that engage youth at an early age and increased opportunities for skill development at competitive levels. Historically, community participation has also correlated with the performance of the Toronto Blue Jays, who have reached the playoffs in four of the past six seasons. In Penetanguishene, the Midland-Penetang Baseball Association (MPBA) is the only youth user of municipal ball diamonds, playing mainly at McGuire Park as part of a broader regional schedule across Simcoe County.

Analysis

Penetanguishene's existing diamonds are operating well within capacity as fields in Midland and Tiny support greater use. Community survey results further reflect baseball and softball as a lower priority, nearly one in ten respondents (9%) reported playing in the past year, while support for new investment in diamonds ranked second-lowest among facility types, with 29% opposing.

Given this context and the limited use of Phil Marchildon Park, there may be an opportunity in consultation with the school to consider repurposing this site for an alternative facility (e.g., cricket, soccer fields), allowing the Town to focus its resources on maintaining the diamonds at McGuire Park. With a backstop already in place, this site may be suitable for single-direction or modified cricket, an emerging form of the sport that is becoming more popular due to the challenge of securing sites that can accommodate a full cricket pitch.

Recommendations

40. Consult with the adjacent school and broader community to explore opportunities to increase use of the **Phil Marchildon Park ball diamond** or possibly repurposing this site for an alternative recreational use (e.g., cricket, soccer fields).

Tennis and Pickleball Courts

Current Supply

The Town's tennis and pickleball courts are supplied at McGuire Park (one unlit tennis court shared with two pickleball courts and four dedicated unlit) and Memorial Park (two unlit tennis courts). McGuire Park's tennis and pickleball courts were implemented through a reconstruction project in 2019, and each of the courts at Memorial Park were resurfaced in 2022. All of these courts can be reserved online, but are available for casual use when not booked. The Town facilitates a popular pickleball league during mornings, seven days a week.



Additionally, the Penetanguishene Curling Club in 2025 began offering indoor pickleball during the summer (April to September) by setting up four portable courts on the rink floor for pay per use online bookings. If successful, this trial could support a full summer season and tournaments. Two outdoor courts are also provided by the Waypoint Centre, but there is currently no agreement for community access.

Beyond local facilities, the Midland Area Pickleball Club (MAP) utilizes eight lit courts at Tiffin Park in Midland. Notably, among survey respondents who participate in recreation activities outside of Penetanguishene, pickleball was the most frequently mentioned activity, with 47 responses.

Market Conditions and Trends

Although participation is reportedly high at the national level, demand for tennis in Penetanguishene appears to be lower compared to many other recreation activities. Excluding non-reserved drop-in use, the tennis court at McGuire Park was reserved for tennis 36 times in 2024, an average of approximately twice a week. Additionally, one in four community survey respondents (25%) opposed Town and community spending to improve or build more tennis courts, ranking them as the fourth most opposed facility type.

Conversely, pickleball has captivated both older and younger populations, making it the fastest growing sport in North America. Pickleball's popularity has soared due to it being a low

impact sport that keeps people of all ages physically active. In 2023, Pickleball Canada recorded that 11% of Canadian households have at least one member who plays the sport at least once a month, nearly tripling the number of pickleball players in Canada over the previous two years.²⁷ As pickleball continues to grow in Canada, participation is expected to broaden and become more diverse, creating demand for more opportunities to play.

With participation in Penetanguishene reportedly growing, the community has expressed support for the continued provision of pickleball courts, including 86% of community survey respondents identifying that they support spending additional public funds to improve or build more pickleball courts (ranking 10th out of 18 options). Additionally, requests were received for more drop-in and registered pickleball programming opportunities, which were amongst the most requested activities. The pickleball courts at McGuire Park have been well received by users and see regular usage, with about 285 players on the convenors' list (with an average age of 55), and 40 to 60 participants attending daily free morning sessions. The convenors report that the current system is working well, but indicate that growing demand could justify more courts in the future.

Pickleball's rapid growth across Canada has created challenges for municipalities, particularly around court sharing with tennis and noise concerns near residential areas. While noise from ball strikes, footwork, and player voices has not been a major issue at McGuire Park, community feedback indicates a preference for dedicated pickleball courts and tennis courts rather than shared courts. Users also expressed interest in enhancing amenities at the Town's pickleball courts, such as installing fencing to separate courts, adding windscreens, and providing a permanent shed for equipment storage. The installation of lighting on the pickleball courts is not recommended due to low demand and "quiet hours" for area residents, an approach that is increasingly being adopted by several municipalities to limit noise complaints.

Analysis

Municipalities tend to target tennis court provision rates at one per 5,000 residents. Although many municipalities have not established service targets for pickleball courts, those that have developed a healthy supply of courts have adopted targets similar to tennis. The Town of Penetanguishene currently provides one tennis court per 3,600 residents and one pickleball court per 1,800 residents, including shared courts. The availability of the Midland Area Pickleball Club has also helped address local pickleball demand. Both reflect strong service levels that demonstrate the local importance of these amenities and should offer additional capacity for the future. No additional tennis courts are recommended over the projection period, but additional analysis is required to consider potential improvements to the provision of pickleball courts.

²⁷ Pickleball Canada. 2023. January 2023 Survey. Retrieved from <https://pickleballcanada.org>

In response to community requests, Town staff have suggested that pickleball court lines could be added to the existing tennis court or that the tennis courts could be repurposed for dedicated pickleball use. However, any decision should balance current tennis demand, court booking practices, future pickleball growth, and appropriate opportunities for multi-use design. It is recommended that the Town maintain the single court at McGuire Park as a shared-use facility, while adding pickleball lines to formalize a six-court complex at this location, with the ability to use the courts for tennis outside of league hours. Due to the potential for noise conflicts, future expansion of this pickleball court complex is not recommended.

The Town's provision rate for pickleball courts is similar to other municipalities in the region, but is much higher than provincial averages. This underscores the strong local participation rates and the Town's responsiveness to these activity trends. Public opinion on the need for additional pickleball courts was mixed – even among enthusiasts of the sport. Continued local interest is projected which – at minimum – should help to sustain the existing courts into the future.

The Town has reported that its pickleball courts are predominantly used during morning hours, rather than afternoons or evenings. The Town should continue to monitor when its courts are being used, as well as the success of the pickleball trial at the Penetanguishene Curling Club. Court users should be encouraged to fundraise for windscreens and other enhancements, as needed. The gymnasium at the proposed MURC will address future indoor, year-round pickleball needs, which may be supplemented in the interim by the use of school gyms.

Looking to the future, two additional courts would be required in the next ten years if the Town is to maintain current levels of provision (one court per 1,800 residents). Two-court complexes have reduced noise mitigation requirements and can more easily be accommodated within the parks system than larger court complexes. Should a demonstrated need emerge in the future for additional outdoor pickleball courts for organized and casual use, the Town may consider a two-court complex at another park location (with consideration of potential noise impacts, support amenities, etc.). It is recommended that the Town undertake a site analysis regarding the potential to develop two pickleball courts in Marchildon Park or a future park in a new subdivision. Both of these options would require local consultation and site-specific evaluation, and may take several years to ready the site due to existing uses (Marchildon Park) or land assembly (new subdivision park).

Recommendations

41. Add **permanent pickleball lines to the tennis court at McGuire Park** to formalize a six court complex at this park, while still allowing for tennis use outside of league hours; no further expansion to this complex is recommended. Monitor usage of these courts to inform future needs and operational practices. To alleviate additional demand in the short-term, consider options for facilitating public access to the two pickleball courts at the Waypoint Centre.

42. Develop **two outdoor pickleball courts** in the medium-term to address growth-related needs. Undertake a site evaluation and community consultation, with consideration of Marchildon Park or a future park in a new subdivision.

Basketball Courts

Current Supply

The Town provides three unlit basketball courts, each located at Rotary Champlain Wendat Park (full and a half court), Martin Valley Park (full court), and Gendron Park (half court). At Rotary Champlain Wendat Park, the courts are situated within a busy community park, near to other youth serving amenities (e.g., skate park, beach volleyball). The Martin Valley Park and Gendron Park facilities are embedded within residential neighbourhoods. Additional basketball courts are available at local elementary and secondary schools which also supplement neighbourhood play outside of school hours.



Market Conditions and Trends

Basketball courts are typically simple in design, consisting of asphalt pads (sometimes with painted lines) and basketball posts. While their primary use is for basketball, these spaces can also serve as multi-purpose surfaces for activities like ball hockey, street soccer, or casual exercise, depending on their design. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, demand has grown for close to home, high-quality, casual outdoor recreation opportunities, with basketball emerging as a particularly popular choice. Basketball is now considered the second most-followed sport among young Canadians, influenced both by Canada's increasingly diverse population and the popularity of professional basketball teams.²⁸



²⁸ Dawson. T. 2023. Canadians still favour hockey — but maybe not for long, as basketball and soccer gain popularity. Retrieved from <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/hockey-canadas-favourite-sport-for-now>

In addition to physical activity, basketball courts serve as gathering spaces for youth, families, and community groups, fostering social cohesion, informal mentorship, and inclusive recreation. Their open design also allows for multi-generational use, from organized leagues to casual pick-up games, making them an accessible recreation option for a wide range of residents.

Analysis

There are approximately 830 youth residents between 10 and 19 years of age in Penetanguishene (2021 Census), for an average service level of one basketball court per 200 youth residents, a higher service level than one court per 700 to 1,000 youth that municipalities typically target. It is common for municipalities to prioritize basketball court distribution, typically targeting one court within 1.0 to 1.5 km of residential areas. To support future residential growth in Penetanguishene, providing a full court at or near the proposed MURC site could present a valuable opportunity.

While basketball received limited attention in the engagement process, with 77% of survey respondents supporting and 23% opposing investment in new or improved courts (ranking fifth lowest in support), it remains important to maintain and, where feasible, enhance existing facilities. Proper maintenance, safety measures (such as lighting or resurfacing), and amenities like seating, shade, or nearby water fountains can improve the user experience and encourage more consistent use.

To support opportunities for local youth to be physically active, the Town should continue to maintain its existing basketball courts, and explore an opportunity for a new basketball court at or near the future MURC site. More specifically, the Town could improve the half court at Gendron Park by expanding and upgrading the asphalt surface with lines.

Recommendations

43. Improve the half-court surface at **Gendron Park** to enhance playability.
44. Add a **full basketball court at or near the future MURC site** when the project commences to support local access and accommodate future residential growth.

Beach Volleyball Courts

Current Supply

The Town supplies two beach volleyball courts at Rotary Champlain Wendat Park.

Market Conditions and Trends

Beach volleyball is a popular activity among teens and young adults, and many waterfront communities, including Penetanguishene, feature courts as part of their recreation facility inventory. These facilities are sometimes rented by organizations to host leagues or tournaments, but in

Penetanguishene they are primarily available as casual/use amenities on a first-come, first served basis. Particularly, courts at waterfronts enhance the appeal of public parks by complementing swimming areas, picnic spaces, and walking trails, creating a more comprehensive recreational destination. While previous efforts by the Town to establish league play drew limited interest, the recent introduction of youth rep volleyball teams in Midland suggests that local interest in the sport is beginning to grow.



Analysis

There is no accepted industry service standard for the provision of beach volleyball. With no indication that additional courts are required, the Town should continue to maintain its two courts. Considerations include ongoing maintenance to ensure safe and high-quality playing surfaces, including regular grooming and net replacement. Accessibility and amenities such as seating, shade structures, water access, and nearby washrooms also influence usage and the overall user experience. As interest in beach volleyball grows, Penetanguishene may explore modest investments to enhance existing courts or improve supporting infrastructure, aligning with broader objectives of providing inclusive, multi-generational, and active outdoor recreation opportunities.

6.5 Playgrounds

Current Supply

The Town provides eight playgrounds located at Charles Scott Memorial Park, Gendron Park, Huronia Park, McGuire Park, Martin Valley Park, Rotary Champlain Wendat Park, Therrien Park, and Tom Coffin Memorial Park. In recent years, the playgrounds at Gendron Park, Therrien Park, and McGuire Park have been upgraded with new equipment to enhance safety and play value.



Market Conditions and Trends

Playgrounds are essential components of most park types, especially for young families and children, as they support childhood development, encourage social and cognitive growth, and promote physical activity. Modern playground design incorporates accessible components, interactive and thematic elements, sensory features, natural materials, and a broad range of activities to foster engagement and creativity among children of all ages and abilities. Playgrounds also contribute to broader community well-being by serving as gathering spaces for families, caregivers, and community programs.

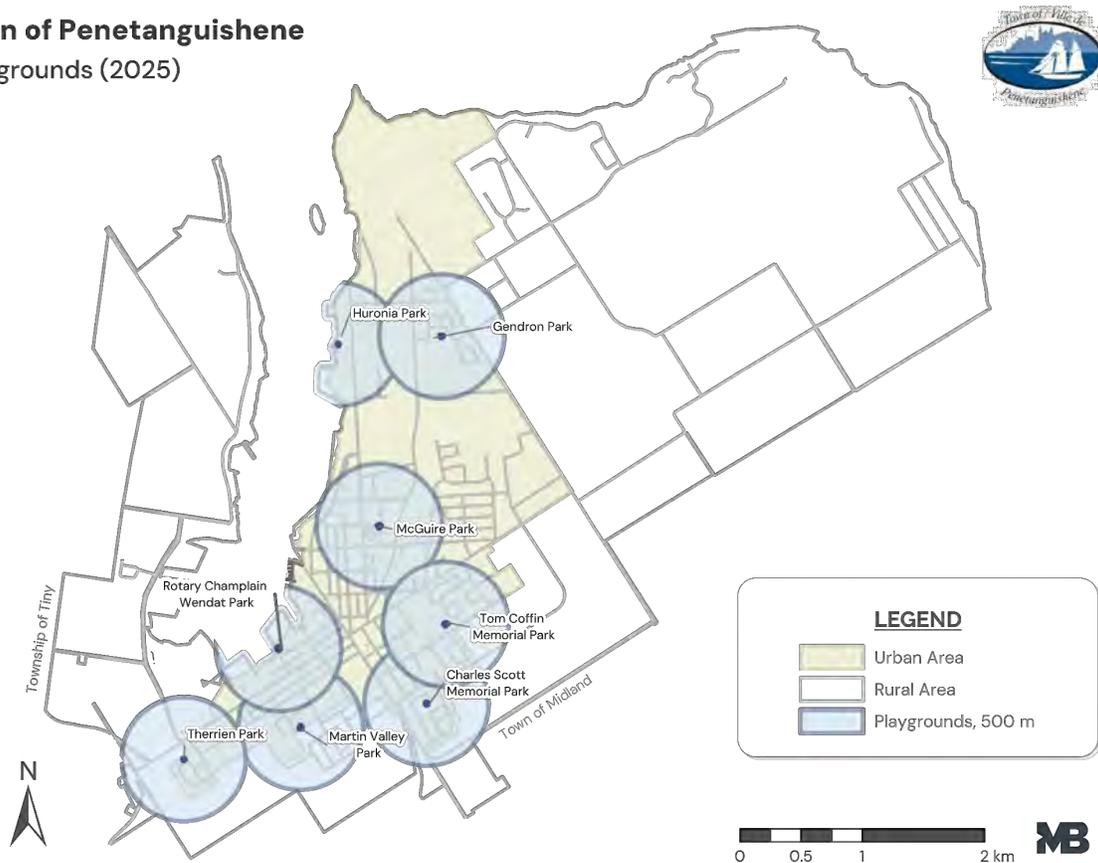
Development and renewal of playgrounds are guided by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which requires accessible features in all new or redeveloped facilities. Best practices in other municipalities indicate that playground accessibility often varies by park type: major parks (e.g., RCWP) may include rubber surfacing, ramps, and a wide range of accessible play components, while neighbourhood parks typically feature engineered wood fibre (EWF) surfacing and a more limited selection of accessible features. In Penetanguishene, the Town allocates \$25,000 annually toward playground replacement, with funding for the planned replacement of the Charles Scott playground in 2026. The Town's capital program also identifies several playground replacement projects over the next ten years.

Analysis

Best practice suggests that municipalities provide playgrounds within 500 to 800 metres (or a 10-minute walk) of all residential areas, unobstructed by barriers such as arterial roads, railways, or waterbodies. This allows for an equitable distribution of playgrounds for children and youth to access and be physically active. A 500-metre radius has been applied to the Town's eight playgrounds (see following map), with only minor gaps noted in the urban area. This supply is supplemented by playgrounds at local elementary schools. Collectively, these playgrounds work as a network to support neighbourhood play.

Figure 10 : Playground Distribution

Town of Penetanguishene
Playgrounds (2025)



With the Town expected to grow by approximately 3,500 residents by 2051, additional playgrounds should be incorporated into new parks in areas where residential development is occurring in order to maintain equitable access. For example, a playground should be provided at the future Multi-Use Recreation Centre (MURC) site, ensuring the facility functions as a community hub that serves a wide range of age groups and interests. Further, opportunities to establish parks/playgrounds serving subdivisions within the Town’s rural shoreline areas may be considered further based on demonstrated demand.



Playground replacements are scheduled across several neighbourhood parks (estimated timelines include Charles Scott in 2026, Huronia in 2033, Tom Coffin in 2034, and Gendron in 2036, with Therrien in 2041). Funding for playground replacement has been identified as a line item in the annual budget – this is a best practice that should continue.

The Town should continue to prioritize upgrades identified in the Shade Plan (e.g., dog park, Gendron Park, and Therrien Park, followed by McGuire Park, Phil Marchildon Park, and the Ecology Garden) and consider additional amenities that enhance both the quality of these facilities and the overall user experience. Ongoing investment in playground renewal, accessibility, shade, and complementary amenities (such as seating, pathways, and nearby washrooms) will be vital to ensuring that children of all ages and abilities can benefit from safe, inclusive, and engaging play opportunities.

Recommendations

45. Prioritize the renewal and enhancement of playgrounds, including **shade improvements** (with partial funding through the tree compensation policy) in keeping with the Town's Shade Plan.
46. Plan for the development of **additional playgrounds** within new parks as residential growth occurs, ensuring equitable access and distribution across neighbourhoods. For example, a playground should be incorporated into the **future MURC site**. Opportunities to establish parks/playgrounds serving subdivisions within the Town's rural shoreline areas may be considered further based on demonstrated demand.

6.6 Skateboard Park / Pump Track

Current Supply

The Town supplies a skateboard park at Rotary Champlain Wendat Park and a pump track at Martin Valley Park.

Market Conditions and Trends

Wheeled sports have gained mainstream popularity, appealing to children and adults alike, not just youth. These facilities provide opportunities for physical activity, self-expression, and skill development, often attracting individuals who do not participate in organized sport. Skateboard parks, pump tracks, and bike parks offer meaningful gathering spaces where people can socialize, engage in wheeled sports, and build resilience. These spaces are widely recognized as positive, inclusive environments that foster creativity, mentorship, and community connection among youth and young adults.



Analysis

The skateboard park at Rotary Champlain Wendat Park was built approximately 20 years ago and is aging, with limited flow and capacity for beginners. By contrast, the pump track

at Martin Valley Park is less than two years old, forming part of a broader park revitalization project. Staff, in consultation with the Canadian Ramp Company, are proposing a phased hybrid approach to improving the existing skateboard park: first adding a new pad with modular equipment adjacent to the existing park to better accommodate beginners and extend the facility's lifespan, followed by a long-term replacement of the concrete park. While the current park still has some functional life, signs of cracking make long-term planning critical. Estimated costs for the full replacement range from \$600,000 to \$750,000, with two placeholders included in the 10-year capital plan. Each phase will include additional community engagement and be led by professional skateboard park builders. Depending on timelines, relocation to the future MURC site may also be considered.



Community engagement indicates relatively low public priority for these facilities, with 69% supporting (31% opposing) improvements or new skateboard parks (the lowest ranked facility), and 78% supporting (22% opposing) new bike parks or pump tracks, ranking sixth lowest among facilities. Despite this, continued provision of investment in wheeled sports infrastructure is important to ensure equitable access, safe participation, and engaging recreation opportunities for all ages. While the Town's service level is met by its one skateboard park, the Town should continue to explore its replacement. The Town should also continue to monitor the new pump track's usage and feedback from users.

Recommendations

47. Advance plans for redevelopment of the Town's **skateboard park at Rotary Champlain Wendat Park** through the proposed phased/hybrid approach (addition of modular equipment, followed by replacement in the longer-term).

Outdoor Skating Rinks

Current Supply

In past years, the Town has facilitated the provision of one outdoor artificial skating rink at St. Ann's Church.

Market Conditions and Trends

Outdoor ice skating rinks and trails provide affordable opportunities for winter recreation in park-like settings. They offer broader social and community benefits, serving as informal gathering places for families, youth, and seniors, while fostering intergenerational interaction and healthy, active lifestyles. These facilities allow residents to enjoy a popular Canadian

activity in an informal, family-friendly environment. Access is typically free, though usage can be affected by weather conditions, particularly during warmer winters or extreme snow events. During off-season months, these spaces can be used for other recreational activities such as ball hockey, roller skating, or community events, enhancing their year-round value.

Maintaining outdoor skating rinks has become increasingly challenging in many communities, as consistently cold temperatures are required to sustain ice surfaces. In response, some municipalities are investing in synthetic surfaces (like Penetanguishene) or refrigerated rinks or trails to provide more reliable skating conditions and extend the usability of these facilities throughout the winter season. These investments can also support winter programming, including skating lessons, youth clinics, or special events that encourage community engagement and physical activity during colder months.

In Penetanguishene, the Town trialed a synthetic (non-refrigerated) rink in the parking lot of St Ann's Roman Catholic Church during the winter of 2025 under agreement with the Church. The rink, acquired from Ontario Place at no cost, faced challenges including damaged boards, unauthorized use, and snowmobile traffic. The Town will continue to work with the Lions Club (who operate the rink) and community to address these concerns.

Analysis

Understanding that weather patterns ultimately impact how often outdoor skating rinks can be used, they serve as an opportunity for users to be physically active and socialize during the winter season when residents may experience isolation at various times. The Town should continue to monitor usage of its artificial rink and encourage community operation and support.

6.7 Off-Leash Dog Areas

Current Supply

The Town has one off-leash dog area at the west end of Rotary Champlain Wendat Park.

Market Conditions and Trends

Off-leash dog parks provide designated spaces where dogs can run, play, and socialize freely within the boundaries of municipal by-laws and policies. These areas also offer important social benefits for owners, allowing them to meet, network, and build connections, which can help combat social isolation and strengthen community ties. Off-leash areas are typically located in under-utilized portions of Town parks or other designated public open spaces. They are often sited away from residential areas to minimize noise or other land use conflicts, though this placement can sometimes limit accessibility for some pet owners, particularly those without transportation. The dog park's past shade issue was resolved with 2022 tree plantings, and the facility is now more comfortable and well-used.

Community engagement indicates relatively modest support for new or expanded dog park infrastructure. In the Town's survey, 74% of respondents supported investment in off-leash dog parks, while 26% were opposed, ranking this facility type third lowest in overall support. Despite this, ongoing investment remains important to ensure equitable access, promote responsible pet ownership, and provide safe, inclusive spaces for dogs and their communities. Well-maintained dog parks also contribute to broader park system goals, such as offering multi-use spaces, activating under-utilized areas, and supporting outdoor recreation diversity.

Analysis

There is no industry target guiding the provision of off-leash dog parks as they tend to be provided based on community demand and where opportunities exist to provide these types of amenities. The Town should continue to monitor the off-leash area at Rotary Champlain Wendat Park and make improvements as needed. A second off-leash dog park is not recommended during the planning period.



6.8 Public Beaches and Waterfront Amenities

Current Supply

Penetanguishene's municipally owned waterfront includes Rotary Champlain Wendat Park, Huronia Park and the Town Dock and Wharf. Together these locations provide sandy shores, swimming areas, and amenities including playgrounds, pavilions, washrooms, picnic areas, a boat launch, an observation dock, and more.



Market Conditions and Trends

Public beaches and waterfront amenities provide valuable contributions to community well-being, tourism, and economic development. Beaches serve as vital spaces for recreation, socialization, and connection to nature, contributing to the overall quality of life in coastal communities. The Town's commitment to providing accessible and welcoming waterfront spaces is evident in its ongoing efforts to enhance these areas for residents and visitors alike.

There is a growing public demand for accessible and well-equipped waterfront spaces. The community survey revealed overwhelming support among residents for investments in waterfront parks and beaches (96%). Other highly supported amenities include playgrounds (94%), paved trails (93%), docks and wharfs (93%), unpaved trails (91%), and spaces for outdoor events (90%). These spaces are all highly accessible and affordable to a wide range of users. A shared appreciation for the beauty of Penetanguishene's natural landscapes was frequently mentioned throughout community engagement discussions; the town's waterfront and trails, were highlighted as a strength and attraction for visitors and new residents.

Analysis

In Penetanguishene, the Town's existing waterfront parks already contribute significantly to tourism appeal, drawing visitors to the harbour and surrounding areas. Strategic enhancements to these amenities could further strengthen Penetanguishene's reputation as a desirable destination for both residents and visitors. For example, Huronia Park would benefit from improvements that enhance accessibility, landscaping, community use, and the overall visitor experience. In addition, Ojibway Landing, which is a brownfield site adjacent to RCWP, presents a longer-term opportunity for future waterfront development that Council will be considering through a future master plan.

The Town Dock Secondary Plan identified seven "Big Moves" to guide the future redevelopment of this waterfront property. These directions include reallocating space, ensuring continuous public access to the water, creating new public spaces for recreation, unlocking economic potential, connecting the Town Dock with surrounding areas, establishing gateways, and designing flexible spaces for multiple uses. The plan also emphasized that significant investment in the Town Dock lands will be required over the next ten years. In the short term, there was broad consensus to retain the boat launch, while Council agreed to remove the urban beach. Future improvements include constructing a



new information centre with amenities for both boaters and the general public, developing a flexible public square, and providing space for winter events. Additional priorities include greenspace enhancements, evolution of the site as a welcoming public space, and ensuring accessibility, pedestrian-friendliness, and community appeal.

While the benefits of investing in public beaches and waterfront amenities are clear, the Town must carefully weigh several factors. These include operational and maintenance resources, environmental sustainability, and ongoing community engagement to ensure that new developments align with public needs and expectations. The Town must also account for the cost of acquiring and/or developing additional waterfront property, if pursued, as well as the expanded servicing requirements that would place additional demands on staff.

Recommendations

48. Continue to invest in and improve Penetanguishene's **public waterfront and beaches** so they remain welcoming, accessible, and well cared for. Future upgrades should focus on enhancing visitor comfort and safety, protecting the natural shoreline, and creating year-round opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the water and surrounding spaces.

6.9 Community Garden

Current Supply

The Community Garden at 144 Fox Street currently offers 18 plots, the majority of which are actively rented by local residents. A volunteer group helps to maintain the gardens.

Market Conditions and Trends

To broaden access and accommodate diverse community needs, many municipalities offer a variety of community garden types. The two most common models are allotment gardens (where individuals rent and maintain their own plots) and collective gardens (where groups work collaboratively on a plot and share or donate the harvest). Additional approaches include pollinator gardens, food forests, and community orchards, which provide educational, ecological, and social benefits while supporting local food production. By offering multiple garden models, municipalities can engage a wider range of residents and respond to evolving community interests.

Analysis

Penetanguishene's community garden would benefit from increased support to maintain and enhance the space. While the site has experienced some theft, security improvements such as fencing, educational signage, and lighting should also be considered in the short-term. Future expansion potential exists at this site and may be considered based on

demonstrated demand (the site is fully booked at present), expanded programming, and/or partnerships (e.g., food bank).

As Penetanguishene continues to grow, new parks present opportunities to introduce additional community gardens, particularly in residential areas with limited existing recreation amenities. This approach would ensure equitable access and reinforce the role of community gardens as hubs for social engagement, healthy living, and local food production.

Recommendations

49. Expand the existing **community garden** and consider including community gardens in new parks, while supporting security improvements and volunteer coordination to maintain the spaces as community hubs.

6.10 Specialized and Other Facility Types

Addressed above are the recreation and park facility types commonly provided in the Town of Penetanguishene. However, it is common for municipalities to receive requests for new and / or non-traditional parks and recreation facilities. Often these requests deal with emerging activities or facilities that are not part of the Town's core service mandate.

The Town should be prepared to consider these requests on a case-by-case basis and may consider low-risk participation in unsolicited proposals if supported by additional research, appropriate sources of funding and broader goals. This Strategy may be used as a resource in determining if a proposal serves a clearly identified community need that is not currently adequately addressed.

The Town's response to unsolicited proposals will depend on its capacity to participate in such projects, the focus on wide community benefits (versus individual benefits) and the specific aspects of the proposal. If the Town were approached by a community partner for the development of a facility, the organization should provide the following (at a minimum) to assist the Town in its evaluation of the proposal: (a) justification of needs and business plan; (b) statement of the organization's capacity; (c) a demonstration of project sustainability; (d) evidence of community benefits; and (e) risk analysis.

Recommendations

50. On a case-by-case basis, evaluate **unsolicited requests for facilities** that are not part of the Town's core mandate. Proponent-led business plans should be developed to determine demand, alignment with this Strategy's goals, the net benefit to the Town and residents, and the degree of municipal involvement (if any).

7. Parks and Open Space Assessment

Public parks are important places for community and sporting events, casual leisure activities, building a sense of community, and social belonging. Penetanguishene's residents expressed interest in expanded opportunities for waterfront recreation, outdoor activities, trails, and greenspace preservation.

This section focuses on the Town's parkland system, a forecast of future needs, and related policies and guidelines to assist in achieving these requirements.

7.1 Parkland Supply & Classification

Public parkland is the land base required for many recreation activities and outdoor facilities. Among other benefits, parks and open space lands also contribute to the preservation and conservation of natural features, provide opportunities for passive recreational activities, provide physical linkages for the movement of humans and wildlife, build a sense of community and contribute to the town's aesthetic value and local appeal.

The Town of Penetanguishene maintains **30.76 hectares of active parkland distributed across 15 sites** (see map on the following page) that are used for a wide range of structured and unstructured recreational activities. Excluded from these figures are open space properties and non-municipal lands²⁹. For the purposes of this strategy, parkland and open space are defined as follows:

- **Parkland** typically consists of tableland suitable for the development or installation of built recreational or civic amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts) that may be used for both organized and unorganized activities. Parkland may also incorporate open space or natural features (beyond any parkland dedication requirement).
- **Open Space** sites generally have no to low development potential and are primarily designated for purposes such as environmental protection/conservation (e.g., woodlots, ravines, and natural heritage features), stormwater management, buffers, etc. The Town may choose to assume open space lands, but they should not generally be accepted as part of the parkland dedication requirements.

Most municipalities use parkland classification systems to guide park development, design and level of service (including maintenance). By identifying intended uses, size, form, function and/or level of amenity, a parkland classification system allows the public to

²⁹ While schools, County forests, and other lands may also have similar functions as municipal parks, community access is often restricted as the Town does not have direct influence over these spaces. These spaces do, however, provide community benefits and the Town should continue to collaborate with local partners where there is an overall public benefit.

understand what a park may include and positions parkland to be compatible with adjacent land uses.

The Town's Official Plan identifies a parkland classification system that includes Community Parks, Neighbourhood Parks, and Parkettes/Pocket Parks.

Table 8. Current Parkland Classification System, Town of Penetanguishene (source: Official Plan)

Classification	Characteristics (paraphrased)
Community Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serve as a focal point for a group of neighbourhoods - Include active recreational opportunities such as playing fields, tennis courts, skate parks etc. - Located along waterfront or key locations - Contribute to Natural Heritage System - Typically from 3 to 10 hectares
Neighbourhood Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focal point of neighbourhood - Includes fields and playgrounds - Walking distance of local residents and neighbourhood commercial activities - Located along local road and linked to green or open space such as a valley or forest - Typically from 1 – 3 hectares
Parkettes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within 400m or 5-minute walk of residents - Predominately offers passive recreation and can improve connectivity within neighbourhoods - Provides greenery and a local gathering place, and are a good location for mailboxes or info kiosks - Within urban contexts, may include hard landscaped plazas - Typically 0.5 to 1 hectare
Pocket Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most common in urban contexts such as the Downtown and Waterfront Area - May include a playground, seating, monument or public art - Will be designed and constructed by the proponent of development - Shall be less than 0.4 hectares in size

Note: Refer to Town of Penetanguishene Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law for specifics.

The following table lists the Town of Penetanguishene's existing parks and open spaces using this classification system; some parks have been reclassified by the consultant to better reflect their function and intended catchment.

Table 9. Supply of Existing Parkland and Open Space, Town of Penetanguishene

Name	Type	Size (ha)
Ecology Garden	Community	1.34
Former PSS Site* (51 Dunlop) – field and track		3.00
Martin Valley Park		3.13
McGuire Park		3.57
Memorial Park		0.63
Rotary Champlain Wendat Park		12.75
Charles Scott Memorial Park	Neighbourhood	1.07
Gendron Park		0.46
Huron Park		1.91
Phil Marchildon Park		1.22
Tom Coffin Memorial Park		0.77
Bob Sullivan Memorial Park	Parkette/ Pocket Park	0.27
CNR Park		0.24
Therrien Park		0.36
Town Gateway Parkette		0.05
Total Parkland (excluding Open Space)		30.76 ha
Breithaupt Park	Open Space	5.00
Former PSS Site (51 Dunlop) – future MURC		1.97
J.T. Payette Park		1.56
Payette Trails		17.01
Rolling Sands / Church Street Property		5.00
Total Open Space Parkland		30.54 ha

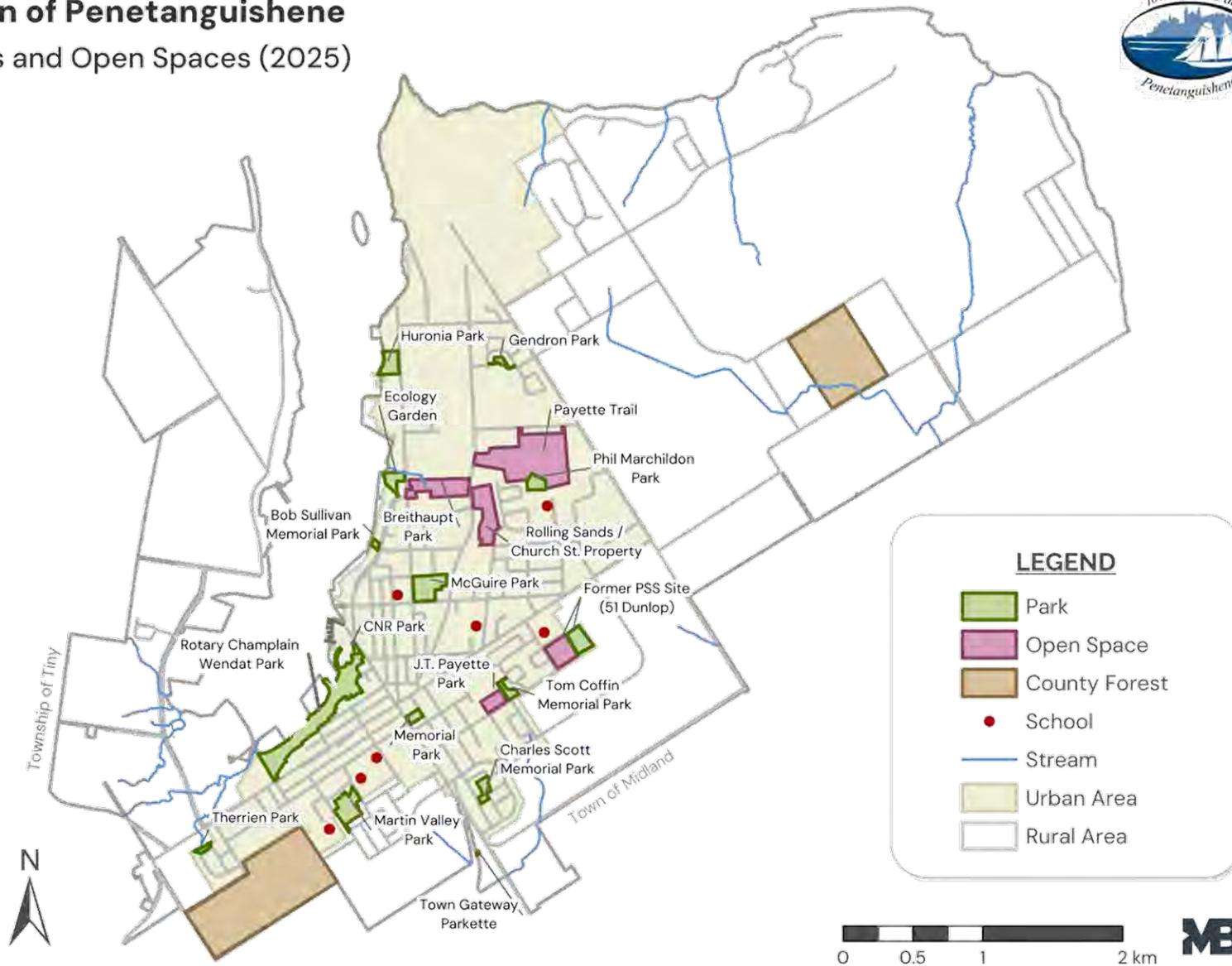
* Not formalized as a park.

Note: Open Space lands are Town-owned and open to the public but remain undeveloped. May not be a complete list.

Parcel sizes are approximate.

Figure 11. Parks and Open Spaces (2025)

Town of Penetanguishene Parks and Open Spaces (2025)



Recommendations

51. Establish an internal **parkland and open space database**, including protocols and assigned responsibilities for tracking of existing and anticipated future parks. Update the park classifications to align with this Strategy.
52. Work with area school boards and other recreation service providers to **maximize community access** to non-municipal parks and recreation spaces, as appropriate.



7.2 Parkland Policy & Dedication

There are several municipal and provincial regulations, policies, and guidelines governing the acquisition and location of parkland. Amongst these, the practice of requiring parkland conveyance as a condition of subdivision or development/redevelopment has long been the primary tool for municipalities. Use of cash-in-lieu to purchase parkland as well as other acquisition tools are projected to become more prominent in the future. It is a policy of the Town that the Town shall secure the maximum benefit of the Planning Act with respect to parkland dedication from development.

The Ontario Planning Act establishes a framework for the dedication of parkland and the Town's Official Plan sets out policies for securing and developing parkland. **There have been several changes to Planning Act that have negatively affected parkland conveyance amounts in recent years.** For example, parkland ratios have been decreased and new exemptions have been instituted (e.g., affordable residential units, attainable residential units, inclusionary zoning residential units, non-profit housing and additional residential unit developments may now be fully or partially exempt from parkland dedication). These changes have resulted in reduced amounts of land and/or funding available for parkland dedication, leading to a decline in parkland provision levels across the province.

Figure 12. Parkland Dedication Rates in the Ontario Planning Act

* no conveyance may exceed 10% of the land for sites under 5 hectares or 15% of the land for sites 5 hectares or larger.

Presently, Section 6.3.11.2 of the Penetanguishene Official Plan allows the Town to require the conveyance of up to 5% of land proposed for residential development or redevelopment. Typically taken under Section 51.1 of the Planning Act (plans of subdivision), this is referred to as the “**standard rate**” and is the manner in which most parkland has been dedicated to the Town in the past. At the Town’s discretion, the municipality may accept cash-in-lieu of the conveyance or a combination of land and payment; the Town determines this value through land appraisal. The Planning Act also allows the Town to require 2% of land for non-residential development (or a blended rate for mixed use developments).

With Penetanguishene’s future growth expected to include both greenfield development (subdivisions) and infill development on serviced lots, the Town would be best served by maximizing the full range of parkland dedication policy tools available through the Planning Act. This includes application of an “**alternative rate**” of 1 hectare of land per 600 units (1 hectare per 1,000 if taking cash), which is permitted under Section 42 of the Planning Act. This alternative rate is capped at 10% of land or the value of the land for development or redevelopment that is 5 hectares or less in area and 15% for development or redevelopment that is greater than 5 hectares in area. Penetanguishene’s Official Plan notes this as 1 hectare per 300 units (and the 10%/15% caps are not noted), but these references are outdated and should be updated through the next review.

There are certain provisions that must be met to apply this alternative rate, but it is not advantageous to the municipality unless development exceeds 30 units per hectare (for land) or 50 units per hectare (for cash-in-lieu). Higher densities are more common in infill and intensification scenarios.

The Town also has a **Parkland Dedication By-law** (2023-17), which is a requirement in order to apply the alternative rate. This By-law prescribes how the Town approaches the conveyance of parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland under sections 42, 5.1., and 53 of the Planning Act and is the implementation by-law for Section 6.3.11.2 of the Official Plan. It is noted that the By-law does not include reference to the more recently introduced 10%/15% land caps, as legislated under the Planning Act.

Among its regulations, the Parkland Dedication By-law includes guidance for when the Town will accept parkland conveyance and when cash-in-lieu of payment will be required. For example, the Town will not generally accept land that has unsuitable conditions or unnecessary restrictions (such as natural hazards, soils, steep slopes, wetlands, easements, stormwater management facilities, etc.). No changes are recommended to these provisions; however, it is noted that the Province has signaled that landowners will be permitted to identify lands capable of meeting parkland conveyance requirements. This may include **encumbered lands**, including privately-owned public spaces (otherwise referred to as POPS, typically smaller spaces such as plazas, courtyards, or pedestrian walkways) and strata parks (such as lands on top of parking garages and stormwater facilities, or below hydro lines). The suitability of land for parks and recreational purposes will be appealable by the municipality to the Ontario Land Tribunal. These permissions are not yet in force, but are expected to be enacted through forthcoming Planning Act regulations.

Fee simple (municipal ownership) should continue to be the Town's first priority when acquiring new parkland, as encumbered lands have different levels of service from public parks and are more expensive to maintain and harder to program. Notwithstanding this, criteria for accepting non-traditional parkland (such as POPS) for full credit may be considered further through updates to the Town's Official Plan. For example, POPS are generally not appropriate in locations outside of mixed use areas. If provided, they should: fulfill an open space need; be designed, developed, and maintained to municipal standards; be subject to agreements held on title to enforce conditions; be located in a prominent public-facing location that is accessible to the public at all times; and be programmed for a wide range of users and activities.

Lastly, open space properties and stormwater management facilities have not historically been accepted by the Town as part of the required parkland dedication. There is value in preserving many open space lands and the Town is encouraged to work with stewardship groups to ensure these remain protected and appropriately managed. One example is the Rolling Sands/Church Street property – adjacent to the Payette Trails and municipal water tower – that have served the community as undeveloped open space for several decades. It is recommended that a management plan be developed for these lands to ensure that the land is protected and enhanced in a way that balances community needs (e.g., trails, passive recreation), ecological health, and long-term sustainability.

Recommendations

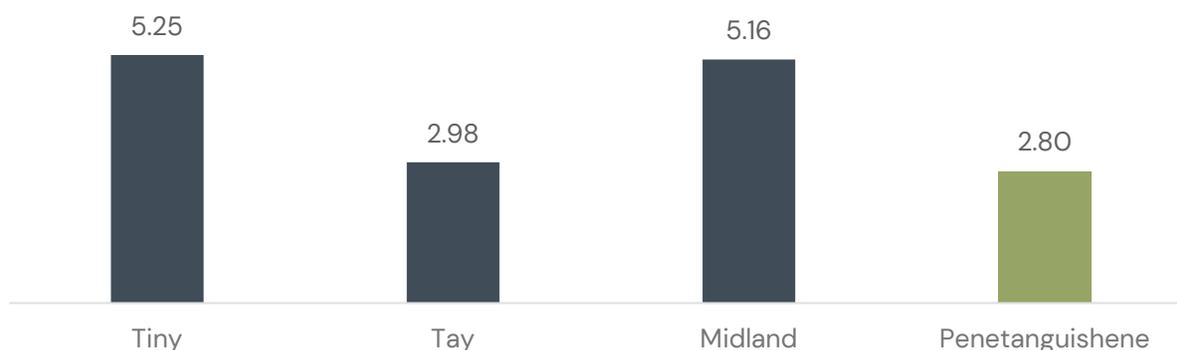
53. At the time of the next scheduled review, update the Town's **Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law** to be consistent with current language and exemptions within the Ontario Planning Act. Consider the establishment of Official Plan policies surrounding **privately-owned public spaces (POPS)**, such as the requirement for legal agreements to address park design and construction standards, public access, maintenance, etc., and appropriate locations for POPS.

7.3 Parkland Needs

Providing an appropriate supply and distribution of parkland is critical to ensuring a high-quality of life, maximizing the benefits that parks offer, and providing adequate services and amenities to achieve community objectives. The value that residents place on parks was noted through the community survey, where 86% of respondents noted that “open space for parks, beaches and casual use” were important to their household. Furthermore, establishing requirements for outdoor public spaces helps to improve outdoor physical activity amenities, encourage connection to nature, and support air and water quality.

A parkland to population ratio is a common way for municipalities to identify how much parkland exists and what may be needed in the future to maintain provision levels. There are approximately **30.76 hectares** of active parkland available to Penetanguishene residents, which equates to a parkland population ratio of approximately **2.8 hectares per 1,000 residents** (based on the 2024 population estimate of 11,000). When compared to its neighbours, the Town of Penetanguishene offers less parkland per 1,000 residents, although the inventories of comparator municipalities are often quite unique to their local geography and circumstances.

Figure 13. Parkland Provision Rates in Nearby Municipalities (hectares per 1,000 residents)



Excludes undeveloped lands, trails, or non-municipal parks.

Source: Compiled by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants from various sources:

Township of Tiny – 2025 Development Charges Background Study, Appendix B (excluding Beaches)

Tay Township – Tay Township Park Amenities (www.tay.ca/media/50pcf52a/tay-township-amenities.pdf)

Town of Midland – Midland Parks and Trails Master Plan (size of Little Lake Park estimated to be 30 hectares).

With recent changes to the parkland dedication provisions of the Planning Act and more dense residential development patterns, development is generating less parkland per capita and smaller park blocks than in the past. As a result, the Town’s parkland to population ratio will likely decline over time.

Additional parkland will be required to serve growth, particularly to provide convenient and localized opportunities, as well as to support growth-related amenities. A review of current park distribution (assessed using a 500-metre walkshed) finds that all parts of Penetanguishene’s built area have adequate access to parks; however, **new park**

development will be required for future subdivision development, including lands east of Fuller Avenue. One new park is currently in the planning stages – a **Neighbourhood Park** (0.95 hectares, proposed) for a future subdivision at 138 Robert Street East.

Additionally, there may be several potential future opportunities for securing or formalizing lands for open space use and preservation. Examples include:

- **Ojibway Landing site** (111 Robert Street West): This will be the subject of a town-led visioning exercise in 2026 to guide future uses. The site has the potential to bolster the Town's waterfront parks supply, among other uses.
- **Rolling Sands/Church Street Property:** These sites consist of several properties along Lorne Street, Church Street, and Payette Drive. Consideration should be given to formalizing all or a portion of these lands as municipal open space that will be protected from private development and maintained as a passive area with appropriate public access (e.g., trails, tobogganing, nature appreciation).
- **Unopened road allowances:** The Town has several unopened road allowances, some of which may be evaluated for their ability to offer enhanced public access to the water or contribute to a linked trail network.

Under the Planning Act, the Town is required to actively monitor parkland acquisitions and track annual spending and allocation of parkland cash-in-lieu funds. Additional opportunities may also be presented in the future that assist the Town in achieving its goal of a comprehensive and connected parks and active transportation network, such as a parkland dedication from development and/or a more formal relationship with other community space providers.

Some municipalities establish provision targets for parkland acquisition. These targets are often aspirational and cannot be addressed fully through parkland dedication alone. For Penetanguishene, the evaluation of park amenity needs has not identified any significant gaps in the urban area that cannot be accommodated within existing or potential future parks, thus a target is not recommended. Rather, the Town should continue to employ the following approach when evaluating parkland suitability and future needs.



Table 10: Parkland Dedication Framework – Priorities and Approach to Evaluating Future Needs

Priority	Description
#1	<p>Land acquisition in new development areas:</p> <p>Consider opportunities to secure parkland blocks (minimum 0.5 hectares) through new residential subdivision development, particularly for new development at the edges of the town’s built area boundary.</p>
#2	<p>Expansion, connectivity, and enhancements:</p> <p>As opportunities arise, evaluate the potential to secure additional lands for parks that may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Expand existing park sites, where aligned with demonstrated needs; b) Support enhanced access to the waterfront; c) Create a linked parks and open space network, including trail connections; d) Improve access for equity-deserving populations; e) Address demonstrated gaps within existing subdivisions in the Town’s rural shoreline areas, where demand exists; and f) Address an emerging gap in park distribution, including localized opportunities for child and youth play.
#3	<p>Building cash reserves for park priorities:</p> <p>Cash-In all other instances, maximize the cash-in-lieu provisions of the Planning Act and utilize the parkland dedication reserve to fund land-based priorities identified in priority #2.</p>

This approach may be re-evaluated through a future update to this Strategy or when other underlying conditions change (e.g., legislation, town growth, emerging amenity needs).

Should Penetanguishene experience demand for additional parkland beyond that able to be achieved through its parkland dedication provisions, the Town may need to utilize alternative financial tools and other parkland acquisition approaches. Some **supplemental park acquisition strategies** that the Town may pursue, include (but are not limited to):

- a) Municipal land purchase or lease (ideally in priority parkland locations or expansion of existing park sites), funded from cash-in-lieu reserves, Community Benefit Charges, general tax funding, grants, donors, etc.;
- b) Land exchanges or swaps;
- c) Off-site conveyance of parkland (ideally in priority parkland locations);
- d) Donations, gifts, and bequests;
- e) Reallocating surplus municipal lands to park use;
- f) Partnership/joint provision of lands with local partners under agreement; and/or
- g) If applicable, the sale or proposed sale of existing parkland (through a surplus lands policy); funds to be used for purchase and / or enhancement of parkland

Recommendations

54. Utilize the **Parkland Dedication Framework** identified within this Strategy to evaluate opportunities for new or expanded parks (minimum parks size of 0.5 hectares, etc.), enhancements to the existing parkland and open space inventory, and use of cash-in-lieu provisions to invest in local park priorities.
55. Retain **51 Dunlop** (former secondary school site) for the development of a Multi-use Recreation Centre; the balance of the lands should be used for park development (including retention of the soccer field) and/or future facility expansion, subject to future site planning.
56. Review the potential to formalize the **Rolling Sands/Church Street property** as a designated municipal open space and establish a management plan to ensure that these lands are protected and enhanced in a way that balances community needs (e.g., trails, passive recreation), ecological health, and long-term sustainability. On a case by case basis, evaluate the potential to secure and/or protect other **open space lands** that are outside the parks system and that provide important connections between parks, trails, and other public areas, having regard to the Official Plan and partner agency requirements.



7.4 Parkland Design

Over time, parks should be redesigned to optimize their intended function. For various reasons – including intensity of use, space demands, noise/disruption, etc. – some uses are more appropriate in certain types of parks. Playgrounds (considered to be a basic unit of

most park construction) are appropriate in all park types, but higher order facilities may not be appropriate for Neighbourhood Parks due to their significant size and impacts (e.g., parking, lighting, hours of use, etc.). The following table identifies suitable amenities according to park type.

Table 11: Suitability of Potential Amenities by Park Type

Facility/Amenity	Community Park	Neighbourhood Park	Parkette/ Pocket Park	Open Space
Recreation Facilities				
All Wheels (Skateboard) Park	●			
Ball Diamond	●	◐		
Basketball / Multi-use Court	●	●	◐	
Community Gardens	●	◐		◐
Off-Leash Dog Park	●			◐
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	●	◐		
Outdoor Rink	●	◐		
Pavilion / Shelter	●	◐	◐	●
Playground	●	●	●	◐
Recreational Trail	●	●	●	●
Soccer Field	●	◐		
Splash Pad	●			
Tennis / Pickleball Court	●	◐		
Park Amenities				
Bike Rack	●	●	●	◐
Casual Play Area / Open Space	●	●	◐	◐
Naturalized Areas	◐	◐	◐	●
Parking Lot	●	◐		◐
Seating (fixed or portable)	●	●	●	●
Washrooms	●	◐		◐

● = Permitted; ◐ = Conditional/Limited

Note: This table identifies potentially suitable uses by park type and is to be used as a guideline only. Site-specific analysis is required to inform park planning and design.

To ensure that parks are functional and responsive to current and emerging needs, there are several factors that the Town may consider as it develops and redevelops parkland. Below are some key considerations that arose through the consultation phase; this is not intended to be an exhaustive list:

- 1) **Informal and Unstructured Uses:** Effective parks are destinations where residents and visitors can engage in a variety of individual and community activities of an active or passive nature. Increasingly, people and families are seeking parks that they can enjoy at their own convenience, thus an emphasis should be placed on flexible and informal park spaces that can be used for unstructured activities and quiet reflection.

- 2) **Growing Variety of Interests:** Parks in Penetanguishene contain a growing variety of features that are indicative of evolving interests, such as splash pads, off leash dog parks, and pickleball courts. Maintaining a parks system not only takes time and resources, but also thoughtful design and programming that includes age-friendly and accessible amenities, organized and non-programmed uses, and best practices in beautification, environmental management, and stewardship.
- 3) **Aging Infrastructure:** Aging infrastructure is a growing concern for most communities. There are many challenges with older parks, which were often built with outdated construction and design standards and lack modern amenities, including barrier-free spaces. Penetanguishene has worked to update its parks and respond to emerging community needs. Sustainable funding is needed to ensure that these and other park spaces are able to be maintained in a safe and effective manner. Furthermore, the Town would benefit from a keen focus on design, with consideration of new and upgraded amenities that reflect local demographics, comfort features (washrooms, seating, shade, etc.), and outdoor programming to help people connect with parks and public spaces.
- 4) **Park Animation:** Traditional park uses include organized activities (such as sports) and unorganized pursuits (such as informal play; e.g., playground use). Increasingly, park spaces are being animated through events, programming, and new forms of community engagement. Some examples include (but are not limited to) fitness in the park, food trucks, and cultural events such as music, concerts, and theatre. Viewing parks as “outdoor living rooms” helps to expand the scope of use and engages a broader range of residents and visitors, leading to experiential learning, participation, and community mobilization.
- 5) **Aging Population:** The town’s population is aging and the number of older adult residents is rising. In general, the “new older adult” is more physically active than past generations and is interested in non-traditional activities, such as pickleball. This is leading to increased use of parks, trails, and recreation facilities at different times, including daytime. Expanding opportunities for nature appreciation, looped trails, seating, and event spaces will be important to serve older adults and all age groups.
- 6) **Accessibility:** It is essential that parks – both existing and future – be inclusive and barrier-free, as guided by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and contemporary design guidelines. To ensure that the parks system is able to serve people from all segments of the community, accessible seating, washrooms, shade (structures and trees), pathways, bike racks, parking, connections to public transit and active transportation routes, and safety strategies must be considered within appropriate park types. Accessibility audits should be incorporated into the Town’s asset management planning to identify a multi-year strategy for addressing barrier-free compliance.

- 7) **Naturalization and Environmental Stewardship:** The importance of environmental protection is being increasingly recognized and demand for passive settings that connect people to nature is on the rise. Many communities are placing a greater emphasis on the provision of passive park space (e.g., woodlots, prairie grasslands, flower gardens, pollinator habitats, restored landscapes, etc.), often ensuring that portions of new or redeveloped parks remain in a natural state. Naturalization typically involves reduced grass cutting, planting of native species, avoidance of non-invasive vegetation, and public education to create awareness in the community (e.g., interpretative signage). To be successful, these initiatives must be supported by focused communications to residents and businesses, as well as civic engagement through volunteer programs.
- 8) **Technology:** Because technology is readily available in so many forms, it has also become an integral part of the public realm. Many public parks and facilities across Ontario support and even encourage use of technology. Some municipalities now provide public access to Wi-Fi in parks and public facilities, encourage technology-focused participation, and use modern applications to monitor usage levels.
- 9) **Safety in Parks:** People sometimes feel unsafe in parks because of things like poor lighting and visibility, a lack of activity, or prohibited activities. Municipalities are addressing these concerns by designing parks to be more open, visible, and welcoming. This includes adding better lighting, reducing hidden spaces, increasing monitoring and surveillance and encouraging increased use through community programs and activities. The goal is to make parks feel safe, inviting, and well-used by everyone.

The following are best practices that the Town may adopt in designing new or redeveloped parks. Many of these practices are already in place, but are undocumented.

- a) Promote **universal accessibility** in all parks, such as wheelchair access, pathways, and ramps to play structures, etc. This includes reducing physical barriers when accessing outdoor recreation experiences, following AODA guidelines, at minimum.
- b) Parks should be designed to allow for **flexibility and seasonality** with a diversity of activities that cater to all ages and abilities. Consider activities and programming for the growing **older adult population**, including increased daytime use and emerging activities such as pickleball.
- c) Provide both junior and senior play opportunities in parks with **playgrounds**, where possible. Use engineered wood fibre for surfacing, at minimum. Ensure appropriate sight lines to play areas.
- d) Where possible, provide **unstructured open space** within parks that allows for a wide variety of **active and passive uses throughout all seasons**.
- e) Consider **new and creative ideas** and encourage **partnerships** that help the Town achieve its vision.

- f) Locate **shade structures and trees** central to amenities, in keeping with the Town's Shade Plan and upcoming Tree Planting Strategy. Consideration may be given to shade pavilions, shade sails over or near playground equipment, and tree planting to protect users from the harmful effects of the sun.
- g) Use non-invasive native species in all **plantings**.
- h) Provide informal **seating** opportunities. Locate seating in shaded areas, along accessible routes, and in proximity to active amenities.
- i) Select **materials and equipment** (e.g., park furniture) that are not easily vandalized and can be easily sourced for repair and/or replacement.
- j) Locate **waste and recycle receptacles** close to park entrances to facilitate maintenance.
- k) Provide **consistent branded signage** at all public parks identifying the park name, address, and current municipal branding. Additional signage should include emergency contact information and regulatory requirements (e.g., non-permitted uses, park hours, etc.). Consideration may also be given to wayfinding signage and parks system mapping to assist users in finding and accessing other nearby parks.
- l) Encourage **public art and historical commemoration plaques** at appropriate locations, in keeping with relevant guidelines (the Town will be developing a Public Art Policy in the short-term). Consider opportunities to support **Indigenous themes and education** within the parks system.
- m) Follow **CPTED** (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) principles to enhance community security and safety features.
- n) Provide **naturalized buffers** adjacent to natural features. Where appropriate, consider the piloting of naturalization initiatives in under-utilized portions of parks to support habitat creation and other environmental objectives.



Recommendations

57. Maintain a commitment to **universal accessibility, safety, and comfort** within the Town's parks system through compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) – including consultation with the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee – and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. It is acknowledged that some parks may include areas of natural terrain that are more difficult to access. Emphasize the provision of amenities such as benches/seating areas, bike parking, shade (structures, tree canopy, etc.), and barrier-free washrooms in appropriate park types.
58. Using this Strategy as a reference, initiate **site-specific planning exercises and concept plans** to be informed by engagement with stakeholders and the public for key park sites, followed by applications for grant and other funding sources. Priority sites include:
 - a. **Memorial Park** (short-term priority) with consideration of opportunities for improved accessibility, seating, beautification, and activation, in addition to replacement of the retaining wall along Main Street;
 - b. **Huron Park** (short-term priority) with consideration of improvements to accessibility, beachfront area, shade, interpretive areas, and community amenities (including potential for a kayak/canoe launch); and
 - c. **Rotary Champlain Wendat Park** (longer-term priority) with consideration of washrooms, event areas (e.g., amphitheatre covering, electrical outlets), circulation/parking, pavilion, tree planting/management, and a future vision for the Curling Club lands.
59. Fully implement the **park and wayfinding signage** program to improve wayfinding and community identity for residents and visitors alike.
60. Update the Town's **Parks By-law** to bring it into conformity with current laws and expectations for the reasonable use of parks and public spaces. Once complete, update regulatory signage within parks, open spaces, trails, etc.
61. Undertake a review of the **bench and tree dedication programs**, with consideration of long-term space needs and appropriate locations.
62. Acknowledge and incorporate **Indigenous history and presence** in parks and open spaces through signage, art, and programming.
63. Continue to support opportunities for **expanded park programming and outdoor education and stewardship**, such as nature-based programming, sustainable tree planting, use of native species, naturalization initiatives, and butterfly/pollinator parks in conjunction with community partners.

7.5 Park and Trail Maintenance

Based on site visits to the Town's parks and input from the public, parks and park amenities in Penetanguishene are generally well maintained. Improved maintenance in parks (such as grass cutting, trash removal, and beautification) are often common public requests but ones that Penetanguishene generally receives high marks for. However, expanded park use is placing greater pressure on existing resources and the Town's growth will necessitate increased investment over time, including additional staff, equipment, and space.

In particular, with parks being used more outside of the traditional summer season, these spaces are requiring additional maintenance and staffing resources. While there is no accepted industry metric for park staffing ratios in Canada as each municipality and local parks system is unique, benchmarking from the National Parks and Recreation Association (United States) suggests that a range of one full-time equivalent (FTE) park staff per 2.5 to 5.0 hectares of maintained parkland is common in smaller communities. The Town employs approximately 4.0 FTEs, all as seasonal gardeners or labourers, for a ratio of one FTE per 8.0 hectares of maintained parkland. Based on this indicator, the Town's complement of parks staff is quite lean, suggesting that additional resources may be needed to address growth or any added responsibilities, such as new or enhanced service levels. A long-term plan is needed to ensure that these resources are expanded in step with community growth. Additional direction on Town of Penetanguishene staffing levels is contained in Section 5.2.

Experiences in municipalities of similar size suggest that Penetanguishene's current informal determination and documentation of maintenance priorities and practices, while adequate in the past, will require thoughtful review to respond to the increased expectations of a growing resident population and new parks and open spaces.

To be successful, it is important for the Town to know whether level of service standards are being met, what resources are being used, and where deficiencies are (or areas where service exceeds standards). It is recommended that existing levels of service be documented and reviewed at least every two years, and adjustments be made to ensure consistency of service and the Town's ability to meet the needs of park users. Operating practices and policies (e.g., field closure policy, operating and partnership agreements, etc.) should also be reviewed on a regular basis in consultation with affected parties.

A suggested set of park and trail maintenance standards for further consideration by the Town can be found in **Appendix D**.

Recommendations

64. Undertake **park amenity condition assessments** on a regular basis to inform the Town's asset management plan and long-term capital plan.
65. In the longer-term, evaluate needs for an **expanded parks depot** or establishment of a satellite facility to facilitate the efficient and effective maintenance of Town parks and trails.
66. Employ operating practices and technologies that promote **operational savings and maintenance efficiencies** (e.g., use of wood fibre safety mulch at playgrounds, selective reduction of mowing, use of low-to-no maintenance landscape treatments, litter-free park programs, etc.).
67. Implement a budget protocol to inform Council of **operating fund impacts** (e.g., staffing, equipment) for maintaining new capital projects relating to parks, park amenities, or trails at the time of approval. Examples include making capital approval conditional on identifying operating funds, creating an "operating impact" section within staff reports and budgets, etc.



8. Trails Assessment

This section examines the Town's existing trails network, identifies potential opportunities for improvement, and provides guidelines for future planning and development.

8.1 Existing Trail Network Review

Overview

The off-road trail network in Penetanguishene offers a range of urban and woodland trail experiences, providing connectivity to waterfront recreational destinations and offering opportunities to explore parkland. The trail network also facilitates links to neighbouring communities and the County of Simcoe through trails such as the Trans-Canada Trail, Tiny Trail, Ganaraska Trail, and County Road 93 Multi-Use Pathway.

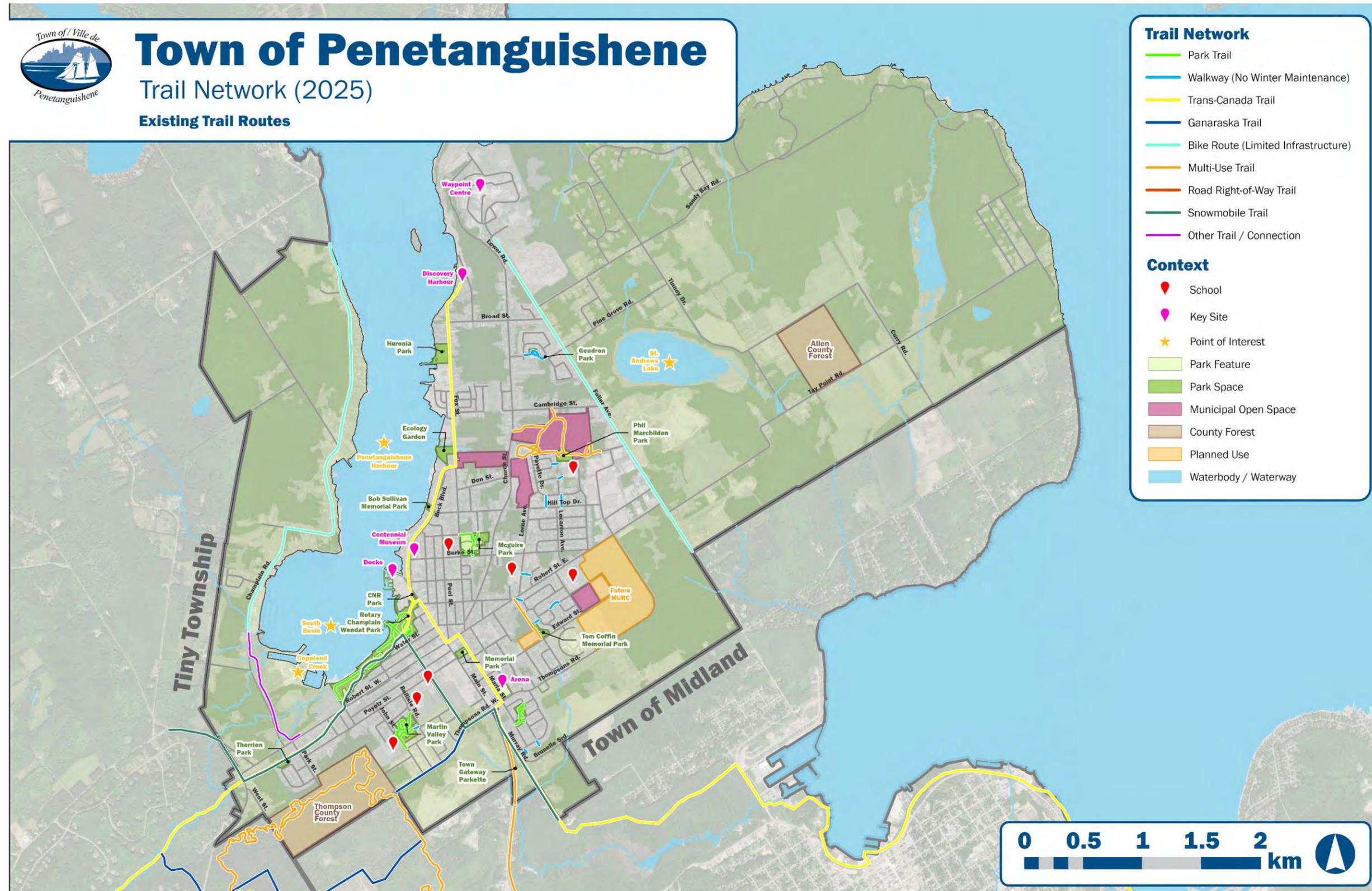


In addition to off-road trails, there are two dedicated cycle routes. One is along the west shore of the South Basin and Penetanguishene Harbour. The second segment is located on Fuller Ave and connects the Provincial Institutional facilities at the North end of the Town to Midland's waterfront. Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) routes provide seasonal connectivity to the Town of Midland and Tiny Township.

While the trail system is situated primarily within programmed parklands and woodlots, it depends on road infrastructure (on-road cycling and sidewalks) to fill gaps and create connectivity. Connectivity has been established along the waterfront zone and the Main Street/ County Road 93 corridor. However, roadway portions or trail routes sometimes lack adequate infrastructure and placemaking, including safe road crossings, consistent/accessible surface treatments, and/or buffering between adjacent uses.

Refer to the following map illustrating an inventory of existing sanctioned trails operated and maintained by the Town of Penetanguishene.

Figure 14: Existing Trail Network



Opportunities and Constraints Assessment

Trail walks were conducted with municipal staff and key stakeholders were engaged to gain a better understanding of opportunities and constraints within the system. Key themes include:

- A need for better connectivity to link community destinations, including parks, other trails, and facilitating active transportation modes of travel.
- More amenities to remove barriers for users, such as better wayfinding signage, rest areas, more shade along trail routes, and washrooms.
- Integration of signature destination boardwalk trail features that will foster community pride and draw tourism (e.g., Hunters Bay Trail in Huntsville).
- In addition to these themes, the consulting team identified a need to formalize trail standards, classification hierarchy, and type/frequency of amenity provisions, to align with industry best practices and improve trail use experience.

The following table summarizes the findings of the trail gap assessment. The table highlights opportunities and constraints that will inform trail network improvements.

Table 12. Trail System Gaps, Town of Penetanguishene

Trail(s)	Gap Location	Opportunities / Constraints
Trail Signage	Entire network	Existing wayfinding and regulatory signs lack design consistency, are undersized for user readability, and convey limited information. Developing design standards is an essential and complex process that requires dedicated resources and engagement to complete successfully.
Trans Canada Trail	Fox Street Beck Blvd. Docks Waterfront	Lack of infrastructure: no sidewalks, no off-road trail, bike lane (facilities do not conform to recommended OTM Book 18 standards). Consider opportunities to develop a separated trail facility along Fox St. and/or improve on-road cycling infrastructure. Beck Blvd. has a separated portion for the trail route and residential access. Opportunities to restrict this section to one-way traffic, reduce the speed limit, increase the width of the trail, buffer the trail, and add amenities for rest and shade.
Trans Canada Trail	Rotary Champlain Wendat Park Robert Street	Lack of formal trail entrance Rotary Champlain Wendat Park. Trail users enter at a vehicular driveway with no dedicated trail infrastructure, signage, or placemaking. Gap in trail and gap in trail infrastructure before new crossing infrastructure of Robert St. at the trail entrance near Dupuis Dr. Informal trail use along Robert Street between Centre St. and Champlain Rd. in the right of way along the former landfill site.

Trail(s)	Gap Location	Opportunities / Constraints
Champlain Road Trail	Former landfill site Copeland Creek Champlain Road	Consider formalizing the trail route, addressing informal routes and undesirable on-road portions. Opportunity to provide users with a nature-based waterfront trail experience and create a connection to the Champlain Rd. area off-road trail. Opportunity for a signature boardwalk trail destination experience. Uncertainty regarding permitted use of the former landfill and development requirements to ensure public safety. Connection needed to the Trans Canada Trail from the Champlain Rd. terminus.
Thompson County Forest	Trans Canada Trail on West St. and Park St. Martin Valley Park connection	Opportunity to facilitate more connections to Town roads, parks, and adjacent trail networks, as well as improve parking particularly on the east side of the property. Improved mapping and wayfinding should also be explored.
Municipal Open Spaces (No Existing Trails)	Tom Coffin Memorial Park Georgian Bay Cancer Centre	Opportunity for a boardwalk trail over the stormwater flood area (former soccer field) to connect Tom Coffin Memorial Park to the Georgian Bay Cancer Centre. Memorial, healing, and placemaking opportunities. Additional connections to adjacent neighborhoods, parks, and woodlots. Longer-term opportunity to connect trail system to future MURC.
Municipal Open Spaces (No Existing Trails)	Payette Trail Network Trans Canada Trail	Opportunity to formalize the unsanctioned trail network between Lorne Ave., Church St., and Payette Dr., connecting to the Payette Trail network. Create connections between the Payette Trails to the Trans Canada Trail and associated waterfront parks, utilizing municipal open space. The municipal open space lots that have been identified for trails are wooded with steep slopes. Trail design will need to use strategies to mitigate slope issues, such as a meandering alignment and segments of formalized accessible ramps, and/or designation as a low accessibility trail with seasonal use restrictions.

8.2 Vision and Goals for Penetanguishene Trails

Penetanguishene’s trails will form a connected, welcoming, and memorable network that supports active living, celebrates nature, and tells the story of our community. The trail system will link people to places – within town and beyond – while offering spaces to explore, rest, and enjoy the natural beauty that the Town of Penetanguishene has to offer.

Figure 15: Goals for the Trail Network



The following content identifies how these goals can be achieved through trail infrastructure upgrades, new trail infrastructure, programming, and partnerships.

8.3 Creating Welcoming and Enjoyable Trail Experiences

Designing trails to be welcoming, comfortable, and inclusive requires a focus on user experience and accessibility. Trail design should remove barriers to participation, set clear expectations for the type and quality of experience users can anticipate, and incorporate supportive amenities such as seating, shade, and accessible features. Where appropriate, vegetative or physical buffers should be included to enhance comfort, safety, and separation from adjacent uses.

Addressing Barriers to Participation

Primary barriers to trail use are often related to physical accessibility, user safety, and personal comfort. The level of design required to address these barriers varies depending on individual user needs and often extends beyond minimum legislated accessibility standards, which are typically focused on building access rather than open space environments. In outdoor and trail settings, there is greater design flexibility, and several best practice guidelines exist to inform the creation of inclusive and user-friendly public spaces.

Trail and active transportation users have diverse abilities, experiences, and comfort levels. For example, experienced users are often more comfortable using facilities within road corridors, while men and people traveling in groups may feel safer using unlit or remote trails. Conversely, individuals with lower mobility may find uneven surfaces or limited winter maintenance challenging to navigate. These variations highlight the importance of offering a range of trail types that accommodate different comfort levels, physical abilities, and user preferences.

However, barriers to trail use extend beyond physical or environmental factors. Trail design and programming should actively identify and mitigate social and psychological barriers that influence participation. These can arise from cognitive or perceptual differences, as well as from social factors such as income, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, health, or gender. Certain groups, including women, teen girls, LGBTQ+ individuals, and members of marginalized communities, are often underrepresented among trail users. These groups may feel unsafe or unwelcome, particularly on trails that are unlit, poorly marked, or located away from populated areas. When a trail or section of a trail is perceived as unsafe, uncomfortable, disconnected, or inconvenient, users are less likely to participate.

Designing and managing trails with inclusivity, safety, and comfort in mind is essential to ensuring that all community members can confidently and equitably enjoy the trail network.

The following are common barriers that may influence an individual's decision to use a trail:

- **Concerns about accessibility or unfamiliar environments:** leading to hesitation or anxiety when trying a new trail.
- **Perceived or actual safety risks:** particularly after sundown or in secluded areas, which are amplified during winter months when daylight is limited.
- **Fear of judgment or suspicion:** often experienced by youth, women, and members of visible minority communities.
- **Lack of information about trail locations, navigation, rest areas, amenities, and route distances:** making it difficult for users to plan trips with confidence.
- **Language barriers:** particularly for users who are unable to read English signage or navigation materials.
- **Limited trail access near places where people live and work:** including lower-income neighbourhoods and industrial employment areas.

- **Insufficient access to basic amenities:** such as washrooms, drinking water, or seating, which can discourage longer or repeat visits.

There are several guidelines and reference documents available to support the design of trails that are universally accessible, safe, and welcoming. These resources help ensure that trail environments are inclusive and provide enjoyable, desirable experiences for all users. The following is a list of resources that Town staff should become familiar with and apply to future decision making:

- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED):** The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd generation CPTED principles provide guidance on orienting the built environment to create safe, inclusive, and welcoming community spaces. Strategies that improve a sense of safety and increase pedestrian use of trails include improved lighting along primary routes, maintaining sightlines, wayfinding that clearly marks entrances and exits, and consistent upkeep of trail amenities. Green City Partnerships has produced a document called **Best Management Practices for CPTED in Natural Landscapes** that outlines strategies for maintaining safety specifically along nature trails. 2nd generation CPTED principles also include the need to program or encourage users to be in a space to provide natural surveillance. Likewise, the very nature of bringing people together to build social relationships and community ownership in a public space improves the sense of safety and wellbeing. Understanding how these principles translate to municipal planning and design is important to help inform future next steps. Some specific design considerations that have been employed by municipalities include:
 - Providing good visibility by others by having routes pass through well-used public spaces;
 - Provide the ability to find and obtain help; signage that tells users where they are along the trail system;
 - Provide “escape” routes from isolated areas at regular intervals;
 - Maintain sight lines and sight distances that are appropriately open to allow good visibility by users;
 - Provide trailhead parking in highly visible areas;
 - Minimize routing close to features that create hiding places such as breaks in building facades, stairwells, dense shrubs and fences;
 - Design underpasses and bridges so that users can see the end of the feature as well as the area beyond;
 - Signs near entrances to isolated areas can be used to inform users that the area is isolated and suggest alternative routes; and
 - Adequate lighting or lighting ‘refuge locations’ where users can reach a safe place.
- **Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification:** A certification program designed to identify specific measures for improving accessibility of a building, site or public space, including front country primary use trails and pedestrian routes.

- **Accessibility for Ontario with Disabilities Act (AODA):** Through the legislation, a specific target has been set to make the entire province accessible to people with disabilities by 2025. To achieve this goal, the Government of Ontario has adopted **The Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment**. This document prescribes specific guidelines and standards needed to ensure universal barrier-free access. These standards apply to the new construction or redevelopment of both on-road and off-road active transportation infrastructure such as multi-use pathways and multi-use trails. At a minimum, the municipality needs to apply the standards outlined in the Built Environment Standards to all new and redeveloped primary trails and pedestrian routes. Ideally, designated existing trails would be upgraded to meet the standards.
- **The Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 18: “Bicycle Facilities”** provides comprehensive guidance for the planning, design, and operation of cycling infrastructure across Ontario. It serves as a technical reference for engineers, planners, and transportation professionals to promote a consistent and safe approach to designing on-road cycling facilities. The manual addresses topics such as cyclist characteristics, facility types (including bike lanes, paved shoulders, and cycle tracks), route selection, integration with other roadway elements such as intersections and roundabouts, and facility maintenance. OTM Book 18 is primarily intended for the design of **on-road bicycle infrastructure**, and while its principles can inform trail planning, it does not specifically apply to **off-road multi-use trails** or recreational pathways.

Amenities that Support Trail Use

Rest and Refuge

It is important to incorporate places for people to rest and take refuge. It is recommended that trails strive for some form of informal or formal seating every 200m, ideally located at points of entry and vistas. This metric is based on accommodating the average user. In areas where there is a higher potential for users with mobility impairments, such as near seniors’ homes or amenities, along transit routes, or trails within tourism destination locations, rest seating is recommended every 50m. Formal bench seating with armrests and backrests is recommended for areas where accessibility is of greater need. However, the provision of seating outweighs the priority for quality. Substitution or augmentation with natural materials such as flat-topped stones is always welcome.



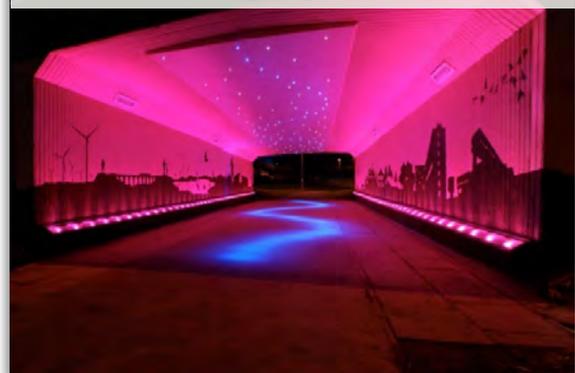
Lighting

Lighting in trail systems must balance environmental and financial concerns. Costs and impacts can be managed with diffused lighting, energy-efficient bulbs, and motion sensors. Adequate lighting encourages use by women and families, especially through dark winter nights, and can facilitate both recreational and commuter access. Consider lighting on trails that facilitate connections to key destinations and routes that will appeal to users in the late fall, winter, and early spring. If full lighting isn't possible, use 'refuge' lighting at intervals for safety. Solar lighting, which is becoming more cost-effective and versatile, is ideal for remote trailheads and short, vulnerable sections. Effective lighting enhances safety by improving visibility, helping people avoid hazards, and deterring crime. Lighting as a feature can be a way to engage with the community and tourists, while benefiting from increased traffic as a form of CPTED. Lighting is one component of CPTED and should not be relied upon as a standalone safety measure. Its application should be selective and informed by the site-specific factors outlined above.

Solar lighting at trail node in North Perth



Creative underpass lighting in Cumbernauld, UK



Washrooms

Access to washrooms is a key consideration for trail and active transportation users, particularly seniors, and can significantly influence comfort and trail use. Providing public washrooms or clearly identifying nearby facilities through partnerships with local businesses can enhance accessibility and encourage more extended visits. While winter operations can be challenging, ensuring four-season access at key, high-use locations is essential to support consistent trail use throughout the year.

Enabling Through Technology

Emerging technologies present new opportunities to enhance trail experiences, increase use, and broaden accessibility. When thoughtfully applied, they can address specific challenges, improve operations, and engage new audiences – particularly younger users – while ensuring that implementation costs remain proportionate to measurable benefits. Examples include solar or hardwired charging stations with USB and e-bike ports, Wi-Fi connectivity through compact low-power broadcast devices such as those developed by Seedia that can also collect user data and share trail information, and digital mapping tools

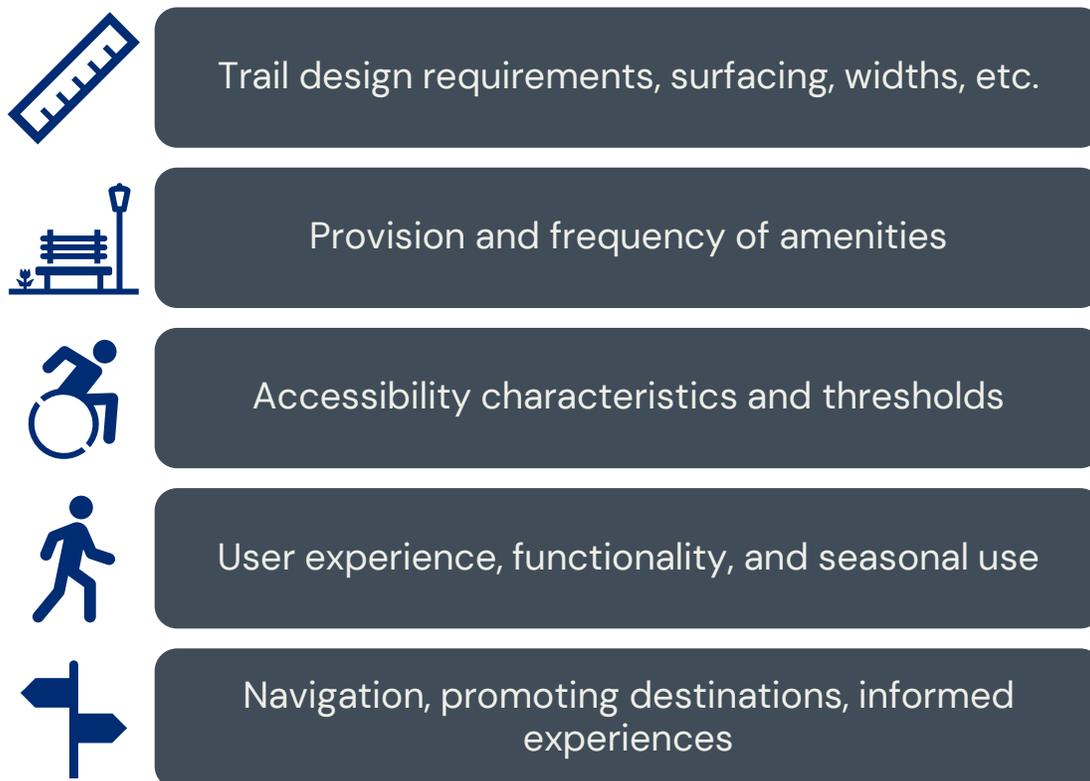
like Google Street View and 360-degree imagery that allow users to preview routes, explore trails virtually, and support education and accessibility.

Trail Classification and Design Standards

Establishing a clear framework for trail classification is key to achieving these objectives. Embedding elements such as accessibility targets, surfacing materials, frequency of amenities, buffer treatments, and maintenance requirements directly into trail design standards ensures consistency and clarity. This approach defines what each trail facility must include while helping users understand the expected quality, comfort, and experience.

The classification framework also guides trail design, management, and maintenance, ensuring that each trail type is developed and maintained to match its intended function and conditions. Clearly labelling trails with easy-to-understand classifications helps communicate expectations for accessibility, safety, and experience. Collectively, these measures support a more predictable, inclusive, and enjoyable trail network for all users.

Figure 16: Key Components of Trail Classification + Design Standards



Trail Classifications are both an internal and public-facing tool that will be paired with existing trail names. The existing trail names serve as significant placemaking and navigational tools, and the proposed Trail Classification will be another layer of that branding, informing users about what to expect of the trail conditions.

The recommended Trail Classification includes an overarching **Type Classification** that relates to the trail's location and land-use context. Each **Type** has multiple **Subcategories** that staff will select from when constructing or upgrading trail facilities. Each **Subcategory** provides clear parameters for the intended function of the trail, and the user needs to guide the selection. The naming and details of trail classifications can benefit greatly from broader regional collaboration to create consistencies; however, the user experience while participating on these trails is unique to Penetanguishene and that distinction should be celebrated.

Figure 17: Recommended Trail Classifications

Type 1: Trails in Urban + Tourism Areas

- A: Primary Multi-Use Pathway
- B: Secondary Multi-Use Pathway
- C: Access Pathway

Type 2: Trails in Natural Areas

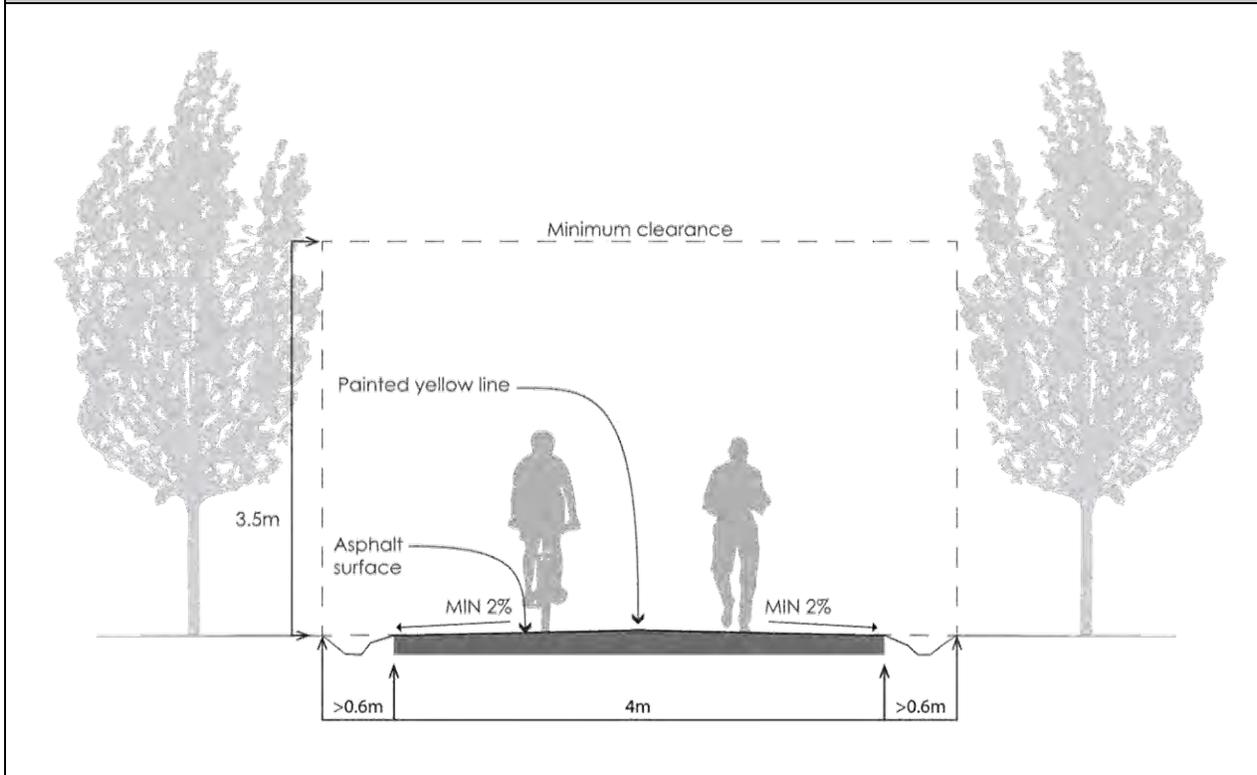
- A: Nature Trail
- B: Adventure Trail

Type 3: Trails with Road Corridors

- A: Roadway Corridor Multi-Use Pathway
- B: Paved Shoulder
- C: Bicycle Lane

Type 1: Trails in Urban + Tourism Areas

A: Primary Multi-Use Pathway



Design Standards

Application: High-traffic park areas and commuter connections.

Direction: Two-way with centreline.

Width: 4 m (preferred) – 3 m (constrained).

Surfacing: Asphalt or Concrete.

Accessibility: Maximum of 5% Slopes, 2% cross slopes. No stairs permitted, ramps conforming to AODA standards, or trail deviations to traverse the slope.

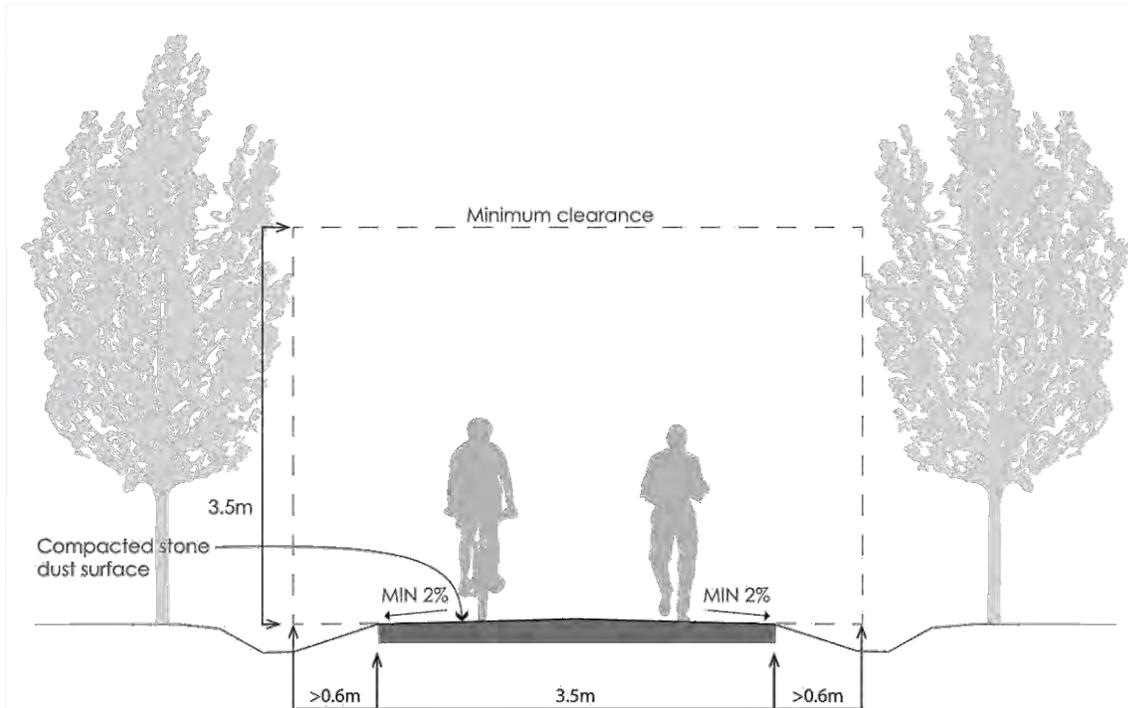
Maintenance: 4-Season Service (i.e., ploughing, sweeping, regular landscape maintenance).

Lighting: Fully lit via road or dedicated pedestrian lighting.

Amenities: Moderate frequency of amenities. Examples: trash receptacles at trail entry points, seating at key locations, trash cans easily accessible by service vehicles. Recommended 50m spacing between seating / resting opportunities in targeted areas that would support reduced mobility users. Recommended 200m minimum spacing between seating / resting opportunities in all other areas.

Type 1: Trails in Urban + Tourism Areas

B: Secondary Multi-Use Pathway



Design Standards

Application: Medium-traffic park areas that do not require 4-season maintained accessibility.

Direction: Two-way without centerline.

Width: 3.5 m (preferred) – 3 m (constrained).

Surfacing: Compacted granular screenings.

Accessibility: Maximum of 5% Slopes, 2% cross slopes. No stairs permitted, ramps conforming to AODA standards, or trail deviations to traverse the slope.

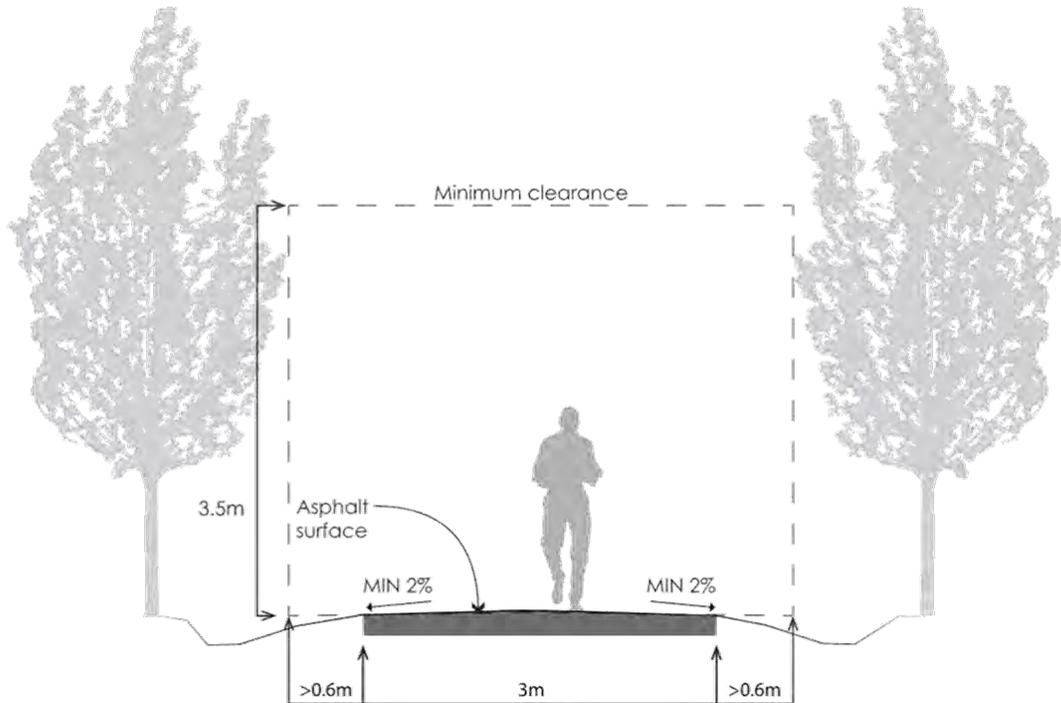
Maintenance: 3-Season Service (i.e., no ploughing, regular landscape maintenance).

Lighting: No lighting or lighting at access and destination points.

Amenities: Moderate frequency of amenities. Examples: trash receptacles at trail entry points, seating at key locations, trash cans easily accessible by service vehicles. Recommended 200m spacing between seating/resting opportunities.

Type 1: Trails in Urban + Tourism Areas

C: Access Pathway



Design Standards

Application: Medium-low traffic connections between amenities and activity nodes.

Direction: Two-way without centerline.

Width: 4 m (preferred) – 3 m (constrained).

Surfacing: Asphalt or Concrete.

Accessibility: Maximum of 5% Slopes, 2% cross slopes. No stairs permitted, ramps conforming to AODA standards, or trail deviations to traverse the slope.

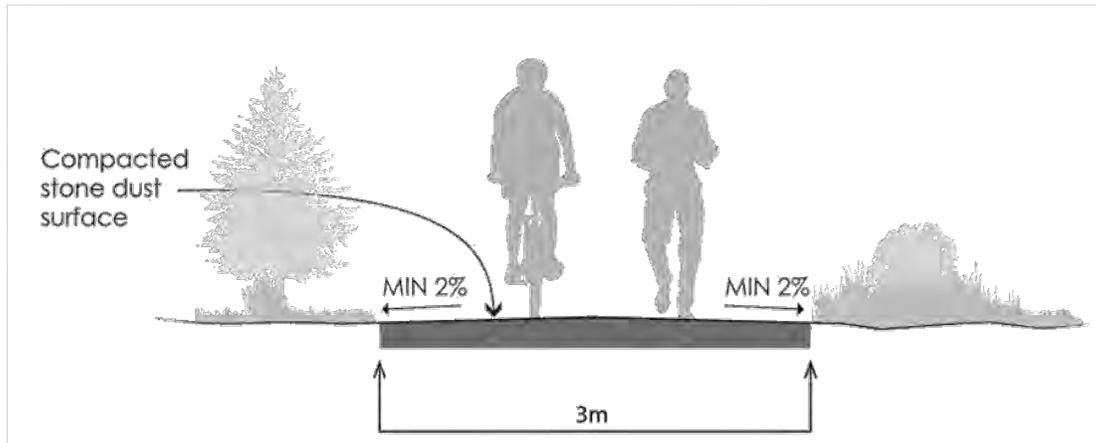
Maintenance: 3-Season Service (i.e., no ploughing, regular landscape maintenance).

Lighting/Security: Fully lit via road or dedicated pedestrian lighting.

Amenities: Moderate frequency of amenities. Examples: trash receptacles at trail entry points, seating at key locations, trash cans easily accessible by service vehicles. Seating/resting opportunities located at destinations only.

Type 2: Trails in Natural Areas

A: Nature Trail



Design Standards

Application: High-traffic park areas and commuter connections.

Direction: Two-way without centerline.

Width: 3 m (preferred) – <1 m (constrained).

Surfacing: Compacted granular screenings.

Accessibility: Maximum of 5–10% Slopes for short distances (AODA recreational trail standards) and 2% cross slope. No stairs permitted, for steep slopes, consider developing ramps conforming to AODA standards, or trail deviations to traverse the slope.

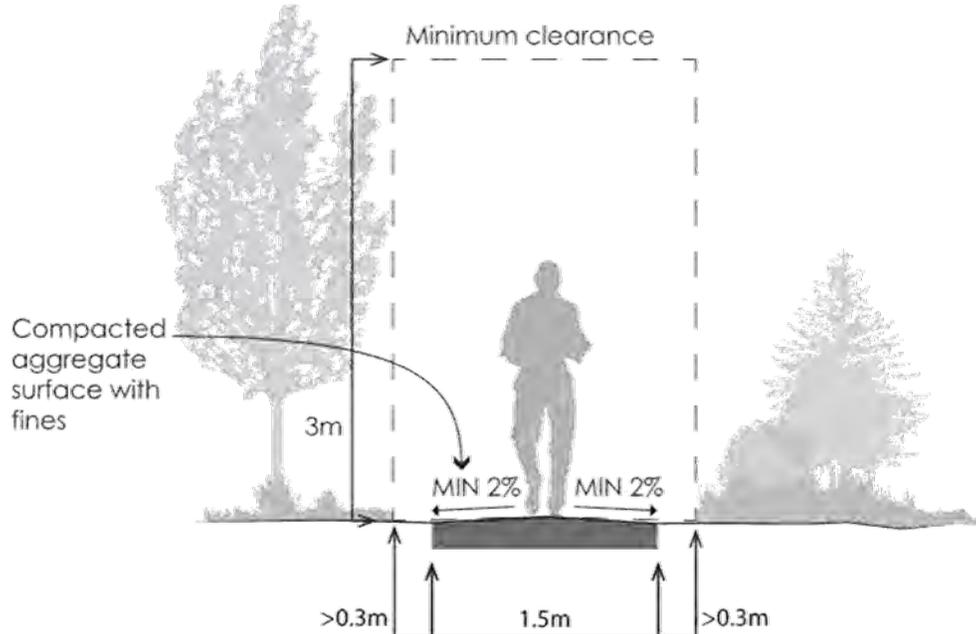
Maintenance: Annual/reactive service (i.e., tree hazard removal). Includes topping up of stone dust surface as necessary, keeping trail envelope free from obstacles (e.g., pruning to maintain clear zone). Annual/reactive service (i.e., seasonal grass trimming and trail edge maintenance). No snow removal and consideration for snow grooming on designated special use trails.

Lighting/Security: No lighting on trail, select trailhead lighting.

Amenities: Moderate frequency of amenities. Examples: waste and recycling facilities at points of entry that are accessible by maintenance vehicles, seating amenities at all trail points of entry and targeting a maximum occurrence of every 200m (primarily through use of informal seating stones), refuge locations which provide both seating and overhead protection from elements shall be provided every 1000m, and within 200m of the trail facility.

Type 2: Trails in a Nature Area

B: Adventure Trail



Design Standards

Application: Natural areas that cannot accommodate cycling because of design constraints (e.g., inadequate sight lines), high traffic levels, or sensitive environments. Should not be the main path of travel to connect users to a destination or amenity.

Direction: Two-way.

Width: 1.5 m (preferred) – 0.5 m (constrained).

Surfacing: Compacted native soil or mulch.

Accessibility: Trails are not considered accessible. Reduce slopes where possible to a maximum of 20%, and cross slopes targeting 2% with allowances to 8%.

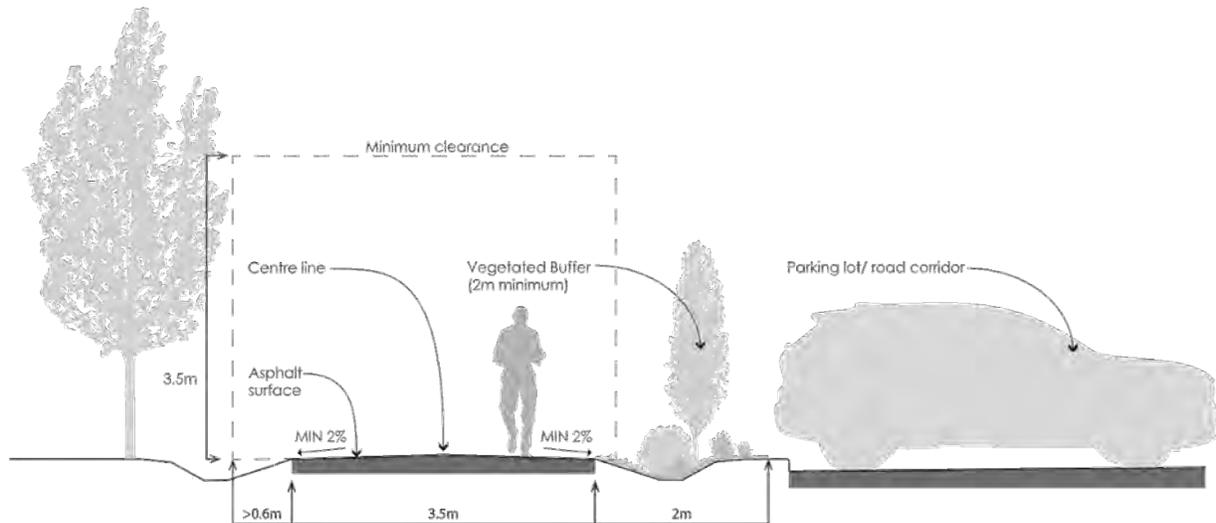
Maintenance: Annual/reactive service (i.e., tree hazard removal). Includes topping up of granular or mulch surface as necessary, keeping trail envelope free from obstacles (e.g., pruning to maintain clear zone).

Lighting: No lighting.

Amenities: Low frequency of amenities. Examples: trash receptacles at trail entry points. Seating at key locations (e.g., top of long climb, viewpoint). Natural materials used for seating opportunities.

Type 3: Trails in a Road Corridor

A: Roadway Corridor Multi-Use Pathway



Design Standards

Application: High-traffic commuter connections within a roadway corridor/boulevard.

Direction: Two-way with centreline.

Width: 4 m (preferred) – 3 m (constrained).

Surfacing: Asphalt.

Accessibility: Maximum of 5% Slopes or match slopes of road profile where necessary.

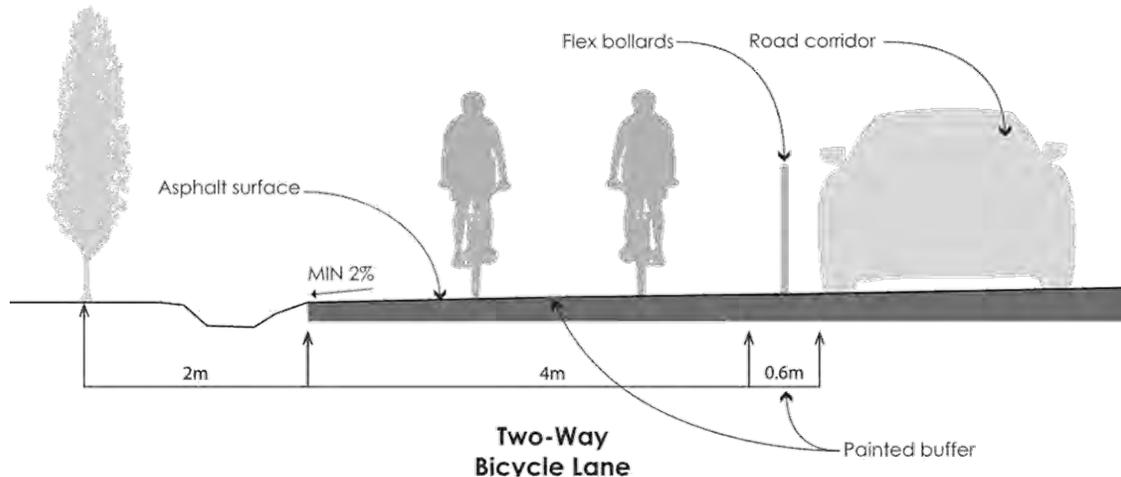
Maintenance: 4-Season Service (i.e., ploughing, sweeping, regular landscape maintenance).

Lighting/Security: Fully lit via road or dedicated pedestrian lighting.

Amenities: Moderate frequency of amenities. Examples: trash receptacles at trail entry points, seating at key locations, trash cans easily accessible by service vehicles. Recommended 200m spacing between seating / resting opportunities.

Type 3: Trails in a Road Corridor

B: Paved Shoulders (two-way bicycle lane)



Design Standards

Application: Addressing gaps when off-road connections are not possible, cycle-commuting routes, and vehicular traffic speeds over 40km per hour.

Direction: Two-way with centreline.

Width: 4 m (preferred) – 3 m (constrained).

Barrier: 600 mm painted buffer and/or flex bollard.

Other: Can be paired with a parallel sidewalk or pedestrian path.

Surfacing: Asphalt.

Accessibility: Maximum of 5% Slopes or match slopes of road profile where necessary.

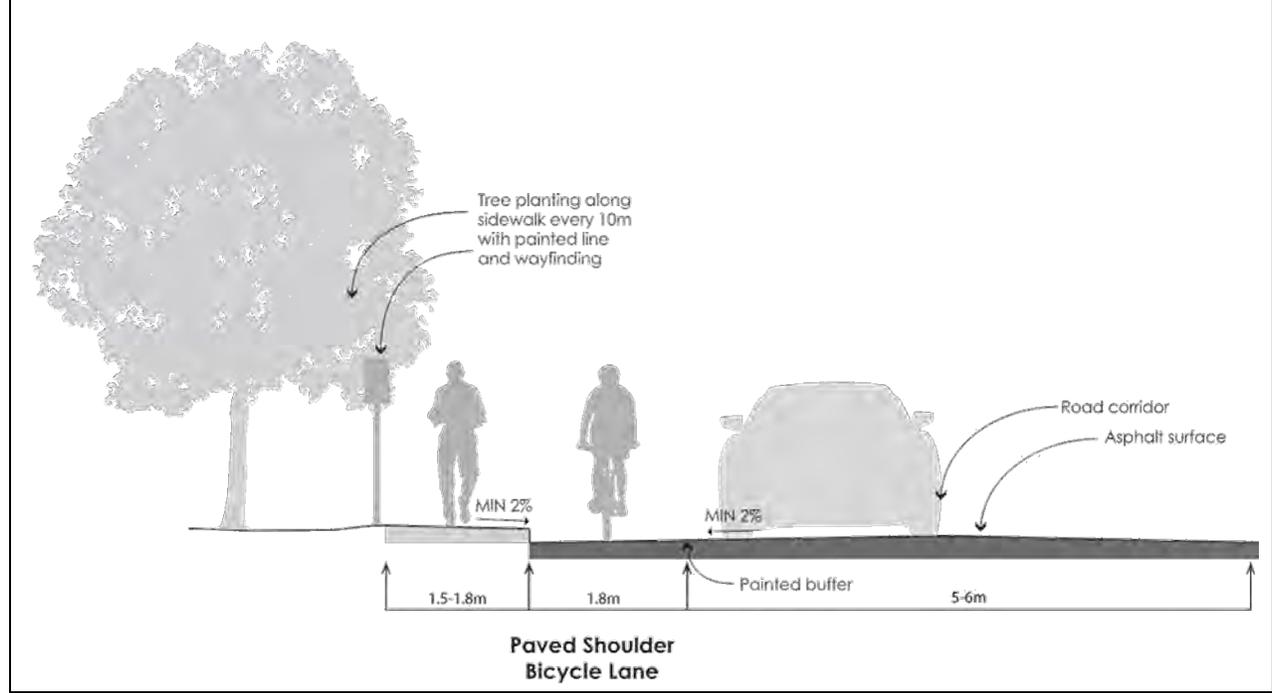
Maintenance: 4-Season Service (i.e., ploughing, sweeping, regular landscape maintenance).

Lighting/Security: Fully lit via road or dedicated pedestrian lighting.

Amenities: Low frequency of amenities. Examples: trash receptacles and seating at trail entry points or destination rest areas.

Type 3: Trails in a Road Corridor

C: Bicycle Lane



Design Standards

Application: Addressing gaps when off-road connections are not possible, cycle-commuting routes, and lower vehicular traffic speeds and volumes.

Direction: One-way.

Width: 3 m (preferred) – 2 m (constrained) for higher speed roads, 1.8 m (preferred) – 1.5 m (constrained) for lower speed roads.

Barrier: Flex bollards and pavement markings (preferred) or pavement markings (typ. Solid white line) (constrained).

Other: Can be paired with a parallel sidewalk or pedestrian path.

Surfacing: Asphalt.

Accessibility: Maximum of 5% Slopes or match slopes of road profile where necessary.

Maintenance: 4-Season Service (i.e., ploughing, sweeping, regular landscape maintenance).

Lighting/Security: Fully lit via road or dedicated pedestrian lighting.

Amenities: Low frequency of amenities. Examples: trash receptacles and seating at trail entry points or destination rest areas.

Trail Classification Selection Process

The trail classification selection process provides a framework for determining which trail types and subcategories are most appropriate for a given context. The classifications and subcategories are listed in priority order, beginning with those that offer the highest quality user experience and accessibility. Staff should strive to implement Trail Type 1 A and Trail Type 2 A wherever possible, as these provide the most inclusive, comfortable, and universally accessible experiences for the widest range of users.

Once the land use context for a trail route has been identified, the feasibility assessment for trail subcategory selection should begin with the highest priority options. The list is structured to start with trails that accommodate a broad range of users and incorporate higher levels of accessibility, comfort, and supporting amenities. Where physical constraints, environmental conditions, or available resources limit the feasibility of these higher-standard designs, lower priority subcategories may be applied to ensure a practical and context-sensitive trail solution.

This structured approach ensures that decisions related to trail design and upgrades remain consistent, transparent, and guided by clear criteria that prioritize accessibility, user experience, and long-term sustainability.

Can a trail route, such as the Trans Canada Trail, have a mix of design standards? Trail Classifications and Subcategories may change as a trail moves through different land use contexts. However, Trail Categories and Subcategories must remain as consistent as possible, only changing at significant points of entry. An important aspect of accessibility is to facilitate a trail user's ability to make an informed decision about their experience. Changes in trail surfacing, slope, and amenity levels can create barriers for users. The design of a trail should remain consistent for the duration of a user's typical trip. There needs to be a strong rationale for the change, such as less user demand, different types of users, or a change in adjacent land use (such as moving from the waterfront to an urban area or roadway corridor).

What is the trail classification selection process? The Trail Classifications are listed in priority order, with trails that are more desirable to users to those that are less desirable. Staff should strive to implement trail Type 1 and Type 2 wherever possible. The trail Subcategories have been listed in priority order within each Type Classification, with trails that will accommodate a broader range of users with heightened accessibility and amenities listed first, followed by options that may be more applicable due to site context, user volumes, space restrictions, and/or interim approaches to facility connectivity.

Recommendations

68. Confirm and develop **trail construction details** based on the recommended trail classification parameters, ensuring application of recommended design standards (AODA, OTM Book 18) and prioritizing measures to enable and encourage a broad range of users. Collaborate with neighboring municipalities and Simcoe County to look for ways to improve and unify the approach.
69. **Apply the trail classification standard requirements** to maintenance practices, asset management tools, site plan application requirements, and long-term Town capital project planning.

8.4 Building a Connected Trail Network

Proposed Trail Network

Creating safe and accessible trail connections unlocks the full potential of the network to support both recreation and active transportation to everyday destinations. Strengthening connections between neighbourhoods, parks, and downtown areas encourages trail use, supports residents who do not drive, and enhances local tourism by drawing visitors to community businesses. Expanding routes to neighbouring municipalities and Simcoe County forests further enhances access to recreation, natural assets, and regional tourism opportunities.

Many trails identified in the proposed network map already exist but require upgrades to align with the updated design and accessibility standards. These improvements should be implemented gradually through lifecycle renewal projects or phased budgeting. This approach ensures consistent surfacing, accessibility, and supporting amenities that meet the needs of intended users. Upgrades should be coordinated with broader site renewals, adjacent developments, or undertaken as part of risk mitigation measures, rather than as immediate stand-alone projects.

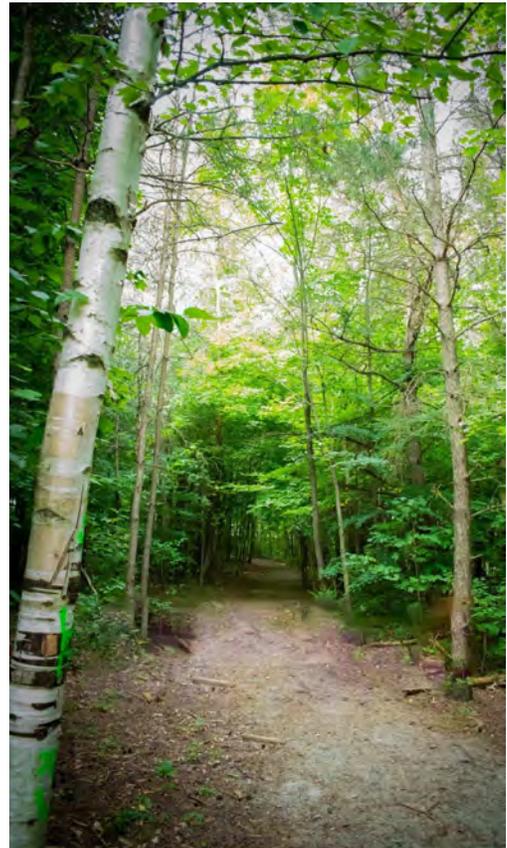
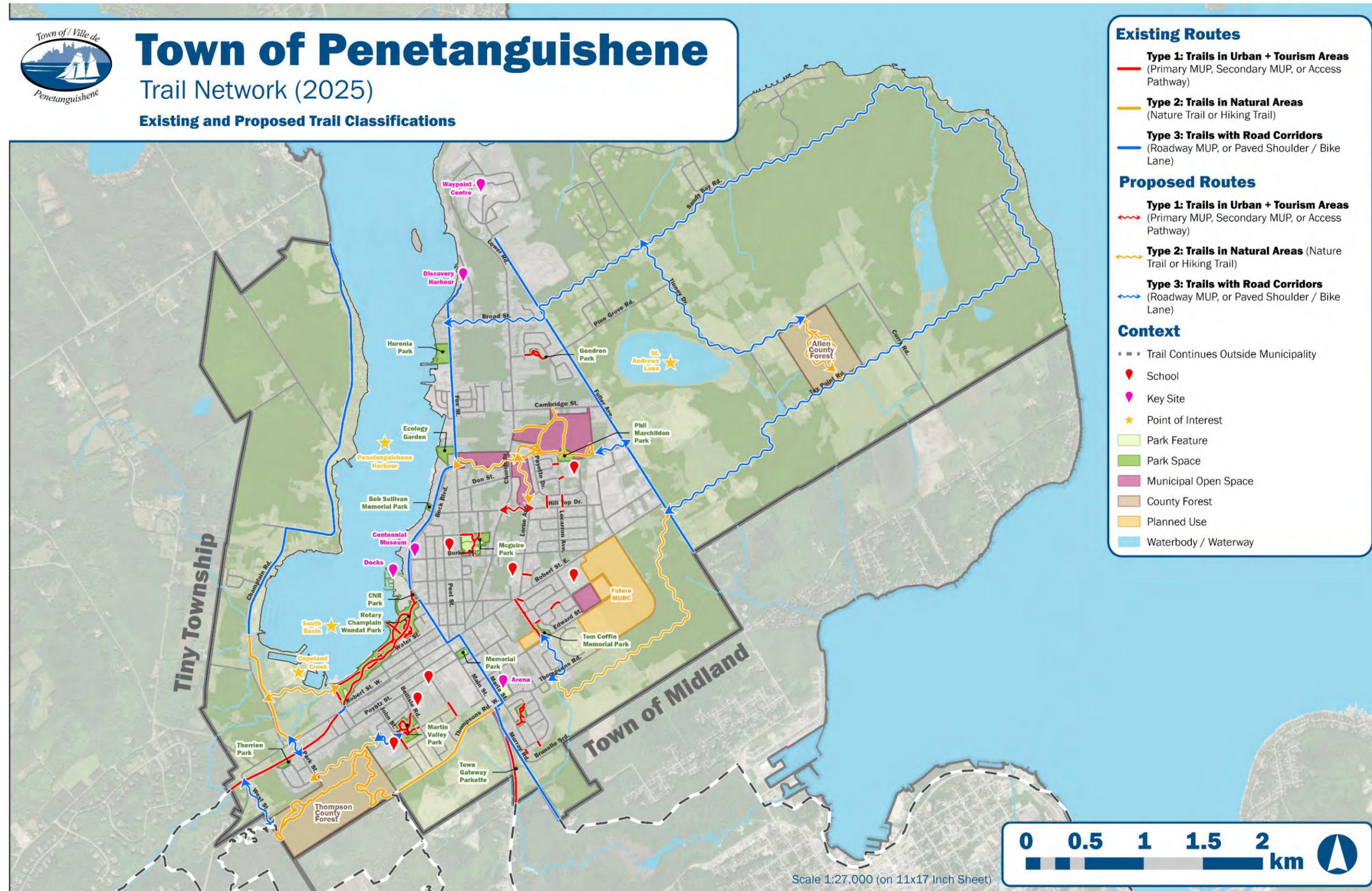


Figure 18: Proposed Trail Network



Consistency in user experience is critical when implementing the network. Variations in trail classification or design should be minimized and occur only where necessary – such as at infrastructure crossings or major trailheads – where changes can be clearly communicated through signage and design cues. This approach ensures that users can easily understand and navigate the system while maintaining a cohesive, enjoyable trail experience across the network.

The table below illustrates the estimated total trail length for existing and new trails.

Table 13: Estimated Quantities and Budgets for New and Replacement Trail Infrastructure

Trail Type	Existing Trails (approximate)	New Trails, (approximate)	Total Trails
TYPE : Trails in Urban + Tourism Areas Primary Multi-Use Pathway, Secondary Multi-Use Pathway, Access Pathway	9 km	1 km	10 km
TYPE 2: Trails in Natural Areas Nature Trail, Adventure Trail	8 km	5 km	13 km
TYPE 3: Trails with Road Corridors Roadway Corridor Multi-Use Pathway, Paved Shoulder, Bicycle Lane	12 km	14 km	26 km
TOTAL	29 km	20 km	49 km

Note: Several 'new' trails are formalizing existing unsanctioned trails. New trails are primarily focused on closing gaps and facilitating access to community destinations.

Recommendations

70. Conduct an **assessment of upcoming capital projects** – including roads, parks, and development areas – to identify opportunities to coordinate trail construction and improvements alongside these initiatives.
71. Before initiating each trail project, evaluate which subcategory of the assigned trail classification is most appropriate, using the **established classification framework** to guide design and implementation decisions.
72. Develop **new trail segments and active transportation infrastructure** to connect missing links, enhancing overall connectivity and ensuring seamless routes between key destinations.
73. Improve **existing trail segments and active transportation infrastructure located outside of road corridors** to meet updated trail classification standards, ensuring consistent quality, safety, and accessibility.

74. Enhance **existing trails situated within road corridors** to align with the new classification standards, improving user comfort and experience within these shared spaces.

Trails in Natural Areas

Natural areas provide unique opportunities for recreation, education, and nature appreciation that are not typically available in traditional parks. However, balancing public access with the protection of sensitive ecological features can be challenging, particularly where trails are located near or within urban areas. Increased visitation can place pressure on the very resources that attract users, highlighting the need for careful trail planning and management.

Trails in natural areas must be thoughtfully aligned, designed, and regularly monitored to prevent overuse, erosion, and off-trail movement. Early detection of issues such as informal “desire lines” allows for timely mitigation before significant damage occurs. Strategic planting and natural barriers can help discourage off-trail travel, while ongoing education fosters user awareness and stewardship.

In some cases, trails should not be located within highly sensitive environments such as rare vegetation communities or narrow wildlife corridors where disturbance could cause lasting harm. Alternative routes should be identified, and public communication provided to explain decisions to restrict access.

When trails are proposed in or near sensitive natural heritage areas, the following design considerations should guide decision-making:

- Avoid or reroute trails away from critical habitats and sensitive features.
- Interpret natural features without drawing users directly to them.
- Use previously disturbed areas where appropriate.
- Maintain natural processes and enhance habitat where possible.
- Highlight and celebrate ecological features through interpretation.

Where trails are proposed through sensitive areas, an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) should be completed to assess potential impacts, recommend mitigation measures, and establish design and construction standards prior to approval.

Integrating trail planning early in the development process helps ensure linkages are located in appropriate areas and avoid sensitive environmental features. One effective approach is to dedicate linear trail blocks parallel to environmental buffers during subdivision planning. This allows trail construction to occur alongside site development and ensures that future homeowners understand trail locations and potential implications prior to purchase.

Seasonal Maintenance and Winter Use of Trails

Seasonal maintenance should be guided by user needs, trail function, and realistic service expectations communicated to the public. Each trail type in the classification tool should identify expected maintenance levels, including winter operations, and this information should be available through trailhead signage and online resources. Typical seasonal maintenance includes vegetation and hazard tree removal, surface and signage repairs, and snow management.

Facilitating Winter Trail Use: Snow-covered trails also offer valuable recreational opportunities such as snowmobiling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and sledding. Designating certain trails or sections for specific uses can reduce conflicts between pedestrians and other users. Volunteer-supported grooming or donation-based “user pass” programs can help sustain winter maintenance. Seasonal programming and events can also encourage winter trail use. On trails not maintained in winter, clear wayfinding and frequent signage are essential to inform users and ensure safety.

Snow and De-icing Priorities: The Town does not currently provide any winter maintenance of its trails. Should the Town decide to evaluate options in the future, winter maintenance may focus on trails that support year-round mobility and access to key destinations, and that are not part of the primary snowmobile trail network. Snow and de-icing materials such as salt and sand should be avoided in environmentally sensitive areas. Service frequency must balance user expectations with available staffing and budgets. A partial clearing approach may be used on granular trails to maintain traction and reduce ice buildup. Leaving light snow cover can improve safety and support a variety of users, especially in fluctuating winter conditions.

Shared Use with Snowmobiles: Most Ontario municipalities restrict snowmobile use to authorized OFSC trails or designated road shoulders and prohibit snowmobiles on public ‘active transportation’ trails. Some permit snowmobile access on designated connector routes to link urban areas to the OFSC network, and there are several rural rail trails across Ontario where snowmobile use is permitted. The Town should continue working with the OFSC and affiliated clubs to designate a limited number of trail routes for snowmobile use. Any such routes should be clearly signed, incorporate reduced speed requirements, and prioritize non-motorized users. Snowmobile permissions should remain flexible and not be embedded within trail classifications, allowing routes and access timing to be adjusted based on seasonal conditions, observed user conflicts, and ongoing monitoring to protect the overall quality of the trail experience for its primary users.

Recommendations

75. Continue to work with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs to assess and sign trail routes for **snowmobile use** annually and educating the public on permitted uses and restrictions.

8.5 Making Trails Easy to Navigate

Trail users often want to know where a trail goes, how to access it, how long it is, and how challenging it will be. Clear, consistent signage paired with a dynamic digital mapping platform is essential for a successful trail system. However, these elements are often underfunded and overlooked. Investing in wayfinding and signage will improve accessibility, increase participation, support active transportation, and strengthen the local economy.

Wayfinding helps users understand where they are, where they want to go, and how to get there. Effective design improves safety, navigation, and confidence through visible, intuitive signs, maps, and markings. Wayfinding can also promote active transportation by showing how local trails connect to neighbourhoods, parks, and regional networks.

Trail signage should be inclusive and consistent, forming a unified system that uses clear symbols, high-contrast colours, and readable fonts. Accessibility can be enhanced through tactile or auditory cues, clear identification of accessible routes, and universal icons that overcome language barriers. Signage should also be durable, easy to maintain, and adaptable for sponsorship or local information, helping offset costs and promoting community engagement.

Existing wayfinding and regulatory signs lack consistency in design, are undersized for user readability, and are limited in the information they convey to users. Developing design standards is an essential and complex process that requires dedicated resources and engagement to complete successfully. Often, trail signage design is completed as needed and without a holistic approach, which negatively impacts its effectiveness.

The following is a list of recommended signage.

- **Trailhead Signs:** Trailhead signage plays a key role in orienting users and creating a sense of welcome and clarity at major access points, destination areas, and network junctions. These signs should include maps, rules and regulations, and key trail information to help users plan their route. Where trailheads are visible from a distance, they can also serve as important landmarks and should include municipal “911” addressing for clear location identification in case of emergencies. Trailhead signage can also serve as an opportunity for local promotion or sponsorship, offsetting costs while informing users about nearby services and amenities. At minimum, entrance signage should feature high-contrast colours, clear and readable fonts, and details such as: trail length and width, surface type, slope gradient, location of amenities, potential hazards, trail difficulty, and accessibility ratings (e.g., wheelchair, walker, or mobility scooter accessible).
- **Directional and Distance Marker Signs:** Directional signage should be consistently placed along trails – particularly at intersections and at regular intervals on uninterrupted segments – to reassure users that they are following the intended route. These signs enhance user confidence, improve navigation, and contribute to a

safer trail experience. Complementing directional signs, distance markers installed at regular intervals provide valuable information for users tracking their progress or using the trail for fitness purposes. Accurately placed markers can also support emergency response, particularly when their locations are GPS-referenced and integrated into digital mapping systems.

- **Interpretive Signs:** Interpretive signage enriches the trail experience by educating users about the surrounding environment, culture, and history. These signs may be incorporated alongside directional signage or stand alone at key points of interest. They can highlight ecological features, cultural or historical landmarks, and current land uses along the trail corridor. When designed thoughtfully, interpretive signs transform a simple route into an engaging learning experience, fostering appreciation and stewardship of the natural and cultural landscape.
- **Regulatory and Warning Signs:** Regulatory and warning signs promote safety, consistency, and responsible use across the trail network. **Regulatory signs** communicate permitted or restricted activities, such as speed limits, leash requirements, or vehicle prohibitions, and are enforceable only when supported by provincial law or a municipal by-law. Including the applicable by-law number on the sign is recommended to reinforce authority. Typically fabricated from aluminum with reflective surfaces, these signs are rectangular (except for stop or yield signs) and may be scaled to about 50% of roadway sizes for trail use. **Warning signs** alert users to upcoming conditions, intersections, or activity zones. Scaled-down versions of familiar roadway signs, such as Stop, Yield, or Curve Ahead, are recommended for recognition and safety. Signs may also be customized for specific areas, such as playgrounds or event spaces, to alert faster-moving users to slow down or dismount.

Table 14: Proposed Signage and Wayfinding System

Facility	Information	Locations and Frequency
Major Trailhead Signage	Name of trail and permitted uses. Maps, rules, tourism information, notices, and emergency contact information Distances to destinations, other points of entry, amenities, etc.	Major points of entry, points of entry with parking, and major decision points. Approximately 25% of all access points.
Minor Trailhead Signage	Name of trail and permitted uses. Accessibility information, rules, notices, and emergency contact information Distances to destinations, other points of entry, amenities, etc.	All points of entry that are not designated Major Trailheads. Approximately 75% of all access points.

Facility	Information	Locations and Frequency
Destination Signage	Name of destination, address, owner/manager, and types of facilities present. Municipal and private destinations indicate amenities available to trail users.	At decision points
Directional Signage	Name of trail and direction of travel. Distances to destinations, other points of entry, amenities, level of challenge, etc.	All decision points, intersections, and at regular intervals along trails (maximum every 2,000m).
Regulatory and Warning Signage	Refer to MTO Standard Manuals, including OTM Book 18 Cycling Facilities and OTM Book 5 Regulatory Signs.	Road crossings, trail intersections, to indicate a potential hazard.

Recommendations

76. Create a **comprehensive signage and mapping plan** (with consideration of the RTO7 signage manual) that emphasizes accessibility, consistency, and branding to ensure clear navigation across the entire trail network, including standard construction details. Install physical signage and integrate digital mapping tools that help users navigate to trails, community destinations, and key amenities.
77. Collaborate with **local businesses and organizations** to provide trail and active transportation users with access to nearby amenities, services, and destinations that enhance the overall trail experience.

8.6 Showcasing Nature and Scenic Experiences

Enhancing the trail system with lookouts, photo opportunities, and signature features such as a boardwalk trail can showcase Penetanguishene's waterfront, forests, and scenic views. Destination trails do not need to be lengthy; they may be short routes or nodes that connect to a viewpoint, cultural site, or place of significance. These trails often require greater investment than standard routes but can deliver substantial tourism, economic, and placemaking benefits for the community.

The following example initiatives and potential project areas are recommended for further study. Projects such as these can present unique challenges, including capital and operational costs, that will require a detailed feasibility assessment before implementation.

Potential Boardwalk Trail Projects

There is a significant opportunity to create a feature boardwalk trail along the waterfront between Champlain Road and the Penetanguishene Dog Park. This former landfill site presents challenges related to contaminated soils and wet conditions, but also offers the potential to transform underutilized land into a unique destination experience. Trails are considered compatible land uses on closed landfill sites, and remediation requirements such as soil capping, fencing, and other barriers to separate users are often less extensive and cost-prohibitive than anticipated. There may be areas of the property with fewer restrictions or other measures to unlock this potential. This will require discussions with regulatory bodies, environmental engineers, and internal risk mitigation specialists to evaluate options going forward. And if deemed not feasible today, this should be reevaluated in the future to capture changes in approaches and technology. Developing a trail here would close a key network gap and establish a signature eco-trail destination celebrating the town's waterfront setting.

A second opportunity exists within the municipal stormwater management area between the Georgian Bay Cancer Centre and Tom Coffin Park. A boardwalk trail in this location could connect the supportive services facility to nearby recreational amenities, activate public green space, and enhance habitat in ways compatible with stormwater functions. The project also presents a meaningful opportunity for reflective and therapeutic programming connected to the Cancer Centre, sharing community stories and providing a place for contemplation and wellness.

Below are a few examples of boardwalk trails and landfill trail restoration project sites.



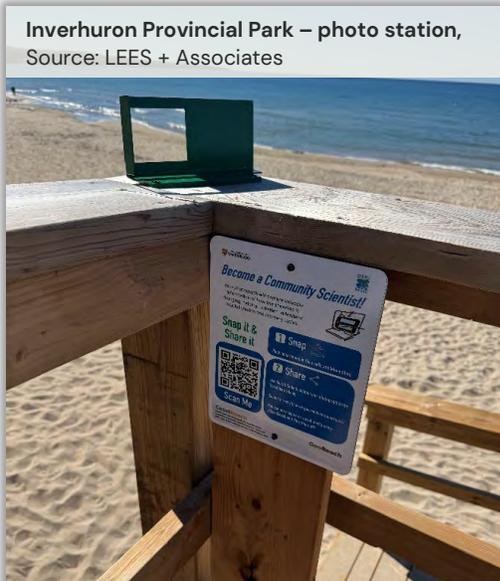


City of Greater Sudbury Trail – Bell Park Walkway,
Source: Rainbow Routes/Trans Canada Trail

Interactive Trail Programming

Interactive and web-based programming offers powerful opportunities to attract users, promote trail use, and reduce participation barriers. Incorporating recreational, educational, and social activities along trails can engage a wide range of users and foster stronger community connections. Programs can be tailored to specific groups, such as walking clubs for newcomers, seniors, or parents with strollers, as well as themed activities like storytelling walks for children or self-esteem walks for teens.

Programming can also help balance use across the trail network by drawing visitors to underutilized areas. Interactive signage or digital links to municipal websites, apps, or social media can connect users to activities such as “spot and share” nature photo challenges or seasonal fitness tracking. These initiatives encourage repeat visits and year-round use.



Inverhuron Provincial Park – photo station,
Source: LEES + Associates



Dundas Valley Conservation Area – The Basadinaa
Experience, Source: Hamilton Conservation Authority

Collaborative programming between municipal departments, local organizations, and conservation authorities can strengthen trail tourism and community engagement. Examples include temporary game or challenge stations inspired by nostalgic outdoor activities, seasonal scavenger hunts, or interpretive installations that promote active play, education, and connection to nature.

Recommendations

78. Complete a feasibility study for one or multiple potential **boardwalk trail projects**.
79. Develop **trail programming** such as activity stations and interpretive signage that engage users along trails. Consider integrating with website and social media platforms.

8.7 Leveraging Collaboration and Partnerships

Work with regional partners, community organizations, and the advisory committees to promote the trail system, improve connectivity, secure funding, and coordinate infrastructure upgrades. Collaboration can strengthen trail development, expand resources, and enhance the overall user experience.

Partnerships with government agencies, non-profit organizations, and local businesses are particularly valuable, as trails support health, wellness, and community connection. Many grant programs are available to fund trail development, operations, and programming. Continuing to monitor, pursue, and coordinate grant applications can help maximize funding opportunities. Partnering with other organizations on larger projects can also build broader support and amplify community benefits.

Engaging volunteers and local groups can reduce costs and foster stewardship. Many residents are eager to contribute but lack clear entry points for involvement. Establishing a dedicated contact for volunteer coordination and maintaining a public “trail wish list” of potential projects can help connect community interest with priority needs.

Finally, collaboration with neighbouring municipalities and Simcoe County will strengthen regional connectivity and support trail tourism. As e-bike use expands, linking Penetanguishene’s trails to regional systems will enhance accessibility and promote the Town as a destination for recreation and active travel.

Collaboration and partnerships are essential; however, having dedicated resources to execute funding, programming, and project implementation is equally important. This may include individuals or departments; however, the roles and responsibilities should be clear, documented, and performance evaluated. If resources do not have the necessary expertise or capacity, then additional dedicated staff may be necessary in order to unlock the goals set for trails. This could include shared staffing resources, new staff members, or outsourcing project work. Sharing resources with project partners may include staffing, expertise, or funding and may be engaged on a short-term, long-term, or project-level

basis. Additional direction on Town of Penetanguishene staffing levels is contained in Section 5.2.

Recommendations

80. Work with **Committees, County staff and community partners** to promote the Town's trail system, enhance or develop connecting links, as well as identify and address trail gaps.
81. Research **grants, partnerships, and funding for trails** for development and capital enhancements.
82. Continue to implement the **outreach initiatives** identified within the Town's Cycling Strategy and incorporate infrastructure improvements and upgrades into the capital plan where feasible.
83. Monitor implementation progress and limitations of resources. Look for opportunities with partners to **coordinate or share resources** to unlock the trail recommendations.

9. Implementation and Capital Plan

Active implementation of the Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy is fundamental to its success. This requires coordinated efforts and a commitment from Council, staff, stakeholders and the public, as well as a variety of funding options to implement certain aspects of the Strategy.

9.1 Monitoring and Updating the Plan

The Town should regularly review, assess, and periodically revise the recommendations of this Strategy to ensure that they remain reflective of local conditions and responsive to community needs. This will require monitoring of activity patterns, tracking user satisfaction levels, dialogue with community organizations, annual reporting on implementation and short-term work plans, and undertaking a detailed ten-year update to the Strategy. Through these mechanisms – or because of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this plan may be required.

An appropriate time for the annual review is prior to the budget process. The following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Strategy:

- a) review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, outcome of key initiatives, changes in participation levels, etc.);
- b) staff review of the plan to identify short term projects and priorities, with consideration of financial readiness, public input, partnership/funding potential, etc.;
- c) identification of issues or constraints anticipated for the coming year;
- d) communication to staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects, and upcoming projects; and
- e) budget requests/revisions as necessary.

Recommendations

84. Enhance **community awareness** of the Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy by publishing the report on the Town's website and reporting annually on key accomplishments and short-term priorities. Regularly seek input from the community and aligned bodies, including Advisory Committees.
85. Develop **annual work plans** to guide strategic implementation of the Strategy, to feed into the yearly budget process and long-range capital plans.
86. Develop and implement a system for **regular monitoring and reporting** on the progress of the Strategy, such as the collection of participation/registration data and annual reports to Council and/or the community.
87. Undertake a **full update of the Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy** in five to ten years (2031–2036). Timing may be influenced by the pace of implementation and changes within the community.

9.2 Funding Considerations

Recommendations are provided at the end of each subsection of this Strategy; however, this is not a definitive list. Additional capital projects, operating costs, and initiatives outside the scope of this plan may arise and be prioritized on a case-by-case basis. Approval of this plan does not commit the Town to implementing every recommendation, nor to doing so in the exact order, scale, or timing presented. Rather, the Strategy is intended as a framework to guide decision-making, reflect community priorities, and establish an overall direction for meeting current needs.

Implementation will occur incrementally. Critical recommendations should be addressed in a timely manner, while less urgent – but still important – actions can be phased in over time. Each capital project will require detailed budgeting, operating impact analysis, and confirmation of funding sources prior to approval. The timing of projects will depend on available resources and may shift as circumstances change. Annual review of the plan during the budget process will ensure that priorities remain aligned with funding capacity.

Full implementation of the Strategy will require the use of numerous funding sources, including (but not limited to):

- development charges;
- parkland cash-in-lieu;
- municipal taxation and reserves;
- fundraising, donations, naming rights, and sponsorships;
- user fees and surcharges;
- debenture financing;
- ongoing government programs and one-time grants; and
- partnership contributions.

In terms of government and community grants, there are several programs that may be able to assist the Town in addressing capital improvements within its parks, recreation, and trails system or to introduce new programming. Below is a sampling of funding opportunities that have been active in recent years (note: this is not an exhaustive list; not all funding programs may be active at this time):

- **Canada Community-Building Fund:** for the construction, material enhancement, or renewal of recreational facilities or networks (e.g., playgrounds, splash pads, trails, etc.)
- **Enabling Accessibility Fund (Government of Canada):** this program aims to make communities more accessible for persons with disabilities, such as creating more opportunities for participating in community activities and programs (small projects component up to \$125,000)
- **Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (Province of Ontario):** repairing and upgrading existing sport and recreation facilities into more accessible,

state-of-the-art facilities that better suit the community's needs (\$200 million over 3 years)

- **Enhancing Access to Spaces for Everyone Grant (Province of Ontario):** projects that improve accessibility and support active lifestyles for people with disabilities and older adults (up to \$60,000)
- **Ontario Trillium Foundation (various programs):** on behalf of a recreation agency, the municipality may apply for a capital grant to update buildings, enhance spaces, and purchase fixed and non-fixed equipment that foster physically active lifestyles (\$10,000 to \$200,000)
- **Ontario Community Environment Fund (Province of Ontario):** supporting resilient communities and local solutions to environmental issues, such as restoring wetlands, installing rain gardens, planting trees, shrubs or plants, etc. (\$5,000 or more)
- **Seniors Community Grant Program:** administered by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, one stream of this program provides opportunities for older adults to stay active and connected in their communities, such as weekly physical activities (e.g., pickleball) (up to \$25,000)
- **Canadian Tire Jumpstart Community Development Grant:** focussed on children and youth with disabilities or in financial need, this grant program helps to support inclusive, equitable, safe sport participant experiences (variable)
- **MLSE Community Action Grant:** seeks to support programs that create positive outcomes for youth facing systemic barriers (up to \$50,000)
- **Growing Canada's Community Canopies (Green Municipal Fund):** supports tree planting projects, urban forestry planning, and research and operational support for tree canopies (variable)
- **Canadian Parks and Recreation Association Green Jobs Initiative:** a program that empowers youth by creating meaningful job placements (variable)
- **TD Friends of the Environment Foundation Grant:** this program supports a wide range of environmental initiatives, with a primary focus on environmental education and green space programs; eligible projects include park revitalization, community gardens, park programming and citizen science initiatives (up to \$10,000)
- **FCC AgriSpirit Fund:** supports capital projects such as those that projects that improve accessibility and inclusion or include upgrades to community buildings (variable)
- **Canada Post Community Foundation:** provides support for initiatives that benefit Canadian children and youth (up to \$25,000)
- **Canadian Dermatology Association Shade Structure Grant Program:** awards grants for the creation of permanent shade structures in schools, daycares, parks, and non-profit organizations across Canada (up to \$7,500)

- **Community Tree Grants (Tree Canada):** this grant supports the planting of fruit- and nut- bearing trees and shrubs and other community tree planting projects (up to \$10,000)
- **Richardson Foundation:** support to many different community initiatives, such as splash parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and more (variable)
- **Community Foundations of Canada Free to Play program:** invests in initiatives that help kids move, connect, and explore outside, in partnership with participating community foundations (variable)
- **Energizing Life Community Fund (Hydro One):** municipal community groups may apply for funding for programs focused on improving community physical, psychological, or emotional safety as well as supporting cultural diversity in their communities (variable)
- **ParticipACTION Community Challenge:** funding to support local sport and physical activity initiatives (up to \$1,500)

In addition to funding, factors that might change priorities year to year may include:

- capital lifecycle and considerations of safety;
- legislation and mandated requirements;
- changes to service standards;
- public input and community interests;
- emerging trends and changes in participation rates;
- availability of alternate providers;
- emerging partnerships and donations; and
- socio-demographic changes and growth forecasts.

The Town's resources are limited, and it is not feasible to address all community requests, which underscores the importance of having a Strategy to guide decision-making. Within these financial realities, it remains in the Town's best interest to pursue the recommended strategies to the greatest extent possible. Implementation will require a phased approach supported by multiple funding sources and strengthened through collaboration with community and government partners.

Recommendations

88. Use this **Strategy as a resource** in developing the Town's annual budget documents, Development Charges studies, growth plans, and related studies.
89. Pursue **grants and other financial supports** from all levels of government, along with community fundraising to support the new MURC and other priority projects identified in this Strategy. Continue to make appropriate annual contributions to the MURC reserve.

9.3 Timing and Priority of Recommendations

For ease of reference, all recommendations are summarized in this section. Priority has been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process (including public engagement, trend and demographic analysis, assessments of facilities, parks, services, etc.). Meeting the widest range of needs possible through the efficient use of resources is paramount.

Within the tables that follow, the priority and timing of recommendations are organized into the following categories, with key considerations and potential cost impacts identified for selected actions:

Priority

- **High:** Prompt attention is recommended during the recommended timeframe.
- **Medium:** Attention is required when high priority recommendations have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners and/or funding have been identified.
- **Lower:** Attention is required when high and medium priority recommendations have been initiated or completed.

Timing

- **Short-term:** 2026 to 2028
- **Medium-term:** 2029 to 2031
- **Longer-term:** 2032 and beyond
- **Ongoing:** Best practices to be followed on a continual basis

Cost / Comments (note: all cost estimates to be confirmed through future study)

- **Minor (\$):** estimated at \$100,000 or less
- **Moderate (\$\$):** estimated to be between \$100,000 and \$500,000
- **Major (\$\$\$):** estimated at \$500,000 or more
- **Staff Time:** initiative to be led by staff, generally beyond regular workloads
- **Best Practice:** a standard or guideline commonly employed by similar municipalities

Table 15: Implementation Strategy

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
Service Delivery and Programs (Section 5)			
1. Align service delivery priorities and decision-making with the vision and goals of this Strategy.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
2. Regularly undertake internal reviews of existing services and emerging pressures , with comparisons to benchmark municipalities and promising practices.	High	Ongoing	Staff time
3. Full implementation of this Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy and the Community-Based Strategic Plan will require additional resources. Increase Departmental staffing levels in a targeted and phased manner to align resources with current and future service demands, including program delivery, trail and park maintenance, and special projects. In the short-term, develop budget requests for a Special Projects Coordinator and additional program staff .	High	Short-term	Modest (\$\$)
4. Develop a staffing plan to support the opening of the new MURC prior to the start of the facility’s construction phase.	High	Medium- to Longer-term	Staff time
5. Develop a Volunteer Policy/Charter that encourages local contributions and outlines the Town’s commitment to supporting volunteer efforts. Support initiatives that expand leadership training, mentorship, and volunteer opportunities to build the next generation of community leaders.	Medium	Short-term	Staff time
6. Regularly review public communication and marketing strategies to guide the use of various tools (mostly digital) in promoting and gathering feedback on recreation and community services and initiatives.	High	Ongoing	Best practice

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
7. Run awareness campaigns about the benefits of recreation and parks in contributing to health, wellbeing, environment, etc.	Lower	Ongoing	Staff time
8. Convene bi-annual information-sharing forums involving Council, Town staff, and the community on recreation and community service topics, such as capital projects, policy development, maintenance practices, activity and sport trends, Strategy implementation, and more.	Medium	Ongoing	Staff time
9. Pursue non-resident surcharges for recreation fees and charges only if coordinated with the Town of Midland and informed by a study that considers the cost-benefit, administrative complexity, and potential impact on participation.	Lower	Ongoing	Costs/revenues to be determined
10. Continue to review recreation rates and fees annually, while ensuring that recreation programs and facilities remain affordable and inclusive. Consideration should be given to a three-year schedule for facility rentals to provide short-term cost certainty for user groups.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
11. Evaluate annual funding levels needed to support the Access to Affordable Recreation Policy and reduce participation barriers to low-income residents. Broaden promotion of this program to reach more audiences.	Medium	Ongoing	Staff time
12. Review and update the arena allocation policy with the goal of enhancing fairness, transparency, and community access. Involve affected organizations in the review of these policies to ensure that they reflect standards of play, gender equity requirements, access for priority populations, and implementation practices.	Medium	Short-term	Staff time
13. Expand affordable drop-in and registered recreation opportunities for priority population groups by offering more programs within parks and trails. Pilot programs to test demand.	High	Ongoing	Staff time

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
14. Seek to expand multi-use programming space through major infrastructure renewal and development projects.	High	Medium- to Longer-term	See also #30
15. Continue to expand seniors programming within the Senior’s Active Living Centre and implement initiatives from the Age-Friendly Community Plan.	High	Ongoing	Staff time
16. Engage youth (e.g., youth expo) and seek options for expanding youth programming in collaboration with other providers.	Medium	Ongoing	Staff time
17. Engage and partner with Indigenous communities to support programs or events that respect Indigenous culture and needs.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice
18. Partner with public health units to promote physical activity, active transportation, and wellness programming.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice
19. Continue to partner with community providers to support vital programs that are not otherwise attainable through municipal spaces, such as swimming at the Waypoint Centre.	High	Ongoing	See also #29 and #37
20. Gather continuous feedback from program participants and residents to test satisfaction and identify new ideas for programming.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
21. Prior to the development of new recreation facilities, prepare a Programming Strategy to establish program priorities, identify ways to engage under-represented groups, define the role of partners, and inform staffing and budget needs.	High	Medium- to Longer-term	Staff time
22. Identify and track key performance indicators and targets that illustrate the value of parks and recreation services, such as (but not limited to) participation data from programs and satisfaction levels for activities offered and enabled by the Town.	Lower	Ongoing	Best practice

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
23. Work with community partners and advisory committees to expand, enhance, promote, and deliver town and third-party events , while ensuring that they remain financially accessible to residents. Link events to local culture and heritage to boost tourism and support the local economy.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
24. Prepare a Tourism Strategy in the longer-term to guide how Penetanguishene develops, manages, and markets tourism. Ensure coordination with the broader North Simcoe region.	Medium	Long-term	Minor (\$)
25. Undertake a review of advisory committees (e.g., mandates, structures, recruitment, meeting times and frequency, attendance expectations, staff time) with a view toward streamlining and consolidating those committees with overlapping mandates.	High	Short-term	Staff time
26. Consider the consolidation of multiple existing committees into a new Recreation and Community Services Advisory Committee focused on departmental lines of business (recreation, parks, trails, events, etc.). Establish sub-committees or working groups dedicated to specific topics or events as required.	Medium	Short-term	Best practice
27. Work with schools, community groups, and non-profits to share resources, expand programming, and gather resident input on future facility use and planning.	High	Short-term	Best practice
28. Strive to develop and maintain strong relationships with neighbouring municipalities (Midland, Tiny, Tay) through information sharing, collaborative events, coordinated marketing, optimization of parks and facilities through scheduling, and more, where appropriate.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
29. Regularly review partnership agreements to ensure an appropriate and sustainable distribution of operational and financial responsibilities.	High	Ongoing	Best practice

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
Facilities (Section 6)			
30. Continue to pursue the development of a modern, accessible, and flexible Multi-use Recreation Centre (MURC) with an arena, gymnasium, dryland space, indoor walking track, multi-purpose rooms, etc. to meet the evolving needs of residents of all ages and abilities.	High	Medium- to Longer-term	Major (\$\$\$)
31. Minimize municipal investments in the PMCC and PCC in the lead up to the new MURC, but ensure that these facilities remain safe and functional.	High	Short-term to Medium-term	Minor (\$) to Moderate (\$\$)
32. Evaluate and announce a decision about the future use of the PMCC building/property prior to opening the new MURC. If declared surplus and put on the market, this site has the potential to contribute to the financial strategy associated with the new MURC. Consideration should be given to the potential to maintain a parkette (playground, etc.) on the site to serve the surrounding neighbourhood.	Medium	Medium-term	Costs to be determined
33. If construction of the MURC is delayed beyond the 2033 target, commission a follow-up study to re-evaluate the state of the PMCC and PCC and to confirm Penetanguishene’s indoor recreation needs and future strategies.	Lower	Longer-term	Minor (\$)
34. Work together with neighbouring municipalities to track and coordinate arena usage , with the goal of offering equitable access for affiliated youth ice organizations.	High	Ongoing	Staff time
35. Continue to work with the Penetanguishene Curling Club to determine a long-term accommodation plan for curling in North Simcoe, including the potential for re-locating the Club to the future MURC.	Medium	Short-term	Staff time

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
36. Encourage a closer working relationship between the Penetanguishene and Midland Curling Clubs , allowing them to work towards a common vision for a new or redeveloped facility in the long-term.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice
37. Continue to partner with the Waypoint Centre to provide community access to swimming lessons and programming. Should opportunities arise, consider mutually beneficial partnerships with other providers to enhance access to indoor aquatic activities for Penetanguishene residents.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
38. Install a splash pad at the future MURC site in the long-term to provide accessible aquatic recreation in a location with supporting infrastructure (parking, washrooms, etc.).	Lower	Longer-term	Moderate (\$\$)
39. Maintain a minimum provision level of one full size soccer field (divisible into smaller fields) within the Town's parks system to support local play opportunities; this may be supplemented by access to school fields. Where appropriate, soccer fields may be designed for shared use, such as event space and other field sports.	High	Ongoing	Costs to be determined
40. Consult with the adjacent school and broader community to explore opportunities to increase use of the Phil Marchildon Park ball diamond or possibly repurposing this site for an alternative recreational use (e.g., cricket, soccer fields).	Medium	Short-term	Costs to be determined
41. Add permanent pickleball lines to the tennis court at McGuire Park to formalize a six court complex at this park, while still allowing for tennis use outside of league hours; no further expansion to this complex is recommended. Monitor usage of these courts to inform future needs and operational practices. To alleviate additional demand in the short-term, consider options for facilitating public access to the two pickleball courts at the Waypoint Centre.	High	Short-term / ongoing	Minor (\$)

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
42. Develop two outdoor pickleball courts in the medium-term to address growth-related needs. Undertake a site evaluation and community consultation, with consideration of Marchildon Park or a future park in a new subdivision.	Medium	Medium-term	Minor (\$) to Moderate (\$\$)
43. Improve the half-court surface at Gendron Park to enhance playability.	Lower	Short-term	Minor (\$)
44. Add a full basketball court at or near the future MURC site when the project commences to support local access and accommodate future residential growth.	Medium	Longer-term	Minor (\$) to Moderate (\$\$)
45. Prioritize the renewal and enhancement of playgrounds, including shade improvements (with partial funding through the tree compensation policy) in keeping with the Town’s Shade Plan.	High	Ongoing	Minor (\$) to Moderate (\$\$)
46. Plan for the development of additional playgrounds within new parks as residential growth occurs, ensuring equitable access and distribution across neighbourhoods. For example, a playground should be incorporated into the future MURC site . Opportunities to establish parks/playgrounds serving subdivisions within the Town’s rural shoreline areas may be considered further based on demonstrated demand.	High	Ongoing	Minor (\$) to Moderate (\$\$)
47. Advance plans for redevelopment of the Town’s skateboard park at Rotary Champlain Wendat Park through the proposed phased/hybrid approach (addition of modular equipment, followed by replacement in the longer-term).	Medium	Short- to Medium-term	Major (\$\$\$)
48. Continue to invest in and improve Penetanguishene’s public waterfront and beaches so they remain welcoming, accessible, and well cared for. Future upgrades should focus on enhancing visitor comfort and safety, protecting the natural shoreline, and creating year-round opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the water and surrounding spaces.	High	Ongoing	Costs to be determined

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
49. Expand the existing community garden and consider including community gardens in new parks, while supporting security improvements and volunteer coordination to maintain the spaces as community hubs.	Lower	Medium-term	Minor (\$)
50. On a case-by-case basis, evaluate unsolicited requests for facilities that are not part of the Town’s core mandate. Proponent-led business plans should be developed to determine demand, alignment with this Strategy’s goals, the net benefit to the Town and residents, and the degree of municipal involvement (if any).	Lower	Ongoing	Best practice
Parks and Open Space (Section 7)			
51. Establish an internal parkland and open space database , including protocols and assigned responsibilities for tracking of existing and anticipated future parks. Update the park classifications to align with this Strategy.	High	Ongoing	Staff time
52. Work with area school boards and other recreation service providers to maximize community access to non-municipal parks and recreation spaces, as appropriate.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice
53. At the time of the next scheduled review, update the Town’s Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law to be consistent with current language and exemptions within the Ontario Planning Act. Consider the establishment of Official Plan policies surrounding privately-owned public spaces (POPS) , such as the requirement for legal agreements to address park design and construction standards, public access, maintenance, etc., and appropriate locations for POPS.	High	Short- to Medium-term	Best practice

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
54. Utilize the Parkland Dedication Framework identified within this Strategy to evaluate opportunities for new or expanded parks (minimum parks size of 0.5 hectares, etc.), enhancements to the existing parkland and open space inventory, and use of cash-in-lieu provisions to invest in local park priorities.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
55. Retain 51 Dunlop (former secondary school site) for the development of a Multi-use Recreation Centre; the balance of the lands should be used for park development (including retention of the soccer field) and/or future facility expansion, subject to future site planning.	High	Ongoing	See also #30 and #39
56. Review the potential to formalize the Rolling Sands/Church Street property as a designated municipal open space and establish a management plan to ensure that these lands are protected and enhanced in a way that balances community needs (e.g., trails, passive recreation), ecological health, and long-term sustainability. On a case by case basis, evaluate the potential to secure and/or protect other open space lands that are outside the parks system and that provide important connections between parks, trails, and other public areas, having regard to the Official Plan and partner agency requirements.	High	Short-term	Costs to be determined
57. Maintain a commitment to universal accessibility, safety, and comfort within the Town’s parks system through compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) – including consultation with the Town’s Accessibility Advisory Committee – and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. It is acknowledged that some parks may include areas of natural terrain that are more difficult to access. Emphasize the provision of amenities such as benches/seating areas, bike parking, shade (structures, tree canopy, etc.), and barrier-free washrooms in appropriate park types.	High	Ongoing	Costs to be determined on a case-by-case basis

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
<p>58. Using this Strategy as a reference, initiate site-specific planning exercises and concept plans to be informed by engagement with stakeholders and the public for key park sites, followed by applications for grant and other funding sources. Priority sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Memorial Park (short-term priority) with consideration of opportunities for improved accessibility, seating, beautification, and activation, in addition to replacement of the retaining wall along Main Street; b. Huronia Park (short-term priority) with consideration of improvements to accessibility, beachfront area, shade, interpretive areas, and community amenities (including potential for a kayak/canoe launch); and c. Rotary Champlain Wendat Park (longer-term priority) with consideration of washrooms, event areas (e.g., amphitheatre covering, electrical outlets), circulation/parking, pavilion, tree planting/management, and a future vision for the Curling Club lands. 	High	Short- to longer-term	<p>Studies: Minor (\$)</p> <p>Capital projects: costs to be determined</p>
<p>59. Fully implement the park and wayfinding signage program to improve wayfinding and community identity for residents and visitors alike.</p>	Medium	Short-term	Minor (\$)
<p>60. Update the Town’s Parks By-law to bring it into conformity with current laws and expectations for the reasonable use of parks and public spaces. Once complete, update regulatory signage within parks, open spaces, trails, etc.</p>	High	Short-term	Staff time
<p>61. Undertake a review of the bench and tree dedication programs, with consideration of long-term space needs and appropriate locations.</p>	Medium	Medium-term	Staff time
<p>62. Acknowledge and incorporate Indigenous history and presence in parks and open spaces through signage, art, and programming.</p>	High	Ongoing	Best practice

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
63. Continue to support opportunities for expanded park programming and outdoor education and stewardship , such as nature-based programming, sustainable tree planting, use of native species, naturalization initiatives, and butterfly/pollinator parks in conjunction with community partners.	Medium	Ongoing	Staff time
64. Undertake park amenity condition assessments on a regular basis to inform the Town’s asset management plan and long-term capital plan.	High	Ongoing	Coordinate with asset management program
65. In the longer-term, evaluate needs for an expanded parks depot or establishment of a satellite facility to facilitate the efficient and effective maintenance of Town parks and trails.	Lower	Longer-term	Costs to be determined
66. Employ operating practices and technologies that promote operational savings and maintenance efficiencies (e.g., use of wood fibre safety mulch at playgrounds, selective reduction of mowing, use of low-to-no maintenance landscape treatments, litter-free park programs, etc.).	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice
67. Implement a budget protocol to inform Council of operating fund impacts (e.g., staffing, equipment) for maintaining new capital projects relating to parks, park amenities, or trails at the time of approval. Examples include making capital approval conditional on identifying operating funds, creating an “operating impact” section within staff reports and budgets, etc.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
Trails (Section 8)			
68. Confirm and develop trail construction details based on the recommended trail classification parameters, ensuring application of recommended design standards (AODA, OTM Book 18) and prioritizing measures to enable and encourage a broad range of users. Collaborate with neighboring municipalities and Simcoe County to look for ways to improve and unify the approach.	High	Short-term	Staff time

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
69. Apply the trail classification standard requirements to maintenance practices, asset management tools, site plan application requirements, and long-term Town capital project planning.	High	Short-term	Best practice
70. Conduct an assessment of upcoming capital projects – including roads, parks, and development areas – to identify opportunities to coordinate trail construction and improvements alongside these initiatives.	High	Short-term	Staff time
71. Before initiating each trail project, evaluate which subcategory of the assigned trail classification is most appropriate, using the established classification framework to guide design and implementation decisions.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
72. Develop new trail segments and active transportation infrastructure to connect missing links, enhancing overall connectivity and ensuring seamless routes between key destinations.	High	Medium-term	Major (\$\$\$)
73. Improve existing trail segments and active transportation infrastructure located outside of road corridors to meet updated trail classification standards, ensuring consistent quality, safety, and accessibility.	High	Medium- to Longer-term	Major (\$\$\$)
74. Enhance existing trails situated within road corridors to align with the new classification standards, improving user comfort and experience within these shared spaces.	High	Longer-term	Best practice
75. Continue to work with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs to assess and sign trail routes for snowmobile use annually and educating the public on permitted uses and restrictions	High	Ongoing	Best practice

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
76. Create a comprehensive signage and mapping plan (with consideration of the RTO7 signage manual) that emphasizes accessibility, consistency, and branding to ensure clear navigation across the entire trail network, including standard construction details. Install physical signage and integrate digital mapping tools that help users navigate to trails, community destinations, and key amenities.	High	Short-term	Minor (\$)
77. Collaborate with local businesses and organizations to provide trail and active transportation users with access to nearby amenities, services, and destinations that enhance the overall trail experience.	Medium	Short- to Medium-term	Staff time
78. Complete a feasibility study for one or multiple potential boardwalk trail projects .	Lower	Medium-term	Minor (\$)
79. Develop trail programming such as activity stations and interpretive signage that engage users along trails. Consider integrating with website and social media platforms.	Medium	Medium-term	Staff time
80. Work with Committees, County staff and community partners to promote the Town’s trail system, enhance or develop connecting links, as well as identify and address trail gaps.	High	Medium- to Longer-term	Staff time
81. Research grants, partnerships, and funding for trails for development and capital enhancements	High	Medium- to Longer-term	Staff time
82. Continue to implement the outreach initiatives identified within the Town’s Cycling Strategy and incorporate infrastructure improvements and upgrades into the capital plan where feasible.	Lower	Short-term	Staff time
83. Monitor implementation progress and limitations of resources. Look for opportunities with partners to coordinate or share resources to unlock the trail recommendations.	High	Ongoing	Best practice

ID. Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
Implementation and Capital Plan (Section 9)			
84. Enhance community awareness of the Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy by publishing the report on the Town’s website and reporting annually on key accomplishments and short-term priorities. Regularly seek input from the community and aligned bodies, including Advisory Committees.	Medium	Ongoing	Staff time
85. Develop annual work plans to guide strategic implementation of the Strategy, to feed into the yearly budget process and long-range capital plans.	High	Ongoing	Staff time
86. Develop and implement a system for regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Strategy, such as the collection of participation/registration data and annual reports to Council and/or the community.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
87. Undertake a full update of the Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy in five to ten years (2031-2036). Timing may be influenced by the pace of implementation and changes within the community.	High	Medium- to Longer-term	Minor (\$)
88. Use this Strategy as a resource in developing the Town’s annual budget documents, Development Charges studies, growth plans, and related studies.	High	Ongoing	Best practice
89. Pursue grants and other financial supports from all levels of government, along with community fundraising to support the new MURC and other priority projects identified in this Strategy. Continue to make appropriate annual contributions to the MURC reserve.	High	Ongoing	Best practice

Appendix A: Document Review

The following documents were reviewed to provide background information on the Town of Penetanguishene:

- 20 Year Community-Based Strategic Plan (2023)
- Town of Penetanguishene Official Plan (2019)
- Recreation and Community Services Master Plan (2014)
- Arena and Recreation Centre Study (2021)
- Trails Strategy (2017)
- Development Charges Background Study (2024)
- 10 Year Capital Plan (2023-2032)
- Asset Management Plan (2024)
- Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2024-2026)
- Age Friendly Community Plan (2022)
- Cycling Strategy (2019)
- Climate Change Action Plan (2019)
- Service Delivery Review (2017)

20 Year Community-Based Strategic Plan (2023)

Date Prepared:

- 2023

Prepared By:

- McSweeney and Associates

Status:

- Approved by Council

Purpose:

- The purpose of this 20 Year Community-Based Strategic Plan is to guide decision making and community engagement and encourage sustainable growth.

Focus:

- The 20 Year Community-Based Strategic Plan has been developed by the Town with the intent to help drive community success, growth, and investment. This plan is designed to be in effect for 20 years and to provide accountability and transparency to the Town's residents.

Vision:

- "Our waterfront community is a destination and a starting point, respectful of its history and natural environment, offering a rich culture, active lifestyle, well-planned growth, employment opportunities and a wonderful opportunity to live one's dream."

Mission:

- "The Town provides its residents and businesses with high quality services and sustainable infrastructure in a financially responsible manner, fostering an engaged community and a diversified economy, while preserving our distinct heritage and natural environment."

Themes:

- Penetanguishene: A Vibrant Community with a Small-Town Feel.
- Stronger Together: Think Regionally to Increase Efficiencies.
- An Inclusive Penetanguishene: Community Celebrations and Volunteerism.
- Healthy Community: Promote Healthy Living, Wellbeing and an Active Lifestyle for All Ages.
- Celebrate Penetanguishene: Highlight its Unique Heritage and Culture.

- Corporate Initiatives

Theme 1 (and relevant objectives/actions)

- **Objective 2: Develop key properties in Penetanguishene to enhance the community.**
 - Move forward with the various steps required for the construction of a multi-use recreation centre at 51 Dunlop Street.
 - Continue to move forward on the Ojibway Landing project 111 Robert Street West and undertake a community-based visioning exercise to determine the best use for this 20-acre waterfront property.

Theme 2 (and relevant objectives/actions)

- **Objective 1: Continue to work with neighbouring communities to deliver combined services and physical assets where appropriate.**
 - Explore opportunities to reduce duplication, identify shared services, establish consistent allocation of joint community contributions, and address physical assets that may be best delivered in collaboration with other municipalities and work to develop collaborative models based on the service being delivered.
 - Work closely with the North Simcoe communities and Simcoe County to determine ways to improve public transit, active transportation, and other modes of transportation to improve connectivity.
- **Objective 2: Work with neighbouring communities to provide shared active lifestyle and tourism opportunities.**
 - Continue to discuss the potential to create a combined infrastructure plan within North Simcoe and Simcoe County, focused specifically on connecting natural assets between municipalities (e.g., snowmobile trails).

Theme 3 (and relevant objectives/actions)

- **Objective 2: Engage and acknowledge Penetanguishene's historic cultures.**
 - Work with representatives from the historic cultures to partner, promote and support Town and partnered community events.
 - Celebrate the Town's heritage, languages, and cultures by establishing an annual Penetanguishene inspired 'Day' and/or event.

- **Objective 3: Recognize and encourage volunteerism within Penetanguishene.**
 - Centralize volunteer management that coordinates volunteer efforts, implements broader recognition and a better recruitment strategy to encourage and celebrate local volunteers.
 - Work with local school boards and youth organizations to establish a coordinated plan to enable youth to contribute to the community through volunteerism.

Theme 4 (and relevant objectives/actions)

- **Objective 1: Encourage healthy living by promoting and enhancing recreational amenities and programs.**
 - Review the Penetanguishene Cycling Strategy and identify the key recommendations that need to be implemented.
 - Review the Age Friendly Community Plan and identify the key recommendations that need to be implemented.
 - Create a new Recreation Master Plan and ensure that it remains current to support a healthy community.
 - Review the current walkability of the Town through the development of a pedestrian strategy.
- **Objective 2: Develop Community “green” initiatives that protect the natural environment.**
 - Continue to implement Penetanguishene’s Climate Change Action Plan and Adaptation Strategy (2019/2020) to ensure that Penetanguishene is completing their responsibilities.
 - Engage the community in taking ownership of making Penetanguishene “green”, including potential activities such as a “community cleanup week” or “adopt-a-trail”.
 - Support local organizations (e.g., school boards, churches, Rotary) that are interested in participating in a community garden program.
 - Lead by example through green habits within Town facilities, modelling the way with regard to being eco-friendly (i.e., energy conservation).
 - Lead by example and encourage best-practice recycling through education and providing physical containers within the Town’s facilities.

Theme 6 (and relevant objectives/actions)

- **Objective 1: Implement Corporate action plans.**
 - Prioritize, assess, and increase investment in the Asset Management Plan and Town infrastructure now and on an ongoing basis.

- **Objective 2: Build partnerships.**
 - Explore and continue to grow opportunities for the Town to partner with organizations (i.e., seniors' homes, Waypoint, BGC, County, school boards, etc.) that will enhance the community's offerings.

- **Objective 3: Support Staff.**
 - Review the corporate organizational structure and staffing levels to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in achieving Councils goals and objectives, while encouraging progressive leadership and future forward thinking.

Town of Penetanguishene Official Plan (2019)

Date Prepared:

- November 2018

Prepared By:

- WSP

Status:

- Adopted by Council (2018) and approved by County of Simcoe (2020)

Purpose:

- This Official Plan for the Town of Penetanguishene provides the overarching tools to direct future growth, development, and change within the Town and to create a more sustainable community for the Town's residents. Its policies provide the direction for managing long term development to achieve social, economic, and environmental objectives of the Town's vision.

Focus:

- This Official Plan projects a long-term vision for the physical development of the Town. Its policies provide the direction for managing long term development to achieve social, economic, and environmental objectives of the Town's vision.

Key Policies (excerpts):

S.3.2 Community Facilities

- Community Facilities shall be located within any residential or mixed-use designation, and subject to the provisions of Sections 3.1 and 4 of this Official Plan.
- The Town shall work with community partners to coordinate the delivery of services and facilities, particularly along major Arterial Roads and in key landmark destinations.
- Existing Community Facilities will be promoted and encouraged as beacons to drive civic pride and promote civic interaction and place-making.

S.3.2.2 Parks and Open Space System

- Spaces used for gathering that are open to the public play an equally important role in defining the public realm.
- The Town's residents need opportunities for passive and active enjoyment of the outdoors throughout the day and night and during all times of the year.

- These places provide a degree of sociability by establishing places where civic engagement can take place, where people can gather and meet and which support community social connectivity.
- Four different classifications of parks include: Community Parks, Neighbourhood Parks, Parkettes, and Pocket Parks.
- The Town shall promote appropriate recreational development in Community and Neighbourhood Parks that provide opportunities for active, passive and programmed community recreation and leisure, and that contribute to the preservation and protection of open space and the natural environment.
- The Town shall work cooperatively with various government ministries, resource agencies, and non-governmental authorities to promote natural resource-based recreational opportunities.
- In areas suitable for recreation, public open space shall be encouraged in the waterfront area.

5.2.9 Cycling, Trails and Active Transportation

- Trails and cycling infrastructure should serve to provide linkages between public amenities including greenspaces and destinations such as schools, recreation centres, shopping areas and the waterfront.
- The Town encourages the development and enhancement of pedestrian and shared use of non-motorized trails and bicycle routes.
- The Town shall work towards providing safe bicycle and pedestrian paths, both separated from the roadway, on existing and proposed roads, on abandoned rail corridors, and within parks and open spaces, as appropriate.
- The Town is encouraged to interconnect existing walking trails and bicycle paths and, where feasible and appropriate, provide continuous trail system linkages. Routes should provide continuous access between both the north and south-ends of the Town in Neighbourhood Areas, Major Open Space Areas, the Downtown and Waterfront Area, and Mixed Use and Commercial Areas.
- The Town shall promote accessible and convenient trail systems within a reasonable distance from all of the Town's larger Open Space Areas, to and from the Downtown and Waterfront Area, and Community Facilities.
- The Town shall require all Community Facilities to be designed and sited to promote active transportation.

6.3.11.2 Parkland Dedication

- The Town shall secure the maximum benefit of the Planning Act with respect to land dedication for park development and shall strive to meet the policies of this Plan relating to park development.
- Parkland dedication shall be calculated based on the total gross area of the land within the plan of subdivision and/or site plan.

- Where land is to be developed for residential purposes, the Town may require the conveyance of land for park purposes or the equivalent cash-in-lieu in accordance with the maximum of the following criteria or combination thereof:
 - five percent (5%) dedication of the gross area of the land proposed for development; and/or
 - dedication at a rate of one (1) hectare per 300 units.
- The Town shall only accept parkland dedication land resources under the following circumstances:
 - the lands meet the park and open space classification and hierarchy standards and provision requirements of the policies of this Plan;
 - the lands effectively support the development of park and open space based facilities and amenities in accordance the policies of this Plan; and
 - the lands are not identified as hazard lands, wetlands, significant woodlands, ravine lands, stormwater management ponds and related undevelopable lands.
- The Town may accept cash-in-lieu of the parkland dedication to be paid into a special account and used as specified in the Planning Act.
- Where new development is proposed on a site, part of which has physical limitations or hazards, then such land shall not necessarily be acceptable as part of the land dedication under the Planning Act.
- Designated school sites do not comprise part of the net developable area of a development with respect to parkland dedication or cash in lieu of parkland. Redevelopment of designated school sites for non-school related purposes is subject to parkland dedication.
- As a condition of development approval, a proponent shall be required to provide a park facilities design satisfactory to the Town for any park within the development. The park facility design shall have regard to all park standards and urban design policies of this Plan. However, in order to ensure that the size, configuration and orientation of the park is such that it can be programmed in an efficient manner, it may be necessary to prepare a park facilities design prior to development approval.
- Where park and open space dedicated lands are insufficient in size or shape for the intended uses and needs, the Town shall consider acquisition of additional lands for park and open space purposes.

Recreation and Community Services Master Plan (2014)

Date Prepared:

- November 2014

Prepared By:

- Sierra Planning and Management

Status:

- Approved by Council

Purpose:

- To guide planning, budgeting and implementation of stated goals and objectives through 2029. This Master Plan is being updated through the 2025 Recreation, Parks and Trails Strategy.

Focus:

- The Master Plan provided the Town with 95 short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations. Of the following recommendations, 25 have been completed and 27 are ongoing / in-progress. The recommendations and their current status are listed on the following pages.

Vision:

- "A vibrant town offering recreation and leisure opportunities, events and experiences that optimize our natural assets, picturesque environment, history and bayside community heritage."

Table 16 : Recommendations from the 2014 Recreation and Community Services Master Plan

Recommendations	Short Term (1–2 Yrs)	Medium Term (3–6 Yrs)	Long Term (7+ Yrs)	Current Status (2025)
Arena				
1. Continue to invest in planned upgrades and maintenance of the Memorial Community Centre Arena.	✓			ongoing
2. Plan for a replacement of the Memorial Community Centre Arena.		✓	✓	ongoing
3. Implement decommissioning of the Memorial Community Centre contingent on feasibility study results and new multi-use recreation complex investment.				timeframe not yet reached
New Multi-use Recreation Facility				
4. Undertake a location and feasibility analysis for a new multi-use recreation facility.	✓			complete
5. Develop a new multi-use recreation complex, considering components like an NHL-sized ice surface, indoor walking track, multi-purpose community space, and gymnasium.		✓		ongoing
New Metis Community Centre				
6. Support the development of a Metis Community Centre in Penetanguishene, ensuring affordable public access.	✓			change in direction
Curling Rink				
7. Investigate options for funding and operating a curling rink as part of a new multi-use facility.	✓			ongoing
8. Decommission the existing Penetanguishene curling rink, contingent on decision to support a curling facility in a new multi-use complex.		✓		timeframe not yet reached
Indoor Pool				
9. Continue partnership with Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care, expanding public access to the Waypoint indoor pool as demand allows.	✓			complete

Recommendations	Short Term (1–2 Yrs)	Medium Term (3–6 Yrs)	Long Term (7+ Yrs)	Current Status (2025)
Gymnasia				
10. Work with local schools to develop a partnership for systematic sharing of gymnasia booking information for forward planning.	✓			unknown
11. Enhance municipal access to school board facilities in Penetanguishene via joint use agreements where needed.		✓	✓	ongoing
12. Engage local community groups to address issues of liability and rental coordination with schools.	✓			unknown
Halls & Meeting Spaces				
13. Maintain investment in hall and meeting space facilities.	✓			ongoing
14. Develop multi-purpose community space as part of new multi-use facility, based on user needs and available budget.		✓		ongoing
Soccer Fields				
15. Investigate and address drainage issues at the J.T. Payette Park soccer field.	✓			change in direction
16. Invest in a new outdoor soccer field with turf and lighting as part of the new multi-use facility, including a mini pitch for future use.		✓		timeframe not yet reached
17. Investigate and implement a plan for the alternative use of the J.T. Payette Park soccer field once the new facility is built.				change in direction
Ball Diamonds				
18. Investigate and resolve drainage issues at the McGuire Park baseball facility.	✓			complete
19. Invest in McGuire Ball Diamonds as the Town’s premier baseball facility, including lighting, modern amenities, and program development.		✓		change in direction
20. Identify and invest in capital replacement for the Phil Marchildon Ball Diamond over time.	✓			change in direction

Recommendations	Short Term (1–2 Yrs)	Medium Term (3–6 Yrs)	Long Term (7+ Yrs)	Current Status (2025)
Tennis Courts				
21. Maintain and resurface existing tennis courts at McGuire Park.	✓			complete
22. Maintain and invest in Memorial Park tennis courts, including lighting improvements.	✓			complete
23. Continue to allow multi-use of Memorial Park tennis courts for pickleball.	✓			change in direction
Basketball				
24. Replace existing asphalt basketball courts at Rotary Park and develop new multi-use courts with lighting.	✓			incomplete
Bocce				
25. Maintain and upgrade existing Bocce courts, investing in player and spectator amenities.	✓			incomplete
Beach Volleyball				
26. Maintain existing beach volleyball courts at Rotary Park and develop programming for increased use.	✓			complete
Playgrounds				
27. Develop a replacement strategy for play equipment in all parks, phasing in replacements for structures installed before 2000.	✓			complete
28. Develop guidelines for playground design based on park service levels and accessibility standards.		✓		incomplete
Splash Pad				
29. Invest in a splash pad at Rotary Park along the waterfront.	✓			complete
Skate Park				
30. Improve or expand the existing Skate Park at Rotary Park or decommission and build a new facility elsewhere.	✓			ongoing

Recommendations	Short Term (1–2 Yrs)	Medium Term (3–6 Yrs)	Long Term (7+ Yrs)	Current Status (2025)
Parks				
31. Revise the Town’s Official Plan Parkland Classification to prioritize park enhancements.	✓			complete
32. Create a Park Design Strategy based on new classification, involving public consultation.		✓		incomplete
33. Ensure appropriate parkland dedication during subdivision planning for new residential areas.	✓			incomplete
34. Confirm that Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland protocols are used for improvements to existing parks.	✓			complete
35. Review the Champlain-Wendat Rotary Park concept plan for potential improvements, including a splash pad, and exclude the kayak/dock feature.	✓			complete
Outdoor Rinks				
36. Maintain temporary natural outdoor rinks at strategic park locations.	✓			complete
37. Promote seasonal outdoor rinks and develop concessions/activities around these facilities.	✓			complete
Town Dock & Harbour				
38. Develop a physical, business, and marketing plan for the Town Dock and Wharf redevelopment, exploring partnership and tourism opportunities.	✓			ongoing
Trails				
39. Adopt a trail classification system and hierarchy based on designed use and user volume.	✓			incomplete
40. Develop a trail strategy, including signage, connections, surface materials, and accessibility standards.		✓		ongoing
41. Implement the Trails Capital Plan, linking all areas of the community.	✓			ongoing
42. Support the Ontario Trails Strategy and leverage funding to develop local trail infrastructure.	✓			complete

Recommendations	Short Term (1–2 Yrs)	Medium Term (3–6 Yrs)	Long Term (7+ Yrs)	Current Status (2025)
43. Develop an Active Transportation Plan, focusing on urban bike lanes and their connections to the local trail system.	✓			complete
Municipal Organization				
44. Annually commission a summer student for Research Coordinator role, monitoring grant opportunities and customer service tools.	✓			incomplete
45. Appoint a part-time Volunteer Coordinator and Programming Assistant for volunteer recruitment and event coordination.	✓			incomplete
46. Appoint a Facility Booking Manager as part of future staff structure.		✓		incomplete
47. Monitor staff roles within the Recreation and Community Services Department during municipal reviews.		✓		ongoing
Communications				
48. Continue partnership for seasonal publication of the North Simcoe Recreation Guide.	✓			ongoing*
49. Translate the recreation asset database into an online interactive community map for residents and visitors.	✓			incomplete
50. Develop municipal online GIS mapping for trails, indicating on- and off-road connections.	✓			incomplete
51. Develop a sub-portal for recreation within the Municipal website’s Resident Portal, linking to online services like bookings and registrations.	✓			complete
Policies & Procedures				
52. Conduct annual customer service monitoring (e.g., satisfaction surveys) to assess and improve service delivery.	✓			ongoing
53. Track program and facility bookings/registrations annually, collaborating with user groups to assess changes in demand over time.	✓			ongoing
54. Continue using and maintaining the current facility booking system, acquiring an online program registration system.	✓			complete

Recommendations	Short Term (1–2 Yrs)	Medium Term (3–6 Yrs)	Long Term (7+ Yrs)	Current Status (2025)
55. Develop an online facility maintenance reporting system for real-time updates on repairs and maintenance.	✓			ongoing
56. Develop and implement a Volunteer Management Plan/Policy, including recruitment and training.	✓		✓	incomplete
57. Implement an Ice Allocation Policy to prioritize ice allocation based on membership size and group type.	✓			complete
58. Review user fees after 3 years of Master Plan implementation.		✓		ongoing
59. Develop a formal policy for program fee reductions for low-income households.		✓		complete
Policies & Procedures				
60. Undertake a comprehensive review of indoor recreation facilities for compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).	✓			complete
61. Continue implementing the Town’s 2012 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to ensure barrier-free access to recreation facilities.	✓	✓		ongoing
62. Regularly update and implement the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to address regulatory changes in the AODA.	✓	✓		complete
Program Development				
63. Work to expand existing programs as well as develop new programming options which cater to residents (from children to seniors). The following represent program options/development strategies which the Town should explore:				ongoing
a) Expand the Town’s existing summer soccer program to include programs for older youth (ages 13-18).				incomplete
b) Expand the Town’s existing baseball program to include activities for older youth (ages 13-18). The Municipality already has an effective partnership with the Toanche Recreation Association to deliver its seasonal Softball and T-ball program and should continue to work with the Association to achieve program development.				complete

Recommendations	Short Term (1–2 Yrs)	Medium Term (3–6 Yrs)	Long Term (7+ Yrs)	Current Status (2025)
c) Work with Museum staff to develop year round cultural programming including art and pottery classes for all ages on-site. The Museum location has ancillary indoor facilities that are equipped with the space and amenities to handle this type of programming. This is also a potential opportunity for the Museum to strengthen its relationship with the schools and enhance the educational component of its operations.				ongoing
d) Maintain existing swim programs and continue to host school swims at the Waypoint indoor pool facility.				complete
e) The Town should work with local schools to actively generate registrations for youth camps and programs.				ongoing
f) Work with the Penetanguishene Public Library to develop creative year-round preschool programming e.g. music for babies.				incomplete
g) Expand summer camp programs to include beach volleyball for teens and adults.				incomplete
h) Develop team tennis programs for youth (8-18). There is potential for the Town to work with members of the local tennis club(s) for coaching assistance.				complete
i) (Long-term) Work with the Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit and other key partners to develop and provide programming to sensitive groups (e.g. pregnant women, persons with disabilities). Specialized/niche programs may include fitness for new mothers and will be part of the Town’s role in advocating for health and wellness.				ongoing
j) Develop a Youth Drop-in program to enhance utilization of community/meeting spaces. Work with the Midland YMCA to investigate a potential partnership for implementation. The YMCA has also successfully offered before and after child care programs in many schools and would be willing to expand this to include recreation in Penetanguishene. The Town should play a lead role in bringing all key partners to the discussion table.				incomplete
k) Engage local school boards in discussions to address issues of youth transportation and access to recreation/after-school programs.				incomplete

Recommendations	Short Term (1–2 Yrs)	Medium Term (3–6 Yrs)	Long Term (7+ Yrs)	Current Status (2025)
l) Discussions should address issues of liability and required waivers/procedures to facilitate school bus drop-offs at select major indoor facilities (e.g. the Public Library) where supervised youth programming is offered. The results of this will be important with the implementation of a Youth Drop-in Schedule.				incomplete
m) Expand the existing Girls Night Out and other youth personal development programs to target older teenagers. Promote programs as part of Youth Drop-in programming.				incomplete
n) Work to develop programs with seniors care partners to provide transportation access to facilities. This will require partnership on the part of the Municipality to plan for and schedule time for seniors to have designated access to municipal facilities/amenities where other users may otherwise compete for access.				ongoing
o) Partner with local seniors care facilities/organizations to promote bocce and other senior programs to residents. Care facilities should function as intermediaries for program registration.				incomplete
p) Work with select local seniors care facilities to develop and pilot mobile seniors' recreation programs. Programs should be piloted at no more than 2 or 3 locations in Penetanguishene. The Simcoe Muskoka Health District Unit is a key partner to provide volunteer/staff training for program delivery.				ongoing
q) Partner with the Midland YMCA to develop satellite youth leadership and wellness programs in Penetanguishene. The YMCA is a willing partner and has worked in other communities to navigate this program into schools. The program may also function as a feeder program for volunteer recruitment (for summer camps, events and other Town-run programming).				incomplete
r) Work with other North Simcoe municipalities to develop a recreation passport program that allows individuals access to multiple recreation and cultural facilities across the region (e.g. libraries, cultural centre, museums).				incomplete
Events, Festivals & Culture				
64. Develop a marquee summer event, such as the Rendezvous Champlain Festival, and potentially make it an annual event.	✓			ongoing

Recommendations	Short Term (1–2 Yrs)	Medium Term (3–6 Yrs)	Long Term (7+ Yrs)	Current Status (2025)
65. Enhance the Town’s summer event roster to coincide with peak visitation.	✓			ongoing
66. Partner with RTO7 to develop festivals and events, targeting a broader audience.	✓			incomplete
67. Seek funding from upper levels of government (e.g., Ministry of Culture and Tourism) to support festival development.	✓			complete
68. Invest in event-ready infrastructure as proposed in the Champlain–Wendat Rotary Park Legacy Plan.	✓			complete
69. Develop a system to monitor and measure event performance annually.	✓			complete
70. Develop an Annual Marketing Plan to promote events at local, regional, and provincial outlets.	✓		✓	incomplete
71. Build a cultural and tourism asset database and integrate it into the community map.	✓			complete
72. Develop a local visitor information guide, including maps, event listings, and dining options.	✓			complete
73. Revamp the Visitor Information Sub Portal on the municipal website.	✓			incomplete
74. Develop a Cultural Passport program in partnership with North Simcoe municipalities.	✓			incomplete
75. Develop cultural tours around existing heritage assets.	✓			complete
76. Align municipal events with Discovery Harbour’s tours and promote cross-event participation.	✓			ongoing
Events, Festivals & Culture				
77. Cross-promote services between Penetanguishene Public Library and Centennial Museum, enhancing connections between local history and genealogy services.	✓			complete

Arena and Recreation Centre Study (2021)

Date Prepared:

- July 16, 2021

Prepared By:

- Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

Status:

- Approved by Council

Purpose:

- This Study identifies strategies to address the future of the Penetanguishene Memorial Community Centre (PMCC) and Penetanguishene Curling Club (PCC), and the evolving recreational needs of the community.

Focus:

- Curling Club and Ice Rink.
- Regional amenities and similar regional assets.
- Aging population and similar trends.
- Barrier-free accessibility.

Recommendations:

- That the Town pursue the development of a new multi-use recreation centre.
- Continue to provide one indoor ice pad and monitor regional arena supplies and needs.
- Formalize an ice allocation policy that outlines practices and priorities for accessing prime-time ice.
- Continue to maintain Penetanguishene Curling Club as per the terms of the existing agreement with the Club, which expires in 2027.
- Encourage discussions between the Penetanguishene Curling Club and Midland Curling Club to investigate the potential to amalgamate organizations.
- Consider options to include a five-sheet curling facility within a new recreational complex (partnered, outside funding).
- Incorporate a double gymnasium and various multi-use spaces within future indoor recreation facilities.
- Include an indoor walking track as a core component of a future multi-purpose indoor recreation centre.
- Expand drop-in and registered programs for older adults and seniors over time through the use of existing and/or new multi-purpose spaces.

- Continue to facilitate swimming lessons by maintaining public access to the swimming pool at the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health.
- Continue to focus on delivering fitness programming within multi-purpose spaces and within a future gymnasium space.
- Consider incorporating leasable floor space within a future multi-purpose recreation facility for civic partners and complementary services that are consistent with the Town's values and vision for meeting the needs of the community.
- Advance the former Penetanguishene Secondary School site (51 Dunlop Street) as the preferred site for the proposed recreation centre.
- As the facility strategy takes shape, the Town should solicit proposals from proponents wishing to participate or be a primary tenant in multi-use recreation centre.
- Begin advanced planning for the development of a new multi-use recreation centre in the short-term, including the development of a funding strategy and establishment of a Building Committee to oversee the recreation centre project.
- The Town should continue forward with plans to replace the PMCC roof and other necessary lifecycle projects.

Trails Strategy (2017)

Date Prepared:

- 2017

Prepared By:

- Penetanguishene Trails Committee

Status:

- 2017-Ongoing

Purpose:

- This Trails Strategy is a living document designed by the Penetanguishene Trails Committee aims to guide the development, use, and maintenance of a comprehensive and interconnected trail system in the Town.

Focus:

- Reviewing current trails, identify gaps, inaccuracies identified by all trail users, and missing connections in the network to support better health, tourism, strong communities, and environmental appreciation and protection.

Vision:

- “The Penetanguishene Trails Committee promotes the development, use and maintenance of a variety of interconnected trails, in support of better health, tourism, strong communities, and environmental appreciation and protection.”

Actions:

- Community survey identified trail gap connections by importance:
 1. Copeland Creek Extension to Rotary Park Trail
 2. Overhead Bridge Trail Maintenance
 3. Copeland Creek Extension (South) Along Park St to Simcoe County Forest
 4. Discovery Harbour Trail / Fuller Bike Lanes Connection
 5. Payette Trails / Fuller Bike Lanes Connection
 6. Robert St E. (at Dufferin St) Connection to Fuller Bike Lanes
 7. Thompson Road West Connection to Martin Valley Park
 8. Thompson Road West Multi-use Trail
 9. Thompson Road connection (Georgian Village to Brunelle Rd)
 10. Short Trail Connections (gap #10 on map)

- Consider trail extensions to adjacent Towns and Townships, possibly forming notable connections.
- Trails Committee was directed to consider and present a report to the RCS Department outlining the following trail stages for each potential trail project:
 - Definition
 - Design
 - Costing
 - Potential funding models
 - Full trail development plans
 - Promotional strategies for the trail
 - Official open event
 - Trail maintenance strategy

Development Charges Background Study (2024)

Date Prepared:

- August 14, 2024

Prepared By:

- Hemson Consulting Ltd

Status:

- Development Charges By-law (2024-33) Approved by Council

Purpose:

- The primary purpose of this Study is to determine development charge rates to recover the capital costs associated with municipal infrastructure required to support new development in the Town of Penetanguishene.

Focus:

- Estimating the amount, type, and location of growth within the Town over a planning period, and identifying capital infrastructure projects required to support this growth.

Parks and Recreation Development Charges:

- The value of capital assets for Parks & Recreation totals \$55.5 million. The 15-year historical average service level is \$5,756 per capita, and this, multiplied by the 10-year forecast 1,357 growth in net population, results in a maximum allowable funding envelope of \$7.8 million.
- The 2024-2033 development-related capital program for Parks & Recreation totals to \$47.6 million and is comprised of a new Multi-Use Recreation Centre, Wharf redevelopment, parkland and park facilities, new trail development, and studies.
- The Town will be upgrading playground facilities annually for a total of \$750,000 over the 10-year period (\$250,000 of which is DC eligible). A new Multi-Use Recreation Centre is planned in the next 10-years (timing to be determined) and totals \$45.0 million (\$12,203,457 of which is DC eligible). Each of these projects involve capital replacement and thus are not fully growth-eligible.
- New trail development over the 10-year period amounts to \$300,000.
- The Town planned to undertake this Recreation Master Plan in 2025, with a grant of \$40,000 applied.

Parks and Recreation Summary

- Development-Related Total: \$47,590,000
- Total DC Eligible Costs: \$12,803,457
- Capital Program Net DC Recoverable (2024-2033): \$7,810,973

10 Year Capital Plan (2023–2032)

Date Prepared:

- May 10, 2023

Prepared By:

- The Town of Penetanguishene

Status:

- Approved by Council

Purpose:

- The 10-Year Capital Plan serves to strategically plan, prioritize, and allocate financial resources for infrastructure, equipment, and facility investments across the Town of Penetanguishene from 2023 to 2032. Its goal is to maintain, upgrade, and develop municipal assets in a fiscally responsible manner, ensuring long-term service delivery and community wellbeing.

Focus:

- The 10-Year Capital Plan focuses on asset management, financial sustainability, strategic growth and community services.

Relevant Actions:

- Annual RCS facility maintenance and upgrade budgets are allotted from 2023 to 2032.
- On average, \$96,800 is budgeted to be transferred annually to the reserve for Arena rehabilitation/reconstruction, representing 14% of the RCS department's average budget between 2023 and 2032.
- On average, \$9,500 is budgeted for annual Curling Club Maintenance, and a total of \$29,000 between 2024 and 2029 is budgeted for Arena and Curling Club Structural Assessments.
- On average, 100,000 is budgeted to be transferred annually to the reserve for the North WHARF to reconstruct concrete between 2026 and 2032, representing 15% of the RCS department's average budget between 2023 and 2032.
- \$20,000 is budgeted for concrete repairs to the WHARF's launch ramp in 2026.
- \$60,000 is budgeted for the Curling Club's recoating of structural steel in 2026.
- \$55,000 is budgeted for the Cycling Strategy's update in 2028.
- \$90,000 is budgeted for replacing the arena's ice resurfacer in 2030.
- \$100,000 is budgeted for a WHARF dock replacement in 2030.

Asset Management Plan (2024)

Date Prepared:

- June 12, 2024

Prepared By:

- PSD citywide

Status:

- Approved by Council

Purpose:

- To provide a sustainable financial plan developed through an analysis of whole lifecycle costs, using a combination of proactive lifecycle strategies (roads) and replacement only strategies (all other assets) to manage the City's infrastructure assets in a sustainable, cost-effective manner. It aims to ensure services are delivered efficiently, while balancing risk, cost, and performance over the lifecycle of assets.

Focus:

- This document identifies current practices and strategies that are in place to manage public infrastructure and to make recommendations where they can be further refined.

Relevant Actions:

- Implementing an Asset Management Roadmap to guide improvements from 2024–2033.
- Integrating asset management planning into the City's corporate and financial planning processes.
- Enhancing data quality, asset condition assessments, and lifecycle costing.
- Adopting risk-based prioritization in capital and maintenance planning.
- Regularly updating the Asset Management Plan and related policies.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2024–2026)

Date Prepared:

- 2024

Prepared By:

- Town of Penetanguishene

Status:

- Approved by Council

Purpose:

- The 2024–2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is a living document that is designed to continually meet the requirements of the AODA and its standards regulation.

Focus:

- This Plan will focus on monitoring and improving upon strategies that are already in place and looking at how to provide better services to the community through new opportunities and public feedback.

Relevant Strategies (excerpts):**Strategies for Information and Communications**

- Enhance capacity of all staff producing content intended for the public so that it can be provided in an accessible manner.
- Consider opportunities to enhance promotion of programs and services that offer content tailored to persons with disabilities.

Strategies for Employment

- Provide staff, Council, Board and Committee members with accessibility training that is specific to their job duties.
- Prepare for future accessibility needs and ensure accommodation requests can be resolved in a timely manner.

Strategies for Transportation

- Strengthen pedestrian linkages.
- Promote and strengthen active transportation.

Strategies for Design of Public Spaces

- Consider elements of Universal Design as the Town works toward upgrading municipal facilities and services.
- Ensure all municipal building plans, new construction and significant renovations are reviewed by the Wellbeing and Accessibility Committee for comments and feedback on accessible design features.
- Look for ways to provide information to developers through the planning process on the construction of new recreation trails and other public spaces.
- Enhance accessibility in outdoor spaces and improve access to nature, including infrastructure for recreation and active transportation.

Age Friendly Community Plan (2022–2026)

Date Prepared:

- December 2020

Prepared By:

- J Consulting Group

Status:

- Approved by Council

Purpose:

- This Plan sets a vision and strategic framework to improve the overall wellbeing of residents and meet the needs of a growing, aging population.

Focus:

- This Plan identifies key strategies and priorities that the Town, along with community partners, can implement to help support residents' health and wellbeing as they age and by providing appropriate supports and community amenities, services, and programs.
- Inclusivity, collaboration, accessibility, and accountability.
- Outdoor spaces and active transportation.
- Social participation.
- Support accessible areas and policies.

Relevant Actions:

- **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**
 - Develop a pedestrian strategy
 - Ensure age-friendly lens applied to new developments
 - Continue efforts to ensure community parks are accessible and encourage recreational and wellness opportunities for all ages
- **Respect and Social Inclusion**
 - Explore opportunities to expand intergenerational activities within the Town
 - Work with community partners to promote friendly-visiting programs
- **Civic Engagement and Employment**
 - Engage with Community Wellbeing Committee (CWC) as part of all community planning initiatives
 - Share information on volunteer and employment opportunities and services

- **Social Participation**

- Continue to explore options to expand recreational program delivery
- Continue to support efforts to ensure low-income residents have access to social programs and services

Cycling Strategy (2019)

Date Prepared:

- April 2019

Prepared By:

- Town of Penetanguishene

Status:

- Approved by Council

Purpose:

- This Strategy is intended to help the Town achieve its future aspirations and goals for cycling by providing the tools, strategies and recommendations to help affect change and support progress.

Focus:

- This Strategy is intended to address a range of cyclists that have different interests, abilities and skill levels.
- This strategy is intended to provide clear next steps to help enhance opportunities for commuter cycling and tourism cycling over the next 20+ years.

Actions:

- Utilize blueprint outlined in study as new road networks become feasible/need.
- Upscale current cycling infrastructure.
- Adopt recommended cycling network throughout Town.
- Improve non-traditional (crossing enhancements, wayfinding markers, storage) infrastructure to support the adoption of biking in Town.
- Establish a North Simcoe Cycling Committee.
- Cycling Instructor Training Fund.
- Work with partners to undertake bike-friendly events.
- Identify Town facilities that can be used as "bike hubs".
- Develop active school travel plans for schools in Penetanguishene.
- Take inventory of current bike assets.
- Expand awareness and education of bicycle safety/support.
- Undertake open streets events.
- Consider establishing an active transportation coordinator position.
- Review and refine actions every 5 years.

Recommendations:

- The Town should adopt the proposed network phasing illustrated on Map 4 of the Cycling Strategy.
- As part of the annual budgeting process, Town staff should incorporate funding to implement, operate and maintain the cycling network using the proposed network phasing illustrated on Map 4 as a guide.
- As part of the annual budgeting process, Town staff should also incorporate funding to support the delivery of outreach initiatives proposed in the Action Plan in Chapter 4 of the Cycling Strategy, including the creation of an Active Transportation Coordinator part-time contract position.
- The proposed phasing identified in the strategy should be communicated to the Town's partners to streamline implementation and to maximize route connectivity as new projects are planned for future implementation.
- The Town should reach out to the primary and secondary partners identified in the implementation plan and continue to engage in a collaborative manner and contribute towards developing cycling infrastructure and programs in Penetanguishene and support growth in North Simcoe.
- The Town should review and consider utilizing the five-step implementation process when moving forward with implementation of the Cycling Strategy. The details of the process and each step are outlined in OTM Book 18.
- The Town should review and where appropriate apply the policy considerations identified in section 5.3.1. as existing plans are being revised or when new projects are commencing to enable change towards cycling supportive planning and design in Penetanguishene.
- The Town should review and adopt the appropriate risk management and liability prevention strategies into day to-day decision making related to facility planning, design, operations and maintenance.
- Technical Appendix E should be used as a reference to inform the Town's future budgeting and costing for cycling facilities. The costing should be updated on a regular basis to reflect more accurate estimates based on inflation and other external factors.
- The Town should identify opportunities to coordinate large-scale capital projects such as road works to achieve economies of scale and build the costs for cycling facilities into those budgets.
- The Town should periodically review the potential opportunities for additional partners to support the implementation of the Cycling Strategy.

Climate Change Action Plan (2019)

Date Prepared:

- 2018

Prepared By:

- Sustainable Severn Sound (SSS) and the Sustainability Committee

Status:

- Approved by Council

Purpose:

- The Climate Change Action Plan includes a corporate and community inventory of GHG emissions for Midland, Penetanguishene, Georgian Bay, Severn, Oro-Medonte, Tiny and Tay; identifies regional GHG reduction targets to be achieved by 2028, and recommends 18 high-level actions to reduce municipal and community contributions to climate change.

Focus:

- To help the Town of Penetanguishene achieve its corporate GHG emissions reduction target of 25% below 2015 levels by 2028 through the five milestones of:
 - Milestone 1 – Creating a GHG emissions inventory and forecast (**achieved July 2018**)
 - Milestone 2 – Setting an emissions reduction target (**achieved April 2019**)
 - Milestone 3 – Develop a local action plan (**achieved May 2019**)
 - Milestone 4- Implementing a local action plan or set of activities (**expected 2020 and ongoing**)
 - Milestone 5- Progress and reporting results (**2020 and ongoing**)

Relevant Recommended Action Items:

- **Ongoing** – Include GHG inventories, GHG targets & climate change action items into Official Plans & municipal Strategic Plans (i.e., Council Strategic Plans, Active Transportation, Transit, Parks & Recreation Master Plans, Community Wellbeing, etc.).
- **Q3 2019** – Prepare an inventory of municipal buildings & their associated energy audit status (not-completed, completed, implemented, etc.) & utilize this inventory in the update of the municipalities' CDM Plan in 2019, complete further actions as feasible – prioritizing the top 5 GHG emitting buildings & facilities (see Table 5).
- **2020** – Develop a 'no-mow' & pollinator policy with municipal commitments to improve the environment for pollinators & reduce corporate fuel use.

- **2021** – Designate warming centres for winter, designate cooling centres for summer, & ensure on-site cooling locations for summer festivals & events.
- **2021** – Develop a Sustainable Fleet Management Plan to reduce GHGs associated with corporate transportation.

North Simcoe Service Delivery Review (2021)

Date Prepared:

- March 1, 2021

Prepared By:

- Optimus SBR

Status:

- Recommendations for 2021 to 2024.
- “Management will need to work with Councils to review each recommendation and confirm a willingness to move forward.”

Purpose:

- The Town of Penetanguishene, Town of Midland, Tay Township, and Township of Tiny requested support to undertake a joint Municipal Services Review.

Focus:

- Consider all in-scope service areas collectively and individually for each Municipality to evaluate how they currently provide services.
- Review information provided by the Municipalities, as well as input received from the leadership/management responsible for the in-scope services, staff survey, public townhall and survey, councillor survey, and CAO and senior leadership team working sessions.
- Identify recommendations that represent ‘incremental/continuous improvement’ for service delivery to further leverage the “power of four” across the four North Simcoe Municipalities.

Relevant Service Delivery Recommendations:

- **Investigate in collaborative communications** to provide a broader outreach across all municipalities, while providing the potential for cost savings and consistency of messaging (Strategic Priority for Q3 2021).
- **Review structure for communications, culture, and tourism organization** to ensure that these activities are supported, measured and managed within each municipality’s ability and priority (Lower Priority for Q1 2022).
- **Increase attention to communication and visitors KPIs** to assist in recognizing staffing and cost requirements across the North Simcoe communities (Lower Priority for Q3 2022).

Service Delivery Review (2017)

Date Prepared:

- November 2017

Prepared By:

- Blackline Consulting

Status:

- 2017 to 2020

Purpose:

- This Service Delivery Review evaluated the Town's operating structure and service levels, critiqued operational effectiveness and efficiency using benchmarks and best practices, and recommended recommend changes or options to maintain adequate service levels while achieving long-term, sustainable budget objectives.

Focus:

- Assessing the Town's internal and external operating environment
- Identifying opportunities to improve operational efficiency and service delivery
- Proposing a roadmap for implementing recommendations
- Engaging stakeholders including residents, Council, staff, and advisory committees

RCS Department Recommendations:

- Create a resource plan of seasonal workers to ensure sufficient number of resources are planned for the upcoming year
- Ensure the timing of resources coincides with the season and event schedules
- Hire an additional part-time employee
- Revise program and event forms to ensure duplicate information is not required, e.g. multi-program form
- Provide full online services for programs and events – from registration to electronic consent (waiver) to payment processing
- Establish a North Simcoe Recreation and Community Services forum, bringing together neighboring municipalities to coordinate more on programs and sharing of facilities.
- Create a common structure to centralize or link information so that property related information and GIS are easily found and accessible to staff. This can be as simple as creating a revised folder structure and defining processes to maintain the information.

- Outsource the recreation programs to a third party such as the YMCA. The third party would operate the Town's recreation facilities (arena, community centre) and implement a membership program, thus funding activities through its members. Typical programs they would operate include outsourcing Day Camps, Swimming Programs and activities at the Arena.

Appendix B: Record of Public Input

Participation & Barriers

1) In the past 12 months, which of the following activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in Penetanguishene or elsewhere? (select all that apply)

	#	%
Aerobics, yoga, fitness, or weight-training	167	36%
Attended a local event (e.g., Winterama)	306	67%
Baseball or softball	40	9%
Basketball	25	5%
Beach activities	185	40%
Boating (sailing, powerboating, etc.)	169	37%
Camps or March break activities	55	12%
Canoeing, rowing, kayaking, paddle boarding	134	29%
Curling	178	39%
Cycling or mountain biking	179	39%
Dog walking (on or off-leash)	172	37%
Enjoying parks and natural areas	309	67%
Fishing	110	24%
Gardening	228	50%
Golfing	133	29%
Gymnastics	34	7%
Hockey, figure skating, or ice skating	149	32%
Ice skating (outdoor)	73	16%
Museum programs and events	166	36%
Performing arts (e.g., dance, music, drama)	144	31%
Pickleball	141	31%
Picnicking	84	18%
Running / jogging	87	19%
Seniors' activities	94	20%
Skateboarding / bike park / pump track	56	12%
Soccer	56	12%
Swimming (indoor)	107	23%
Swimming (outdoor)	165	36%
Tennis	49	11%
Track and field	22	5%
Use of playground equipment	161	35%
Use of splash pad	157	34%
Visual arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, crafting)	57	12%
Volleyball	23	5%
Walking on paved trails	341	74%
Walking on unpaved trails	289	63%
Other (please specify)	23	5%
	answered question	460
	skipped question	0
		100%

Open-ended (Other Top Activities)

	#
Cross-country skiing	3
Snowshoeing	3
Lawnbowling	2
Downhill skiing	2

2) Generally, what proportion of your household's recreation and parks needs are met within Penetanguishene?

	#	%
All (100%)	47	10%
Most (67-99%)	176	38%
About Half (34-66%)	144	31%
Some (1-33%)	91	20%
None (0%)	2	0%
answered question	460	100%
skipped question	0	

3) What recreation and parks activities do you or members of your household participate in most frequently outside of Penetanguishene?

	#	%
answered question	370	80%
skipped question	90	

Open-ended (Top Activities)

	#
Pickleball	47
Golf	37
Walking	32
Swimming	29
Cycling	26

4) Why does your household participate in these activities outside of Penetanguishene? (select all that apply)

	#	%
Activity or facility is not available in Penetanguishene	204	55%
Part of organization with regional membership	59	16%
Tournaments / special events / travel team	48	13%
Closer to home, work or school	55	15%
Activity is available at preferred times	63	17%
Less expensive	29	8%
Quality of facility or program is better	87	24%
Other (specify):	69	19%
answered question	369	
skipped question	91	

Open-ended (Other Reasons)

	#
Change of scenery and variety	13
Swimming and water quality	9
Alternative trail systems	7
Pickleball court access	4
Golf membership	3

Program & Activity Gaps

5) Are you and members of your household able to participate in recreation and parks activities as often as you would like?

	#	%
Yes	303	69%
No	111	25%
Don't know	26	6%
answered question	440	100%
skipped question	20	

6) Why are you and members of your household not able to participate in recreation and parks activities as often as you would like? (select up to three)

	#	%
Lack of personal time / too busy	53	39%
Lack of desired parks, facilities, or programs	64	47%
Program not offered at a convenient time	40	30%
Cost / too expensive	14	10%
Lack of information / unaware of opportunities	40	30%
Parks or facilities are too far away	5	4%
Health problems / disability / age	12	9%
Lack of childcare	4	3%
Parks or facilities are too crowded	18	13%
Don't know	4	3%
Other (please specify)	11	8%
answered question	135	
skipped question	325	

Open-ended (Other Top Activities)

	#
Program / classes are full or limited	4
Water quality / beach conditions	1
Pickleball	1
Aquafit	1

Gaps

7) Are there any recreation and parks activities that you or members of your household would like to see offered in the Town of Penetanguishene that are not currently available?

	#	%
Yes	168	39%
No	111	26%
Don't know	155	36%
answered question	434	100%
skipped question	26	

8) If you answered "Yes" to the previous question: What activities would you like to see offered?

	#	%
Drop-in Activities	150	82%
Registered Programs	123	67%
answered question	183	40%
skipped question	277	

Open-ended (Top Drop-in Activities)

	#
Pickleball	30
Swimming / Aquatic Activities	19
Fitness / Exercise Classes	12
Arts & Crafts / Art Classes	10
Youth / Teen Activities	8
Walking	8
Seniors' Programs	7
Gymnasium activities	6
Dance / Movement	4
Basketball	4

Open-ended (Top Registered Activities)

	#
Swimming	31
Pickleball	16
Hockey	14
Arts and Crafts	11
Fitness/Exercise Classes	11
Dance	9
Yoga	8
Soccer	4
Curling	4
Gymnastics	2

Importance & Satisfaction

9) In general, how important are the following items to your household?

	Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not at all important		Don't know / Don't use		Answered		Skipped	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Indoor recreation facilities (i.e., Arena and Community Centre, Curling Club)	258	61%	100	24%	41	10%	15	4%	7	2%	421	100%	39	
Outdoor recreation facilities (i.e., sports fields, courts, playground)	202	48%	129	31%	66	16%	14	3%	8	2%	419	100%	41	
Trails for hiking and exercise	255	61%	111	26%	40	10%	8	2%	6	1%	420	100%	40	
Trails for commuting to school, work, or other locations	103	26%	97	24%	88	22%	76	19%	37	9%	401	100%	59	
Open space for parks, beaches and casual use	222	53%	139	33%	51	12%	6	1%	4	1%	422	100%	38	
Recreation programs (registered and drop-in)	170	41%	154	37%	70	17%	14	3%	10	2%	418	100%	42	
Community events	156	37%	175	42%	75	18%	8	2%	3	1%	417	100%	43	

10) Thinking about spaces and services that currently exist in the Town of Penetanguishene, what is your level of satisfaction with the following?

	Very Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Somewhat Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		Don't know / Don't use		Answered		Skipped	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Indoor recreation facilities (i.e., Arena and Community Centre, Curling Club)	108	25%	211	50%	52	12%	23	5%	32	8%	426	100%	34	
Outdoor recreation facilities (i.e., sports fields, courts, playgrounds)	84	20%	240	57%	46	11%	7	2%	41	10%	418	100%	42	
Trails for hiking and exercise	138	33%	227	54%	29	7%	6	1%	21	5%	421	100%	39	
Trails for commuting to school, work, or other locations	46	11%	146	35%	37	9%	12	3%	177	42%	418	100%	42	
Open space for parks, beaches and casual use	86	20%	247	59%	44	10%	18	4%	26	6%	421	100%	39	
Recreation programs (registered and drop-in)	62	15%	201	48%	52	12%	16	4%	87	21%	418	100%	42	
Community events	78	19%	256	61%	39	9%	15	4%	31	7%	419	100%	41	

11) To what degree do you oppose or support the Town and/or community spending additional public funds to improve or build more of the following types of park facilities?

	Strongly Support		Somewhat Support		Somewhat Oppose		Strongly Oppose		Answered		Skipped	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Baseball or softball diamonds	78	20%	201	51%	82	21%	33	8%	394	100%	66	
Basketball courts (outdoor)	67	17%	236	60%	66	17%	25	6%	394	100%	66	
Bike parks and pump tracks	92	23%	213	54%	64	16%	24	6%	393	100%	67	
Community allotment gardens	104	26%	217	54%	58	15%	20	5%	399	100%	61	
Off-leash dog parks	80	20%	213	54%	69	17%	36	9%	398	100%	62	
Outdoor ice skating rinks	143	36%	201	51%	42	11%	11	3%	397	100%	63	
Park pavilions	140	35%	210	52%	42	10%	11	3%	403	100%	57	
Playgrounds	208	52%	166	42%	22	6%	3	1%	399	100%	61	
Pickleball courts	167	42%	177	44%	37	9%	19	5%	400	100%	60	
Skate parks	71	18%	199	51%	93	24%	27	7%	390	100%	70	
Soccer fields	100	26%	231	59%	49	13%	10	3%	390	100%	70	
Spaces for outdoor events	188	47%	170	43%	32	8%	7	2%	397	100%	63	
Splash pads	176	45%	166	42%	36	9%	16	4%	394	100%	66	
Tennis courts	76	19%	218	56%	73	19%	23	6%	390	100%	70	
Town Dock and Wharf	245	61%	126	31%	21	5%	9	2%	401	100%	59	
Trails (paved)	245	61%	126	31%	21	5%	9	2%	401	100%	59	
Trails (unpaved)	237	59%	130	32%	28	7%	8	2%	403	100%	57	
Waterfront parks and beaches	287	71%	102	25%	10	2%	5	1%	404	100%	56	

Other high priorities for parks (please specify)	#
Open-ended (Other)	61
Curling Facility	17
New or Expanded Community Centre / Arena	9
Indoor Pool / Aquatic Facility	7

Trails Usage & Priorities

12) On average, how often do you use Penetanguishene's trails (select one per season)?

	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Once or twice a year		Never		Answered		Skipped	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Spring to Fall seasons (months without snow)	72	17%	176	43%	95	23%	55	13%	15	4%	413	100%	47	
Winter season (months with snow)	24	6%	93	23%	109	27%	99	25%	78	19%	403	100%	57	

13) What types of activities do you or members of your household use trails in Penetanguishene for? (select all that apply)

	#	%
Walking	385	92%
Hiking	189	45%
Running	71	17%
Cycling	211	50%
Horseback riding	3	1%
Cross-country skiing	48	11%
Snowshoeing	91	22%
Snowmobiling	35	8%
E-personal mobility (e-scooter, e-skateboard, etc.)	8	2%
Nature appreciation, bird watching, wildlife viewing	168	40%
Commuting to work or school	20	5%
Dog walking	169	40%
Don't know	9	2%
answered question	418	91%
skipped question	42	

14) What keeps you from using trails more often? (select all that apply)

	#	%
Nothing	89	22%
Lack of time	144	35%
Trail maintenance issues	53	13%
Safety concerns	66	16%
Poor weather / winter weather	141	34%
Lack of lighting	45	11%
Trail connectivity	59	14%
Lack of desirable routes	38	9%
The trails are too challenging	3	1%
The trails are too easy	6	1%
The trails are confusing/difficult to navigate	11	3%
The trails are difficult to get to	16	4%
Conflicts with other trail users	22	5%
The trails are too crowded	3	1%
Lack of sidewalks	30	7%
Lack of parking	34	8%
Other (Please Specify)	62	15%
answered question	412	
skipped question	48	

Open-ended (Other)

	#
Off-leash / irresponsible dog owners	13
Smell from sanitation plant	8
Awareness / don't know where trails are	5
Natural deterrents (goose waste, bugs, ticks)	4
Accessibility issues (age, health, stroller)	4
Motorized vehicles	4

15) How important are the following priorities for investment in local trails?

	Very important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not at all Important		Don't know / Don't use		Answered		Skipped	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Add new trails and connections	142	35%	128	32%	92	23%	31	8%	9	2%	402	100%	58	
Add additional sidewalks	102	26%	117	30%	109	28%	51	13%	14	4%	393	100%	67	
Improve street crossings	93	24%	114	29%	117	30%	52	13%	15	4%	391	100%	69	
Improve trail signs and maps	83	21%	117	30%	134	34%	48	12%	14	4%	396	100%	64	
Improve safety and trail etiquette	102	26%	116	29%	115	29%	50	13%	13	3%	396	100%	64	
Improve trail maintenance	94	24%	156	40%	114	29%	20	5%	10	3%	394	100%	66	
Improve accessibility	79	20%	130	33%	122	31%	39	10%	21	5%	391	100%	69	
Improve amenities (i.e., benches, trash cans)	117	30%	148	37%	98	25%	23	6%	10	3%	396	100%	64	
Improve trail lighting	90	23%	108	28%	116	30%	60	15%	18	5%	392	100%	68	
Improve parking	66	17%	122	31%	127	32%	59	15%	22	6%	396	100%	64	

Statements

16) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Don't know		Answered		Skipped	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
I support the Town's proposal to develop a new multi-use recreation centre.	256	62%	103	25%	15	4%	23	6%	13	3%	410	100%	50	
The Town's parks and trails are generally well maintained.	136	33%	226	55%	23	6%	5	1%	18	4%	408	100%	52	
The Town's recreation facilities, parks and trails are important to my wellbeing.	277	68%	113	28%	9	2%	1	0%	10	2%	410	100%	50	
I feel that I am aware of the recreation, park, and trail opportunities that are available.	149	37%	211	52%	34	8%	7	2%	6	1%	407	100%	53	
The cost to participate in recreation programs is reasonable and affordable for me.	163	40%	172	42%	31	8%	5	1%	34	8%	405	100%	55	
I am satisfied with the customer service and registration process for Town-run recreation.	142	35%	145	36%	32	8%	7	2%	77	19%	403	100%	57	
I support the Town continuing to host festivals (e.g., 'All Things Canadian') that are inclusive.	286	70%	100	25%	14	3%	2	0%	4	1%	406	100%	54	

Comments

17) Please provide any additional comments or suggestions you may have regarding recreation, parks, and trails within the Town of Penetanguishene.

	#	%
answered question	215	47%
skipped question	245	
Open-ended responses	#	%
New Recreation Centre	48	22%
Curling Club Support	42	20%
More Pickleball Courts	39	18%
Indoor Pool Needed	27	13%
Trail Maintenance	25	12%
Smell from Sewage Plant	19	9%
Off-leash Dog Areas	16	7%
Park and Beach Cleanliness	14	7%
Program Accessibility	12	6%
Waterfront Improvements	11	5%

Quotes

- "We need a community recreation centre that has a pool and indoor track and board rooms and an arena (with handicap capabilities)."
- "Continue to maintain the Penetanguishene curling club facility and support the growth and expansion of its usage."
- "Need new/more regulation sized pickleball courts to meet current and future demands."
- "Would like to see trail area developed off of Payette Drive and sand pit area behind the fire department connect to waterfront park trails."
- "Odour from sewage plant must be addressed! Goose droppings are an issue, but staff work diligently to keep it under control."
- "You can't reinvent waterfront space. It's wonderful to have waterfront parks, open space vistas, and trails to walk."
- "Suggest low cost fees for low income families, people with disabilities and 55+. Expand fitness programs for 55+."

Demographic Information

18) How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

	#	%
1	27	7%
2	189	47%
3	55	14%
4	92	23%
5	25	6%
6	14	3%
7+	3	1%
answered question	405	100%
skipped question	55	

19) Including yourself, please indicate the number of people within your household that fall into the following age categories.

	Households		People		2021 Census (Pop)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 10 years -	89	19%	137	12%	720	7%
10-19 years -	67	15%	98	8%	830	8%
20-34 years -	90	20%	156	13%	1,640	16%
35-54 years -	145	32%	261	23%	2,200	22%
55-69 years -	201	44%	340	29%	2,545	25%
70 years and over -	111	24%	167	14%	2,155	21%
answered question	398		1,159	100%	10,090	100%
persons per household	2.9					
skipped question	62					

20) In what year were you born?

	#	%
Prior to 1950 (76 yrs or older)	28	8%
1950 to 1959 (66 to 75 yrs)	88	24%
1960 to 1969 (56 to 65 yrs)	106	29%
1970 to 1979 (46 to 55 yrs)	47	13%
1980 to 1989 (36 to 45 yrs)	57	16%
1990 to 1999 (26 to 35 yrs)	32	9%
2000 or later (25 yrs or younger)	6	2%
answered question	364	100%
skipped question	96	
Average Year	1968	
Average Age	57	

21) Are you a permanent or seasonal resident of the Town of Penetanguishene?

	#	%
Permanent resident	311	76%
Seasonal/part-time resident	13	3%
Do not live in Penetanguishene	83	20%
answered question	407	100%
skipped question	53	

22) If you are not a resident of the Town of Penetanguishene, in which municipality do you reside?

	#	%
Midland	30	36%
Tay	6	7%
Tiny	46	55%
Other (please specify)	1	1%
	answered question 83	100%
	skipped question 377	

Open-ended (Other)

#
Kingston
1

23) How long have you lived in Penetanguishene as either a permanent or seasonal resident?

	#	%
Less than 5 years	49	15%
5 to 10 years	57	18%
10 to 20 years	53	16%
More than 20 years	162	50%
Prefer not to answer	2	1%
	answered question 323	100%
	skipped question 137	

Appendix C: Affordable Access Policy Case Studies

To inform the service delivery and programming assessment, the Town of Penetanguishene's Access Policy was reviewed against those in other municipalities. These policies are summarized below.

1. **Town of Huntsville's Affordable Access to Recreation policy** uses registrants' most recent tax assessment or Letter of Support from a Community Organization. Part-time post-secondary students are eligible. The Policy includes a 100% discount for; up to two youth registered programs and annual public swim or skate pass for children and youth; up to two registered programs, 52 drop-ins per year (adult/55+ drop-in programs); annual public swim or skate pass for adults; and visit to Muskoka Heritage Place or up to five tickets to show at Algonquin Theatre.
2. **Town of St. Marys Access to Recreation Grant Policy** uses registrants' proof of income, residency in St. Marys, and identification. Financial assistance of up to \$100 per individual per calendar year is available. Town of St. Marys residents who are in receipt of Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits or Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D) payments automatically qualify for the Access to Recreation Grant Program subject to verification. For programs not offered by the Town of St. Marys, the grant will be paid directly to the program or service provider upon proof of registration.
3. **Township of Tiny's Affordable Recreation Program** includes subsidy registration and a Sport Loaner Equipment Program for free equipment kits in summer. Typically, proof of household income and residency is required (e.g., tax documents, OW/ODSP confirmation). Like the Town of Penetanguishene, this Program also uses 'We Are The Villagers'.
4. **Municipality of Port Hope's Recreation Fee Assistance Program** offers up to \$300/year subsidy per person for day camps, passes, and registered programs; income eligibility based on OW, ODSP, or Statistics Canada LICO.
5. **Town of Aurora's Fee Assistance in Recreation (F.A.I.R) Access Program** provides financial assistance of up to \$250 per person per calendar year to eligible residents. Funds can be used for registered recreation programs and drop-in activities operated by the Town. Applicants must meet income thresholds based on the Low-Income Measure (LIM) or be recipients of Ontario Works (OW) or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Proof of income or assistance is required during the application process.
6. **City of Niagara Falls Municipal Fee Assistance Program (pilot)** provides a 50% discount on one registered program per child per season (fall, winter, spring, summer) and free public swim and skate access for eligible families. The program is income-tested, based on criteria such as the Canada Revenue Agency's Low-

Income Cut-Off (LICO) or proof of government assistance. Parents or guardians must complete an application and provide verification documents.

7. **City of Kingston's Affordable Recreation Program** has \$300/year usable towards municipal programs, gym/pool memberships, camps, etc.
8. **Town of Oakville's Recreation Connection** provides eligible residents a \$400 credit per person per year towards programs, passes, and registration; income thresholds tied to LICO.

Appendix D: Park and Trail Maintenance Standards (Draft)

The tables that follow contain proposed parks and trails maintenance standards for properties owned and managed by the Town. These have been based on an understanding of current levels of service, as well as those in similar municipalities. These standards consider several trends and best practices related to municipal parks and trails that may impact maintenance and service levels, such as:

- greater diversity and changes in demographics, including an increase in older age groups and young families;
- more demand for accessible parks and trails (and greater regulatory obligations for accessibility);
- increased use of parks and trails, in particular for unstructured, self-directed activities such as walking and informal play;
- year-round use of parks and trails; and
- a demand for increased provision of park washrooms, shade (trees and structures), benches, and other park furniture.

Service Area – Turf Maintenance

Parks and Trails	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Parks and Open Space	Grass cutting and trimming.	Healthy turf cut to a 3" height. Areas around structures, beds, trees and hard surfaces trimmed.	Cut and trim weekly.	Restore winter damage to turf in spring as required.
Trails	Grass cutting.	Turf adjacent to trails cut one mower width to 4" height.	Cut and trim weekly.	N/A

Notes: The Town may wish to consider higher levels of turf maintenance for Community and higher profile parks, and Town facilities.

Service Area – Sports Fields

Sports Fields	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Inspection	Inspection as per checklist. Deficiencies recorded and reported.	Field and field amenities in good, safe and playable condition.	Inspect weekly in season.	Rectify deficiencies.
Soccer Fields	Grass Cutting and trimming. Lining..	Field is healthy at 2”-3” providing a safe surface. Fencing, benches, and bleachers in good state of repair. Lines visible.	Line a minimum of once per week during the soccer season. Seasonal startup and shutdown of systems.	Turf repair (sodding or seeding) as determined through inspection or discussion with user groups. Repair to field amenities as required.
Ball Diamonds	Grass Cutting and trimming. Lining. Infield grooming.	Field is healthy at 2”-3” providing a safe surface. Fencing, benches, bleachers and backstops in good state of repair. Lines visible. Infield is level, drains properly and there is a smooth transition between the infield and outfield turf.	Lined a minimum of once per week during ball season.	Infield leveling and filling of low areas as required.

Notes: A maximum 2” length of turf is desirable for soccer for playability

Service Area – Horticulture and Beautification

Horticulture	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Primary Beds	Planting and maintenance of annuals in primary beds.	Beds are weed free; plants are healthy and properly spaced.	Planting in June, weeding by-weekly, watering every 2 days. Pruning of shrubs 2x per year.	Removal of dead plants and replace as required.
Secondary Beds	Planting and maintenance of annuals in park beds.	Beds are weed free; plants are healthy and properly spaced.	Planting in June, weeding by-weekly, watering every 2 days. Pruning of shrubs 2x per year.	Removal of dead plants and replace as required.

Horticulture	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Hanging Baskets	Installation and maintenance of hanging baskets.	Baskets are attractive and plants are in good condition.	Installed in June, Water every 3-4 days.	Remove any dead plant material.
Town Facilities	Planting and maintenance of annual and shrub beds outside Town facilities.	Beds are weed free; plants are healthy and properly spaced.	Beds inspected weekly. Shrubs pruned as required. Annual planting in June, weeding by-weekly. Watering every two days.	Removal of dead plants and replace as required.

Service Area – General Maintenance

General Maintenance	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Park Furniture	Repair or replacement of park benches, picnic tables.	Park furniture is safe and in good repair.	Annual inspection of all park furniture.	Repair of park furniture within one week of inspection or concern from user.
Parks Fencing	Repair of Town-owned park and open space fencing.	Fencing is safe and in good repair.	Inspection of all fencing in spring and fall.	Repair of damage to fencing within one month of inspection or concern from a user. Replace fencing or sections of fencing as required based on inspection.
Park signs	Repair or replacement of park signs.	All signs are legible and in good condition.	Inspection of park signs on a weekly basis as part of litter pickup.	Replacement or signs as required.
Graffiti	Removal of graffiti from parks and open space signs, structures, and amenities.	Parks and open spaces are free of graffiti.	Inspection of parks and open spaces for graffiti as part of regular maintenance. Field staff to report any graffiti found.	Removal of graffiti reported by staff or users within one week.

General Maintenance	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Waste Receptacles	Repair or replacement of waste receptacles.	All waste receptacles are in good condition and in the proper locations.	Inspect waste receptacles as part of park waste management and report any issues.	Repair, replace or relocate any receptacles reported within a week.

Notes: Graffiti removal is carried out by Public Works beautification staff. The Town may wish to investigate contracted graffiti removal.

Service Area – Waste Management

Waste Management	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
All Parks and Trails and the exterior of Town Buildings	Litter pickup and removal from all areas. Emptying of waste receptacles.	Parks, outside areas and trails rights of way are free of litter. Receptacles emptied when more than 75% full.	A minimum of once per week and prior to grass cutting. Emptied as per agreement with Niagara Region and private contractors.	More frequent pickup as required for events and tournaments, or in high use areas. Emptying of overflowing receptacles or removal of dumped household waste within 24 hours of report.
Open Space	Pickup and removal of litter including any dumped material. Emptying of waste receptacles.	Areas free from litter and dumped material. Receptacles emptied when more than 75% full.	Pickup and removal or litter spring and fall. Receptacles emptied once per week.	Pickup of reported dumped material within one week of report.

Notes: Receptacles should be placed at park and open space entrances, parking lots and along roadways where practical to facilitate waste removal

Service Area – Play Amenities

Play Amenities	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Play Structures	Inspection of playgrounds, repair and maintenance of play structure components and surfaces.	All play structures and surfaces meet CSA safety standards; no glass or other hazards on playground surfaces.	Monthly documented inspection by a certified playground inspector.	Based on regular inspection or concern from the public, repair or replacement of any damaged component within three days; safety concerns to be addressed immediately.

Play Amenities	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Skate Park	Inspection, repair and maintenance of skate park features and surfaces.	All components and equipment are fully functional; no graffiti or hazards on surfaces.	Documented inspection of skate park components and surfaces every month.	Based on regular inspection or concern from the public, repair of any damaged component within three days; safety concerns to be addressed immediately.
Splash Pads	Inspection, repair and maintenance of spray pad components and surrounding surfaces.	All spray pad components are fully functional; surfaces are clean and free of hazards.	Inspection and cleaning daily. Seasonal start-up and shutdown (spring and fall).	Component repair and replacement and surface repair acted on within three days of report.

Notes: Some municipalities permit graffiti at skate parks, on a managed basis, if desired by users. If desired, the Town should develop an internal policy, in consultation with users.

Service Area – Outdoor Sports Courts

Outdoor Sports Courts	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Tennis/Pickleball	Inspection, maintenance, sweeping and surface repair of tennis/pickleball courts.	Court surfaces are level, free for cracks and debris; lines are visible; nets are in good repair and adjusted for tension. Perimeter fencing is in a good state of repair; lighting is functioning.	Inspection of court monthly in season. Sweep courts monthly. Install and remove nets spring and fall. Adjust lighting timer as required.	Remove debris, adjust and repair nets, repair surfacing and fencing as required based on inspection or user concern.
Basketball/Multi-Sport	Inspection, maintenance, sweeping and surface repair of basketball/multi-sport courts.	Court surfaces are level, free for cracks and debris; lines are visible; basketball goals and backboards are in good repair. Perimeter fencing is in a good state of repair.	Inspection of court monthly in season. Sweep courts monthly.	Remove debris, repair basketball goals and backboards, repair surfacing and fencing as required based on inspection or user concern.

Service Area – Trails and Pathways

Trails and Pathways	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Inspection	Inspection of trails.	All trails are inspected regularly, and deficiencies documented.	Inspect trails monthly to identify hazards, potholes or washouts, deadfalls, missing or damaged signage and sight line or other safety issues.	Deficiencies documented.
Asphalt/ Hard Surface Trails and Pathways	Maintenance and repair of trail treadway surface and shoulder.	Trails and pathways have an even, trip-free surface with no ponding. The right of way provides for safe sight lines.	Annual spring sweeping.	Repair of potholes, washouts and other hazard as determined by inspections of user concerns. Removal of deadfalls or other debris as determined by inspections or user concerns.
Limestone screenings, Stone Dust or Gravel Trails	Maintenance and repair of trail treadway surface and shoulder.	Trails and have an even, trip-free surface with no ponding, washouts, or potholes. The right of way provides for safe sight lines.	Addition of granular material and grading in spring as required.	Repair of potholes, washouts and other hazard as determined by inspections of user concerns. Removal of deadfalls or other debris as determined by inspections or user concerns.
Natural Trails (Soil, Turf, Mulch)	Maintenance and repair of trail treadway surface and shoulder.	Trails and have an even, trip-free surface with no ponding, washouts, or potholes. The right of way provides for safe sight lines.		Filling of holes or washouts as required.
Vegetation Control Trail ROW	Flail Mowing of the ROW for Steve Bauer and Gerry Berkhout Trails.	Vegetation is cut to provide for safe sight lines.	Every 2 years.	Cut more frequently if required based on inspection or user concerns.

Service Area – Trees in Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails

Trees in Parks and Trails and Open Spaces	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Inspection	Inspection of park trees.	N/A	Inspect park trees each fall.	Inspect park trees in response to user concerns.
Mulch	Mulching of park trees.	Trees are mulched correctly.	Mulch all park trees annually in spring or fall.	N/A
Pruning	Pruning of dead limbs on park trees. Prune of trees to provide appropriate sight lines.	Trees in parks are healthy, safe and allow for CPTED requirements.	N/A	Pruning of trees in response to inspections or staff/user concerns.
Removal of Dead or Hazard Trees in Parks	Tree removal as required.	Dead or hazard trees are not present in parks.	N/A	Removal of dead or hazard trees in response to inspection or staff/user concerns.
Removal of Dead or Hazard Trees in Open Spaces and Trails	Tree Removal as required.	Dead or hazard trees are not present in target areas (see Notes) in open spaces and adjacent to trails.	N/A	Removal of dead or hazard trees in response to inspection or staff/user concerns.