



Grand Bay-Westfield
NEIGHBOURS BY NATURE

TRAILS MASTER PLAN

Town of Grand Bay – Westfield
January 2026





Ancestral Acknowledgement

The land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Wolastoqiyik, Wəlastəkewiyik / Maliseet whose ancestors along with the Mi'Kmaq / Mi'kmaw and Passamaquoddy / Peskotomuhkati Tribes / Nations signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the British Crown in the 1700s.



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Section 1

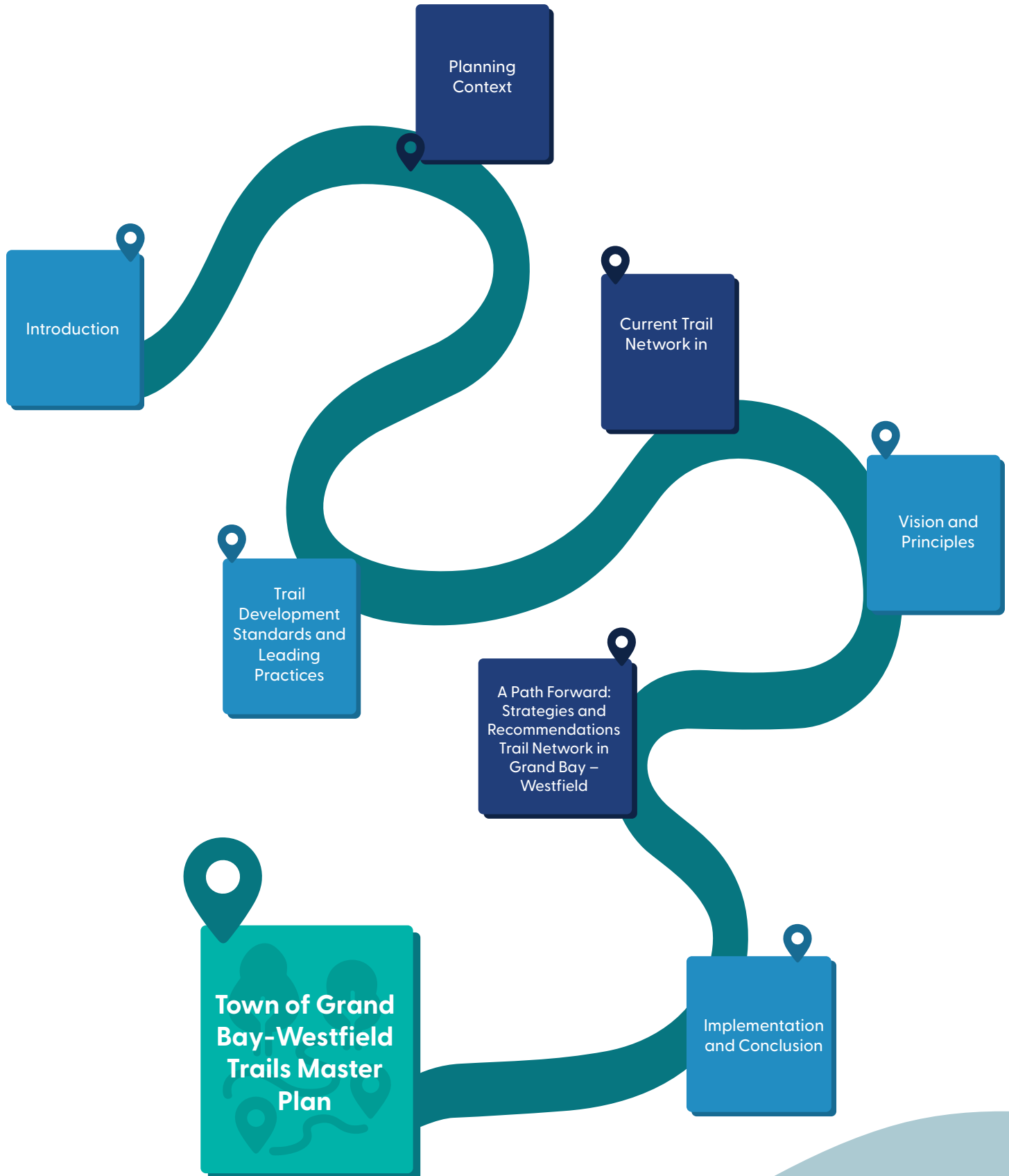
Introduction

The Town of Grand Bay – Westfield a steadfast commitment to preserving its natural environment, strong sense of place, and high quality of life. To further this position and to ensure the community remains a desirable place in which to live, work, and play well into the future, the Town has committed to providing high-quality recreation infrastructure and community services for its residents. This is evident in the significant investment already made in public facilities and in community, recreation and active transportation planning.

The community's trails are another of its strongest assets and provide residents and visitors with access to picturesque landscapes and outstanding nature-based and outdoor experiences. As such, the Town has identified expansion and development of its trail network as a priority. A planned and thoughtful approach to trail development is needed, however, to ensure that the desire to enjoy the community's incredible landscapes and ecologically sensitive areas is carefully balanced with the need to protect them. We must avoid doing anything that inadvertently takes away from the very qualities we love about these spaces and ensure that they remain protected and enjoyable for future generations.

The purpose of this plan will be to develop a road map or guiding document for the future development, improvement, and enhancement of the trail network in Grand Bay – Westfield over time. It also provides a framework for future investment in the trail network by ensuring that funding is allocated where most beneficial to the community and its residents. And, perhaps most importantly, it defines a vision for trail development that protects and enhances the cherished landscapes of Grand Bay - Westfield well into the future.

1.1 Report Structure



Planning Context

2.1 Community Demographics

Grand Bay Westfield is in Southwestern New Brunswick along the Wolastoq (Saint John River) on the traditional lands of the Wolastoqey. The lands of Wabanaki (WAH-BAH-NAH-KEE) people are recognized in a series of Peace and Friendship Treaties to establish an ongoing relationship of peace, friendship and mutual respect between equal nations . This growing community is the gateway to the Lower Saint John River Valley and offers the best of rural and urban New Brunswick with its proximity to Saint John .

Grand Bay-Westfield offers something for everyone from enjoying nature through walking, hiking and cycling trails, enjoying parks, river access and parks, to participating in recreational activities such as golf, pickle ball and other sport court and field activities, to enjoying shopping and dining experiences throughout Town. Grand Bay-Westfield is a vibrant and diverse community nestled in nature.

On January 1, 2023, as part of the provincial local governance reform, Grand Bay-Westfield adopted new town boundaries to include the former Town of Grand Bay-Westfield (Ward 1) and a portion of the Local Service District of Westfield West (Ward 2).

Population and Demographics Overview

The Grand Bay Westfield has a population of 5,866 (Ward 1 and 2)ⁱ. The census data that our analysis is based off is from 2021. Therefore, the statistics included in this section are based off the original Town boundaries of Grand Bay-Westfield (Ward 1), population 5,090. The following section outlines population trends and statistics outline how demographic characteristics can impact parks and recreation participation in the community.

Population and Future Growth

The population trends for Grand Bay-Westfield from 2001- 2021 examine the population change over the last several census periods. Over the last 20 years the population has remained stable with small increases and decreases. The median age of the population has increased but is still similar to the median age for the province. When looking at the population breakdown by age, Grand Bay-Westfield has a slightly higher proportion of people aged 0-14 (2% more) and slightly less 20-29 year olds (2% less) compared to province. Overall, the proportion of the population of Grand Bay-Westfield is very similar to that of New Brunswick.

Table 1. Grand Bay West Field Population Trends 2001 - 2021

Census Year	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
Population	4,949	4981	5117	4964	4967
Median Age	38.4	40.7	42.4	44.3	45.2

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021

Table 2. Age Characteristics

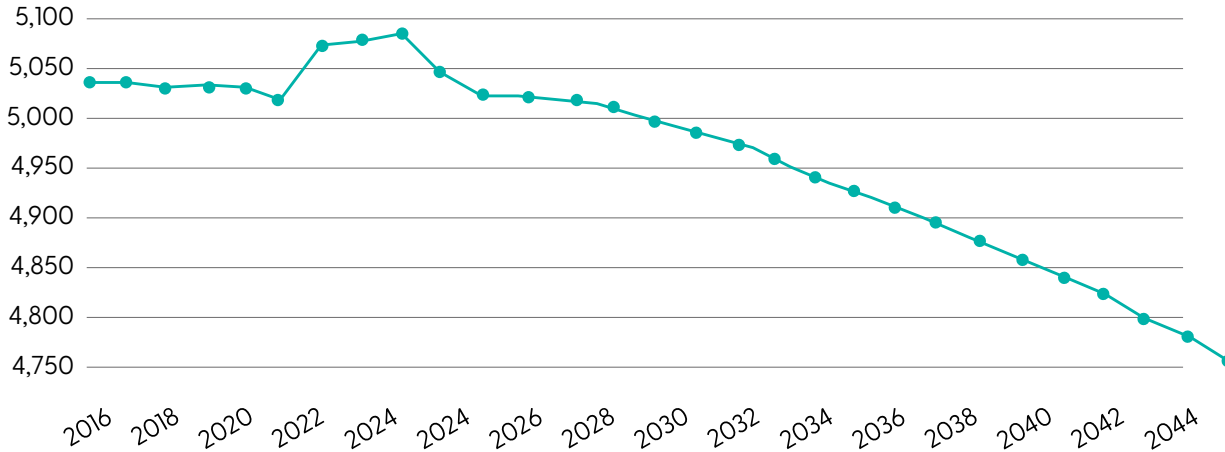
Age Range (years)	Proportion of the Population in Grand Bay Westfield	Proportion of the Population of New Brunswick
0-14	16%	14%
15-19	6%	5%
20-29	9%	11%
30-39	12%	11%
40-49	14%	13%
50-59	15%	15%
60-69	15%	15%
70-79	9%	10%
80+	4%	5%
Average Household Size	2.5	2.3
Median Age	45.2	46.8
Average Age	43.2	44.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021

Projected Population Trends

The Town of Grand Bay-Westfield is projected to maintain a similar population compared to the last 10 years. In 2024, the population was 5,090 (Ward 1 only), 5,866 (Ward 1 and 2), the projections suggest that the population will peak in 2025 and then decrease over the next 20 years. This is illustrated in the graph below.

Trends Population



ESRI Population and Key Indicators, 2025

Employment and Income

In Grand Bay-Westfield, the average household income is \$122,577 and the median household income is \$103,882. The unemployment rate is 4.9%, which is lower than in 2019 when the unemployment rate was 6.3%. The top four industries in Grand Bay-Westfield include health care and social assistance (16.8%), public administration (10.2%), retail trade (9.0%) and manufacturing (8.1%). When looking at the main mode of transportation to get to work, 89.8% of the employed population used a personal vehicle. In Grand Bay-Westfield, 1.5% of the population makes below \$20,000 and the largest income bracket for the employed population at 16.9% is \$40,000-\$59,999.

Household Income

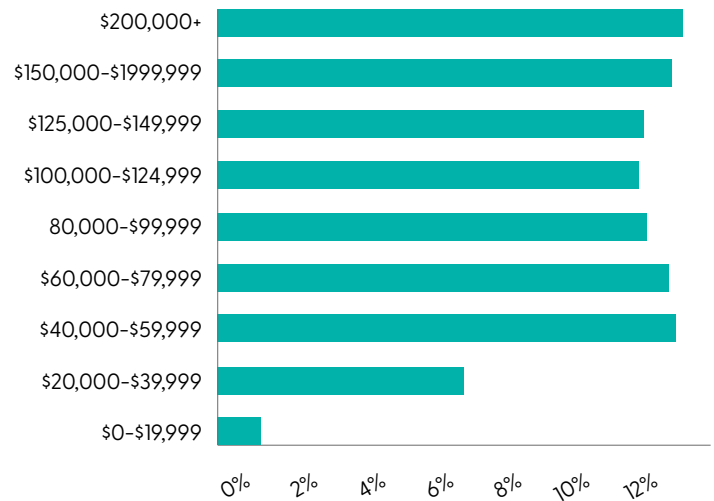
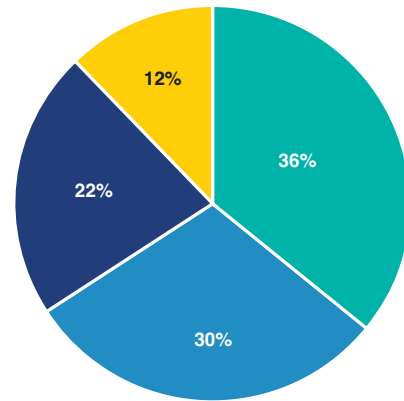


Image Source: ESRI Target Market Profile Report, 2025

Education

When looking at the highest level of education obtained by residents in Saint Andrews most of the population has taken part in higher education (58%). 22% of the population has a university degree, 36% have a college or trades degree, 30% have obtained a high school diploma and 12% of the population does not have a high school diploma.

■ No High School ■ High School ■ College and Trades ■ University Degree



Data Source: ESRI Community Demographics Report, 2025

Health

The New Brunswick Health Council has collected data based on the Population Health Model that is based on the six indicators of population health; demographic context, physical environment, health behaviours, social and economic factors, health services and health outcomes. This report provides a comprehensive understanding of the people who make up the communities and workforce in the province. The data for Grand Bay-Westfield is from Health Zone 2: Fundy Shore and Saint John Area, under the community cluster of Grand Bay-Westfield, Westfield and Greenwich area. The following provides key insights :

- For physical activity, children (32.0%) and youth (24.9%) participate in 60 minutes per day of moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity over the last 7 days. Continually, adults (56.1%) and seniors (52.0%) participate in at least two and a half hours of moderate or vigorous physical activity per week.
- 62.4% of youth volunteer outside of school.
- 94.4% of the community cluster has access to a primary care provider, with 91.4% having a family doctor.
- Youth have symptoms of depression (42.1%) and anxiety (51.4%) but have also been found to have a moderate to high level of mental fitness (having a positive sense of how they feel, think and act) of 79.4% and pro-social behaviours (86.9%).
- For good or excellent perceived mental health for adults (50.1%), seniors (55.7%) and perceived overall health adults (44.5%), seniors (32.6%).
- Children (27%), youth (34.5%), adults and seniors (29%) were found to be overweight or obese.

The Gini Coefficient

The Gini Coefficient is a Statistics Canada measurement of inequality based on income, wealth or consumption across a given population. The measurement is on a scale of 0 to 1, the higher values indicates that a larger inequality exists. If the value was 0, it would indicate that there is no inequality, and everyone has the same income as an example. Saint Andrews's Gini Index score indicates similar income equality distribution when compared to its neighbours and the province. Below are the Gini index scores based on adjusted household after-tax income from the 2021 Census:

- Grand Bay Westfield's Gini Index Score: 0.234
- Oromocto's Gini Index Score: 0.200
- Fredericton's Gini Index Score: 0.287
- Quispamsis's Gini Index Score: 0.257
- Rothesay's Gini Index Score: 0.312
- Saint John's Gini Index Score: 0.287
- New Brunswick's Gini Index Score: 0.272

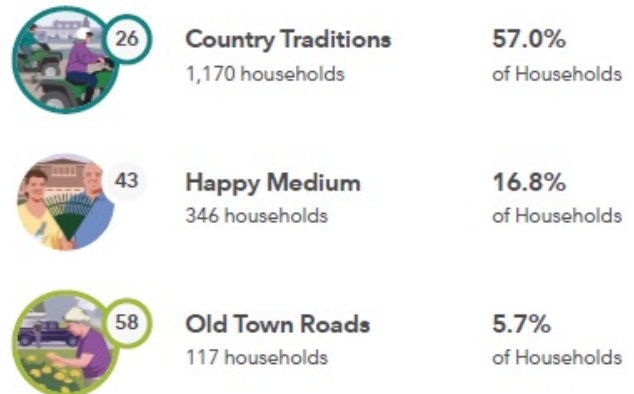
Additional 'Big Data' Insights into Parks and Recreation Demands and Preferences

Demands and expectations for parks and recreation services is strongly influenced by the life stage of person(s) within a household as well as a variety of other demographic indicators and characteristics. The emergence of analytics tools and resources can help parks and recreation providers to better understand the cultural landscape and desires of the community and how they influence the need and wants for programming, facilities and events.

Environics Analytics PRIZM is a segmentation system that classifies Canada's Neighbourhoods into 67 unique lifestyle types. This unique tool incorporates data from over a dozen demographic, marketing, and media sources to analyze and understand consumers, customers, and markets. The segmentation summary for Grand Bay Westfield indicates that the three largest segments of the population are:

- "Country Traditions" (57.0% of all households)
- "Happy Medium" (16.8% of households)
- "Old Town Roads" (5.7% of households)

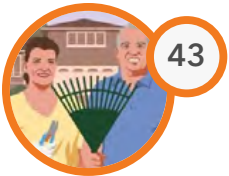
PRIZM segments





Country Traditions

- This segment is the second most affluent rural segment and consists mostly of middle-aged and older couples and families who work blue collar and service sector jobs, with upper middle incomes.
- Nearly 95% of this segment live in single detached homes.
- Common leisure pursuits of these rural families enjoy including gardening, boating and swimming. This segment enjoys recreating in the woodlands and lakes with gear such as ATVs, power boats, campers and fishing/hunting equipment or spending time at their vacation cottage or land relaxing.
- This segment often seeks the outdoors as a way to reenergize.
- Country traditions are rugged individualists, who are self-reliant, have National Pride, respect authority but strive to have personal control over their lives.



Happy Medium

- This segment consists of couples and families living in the outer suburbs of large and midsize cities and hosts a mix of middle-income households with a variety of ages, educations and family types. 90% of residents rely on their vehicles for commuting to work.
- 80% of Happy Medium own a home, mostly single detached.
- This segment enjoys home based leisure pursuits such as sewing/knitting, birdwatching, making crafts and woodworking, as well as ATV/snowmobiling, community theatres and craft shows.
- Happy Medium residents are devoted to their local communities and politically engaged, have a strong work ethic, budget conscious and connected to their local communities and family.



Old Town Roads

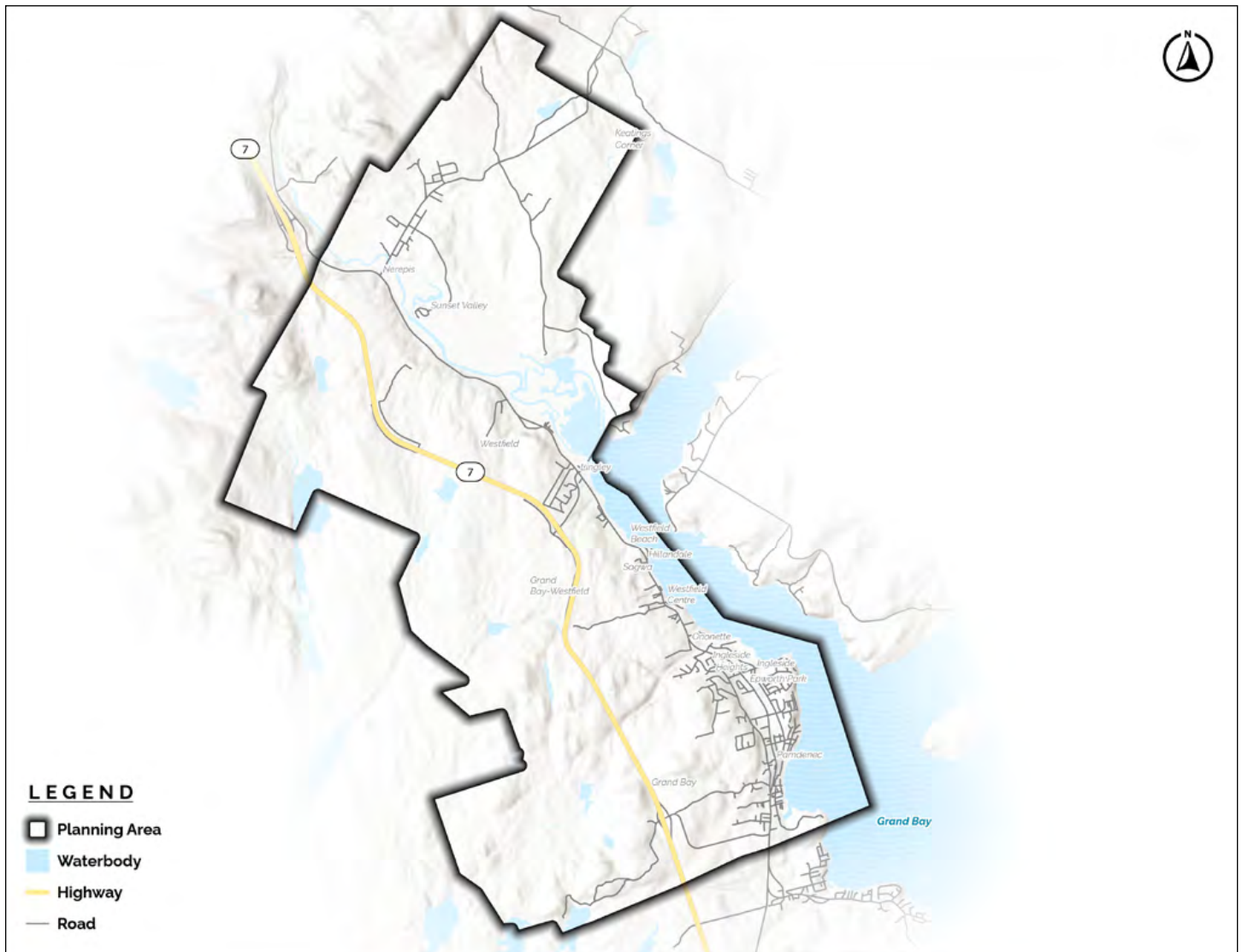
- This segment is comprised of old folks who gravitate to a relaxed lifestyle in rustic towns where seniors are looking to age in place.
- Old Town Roads is a mix of older single, empty nest couples and widowed individuals. Most live in mobile homes or rent low-rise apartments.
- Leisure pursuits consist of time-honoured and outdoor-oriented leisure pursuits like fishing, hunting, gardening and attending country music concerts and community theatres.
- This segment enjoys the disorder of rural living and little use for formality, generally have conservative social views but a growing acceptance for others.

2.2 Spatial Overview of the Population Demographics

The following maps reflect the spatial analysis undertaken by the project team to better understand how these spatial characteristics may impact parks and recreation services and needs.

Map 1: Study Area

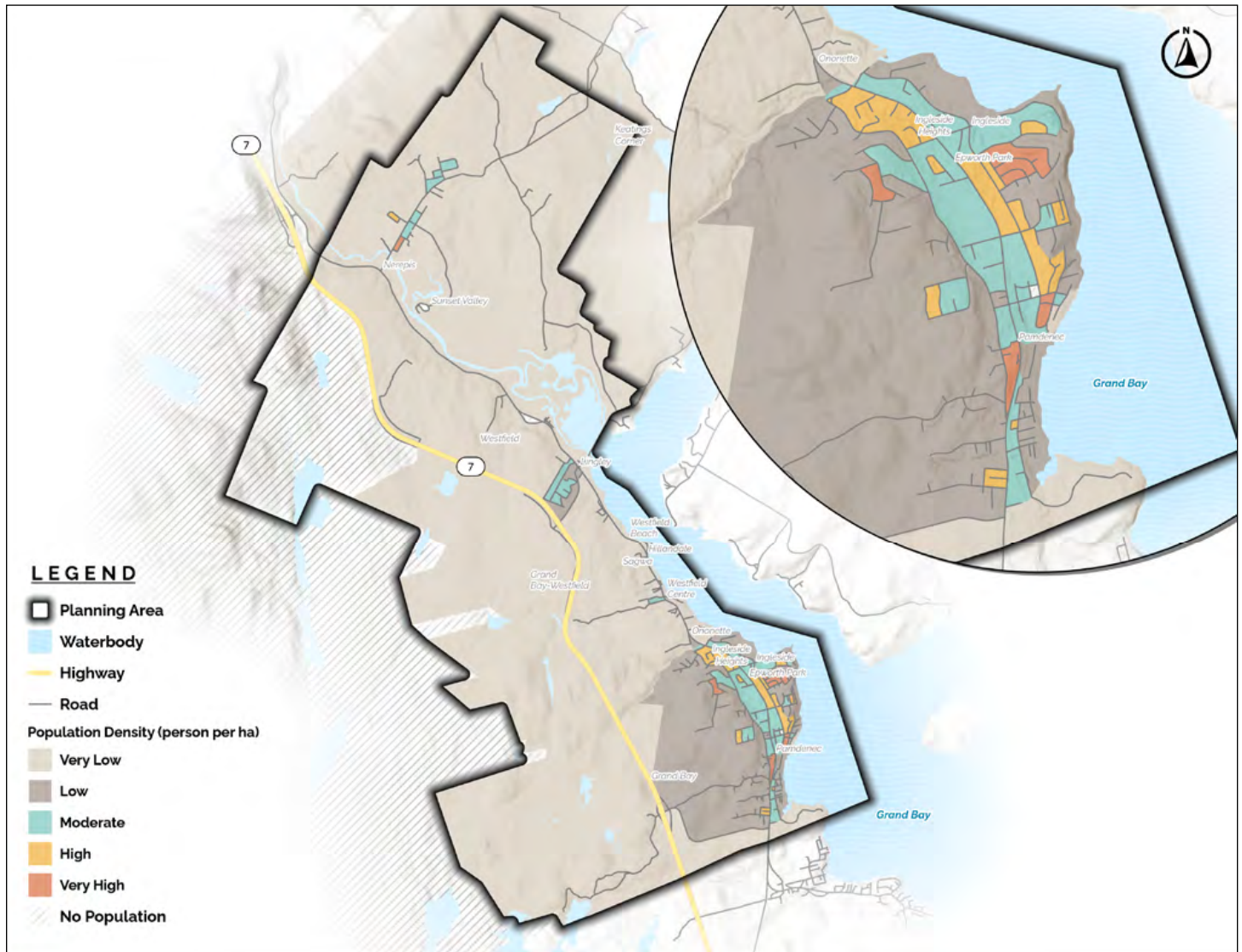
The following map illustrates the planning area for the Town of Grand Bay Westfield



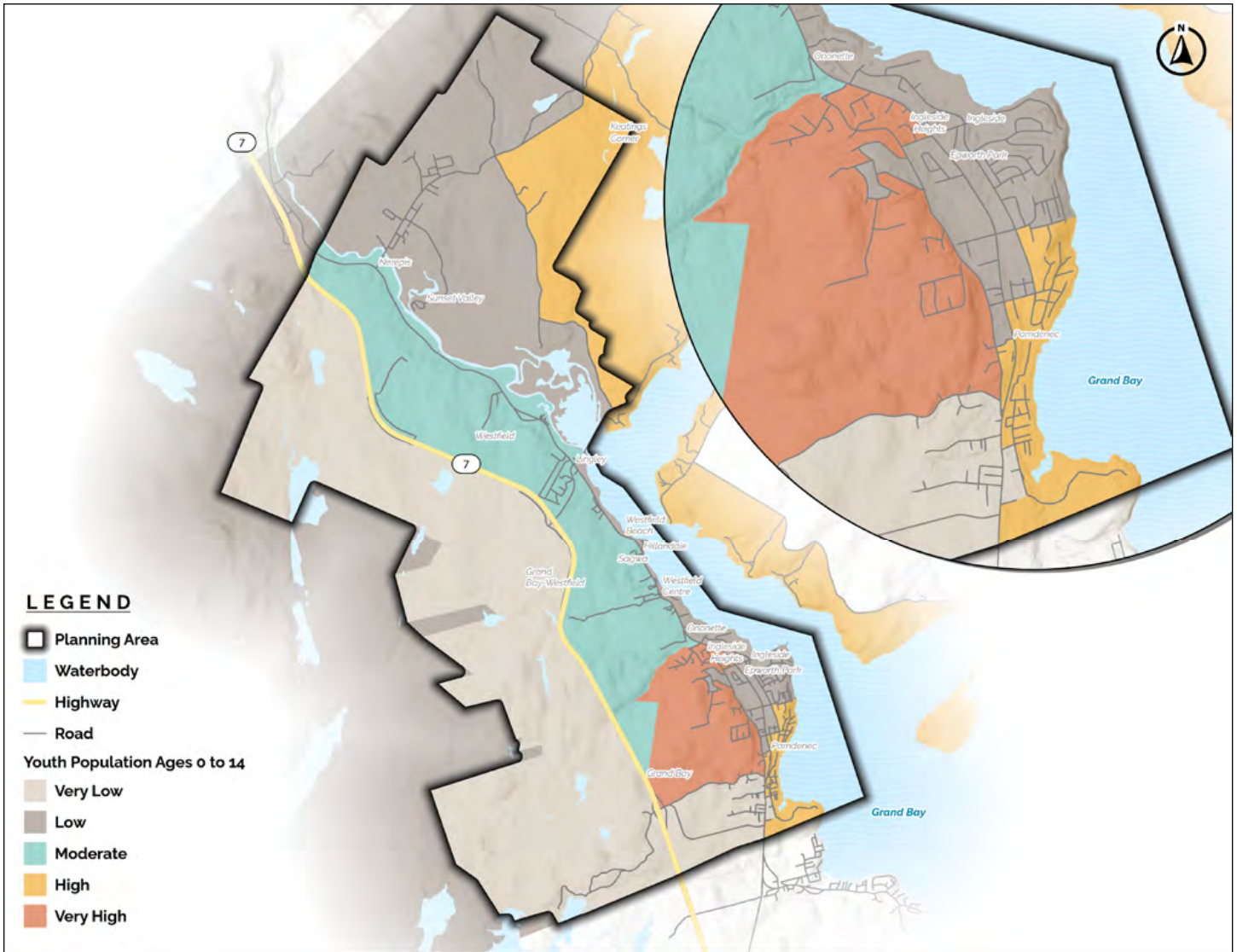
Map 2: Population Density Map

An important component for understanding the needs and demands of residents is understanding community composition in the Town, this can assist in determining priorities for investment in facilities and spaces as well as programming and service development. The following maps provides insight into community demographics.

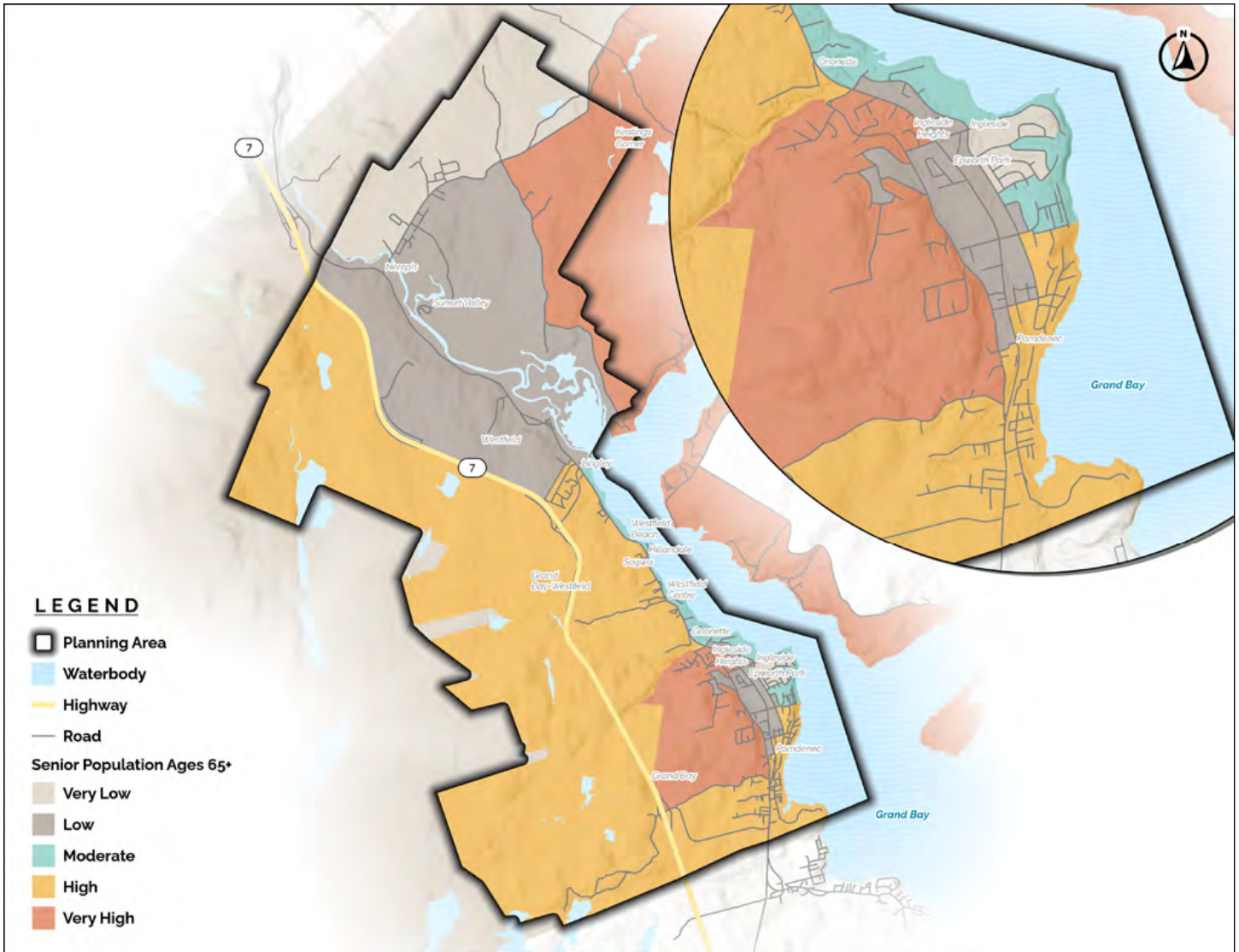
Maps **three (3)** and **four (4)** highlights the areas of population density, areas shaded in yellow and red have a higher population density compared to areas in shades of grey.



Map 3: Youth (0 – 14 yrs) Population Density Map



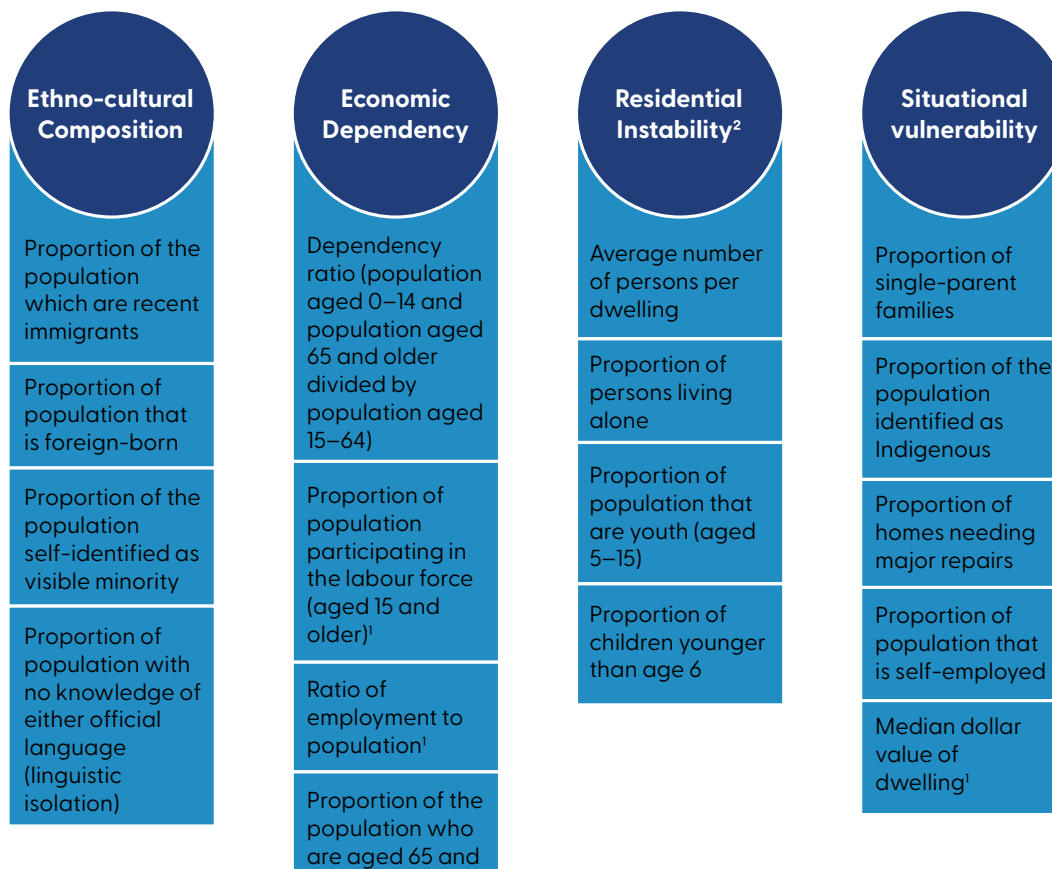
Map 4: Senior (65 + yrs) Population Density Map



Map 6: Multiple Deprivation Index

Equity is the acknowledgement that individual rights and opportunities are fundamental and not dependent on identity. It relates to the effort to understand and provide the different levels of support people need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Therefore, as it relates to the public investment in recreation, equity ensures that everyone receives the appropriate investment based on their individual or unique needs. Some communities, geographic and social, need more investment because they have been historically underserved.

It is important for the purposes of this study, to understand inequities that may exist throughout the Town. The Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation data set developed by Statistics Canada was analyzed to understand equity in Grand Bay - Westfield. The Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation allows for an understanding of inequalities through various measures of social well-being, including health, education, housing, income and justice. There are four dimensions of multiple deprivation and their corresponding indicators, the following figure can be applied to the Atlantic Region.



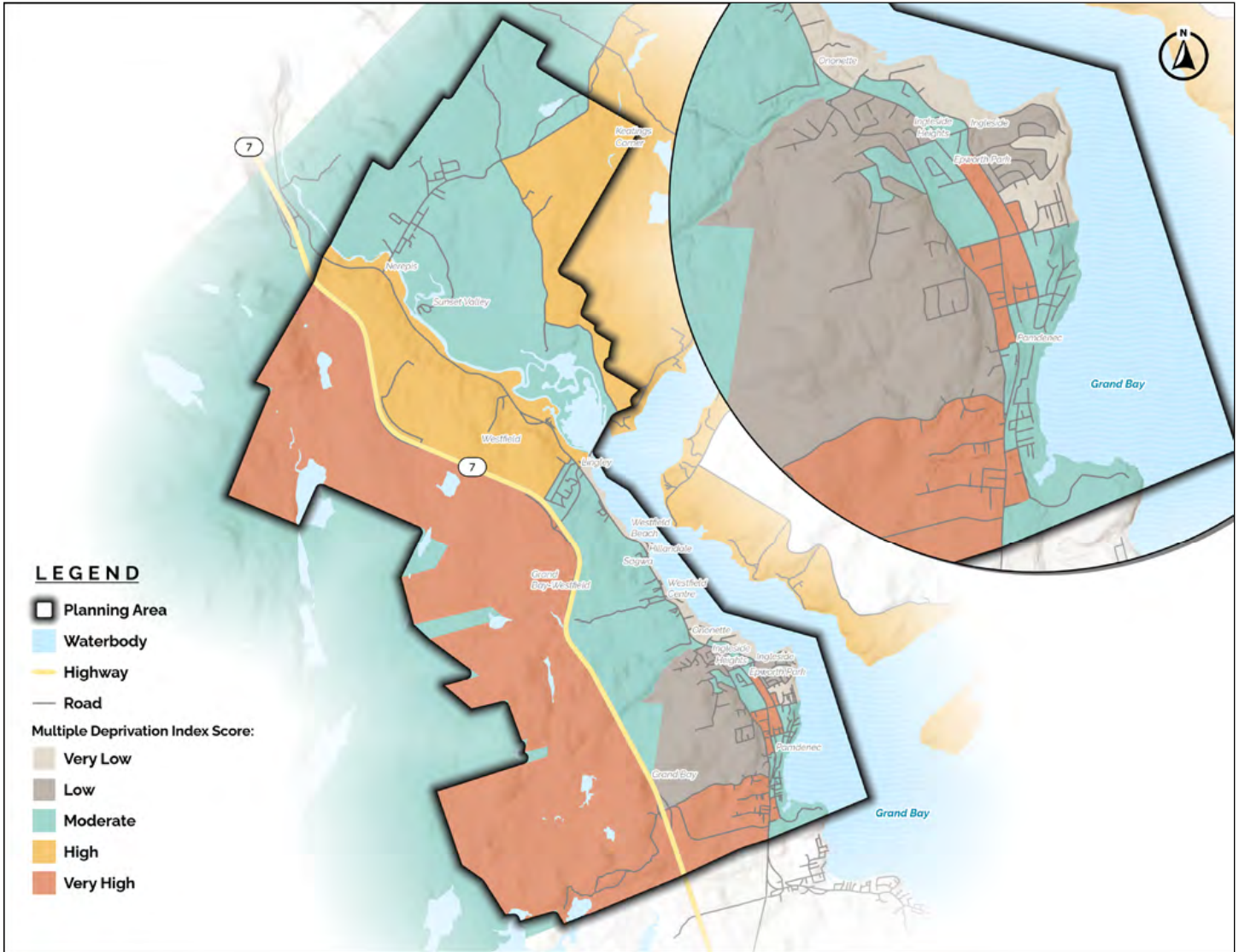
¹ This indicator was reverse-coded, meaning it was coded opposite of the measure. For example, proportion of the population that is married or common-law becomes proportion of population that is single, divorced, separated or widowed.

² The scores for this dimension were reverse-coded, meaning that the order of the scores was reversed, so that higher scores indicate higher residential instability and lower scores indicate lower residential instability.

Note: The Atlantic region includes the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The dimensions are ordered such that the dimension on the left explains the highest percentage of the variance of the data and the dimension on the right explains the lowest percentage.

Image Source, Statistics Canada, 2025

The map below illustrates the analysis of the Town; areas in red indicate areas of higher deprivation relative to other areas in the Town. These areas may warrant additional attention and potential investment to address the unique barriers residents in these areas may face to engage in active living.



Trail Development Standards and Leading Practices

A well-defined trail system is essential for creating safe, enjoyable, and sustainable outdoor experiences. Clear definitions of trails and trail experiences help land managers, planners, and users align expectations. Trans Canada Trail (TCT) is a nationwide trail system spanning 28,000 km from coast to coast. The TCT is not only an incredible trail network but a leader in the trail sphere, paving a path forward for others to follow in their footsteps. In doing so, the TCT has created and compiled a variety of guides, resources, and tools to support and protect Canada's trails. By establishing a standardized approach to trail classification, TCT supports informed decision-making for both operators and visitors¹.

A **trail** is infrastructure, purposely designed for one or more recreation activities, or active transportation. It must meet the following criteria to be classified as a designated trail²:

- Approved by the landowner.
- Mapped and marked with signage.
- Trails and associated infrastructure are actively maintained and managed by trail operator(s).

1 Trans Canada Trail. (2021). *National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada*. <https://tctrail.ca/national-guidelines-webinars/>

2 Trans Canada Trail. (2021). *National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada*. <https://tctrail.ca/national-guidelines-webinars/>

Trail experiences are shaped by various factors that influence how users interact with and perceive a trail. A well-designed trail offers opportunities for different types of recreation while ensuring safety, accessibility, and enjoyment. TCT provides trail managers with guidelines to support creating trail experiences. Key elements that define a trail experience include users being able to engage in their desired³:

- Trail activity,
- Level of challenge,
- Recreation setting,
- Natural region.

Providing clear and accurate trail information before and during a visit is essential for ensuring positive trail experiences. When users have access to well-communicated details about trail characteristics, they can select trails that align with their expectations, skill levels, and interests.]⁴






3 Trans Canada Trail. (2021). National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada. <https://tctrail.ca/national-guidelines-webinars/>

4 Trans Canada Trail. (2021). National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada. <https://tctrail.ca/national-guidelines-webinars/>

To support this, TCT has developed a **Trail Experience Typology**, a proposed classification system that standardizes how trail experiences are described. This typology helps unify communication among stakeholders and allows users to make informed decisions about which trails best suit their needs. Each typology reflects a different level of trail, with the initiative to create a What’s Your Trail Type online tool that creates a consistent trail classification system for Canada. Table X provides an overview of the TCT Trail Typologies, for an in-depth look please refer the [National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada report](#).⁵

Table 3. Graphics. Trail Typology.

Trail Typology	
 <p>Strolls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy-moderate distance. • Well-marked, easy navigation. • No-modest elevation gain. • Little to no planning required. • Easy to access, full range of amenities. • Visitors less interest in physical challenge.
 <p>Excursions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate distance for beginners and intermediate visitors. • Well-marked, some navigation required. • Pre-trip planning required. • Diverse terrain, higher difficulty and specialized equipment might be needed for user safety. • Rudimentary comfort and convenience amenities.
 <p>Epics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate-long distance for intermediate to expert visitors. • Multi-day and extended trip trails. • Physically, mentally and technically challenging trails/terrain. • Navigation required, harder to access trails. • May not have any comfort and convenience amenities.

5 Trans Canada Trail. (2021). National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada. tctrail.ca/national-guidelines-webinars/

<https://>

Figure 1 Elements of a Trail Experience



Building on the foundations of trails and trail experiences, TCT emphasizes the importance of trail classification in developing and enhancing existing trail networks. In its, [National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails](#) in Canada, TCT introduces a **visitor-centric approach** to trail classification. It shifts away from traditional prescriptive models which often failed to capture the full range of trail experiences. Instead, the TCT has moved towards approaching trail classification as an **adaptive process** that prioritizes visitor needs and desired experiences. Trail classification is the **first step** in TCT's **three-step process** and consists of **eight key elements** that define trail conditions (please refer to [Figure 2](#)).

From the start, trail operators are encouraged to make decisions on each element that best reflect their intended and desired trail conditions. A fundamental part of this process is the **Trail Management Objective (Appendix A)**, which is a tool used by trail operators to document clear, concise management intentions for the trail and guide future planning, maintenance, design, construction and management decisions.

Ultimately, a trail's main purpose is to provide high-quality and sustainable visitor experiences. TCT's comprehensive trail classification system helps to describe, and document intended characteristics of trails. It puts visitors at the core and provides answers to common questions asked by trail operators, builders, visitors and the trail tourism ecosystem.⁶



Trail Tourism Ecosystem: A dynamic, interconnected ecosystem of organizations involved in planning, design and management of trails. Recognized in the importance of contributing towards successful trail destinations, and includes stakeholders such as land managers, near trail attractions, and destination marketers.

⁶ Trans Canada Trail. (2021). *National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada*. <https://tctrail.ca/national-guidelines-webinars/>

Figure 2 Trail Classification Process and 8 elements of trail classification

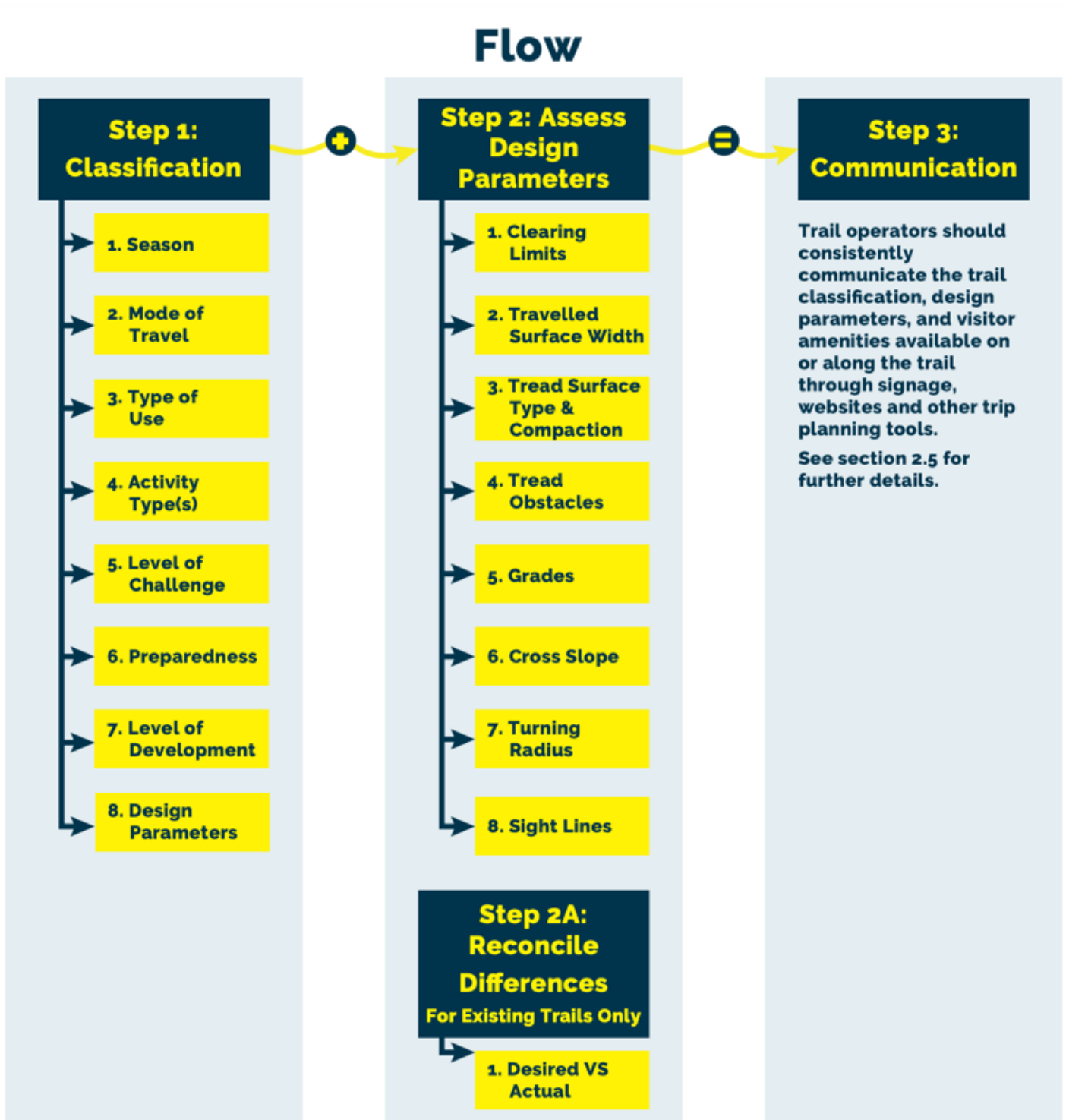
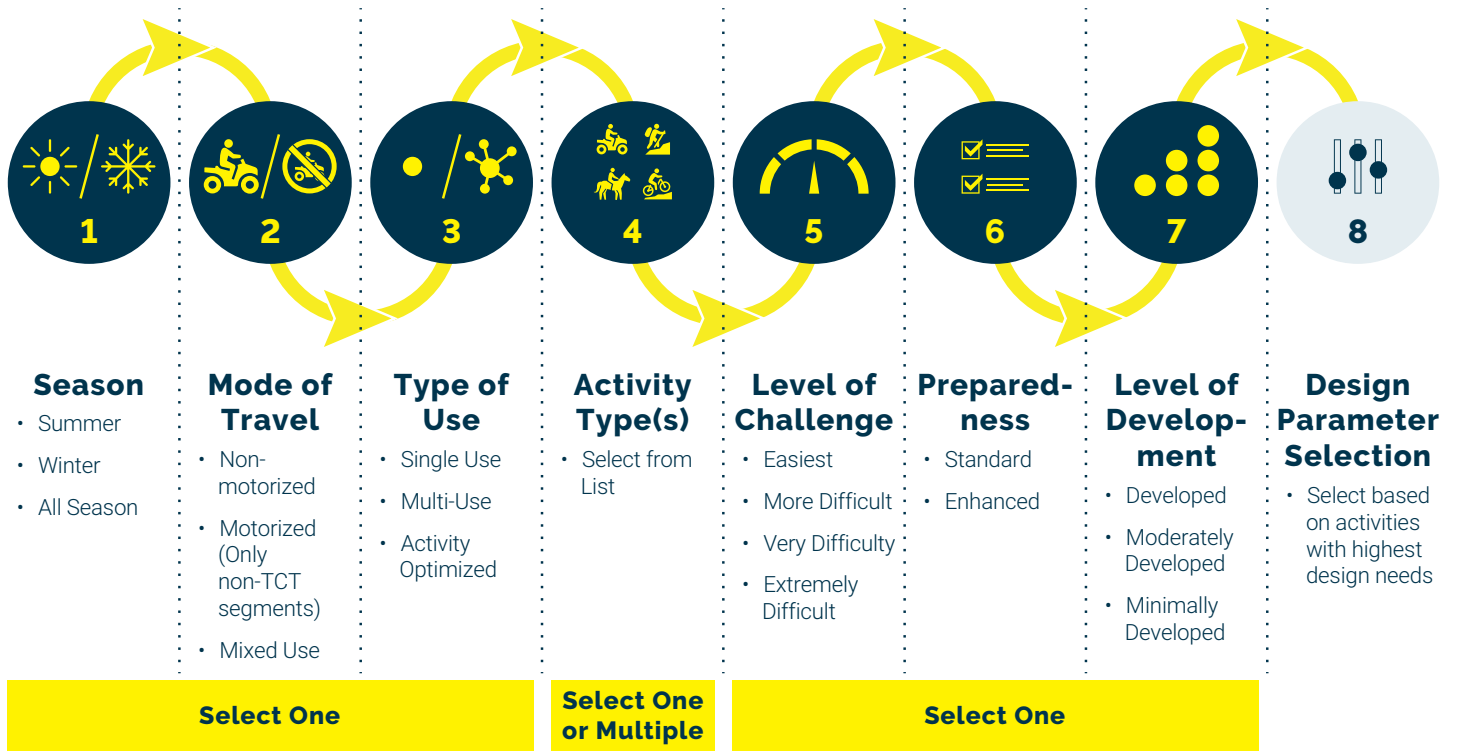







Figure 3 Trail Classification Process and 8 elements of trail classification



Photos from: www.facebook.com/towngbw

Trans Canada Trail provides a variety of up-to-date guides, resources and tools with the aim in creating national consistency for multi-use trail standards. The following, Table X, highlights overall TCT standards with associated guides for best practices when it comes to trail development and ongoing maintenance:

Table 4. TCT Standards and Guides Overview

TCT Standards	Overview	Guidelines and Resources
 <p>Trail Classification and Design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes visitor experience at the centre of the trail classification process. 8 design parameters. Please refer to <u>Appendix A.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada.</u>
 <p>Accessibility and Inclusivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusivity for all to have a variety of trail experiences. Firm trail surface, accessible infrastructure, navigational tools, and experiential features (neuro-inclusive). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Guidelines for Planning and Designing All Persons Trails.</u> <u>Resources for an Inclusive Trail Sector.</u> <u>Indigenous Reconciliation.</u>
 <p>Sustainability and Maintenance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritizing trails designed with longevity and sustainability in mind. Sustainable trails reduce maintenance costs and environmental impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Trail Development & Life Cycle Costing Tool.</u> <u>Tree Planting Resource Guide.</u>
 <p>Safety and Signage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key for impactful and positive user experiences. Consistent and effective signage creates quality trail networks and keeps users safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Signage Best Practices Guidelines.</u>
 <p>Compliance with Standards and Legislation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail operators need to understand and adhere to local, regional and national legal requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Accessibility Standards and Legislation.</u>

Accessibility

Thoughtful planning and trail design ensures that people of all abilities and ages can safely enjoy outdoor spaces in their communities. Today, accessibility recognizes a wide spectrum needs, from neurodivergence to mobility, visual and hearing impairments. As well, it accounts for permanent, temporary and situational challenges that people may face throughout their lifetime. Accessible trails promote inclusion, enhances overall user experience and increases community engagement in natural spaces.^{7,8}

When developing or enhancing trail infrastructure for diverse abilities it is important to follow Universal Design Standards (UDS). These built environment standards follow seven principles from equitable use, flexibility, simple and intuitive design, to accessible information, low physical effort as well as appropriate size and space for ease of use by all. TCT has a set of guidelines for trail developers which emphasizes **All Persons Trails**. This considers the whole user experience from pre-trail planning with accessible information available before arrival to trail navigation and facilities guided by universal design principles.



7 Trans Canada Trail. (2023). All Persons Trails. https://tctrail.ca/allpersonstrails/?_gl=1*1091csv*_up*MQ.*_ga*NzA1ODEzOTEuMTczODg2ODQ3Mg.*_ga_Z63TFVPQJ6*MTczODg2ODQ3MS4xLjAuMTczODg2ODQ3MS4wLjAuMTkyMzMwMjA2OA

8 Government of Canada. (2022). Federal Disability Reference Guide. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disability/arc/reference-guide.html>

Key components for developing **All Persons Trails** include:^{9,10}

- **Distance:** looped trails connecting a variety of features to avoid having to turn back.
- **Terrain:** firm and stable surfaces that require minimal maintenance or have a maintenance plan in place to avoid obstacles such as cracks, holes and bumps. Examples include rubber, compacted crushed aggregate, horizontal wooden planks and asphalt.
- **Grade:** less is best when it comes to slopes, planning for no greater than 5%. If the nature of terrain does not allow for this, add in flat rest stops.
- **Width:** planning for two people and wheelchair or service animal. In areas where paths narrow, adding safe passing places.
- **Amenities and Facilities:** plan for the whole user experience from connecting pathways to the approach.
- **Signage:** including information such as distance, grade, key points of interest, and facilities. Keeping information clear, concise and accurate. Signage for a variety of needs such as high-contrast colours, tactile and integrating technology such as Blind Square, auditory aids and QR codes.

When developing trails for those living with neurodivergence it is important to incorporate consistency, predictability and patterns in trail design to reduce stimulation and increase ease of use. Avoiding the use of bright coloured signage can reduce overwhelm and implementing looped trails helps to create a safe environment. Using a variety of trail surfaces can enhance sensory experiences along with incorporating different zones such as quiet rest stops and sensory gardens. The following case study from Letchworth State Park highlights a well-developed trail that is inclusive for those living with neurodivergence, in particular autism spectrum.



9 Trans Canada Trail. (2023). All Persons Trails. https://tctrail.ca/allpersonstrails/?_gl=1*1091csv*_up*MQ.*_ga*NzA1ODEzOTEuMTczODg2ODQ3Mg.*_ga_Z63TFVPQJ6*MTczODg2ODQ3MS4xLjAuMTczODg2ODQ3MS4wLjAuMTkyMzMwMjA2OA

10 Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. (2025). About Universal Design. <https://universaldesign.ie/about-universal-design>

Accessibility Highlight: Letchworth State Park, New York: Autism Friendly Trail.¹¹



This one-of-a-kind interactive looped trail was created in Letchworth State Park for those living with autism to connect with the outdoors in an environment that reduces overwhelming stimuli. From pre-trip departure, people can access information such as a virtual trail tour, trail maps, key facilities and amenities to help reduce barriers. Upon arrival, the one-mile Autism Nature Trail (ANT) welcomes all people into its calming atmosphere. The looped design creates safety and predictability following key accessibility standards of design. There are eight stations throughout for sensory stimulation, which range from quiet engagement to adventure and active exploration. Stone dust creates a firm yet stable and sustainable surface underfoot, also making it accessible for wheelchairs. The trail adhered to guidelines from the American Disability Act to ensure all people could experience the benefits of nature in a safe, inclusive manner.

¹¹ Autism Nature Trail. (2021-2025). Autism Nature Trail. A Nature Trail for All at Letchworth State Park. <https://autismnaturetrail.com/>

A variety of factors influence the overall sustainability of a trail from amount, type and behaviour of use to visitor regulations, education and design parameters. Sustainable trail networks are developed and managed to accommodate their intended and desired uses for high-quality visitor experiences. As well, they are developed in harmony with nature by mitigating trail degradation and soil loss through comprehensive planning processes such as TCT's trail classification approach. Trails that are sustainable not only benefit its users and the natural environment but also reduce ongoing maintenance costs ensuring longevity from a management perspective. The TCT provides a Tree Planting Resource Guide and a Trail Development Life Lifecycle Costing Tool for sustainable trail networks.

Key considerations from a design perspective include using natural surfaces, such as trail substrates with high rock and gravel content, which overtime require less maintenance and help reduce trail degradation. High rock and gravel content trail materials are also firm and able to withstand heavy traffic from horseback, bikers, and hikers. Concrete surfaces are prone to cracking and experiencing holes, which not only increase ongoing maintenance but also reduce visitor accessibility. Asphalt materials have a similar concern along with environmental risks of harmful chemicals leaching into the adjacent environment. Keeping trail grades on average at 10% or less for recreational use is recognized as a rule of thumb for reducing trail degradation through minimizing soil loss. In areas prone to flooding or high-precipitation events, incorporating side trails is a cost-effective strategy to manage the flow of water and prevent water from pooling on trails.^{12,13,14}



12 Marion, J. L., & Wimpey, J. (2017). Assessing the influence of sustainable trail design and maintenance on soil loss. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 189, 46–57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2016.11.074>

13 Lukoseviciute, G., Pereira, L. N., & Panagopoulos, T. (2021). Sustainable recreational trail design from the recreational opportunity spectrum and trail user perception: a case study of the Seven Hanging Valleys. *Journal of Ecotourism*, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14724049.2021.2004153>

14 Trans Canada Trail. (2021). National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada. <https://tctrail.ca/national-guidelines-webinars/>



Photo from: www.hikingnb.ca/Trails/LowerSJRiver/GrandBayWestfield.html

Wayfinding and Signage

Effective wayfinding and signage lay foundation in providing positive, accessible, and welcoming trail networks. The TCT's Signage Best Practices Guidelines emphasizes the importance establishing a comprehensive sign plan for trail networks as it is coined as the most important part of any trail. Signage not only contributes to users' safety on the trail, but represents a high-quality trail network, attracting exposure and creating trail identity.

It is important that trail operators adhere to any local, regional, or national regulations for their trail signage and wayfinding. Trail networks should have clear, concise and consistent branding and messaging for all their signage. Cohesive signage is not only easier for users to identify but also create important narratives for storytelling such as interpretation along the trail. Having cluttered, unbranded signs create confusion and congestion for trail users. This could result in the reduced likelihood of users understanding the information being delivered and potentially negatively impacting visitor safety.

Trailheads are an important first point of contact within a trail experience. These are places to inform, educate and indicate the start of a well-established route. A trailhead signage board is an effective way to communicate the following information: ^{15,16}

- Trail name, difficulty, distance, terrain grade, key junctions.
- Marker keys, trail icons, landmarks for users to create cognitive maps, trail maps.
- Emergency contact information, advisories and/or cautions.
- Convenience and comfort amenity locations.
- Interpretation and education such as Leave No Trace Principles.

¹⁵ Trans Canada Trail. (2023). *Signage Best Practices Guidelines*. <https://tctrail.ca/signage-best-practices-guidelines/>

¹⁶ Mitschke, S. (2020). *Lost on the Trail: Investigating Hiking Wayfinding and Trail Navigation within National Parks*. Graduate Council of Texas State University.

Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife and ecological corridors are essential links connecting landscapes that allow for the natural migration of species between key habitats. Anthropogenic changes have resulted in a variety of linear barriers which fragment corridors into smaller sub-sections and reduce connectivity. Some roadways and highways that exist across key wildlife corridors have implemented solutions by adding built structures, such as the Banff wildlife bridges, to help manage critical corridors and reduce negative human-wildlife encounters.

Trail networks operate on a much smaller scale than major highways but still create the same linear barriers for a variety of species. To help reduce a trails impact on wildlife corridors, it is recognized as best practice to avoid developing through key connectivity routes when possible. Within the initial planning phases of trail development, conducting environmental assessments of the landscape will help trail operators to identify any sensitive ecological areas of concern, including wildlife corridors. If a trail network already exists, or cannot be developed around a corridor, it is important to minimize the amount and intensity of human activities within these zones. When designing trails within wildlife corridors, re-creating linkages, such as constructing tunnels under trails, and implementing seasonal closures when necessary (e.g. during sensitive breeding times for frogs to cross the path). As well, for trail networks with riparian ecosystems, creating buffer strips or zones is an important tool for reducing erosion and supporting critical habitat for aquatic species. It is recommended that for areas with amphibians a minimum of a 400m buffer zone should be created reduce human disturbance. Education is also a vital link, connecting people to the importance of trail stewardship and ultimately contributing to the success of trails balanced alongside wildlife corridors. Trails networks can successfully coexist within wildlife corridors when thoughtful measures are put into place, such as what was done in the Village of Cumberland, Vancouver Island (please refer to the wildlife corridor highlight case study).^{17,18}



17 Gregory, A., Spence, E., Beier, P., & Garding, E. (2021). *Toward best management practices for ecological corridors*. *Land (Basel)*, 10(2), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land10020140>

18 Government of Canada. (2024). *Wildlife Corridors- a 'moving' story*. <https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/ab/banff/nature/conservation/transport/corridors>

Wildlife Corridor Highlight: Village of Cumberland, Vancouver Island. Tiny Toad Patrol.^{19,20}



The Village of Cumberland is not only home to 4,447 human residents but also thousands of Western Toads. These toads are federally listed as a species of concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) due to their sensitivity to human activities and climate change. In the lush Cumberland Forest, mountain bikers and other recreationists share the diverse trail network alongside these amphibians. The Western Toad has three main migration periods throughout the year, two in the spring and one in the summer. The largest migration in Cumberland is when the toadlets leave Allen Lake for their upland forest habitat, hopping across the forest trails. This migration occurs during peak human use, in the daytime and usually after summer rain events, making the toadlets vulnerable to trampling. The Cumberland Community Forest Society along with United Riders of Cumberland and other stakeholders rallied together to form the Tiny Toad Patrol. Recognising how their existing trail infrastructure interfered with the Western Toads migration corridor, they created a variety of educational materials from maps and citizen science projects to trailhead booths. They closed sections of the trail to allow for safe migration and reduced human presence by creating trail re-route options with updated migration maps during the closures. Collectively, the community of Cumberland came together to create a vital link between the Western Toads habitats and their hearts. Ensuring these toadlets, and future generations, have a positive first trail experience.

19 Cumberland Community Forest Society. (N.D). Western Toad Project. <https://www.cumberlandforest.com/about-the-forest/western-toad-project/>

20 United Riders of Cumberland. (2025). Western Toad Information. <https://unitedridersofcumberland.com/trail-care/western-toad-information/>

Visitor Use Management

Trail networks provide people with a variety of recreational opportunities and active transportation options. Trails provide communities with access to nature-based activities, and trail usage surged post-pandemic when people began to experience the benefits of time spent outdoors. With increased popularity comes management concerns such as trail stewardship, invasive species, informal trails degrading local ecosystems and user conflicts.

To mitigate concerns, there are a variety of tools to help manage visitors. Applying frameworks such as the Visitor Use Management (VUM) Framework, from the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council, helps to create consistency and build a foundation for management. This framework provides guidance on desired conditions and identifies appropriate uses with management strategies as well as monitoring. Understanding visitor's motivation, perceptions and preferred activities can help with site-level management and trail design. Designated trails along with consistent trailheads, signage and wayfinding decrease informal trail use. Visitor education aids in influencing behaviours of trail users and is best done throughout the whole user experience. Obtaining spatial data to map visitation patterns is another important tool that can be used to understand and manage visitation within trail networks. Overall, effective VUM defines the type and level of visitor use a trail network can accommodate while sustaining resources and social conditions set out within the trails management objectives. ^{21 22 23 24 25 26}

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- 21 Pacific Crest Trail Association. (2025). *Strategies for Visitor Use Management*. <https://www.pcta.org/our-work/vum/vum-strategies/>
- 22 Interagency Visitor Use Management Council. (2025). *Visitor Use Management Overview*. <https://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/VUM/VumOverview>
- 23 Trans Canada Trail. (2020). *Visitor Management Plans*. https://tctrail.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/07-Visitor_Management-plans.pdf
- 24 Lukoseviciute, G., Pereira, L. N., Panagopoulos, T., Fedeli, G., Ramsey, E., Madden, K., & Condell, J. (2023). *Recreational trail development within different geographical contexts as a determinant of income multiplier and local economic impact*. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 46, 101090-. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101090>
- 25 Marion, J. L., Leung, Y.-F., & Nepal, S. K. (2006). *Monitoring Trail Conditions: New Methodological Considerations*. *The George Wright Forum*, 23(2), 36–49.
- 26 Kuba, K., Monz, C., Bårdsen, B.-J., & Hausner, V. H. (2018). *Role of site management in influencing visitor use along trails in multiple alpine protected areas in Norway*. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, 22, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2018.02.002>

Trail Tourism Ecosystem

Trans Canada Trail emphasizes the importance of an interconnected dynamic ecosystem for successful trails and destinations. It is recognized that while not all trails should be developed for tourism, trail tourism is a beneficial way for communities to strengthen and diversify their economies. It shifts the tourism narrative away from mass tourism towards nature-based and slow tourism that not only benefits the local ecosystem positively but people too. Trail operators must evaluate early in the planning process if their trail(s) are tourism ready. The TCT provides a Guide to Evaluating Trails Tourism Readiness (section 4), along with a Trail Funding Program, supporting destinations developing sustainable trail tourism.^{27,28,29}

Lukoseviciute notes in the Journal of Ecotourism that trail users are becoming one of the fastest growing nature-based recreationists worldwide. One form of trail tourism is developing a signature trail, which is a themed walk, such as art, history or culinary, that showcases an areas unique heritage. Rail trails are a popular form of signature trail, that follow historical and abandoned railroad lines, offering interpretive opportunities. Signature trails can be promoted throughout the whole visitor experience, from pre-trip planning to welcoming themed signage in the community and on the trails. When implemented thoughtfully and successfully, signature trails directly connect visitors to the host community, which in turn provides economic benefits to the greater trail tourism ecosystem.³⁰



27 Trans Canada Trail. (2021). National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada. https://tctrail.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Trans-Canada-Trail-National-ClassificationGuidelines_2021.pdf?_gl=1*1a6vlyr*_up*MQ..*_ga*OTk3NTcyNjgxLjE3MzkyOTkyNzU.*_ga_Z63TFVPQJ6*MTczOTI5OTI3NC4xLjAuMTczOTI5OTI3NC4wLjAuOTk1NjEwMjk3

28 Lukoseviciute, G., Pereira, L. N., & Panagopoulos, T. (2021). Sustainable recreational trail design from the recreational opportunity spectrum and trail user perception: a case study of the Seven Hanging Valleys. *Journal of Ecotourism* 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14724049.2021.2004153>

29 Government of Alberta. (2019). Trail Development Guidelines for Alberta's Public Land. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/blcae0e7-4b70-4c7b-8575-f89ada15342d/resource/9cc04dc8-ffe5-4c04-aed4-ff43cee2cb56/download/aep-trail-development-guidelines-2019.pdf>

30 Lukoseviciute, G., Pereira, L. N., & Panagopoulos, T. (2022). The economic impact of recreational trails: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 21(4), 366–393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14724049.2022.2030745>

Trail Tourism Ecosystem Highlight: Heinsburg to Waskatenau, Alberta's Iron Horse Trail 31,32

Part of the Trans Canada Trail, the 177km Iron Horse Trail follows an abandoned CN rail line through 10 small communities from Heinsburg to Waskatenau. Along the way, visitors get to experience beautiful, forested landscapes, diverse wetland ecosystems and vast open prairies that a train once weaved through. Not only this, but the trail brings people through the heart of each community, allowing a direct connection to these unique small towns. Towns showcase their quirks, welcoming visitors with tasty treats and ultimately creating list of things to see throughout the abandoned rail journey. Some highlights include antique shops, food trucks, geocaching, the world's largest perogie in Glendon and a UFO landing site in St. Paul. Rich in over 100 years of history, this trail showcases how small communities can work together to form a strong trail tourism ecosystem through leveraging its unique railway history in the form of a signature trail.



31 AMA Travel. (2025). *Hidden Alberta: The Iron Horse Trail*. <https://www.amatravel.ca/articles/alberta-iron-horse-trail>

32 Trans Canada Trail. (2023). *Explore the Map: Alberta's Iron Horse Trail*. https://tctrail.ca/explorethemap/?_gl=1*3nbkbc*_up*MQ..*_ga*MTk0Njc2NjE1NS4xNzM5NDY4NzQw*_ga_Z63TFVPQJ6*MTczOTQ2ODczOC4xLjAuMTczOTQ2ODczOC4wLjAuMTc1NDA4MjI4

Commitment to Indigenous Reconciliation

The TCT encourages and supports reconciliation through honouring the land trails are on and the importance of trails as a current and historical transport route for many Indigenous communities. Working with Indigenous communities and supporting partnerships is a cornerstone in developing trails nationwide. On Vancouver Island, the TCT worked with local Indigenous people of Malahat Nation when developing the Cowichan Valley multi-use trail. Through this partnership, the Malahat Nation was able to design a Yos Pole to honour their people's culture and welcome trail users onto their land.³³

Value-based experiences are growing within the trail sector which support Indigenous-led trail experiences that share traditional knowledge with respect for their communities' land, culture and history. Within the TCT there is a 14km portion of trail along the Niagara Escarpment travelling through Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory. The Bebamikawe Memorial Trail includes Odawa interpretive experiences where people can learn about the local ecosystem as they walk alongside seven clan dodems ascending the warrior trail. Guided hikes and culinary experiences are also offered through Wiikwemkoong Tourism which uses the trail to offer authentic value-based experiences, merging the trail tourism ecosystem with Indigenous reconciliation.³⁴

The following are actions which support commitment towards Indigenous Reconciliation for trail networks:

- Honouring Indigenous place names on trail signage and route names to restore indigenous culture.
- Working with Indigenous communities to build partnerships.
- Include local Indigenous language on trail signage and wayfinding.
- Land acknowledgements on trailhead signage.
- Work with Indigenous communities to incorporate interpretive storytelling on trails.

33 *Trans Canada Trail. (2018). Trail sections that connect with Canada's Indigenous heritage.* <https://tctrail.ca/stories/trail-sections-indigenous-heritage/>

34 *Trans Canada Trail. (2024). How trail tourism and Indigenous experiences can contribute to reconciliation and a resilient, inclusive trail sector.* *Trans Canada Trail. (2024). How trail tourism and Indigenous experiences can contribute to reconciliation and a resilient, inclusive trail sector.* <https://tctrail.ca/stories/how-trail-tourism-and-indigenous-experiences-can-contribute-to-reconciliation-and-a-resilient/>

3.1 Community Case Studies

Town of Cochrane, Ontario: Revitalizing Multi-Use Trails



In northeastern Ontario the Town of Cochrane, with a population of 5,487 residents, recognized the existing value of their trail network as important community asset. The pathways throughout town serve as important recreation and active transportation corridors for residents and visitors alike. Connecting people to the local environment and each other, ultimately contributing to enhanced community wellbeing. However, it was recognized that although the existing trail network provided a great foundation, it was not benefiting people with diverse abilities and its maintenance was unsustainable. Cochrane received funding support from FedNor through the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF) to improve their existing trail system, making it more accessible and sustainable.

The multi-use trail was extended by two kilometers, providing increased connectivity, linking various community parks, and providing access to local schools, hospitals and other essential services. Trail infrastructure was improved to meet the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act standards. Some changes included increased lighting along the multi-use pathway, rest areas and park benches. As well, sustainable design was prioritized by using packed dust and fine gravel to form a firm, sturdy trail bed instead of concrete paving. This decision is not only better for the environment while meeting accessibility standards but also ensures economic feasibility through reducing trail maintenance costs over the lifecycle. Overall, the Town of Cochrane’s updated multi-use trail network provides a path forward for other small towns to follow their footsteps when it comes to creating accessible and sustainable trails for all.³⁵

³⁵ Government of Canada. (2025). Multi-Use Trails for Every Ability. <https://fednor.canada.ca/en/our-successes/multi-use-trails-every-ability?wbdisable=true>

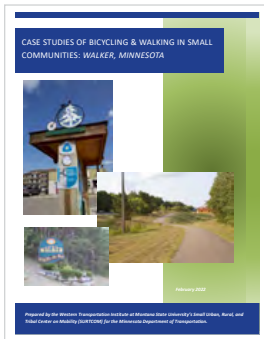
Town of Ely, Nevada: Diversifying Existing Mountain Bike Trails

The Town of Ely, Nevada, a four-season mountain town of 3,908 residents, has long embraced mountain biking, hosting America's longest running enduro race, Fears, Tears, and Beers, since 1995. While the town welcomes growing tourism, residents seek to balance increased visitation with preserving the solitude and sustainability of their trails. Much of Ely's existing trail network evolved informally over time, but rising use has exposed challenges in connectivity, erosion, drainage, and trail grades.

To enhance the rider experience while maintaining environmental sustainability, Ely is working with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) to improve and diversify trails on Ward Mountain. Plans include a new, scenic climb with rest stops and advanced offshoots up to a primary hub on Ward Mountain. As well, increased connectivity of trails to campgrounds and town, which account for the trail tourism ecosystem. Also, thoughtfully designed infrastructure that supports both growth and conservation. By proactively re-designing its trails, Ely is shifting gears toward a future where hard-core adventure and friendly-fun ride in tandem. ³⁶

³⁶ International Mountain Biking Association. (2024). *New Trails Promise High Quality Experiences: Planning and Design in Ely, Nevada*. <https://www.imba.com/blog/new-trails-promise-diversification-high-quality-experiences>

Walker, Minnesota: Enhancing Existing Network to Support Active Transportation



Walker is home to 938 residents who stride and ride their way around town. Through years of comprehensive planning and support from various grants, the community has enhanced their existing infrastructure to support trail networks that promote active transportation. In 2018 Walker achieved the league of American Bicyclists Bicycle Friendly Community Bronze level designation and 11 local businesses received a Bicycle Friendly Business designation.

Highlights from Walkers trail infrastructure and network enhancements include:³⁷

- Establishing a designated loop, The Walker Loop, connecting three major trails.
- Redesigning and building a multi-use pathway along the town's main thoroughfare, Railroad Avenue.
- Railroad Avenue sections redesigned and built as one-way streets to reduce pedestrian crossings and increase walkability.
- Continued improvements for accessibility and safety such as enhanced pathway lighting and curb extensions.
- Restriping bike lanes and using shared lane markers.
- Establishing underpasses for increased active transportation connectivity.
- Installing public restrooms along pathways.
- Putting bike racks, and bike repair stations in town to accompany bike path infrastructure and further support active transportation.
- Implemented a defined walking route, art and historical route with interpretive and wayfinding signage.
- The active transportation networks support local businesses and vis versa, through options such as bike rentals in town, and safe pathway connectivity through town.

³⁷ Western Transportation Institute. (2022). *Case Studies of Bicycling & Walking in Small Communities: Walker, Minnesota*. https://westerntransportationinstitute.org/wpcontent/uploads/2022/03/MN_Walker_CaseStudy_2022.pdf

Current Trail Network in Grand Bay – Westfield

4.1 Current Trails and Pathways

Grand Bay-Westfield’s trail network reflects a combination of formal Town-managed infrastructure and informal, community-created pathways that have evolved organically over time. While the community benefits from an active trail culture, many existing trails operate as “unofficial” routes—meaning they were not formally planned, designed, or constructed by the Town and currently lack regular municipal maintenance or management.



Photo from: www.facebook.com/towngbw

Formal Trail Infrastructure

The Town's primary formal trail asset is the Municipal Heritage Trail, a 14.5 km crushed rock multi-use pathway that serves as the backbone of the community's trail network. This trail follows along the road and former railbed, offering scenic views of the Wolastoq (Saint John River) and connecting key community destinations including the arena, schools, parks, ball fields, commercial areas, and waterfront access points. The Municipal Heritage Trail features interpretive signage highlighting the area's history and provides important active transportation links for residents.

Additional formal trail areas include:

- Blueberry Hill Nature Preserve: Several trails providing access to undeveloped shoreline and natural areas
- Designated trails connecting to recreation facilities and parks

Informal and Unofficial Trail Network

A significant portion of Grand Bay-Westfield's trail system consists of informal, user-created trails that have developed through regular community use rather than formal planning processes. These unofficial trails include:

- Backcountry and woodland trails: Including routes like the Turtle Mountain Trail, which follows old roads approximately 11 kilometres into the woods behind town, culminating at a granite dome summit
- Social trails and desire lines: Pathways created by repeated foot traffic connecting neighbourhoods, natural areas, and destinations
- Motorized vehicle routes: ATV and snowmobile trails used seasonally throughout the community's rural areas
- Informal neighbourhood connections: Shortcuts and pathways linking residential areas

These unofficial trails are not currently mapped, signed, or maintained by the Town. While they provide valuable recreation opportunities and demonstrate strong community engagement with the landscape, they present several challenges:

- Inconsistent trail conditions and safety standards
- Lack of formal access agreements with landowners
- Absence of environmental assessments or sustainable design features
- No regular maintenance or monitoring
- Limited accessibility for people with diverse abilities
- Potential conflicts between different user groups
- Unknown environmental impacts on sensitive areas

Trail Use Patterns

Grand Bay-Westfield demonstrates strong multipurpose trail usage across its network. Based on community engagement findings (additional findings presented in the following section of this report), current trail activities include:

- Walking and hiking (85% of users): The predominant use, occurring year-round on both formal and informal trails
- Nature appreciation (44%): Users seeking wildlife viewing and natural environment experiences
- Dog walking (43%): Significant recreational activity throughout the trail system
- Motorized use (26%): Notable proportion of users engaging in ATV and snowmobile recreation, particularly on informal backcountry routes
- Cycling: Mountain biking and recreational cycling on suitable trails

The high percentage of motorized usage (26%) indicates that a substantial segment of the community values trail opportunities for ATVs and snowmobiles, particularly during winter months. This motorized recreation currently occurs primarily on unofficial trails and old forestry roads, without formal designation, signage, or management.

Multipurpose Trail Demand

The community has expressed strong interest in multipurpose trail infrastructure that can accommodate diverse user groups and activities. Current trail use reflects this preference, with many trails informally serving multiple functions—walking, cycling, dog walking, and seasonal motorized use. However, the lack of formal trail classification and designated use policies can lead to user conflicts and safety concerns, particularly on shared pathways where speeds and user expectations vary significantly.

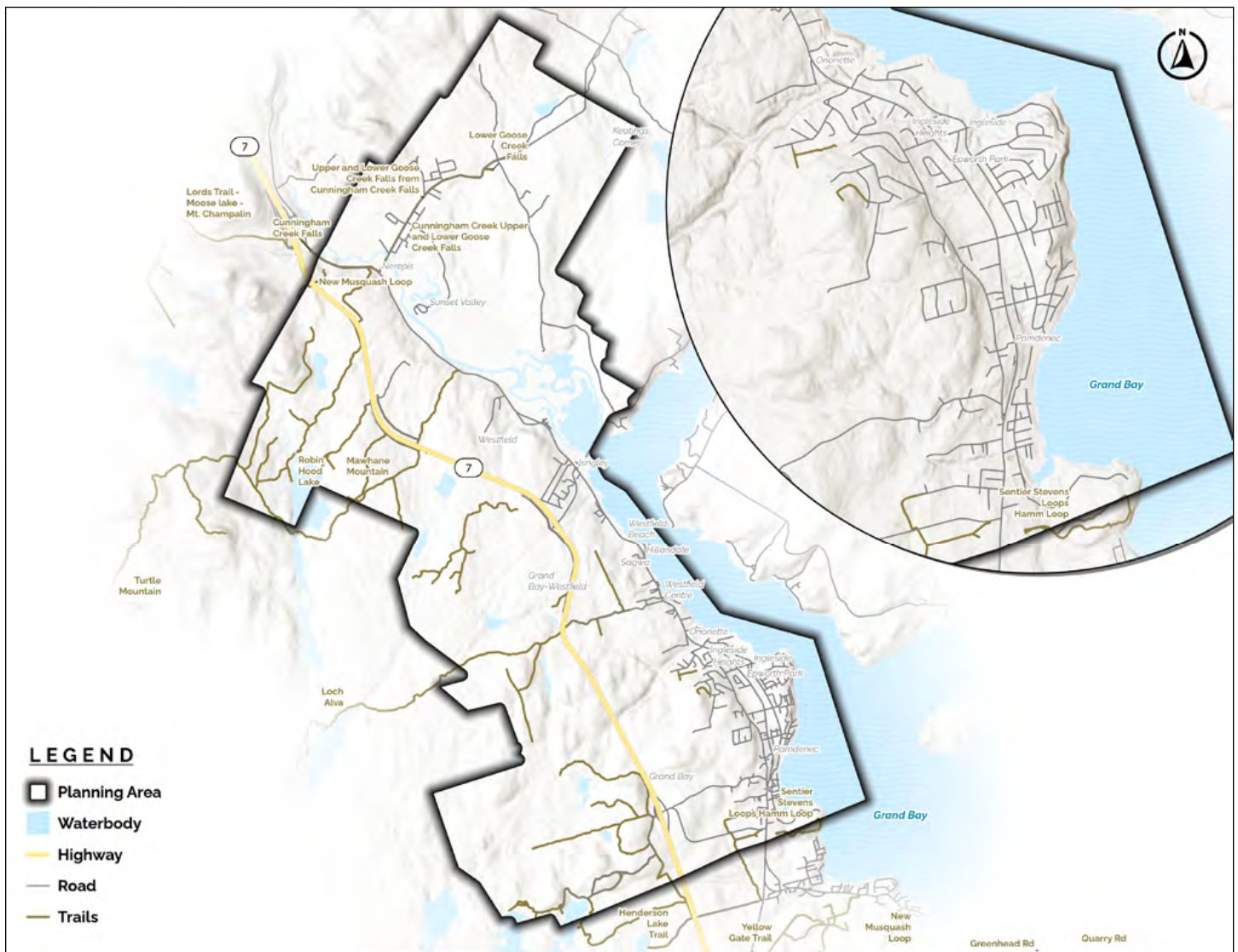
The existing Municipal Heritage Trail serves as the community's primary multipurpose pathway, accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized users. However, community feedback indicates desire for:

- Additional dedicated multipurpose pathways
- Designated trails for specific activities (cycling-priority trails, motorized trails)
- Clear policies on trail etiquette and shared use
- Infrastructure supporting diverse activities (bike lanes, ATV-accessible routes)

Network Gaps and Connectivity Challenges

While Grand Bay–Westfield benefits from both formal and informal trail assets, significant gaps exist in the overall network:

- Limited connections between Ward 1 and Ward 2 (newly amalgamated areas)
- Insufficient trails in close proximity to residential neighbourhoods
- Missing links creating discontinuous routes and dead-ends
- Lack of connections to key destinations (schools, community facilities, commercial areas)
- No regional trail connections to neighbouring municipalities
- Absence of designated accessible trails meeting Universal Design Standards





Community Survey:

May – June 2025

241 Responses

4.2 Community Insights

Importance of Trails

Strong Agreement:

67% believe trails are vital to quality of life.

65% say they are important to the community.

Top Reasons:

Health & Wellness



Connectivity



Environmental Benefits



Recreation & Play



Safe Active Transportation



Current Trail Use & Satisfaction

Usage: 90%

used trails in the past year; most frequent in warmer months.

Usage:

85% Walking/hiking

44% Nature appreciation

43% Dog walking

26% Motorized use

Duration:

Majority of visits for

1-2hrs

Usage: 65%

satisfied overall; concerns include insufficient trails near homes and maintenance issues.

Barriers



Condition / maintenance (28%)



Lack of awareness of trail locations (21%)



Transportation challenges (15%)



Accessibility issues and missing amenities (e.g., signage, benches)

Future Planning Priorities

Respondents rated these goals as most important:

- Physical activity & healthy living (**71%**)
- Inclusive & equitable access
- Biodiversity protection
- Climate resilience
- Community gathering and beautification

Big Ideas from Residents

Expansion & Connectivity:

More trails linking neighborhoods, longer loops, and destination points.

Maintenance & Amenities

Regular upkeep, winter grooming, benches, shelters, maps.

Multi-Use Options:

Dedicated biking and ATV trails alongside walking paths.

Accessibility & Signage:

Inclusive design and improved wayfinding.

Community Engagement

Better marketing and collaboration with local groups.

Vision and Principles

5.1 Vision Statement

Grand Bay-Westfield will cultivate a connected, accessible, and sustainable trail network that honours the land, celebrates community, and enriches the health and well-being of all residents and visitors.

Our trails will serve as vital threads weaving through our community to connect neighbourhoods to nature and people to each other. They will provide year-round opportunities for recreation, active transportation, and meaningful engagement with the natural environment along the Wolastoq. Through thoughtful stewardship and inclusive design, Grand Bay-Westfield's trails will reflect our values of environmental responsibility and commitment to creating spaces where everyone feels welcome and connected.



Photo from: www.hikingnb.ca/Trails/LowerSJRiver/GrandBayWestfield.html

5.2 Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are a set of strategic statements that summarize the focus and desired outcomes for the provision of trails in Grand Bay - Westfield. They represent the fundamental things that must be kept top of mind moving forward and become the measurement upon which recommendations are based and projects are prioritized.

The following guiding principles have been developed for our Trails Master Plan:

Visitor-Centred Experience

All trail planning, design, and management decisions prioritize the needs, safety, and desired experiences of trail users. We commit to understanding diverse user motivations and creating trails that accommodate varying abilities, interests, and activity types—from leisurely strolls to challenging adventures.

Accessibility and Inclusion for All

Trail networks will be designed to welcome people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and experiences. Following Universal Design Standards and Trans Canada Trail's All Persons Trail guidelines, we will remove barriers—physical, social, and informational—to ensure equitable access and meaningful participation for everyone in our community.

Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability

Trails will be developed and maintained in harmony with the natural environment, protecting biodiversity, respecting wildlife corridors, and minimizing ecological impact. We commit to sustainable design practices that reduce long-term maintenance costs, prevent trail degradation, and enhance climate resilience while celebrating the natural beauty of the Wolastoq region.

Connectivity and Integration

Trail development will prioritize creating a connected network that links neighbourhoods, parks, schools, community facilities, and natural areas. Trails will serve dual purposes as recreational amenities and active transportation corridors, providing safe alternatives to vehicle travel and reducing car dependency where feasible.

Community Collaboration and Partnerships

Trail development and stewardship require shared responsibility. We will actively engage residents, community organizations, local businesses, advocacy groups, and neighbouring municipalities in trail planning, implementation, and ongoing care. Strong partnerships will enhance resources, expertise, and community ownership of our trail network.

Quality, Safety, and Ongoing Stewardship

Excellence in trail design, construction, maintenance, and management is essential for positive user experiences. We commit to high standards for trail conditions, clear wayfinding and signage, regular maintenance, and effective communication. Trails will be managed proactively to ensure safety, minimize user conflicts, and sustain quality over the long term.

A Path Forward: Strategies and Recommendations

The following recommendations provide a strategic framework for enhancing and expanding Grand Bay-Westfield's trail network over the next 10 years. Organized into seven strategic themes, these recommendations respond directly to community input, align with Trans Canada Trail best practices, and address identified gaps in the current trail system.

Implementation Priority Framework



Priority 1 (Years 1-3):

Foundational actions critical for system functionality and safety



Priority 2 (Years 4-7):

Enhancement projects building on established foundation



Priority 3 (Years 8-10): Long-term vision projects and system optimization



Theme 1: Trail Network Expansion and Connectivity

Strategic Intent: Create a comprehensive, connected trail network that provides residents and visitors with diverse recreational opportunities and viable active transportation options throughout Grand Bay-Westfield.

Key Finding: 90% of residents used trails in the past year, yet expressed strong desire for more trails, longer loops, and better connectivity between neighbourhoods and destinations. Insufficient trails near homes were identified as a primary concern (28% of barriers).

Recommendations:



1.1 Develop a Phased Trail Expansion Strategy

Identify and prioritize trail corridors that address connectivity gaps, particularly in underserved neighbourhoods (Ward 2 areas along Brittain and Campbell Roads). Create minimum 5-10 km of new trail connections within first 3 years. Focus initial expansion on linking residential areas to existing trail infrastructure, schools, parks, and community facilities. Establish criteria for evaluating and prioritizing new trail corridor opportunities (connectivity value, environmental impact, cost, community benefit).



1.2 Complete Missing Links in the Municipal Heritage Trail Network

Conduct detailed analysis of gaps in the existing 14.5 km Municipal Heritage Trail. Prioritize infill connections that create continuous loops and eliminate dead ends. Address safety concerns at road crossings with enhanced signage, lighting, and potentially grade-separated crossings at high-traffic locations. Extend the Municipal Heritage Trail network by 3-5 km to enhance accessibility and connectivity.



1.3 Create Multi-Use Trail Corridor Along Key Transportation Routes

Evaluate opportunities for trail development along River Valley Drive and other major roads as identified and recommended within the Active Transportation Plan to improve connectivity.



1.4 Explore Regional Trail Connections

Investigate partnerships with neighbouring municipalities / Regional Service Commission for regional trail linkages. Connect to broader trans-provincial trail networks and tourism routes. Evaluate feasibility of connections to Trans Canada Trail or other significant regional trails.



Theme 2: Accessibility and Universal Design

Strategic Intent: Ensure that all residents and visitors, regardless of age or ability, can meaningfully access and enjoy Grand Bay–Westfield’s trail network.

Key Finding: Community identified inclusive and equitable access as a top planning priority (71% importance). Current barriers include accessibility issues and missing amenities.

Recommendations:



2.1 Designate and Develop Priority All Persons Trails

Identify 2-3 high-priority trail segments for immediate accessibility upgrades following TCT All Persons Trail guidelines. Focus on trails connecting to community facilities, schools, and high-use areas as identified by the Active Transportation Plan. Ensure minimum 1.5-2m width, firm and stable surfaces (compacted crushed aggregate or rubber), grades $\leq 5\%$, and accessible trailhead facilities. Provide accessible parking, wayfinding, and amenities at key access points.



2.2 Implement Universal Design Standards for All New Trail Development

Adopt TCT accessibility guidelines as minimum standard for new trail construction. Integrate universal design principles from planning through construction and maintenance. Include accessible rest areas with benches, shade structures, and smooth surfaces every 200-400m on accessible trails. Design for temporary and situational disabilities (e.g., parents with strollers, people with temporary injuries).



2.3 Enhance Wayfinding for Diverse Abilities

Implement multi-modal wayfinding: high-contrast visual signage, tactile elements, QR codes linking to audio descriptions, and digital navigation tools. Integrate technology solutions like Blind Square app compatibility. Provide clear, accurate trail information including distance, grade, surface type, amenities, and difficulty ratings at all trailheads.



2.4 Develop Neuro-Inclusive Trail Design Features

Create designated quiet zones along trails with reduced visual stimulation. Use consistent, predictable design patterns and avoid bright, overwhelming signage. Develop sensory-rich zones with varied natural textures and experiences where appropriate.



2.5 Conduct Accessibility Audit of Existing Trail Network

Systematically evaluate all existing trails against Universal Design Standards. Prioritize improvements based on usage levels, community importance, and feasibility. Develop multi-year plan to retrofit high-priority existing trails for improved accessibility. Engage residents with diverse abilities in audit process and priority-setting.



2.6 Establish Inclusive Recreation Programming

Partner with community organizations to offer guided trail experiences for people with diverse abilities. Develop inclusive signage and educational materials in multiple formats.



Photo from: www.facebook.com/towngbw

Theme 3 Maintenance, Sustainability, and Trail Quality

Strategic Intent: Establish sustainable trail design, construction, and maintenance practices that ensure high-quality, safe, and environmentally responsible trail experiences while managing long-term costs effectively.

Key Finding: Trail condition and maintenance was the #1 barrier to trail use (28%). Community expressed desire for regular upkeep and winter maintenance. 65% satisfaction rate indicates room for improvement in overall trail quality.

Recommendations:



3.1 Develop Comprehensive Trail Maintenance Plan

Establish clear maintenance standards and schedules for each trail classification type. Create Trail Management Objectives (TMOs) for all existing and new trails documenting intended conditions and maintenance requirements (see Appendix B). Define maintenance responsibilities (Town staff, contractors, volunteer groups, trail partners). Implement seasonal maintenance calendar addressing spring cleanup, summer inspections, fall preparation, and winter grooming priorities.



3.2 Prioritize Sustainable Trail Design and Materials

Design trails with proper drainage, appropriate grades ($\leq 10\%$ for most recreational trails), and erosion control measures. Use natural surfaces where appropriate for user experience and sustainability. Minimize environmental impact through thoughtful alignment and construction techniques. Utilize TCT Trail Development Life Cycle Costing Tool to evaluate long-term financial sustainability of design choices.



3.3 Establish Regular Inspection and Monitoring Program

Conduct systematic inspections at minimum twice annually (spring and fall) plus after significant weather events. Use standardized inspection forms/apps to document conditions and maintenance needs. Track and trend trail condition data to inform budget planning and prioritization. Establish rapid response protocols for safety hazards.



3.4 Implement Winter Trail Maintenance Strategy

Designate priority trails for winter grooming (walking, fat biking, cross-country skiing). Evaluate equipment needs and budget requirements for winter maintenance. Communicate seasonal trail conditions and closures clearly to users. Balance winter recreation demand with budget realities and snow management priorities.



3.5 Develop Trail Stewardship and Volunteer Program

Recruit and train community volunteers for light maintenance, monitoring, and invasive species removal. Establish ‘Adopt-a-Trail’ program for community groups, businesses, and families. Organize regular trail clean-up and maintenance events. Recognize and celebrate volunteer contributions. Leverage the community’s strong volunteer culture (62.4% of youth volunteer outside school).



3.6 Implement Visitor Use Management Framework

Apply Interagency Visitor Use Management (VUM) Framework to define desired conditions and appropriate use levels for each trail. Monitor usage patterns using trail counters, observational studies, and user surveys. Address conflicts between different user groups through design, education, and policy. Manage informal trail development proactively through designated trail expansion and education.



Photo from: www.hikingnb.ca/Trails/LowerSJRiver/GrandBayWestfield.html

Theme 4 Wayfinding, Signage, and Trail Information

Strategic Intent: Provide clear, consistent, and accessible trail information and wayfinding systems that enhance safety, support positive user experiences, and showcase community identity.

Key Finding: Lack of awareness of trail locations (21% of barriers) and requests for improved signage, maps, and wayfinding were prominent themes in community input.

Recommendations:



4.1 Develop Comprehensive Trail Signage and Wayfinding System

Follow TCT Signage Best Practices Guidelines to establish consistent, branded signage across entire trail network. Create unified visual identity for Grand Bay-Westfield trail system. Ensure all signage meets accessibility standards (high contrast, appropriate text size, tactile elements where appropriate). Phase implementation prioritizing highest-use trails and key decision points.



4.2 Install High-Quality Trailhead Information Boards

Place comprehensive trailhead boards at all primary trail access points featuring trail system map with 'you are here' indicator; individual trail distances, difficulty ratings, surface types, and accessibility information; key destinations and connections; safety information and emergency contacts; Leave No Trace and trail etiquette guidelines; QR codes linking to digital resources and real-time trail conditions. Ensure weather-resistant materials and commit to keeping information current.



4.3 Implement Consistent Trail Marking and Directional Signage

Establish trail marking standards (blazes, markers, symbols) consistent across network. Provide directional signage at all trail intersections indicating distances and destinations. Use consistent colour coding or symbols for different trail types/difficulty levels. Ensure markers are visible in both directions of travel and at appropriate intervals.



4.4 Create Interpretive Signage and Storytelling Opportunities

Develop interpretive signage highlighting: natural history and ecology of the Wolastoq region; Indigenous history and Wolastoqey cultural heritage; community history and heritage; wildlife and habitat information. Engage local historians, naturalists, and Indigenous knowledge keepers in content development. Use QR codes to provide deeper digital content without cluttering physical signage.



4.5 Develop Digital Trail Resources and Real-Time Information

Create dedicated trails page on Town website with: interactive digital trail maps; downloadable trail guides and GPX files; real-time trail conditions and closure information; photo galleries and virtual trail tours. List trails on major platforms (AllTrails, Trailforks, Google Maps). Develop simple mobile-friendly trail app or partner with existing platforms. Use social media to communicate trail conditions, events, and highlights.



Photo from: www.hikingnb.ca/Trails/LowerSJRiver/GrandBayWestfield.html

Theme 5 Community Engagement and Partnerships

Strategic Intent: Foster strong community ownership, engagement, and collaborative partnerships that enhance trail development, stewardship, and programming.

Key Finding: Community expressed desire for better marketing, communication, and collaboration with local groups. Strong volunteer culture exists (62.4% of youth volunteer) representing significant untapped capacity.

Recommendations:



5.1 Establish Multi-Stakeholder Trails Advisory Committee

Form committee with representation from: Council and Town staff (Recreation, Public Works, Planning); trail user groups (hiking, cycling, running, accessibility advocates); environmental and conservation organizations; local businesses and tourism sector; schools and youth representatives; Indigenous community representatives; neighbouring municipalities. Meet quarterly to guide implementation of Trails Master Plan and advise on trail design, policy, programming, and conflict resolution.



5.2 Develop Formal Trail Partnership Framework

Create clear terms of reference for trail partnerships defining roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Partner with established groups (running clubs, cycling clubs, outdoor recreation groups, accessibility organizations). Establish partnership agreements for trail maintenance, programming, advocacy, and funding. Recognize partners publicly and celebrate contributions.



5.3 Launch Robust Trail Communication and Marketing Strategy

Address awareness gap (21% didn't know where trails were) through: regular social media content highlighting trail features, seasonal conditions, events; email newsletter for trail updates and programs; signage at trail access points and community facilities; features in municipal communications and local media. Create 'Trail of the Month' series showcasing different trails and activities. Develop photo/video content for promotional use. Engage local influencers and trail ambassadors.



5.4 Implement 'Friends of Grand Bay-Westfield Trails' Volunteer Program

Establish structured volunteer program with training, recognition, and community-building. Recruit volunteers for: trail monitoring and light maintenance; guided hikes and interpretive programming; invasive species management; trail counters and user surveys; events and special projects. Provide training workshops on trail maintenance, ecology, safety. Host annual volunteer appreciation event.



5.5 Develop School and Youth Engagement Programs

Partner with Grand Bay–Westfield Elementary and Middle Schools to integrate trail use into curriculum: outdoor education and nature studies; active transportation initiatives (walk/bike to school programs); trail stewardship and environmental monitoring projects; Indigenous history and ecology learning opportunities. Engage youth in trail design process through participatory planning exercises. Create youth leadership opportunities (junior trail ambassadors, youth advisory roles).



5.5 Strengthen Regional Trail Partnerships

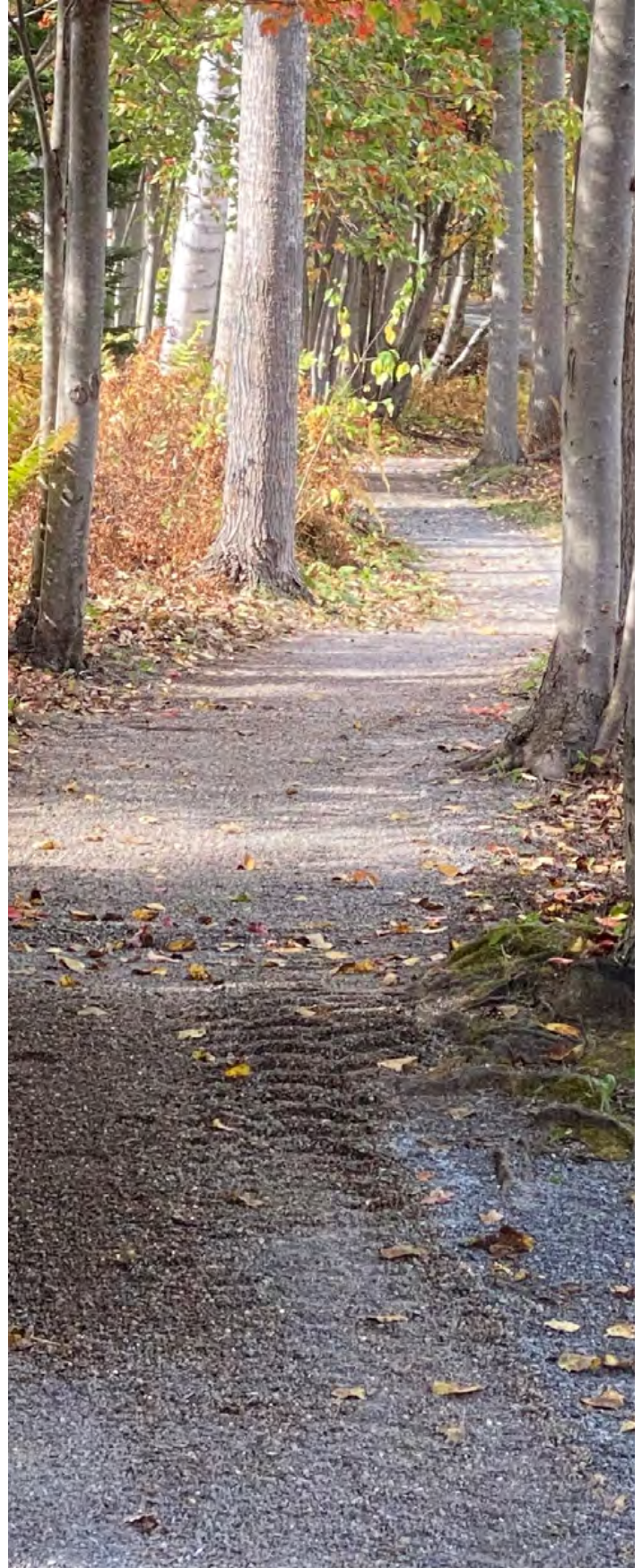
Collaborate with neighbouring municipalities on shared priorities and connections. Participate in regional trail planning initiatives. Share resources, expertise, and best practices. Pursue joint funding opportunities.



5.6 Host Community Trail Events

Organize annual signature trail events: trail opening celebrations for new sections; seasonal guided hikes (spring wildflowers, fall colours, winter snowshoe); trail races and challenges (fun runs, bike events, trail clean-up competitions); National/International observances (Trails Day, Parks Day). Partner with community organizations to deliver events. Use events to build community, educate users, and celebrate trails.

Photo from: www.facebook.com/towngbw



Theme 6 Diversity of Trail Experiences and Activities

Strategic Intent: Provide diverse trail experiences that accommodate different activities, skill levels, interests, and seasonal uses while managing potential user conflicts effectively.

Key Finding: Community requested multi-use options including dedicated biking trails (58% recreation), ATV trails (26% motorized use), and diverse trail types. Current activities concentrated in walking/hiking (85%) with opportunities to diversify.

Recommendations:



6.1 Classify All Trails Using TCT Trail Experience Typology

Categorize trails as Strolls, Excursions, or Epics based on distance, difficulty, challenge, amenities. Document Trail Management Objectives (TMOs) for each trail specifying: permitted activities and user groups; difficulty rating and physical challenge level; surface type and maintenance standards; accessibility level; expected visitor experience. Communicate classifications clearly through signage and trail information.



6.2 Evaluate Motorized Use Policy and Designated Areas

Conduct thorough assessment of demand for motorized trail use (ATVs, e-bikes, snowmobiles). Consider designated motorized trail areas that: minimize user conflicts with non-motorized recreation; protect sensitive environmental areas; meet relevant provincial regulations and insurance requirements; have sustainable design and maintenance plans. Establish clear policies on e-bikes (class distinctions, where permitted). Evaluate seasonal motorized use options (snowmobile trails in winter).



6.3 Create Designated Dog-Friendly Trail Areas

With dog walking as significant activity (43%), establish clear dog policies: designated on-leash trails; explore potential for off-leash trail areas (if appropriate locations exist); dog waste stations at key access points and along high-use trails; education about responsible dog ownership on trails. Consider partnership with local veterinary clinic or pet businesses for support.



6.4 Develop Nature-Based and Interpretive Trail Experiences

Enhance nature appreciation opportunities (44% of survey responses): identify trails with high natural/ecological value for interpretive focus; create wildlife viewing areas and bird watching opportunities; develop nature interpretation programs and guided walks; install interpretive signage on flora, fauna, ecology, geology. Establish partnerships with naturalist groups, environmental educators, conservation organizations.



6.5 Enhance Winter Trail Opportunities

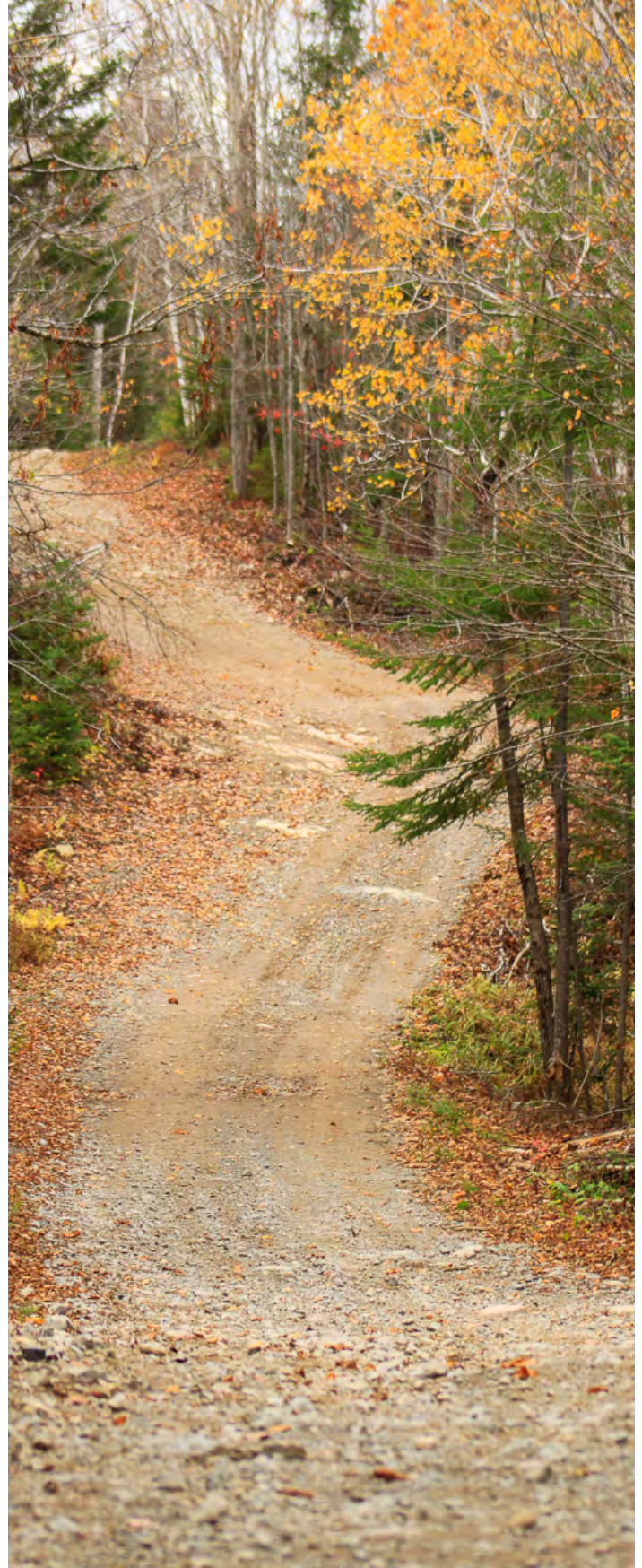
Develop comprehensive winter trail strategy: groomed multi-use trails for walking, fat biking, cross-country skiing; snowshoe-specific trails through natural areas; clear winter wayfinding and condition reporting; winter trail map highlighting groomed vs. ungroomed trails. Partner with winter recreation groups for grooming and programming. Explore winter trail lighting for early morning/evening use on key trails.



6.6 Establish Trail Etiquette and User Conflict Management

Develop and communicate clear trail etiquette guidelines: right-of-way rules (typically: walkers have right of way over cyclists; uphill users have right of way; yield to horses); speed expectations on shared trails; passing protocols and communication; Leave No Trace principles; responsible dog ownership. Install trail etiquette signage at trailheads and key points. Address conflicts through design (separate trails, directional trails, designated use trails). Monitor user feedback and adapt policies as needed.

Photo from: www.hikingnb.ca/Trails/LowerSJRiver/GrandBayWestfield.html



Theme 7 Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience

Strategic Intent: Protect and enhance natural ecosystems while building climate-resilient trail infrastructure that mitigates environmental impacts and supports biodiversity.

Key Finding: Environmental benefits ranked high in community priorities (33%) with strong emphasis on biodiversity protection and climate resilience in future planning goals.

Recommendations:



7.1 Conduct Environmental Assessments for all new Trail Development

Require environmental screening for all new trail corridors identifying sensitive habitats and species at risk; wildlife corridors and movement patterns; wetlands, riparian areas, and water crossings; steep slopes prone to erosion; areas of ecological significance. Apply mitigation hierarchy: avoid, minimize, restore.



7.2 Protect and Enhance Wildlife Corridors

Map critical wildlife corridors within trail planning area. Avoid trail development through key connectivity zones where possible. Where trails must cross corridors: minimize trail width and impact; create wildlife passage structures (tunnels, bridges) where appropriate; implement seasonal closures during sensitive periods (breeding, migration); use education and signage to minimize wildlife disturbance.



7.3 Establish Riparian Buffer Zones

Maintain minimum buffers along waterways (streams, ponds, wetlands): 30m minimum setback for most water bodies; 400m buffer in areas with amphibian habitat; greater buffers for sensitive fish habitat. Design trails to avoid direct impacts to riparian vegetation. Restore degraded riparian areas where trails have caused historical impacts.



7.4 Design for Climate Resilience and Adaptation

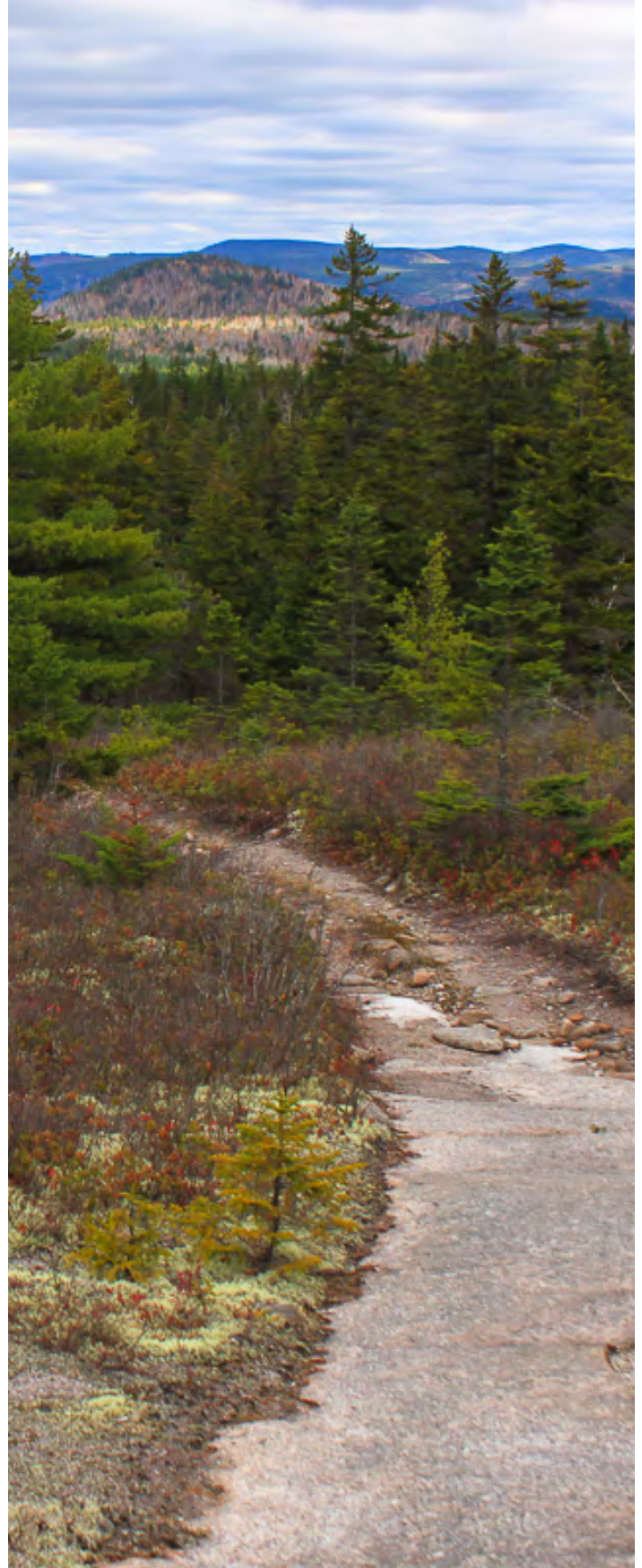
Consider projected climate change impacts in trail design: increased precipitation and flooding events; more intense storms and weather variability; warmer temperatures affecting seasonal trail use patterns. Design drainage systems for higher-intensity rainfall. Elevate trails in flood-prone areas or design for periodic inundation. Select plant species and trail materials adapted to changing conditions. Plan for longer shoulder seasons and changing winter recreation patterns.



7.6 Use Trails as Carbon Sequestration and Biodiversity Tool

Utilize TCT Tree Planting Resource Guide to integrate native tree and shrub planting along trails. Create pollinator corridors along trail edges with native wildflowers and grasses. Design trails to enhance rather than fragment habitat where possible. Use trails as education platform for climate action and environmental stewardship.

Photo from: www.hikingnb.ca/Trails/LowerSJRiver/GrandBayWestfield.html



Implementation and Conclusion

This implementation framework provides a comprehensive ten-year roadmap for executing the 38 recommendations outlined in the Grand Bay-Westfield Trails Master Plan. The plan is structured around seven strategic themes and prioritized into three implementation phases aligned with the community's vision for an accessible, connected, and sustainable trail network.

The implementation framework responds directly to community input, where residents expressed strong desire for more trails, better connectivity, and improved maintenance. By addressing the top barriers to trail use; and by aligning with the Active Transportation Plan this framework establishes a foundation for transformative change in Grand Bay-Westfield's trail network.

Photo from: www.facebook.com/towngbw



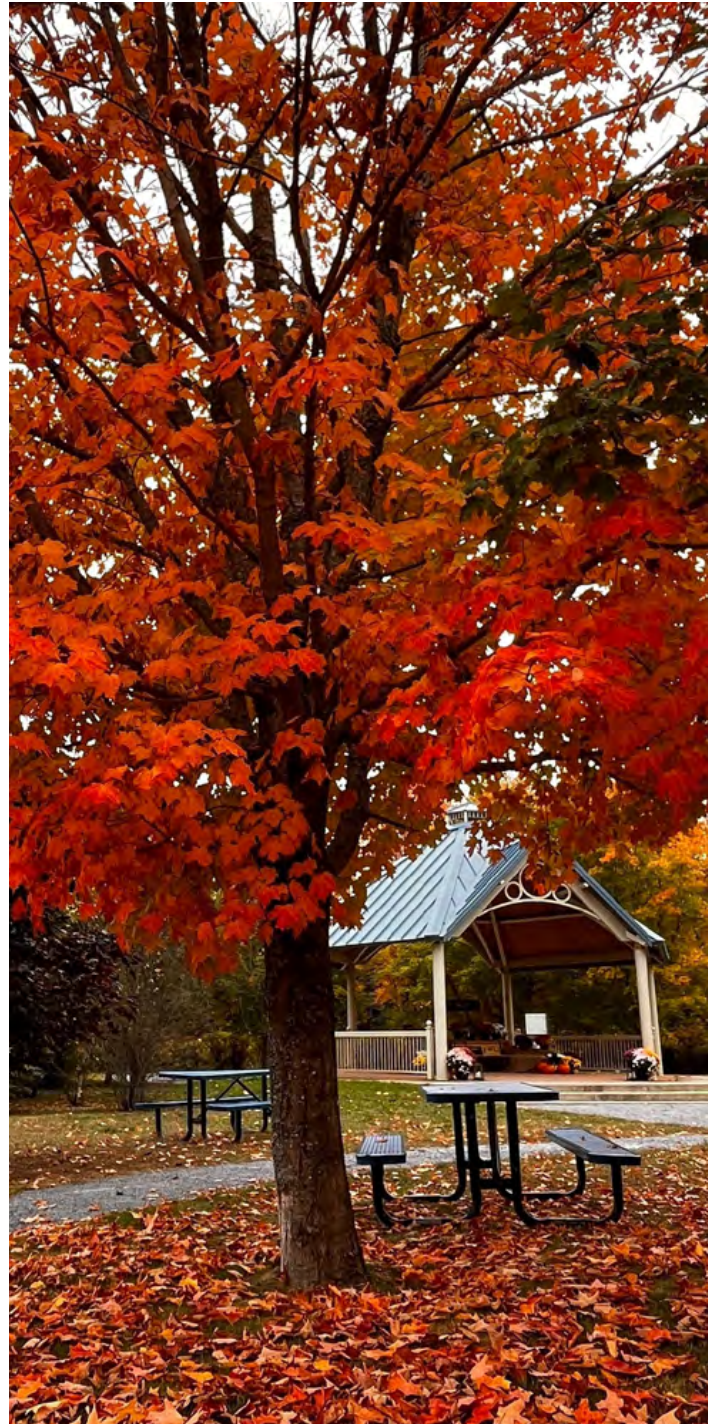
Successful implementation will require coordinated investment across multiple resource categories including capital funding for trail construction and infrastructure, operational budgets for maintenance and programming, dedicated staff capacity in Recreation, Public Works, and Planning departments, community volunteer engagement, and strategic partnerships with external organizations and neighboring municipalities.

The plan emphasizes sustainable approaches including long-term financial planning, volunteer stewardship programs to extend capacity, partnership frameworks to share resources, and phased implementation to manage cash flow and organizational capacity.

It is recommended that implementation be guided by a multi-stakeholder Trails Advisory Committee to oversee progress, provide strategic guidance, and ensure alignment with community values. Annual monitoring will track key performance indicators including trail kilometers developed, accessibility improvements completed, volunteer engagement levels, user satisfaction ratings, and environmental stewardship outcomes.

This implementation framework transforms community vision into actionable steps, creating a trail network that serves all residents and visitors while protecting the natural environment that makes Grand Bay-Westfield special.

Photo from: www.facebook.com/towngbw



7.1 Implementation Priorities

The recommendations are organized along three priority levels over a ten-year timeframe.



Priority 1 (Years 1-3): Foundational Actions

Focus on critical infrastructure, accessibility upgrades, and establishing core policies and programs. This phase includes priority actions that build the foundation for system functionality and safety, including trail expansion planning, accessibility improvements, maintenance frameworks, comprehensive signage systems, and multi-stakeholder governance structures.



Priority 2 (Years 4-7): Enhancement and Expansion

Build upon the established foundation with enhancement projects including multi-use trail corridors, accessibility audits, volunteer programming, interpretive experiences, and specialized trail areas. This phase includes recommendations that diversify trail offerings and strengthen community engagement.



Priority 3 (Years 8-10): Long-Term Vision and Optimization

Advance long-term vision projects including regional trail connections and comprehensive visitor use management. This phase includes recommendations focused on system optimization and regional collaboration.

7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Successful implementation requires ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management to ensure recommendations are achieving desired outcomes and to adjust strategies based on experience and changing conditions.

Governance and Oversight

Implementation will be guided through the following governance structures:

- Trails Advisory Committee (Recommended): Quarterly meetings to oversee implementation progress, provide strategic guidance, and advise on prioritization decisions
- Town Council: Annual reporting on Trails Master Plan implementation progress, budget requests aligned with implementation priorities, policy approval for key recommendations
- Town Administration: Cross-departmental coordination (Recreation, Public Works, Planning, Communications), quarterly implementation coordination meetings, project management for individual recommendations
- Community Partners: Regular communication with trail partners and stakeholder organizations, engagement in specific recommendation implementation, feedback on programs and policies

Key Performance Indicators

Progress will be measured through the following key performance indicators, tracked annually:

Network Development

- Total trail kilometers developed (target: 8-15 km new trails over 10 years)
- Kilometers of All Persons Trails completed (target: 2-3 km in Priority 1)
- Missing link connections completed (target: 3-5 km)
- Neighborhoods connected to trail network (target: 3+ underserved areas)

User Experience

- Trail usage rates (maintain 90%+ of residents using trails annually)
- User satisfaction with trail conditions (target: increase from 65% to 85%+)
- Trail awareness
- Accessibility satisfaction among users with disabilities (target: 80%+)
- Reduction in barriers to trail use (target: maintenance barrier reduced from 28% to under 15%)

Community Engagement

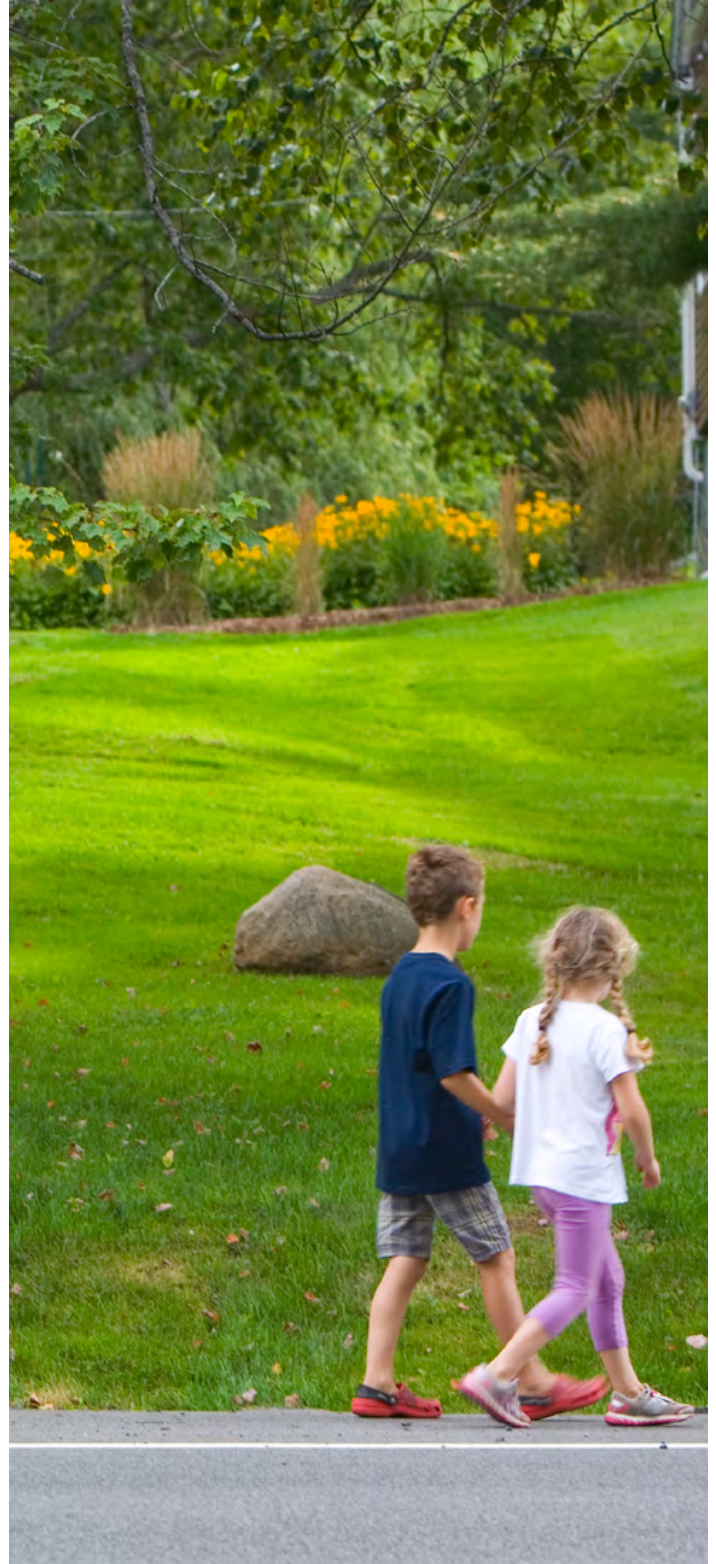
- Active partnership agreements (target: 5+ by Year 3, 10+ by Year 7)
- Volunteer engagement (target: 50+ active volunteers, 1,000+ hours annually)
- Trail events and programs delivered (target: 10+ annually by Year 5)
- Social media engagement metrics
- Trails Advisory Committee meeting attendance and engagement

Environmental Stewardship

- Environmental assessments completed (target: 100% of new corridors)
- Native trees/shrubs planted along trails (target: 500+ by Year 7)
- Wildlife corridor protections implemented
- Zero trail-related environmental violations

Infrastructure and Quality

- Trail Management Objectives (TMOs) completed (target: 100% of trails)
- Comprehensive signage system implementation (target: 100% of network)
- Trailhead information boards installed (target: all primary access points)
- Scheduled maintenance completion rate (target: 95%+)
- Safety incident rates and response times



Appendix A – Trail Classification

Trail classification provides a structured approach to organizing, designing, and managing the city’s diverse recreational trails. It serves as a comprehensive framework for determining and documenting the mode of travel, intended uses, levels of challenge, degrees of development and design parameters for each trail.

Classifying trails provides the direction staff, trail partners, and contractors need to build, maintain, and manage recreation trails in the city. It also enables the delivery of clear, accessible wayfinding, signage, and public information, empowering residents and visitors to choose trails that match their abilities and desired experiences, while enhancing safety, usability, and enjoyment across the trail network.

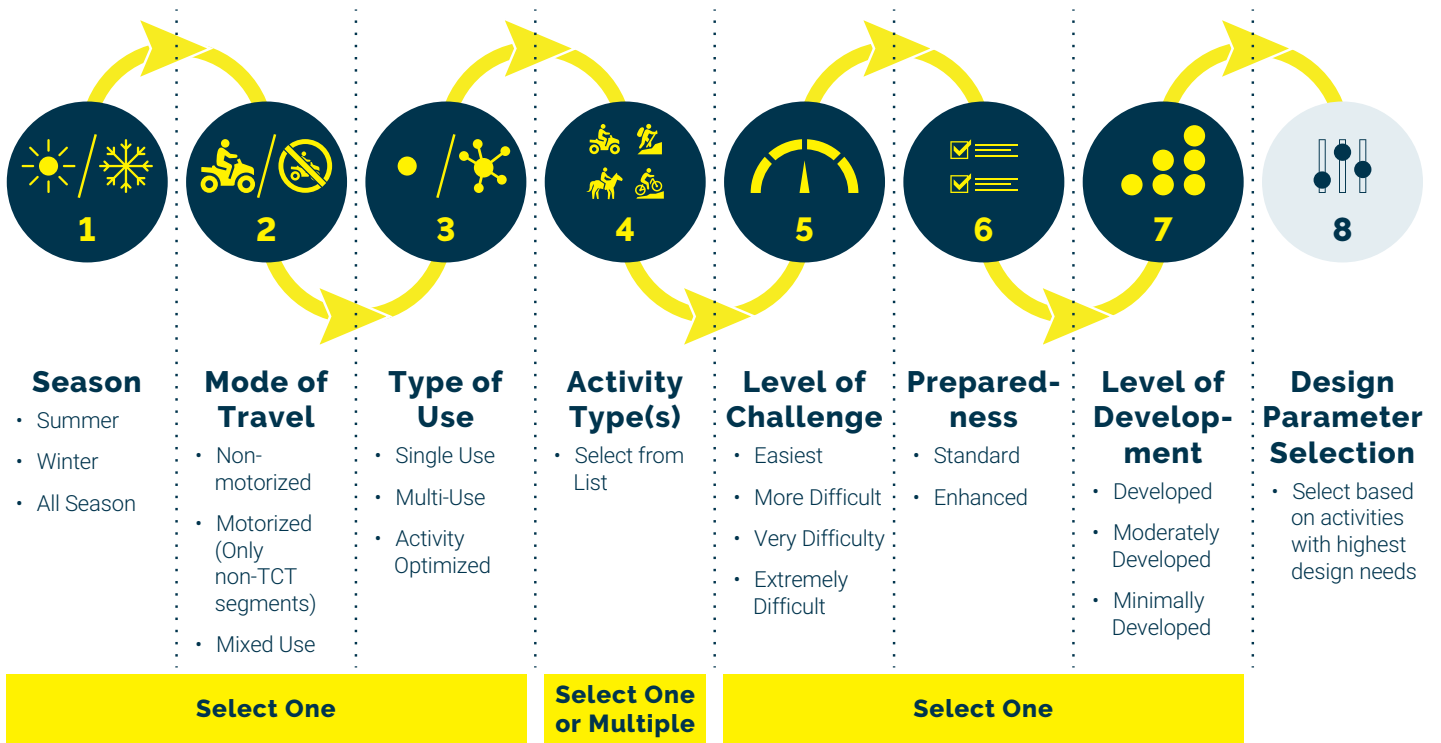
Recreation-focused Town trails will be classified in accordance with the [National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada](#)¹ (**Figure 23**).

To document the intended classification and guide construction, maintenance and management, a Trail Management Objective (TMO) (Appendix B) will be prepared for each trail. Once determined, the TMO and the selected design parameters will provide a basis on which the Town, or its partners, will guide the build of new trails and evaluate the current condition and characteristics of existing trails. This will allow staff to identify deficiencies in trail condition and prioritize maintenance initiatives to ensure current trail conditions remain in line with the intended trail classification and design parameters.

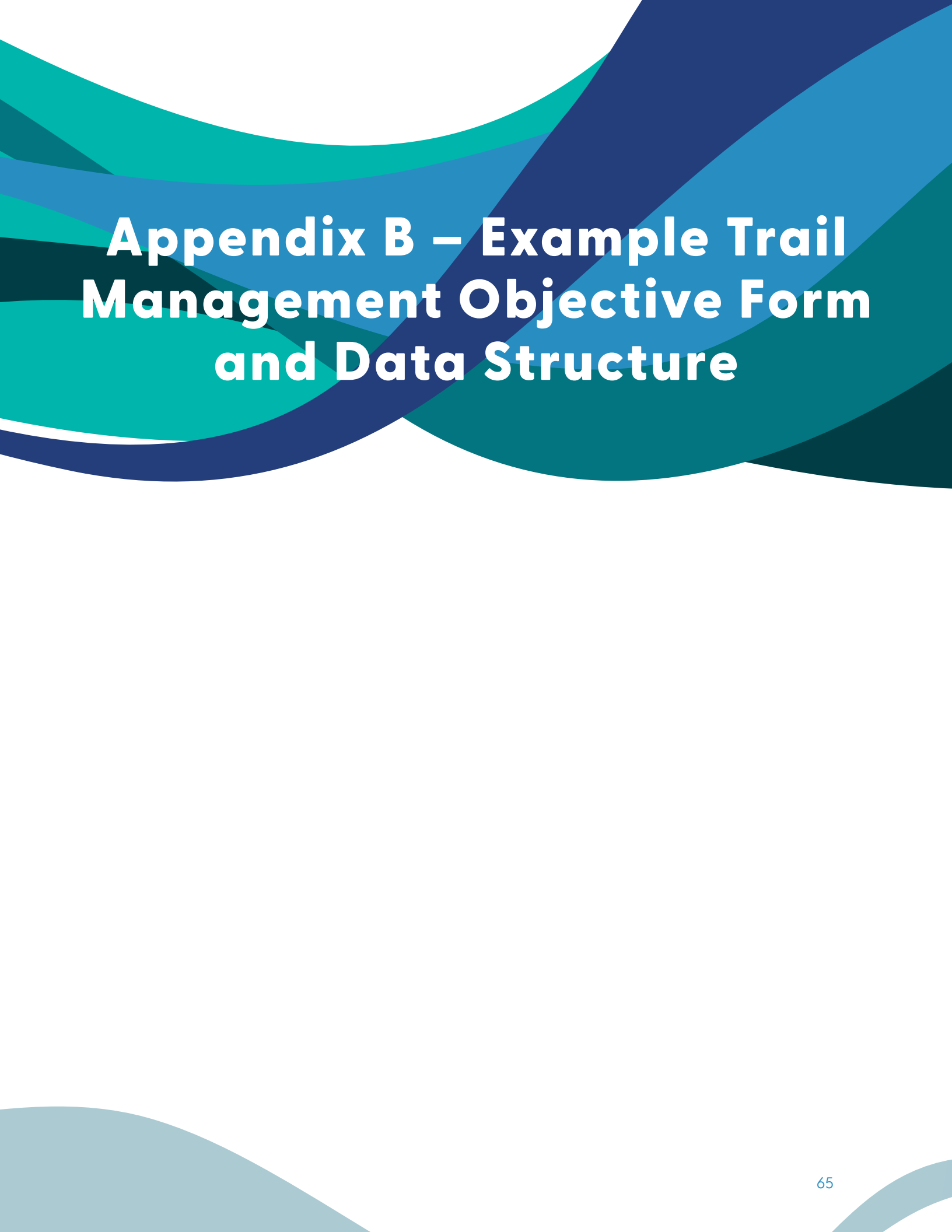


Classification of Recreation-Focused Trails vs Active Transportation Trails and Infrastructure

This classification system will be used by the Town to categorize all **recreation-focused trails** located within the municipal parks system and other Town-owned lands. It is specifically designed to guide the planning, design, and management of trails intended for leisure, exploration, and outdoor enjoyment. This system does **not apply to trails or corridors primarily intended for active transportation** (e.g., commuting or utility cycling); those are addressed separately in the Town's **Active Transportation Plan**.



Trail Classification System and Process (adopted from the National Guidelines of Classifying Multi-use Trails in Canada)



Appendix B – Example Trail Management Objective Form and Data Structure

Region: Trail Operator: Land Manager:

Trail Name: Trail Number:

Trail Beginning: Beg. Milepost:

Trail Ending: End. Milepost:

Trail Inventory Length: km Trail Mileage Source: Wheel GPS Map Unknown

TMO Trail Section

Section Beginning: Beg. Milepost:

Sec. # Section End: End. Milepost:

Trail Classification

(Check any that apply)

Season:

- Summer (snow-free)
- Winter (snow-covered)
- All

Level of Development:

- Developed
- Moderately Developed
- Minimally Developed

(Check one in each category)

Mode of Travel:

- Non-Motorized
- Motorized
- Mixed-Use

Use Type:

- Single Use
- Multi-Use
- Activity-Optimized

Level of Challenge:

- Easiest
- Moderate
- Difficult
- Very Difficult

Preparedness:

- Standard
- Enhanced

Optimized Activity Types

(Check all that apply)

- Pedestrian
- Equestrian
- Cross-Country Ski
- Snowshoe
- Mountain Bike
- Two-Wheel Motorized
- Motorized <1.5 m wide
- Motorized 1.5-1.83 m wide
- Motorized >1.83 m wide
- Snow Vehicle <1.83 m wide
- Snow Vehicle (<1.5 m wide)
-
-
-

Design Parametres

(Fill in all that apply)

- Travelled Surface Width (m)
- Target Grade (%)
- Max Grade (%)
- Proportion Grade (%)
- Target Cross Slope (%)
- Max Cross Slope (%)
- Proportion Cross Slope (%)
- / Clearing Width/Height (m)
- Turning Radius (m)
- / Obstacle Frequency/Height

Tread Surfacing:

- Asphalt/Concrete/Paver Nat - Firm
- Agg - Firm Nat - Loose
- Agg - Loose

Target Frequency

Per Year (Fill in all that apply)

- Tread Repair
- Drainage Cleanout
- Tread Grading
- Brushing
- Condition Survey
- Enforcement Patrols
-
-
-

Appendix C – Implementation Actions

Priority 1 Recommendations - Years 1-3 (Foundational Actions)

Priority 1 recommendations establish the critical foundation for trail system functionality and safety. These 19 recommendations address immediate community needs, establish governance structures, create baseline standards, and deliver tangible improvements in accessibility, connectivity, and trail quality.

Theme 1: Trail Network Expansion and Connectivity

Immediate focus on addressing connectivity gaps and creating new trail infrastructure to serve underserved neighbourhoods.

1.1: Develop a Phased Trail Expansion Strategy

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead) with CAO, Public Works and Development

- Key Actions**
- Develop corridor evaluation criteria (connectivity value, environmental impact, cost, community benefit)
 - Engage with underserved neighbourhoods to identify priority connections
 - Create detailed trail corridor plans with cost estimates and environmental assessments
 - Prioritize links to schools, parks, community facilities, and existing trail infrastructure
 - Establish phased construction schedule aligned with capital budget cycles

- Resource Requirements**
- GIS mapping and analysis capacity
 - Trail design consultant
 - Capital funding for construction
 - Environmental assessment budget
 - Community engagement resources

- Success Metrics**
- 5-10 km of new trail constructed
 - Connectivity to underserved neighbourhoods
 - Documented evaluation framework adopted by Council
 - Increased trail accessibility scores in Ward 2
 - Community satisfaction with trail access increases from baseline

Dependencies Coordination with Active Transportation Plan; Environmental assessments for new corridors; Budget allocation approval; Land acquisition or easement agreements

1.2: Complete Missing Links in the Heritage Trail Network

Lead Responsibility Public Works (lead) with Recreation Department

- Key Actions**
- Map all gaps and dead ends in existing 14.5 km Heritage Trail network
 - Prioritize connections that create continuous loops and eliminate safety hazards
 - Design enhanced road crossing treatments (signage, lighting, potential grade separations)
 - Identify high-traffic crossing locations requiring immediate safety upgrades
 - Install wayfinding signage for completed loop routes

- Resource Requirements**
- Trail engineering and design services
 - Construction budget for 3-5 km extensions
 - Road crossing safety infrastructure
 - Potential grade separation structures Public Works staff time for project management

- Success Metrics**
- 3-5 km of Heritage Trail extensions completed
 - All dead ends eliminated or clearly marked
 - Minimum 2 continuous loop routes created
 - Enhanced safety infrastructure at minimum 3 priority road crossings
 - Documented reduction in crossing-related safety incidents

Dependencies Land acquisition or easements for infill sections; Traffic analysis for crossing locations; Budget approval; Coordination with road maintenance schedules

Theme 2: Accessibility and Universal Design

Establishing accessibility as a core value through immediate upgrades and adoption of universal design standards for all future development.

2.1: Designate and Develop Priority All Persons Trails

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead) with Public Works

- Key Actions**
- Identify high-priority trails connecting community facilities, schools, and high-use areas
 - Coordinate with Active Transportation Plan priority routes
 - Design trails to TCT standards: 1.5–2m width, firm stable surfaces, grades $\leq 5\%$
 - Install accessible trailhead facilities including parking, wayfinding, and amenities
 - Ensure accessible rest areas every 200–400m with benches, shade, smooth surfaces
 - Conduct accessibility review with community members with diverse abilities

- Resource Requirements**
- Minimum 2–3 km of All Persons Trail completed to TCT standards
 - Accessible parking and facilities at minimum 2 trailheads
 - 100% of new trails meet accessibility requirements
 - Community feedback indicates improved accessibility satisfaction
 - Increased trail usage by persons with disabilities (measured through user surveys)

- Success Metrics**
- Minimum 2–3 km of All Persons Trail completed to TCT standards
 - Accessible parking and facilities at minimum 2 trailheads
 - 100% of new trails meet accessibility requirements
 - Community feedback indicates improved accessibility satisfaction
 - Increased trail usage by persons with disabilities (measured through user surveys)

Dependencies Alignment with Active Transportation Plan; Budget approval for higher construction costs; Partnership with accessibility advocacy groups; Training for maintenance staff on accessible surface requirements

2.2: Implement Universal Design Standards for All New Trail Development

Lead Responsibility	Development (lead) with Recreation and Public Works
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formally adopt Trans Canada Trail accessibility guidelines through Council resolution• Develop internal design manual integrating universal design principles• Create standard specifications for accessible rest areas, benches, and shade structures• Establish review process ensuring all new trails meet accessibility standards• Design for temporary and situational disabilities (strollers, temporary injuries)• Include accessibility review as mandatory step in all trail project approvals
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff training on universal design principles• Ongoing incremental costs for accessible design features• Accessibility consultant review for major projects
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council adoption of TCT accessibility guidelines as minimum standard• 100% of new trail projects designed to universal design principles• Staff training completion rate 100%• Design manual completed and distributed• Zero new trails approved without accessibility compliance
Dependencies	Council approval of policy; Staff capacity for training; Integration with development approval processes; Alignment with building and parks standards

2.3: Enhance Wayfinding for Diverse Abilities

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead) with Communications

- Key Actions**
- Design high-contrast visual signage meeting accessibility standards
 - Integrate tactile elements (raised text, braille) at key decision points
 - Install QR codes linking to audio descriptions and digital navigation
 - Provide comprehensive trail information: distance, grade, surface, amenities, difficulty
 - Test wayfinding system with users with diverse abilities
 - Create audio description content for major trails

- Resource Requirements**
- Accessible signage design and fabrication
 - QR code system development and hosting
 - Audio description content creation
 - Digital navigation integration
 - Testing and consultation with accessibility community

- Success Metrics**
- Multi-modal wayfinding installed at all primary trailheads
 - QR codes functional
 - Audio descriptions available for all major trails
 - Positive feedback from accessibility community
 - Increased trail usage by persons with visual or cognitive disabilities

Dependencies Integration with overall signage system (Rec 4.1); IT infrastructure for digital content; Partnership with accessibility technology providers; Content creation capacity

Theme 3: Maintenance, Sustainability, and Trail Quality

Addressing the number one barrier to trail use through comprehensive maintenance planning and sustainable trail design standards.

3.1: Develop Comprehensive Trail Maintenance Plan

Lead Responsibility Public Works (lead) with Recreation Department

- Key Actions**
- Establish maintenance standards for each trail classification type
 - Create Trail Management Objectives (TMOs) for all existing and new trails
 - Define clear maintenance responsibilities (staff, contractors, volunteers, partners)
 - Develop seasonal maintenance calendar: spring cleanup, summer inspections, fall preparation, winter grooming
 - Establish maintenance budget requirements and staffing needs
 - Create maintenance tracking system to document work completed
 - Develop emergency response protocols for safety hazards

- Resource Requirements**
- Trail assessment and TMO development
 - Maintenance management software
 - Increased maintenance budget allocation based on expanded network
 - Public Works staff time for plan development and implementation

- Success Metrics**
- Comprehensive maintenance plan adopted by Council
 - TMOs completed for 100% of existing trails
 - Seasonal maintenance calendar implemented
 - Documented reduction in maintenance-related user complaints
 - Trail condition satisfaction increases from 65% baseline
 - 95% of scheduled maintenance tasks completed on time

Dependencies Budget approval for enhanced maintenance; Staff or contractor capacity; Equipment procurement; Integration with asset management system

3.2: Prioritize Sustainable Trail Design and Materials

Lead Responsibility	Public Works (lead) with Recreation and Development
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritize compacted crushed stone/gravel with high rock content• Establish standards for proper drainage, appropriate grades ($\leq 10\%$), erosion control• Identify appropriate applications for natural surfaces versus hard surfaces• Minimize environmental impact through thoughtful trail alignment• Document material performance for continuous improvement
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff training on sustainable trail design• Access to TCT Life Cycle Costing Tool• Material testing and specification development• Generally lower construction costs vs. asphalt/concrete• Lower long-term maintenance costs through sustainable design
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable design standards formally adopted• Life Cycle Costing analysis completed for all major trail projects• 75% of new trail surfaces use sustainable materials (crushed stone/gravel/natural)• Documented cost savings vs. traditional hard surface construction• Reduced erosion and drainage issues on new trails
Dependencies	Staff buy-in for sustainable approaches; Material suppliers in region; Testing period to validate performance; Integration with procurement policies

3.3: Establish Regular Inspection and Monitoring Program

Lead Responsibility Public Works (lead) with Recreation Department

- Key Actions**
- Develop standardized inspection forms
 - Conduct minimum twice-annual comprehensive inspections (spring and fall)
 - Establish post-weather event inspection protocols
 - Track and trend trail condition data to inform budget planning
 - Establish rapid response protocols for immediate safety hazards
 - Create public reporting system for user-identified issues
 - Document maintenance needs and prioritize based on safety and usage

- Resource Requirements**
- Staff time for inspections (estimated 2-3 weeks annually)
 - Repair budget based on inspection findings
 - Public reporting system integration

- Success Metrics**
- 100% of trail network inspected twice annually minimum
 - Inspection data documented in tracking system
 - Safety hazards addressed within 48 hours of identification
 - Maintenance work orders generated from 100% of inspections
 - Trail condition trends inform annual budget planning
 - User-reported issues responded to within 5 business days

Dependencies Staff training on inspection protocols; Mobile device/app setup; Integration with work order system; Rapid response capacity for safety issues

3.4: Implement Winter Trail Maintenance Strategy

Lead Responsibility Public Works (lead) with Recreation Department

- Key Actions**
- Designate priority trails for winter grooming (walking, fat biking, cross-country skiing)
 - Evaluate equipment needs for winter maintenance (grooming machines, attachments)
 - Develop winter maintenance schedule and budget requirements
 - Create communication system for seasonal trail conditions and closures
 - Balance winter recreation demand with budget realities and snow management priorities
 - Establish protocols for ice management and snow depth on groomed trails
 - Partner with winter recreation groups for specialized grooming

- Resource Requirements**
- Winter grooming equipment
 - Seasonal maintenance budget (\$5,000-\$15,000 per winter)
 - Staff time for winter operations
 - Potential partnership agreements with user groups

- Success Metrics**
- Winter maintenance strategy adopted
 - Minimum 2-3 trails designated and groomed for winter use
 - Real-time winter trail condition information available online
 - User satisfaction with winter trail access (target 70%+)
 - Increased winter trail usage (measured through trail counters)
 - Partnership agreements with minimum 1 winter recreation organization

Dependencies Equipment procurement and storage; Staff capacity during winter months; Partnership development with winter recreation groups; Budget allocation for seasonal operations

Theme 4: Wayfinding, Signage, and Trail Information

4.1: Develop Comprehensive Trail Signage and Wayfinding System

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead) with Communications

- Key Actions**
- Adopt Trans Canada Trail Signage Best Practices Guidelines
 - Create unified visual identity and branding for Grand Bay-Westfield trail system
 - Design signage meeting all accessibility standards (contrast, text size, tactile elements)
 - Develop sign families: trailhead ID signs, directional signs, regulatory signs, interpretive signs
 - Create signage standards manual for consistent future implementation
 - Phase installation prioritizing highest-use trails and key decision points
 - Establish signage maintenance and replacement protocols

- Resource Requirements**
- Signage design and branding
 - Sign fabrication costs
 - Installation costs
 - Estimated 50-100 signs needed system-wide
 - Signage standards manual development

- Success Metrics**
- Unified signage system designed and adopted
 - 100% of trail network signed with consistent system
 - Trail awareness barrier reduced from 21% baseline
 - User wayfinding satisfaction (target 85%+)
 - Reduction in user-reported wayfinding issues
 - Standards manual guiding all future signage

Dependencies Integration with accessibility wayfinding (Rec 2.3); Budget approval for comprehensive rollout; Installation coordination with trail maintenance; Brand identity development

4.2: Install High-Quality Trailhead Information Boards

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead) with Development

- Key Actions**
- Design weather-resistant trailhead information board template
 - Include trail system map
 - Display individual trail information: distances, difficulty, surface types, accessibility
 - List key destinations and connections
 - Include safety information and emergency contacts
 - Add Leave No Trace principles and trail etiquette guidelines
 - Integrate QR codes linking to digital resources and real-time trail conditions
 - Establish commitment and process for keeping information current

- Resource Requirements**
- Trailhead board design and template
 - Board fabrication and installation
 - Estimated 8-12 primary trailheads
 - Annual content updates and maintenance
 - Map design and updates

- Success Metrics**
- High-quality information boards installed at all primary trailheads
 - 100% of boards include current, accurate information
 - QR codes functional with links to digital resources
 - Information updated minimum annually
 - User feedback indicates boards are helpful (target 90%+)
 - Reduction in information-related user inquiries to Recreation Department

Dependencies Map design capacity; QR code digital infrastructure; Content management process; Weather-resistant materials sourcing; Installation coordination

4.3: Implement Consistent Trail Marking and Directional Signage

Lead Responsibility Public Works (lead) with Recreation Department

- Key Actions**
- Establish trail marking standards (blazes, markers, symbols) consistent across network
 - Install directional signage at all trail intersections with distances and destinations
 - Implement consistent color coding or symbols for trail types/difficulty levels
 - Ensure markers visible in both directions of travel
 - Install markers at appropriate intervals (every 100-200m on longer trails)
 - Create standards for intersection signage showing options and distances
 - Coordinate trail marking with overall signage system (Rec 4.1)

- Resource Requirements**
- Trail marking system design
 - Trail markers/blazes
 - Estimated 500-800 markers needed
 - Directional signs at intersections
 - Estimated 30-50 intersection locations
 - Installation labor included in signage program

- Success Metrics**
- Trail marking standards established and documented
 - 100% of trail network consistently marked
 - Directional signage at 100% of trail intersections
 - User confidence in wayfinding
 - Reduction in rescue/assistance calls related to trail navigation
 - Positive user feedback on trail marking clarity

Dependencies Coordination with comprehensive signage system (Rec 4.1); Alignment with TCT standards; Installation timing with trail construction; Ongoing maintenance plan

Theme 5: Community Engagement and Partnerships

Establishing governance structures and communication systems to support long-term trail stewardship and community ownership.

5.1: Establish Multi-Stakeholder Trails Advisory Committee

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead) with Council

- Key Actions**
- Draft Terms of Reference defining committee purpose, membership, and authority
 - Recruit diverse representation: Council, Town staff (Recreation, Public Works, Planning), trail user groups, environmental organizations, businesses/tourism, schools/youth, Indigenous community, neighboring municipalities
 - Establish meeting schedule (quarterly minimum)
 - Define committee responsibilities: guide TMP implementation, advise on trail design/policy, recommend prioritization, resolve user conflicts, review annual progress
 - Create subcommittees for specific themes as needed
 - Develop annual work plan aligned with implementation priorities

- Resource Requirements**
- Staff time for committee coordination
 - Meeting space and materials
 - Minor budget for community engagement
 - No member stipends (volunteer basis)

- Success Metrics**
- Trails Advisory Committee established with adopted Terms of Reference
 - Diverse membership representing all stakeholder categories
 - Minimum 4 meetings annually (quarterly)
 - Committee provides input on 100% of major trail decisions
 - Annual work plan guides implementation priorities
 - Committee satisfaction with process and influence (target 80%+)

Dependencies Council approval of Terms of Reference; Successful recruitment of committed members; Staff capacity for coordination; Alignment with other municipal advisory bodies

5.2: Develop Formal Trail Partnership Framework

Lead Responsibility	Recreation Department (lead)
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop partnership framework template defining roles, responsibilities, expectations• Identify potential partner organizations: running clubs, cycling clubs, outdoor recreation groups, accessibility organizations, environmental groups• Create partnership agreement templates for different types of partnerships (maintenance, programming, advocacy, funding)• Establish recognition and celebration mechanisms for partner contributions• Develop mutual benefit propositions for partner recruitment• Create partnership reporting and accountability processes• Hold annual partner appreciation event
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnership framework development• Partnership coordinator staff time• Annual partner appreciation event• Partnership support budget
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnership framework adopted by Council• Minimum 5 active partnership agreements established• Partner contributions documented (volunteer hours, funding, in-kind)• Partner satisfaction with framework (target 85%+)• Increased capacity for trail maintenance/programming through partnerships• Annual partner appreciation event held with good attendance
Dependencies	Legal review of partnership agreements; Insurance considerations; Staff capacity for relationship management; Identification of committed partner organizations

5.3: Launch Robust Trail Communication and Marketing Strategy

Lead Responsibility Communications Department (lead) with Recreation

- Key Actions**
- Establish regular social media content (Facebook, Instagram) highlighting trail features, seasonal conditions, events
 - Create email newsletter for trail updates, programs, and seasonal information
 - Install trail awareness signage at community facilities and key locations
 - Develop Trail of the Month series showcasing different trails and activities
 - Feature trails in municipal communications (e.g., Town newsletter, website)
 - Create photo/video content library for promotional use
 - Engage local influencers and trail ambassadors
 - Coordinate with local media for trail-related news and features

- Resource Requirements**
- Communication strategy development
 - Content creation
 - Social media management
 - Email newsletter platform
 - Print materials and signage
 - Trail ambassador program coordination

- Success Metrics**
- Communication strategy adopted and implemented
 - Minimum 2-3 social media posts per week about trails
 - Quarterly email newsletter distributed to subscribers
 - Trail awareness increases from 79% baseline (target 90%+)
 - Social media engagement metrics increase 50% year-over-year
 - Email newsletter subscriber base grows to 500+ households
 - Website trail page traffic increases 100% over baseline

Dependencies Staff capacity for content creation and management; Photography/videography resources; Integration with overall municipal communications; Social media platform management

Theme 6: Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience

Ensuring all new trail development protects sensitive ecosystems and supports biodiversity conservation.

6.1: Conduct Environmental Assessments for All New Trail Development

Lead Responsibility Development (lead) with Recreation

Key Actions

Resource Requirements

Success Metrics

Dependencies

6.2: Protect and Enhance Wildlife Corridors

Lead Responsibility

Key Actions

Resource Requirements

Success Metrics

Dependencies

6.3: Establish Riparian Buffer Zones

Lead Responsibility Development (lead) with Public Works

Key Actions

Resource Requirements

Success Metrics

Dependencies

Theme 7: Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience

Ensuring all new trail development protects sensitive ecosystems and supports biodiversity conservation.

7.1: Conduct Environmental Assessments for All New Trail Development

Lead Responsibility Development (lead) with Recreation

Key Actions

- Develop environmental screening protocol for all new trail corridors
- Identify sensitive habitats, species at risk, and ecological significance areas
- Map wildlife corridors and movement patterns
- Assess wetlands, riparian areas, and water crossings
- Evaluate steep slopes prone to erosion and geological hazards
- Apply mitigation hierarchy: avoid, minimize, restore
- Require professional environmental assessment for high-sensitivity corridors
- Integrate Indigenous ecological knowledge where appropriate

Resource Requirements

- Environmental screening protocol development
- GIS mapping and ecological data compilation
- Professional environmental assessments for new corridors
- Staff training on screening process
- Ongoing screening staff time built into project timelines

Success Metrics

- Environmental screening protocol adopted
- 100% of new trail corridors screened for environmental impacts
- Zero new trails approved in high-sensitivity areas without mitigation
- Environmental assessment recommendations implemented in trail design
- Documentation of avoided impacts and implemented mitigation measures
- No trail-related environmental violations or incidents

Dependencies

Access to ecological mapping data; Environmental expertise (staff or consultant); Integration with municipal environmental policies; Coordination with provincial regulations

7.2: Protect and Enhance Wildlife Corridors

Lead Responsibility Planning Department (lead) with Recreation and Conservation Partners

- Key Actions**
- Identify and map critical wildlife corridors and connectivity zones
 - Avoid trail development through key connectivity zones where possible
 - For necessary corridor crossings: minimize trail width and impact, create wildlife passage structures where appropriate, implement seasonal closures during sensitive periods (breeding, migration), use education and signage to minimize wildlife disturbance
 - Establish buffer zones around sensitive wildlife areas
 - Monitor wildlife use of corridors and trail impacts
 - Adapt management strategies based on monitoring data

- Resource Requirements**
- Wildlife corridor mapping
 - Wildlife passage structures if needed
 - Monitoring equipment (trail cameras, etc.)
 - Signage for seasonal closures and wildlife sensitivity Partnership development with conservation organizations

- Success Metrics**
- Critical wildlife corridors mapped and documented
 - Trail planning decisions avoid 100% of critical corridors unless mitigated
 - Wildlife passage structures installed where trails cross corridors
 - Monitoring data shows no significant wildlife displacement
 - Seasonal closure protocols established and enforced
 - Partnership with minimum 1 conservation organization for monitoring

Dependencies Ecological expertise for corridor mapping; Collaboration with provincial wildlife agencies; Partnership with conservation organizations; Long-term monitoring capacity

7.3: Establish Riparian Buffer Zones

Lead Responsibility Development (lead) with Public Works

- Key Actions**
- Establish minimum buffer requirements: 30m for most waterbodies, 400m for amphibian habitat, greater buffers for sensitive fish habitat
 - Map all waterbodies, streams, ponds, wetlands within trail planning area
 - Design trails to avoid direct impacts to riparian vegetation
 - Identify existing trails requiring realignment or restoration
 - Develop restoration plans for degraded riparian areas impacted by historical trails
 - Create educational signage about riparian zone importance
 - Monitor and enforce buffer compliance

- Resource Requirements**
- Waterbody mapping and buffer zone delineation
 - Policy development and adoption
 - Trail realignment costs where needed
 - Riparian restoration for degraded areas
 - Signage and education materials

- Success Metrics**
- Riparian buffer zone policy adopted
 - All waterbodies mapped with appropriate buffers delineated
 - 100% of new trails comply with buffer requirements
 - Restoration plans completed for priority degraded riparian areas
 - Minimum 2 riparian restoration projects completed
 - Improved riparian vegetation quality measured at trail-adjacent areas

Dependencies Ecological expertise for buffer zone delineation; Council adoption of policy; Budget for trail realignment if needed; Restoration ecology partnerships; Integration with watershed planning

Priority 2 Recommendations - Years 4-7 (Enhancement and Expansion)

Priority 2 recommendations build upon the established foundation with enhancement projects that diversify trail offerings, strengthen community engagement, and improve the quality of trail experiences. These 16 recommendations expand the trail network, retrofit existing trails for improved accessibility, develop volunteer and partnership programs, and create specialized trail experiences.

Theme 1: Trail Network Expansion and Connectivity

1.3: Create Multi-Use Trail Corridor Along Key Transportation Routes

Lead Responsibility

Development (lead) with Public Works and Active Transportation

Key Actions

- Coordinate with Active Transportation Plan (ATP) recommendations
- Evaluate opportunities along River Valley Drive for trail development
- Assess other major roads identified in ATP for trail potential
- Conduct traffic analysis and safety assessments for roadside trails
- Design separated multi-use paths providing both recreation and transportation benefits
- Prioritize corridors that enhance connectivity to priority destinations
- Develop phased construction plan aligned with road reconstruction schedules

Resource Requirements

- Design and engineering for priority segments
- Construction costs
- Coordination with road maintenance/reconstruction schedules
- Potential grant funding through active transportation programs

Success Metrics

- Comprehensive evaluation of multi-use corridor opportunities completed
- Priority corridor segments identified and ranked
- Detailed design completed for minimum 2 km of corridor
- Construction initiated on first corridor segment
- Integration with Active Transportation Plan priorities
- Grant applications submitted for funding

Dependencies

Coordination with Active Transportation Plan; Alignment with road reconstruction schedules; Budget approval for capital construction; Provincial/federal funding opportunities; Traffic impact assessment

Theme 2: Accessibility and Universal Design

2.4: Develop Neuro-Inclusive Trail Design Features

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead) with Development

- Key Actions**
- Create designated quiet zones along trails with reduced visual stimulation
 - Use consistent, predictable design patterns throughout trail network
 - Avoid bright, overwhelming signage; opt for calming colors and simple graphics
 - Develop sensory-rich zones with varied natural textures where appropriate
 - Incorporate predictable wayfinding and clear expectations
 - Provide advance notice of trail changes or features
 - Consult with neurodiverse community members in design process

- Resource Requirements**
- Research and consultation with neurodiverse community
 - Neuro-inclusive design guideline development
 - Incremental costs for specialized signage and design features
 - Training for design staff on neuro-inclusive principles

- Success Metrics**
- Neuro-inclusive design guidelines developed and adopted
 - Quiet zones designated on minimum 2 trails
 - Sensory-rich zones created in appropriate locations
 - Feedback from neurodiverse trail users indicates improved experience
 - Staff trained on neuro-inclusive design principles
 - Guidelines integrated into standard design manual

Dependencies Consultation with autism/neurodiversity advocacy organizations; Research on best practices; Budget for specialized features; Ongoing community engagement

2.5: Conduct Accessibility Audit of Existing Trail Network

Lead Responsibility	Recreation Department (lead) with Accessibility Advocates
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Systematically evaluate all existing trails against Universal Design Standards• Engage residents with diverse abilities in audit process through participatory assessment• Document accessibility barriers: surface quality, grades, width, amenities, access points• Prioritize improvements based on usage levels, community importance, retrofit feasibility• Develop multi-year retrofit plan with cost estimates• Identify quick wins vs. major capital projects• Begin implementing highest priority and most feasible improvements
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional accessibility audit• Community engagement and participatory assessment• Multi-year retrofit planning• Retrofit implementation costs• Potential grant funding for accessibility improvements
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive accessibility audit completed for 100% of existing trails• Multi-year retrofit plan adopted by Council• Minimum 2-3 existing trails retrofitted to improved accessibility standards• Priority barriers addressed on high-use trails• User satisfaction with accessibility improvements• Grant applications submitted for retrofit funding
Dependencies	Budget for audit and retrofits; Partnership with disability advocacy organizations; Prioritization framework; Potential external funding; Community engagement capacity

2.6: Establish Inclusive Recreation Programming

Lead Responsibility	Recreation Department (lead)
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with community organizations serving persons with diverse abilities • Offer guided trail experiences designed for specific accessibility needs • Develop inclusive signage and educational materials in multiple formats (large print, braille, audio, plain language) • Train recreation staff and volunteers on inclusive programming • Create adaptive equipment lending library if appropriate (e.g., trail wheelchairs) • Host inclusive trail events and celebrations • Develop mentorship/buddy programs connecting experienced users with newcomers
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership development and coordination • Inclusive program delivery • Adaptive equipment if pursued • Staff/volunteer training • Multi-format educational materials • Event costs
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships established with minimum 2 disability/accessibility organizations • Minimum 6 inclusive programs delivered annually • Participation by persons with diverse abilities in programs • Educational materials available in minimum 3 formats • Staff/volunteer training completion rate 100% • Participant satisfaction ratings (target 90%+)
Dependencies	Partnership development with disability organizations; Staff training capacity; Program development expertise; Accessible program promotion; Potential adaptive equipment procurement

Theme 3: Maintenance, Sustainability, and Trail Quality

3.5: Develop Trail Stewardship and Volunteer Program

Lead Responsibility	Recreation Department (lead)
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruit and train community volunteers for light maintenance and monitoring• Establish Adopt-a-Trail program for community groups, businesses, families• Provide training on trail maintenance, invasive species removal, monitoring• Organize regular trail clean-up and maintenance events (seasonal)• Create volunteer recognition and celebration program• Develop volunteer management tools and tracking systems• Provide volunteers with supplies, tools, and insurance coverage
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer program development• Volunteer coordinator staff time• Insurance coverage for volunteers• Annual volunteer appreciation event
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer stewardship program launched• 50+ active volunteers engaged in trail stewardship• Minimum 500 volunteer hours contributed annually• 4 seasonal trail maintenance events held annually• Volunteer satisfaction ratings (target 85%+)• Documented reduction in municipal maintenance costs through volunteer contributions
Dependencies	Volunteer coordinator capacity; Liability insurance for volunteers; Training program development; Volunteer recruitment and retention strategy; Recognition program design

Theme 4: Wayfinding, Signage, and Trail Information

4.4: Create Interpretive Signage and Storytelling Opportunities

Lead Responsibility

Recreation Department (lead) with Heritage and Indigenous Partners

Key Actions

- Develop interpretive signage highlighting natural history and ecology of region
- Share Indigenous history and cultural heritage with appropriate permissions and protocols
- Feature community history and heritage
- Provide wildlife and habitat information to enhance nature appreciation
- Engage local historians, naturalists, and Indigenous knowledge keepers in content development
- Use QR codes to provide deeper digital content without cluttering physical signage
- Create audio interpretation files for enhanced accessibility
- Develop educational resources for schools and families

Resource Requirements

- Research and content development
- Indigenous community engagement and cultural protocols
- Interpretive signage design and fabrication
- Digital content creation
- QR code integration and hosting
- Educational resource development

Success Metrics

- Interpretive content developed in respectful partnership with Indigenous community
- Minimum 10-15 interpretive signs installed throughout trail network
- Digital content accessible via QR codes on all interpretive signs
- Audio interpretation available for key stories
- Educational resources used by schools and families
- User feedback indicates interpretive content enhances experience (target 85%+)
- Respectful cultural protocol followed throughout

Dependencies

Partnership and protocol development with Indigenous community; Historical research capacity; Naturalist/ecologist expertise; Content writing and design; Cultural sensitivity and approval processes

4.5: Develop Digital Trail Resources and Real-Time Information

Lead Responsibility	IT Department (lead) with Recreation and Communications
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create dedicated trails section on Town website with interactive digital maps• Provide downloadable trail guides and GPX files for navigation apps• Establish real-time trail conditions and closure information system• Create photo galleries and virtual trail tours• List trails on major platforms (AllTrails, Trailforks, Google Maps)• Develop mobile-friendly trail app or partner with existing platforms• Use social media to communicate trail conditions, events, and highlights• Enable user-generated content and trail condition reports
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website development and trail page design• Real-time conditions system• Photo/video content creation• Mobile app development OR platform partnership• IT support and maintenance
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedicated trails webpage launched with interactive maps• Trail information listed on AllTrails, Trailforks, Google Maps• Real-time trail conditions updated weekly minimum (daily during high-use seasons)• Website traffic to trails page (target 1,000+ visits monthly)• Trail app OR strong platform partnership established• Social media engagement on trail content increases 100%• User-generated content and reports integrated into system
Dependencies	IT capacity for web development and maintenance; GIS expertise for mapping; Photo/video content library; Social media management; Platform partnership negotiations; User engagement strategy

Theme 5: Community Engagement and Partnerships

5.4: Implement Friends of Grand Bay-Westfield Trails Volunteer Program

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead)

Key Actions

- Establish structured volunteer program with training, recognition, community-building
- Recruit volunteers for trail monitoring and light maintenance, guided hikes and interpretive programming, invasive species management, trail counters and user surveys, events and special projects
- Provide training workshops on trail maintenance, ecology, safety, interpretation
- Create volunteer roles at different commitment levels (flexible for diverse participants)
- Develop volunteer handbook and onboarding materials
- Host annual volunteer appreciation event and regular recognition
- Build community among volunteers through social events and team-building

Resource Requirements

- Research and content development
- Indigenous community engagement and cultural protocols
- Interpretive signage design and fabrication
- Digital content creation
- QR code integration and hosting
- Educational resource development

Success Metrics

- Interpretive content developed in respectful partnership with Indigenous community
- Minimum 10-15 interpretive signs installed throughout trail network
- Digital content accessible via QR codes on all interpretive signs
- Audio interpretation available for key stories
- Educational resources used by schools and families
- User feedback indicates interpretive content enhances experience (target 85%+)
- Respectful cultural protocol followed throughout

Dependencies

Partnership and protocol development with Indigenous community; Historical research capacity; Naturalist/ecologist expertise; Content writing and design; Cultural sensitivity and approval processes

5.5: Develop School and Youth Engagement Programs

Lead Responsibility

Recreation Department (lead) with School District

Key Actions

- Partner with Grand Bay-Westfield Elementary and Middle Schools
- Integrate trail use into curriculum: outdoor education and nature studies, active transportation initiatives (walk/bike to school), trail stewardship and environmental monitoring, Indigenous history and ecology learning
- Engage youth in trail design process through participatory planning exercises
- Create youth leadership opportunities (junior trail ambassadors, youth advisory roles)
- Develop age-appropriate educational resources and field trip guides
- Support teacher professional development on outdoor education
- Host youth trail events and challenges

Resource Requirements

- School partnership development
- Educational resource and curriculum development
- Teacher professional development workshops
- Youth programming delivery
- Youth trail ambassador program
- Field trip support and materials
- Youth events and challenges

Success Metrics

- Partnership agreements with both Grand Bay-Westfield schools
- Curriculum-linked trail programs available for all grades
- Minimum 10 school field trips to trails annually
- Youth trail ambassador program with 10-15 active participants
- Teacher professional development sessions held annually
- Youth participation in trail planning processes
- Positive feedback from teachers and students (target 85%+)

Dependencies

School district partnership and buy-in; Curriculum development expertise; Teacher engagement; Youth programming capacity; Coordination with school calendars; Transportation logistics for field trips

5.6: Strengthen Regional Trail Partnerships

Lead Responsibility	Recreation Department (lead) with CAO
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with neighbouring municipalities (Saint John, Quispamsis, Rothesay) on shared priorities• Participate in Regional Service Commission trail planning initiatives• Share resources, expertise, and best practices across region• Pursue joint funding opportunities (federal/provincial programs)• Coordinate regional trail marketing and promotion• Explore shared maintenance agreements or equipment• Align trail standards and wayfinding across region for seamless user experience
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional partnership coordination• Joint planning initiatives• Regional marketing materials• Participation in regional forums and committees (travel, meeting time)• Potential shared equipment or resource purchases (highly variable)
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal regional trail partnership framework established• Participation in minimum 2 regional trail initiatives• Joint funding applications submitted for regional projects• Shared resources agreement established (e.g., expertise, equipment, training)• Regional trail marketing materials developed and distributed• Cross-municipality trail connections identified and planned• Best practices shared through regular regional meetings
Dependencies	Political will for regional collaboration; Staff time for coordination; Alignment of priorities across municipalities; Regional Service Commission engagement; Shared funding mechanisms

5.7: Host Community Trail Events

Lead Responsibility	Recreation Department (lead) with Community Partners
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize annual signature trail events: trail opening celebrations for new sections, seasonal guided hikes (spring wildflowers, fall colours, winter snowshoe), trail races and challenges (fun runs, bike events, trail clean-up competitions), National/International observances (National Trails Day, Parks Day)• Partner with community organizations to deliver events (running clubs, nature groups, schools)• Use events to build community, educate users, celebrate trails• Create volunteer opportunities through event planning and delivery• Promote events through all communication channels• Evaluate event success and participant feedback for continuous improvement
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Event planning and coordination• Event materials and supplies• Marketing and promotion• Potential event equipment or rentals
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual trail events calendar established• Minimum 6 trail events delivered annually• Growing event participation year-over-year (target 20% annual increase)• Partnerships with minimum 3 community organizations for event delivery• Event participant satisfaction (target 90%+)• Media coverage of signature trail events• Events contribute to community engagement and trail awareness
Dependencies	Event planning capacity; Partnership development; Permits and insurance; Volunteer coordination; Marketing resources; Weather contingency planning

Theme 6: Diversity of Trail Experiences and Activities

6.2: Evaluate Motorized Use Policy and Designated Areas

Lead Responsibility	Recreation Department (lead) with Public Works, Development and CAO
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct thorough assessment of demand for motorized trail use (ATVs, e-bikes, snowmobiles) • Evaluate potential for designated motorized trail areas that minimize user conflicts, protect sensitive environmental areas, meet provincial regulations and insurance requirements, have sustainable design and maintenance plans • Establish clear policies on e-bikes including class distinctions and where permitted • Evaluate seasonal motorized use options (e.g., snowmobile trails in winter) • Consider enforcement mechanisms and signage needs • Engage with motorized recreation community and non-motorized users • Research best practices from other municipalities
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal review of policy implications • Insurance assessment and cost implications • Policy development • Pilot program costs if approved (highly variable depending on scope)
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear motorized recreational vehicle use policy established for trail network • Policy recommendations presented to Council • If approved: motorized use areas designated and pilot program launched • User conflict management strategy developed • Enforcement protocols established
Dependencies	Community engagement with diverse user groups; Legal and insurance review; Provincial regulatory compliance; Council decision-making on policy direction; Potential pilot program design

6.3: Create Designated Dog-Friendly Trail Areas

Lead Responsibility	Recreation Department (lead) with Public Works and Development
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish clear comprehensive dog policies• Designate specific on-leash trails with clear signage• Explore potential for designated off-leash trail areas (if appropriate locations exist)• Install dog waste stations at key access points and along high-use trails• Develop education campaign about responsible dog ownership on trails• Consider partnership with local veterinary clinic or pet businesses for support• Establish enforcement protocols for leash requirements and waste disposal• Monitor and address user conflicts related to dogs on trails
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dog policy development and community engagement• Dog waste stations• Off-leash area development if pursued• Dog trail signage• Education campaign materials• By-law enforcement resources
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive dog policy established and approved• Dog waste stations installed at minimum 15 locations• Clear signage indicating on-leash/off-leash requirements on all trails• Off-leash area(s) established if feasible and approved• Education campaign reaching dog owners• Reduction in dog waste and leash-related complaints• Partnership established with minimum 1 local pet business or veterinary clinic
Dependencies	Community engagement with dog owners and non-dog users; Suitable locations for off-leash areas; Budget for waste stations and maintenance; By-law enforcement capacity; Partnership development

6.3: Create Designated Dog-Friendly Trail Areas

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead) with Environmental Partners

- Key Actions**
- Enhance nature appreciation opportunities
 - Identify trails with high natural/ecological value for interpretive focus
 - Create wildlife viewing areas and bird watching opportunities
 - Develop nature interpretation programs and guided walks
 - Install interpretive signage on flora, fauna, ecology, geology (coordinate with Rec 4.4)
 - Establish partnerships with naturalist groups, environmental educators, conservation organizations
 - Create educational resources for self-guided nature exploration
 - Develop seasonal nature programming (spring wildflowers, fall migration, winter tracking)

- Resource Requirements**
- Ecological assessment of trail areas
 - Wildlife viewing infrastructure (benches, viewing platforms)
 - Nature interpretation program development
 - Guided walk programming
 - Educational resources and field guides
 - Partnership development with environmental organizations
 - Naturalist training for guides/volunteers

- Success Metrics**
- Minimum 3-5 trails designated for nature interpretation focus
 - Wildlife viewing areas established at 2-3 locations
 - Interpretive programming delivered (minimum 10 guided walks annually)
 - Educational resources available for all nature-focus trails
 - Partnerships with minimum 2 environmental/naturalist organizations
 - Increased user engagement with nature appreciation aspects
 - Participant satisfaction with nature programs (target 90%+)

Dependencies Ecological expertise; Partnership development with environmental groups; Naturalist guide capacity; Interpretive material development; Coordination with interpretive signage program (Rec 4.4)

6.5: Enhance Winter Trail Opportunities

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead) with Public Works

Key Actions

- Develop comprehensive winter trail strategy building on Priority 1 winter maintenance (Rec 3.4)
- Expand groomed multi-use trails for walking, fat biking, cross-country skiing
- Develop snowshoe-specific trails through natural areas
- Implement clear winter wayfinding and condition reporting system
- Create winter trail map highlighting groomed vs. ungroomed trails
- Partner with winter recreation groups for specialized grooming and programming
- Explore winter trail lighting for early morning/evening use on key trails
- Host winter trail events and programming

Resource Requirements

- Winter strategy development
- Expanded grooming operations Winter trail lighting
- Winter wayfinding and mapping
- Winter programming delivery
- Partnership coordination with winter recreation groups
- Winter trail counters for usage monitoring

Success Metrics

- Comprehensive winter trail strategy adopted
- Groomed trail network expanded to 5-10 km
- Winter trail map distributed and available online
- Real-time winter conditions reporting system operational
- Winter trail lighting installed on minimum 1 priority trail if approved
- Partnership with minimum 1 winter recreation organization
- Winter trail usage increases 50% over baseline
- Winter programming delivered (minimum 6 events/programs annually)

Dependencies Budget for expanded winter operations; Equipment procurement and maintenance; Partnership with winter recreation groups; Lighting infrastructure if pursued; Winter condition monitoring capacity

6.6: Establish Trail Etiquette and User Conflict Management

Lead Responsibility	Recreation Department (lead)
Key Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and communicate clear trail etiquette guidelines: right-of-way rules (walkers have priority over cyclists, uphill users have priority, yield to horses), speed expectations on shared trails, passing protocols and communication, Leave No Trace principles, responsible dog ownership• Install trail etiquette signage at trailheads and key decision points• Address conflicts through design solutions where appropriate (separate trails, directional trails, designated use trails)• Create user education campaign across all communication channels• Monitor user feedback and conflict reports• Adapt policies and management strategies based on experience and data• Establish mediation process for persistent conflicts
Resource Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trail etiquette guideline development• Etiquette signage design and fabrication• Education campaign delivery• User survey and conflict monitoring• Design modifications to address conflicts (variable, case-by-case)• Mediation or facilitation services if needed
Success Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trail etiquette guidelines established and widely communicated• Etiquette signage installed at all trailheads and key locations• User awareness of etiquette guidelines (target 80%+ in surveys)• Documented reduction in user conflict reports• Design modifications implemented where conflicts persist• User satisfaction with trail experience maintained or improved• Clear conflict resolution process established
Dependencies	Community engagement on etiquette standards; Signage coordination with overall system; Education campaign delivery; Conflict monitoring system; Mediation capacity if needed

Theme 7: Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience

7.4: Design for Climate Resilience and Adaptation

Lead Responsibility

Development (lead) with Public Works

Key Actions

- Consider projected climate change impacts in trail design: increased precipitation and flooding events, more intense storms and weather variability, warmer temperatures affecting seasonal use patterns
- Design drainage systems for higher-intensity rainfall events
- Elevate trails in flood-prone areas or design for periodic inundation
- Select plant species and trail materials adapted to changing climate conditions
- Plan for longer shoulder seasons and changing winter recreation patterns
- Incorporate climate adaptation best practices from Trans Canada Trail resources
- Monitor climate impacts on existing trails and document adaptation needs

Resource Requirements

- Climate resilience design standards development
- Climate impact assessment for trail corridors
- Enhanced drainage infrastructure costs (10-20% premium on standard design)
- Climate-adapted materials and plantings (variable costs)
- Staff training on climate adaptation design
- Monitoring and documentation system

Success Metrics

- Climate resilience design standards adopted
- 100% of new trails designed with climate adaptation considerations
- Enhanced drainage systems installed on all new/retrofitted trails
- Climate-adapted plant species used in landscaping and restoration
- Monitoring system tracking climate impacts on trail infrastructure
- Reduced trail closures due to flooding or weather events
- Documentation of climate adaptation measures and effectiveness

Dependencies

Climate science expertise; Engineering capacity for enhanced drainage; Access to climate projection data; Staff training on adaptation design; Monitoring and documentation capacity

7.5: Use Trails as Carbon Sequestration and Biodiversity Tool

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead) with Development and Environmental Partners

Key Actions

- Utilize Trans Canada Trail Tree Planting Resource Guide for native plantings along trails
- Create pollinator corridors along trail edges with native wildflowers and grasses
- Design trails to enhance rather than fragment habitat where possible
- Use trails as education platform for climate action and environmental stewardship
- Partner with environmental organizations for planting and monitoring
- Engage volunteers and community groups in planting events
- Document carbon sequestration and biodiversity benefits
- Integrate interpretive signage on climate action and ecosystem services

Resource Requirements

- Planting strategy development
- Native trees, shrubs, wildflowers
- Planting events and volunteer coordination
- Partnership development with environmental organizations
- Monitoring and documentation
- Educational signage and materials
- Access to TCT Tree Planting Resource Guide (free resource)

Success Metrics

- Planting and biodiversity enhancement strategy adopted
- Minimum 500 native trees/shrubs planted along trails
- Pollinator corridors established along minimum 2 km of trails
- Partnership with minimum 1 environmental organization for planting/monitoring
- Community planting events with volunteer participation
- Documented biodiversity improvements in trail-adjacent areas
- Educational interpretation on climate action available on trails
- Carbon sequestration benefits calculated and communicated

Dependencies Access to TCT Tree Planting Resource Guide; Partnership with environmental organizations; Native plant sourcing; Volunteer coordination; Monitoring expertise; Educational content development

Priority 3 Recommendations - Years 8-10 (Long-Term Vision and Optimization)

Priority 3 recommendations advance the long-term vision for Grand Bay-Westfield’s trail network through regional connectivity and sophisticated visitor use management. These recommendations focus on system optimization, regional collaboration, and ensuring trails continue to meet community needs into the future.

Theme 1: Trail Network Expansion and Connectivity

1.4: Explore Regional Trail Connections

Lead Responsibility Recreation Department (lead)

Key Actions

- Investigate partnerships with neighbouring municipalities and Regional Service Commission for trail linkages
- Connect to broader trans-provincial trail networks and tourism routes
- Evaluate feasibility of connections to Trans Canada Trail or other significant regional trails
- Assess economic and tourism benefits of regional connectivity
- Develop cost-sharing frameworks for regional connections
- Coordinate with provincial trail planning initiatives
- Create regional trail marketing opportunities
- Plan for long-term regional trail network vision

Resource Requirements

- Regional connectivity feasibility study
- Partnership framework development
- Preliminary design for priority regional connection
- Economic impact assessment
- Regional planning coordination (staff time)
- Future construction costs for regional connections

Success Metrics

- Comprehensive regional connectivity study completed
- Partnership framework for regional connections established
- Priority regional trail connections identified and ranked
- Preliminary design completed for highest priority connection
- Economic impact of regional connectivity quantified
- Cost-sharing agreements in principle with regional partners
- Provincial/federal funding opportunities identified
- Regional trail marketing concept developed

Dependencies

Regional political will and partnership development; Cost-sharing framework; Provincial coordination; Long-term capital funding; Tourism development alignment; Trans Canada Trail engagement

Theme 3: Maintenance, Sustainability, and Trail Quality

3.6: Implement Visitor Use Management Framework

Lead Responsibility

Recreation Department (lead) with Public Works and Development

Key Actions

- Apply Interagency Visitor Use Management (VUM) Framework to define desired conditions and appropriate use levels for each trail
- Monitor usage patterns using trail counters, observational studies, user surveys
- Address conflicts between different user groups through design, education, and policy interventions
- Manage informal trail development proactively through designated trail expansion and user education
- Establish capacity thresholds for high-use trails
- Develop adaptive management strategies to respond to changing use patterns
- Balance conservation, recreation, and community objectives through VUM process

Resource Requirements

- VUM framework development and training
- Trail counter infrastructure
- User monitoring and surveying
- Data analysis and reporting
- Management intervention costs (variable depending on actions needed)
- Staff training on VUM principles and application

Success Metrics

- Visitor Use Management framework adopted
- Desired conditions defined for all trails in network
- Trail counter monitoring system operational on high-use trails
- Annual user monitoring and surveying completed
- Usage trends analyzed and reported annually
- Management interventions implemented to address overuse or conflicts
- Informal trail development managed proactively
- User satisfaction maintained while protecting trail resources

Dependencies

VUM expertise or training; Trail counter technology; Data analysis capacity; Adaptive management framework; Staff training; Long-term monitoring commitment

Endnotes

1 Grand Bay-Westfield, Grand Bay-Westfield Heritage, n.d., <https://grandbaywestfield.ca/town-history/>

Tourism New Brunswick, Grand Bay-Westfield, n.d., <https://tourismnewbrunswick.ca/listing/town-grand-bay-westfield>

New Brunswick Health Council, 2023, <https://nbhc.ca/data/community/grand-bay-westfield-westfield-greenwich-area>

Statistics Canada, The Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-20-0001/452000012023002-eng.htm>

Trans Canada Trail (2021) National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada. Retrieved from <https://tctrail.ca/national-guidelines-webinars/>.



