



Mississippi Mills Community Services Master Plan

June 2025



Mississippi
Mills



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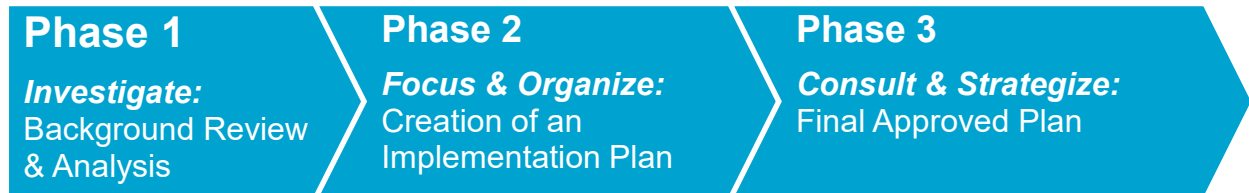


Executive Summary

Purpose of the Plan

The development of a strategic framework for childcare, culture, community services, and recreation involves summarizing existing needs while evaluating and planning for the future. These services and their associated facilities are highly valued by the Municipality and its residents, and the Municipality wishes to expand upon what has been implemented to date. Considering the anticipated future growth, shifting trends in municipal services, and changing community expectations, it is now vital to understand existing and future needs for childcare facilities, cultural services, events and spaces, community services, and recreation facilities, and to have a plan in place to meet those needs.

The Community Services Master Plan ("the Plan") for the Municipality of Mississippi Mills provides a cohesive vision and strategy for the provision of these services for the community over the next seven (7) years. The Plan was prepared through a three (3) phase approach.



Phase 1 of the Plan aimed to generate a starting point from which a unique, context-specific Plan can be developed. This was accomplished by creating an inventory of facilities and amenities that the Municipality already possesses and then compiling data, statistics, and research on Provincial and National trends and best practices.

Building off this background research, Phase 2 reviewed the needs of the community and established an action plan for implementation and monitoring childcare, culture, community services, and recreation in Mississippi Mills.

Phase 3 corresponded to presenting the results of our findings and recommendations to the residents of Mississippi Mills and incorporating community input and feedback received back into the Plan.

This Plan provides a long-term vision for the Municipality's childcare, culture, community services, and recreation systems. This Plan includes specific policies and standards to direct day-to-day decisions and creates a framework that will allow the Municipality to respond to new opportunities as they arise. The Plan strives to ensure that facilities, programs, and services meet the needs of the Municipality's existing and future residents and visitors.



Community Profile

According to the 2021 Census of Population, the population in Mississippi Mills was 14,740. The following provides a summary of some of the Municipality's key and notable statistics based on 2021 and 2016 Census data that may be relevant to making decisions for childcare, culture, community services, and recreation.

- The population in Mississippi Mills has grown by 3,006 people since 2006.
- From 2016 to 2021, Mississippi Mills' population increased by 12 per cent, while the provincial and national averages were 5.8 and 5.2 respectively.
- The share of adults over the age of 65 grew from 14.7% in 2006 to 26.6% in 2021.
- Age cohorts from 0 to 4 years to 20 to 24 years recorded modest decreases in population share.
- The population in Mississippi Mills is expected to grow to 24,400 by 2046, a 65.5 per cent increase over the reported population in the 2021 Census of Population.
- The median 2020 household income is \$48,800, while the average household income is \$58,850.
- Around 28 per cent of people in Mississippi Mills have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate as their highest certificate, diploma, or degree.
- Around 61 per cent of people in Mississippi Mills have some type of post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree as their highest form of education in 2021, compared to 58 per cent of Ontarians.
- As of 2021, 82 per cent of Mississippi Mills residents speak English as their first language, less than 1 per cent speak French, and the remaining 17 per cent speak both English and French or another language as their first language.
- In 2021, the average household size in Mississippi Mills was 2.4 persons with a total of 6,040 private households.

These trends indicate that, while demand for childcare, cultural, community services, and recreation services will be strong for all age cohorts, demand for programs and facilities catering to older adults will be particularly strong and important to consider in the development of this Plan.



Engagement

Community engagement was key in the development of a Plan for the Municipality. The Municipality previously began the development of a Community Services Master Plan in 2023, for which meaningful engagement was done. The results of this engagement as well as other Municipal engagement, was used to inform the development of this Plan.

The Municipality completed in 2022-2023 the following engagement activities in preparation for the development of a Community Services Master Plan:

- Public Consultation to Guide Recreation and Culture Services – Residents Oriented
- Sports and Facility Users Questionnaire
- Community Services Master Plan Survey – Sports and Facility Program Providers
- Almonte Old Town Hall (AOTH) – Performance Based Rental Groups Survey
- Focus Groups with Community Organizations
- Childcare Focus Groups

The overall engagement process is summarized in the graphic below with activities completed by Stantec highlighted in blue and activities completed by the Municipality highlighted in green.





Vision

To guide the establishment of recommendations for the Plan, a series of six (6) vision statements were developed incorporating findings from the early-stage investigations, comments from public engagement activities, and results from the needs assessments. The vision statements provide the basis for the Plan to support the community vision as laid out in provincial and local policy statements. The vision statements have been structured to represent the six (6) key components of this Plan.

Childcare



Provide high quality learning through accessible, inclusive, and equitable care that supports positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and staff and fosters children's exploration, play and inquiry.

Culture & Events



Use arts and culture to foster a strong sense of place, express community values, and enhance the landscape of Mississippi Mills. Arts, culture programming and community features contribute to the sense of place, local economy and to the general quality of life of the community.

Recreation



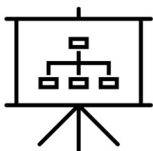
Build a sense of community and enhance community well-being and individual health for people of all ages and abilities through a wide range of recreation opportunities and social interaction that support physical and mental health.

Programs and Services Delivery



Offer and promote a wide range of programs for all ages, abilities, and identities with opportunities for participation, skills development, volunteering and social interactions, cultural, economic, and environmental developments.

Projects, Staff, and Finance



Deliver successful childcare, cultural, community, and recreation initiatives in a sustainable, effective, and efficient manner while maintaining qualified staff and resources.



Recommendations and Implementation Plan

The recommendations developed for the Community Services Master Plan are the result of the public consultation done by Mississippi Mills, staff feedback, industry trends analysis, and the assessment of needs and gaps of services provided by the Municipality. The recommendations cover actions related to childcare; culture and events; capacity-building and service level requirements; collaboration and partnerships; communications and promotion; indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities and amenities; and seasonality. The recommendations work together to create a holistic vision for the Municipality.

Overall, this Plan includes eighty-seven (87) recommendations divided for each vision statement. In terms of priority, the individual recommendations were broken into short, medium, and long-term goals, which will assist the Municipality with implementation of the recommendations throughout the lifespan of this plan. In addition, an overall anticipated cost for recommendations associated with this work and studies to be completed by external consultants have been provided as part of this Plan.

Acronyms / Abbreviations

Acronym / Abbreviation	Full Name
AMP	Asset Management Plan
AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
AOTH	Almonte Old Town Hall
AT	Active Transportation
CWELCC	Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care
CPRA	Canadian Parks and Recreation Association
CIP	Community Improvement Plan
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
DC	Development Charges
DCA	Development Charges Act
DFO	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
ECE	Early Childhood Educator
ELCC	Early Learning Child Care
IASR	Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation
MMCS	Mississippi Mills Childcare Services
MVCA	Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
OP	Official Plan
PPS	Provincial Policy Statement
PRO	Parks and Recreation Ontario
QOL	Quality of Life
SCOP	Lanark County's Sustainable Communities Official Plan
TAOC	Trails for All Ontarians Collaborative
TMP	Transportation Master Plan

Glossary

Term	Definition
Municipality of Mississippi Mills VS Town of Mississippi Mills	It should be noted that the Municipality of Mississippi Mills was previously named the Town of Mississippi Mills. References to the 'Town of Mississippi Mills' in this report are only in cases when referring to existing reports that were created when the community used this name. However, the community is officially referred to as the Municipality of Mississippi Mills at the time of the writing of this report.





1 | Introduction





1 Introduction

Stantec Consulting Ltd. (Stantec) was retained by the Municipality of Mississippi Mills (Municipality) to develop a strategic framework to guide the future development and expansion of the Municipality's childcare services and facilities, cultural services and spaces, community services, and recreation facilities. The main objective of the Mississippi Mills Community Services Master Plan is to develop a holistic view of childcare, culture, community services, and recreation for the community. The Council's Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 is to have "a healthy, age-friendly and welcoming community with programs and facilities that promote active lifestyles for all ages, enrich the community, and sustain the environment." In addition, there is a desire to become cycle-friendly, inclusive, dementia-friendly, youth-friendly, and to offer affordable housing to the community.

The development of a Master Plan for childcare, culture, community services, and recreation starts with summarizing existing needs while evaluating and planning for the future. These services and associated facilities are highly valued by the Municipality and its residents, and the Municipality wishes to expand upon what has been implemented to date. Considering anticipated future growth, shifting trends in municipal services, and changing community expectations, it is now vital to understand existing and future needs for childcare facilities, cultural services, events and spaces, community services, and recreation facilities, and to have a plan in place to meet those needs.

The Community Services Master Plan ("the Plan") for the Municipality of Mississippi Mills provides a vision and strategy for the provision of these services for the community over the next seven (7) years. The Plan was prepared through a three (3) phase approach; Figure 1 illustrates the Plan phase structure.

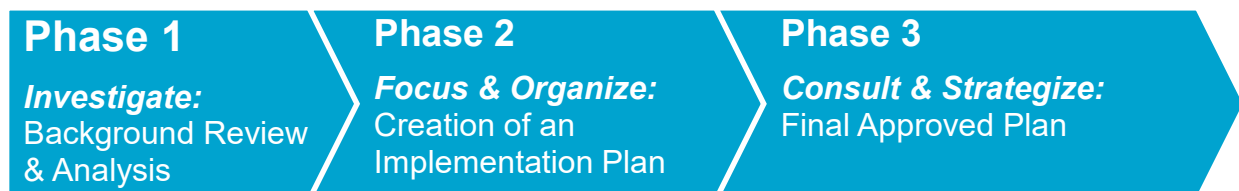


Figure 1: Project Phasing Overview

Phase 1 of the Plan aimed to generate a starting point from which a unique, context-specific Plan can be developed. This was accomplished by creating an inventory of facilities and amenities that the Municipality already possesses, then compiling data, statistics, and research on Provincial and National trends and best practices.

Building off this background research, Phase 2 reviewed the needs of the community and developed an action plan for implementation and monitoring for childcare, culture, community services, and recreation in Mississippi Mills.

Phase 3 corresponded to presenting our findings and recommendations to the residents of Mississippi Mills, incorporating community input and feedback received into the Plan.



1.1 What is a Community Services Master Plan?

The *Community Services Master Plan* is a strategic planning document that studies the existing park system, childcare services, cultural and recreational programming, and other community services. The document identifies a planning blueprint to improve and expand the Municipality's network of parks, facilities, childcare services, and recreational, community, and cultural programs for the future.

This Plan provides a long-term vision for the Municipality's childcare, culture, community services, and recreation systems. This Plan includes specific policies and standards to direct day-to-day decisions and creates a framework that will allow the Municipality to respond to new opportunities as they arise and ensure that facilities, programs, and services meet the needs of the Municipality's existing and future residents and visitors.

Through research and public input, the Plan examines:

- Municipal childcare provided to residents.
- Programs, events and activities delivered by the Municipality and the community.
- Recreation and sport facilities both indoor and outdoor.
- Operations such as policy development, staffing, communications, etc.
- Implementation strategies including anticipated costs associated to recommended actions.

The Plan's objectives are as follows:

- Identify needs based on changing demographics and participation trends.
- Establish an overall vision for Mississippi Mills in the areas of childcare, culture, community services, and recreation.
- Develop strategies to meet identified current and future needs.
- Align municipal efforts, operations, and budgets through priority-setting.
- Utilize feedback from public engagement previously conducted by the Municipality to establish the recommendations of the Plan.

1.2 How are Childcare, Culture, Community Services and Recreation planned for?

Master Plans focused on the provision of childcare, culture, community services and recreation are relatively new compared to other forms of planning in Ontario. Unlike other planning documents written in the Province of Ontario, there is no overarching policy that mandates the provision of childcare, culture, and recreation facilities. Since planning of these facilities and services is not dictated to be part of community planning, it leaves such planning as an optional responsibility of each municipality. Unlike land use planning, there is no legislation that requires municipalities to create strategies around childcare, culture, community services and recreation.



With no required legislation to be followed, there is no single process for creating a Community Services Master Plan. This field is unique as without a formal process to follow, it is based on trends, benefits, frameworks, knowledge sharing and evidence-based practices. In particular, the development of this type of Plan is based on the needs of the community as expressed through community engagement and data collected by the Municipality about usage and gaps.

1.3 Community Engagement

Community engagement was key in the development of a Plan for the Municipality. The Municipality previously began with the development of a Community Services Master Plan in 2023, for which meaningful engagement was done. The Municipality completed in 2022-2023 the following engagement activities in preparation for the development of a Community Services Master Plan:

- Public Consultation to Guide Recreation and Culture Services – Residents Oriented
- Sports and Facility Users Questionnaire
- Community Services Master Plan Survey – Sports and Facility Program Providers
- Almonte Old Town Hall (AOTH) – Performance Based Rental Groups Survey
- Focus Groups with Community Organizations
- Childcare Focus Groups

The results of this engagement, as well as other Municipal engagement, was used to inform the development of this Plan.

As part of the development of this Plan, Stantec also completed, in January 2025, a Site Tour of key facilities in the Municipality to better understand how childcare, culture, community services and recreation are experienced in Mississippi Mills.

In the Spring 2025, the Municipality facilitated a Public Open House to provide an update on all MM2048 projects. In total, sixteen projects were presented at the Open House and sought feedback from the public, including this Plan. At the Open House, there were 202 members of the public in attendance. Attendees provided feedback on the Plan in general, engagement done to date, events and recreation amenities in Mississippi Mills, strategic directions and vision, recommendations, and maps/locations of facilities. Feedback was provided by placing Post-it notes and preference stickers on the board. The public was also encouraged to provide feedback by submitting long-form comments to a project email address; a total of six (6) emails were received from the public.



Figure 2: Public Open House

The consultation activities resulted in the following statistics with activities completed by Stantec highlighted in blue and activities completed by the Municipality highlighted in green. Details related to the consultation responses have been compiled and are included in Section 4 of this report.



Figure 3: Community Engagement Summary



2 | Existing Legislation, Policies and Practices





2 Existing Legislation, Policies and Practices

The following section provides an overview of the applicable provincial and local legislation, policies, plans, and practices that will guide the process of developing the Plan for the Municipality of Mississippi Mills. Some of the policies reviewed in this section provide the basis for the legislative powers of the Municipality to use plans like this Plan to create safe and healthy communities. Other policies look at specific land use policies within the Municipality and how parkland should be created and managed. Overall, the legislation and policies covered in the following section provide a framework that assisted with identifying recommendations to the Municipality for the final Plan.

2.1 More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022

On November 28, 2022, Bill 23 received Royal Assent, introducing the *More Homes Built Faster Act* as part of Ontario's broader Housing Supply Action Plan. The Act aims to build 1.5 million homes in the province of Ontario over the subsequent 10 years. The new legislation results in significant changes to a series of planning and development statutes, including the *Planning Act*, *Development Charges Act*, *Conservation Authorities Act*, *Ontario Heritage Act*, and *Municipal Act*. Some of the policy directions in these documents relevant to the Plan include:

- Exempting affordable housing, non-profit housing and certain attainable housing units from development charges, parkland dedication fees, and community charges;
- Introducing a category of "attainable housing" which will be defined in future regulations;
- Developments of up to 10 residential units are exempted from site plan control, with architectural details and landscape design aesthetics being removed from the scope of site plan control;
- The maximum amount of parkland that can be conveyed or paid in lieu is capped at 10% of the land or its value for sites under 5 hectares, and 15% for sites greater than 5 hectares;
- Maximum alternative parkland dedication rate reduced to 1 ha/600 units for land and 1 ha/1000 units for cash in lieu;
- Parkland rates are frozen as of the date that a zoning by-law or site plan application is filed. Freeze remains in effect for two years following approval. If no building permits are pulled in that time, the rate in place at the time the building permit is pulled would apply;
- Landowners can identify land they intend to provide for parkland, with the municipality able to appeal to the Tribunal if there is a disagreement;
- Park plans to be required prior to the passing of any future parkland dedication by-law (would not apply to by-laws already passed); and,
- Municipalities are required to spend or allocate 60% of parkland reserve funds at the start of each year.

The *More Homes Built Faster Act* will have impacts on the planning process, particularly in the calculation and evaluation of parkland to be dedicated. These changes could result in a decrease in parkland over time, an increase in non-suitable land being conveyed as parkland, as well as less municipal funding to invest in parks, recreation, and culture projects and upgrades. Continual monitoring of the effects of the Act is necessary throughout the lifespan of this Plan to ensure that the recommendations provided are up to date.



2.2 Planning Act

In the Section 1.1 of the *Planning Act*, the Province seeks to integrate matters of Provincial interest in municipal planning decisions. It also recognizes the decision-making authority and accountability of municipal councils in planning and provides a land use planning system led by Provincial policy.

The *Planning Act* provides several powers and tools that enable the Municipality to realize such goals and objectives. These include powers around the dedication of lands in new developments for new or expanded park spaces, powers to regulate the use of lands through zoning and plans of subdivision, and the ability to establish site plan control areas for certain types of development. Additionally, the *Planning Act* provides for the ability of a municipal Council to appoint Committees and enable certain delegated authorities to such committees and/or Staff to deal with specific land use planning matters. Some of these powers are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

In exercising its authority under the *Planning Act*, the council of a municipality is to have regard to the various matters of Provincial interest. The matters of Provincial interest which are relevant to the development of the Plan include the following:

- The protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features, and functions;
- The orderly development of safe and healthy communities;
- The adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural, and recreational facilities;
- The protection of the financial and economic well-being of the Province and of its municipalities;
- The promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians; and,
- The promotion of built form that: is well-designed, encourages a sense of place, and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive, and vibrant.

These interests outline only a portion of the overall responsibilities of municipal councils, as these items would need to be considered in conjunction with other municipal goals and objectives, such as those to protect natural and cultural resources and agricultural lands, promote development that is appropriate and adequately provides the services needed for members of the community.

2.2.1 Community Benefits Charges (Under the COVID Economic Recovery Act)

The COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, proclaimed in 2020, presented amendments to the *Planning Act* and *Development Charges Act* regarding parkland dedication. The Province concurrently released Ontario Regulation 509/20, Community Benefits Charges and Parkland, under the Planning Act.

The amended *Planning Act* implemented regulations introducing requirements for consultation prior to passing a parkland dedication by-law and the ability to appeal by-laws that provide for an alternative rate, as noted in Section 2.6.3 of this Plan. A new subsection, 42 (4.26), requires that all current parkland dedication by-laws that calculate parkland dedication based on the alternative rate be re-enacted by September 18, 2022, or they will expire on this date. The Municipality does not currently have a parkland dedication by-law.



Furthermore, the *Act* amends Section 37 of the *Planning Act* to authorize municipalities to impose community benefits charges against land to pay for the capital costs of facilities, services and matters required due to development or redevelopment in the area to which the by-law applies. The charges may be imposed on development that require certain specified development applications and are limited to higher-density residential or mixed-use development (development/redevelopment involving a building of 5 or more stores). The Municipality does not currently impose community benefits charges.

The Community Benefits Charges and Parkland regulation under the *Planning Act* sets out the requirements for a community benefits charge strategy – a document which must be adopted prior to a municipality passing a Community Benefits Charge By-Law and sets the maximum for a community benefits charge at four per cent (4%) of the value of the land being developed. Note that the above information was referenced at the time that this report was written and may change.

2.2.2 Parkland Dedication & Draft Plans of Subdivision

Parkland dedication, as discussed in Section 51.1 of the *Planning Act*, allows the approval authority of an application for a Plan of Subdivision to impose a condition that land be conveyed to the local municipality for “park or other public recreational purposes”. An amount not exceeding 2% of the land included in the plan for a commercial or industrial proposal could be requested, or if the Plan of Subdivision is for residential purposes, the approval authority can request up to 5% of the land to be conveyed.

Subsection 42(3) of the *Act* allows for the dedication of parkland at the recently reduced alternative rate of one hectare per 600 units for land conveyance and one hectare per 1,000 units for cash-in-lieu, if outlined in the applicable official plan policies and supported by a publicly available parks plan. It should be noted that Mississippi Mills does not use this approach. In preparing such ‘parks plan’, the municipality shall consult with every school board that has jurisdiction in the municipality and may consult with any other persons or public bodies that the municipality considers appropriate (Bill 73 s.s. 4.2.1). In lieu of the physical conveyance of parkland, the municipality may require a payment to the value of the land, otherwise required to be conveyed.

For applications to consent to sever lands (e.g. severances), dedication of land or payment in lieu can also be required by a municipality for ‘park or other public recreational purposes’. To determine the amount of the payment, the value of the land shall be determined the day before the day of the provisional consent.

Conditions of Draft Plan of Subdivision approval granted by a municipality can impose requirements for land dedication, as described above, but also, can require that “...highways, including pedestrian pathways, bicycling pathways, and public transit rights of way be dedicated as necessary”. Therefore, in addition to the land area itself, conditions can be imposed that consider the connectivity of the parks and recreation to an active transportation system throughout a community.



2.2.3 Site Plan Control

Site Plan Control Areas are established through a by-law of a local municipality, through referencing one or more land use designations or zones as a 'site plan control area'. Any person wishing to develop in such an area would need to provide plans to show the location of buildings and structures. Elevations and cross-section views of the site can also be used to display the relationship of the proposed building to adjacent buildings, streets, and exterior areas to which members of the public have access. Municipalities can require elevations and cross-sections views (except for residential uses containing fewer than 25 dwelling units) to regulate the following:

- The sustainable design elements on any adjoining highway under a municipality's jurisdiction, including without limitation trees, shrubs, hedges, plantings, or other ground cover, permeable paving materials, street furniture, curb ramps, waste recycling containers and bicycling parking facilities (s.s. 41(4)1.(e)).
- Facilities designed to have regard for accessibility for persons with disabilities.

While Site Plan Control previously allowed municipalities to include exterior architectural design and aesthetic landscape details within the scope of review, they are now excluded due to changes from the *More Homes Built Faster Act*, limiting a municipality's ability to influence the exterior design of the public realm through new developments. Regardless, Site Plan Control ensures that new development is designed to be safe and functional while minimizing potential negative impacts on adjacent properties.

The *Planning Act* contains guidance to enable upper and lower-tier municipalities to establish policies and by-laws that adhere to the matters of provincial interest. To outline how the matters relate to municipal planning, there are a set of policy statements. The policy statement that is applicable within the Municipality of Mississippi Mills is the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024). The provision of parks, recreation and culture services in relation to the PPS is outlined in section 3.9.

Furthermore, the improvement of parks, recreational and cultural spaces may be augmented through the financial tools of the *Planning Act*, such as Community Improvement Plans and Community Benefits Charge.

2.3 Municipal Act

The *Municipal Act* provides the basis for each municipality's authority to govern its affairs as it considers appropriate and to enhance the municipality's ability to respond to municipal issues. The *Municipal Act* also lays out the spheres of jurisdiction for upper-tier and lower-tier municipalities. Municipalities can pass by-laws on the following matters that relate to parks, recreation and culture:

- Economic, social, and environmental well-being of the municipality, including with respect to climate change.
- Health, safety, and well-being of persons.
- Culture, parks, recreation, and heritage.
- Transportation systems, other than highways.
- Structures, including fences and signs.



These matters outline only a portion of the overall power and jurisdictional spheres of municipalities. However, it provides an authoritative basis for Mississippi Mills to create policies on guiding and regulating the implementation and maintenance of parks, recreation, and culture spaces within the Municipality, such as land acquisition.

2.4 Provincial Planning Statement

The *Provincial Planning Statement* (PPS, 2024) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest that relate to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land province-wide to meet the needs of the fast-growing province and enhance the quality of life for Ontarians.

These high-level objectives are relevant to the recreation and parks sphere, in that they guide where and how services are offered and managed within the communities of a municipality.

Subsection 2.1.6 of the PPS directs planning authorities to support the achievement of complete communities by:

- a) Accommodating an appropriate range and mix of land uses, housing options, transportation options with multimodal access, employment, public service facilities and other institutional uses (including schools and associated childcare facilities, long-term care facilities, places of worship and cemeteries), recreation, parks and open space, and other uses to meet long-term needs;
- b) Improving accessibility for people of all ages and abilities by addressing land use barriers which restrict their full participation in society; and
- c) Improving social equity and overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes, including equity deserving groups.

Complete communities, in the PPS, means, “places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and settlement areas that offer and support opportunities for equitable access to many necessities for daily living for people of all ages and abilities, including an appropriate mix of jobs, a full range of housing, transportation options, public service facilities, local stores and services. Complete communities are inclusive and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts to meet the diverse needs of their population.”

Subsection 2.3.1.6 directs planning authorities on phasing policies within settlement areas:

Planning authorities should establish and implement phasing policies, where appropriate, to ensure that development within designated growth areas is orderly and aligns with the timely provision of the infrastructure and public service facilities.

In the PPS, *infrastructure* means “physical structures (facilities and corridors) that form the foundation for development. Infrastructure includes: sewage and water systems, septage treatment systems, stormwater management systems, waste management systems, communications/telecommunications including broadband, transit and transportation corridors and facilities, active transportation systems, oil and gas pipelines and associated facilities.”



In the PPS, *public service facilities* means, “land, buildings, and structures, including but not limited to schools, hospitals and community recreation facilities, for the provision of programs and services provided or subsidized by a government or other body, such as social assistance, recreation, police and fire protection, health, child care and educational programs, including elementary, secondary, post-secondary, long-term care services, and cultural services. Public services facilities do not include infrastructure.”

Section 3.1 contains policies pertaining to infrastructure and public service facilities:

1. Infrastructure and public service facilities shall be provided in an efficient manner while accommodating projected needs. Planning for infrastructure and public service facilities shall be coordinated and integrated with land use planning and growth management so that they:
 - a. Are financially viable over their life cycle, which may be demonstrated through asset management planning;
 - b. Leverage the capacity of development proponents, where appropriate; and
 - c. Are available to meet current and projected needs.
4. Public service facilities should be planned and co-located with one another, along with parks and open space where appropriate, to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration, access to transit and active transportation.

In the PPS, the definition of *active transportation* is, “human-powered travel, including but not limited to walking, cycling, inline skating and travel with the use of mobility aids, including motorized wheelchairs and other power-assisted devices moving at a comparable speed.”

Section 3.9 contains policies for Public Spaces, Recreation, Parks, Trails and Open Space:

1. Healthy active, and inclusive communities should be promoted by:
 - a. Planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of persons of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, foster social interaction and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity;
 - b. Planning and providing for the needs of persons of all ages and abilities in the distribution of a full range of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, public spaces, open space areas, trails and linkages, and, where practical, water-based resources;
 - c. Providing opportunities for public access to shorelines; and
 - d. Recognizing provincial parks, conservation reserves, and other protected areas, and minimizing negative impacts on these areas.



2.5 Lanark County Official Plan

Lanark County's Sustainable Communities Official Plan (SCOP) is a combined Official Plan and Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. Lanark County Council adopted the SCOP in 2016, and it is reviewed every five years. The SCOP provides for the implementation of land uses through tools such as zoning and lot creation, with a focus on the integration of sustainable practices. The SCOP is a policy document adopted and approved under the *Planning Act*. It applies to all lands within the limits of the County of Lanark and sets out the vision, goals, objectives, policies, and maps for the county's physical, social, and economic growth.

The following objectives from the Lanark County OP relate to the development of the Mississippi Mills Plan:

- We will strengthen our communities by providing for efficient land use and opportunities for mixed use development on appropriate infrastructures which recognizes the diversity of Lanark County's settlement areas.
- Local municipalities will, in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner, maintain a three-year supply of serviced land at all times, as part of the ten-year supply of land designated for residential development. This objective does not apply where local municipalities do not provide public piped services or where such services are constrained by environmental or financial conditions.
- A broad range of housing types will be permitted in local municipal planning documents in order to meet the requirements of a growing population.

Section 2.3.1 General Policies for Settlement Areas include the following provisions:

1. Efficient development patterns will be encouraged in Settlement Areas to optimize the use of land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities.
2. Local land use policies shall provide for mixed use development including residential, commercial, employment lands, parks and open space and institutional uses in areas designated as a settlement area in local Official Plans.

Section 2.6.1 Settlement Area Land Use Policies – Objectives include the following provision:

3. To provide for neighbourhood facilities and amenities which are appropriate to a residential living environment.

Section 2.6.2 – Local Planning Framework includes the following provisions:

2.6.2.4: The implementation of this Official Plan through local Official Plans, zoning regulations, subdivision and condominium control and site plan control shall consider the following criteria:

1. Permit and zone a range of residential housing types and sizes.
8. Provide for open space and parkland and the protection of natural heritage features.



2.6 Municipality of Mississippi Mills Plans, Policies, and By-Laws

2.6.1 2019 Community Official Plan

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan (2019) is a legal document containing the goals, objectives and policies which guide the development, growth and changing needs of the municipality.

Section 3.8 of the Official Plan lays out policies for Parkland & Open Space. Relevant policies are summarized below.

3.8.1 Goals and Objectives:

1. Adopt a public open space and municipal park system that accommodates a broad range of interests and needs in the area.
2. Create an inventory of public spaces within Mississippi Mills.
3. Establish a program to acquire new public lands.
4. Establish appropriate signage to identify public lands.
7. Involve members of the community in the design and development of public spaces.
10. Maintain and improve local beaches as important public spaces.
11. Encourage the development of riverside foot paths in both Almonte and Pakenham village which are linked to a broader trail system throughout the community.

3.8.2 Permitted Uses:

In areas designated Parkland & Open Space, the predominant use of land shall be oriented towards active and passive recreation and natural conservation activities. Permitted uses shall include public parks, natural areas, pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths, playgrounds, picnic areas, swimming areas, sport fields, community centres, arenas, farmers' markets, food services, tourist information centres, museums and other similar uses. Public utilities and cemeteries may also be permitted within the Parkland and Open Space designation. New cemeteries may be considered through an Official Plan Amendment. Existing ski hills, existing golf courses and existing tent and trailer campgrounds will be permitted to continue.

3.8.3 Parkland Classification:

The Official Plan provides a parkland hierarchy and classification system that guides the development and acquisition of parkland and open space, including neighbourhood parks, community parks, and regional parks. Definitions for these, as well as for pedestrian linkages, are as follows:



1. Neighbourhood parks should generally be located in residential areas and accommodate multigenerational, neighbourhood interests. They should provide for unorganized play activities, quiet seating or rest areas, sports areas for minor leagues, such as mini soccer pitches, outdoor skating rinks, water play, playgrounds, neighbourhood events and informal activities. Wherever possible, neighbourhood parks should be established adjacent to or in conjunction with an elementary school or secondary school. Neighbourhood parks are generally less than 4 hectares in size and located within ½ kilometre radius of the population being served. They should be easily accessible by pedestrians from local roads and pathways. They should be designed with extensive street frontage for visibility and safety.
2. Community parks should accommodate multigenerational social, cultural, education and physical activities of particular interest to the community, including multi-purpose, year-round, day/night activities, and organized recreational sports with some spectator space. Wherever possible, community parks should be established adjacent to or in conjunction with elementary or secondary schools. Community parks may vary in size from 1.5 to 10 hectares. There should be approximately ½ to 1 hectare of community park for every 1000 persons, located within a 2-kilometre radius of the population being served. Such parks should be directly accessible by arterial or collector roads, pedestrian networks, and may have facilities for off-street parking.
3. Regional parks should provide specialized facilities for a wide segment of the population, including preservation of unique historical, cultural or natural areas and may include more passive activities. Regional parks may vary in size from 10 to 70 hectares.
4. In addition to blocks of parkland provided in accordance with the park classification system, the Municipality shall strive to develop pedestrian linkages between public open spaces throughout the Municipality. Public components of the linked open space system may include municipal lands, provincial, County or Conservation Authority lands, watercourses, utility corridors, schools, unopened road allowances, and other public areas. Where appropriate and necessary, the Municipality shall attempt to secure a public easement over private land in order to achieve a linkage between public open spaces. Wherever possible, the Municipality's pedestrian networks should be designed to connect with regional trail networks.
5. The Municipality shall establish an inventory guide of available parkland and open spaces.

3.8.4 Development Standards for Parks:

1. The development of new parks or significant changes to existing parks shall be carried out through a three-stage process. The first stage shall involve public consultation on the function of the parks, needs of the anticipated uses and specific features or characteristics valued by the residents. The second phase shall include the development of a general concept plan and cost estimate, prepared by a recreation planner or landscape architect, in conjunction with interested members of the public. The final stage shall include a detailed site development plan and the implementation and phasing of the park plan.



2. When designing parks, the following criteria should be considered:
 - i. Landscaping which will be used to enhance the visual appearance of the park, provide shade and screen activities or functions which may negatively affect adjacent land uses;
 - ii. Responsible lighting which does not negatively impact on the adjacent land uses in conjunction with the Municipality's responsible lighting by-law;
 - iii. Pedestrian and vehicle access and potential for negative traffic impact;
 - iv. Adequate parking and drop-off areas;
 - v. Adequate frontage along roadways to ensure greater visibility and security, reduce conflicts with adjoining land uses and provide on-street parking opportunities;
 - vi. Accessibility;
 - vii. Incorporation/protection/enhancement of existing and/or native vegetation, habitat or natural features on the property;
 - viii. Linkages with other public open spaces;
 - ix. Consideration of four-season usage;
 - x. Demands for ongoing maintenance.
3. To improve the visibility of parkland and open spaces, the Municipality shall clearly sign and identify such lands.

Section 4.5 of the Official Plan lays out policies for Arts and Culture; the objectives associated to Arts and Culture are summarized below.

1. Encourage and support the development of arts, culture and tourism.
2. Make the arts accessible to all residents and visitors.
3. Recognize that the arts and culture sector consist of a broad and diverse collection of individuals, businesses and volunteer organizations.
4. Promote public art as an investment for the Municipality.
5. Initiate a policy for the funding of public art.
6. Raise awareness of public art through related educational activities.
7. Enhance and give meaning to our built and natural environment.
8. Support the Mississippi Mills Arts and Culture Advisory Committee and other cultural community stakeholders in their efforts to coordinate and promote arts and culture in Mississippi Mills.
9. Encourage collaboration between artists, planners, engineers, landscape architects, architects, and others.



2.6.2 2023-2027 Strategic Plan

A Strategic Plan was prepared for the Municipality of Mississippi Mills for 2023 to 2027. Council identified six themes to shape the Strategic Plan:

- 1) **Safe and sustainable:** Mississippi Mills will implement local options/actions to support the Lanark County Community Safety and Well Being Plan as well as the Climate Action Plan (Draft). The directive also involves a review of the current approach to contract municipal by-law enforcement.
- 2) **Welcoming, inclusive, active and healthy community:** The Municipality of Mississippi Mills is focused on ensuring an appealing and affordable/attainable (cost effective) full-service municipality offering an excellent age friendly (appropriate) quality of life.
- 3) **Modern, efficient and effective municipal operations:** The Municipality will strive to integrate across facilities, equipment and staff, as well as provide excellence in services, processes and communications while recognizing both rural, suburban and urban needs.
- 4) **Sustainable financial stewardship:** The Municipality will strive to develop a financial plan that supports Development Charges, Transportation Master Plan, Waste/Wastewater Plan, Community Services Master Plan, Asset Management Plan and other policies and long-term plans of Mississippi Mills. This includes an update to Reserve and Investment Policies to ensure they remain current.
- 5) **Support a vibrant and prosperous economy:** Mississippi Mills Council will take steps within its authority to diversity economy to encourage local employment (millennials, entrepreneurs, digital economy, knowledge economy, etc.) with a mix of residential development, small and light industry. To promote Mississippi Mills through assets such as the Mississippi Mills Public Library, museum network, Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail, recreation and tourist opportunities.
- 6) **Accountable and transparent governance:** The Municipality will strive to align the conference calendar and requests for delegations to advocate for our constituents on key issues important to them. Council discussions will continue to take place to develop our positions on key issues. Cooperation and advocacy with other municipal partners will take place on key issues such as physician allocation, recruitment, long-term care, etc. We will leverage existing procedures to include updates on advocacy efforts or seeking Council input (could be an addition to the Procedural By-Law or a quarterly report; and ensure communication on partnerships and advocacy to the community through the Community Engagement Strategy.

Setting priorities in the Strategic Plan was identified as valuable for two reasons. First, setting the priorities encourages Council to think about what it values and where it wants to allocate resources. Second, the priorities are a clear picture that will guide other aspects of the daily and operational work to ensure that it contributes to the achievement of the “bigger picture”.



2.6.3 Parkland By-Law

The Parkland By-Law No. 15-78 has the following purpose:

- 1) To identify the amount of land which is to be conveyed to the Municipality or in lieu of the conveyances, the amount of payment of money based on the value of the land and intended use;
- 2) To identify the purposes for which funds, in the Municipality's cash-in-lieu of parkland accounts, may be used;
- 3) To ensure that funds in 'cash-in-lieu' accounts are used for Eligible Projects; and
- 4) To identify the circumstances under which the Chief Administrative Officer, the Recreation Manager and the Treasurer have delegated authority from Council to access and use funds in 'cash-in-lieu' accounts.

The By-Law provides the basis for the Municipality to determine whether new parkland, the acceptance of cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication or an appropriate combination thereof will apply when reviewing Draft Plans of Subdivision or Condominium, Zoning By-Law Amendments, Site Plan Control applications, or Consent applications. Upon decision, the owner of the land will dedicate land to the Municipality or will provide conveyance and/or cash-in-lieu as required by the Municipality as set out in the By-Law.

The following provisions relate to the specific requirements for conveyance of land to the Municipality:

Section 5.1.1 - For lands proposed for Development or Redevelopment for Residential purposes, at a rate of 5% of the Gross Land Area being developed or redeveloped.

Section 5.1.2 – For lands proposed for Development or Redevelopment for Commercial or Industrial purposes, land in the amount of two per cent (2%) of the Gross Land Area to be developed or redeveloped

Section 5.1.3 – For lands proposed for Development, for use other than those referred to in subsections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, such as Institutional uses, land in the amount of five per cent (5%) of the Gross Land Area to be developed or redeveloped.

Section 5.1.4 - Land dedicated to the Municipality for park purposes shall be leveled, serviced, top-soiled, and seeded to the specifications of the Municipality.

In the following circumstances the Municipality may require cash-in-lieu of parkland:

- 1) Where the amount of parkland to be dedicated, in accordance with the Act, is of insufficient size, in the opinion of Council, to be usable for normal public recreational activities;
- 2) Where an area is adequately served by municipal or other open space lands;
- 3) Where the Municipality wishes to combine the parkland dedications of a number of small Developments to provide for one large park area; or,



- 4) Where the required dedication would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for Development.

2.6.4 Development Charges Bylaw

The *Development Charges By-Law No. 23-081 to 23-088* was passed in 2023 under the *Development Charges Act* of 1997. It should be noted that the Development Charges Bylaw will be updated in 2025 and, as such, the amounts noted in this section will likely be changed.

As per Section 2.1 of the Development Charges (DC) By-law No. 23-083, Parks and Recreation are a designated category for which development charges are imposed.

It should be noted that all Development Charges will be updated as of June 17, 2025, when the by-law is passed. Upon the passing of this by-law, the information in this section will no longer be up-to-date.

Schedule of Development Charges for Parks and Recreation Services:

Service	Development Charge
Single and Semi-Detached Dwelling	\$3,427
Other Multiple Dwelling	\$3,049
Apartment Dwelling Unit – 2 Bedrooms +	\$2,019
Apartment Dwelling Unit – Bachelor and 1 Bedroom	\$1,457
Non-Residential (per sq. ft. of Gross Floor Area)	\$0.39

Per *Development Charges By-Law No. 23-085*, Section 2.1 Child Care Services are a designated category for which development charges are imposed.

Schedule of Development Charges for Child Care Services:

Service	Development Charge
Single and Semi-Detached Dwelling	\$165
Other Multiple Dwelling	\$147
Apartment Dwelling Unit – 2 Bedrooms +	\$97
Apartment Dwelling Unit – Bachelor and 1 Bedroom	\$70
Non-Residential (per sq. ft. of Gross Floor Area)	\$0.00



2.6.5 2012 Economic Development Strategy

A *Community & Economic Development Strategy* was prepared by the Community & Economic Development Committee in 2012. The economic strategy was a three-pronged approach: get people to visit, show them the quality of life in Mississippi Mills, and get them to return and invest in the community.

This approach is to be achieved through twelve strategies that will benefit the economy of the community and identify what resources are required to best promote economic development within the abilities of the community. These strategies were in the following areas:

- Branding
- Live Within Our Means
- The Overnight Visitor
- Volunteerism
- Marketing Agri-Businesses
- Business Partnerships
- Greening
- Cultural/Heritage
- Healthy Active Living
- Commercial/Industrial Space
- Education
- Regional Economic Development

2.6.6 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills prepared a Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2013. At that time, the vision for parks and recreation was to develop parks and open spaces so that the residents of all ages may become more physically active.

The Guiding Principles for the previous Parks and Recreation Master Plan are as follows:

- **Essential Service:** Develop well-maintained parks and facilities as essential elements that create a livable, dynamic and vibrant municipality.
- **Active Transportation:** Develop a connected system of trails and cycling routes as a continuous system with linkages, notably to parks, open spaces, community facilities, schools and services.
- **Responsiveness:** Support a wider variety of recreation and cultural services for all residents based on need.
- **The Municipality's Role:** Remain the coordinator and overseer of the parks, recreation and culture system and the main facility provider.
- **Partnerships:** Actively pursue partnerships with public and private organizations and with recreation organizations that are active in the community to provide new recreation and cultural programs and facilities and programs.



2.6.7 2014 Cultural Plan

The 2014 Municipal Cultural Plan provides a strategy and recommended actions to leverage local cultural resources to grow the economy, to improve quality of life, and to build and sustain a sense of community cohesion and pride.

The Cultural Plan Vision is to contribute to the following changes in the community by 2025:

- Mississippi Mills is thought of as a leader in culture and integrates culture in all facets of planning and decision-making.
- Cultural resources and activities are essential ingredients in the quality of life that is attracting new residents of all ages to the community.
- A vibrant cultural life has also become a magnet for increased investment and an expanding business community.
- Mississippi Mills is recognized across Ontario as a unique and popular tourism destination.
- The vitality of downtown areas has made them thriving social, economic and cultural hubs in the community. Broadened community awareness and participation in cultural activities has increased community support for existing and emerging cultural groups.
- Culture and heritage are a source of identity for individual communities as well as a shared identity for the Municipality as a whole.

2.6.8 2015 Active Transportation Plan

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills prepared an Active Transportation Plan in 2015, which was recommended in the development of the 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Active Transportation Plan provides the Municipality with a framework and recommendations for improvements that enable residents, visitors, and cycling enthusiasts the ability to travel within and around the Municipality.

The goals of the Active Transportation Plan are summarized below:

1. Make it easy for people to use active transportation in favour of their private automobiles.
2. Improve active transportation connections between the different communities and between community facilities.
3. Develop an active transportation-friendly culture in Mississippi Mills.

The Plan identifies daycares, parks, and community facilities as key pedestrian areas of focus for pedestrian facilities. Active transportation connections should be improved between these areas and other parts of the community.

The Active Transportation Plan presents a variety of recommendations related to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, prioritization, and implementation. Specific recommendations related to the development of the Plan are below:



- Items such as park benches, garbage receptacles, and parkettes should be programmed through the Recreation and Culture department along pedestrian infrastructure.
- Promote active transportation at local festivals and events including provision of temporary bicycle parking and encouraging people to use active modes to get to special events.
- Cash in lieu of parkland dedication is intended for acquiring, developing or maintaining parkland – this could be used to support acquiring land for public recreational facilities (such as linear parks) or for implementing recommendations in this plan.

2.6.9 2017 Library Strategic Plan

Mississippi Mills' Library Strategic Plan is a roadmap for the library to move forward and expand its role in the community in a rapidly changing technological and socio-economic environment from 2017 to 2026. The Strategic Plan provides background information about the library's role in the community, information from comparator municipalities' libraries, details about the previous strategic plan, and the outline of the plan for the library over the 10-year planning period.

The plan identified the following key strategic directions:

1. Shift the focus of the library from archive model of the 20th century to gateway model of the 21st century
2. Support staff training to better serve the needs of the community
3. Strengthen volunteer base
4. Update library infrastructure
5. Create innovative funding plan
6. Increase collaborative efforts

To address the strategic directions, the Library Strategic Plan suggests a number of implementation measures falling into the broad categories of ongoing measurement and re-assessment and leveraging public relations and public partnerships.

The Strategic Plan will not assess the Library's needs as the Library engages in its own strategic planning process. However, partnerships that might be established with the Library for childcare, culture, community services, or recreation may be explored.

2.6.10 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the initiatives the Municipality has taken and plans to take to ensure compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Policies in this plan that are relevant to the Plan are summarized below:

- Continue to identify and address potential barriers at public spaces.
- Continue to prioritize accessibility in newly designed and significantly renovated public spaces.
- Explore community engagement opportunities during the project design phase.
- Enhance pedestrian safety.
- Create an annual accessibility fund that would identify barrier-reducing improvements to municipal assets such as buildings, recreation facilities or outdoor spaces.



2.6.11 2024 Transportation Master Plan

The final draft of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) was accepted by Council in November 2024. The TMP is a roadmap for future planning decisions and capital investments while being used to align the goals and necessities of staff, stakeholders, and decision makers under a comprehensive community vision.

The key objectives of the TMP are to:

- Develop a transportation system that prioritizes inclusivity, equity, and accessibility, one that is welcoming to all users regardless of age, physical ability, and financial means.
- Emphasize sustainable travel modes to reduce pollution and climate implications, enhance quality of life through active living, and offering more choices for residents who cannot drive, or have limited or no access to an automobile.
- Maintain satisfactory vehicular mobility to support local tourism and the local economy.
- Improve road safety, especially for the most vulnerable groups.
- Emphasize permeability and connectivity, particularly among active modes, and overcome barriers that separate communities and important destinations.
- Implement the TMP in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Develop a network that maintains an acceptable level of service as the community grows.

2.6.12 Community Awards Policy

The Community Awards Policy was developed by the Municipality to enable the recognition and honour of individuals for their contribution to life in the community. The Policy lays out the various awards that are available and the process for nominating an individual. Award categories include:

- Welcoming Community Champion Award
- Business Champion Award
- Municipality of Mississippi Mills Inspiring Youth Award
- Municipality of Mississippi Outstanding Senior Citizen Award
- Mississippi Exceptional Volunteer Appreciation Award
- Community Builder of the Year
- Key to the Municipality Award

Community Awards are presented annually at a Municipal Council or at an event hosted within the community.

2.6.13 Municipal Grants Policy

The Municipal Grants Policy was established by Council to recognize the contributions made by community organizations and volunteer groups to improve the wellbeing of the community and the quality of life for its residents. The Policy is to provide Council with guidelines to organizations within Mississippi Mills who are seeking modest financial assistance with the following:



1. One time start-up funding for a new community event or festival.
2. Sponsorship funding for established community events or festivals.
3. Funding towards partnerships between the Municipality and Organizations.
4. Funding to maintain and/or operate private structures or property that are used to the benefit of the community as a whole.
5. Funding to support federal and provincial government grant application requirements.

The policy lays out eligibility and ineligibility criteria for the grants, types of grants, the application process for grants, and guidelines for reporting.

2.6.14 Micro Grants Program

The Municipality has a Neighbourhood Micro Grants program which is intended to help build the community and strengthen connections in local neighbourhoods. The program provides an annual total amount of \$3,600 divided between residents to a value of up to \$200 for each grant. Grants are awarded to achieve the following goals:

1. Connect and engage neighbourhood residents of all ages and abilities;
2. Share residents' skills and knowledge within the community;
3. Build sense of ownership and pride; and
4. Respect and celebrate diversity.

2.6.15 Adopt-a-Park Policy

The Municipality's Adopt-a-Park Policy was implemented to promote a sense of ownership and pride in the Municipality's parks through a public service program. The program enlists community-minded, environmentally conscious individuals, community and civic organizations, and businesses to assist with keeping the Municipality's parks inviting and clean through the voluntary clean-up, beautification, and maintenance of parks.

To participate in the Adopt-a-Park program, groups of volunteers led by a Group Captain can submit an application to the program. The Group Captain then liaises with the Recreation Manager to facilitate the selection of the group and park. The term of the program is one year with option to renew. The Municipality does not cover costs or expenses incurred by volunteers.

2.6.16 Volunteer Policy

The Volunteer Policy was implemented in Mississippi Mills as the Municipality recognizes the benefits of including volunteers in Municipal activities. The Municipality benefits by including citizens in the planning and delivering of services to the community, and the volunteers benefit from gaining new experiences. The purpose of the Volunteer Policy is to establish volunteer management policies and procedures that enhance program delivery while protecting community members, volunteers and the Municipality from harm.



The Volunteer Policy lays out the responsibilities of involved parties, including the Chief Administrative Officer, Municipal Employees, Volunteers, and Volunteer Captains. The Policy also identifies other relevant policies, such as the Employee Code of Conduct, that apply to volunteers.

2.6.17 Commemorative Bench, Tree, and Bike Rack Policy

The Commemorative Bench, Tree, and Bike Rack Policy exists to provide a creative and enduring way for members of the public to recognize and honour others through a lasting tribute. This policy is administered by the Recreation and Culture Department. This policy provides guidelines to allow donors to select a location of a bench, tree, or bike rack in collaboration with Staff, which can honour an individual. The costs associated with the program, per the Fees and Charges By-Law, are the responsibility of the donor.

2.6.18 Communications Plan

The goal of the 2024 Communications Plan is to support the effective management of the Corporation of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills through clear, concise, and effective communication of the Municipality's programs, services, goals and objectives. The Plan is implemented by the Social Media Policy and the Community Engagement Strategy. The new objectives put forward in this Plan include:

1. Explore further engagement opportunities through the addition of community engagement and citizen relationship management software solutions.
2. Review the Municipality's Social Media Policy to ensure best practices and consider the development of a Mississippi Mills Style Guide to guide staff and Council in consistent messaging and branding.
3. Strengthen internal communications processes with staff and Council and response protocols.
4. Continue to grow consistent branding and message of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.
5. Enhance Indigenous communications, engagement, and protocols.

2.6.19 Guidelines for Tree Conservation & Planting, 2022

The Guidelines for Tree Conservation & Planting pertain to private land development, corridor development, subdivision development, site plan development, private homeowners' land, and public land. The Guidelines include suggestions for the type of trees and shrubs to be planted in specific areas and also encourages donating trees to public lands or voluntarily adding trees to private property. This document also includes Tree Planting Guidelines to help interested individuals or groups to appropriately and properly plant trees.

2.7 Trails for All Ontarians Collaborative

Trails for All Ontarians Collaborative (TAOC) has established principles that can assist the Municipality in planning, developing, and designing its trails by aligning with the TAOC's seven principles of Universal Design:



- Equitable Use: Same method of access for all users, avoid segregating or stigmatizing some users, make design appealing to all users.
- Flexibility in Use: Provide choice in methods of use, provide adaptability to the user's pace, facilitate the user's abilities.
- Simple and Intuitive in Use: Correct use is easy to understand, be consistent with users intuition, arrange information based on importance, accommodate a wide range of literacy/language skills.
- Perceptible Information: Use different modes for essential information, contrast information and surroundings, maximize legibility.
- Tolerance for Error: Minimize hazards and errors, provide warnings of hazards and errors, provide fail safe features, discourage unconscious action when vigilance is required.
- Low Physical Effort: Maintain neutral body position, use reasonable operating forces, minimize repetitive actions, minimize sustained effort.
- Size and Space for Approach and Use: Clear line of sight to important items for seated users, reach all components from standing or seated position, accommodate variations in hand and grip size, provide space for use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

2.8 Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014

The purpose of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, is to foster the learning, development, health and wellbeing of children and to enhance their safety. This is done by:

- Providing a framework for the regulation of the provision of child care and the operation of child care and early years programs and services;
- Setting out requirements for funding and resourcing of these programs and services;
- Facilitating and supporting the local planning and implementation of child care and early years programs and services; and
- Providing related access to information.

Child care providers in Ontario must follow the *Child Care and Early Years Act*. Additionally, the Ministry of Education licenses childcare centres and home childcare agencies. The childcare component of this Plan is regulated by this *Act*.



3 | Community Profile





3 Community Profile

When preparing the Mississippi Mills Plan, it is important to consider the Municipality's demographic profile in order to best understand the current conditions, trends, and potential future demands facing the community. The following sections provide a high-level review of the Municipality's demographic profile using the most recent data available.

3.1 Municipality Overview

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills is a lower-tier municipality within the two-tier Lanark County government in the eastern portion of Ontario. The Municipality is elongated north-south and is made up of the Town of Almonte, and the villages of Pakenham, Clayton, Blakeney, and Appleton, with Town and most of the villages situated along the Mississippi River, with the exception of Clayton which is located on the shore of Clayton Lake. It is approximately 50 km west (45 minutes driving) of the City of Ottawa and bordered by Carleton Place, Lanark Highlands, Drummond North Elmsley, and Renfrew County is to the northwest. Nearby airports include the Ottawa International Airport, the Arnprior Airport, the Rockcliffe Airport, and the Carp Airport. There is easy access to the Trans Canada Highway and local highways into the National Capital Region.

Mississippi Mills is located in Ontario Tourism Region 11, Haliburton Highlands to the Ottawa Valley. Several provincial parks are easily accessible from Mississippi Mills, including Burnt Lands Provincial Park (5 km), Fitzroy Provincial Park (40 km), Rideau River (60 km), Murphy's Point (65 km), Silver Lake (70 km), Sharbot Lake (85 km), Ottawa River Provincial Park (95 km), Lower Madawaska Provincial Park (125 km), Bon Echo (125 km), Bonnechere Provincial Park (155 km), and Algonquin Provincial Park (245 km).

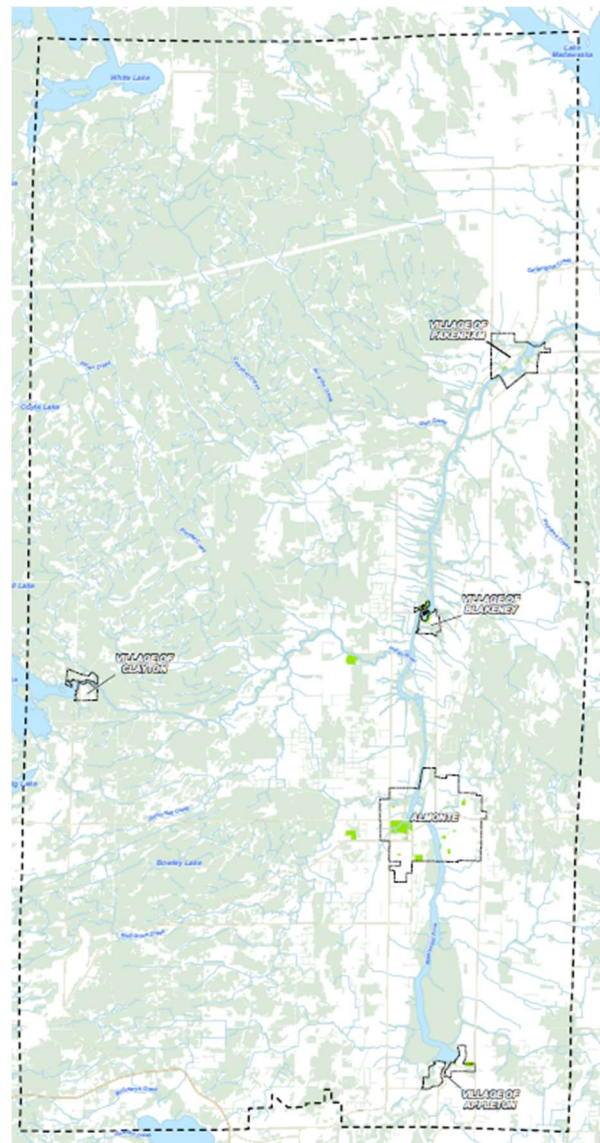


Figure 4: Public Open House

3.2 Current and Forecasted Populations

According to the 2021 Census of Population, population in Mississippi Mills was 14,740, indicating a 12 per cent increase from the population recorded in the 2016 Census, a total population growth of 1,577 people. Over the same period, the number of private dwellings occupied in Mississippi increased by 12.7 per cent. Based on the most recent population forecasts from the 2023 Growth Forecast for Mississippi Mills (J.L. Richards and Associates, 2023), Mississippi Mills' population is expected to grow to 24,400 by 2046, a 65.5 per cent increase over the reported population in the 2021 Census of Population.

Table 1: Mississippi Mills Population, 2016 to 2048

2016 (actual)	2021 (actual)	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2048
13,163	14,740	16,672	18,604	20,536	22,468	24,400	25,173

Mississippi Mills has seen a gradual and steady increase in population since its 2006 population of 11,734 (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Mississippi Mills' population in 2046 is expected to grow to 24,400, with the majority of growth being in Almonte. This is in-line with the Official Plan Amendment (OPA 22) which directs 70 per cent of future growth to Almonte on full services and 30 per cent to rural areas, existing villages with large lots developed on private services or new rural settlement areas. Like Ontario and Canada more broadly, population growth in Mississippi Mills will likely be driven by older adults. This is evidenced by the increase in the median age of residents which increased from 42.6 years in 2006 to 50 years in 2021. As well, the share of adults over the age of 65 grew from 14.7% in 2006 to 26.6% in 2021, whereas age cohorts from 0 to 4 years to 20 to 24 years recorded modest decreases in population share. These trends indicate that, while demand for childcare, cultural, community services, and recreation services will be strong for all age cohorts, demand for programs and facilities catering to older adults will be particularly strong and important to consider in the development of this Plan.

Table 2: Mississippi Mills Population by Age Cohort, 2006 to 2021

Age Cohort	2006	2011	2016	2021
Total	11,734	12,385	13,163	14,740
0 to 4	565	560	630	695
5 to 9	690	685	690	750
10 to 14	865	745	720	730
15 to 19	890	840	745	725
20 to 24	650	630	630	585
25 to 29	410	505	570	705



30 to 34	570	510	640	800
35 to 39	745	710	650	790
40 to 44	995	825	795	755
45 to 49	1020	1100	855	845
50 to 54	1045	1095	1150	900
55 to 59	910	1055	1130	1245
60 to 64	665	950	1150	1295
65+	1720	2175	2810	3915
Median Age	42.6	46	47.9	50
Change		651	778	1577
Per Cent Change		5.5	6.3	12

Table 3: Share of Population by Age Cohort, 2006 to 2021

Age Cohort	2006	2011	2016	2021
0 to 4	4.8%	4.5%	4.8%	4.7%
5 to 9	5.9%	5.5%	5.2%	5.1%
10 to 14	7.4%	6.0%	5.5%	5.0%
15 to 19	7.6%	6.8%	5.7%	4.9%
20 to 24	5.5%	5.1%	4.8%	4.0%
25 to 29	3.5%	4.1%	4.3%	4.8%
30 to 34	4.9%	4.1%	4.9%	5.4%
35 to 39	6.3%	5.7%	4.9%	5.4%
40 to 44	8.5%	6.7%	6.0%	5.1%
45 to 49	8.7%	8.9%	6.5%	5.7%
50 to 54	8.9%	8.8%	8.7%	6.1%
55 to 59	7.8%	8.5%	8.6%	8.4%



60 to 64	5.7%	7.7%	8.7%	8.8%
65+	14.7%	17.6%	21.3%	26.6%

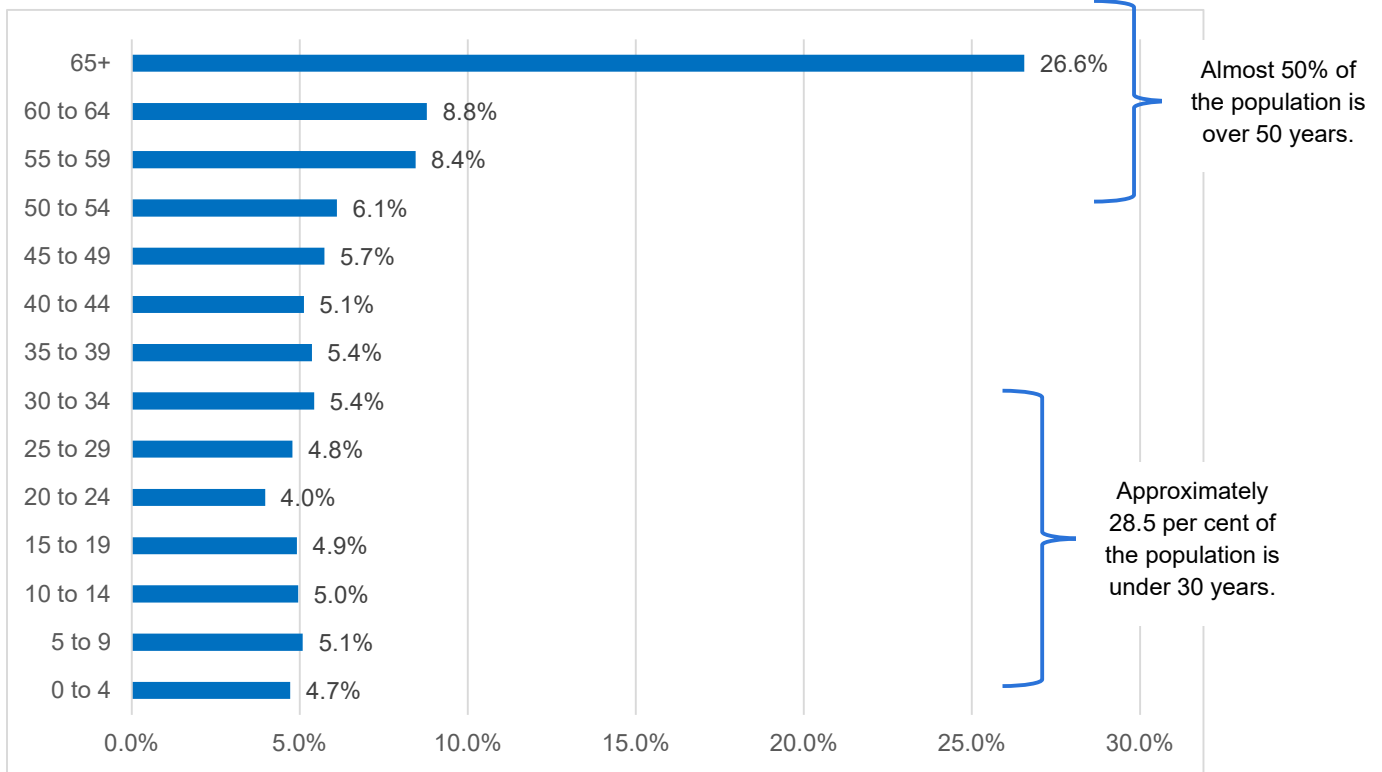


Figure 5: Population Distribution by Age Cohort, 2021

3.3 Demographics Breakdown

The following section provides a summary of some of the Municipality's key and notable statistics based on 2021 and 2016 Census data that may be relevant to making decisions for childcare, culture, community services, and recreation.

- Mississippi Mills' population has grown by 3,006 people since 2006.
- From 2016 to 2021, Mississippi Mills' population increased by 12 per cent, while the provincial and national averages were 5.8 and 5.2 respectively.
- The share of adults over the age of 65 grew from 14.7% in 2006 to 26.6% in 2021.
- Age cohorts from 0 to 4 years to 20 to 24 years recorded modest decreases in population share.
- The median 2020 household income is \$86,000, while the average household income is \$116,000.
- Around 28 per cent of people in Mississippi Mills have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate as their highest certificate, diploma, or degree.



- Around 61 per cent of people in Mississippi Mills have some type of post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree as their highest form of education in 2021, compared to 58 per cent of Ontarians.
- As of 2021, 82 per cent of Mississippi Mills residents speak English as their first language, less than 1 per cent speak French, and the remaining 17 per cent speak both English and French or another language as their first language.
- In 2021, the average household size in Mississippi Mills was 2.4 persons with a total of 6,040 private households.

3.4 Demographic Analysis of Needs

The population structure is a critical metric for determining demand for most municipal services, and especially important for estimating demand for childcare, culture, community services, and recreation. In other words, these needs are strongly influenced by population structure. The age and gender of residents are also critical determinants of childcare, culture, community services, and recreation and frequency of use.

While municipal providers strive to engage and serve all segments of the population, youth have traditionally been the largest consumers of recreation and culture programs and users of recreation facilities as group play and competitive intensity is at its highest during childhood and increases into young adulthood. Competitive recreation activity tends to fall off as people age, most turning to more informal and casual recreational sports or passive recreational activities.

However, provincial and national demographic trends indicate that the older adult population is growing more quickly than other age cohorts. This group is staying more active into later years than previous generations and, as such, seek more community recreation and culture activities. Cultural programs, lower-impact recreation and sports (e.g., pickleball), and other passive recreation are popular among this group. Older adults encounter more barriers accessing resources like recreation, parks, and cultural services, so it is recommended that the Municipality adjust its delivery of existing services, programs, and facilities to accommodate such growth in older age groups.

Mississippi Mills is expected to see significant growth over the coming decades. This could also impact the number of families with children residing in the Municipality, leading to greater pressure on an already overburdened childcare system. This is an area that will require substantial resources and effort over the coming years to address the existing waitlist and the needs of the future population.

3.5 Recent and Ongoing Developments

Recently approved developments in Mississippi Mills include two residential developments along Old Almonte Road: Weavers Way and Mill Valley Estates. Other applications are also at various stages of development; these developments are summarized below.



Table 4: Recent and Ongoing Developments

Address / Location	Type of Development	Description	Parkland / Open Space Provided (ha)
Weavers Way, Almonte – 1218 Old Almonte Rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 30' single detached dwellings • 138 36' single detached dwellings • 75 43' single detached dwellings • 210 20' executive townhomes • 71 20' avenue townhomes 	Weaver's Way is proposed to be a residential subdivision consisting of five housing types for a total of 535 new units. The proposed development will also consist of parkland (1.46 ha), open space (0.09 ha), a stormwater management pond, and a business park.	1.55 ha divided between 2 parks
Barry's Quarry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 units 	The Barry's Quarry development is proposed to include 15 units.	0
Mill Run Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47 single detached dwellings • 18 semi-detached dwellings • 60 townhouses 	The Mill Run Extension is comprised of Phases 7 and 8 of the subdivision and will consist of 125 new units of varied typologies as well as open space.	0.50
Appleton Shores – at the intersection of Apple Street and Wilson Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 single detached dwellings 	The Appleton Shores subdivision is proposed to be a 14-lot development comprised of single detached homes. The proposed development will also include a proposed future park.	0.19
Brown Lands – Strathburn Street and Highway 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 143 single detached dwellings • 103 semi-detached dwellings / townhouses 	The Brown Lands subdivision is proposed to be a 246-unit development comprised of single detached homes and semi-detached/townhomes. Also included in this development are a pump station, a park (2 ha), and open space (1.12).	3.12



Menzie Enclaves – Adelaide St and McDermott St	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18 townhouses• 37 semi-detached or single detached dwellings	The Menzie Enclaves subdivision is proposed to be a 55-unit development comprised of townhouses, semi-detached, and single detached homes. The development will also include a stormwater facility.	0
Hannan Hills – Adelaide Street and Florence Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 110 units	The Hannan Hills subdivision is proposed to be a 110-unit subdivision including single detached homes, 4-, 6-, and 7-unit townhouses, and back to back buildings. This development also includes greenspace.	0.24
Hilan Village, Almonte	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 41 single detached dwellings• 22 multi-unit residential buildings	The Hilan Village subdivision is proposed to include 41 single detached dwellings and 22 multi-unit residential buildings. The subdivision is located along the Ottawa Valley Rail Trail and also includes parkland (0.24 ha.) and open space (1.5 ha.).	1.74
Total Future Planned Parkland / Open Space from Developments			7.34

As a relatively small community, any new residential developments in Mississippi Mills can have significant impacts on the utilization rates of municipal services and programming and the demand for more facilities and programs. Connections and impacts to parks, trails, recreation and culture amenities, and childcare capacity must be considered when accommodating new growth.



4 | Summary of Engagement





4 Summary of Engagement

4.1 Mississippi Mills Community Engagement Strategy

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills created an Engagement Strategy in 2023 in preparation of this Community Services Master Plan. The Strategy was developed to demonstrate the Municipality's commitment to engaging the community in a meaningful and effective way. The goals and vision of the Engagement Strategy are summarized below:

Goals:

1. Support the Municipality's strategic goals through transparent, accountable, consistent and accessible community engagement.
2. Build engagement opportunities that inspire community stakeholders to help shape Mississippi Mills' future.
3. Make it easy for the community to participate and sustain an informed public.
4. Ensure participation in our Municipality reflects diversity and understanding of community perspectives.
5. Build staff capacity to lead community engagement processes.
6. Continue to build community stakeholder trust in the Municipality's decision-making process.

Vision:

- That Mississippi Mills' residents are well informed about the functions, actions, and processes of the municipal government.
- That the public contributes to the decisions of municipal government by weighing in on issues that impact them, understanding how and why decisions are made.
- That municipal government consults and engages with the public to understand their interests, issues, opinions, and perspectives, and factors that into plans and decisions.

Guided by the engagement strategy, the Municipality met, discussed, and surveyed different groups of the community to get an overall understanding of the needs and challenges in terms of childcare, culture, community services, and recreation. The following provides a summary of the different engagement activities.

4.1.1 Stakeholder Focus Groups

The Municipality initiated stakeholder focus groups starting in Spring 2023 for the Community Services Master Plan. Over 170 organizations were invited to participate in the focus group sessions, 56 of which participated. Of those organizations who did not attend the focus groups, 16 provided responses over email. Five focus group discussions were held between June and August 2023, with the stakeholders grouped as follows:



1. Group A
 - a. Health & Wellbeing Programs / Projects
 - b. Service Clubs
 - c. Festivals & Events
2. Group B
 - a. Organizations Offering Community Services
3. Group C
 - a. Sports & Municipal Facility Users
4. Group D
 - a. Non-Sport Recreation Organizations
5. Group E
 - a. Museums

During the focus groups, the participating stakeholders were broken out into smaller groups where conversation was facilitated and scribed by Community Services Steering Committee staff.

4.1.2 Stakeholder Focus Groups Surveys

Surveys were distributed to 87 stakeholder groups to collect further information. These groups fell into the categories of: Private & For-Profit Recreation Providers using AOTH Facilities, Childcare, Sports & Municipal Facility Users, and AOTH Performance Providers. The childcare surveys were circulated to both families with children and the providers.

In total, 21 surveys were completed and returned by Private & For-Profit Recreation Providers using AOTH Facilities, Sports & Municipal Facility Users, and AOTH Performance Providers combined. There were 110 responses received from Childcare stakeholders: 103 responses from families with children and 7 responses received from childcare providers.

In total, 71 unique organizations participated in focus groups, email responses, surveys, or a combination of all three in the Community Services engagement.

4.1.3 Resident Surveys

A Resident Survey was undertaken in 2023 to collect feedback on various services considered by this Plan, and to support the development of the Plan's strategic directions. The main objectives of the study were:

- Undertake a public consultation to understand Mississippi Mills resident perception of any participation in recreation and cultural services and programming;
- Determine immediate and long-term options for the municipality through trends in resident's priorities and preferences; and,
- Contribute information to guide strategic planning, budgeting decisions and knowledge of residents' priorities.



The survey was distributed at two municipal events as both paper surveys and online links. Completed paper surveys were accepted between September 14, 2022 and October 31, 2022, while online surveys were accepted between October 3, 2022 and October 31, 2022.

A total of 325 surveys were completed.

The majority of survey respondents resided in Almonte (66%). There were higher proportions of survey respondents that identified as female in the survey group, and the survey group was also found to have higher levels of educational attainment and higher household incomes than the population average. The survey group was found to be representative of the population on ethnic identity. Finally, the respondents largely mirrored the proportions of middle-aged residents in the 25-59 category.

Almost half of respondents (42%) reported living in Mississippi Mills for greater than 20 years. Households of survey respondents were predominantly comprised of two or more people. The types of households were split relatively evenly between children only, seniors only, and neither children nor seniors, which differs somewhat from the actual split of the population.

Respondents indicated that they were mostly satisfied (67%) with Recreation Services and Programs as a whole. Among subcategories of Recreation Services and Programs, 88% of residents were satisfied with Parks, Playgrounds, and Trails, 86% were satisfied with Festivals and Events, and 76% were satisfied with Culture and Recreation Facilities.

The survey asked questions related to Festivals and Events; Recreation Facilities; Recreation Services and Programs; Parks, Playgrounds, and Trails; and Childcare Services. The results on these topics are summarized below.

- Festivals and Events
 - Overall satisfaction with festivals and events was high at the overall municipality level (86%). By community, the highest satisfaction ratings were found among residents living in Almonte (89%), Blakeney/Cedar Hill/Pakenham/Other (82%), and Appleton/Clayton/Ramsay/Scotch Corners (80%).
 - The most attended events in Mississippi Mills were reported to be the Santa Claus Parade (Almonte) and Light Up the Night.
 - The least attended events of festivals were Puppets Up and Celfest. Though Puppets Up and Celfest were less attended, these events have a high satisfaction rate and are considered key strengths and distinctive to Mississippi Mills.
 - Mississippi Mills Bicycle Month and Canada Day Eve were found to be weaknesses, with low attendance rates.
 - Residents reported attending festivals and events for the following reasons: entertainment quality (91%); convenience of location (50%); youth/children friendliness of the event (45%); variety of programs/events offered (33%); education (21%); ease of finding information on event (21%); older adult friendliness of event (17%); ease of registering to visit the events (14%); cleanliness and maintenance (13%).
 - Residents reported not attending festivals and events for the following reasons: events not appealing to residents (65%); pandemic restrictions (37%); did not know about the



- events or festivals (28%); did not have time to attend events (27%); too costly (12%); residents were new to the municipality (12%); and accessibility barriers (2%).
- Of residents who reported not attending festivals and events, over half (56%) reported that they attended festivals and events outside of the Municipality and about two-thirds (63%) indicated that they visited Ottawa for festivals or events.
- Residents suggested the following festivals and events in which they would be interested in participating:
 - Arts and music festivals (small music festivals with local musicians; live music events, etc.);
 - Winter festivals, ice skating events, races;
 - Events geared toward children and families;
 - Educational/cultural events (lecture series, skills training workshops, historic visits to old homes and buildings, etc.);
 - Food related events/festivals (food trucks, beer/cider/spirit/wine festival; Oktoberfest);
 - Activities focusing on keeping people active (yoga in the park); and
 - Multicultural events (Truth and Reconciliation Events and Collaborations).
- The engagement report indicates that Mississippi Mills should focus on improving the variety of events offered, as well as specific events focusing on fitness (Mississippi Mills Bicycle Month), and family-oriented events (Canada Day Eve), and should also ensure that events are older-adult friendly.
- Mississippi Mills should continue to ensure that events and festivals are held in convenient locations and provide entertainment to residents.
- Continued efforts should be made to maintain high levels of satisfaction, particularly pertaining to Celtfest, Puppets Up, and the Santa Claus Parade in Almonte.
- **Cultural and Recreation Facilities**
 - Overall satisfaction with festivals and events was high at the overall municipality level (76%). By community, the highest satisfaction ratings were found among residents living in Almonte (79%), Blakeney/Cedar Hill/Pakenham/Other (73%), and Appleton/Clayton/Ramsay/Scotch Corners (67%).
 - The most-visited facilities in Mississippi Mills were the John Levi Community Centre and the Mill of Kintail Conservation Area, with 83% and 82% of respondents reporting they visited these respectively.
 - The least visited facilities were Union Hall and splash pads, with 46% and 51% of respondents reporting visiting these respectively.
 - Key strengths in cultural and recreation facilities were found to be the John Levi Centre and the splash pads in the municipality. The North Lanark Regional Museum was found to be a weakness, and was only visited by 26% of residents.
 - More than four-in-five (83%) of residents reported that they were likely to visit a cultural or recreation facility in the future. By community, 87% of Almonte residents reported that they were likely to visit a cultural or recreation facility in the future, with Blakeney/Cedar Hill/Pakenham/Other reporting 78%, and Appleton/Clayton/Ramsay/Scotch Corners reporting 76%.



- Residents reported visiting cultural and recreation facilities for the following reasons: entertainment (88%); health and fitness (56%); convenience of location (49%); education (32%); cleanliness and maintenance of facilities (21%).
- Residents reported not visiting cultural and recreation facilities for the following reasons: sites did not appeal to residents (48%); residents did not know about them (39%); pandemic restrictions (33%); no time to visit (24%); resident was new to the municipality (14%); too costly (6%); and accessibility barriers (2%).
- Of those that did not attend cultural and recreation facilities, more than three-quarters (77%) reported that they visited cultural and recreation facilities outside the municipality, and of those respondents, 68% indicated that the facility was in Ottawa.
- Respondents had the following suggestions related to types of cultural and recreation facilities of interest:
 - Swimming pool complex (most frequently mentioned);
 - Pickleball facility (frequently mentioned);
 - Dog parks;
 - More art galleries, theatres, music hall;
 - Dedicated location for seniors to exercise (e.g. seniors centre);
 - More fitness facilities (e.g. yoga);
 - More options for children/youth (e.g. museums);
 - Outdoor skating rinks; and
 - More softball diamonds/soccer fields/tennis courts/basketball courts.
- The engagement report indicates that Mississippi Mills should focus on improving the cleanliness and maintenance of facilities; rebrand some cultural facilities so that they focus on educational programs; and improve the North Lanark Regional Museum facility.
- Continued efforts should be made to maintain high levels of satisfaction at facilities where Mississippi Mills performs well, like the John Levi Centre and splash pads. Additionally, entertainment component of available facilities and convenient location should be maintained.
- Mississippi Mills should also focus on increasing awareness of the facilities and making improvements as likelihood to visit facilities in the future was reported to be high.
- **Recreation Services and Programs**
 - Overall satisfaction with recreation services and programs in the municipality was moderate, with 67% of respondents indicating satisfaction. By community, residents living in Almonte had greatest proportion of respondents satisfied with recreation services and program (72%), followed by Blakeney/Cedar Hill/Pakenham/Other (66%), and Appleton/Clayton/Ramsay/Scotch Corners (51%).
 - The services and programs with the most participation are the Almonte and Pakenham beaches and municipal skating rinks. Participation at the Almonte Tennis Club and the Mississippi Mills Youth Centre have significantly increased in the past year, along with participation with the Almonte Soccer Club.
 - Over three-quarters (76%) of respondents indicated they would be likely to participate in recreation programs in the future. In Almonte, 82% of respondents indicated they would be likely to participate in recreation programs in the future, followed by 68% in



- Blakeney/Cedar Hill/Pakenham/Other, and 62% in Appleton/Clayton/Ramsay/Scotch Corners.
- Respondents reported participating in recreation and cultural services and programs for the following reasons: health and fitness (88%), friendliness of programs for youth and children (38%), affordability of programs and services (35%), and friendliness of programs for older adults (22%).
 - Respondents reported not participating in recreation and cultural services and programs for the following reasons: programs do not appeal to residents (67%), residents did not know what was offered (36%), and pandemic restrictions.
 - Approximately half of respondents (47%) indicated that they have participated in recreation and cultural programming outside of the Municipality. Of these respondents, the largest majority (49%) participated in programs in Ottawa followed by going to Carleton Place (47%).
 - The most commonly cited reason for participating in recreation and cultural programs outside of Mississippi Mills was that the programs were not available or offered within the Municipality.
 - Respondents indicated that they would join the following programs if available in the municipality:
 - Swimming or pool-related activities;
 - Pickleball (structured class/program); and
 - Yoga (structured classes).
 - With residents highly likely to want to participate in recreation and cultural services in the future, particularly in Almonte, consideration should be made for following the key areas noted for improvement:
 - Ease of registration;
 - Maintenance of facilities;
 - Access to recreation and cultural program information;
 - Identifying program-specific areas for improvement; and
 - Regular follow-up on user satisfaction.
 - Short-term recommendations for next steps in the engagement report include:
 - Create a strategic communications plan to assist with increasing awareness of programs and services being offered, either from the Municipality or from volunteer organizations.
 - Positioning of tools and information on the Municipality's website so recreation programming information is more easily accessed.
 - Consider the importance of enabling online access to registration and payment capabilities, including a policy review to implement the use of credit cards for payment.
 - Long-term recommendations for next steps in the engagement report include:
 - Consider changes and growth shown in the Growth Management Plan including considerations for potential recreational space limitations.
 - Review additional opportunities for increasing awareness of volunteer-designed and delivered programs.



- Conduct a review of practices in other municipalities to align Mississippi Mills with known or innovative practices.
 - Review options, capacities, and the role of the Municipality to support residents that must access services outside of the Municipality due to major/large programs not being available in Mississippi Mills.
- **Parks, Playgrounds, and Trails**
 - Almost all (94% of respondents) indicated that they have visited a park, playground, or trail in Mississippi Mills. At the municipal level, satisfaction is high (88%). At the community level, satisfaction is also quite high, with 94% of respondents from Blakeney/Cedar Hill/Pakenham/Other, 89% respondents from Almonte, and 78% of respondents from Appleton/Clayton/Ramsay/Scotch Corners indicating satisfaction.
 - For respondents who indicated they did not visit parks, playgrounds, or trails, cited the following reasons: parks and trails did not appeal to residents (33%), they had no time to visit (20%), and they were new to the municipality (13%).
 - When asked what types of parks would be of interest in the future, walking trails was most commonly mentioned (83%), followed by natural parks (70%), parks that are well-groomed and carefully mowed (51%), parks with playgrounds (44%), and parks with splash pads (40%).
 - Given the high satisfaction with parks, playgrounds, and trails in the Municipality, and given the Municipality's focus on families with children, maintaining standards at parks and playgrounds should be a key focus.
 - Respondents expressed high levels of interest in visiting trails in the future. However, the Municipality only maintains one trail, Riverwalk Almonte. The two other trails, the Ottawa Valley River Trail and the Almonte Lagoon Birding Complex, are cared for by Lanark County and the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists.
 - The Municipality may wish to work with Lanark County and the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists to erect signage which shows that these trails are maintained by organizations other than Mississippi Mills to allow users to direct inquiries to the appropriate owner.
- **Childcare Services**
 - Overall satisfaction with childcare services is high (84%) in the Municipality and is also high at the community level, with 86% of parents satisfied in Almonte, 83% in Appleton/Clayton/Ramsay/Scotch Corners, and 70% in Blakeney/Cedar Hill/Pakenham/Other.
 - The aspects of childcare that parents are most satisfied with include:
 - Convenience of location (96%);
 - Helpfulness of staff (92%);
 - Cleanliness and maintenance of facilities (92%);
 - Staff practice good hygiene (90%);
 - Variety of programs and activities offered (90%);
 - Elements of programs meet their needs (89%);
 - Adequate number of staff caring for my child (88%);
 - Childcare staff are sensitive and responsive (88%);
 - Childcare environment is open, supportive, engaging (86%);



- Learning opportunities are developmentally appropriate (86%);
 - Childcare services are healthy and safe (85%);
 - There is good classroom interaction (85%);
 - Staff provide positive learning environment (85%);
 - Ease of registering (84%);
 - Centres provide child with good nutritional snacks (84%); and
 - Staff sends electronic/verbal updates (68%).
- For respondents who did not use childcare services, the majority reported not having children or grandchildren or having children too old for daycare (86%). Respondents with children who were not using childcare services reported not using these services because they use alternative services (e.g. home or private daycare) (5%); because formal childcare is too expensive (3%); and because they are on the waitlist at the childcare centre (3%).
- Few respondents provided suggestions on how Mississippi Mills could encourage the use of childcare services. Respondents who did provide responses suggested:
 - Offering variable hours for childcare (e.g. part-time, full-time, before/after school);
 - Include programming that residents are interested in (e.g. Nature Programs);
 - \$10-a-day childcare once available in the Municipality;
 - More affordable childcare;
 - Open a facility near my home that makes drop-off easy;
 - Include programming for children with special needs;
 - More ECE teachers per child (decrease ratio).
- The primary weakness in childcare services, as reported by respondents, is 'staff are consistently sending updates electronically or verbally about my child's program and/or participation.
- The main focuses for childcare in Mississippi Mills should be 1) creating more childcare spaces, as the current provision level does not meet the needs of the community, and 2) consult with parents and guardians to better understand what type of communication they would like to receive about their children.
 - When considering more childcare spaces, the Municipality should consider the option of opening facilities in new locations to meet existing and future demand, as existing services are offered only in Almonte.

4.1.4 Museums Stakeholder Meeting

A Museums Stakeholder Meeting was held in August 2023 to receive input from the museums on how to improve services for the Municipality. The result of this meeting was a list of suggested actions:

- Development of a Service Agreement for the museums led by the Municipality.
- Development of Maintenance and Life Cycle Agreements led by the Municipality and each respective museum.
- The renewal of an alliance between the museums involving the formalizing of a business protocol for potential business and project opportunities. This is to be led by the museums with the support of the Municipality and will be leveraged on an as-needed basis for specific collaborative projects.



- Increasing social media engagement for museums as a collective; for example, collective Facebook and Instagram accounts could be created.
- Improved advocacy for the Mill of Kintail. This may involve connecting with the MVCA and municipal funding partners such as the City of Ottawa.
- Development of a protocol with the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation.

4.1.5 Youth Survey

A Youth Survey was administered by Thrive, a Youth Community Needs Project, in January and February of 2025. Thrive is a committee of youth aged 13 to 18 years and is funded by the Municipality to empower and engage youth voices to gain a better understanding of what youth in Mississippi Mills need to thrive. The theme of the survey was “What do youth need to thrive?” The results of the Youth Survey are summarized below:

- Youth aged 9 to 18 responded to the survey, with relatively even distribution of responses across this age range.
- Respondents indicated they would be most likely to go to the following places to find information about local news, events, and announcements:
 - Instagram (45.9%)
 - TikTok (27%)
 - Email (13.5%)
 - Newsletters (8.1%)
 - Facebook (5.5%)
- Although there was a wide range of responses regarding what types of resources respondents would access for mental health support, the most popular were Kids Help Phone and hotlines in general.
- When asked if there are enough youth-centered spaces in Mississippi Mills, respondents indicated the following:
 - “There are some spaces for me, but there could be more” (62.2%)
 - “There are very few spaces for me” (17.8%)
 - “Yes, there are a lot of spaces for me” (15.6%)
 - “No, there are no spaces for me” (5.4%)
- The majority of respondents thought there was not enough information or could be more information about local events and resources for youth.
- Some of the suggestions for improving youth-centered spaces in Mississippi Mills included:
 - More funding for more spaces for youth, especially youth in the 14-18 year age group.
 - More accessible spaces in terms of hours of availability for drop-in and for later evening hours.
 - In general, the creation of additional or extended spaces.
 - Low-cost outdoor activities, such as youth-led activities at parks where youth feel safe.



4.2 MM2048 Open House

As part of Stantec's development of the Community Services Master Plan, a Public Open House was held to seek feedback on the Plan on April 30, 2025, from 2pm to 8pm. This Open House was organized by the Municipality as part of a broader MM2048 progress update meeting with a total number of 202 attendees recorded. In addition to the Plan, the meeting covered a total of 16 initiatives like the Affordable Housing Plan, the Business Improvement Strategy, the Urban Design Plan, and the Transportation Master Plan, among others. Attendees provided feedback on the recommendations of the Plan. Some of the key feedback received as part of this community engagement activity is summarized below:

- *Planning & Policies:* Suggestions were made for vacant building policies that would allow community partners to deliver programs (e.g. exercise classes, walking areas, etc.) in vacant buildings.
- *Partnership Funding Opportunities:* Attendees provided feedback that indicated that opportunities for museum funding were of interest and that this type of funding would be beneficial to the community and museums.
- *Childcare:* There were several concerns about the size of the waitlist indicated in the Plan. The number of proposed childcare spaces was perceived to be inadequate to meet the needs of the community.
- *Culture and Events:* Attendees generally liked the proposed Culture and Events recommendations for the Plan and also suggested that a mid-range community grant could be added to bridge the gap between the \$200 and \$5,000 grants.
- *Outdoor Recreation:* There was interest in seeing several amenities added or the provision increased, including beach volleyball courts, outdoor pickleball courts, boat launches, and bike repair and lock stations. There was a great deal of interest in having tennis courts repaired or better maintained and for the funding of tennis court maintenance to be revisited.
- *Indoor Recreation:* Generally, all of the Indoor Recreation recommendations were well-liked. Many attendees provided feedback on recommendations related to pools including supporting the reimbursement of pools fees and split views on constructing a Mississippi Mills aquatic facility.
- *Sustainability:* The most popular Sustainability recommendations were related to creating connections with nature and conserving the tree canopy. Attendees also thought that invasive species needed to be managed and that naturalized parks should be considered.
- *Programs and Service Delivery:* Positive feedback was received about recommendations related to using an online platform for booking and rentals as well as to Active Living Programming.
- *Monitoring:* The main comments received about Monitoring recommendations were related to two topics. First, there is a strong desire, as iterated in other engagement activities, for refurbishment of the tennis courts. Second, residents would like to see year-round garbage receptacles in the community.

During this community engagement activity, long-form feedback were also received from residents via email, as summarized below.

- There is a desire for additional roadside or separated bike paths to be added for kids to travel safely through the community.



- A multi-use or all-seasons facility would be helpful in enabling activities to run in many weather conditions and as a place for drop-in or spontaneous activities.
- Age-specific activities for children and for older adults would be utilized by the community; such as a kids' club where children could learn to play various sports and games, and a seniors' centre where card clubs could run and meals could be shared.
- The Library is a valuable part of the community and residents see possibilities to expand the Library's offerings. Such and expansion could include:
 - Expanded hours;
 - More programs (such as art groups);
 - Meeting space for community groups; and
 - Performing arts space.
- There is a strong desire for tennis courts to be improved and subsequently maintained. Additionally, tennis courts are highly utilized, so additional tennis courts in the future could be beneficial. On existing tennis courts, full lighting would be beneficial. Finally, there are split opinions on whether tennis and pickleball courts should be shared or each sport should have separate facilities. Many residents mentioned the state of disrepair of the tennis courts as a significant issue for Mississippi Mills' recreation.
- An indoor pool is desired in the community, with Almonte as the primary location of choice. It can be challenging for families with only one car to access swimming lessons in Carleton Place, Arnprior, or Ottawa.
- There are some improvements that could be made to the dog park, such as grading and gravel at entrances, additional snow fencing in the winter, repair of holes in the fence, and the addition of solar lights along the perimeter of the park near the road.
- There is general concern with the upkeep of municipal recreation facilities and the funding to do this upkeep. Adding a small surcharge to sports and programming registration could result in revenue for the Municipality to ensure that maintenance and improvements are done in a timely manner and that all sports and groups are contributing to the spaces they use.
- There is an interest in encouraging/facilitating new and unique recreational activities, such as pickleball, disc golf, lifestyle sports (CrossFit, yoga, running cycling), nature-based recreation (like hiking and kayaking), and digital and e-sports participation.
- Mississippi Mills is unique in that much of its recreation is community-led. Resident feedback indicated that it would be helpful to clarifying the Municipality's role in recreation and delineating what falls under the Municipality's versus the community groups' responsibilities.
- Should a Standardized Facility Agreement Policy and Restoration Fund be implemented, these should be developed with clubs, as in many cases, clubs have been paying fees to contribute to facility maintenance and restoration.
- There is an interest in expanded youth and teen activities, and in order to do so, the Mississippi Mills Youth Centre (MMYC) should be leveraged.
- Recommendations for soccer fields included the following:
 - Changing the recommended grass height from 65 mm – 90 mm to 50 mm – 75 mm, not allowing grass height to exceed 75 mm.
 - Change the recommended mowing frequency from 'once weekly' to 'as required to maintain 50 mm – 75 mm height'.



- Plan and construct one new full-size soccer field and as new fields are constructed, locate in parks throughout Mississippi Mills to increase distribution of access.
- In the long-term, consider the construction of a multi-use sports facility that could include indoor artificial turf fields, natural grass mini fields, full-size outdoor artificial turf field, indoor fitness centre, swimming pool, playground, meeting room/lounge space, bathrooms, splashpads, basketball courts, tennis and pickleball courts, and snack bar.
- Consider contracting out lawn mowing of soccer fields.



5 | Benefits, Trends and Best Practices





5 Benefits, Trends, and Best Practices

Childcare, culture, community services, and recreation are elements of the built and social environments; together they support strategies that help address some of society's most challenging issues such as social disconnectedness or lack of social interaction, community engagement, physical literacy, childhood inactivity, and nature-shortfall disorder (Louv, 2006). Public spaces, indoor and outdoor, provide several benefits to their communities including social, economic, and environmental benefits. Public spaces also improve and boost public health. These benefits become more significant where they can be considered equitable and where their effects extend beyond the immediate users of a defined public space to the larger community. Trends in public spaces influence how we use those places increasing the economy and growth of the community.

5.1 Benefits

The provision of childcare, culture, community services, and recreation services offers numerous social, economic, and environmental benefits. Socially, these services foster a sense of community and belonging, enhancing the quality of life for residents by providing opportunities for social interaction, cultural enrichment, and personal development. Economically, they support local economies by creating jobs, attracting families to the area, and increasing productivity as parents can work knowing their children are in safe and enriching environments. Additionally, these services can reduce long-term social costs by promoting early childhood development and preventing social isolation. Environmentally, community and recreation services often include green spaces and promote outdoor activities, which contribute to environmental sustainability and public health by encouraging active lifestyles and reducing urban heat islands. Overall, the integration of these services into communities creates a more vibrant, resilient, and sustainable living environment.

Information on benefits can inform decision makers, administrators, and residents on the importance of investing in these services. Often, other forms of tangible infrastructure projects are prioritized over investments in programs and recreation without consideration of what the impact is on economic development of the community and the quality of life of current and future residents and visitors.

The benefits of childcare services are multiple. The provision of childcare services enables a strong economy, as more parents can return to and participate in the workforce. Additionally, children can develop social connections and participate in programming grounded in childhood development pedagogy. The benefits of childcare to society were most evident when childcare options disappeared during the COVID-19 pandemic (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2023), when the lack of viable childcare options created significant challenges for parents (particularly women) in participating in the workforce.

Recreation and culture have the capacity to bring diverse benefits to the residents, the economy, the environment, and the broader community. However, recreation and cultural resources need to be approached with purpose and planning for the benefits to have an optimal impact on the community.



Health



Social



Economic



Environmental

Figure 6: Benefits of Childcare, Culture, Community Services and Recreation

The following provides a more detailed list of benefits associated to municipal childcare, culture, community services and recreation for communities.

5.1.1 **Health**



- Personal development and growth for people of all ages and abilities.
- Strengthen the growth, self-esteem, self-image, creativity, and productivity of children and youth.
- Enhance the productivity, self-esteem, self-image, and life satisfaction of adults.
- Enhance activity, quality of life, well-being, and extend individual life expectancy.
- Lower levels of obesity and chronic disease, and decrease stress levels, which can translate to reduced health care costs.
- Improve physical and mental health.
- Enhance mental and physical well-being by providing services that have an important role in enhancing physical activity.
- Interactions with nature support physical and mental health.

5.1.2 **Social**



- Strengthen family connectedness, adaptability, and resilience.
- Help residents connect with one another, leading to more cohesive, caring, and engaged communities.
- Build sense of place and community pride.
- Enhance understanding and appreciation of cultural differences.
- Foster a general sense of inclusion among residents by providing facilities, amenities, and programming geared toward an intersection of identities.
- Reduce anti-social behaviours, crime and associated justice costs.
- Make communities more attractive places to live, learn, work, play, and visit.
- Enhance social well-being through clubs, social organizations, team sports, or providing an environment to make new friends for children and adults.
- Help build strong families and communities by being a vehicle for promoting family cohesion, adaptability and resilience through community events that keep neighbours in touch with each other.
- Create a welcoming environment for newcomers to help instill a feeling of community involvement.



5.1.3 Economic



- Contribute to community economic development.
- Draw tourism and contribute directly and indirectly to local economies through employment opportunities, hospitality-related business, and other visitor spending.
- Attract and retain skilled labour and business investment.
- Diversify and strengthen local economies through tourism.
- Create and sustain local employment opportunities through creative industries, entrepreneurs, facilities, and programs.
- Enhance land and home values near recreation areas.
- Protect green infrastructure which reduces the costs to develop and maintain municipal infrastructure such as water infiltration and storm water retention and mitigates against natural disasters such as flood.

5.1.4 Environmental



- Provide opportunities for the community to connect with nature.
- Enhance citizens understanding of and connect citizens with nature; growing the next culture of conservation through environmental awareness and stewardship.
- Protect sensitive habitats and biodiversity and enable the flow of ecosystem services to continue.
- Improve air and water quality.
- Reduce carbon footprint through active transportation.
- Protect and celebrate our cultural places, activities, and built heritage.

5.2 Trends and Best Practices

When planning for the future of childcare, culture, community services, and recreation, it is important to analyse and distinguish prominent trends that influence people's leisure choices at a variety of levels and across Canada, Ontario, and the Municipality of Mississippi Mills. Understanding the trends in childcare, culture, community services, and recreation allows us to plan better for the needs of tomorrow. The following provides some key trends to consider:



Figure 7: Trends in Childcare, Culture, Community Services and Recreation



5.2.1 Demographics



- Meeting the unique needs of different age groups while ensuring their active participation continues through all stages of life. Success means a variety of purposefully designed spaces and programs, from early childhood development to youth, family, adults, seniors and intergenerational opportunities.
- To remain relevant, the municipality will have to implement parks, facilities, and programs to meet the changing needs and interests of a diversifying population. In addition, efforts will be needed to connect a diversifying population to nature and the outdoors.
- Globalization allows for opportunities to integrate diverse and international cultural activities, fostering the sharing of information and cultural practices in a respectful and engaging way.
- The needs of an aging population should be reflected in all aspects of parks delivery, recreation opportunities, and culture programs.
- There is an ever-increasing need to design public spaces in an inclusive and accessible way with features for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. In particular, there is increased interest and need for universally accessible design and complementing accessibility features for programming to address accessibility barriers (Parks People, 2022).
- A widening income gap drives the need to ensure childcare, cultural, arts, and recreational opportunities remain affordable and that programs can benefit residents with varying economic means.
- Retirees remain more active for much longer. Many retirees will have the time and health to frequently participate in activities and take advantage of facilities.

5.2.2 Behavioural



- There is a growing awareness of the health benefits of physical activity and healthy eating. This impacts the design of our living spaces and programs to be delivered to communities. Individuals seek facilities and features that support their daily life functions and activities, such as areas for dog walking/off-leash dog areas; growing, cooking, or eating food; and getting exercise along or on multi-use trails (Parks People, 2022). Activities that are experiential in nature and offer opportunities such as cultural learning and ecotourism are highly valued by users. There is a shift away from programmed parks and recreation services to more unstructured, informal spaces this can accommodate a range of spontaneous activities. There is an increase in people seeking connection to nature in naturalized spaces that are close to home – typically within a 10-minute walking radius (Park People, 2022)
- Following the pandemic of COVID-19, recreational facilities include amenities to allow for social distancing and safe gathering spaces (i.e., widened trails, seating configuration, etc.) to encourage social distancing and reduce highly touched surfaces.
- Obesity rates in children and youth have tripled over the last 15 years with an increasing concern for long-term health implications.



- On average, Canadian cities have a ratio of 4.4 volunteers for every 1,000 residents, compared to 11.6 volunteers per 1,000 residents pre-pandemic (Park People, 2022). With volunteering declining:
 - New ways will need to be found to inspire the next generation of volunteers;
 - Expectations on volunteers will need to be reconsidered;
 - Attention on volunteer recognition will need to be increased; and,
 - High-quality volunteer experiences are more important than ever.
- While volunteering is declining, there are trends indicating that people do not feel they have a voice or ability to influence decisionmaking. There is an emerging opportunity to improve communication and collaboration during planning stages to expand meaningful avenues for public engagement (Park People, 2022).
- Visitors and residents are looking for visually pleasing spots in public spaces to take photos to share on social media. Framed views and features that define those “photogenic” spots can help to keep visitors and residents in permitted areas (Whitehead, 2022).
- Posting QR codes can connect visitors and residents to information about heritage and environmental features and leverages mobile technologies in a way that enhances engagement with these features and creates interest and pride in the history of the feature. (Whitehead, 2022).

5.2.3 **Environmental & Ecological**



- There is a growing sense of stewardship for and learning about water, air quality, and preservation of natural areas.
- There is a growing desire for increased access to outdoor winter recreation activities.
- Access to winterized public washrooms are essential to year-round comfort and accessibility of public spaces and are reportedly the highest requested amenity by residents across Canadian cities (Park People, 2022).
- Increased use of natural park spaces has also magnified existing challenges with municipalities’ ability to maintain biodiversity in natural areas. This increased use has led to municipalities requiring separate and specific biodiversity strategy, and intentional planning, to ensure the preservation of urban biodiversity (Park People, 2022).
- Following the pandemic of COVID-19, people now have an enhanced appreciation for connecting with nature and being physically active outdoors (Whitehead, 2022).
- The impacts of climate change are likely to present ongoing challenges for parks planning, due to the damage caused by extreme weather events such as floods, fires, and droughts (Park People, 2022). Risk of flooding may be a particularly relevant challenge for the Municipality of Mississippi Mills, considering the proximity to the waterfront.
- Increased expectations that parks and recreation departments will demonstrate high levels of stewardship and environmental sensitivity.
- Increased public interest in the inclusion of naturalized spaces in parks, especially in neighbourhood parks in particular.
- The role of municipal conservation parks will grow as Canada works to meet biodiversity targets through raising awareness of biodiversity and encouraging participation in conservation.
- There is growing interest in incorporating natural features in parks such as native plant gardens, naturalized spaces within parks, and adventure play (including nature playgrounds or loose parts play).



- There is an opportunity to utilize parks for such things as green infrastructure developments (e.g., rain gardens and bioswales).
- There is an opportunity to improve food accessibility through growing, cooking, and selling opportunities (e.g., community gardens, edible orchards, farmers markets, and bake ovens). As mentioned in the 2022 Canadian City Parks Report, an emerging trend in Parks and Recreation is the increased interest in food growing, cooking, and selling opportunities (i.e., urban agriculture).

5.2.4 Service Delivery



- Recent trends show that 90% of cities reported having a community grant program in place that helps fund park spaces, making this a viable avenue for parks funding (Parks People, 2022).
- With increased park use levels that emerged during the pandemic – a trend that is likely to continue into the future – operating budgets will need to increase to meet the new demands of parks maintenance (Park People, 2022).
- There is a need to consider more participatory funding options for public spaces, which would allow community members to actively collaborate and contribute to the budgeting and funding of operational costs.
- The importance and need for strong inter-municipal partnerships and other partnerships will only grow into the future.
- More relationships are formed between municipalities and local community groups and stakeholders to keep municipalities informed about new and emerging community needs. Taking a proactive and neighbourhood-based approach ensures that there is a strong foundation of trust to build from when the time comes for more formal engagement processes (Park People, 2022).
- Many municipal parks are built on Indigenous traditional territory, and the Park People report addresses the importance of Indigenous consultation in developing park improvement initiatives (2022).
- It is important to recognize and honour the role of Indigenous Peoples as the inherent caretakers of lands, as well as supporting their programming for nature education and stewardship activities (Park People, 2022).
- There is a growing understanding between park usage and people's ability to get to parks and emphasis on providing more parks or programs, such as free transit to large, city-wide parks (Parks People, 2022).
- Changing provincial priorities and alterations of cost recovery tools in the management of future parkland.
- With technology's continuous advance, there is an expectation that technology is available everywhere; booking and scheduling experience is included in those expectations. Booking and scheduling software improve the efficiency and increase convenience to enroll to programs, rent spaces, and pay for activities (Whitehead, 2022).



5.2.5 Facilities & Infrastructure



- As our parks and recreation assets near the end of their lifespans we need to identify opportunities to co-locate sustainably designed facilities to attract multiple users to one area creating servicing and operational efficiencies.
- Strong asset management and capital lifecycle planning will become essential as we work to provide access to the quality and diversity of parks and facilities expected by residents.
- Incorporate digital infrastructure to parks, including the implementation of free Wi-Fi and phone charging stations in parks and the creation of park-based apps (Park People, 2022).
- Esports (or organized competitive video gaming) is a growing multi-billion-dollar industry worldwide. Local recreation centers including esports have an opportunity to attract non-traditional users and bring them into facilities for the first time. New recreation design should consider space to accommodate this coming wave of recreational and competitive activity, along with added opportunities to clean and sanitize during and following an event.
- There is also an expectation that free Wi-Fi and charging stations should be provided in all public spaces including municipal spaces (Whitehead, 2022).
- Flexible and accessible multi-purpose spaces able to accommodate a variety of activities—are the next big thing. This includes designing recreational buildings so that community amenities are more easily accessible through public transportation or to those with reduced mobility. By doing so, we can reduce sport facility parking requirements and greatly reduces the carbon footprint of the facility.
- Inclusivity (facilities without male or female designated spaces) is coming to sports and recreation design in North America, with Canada leading the way. Building gender neutral facilities usually means increased space requirements and upfront investment for larger washrooms or changing rooms, but often there is an operational savings.
- Synthetic turf is increasing in popularity, particularly because these surfaces have improved dramatically. Artificial turf can offer a safer, more predictable playing surface than natural turf fields and can provide more hours of play to the communities they serve where a high level of play is required.

Smaller communities are seeing the value in sports and recreation as a cornerstone for development. A local hockey arena, soccer stadium, or recreation center built for competitive teams can help draw crowds, boost development, and promote active lifestyles in local neighborhoods. A multi-function facility can build the critical mass needed for retail, residential, and other development to take root. The result is a synergy between recreation and community that is likely to be an asset for years to come.



6 | Municipal Childcare





6 Municipal Childcare in Mississippi Mills

6.1 Overview

Mississippi Mills Childcare Services (MMCS) is licensed by the Ministry of Education under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and is funded through Lanark County children's services division. All childcare programs are planned and implemented by qualified early childhood educators using Lanark County's quality assurance resources; all staff are hired by the municipality. The childcare programs are monitored by the South East Health Unit (previously called the Leeds Greenville, Lanark Health Unit (LGLHU)), Ministry of Education, and Municipal By-laws. Specialized services such as ConnecWell (formally LEIP) and speech therapy are also available.

Current childcare services in Mississippi Mills are divided into four different types of services: Infant, Toddler, Preschool, or Before and After School Care. Hours of service are from 6:30am to 6:00pm, from Mondays to Fridays; for the Before and After School Care, the services are from 6:30am to start of school and from after school to 6:00pm. Before and After School Care are extended to Full-Day Care on Professional Development days, March Break, and during the summer; Full-Day Care extends from the first week of July until the last week of August. In 2025, the waitlist for childcare was over 600 children including more than 425 childcare spaces for children in the 0-4 age cohort.

There are currently 61 staff on payroll including 42 full-time staff. The MMCS Department is managed by the Director of Childcare overseeing supervisors, educators, cooks, and cleaners.

In 2022, the Municipality enrolled in the Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC) agreement, a Federal program to provide high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive Early Learning Child Care (ELCC) to all families in Canada. Through this program, the province of Ontario has the objective of increasing the quantity of licensed childcare spaces for children under 6-year-old and creating 76,700 spaces by March 31, 2026, and an additional 86,000 childcare spaces by December 31, 2026. In creating the new childcare spaces, the province of Ontario will support predominantly not-for-profit spaces while reducing parent fees for full-time ELCC spaces for children under 6-year-old to an average cost of \$10 per day by the end of 2026.

6.2 Childcare Facilities Inventory

The municipal focus on childcare is to provide central services in Almonte for the entire community; it should be noted there is a not-for-profit childcare centre located in Pakenham which is separate from the Municipality of Mississippi Mills Childcare Services.

There are four locations in Almonte providing municipal childcare with specific locations based on the type of service required / provided. There are currently 73 childcare spaces (3 to 48 months old) offered at Mississippi Mills Childcare Centre and 63 childcare spaces (18-48 months old) offered at Holy Name of Mary.



1. Infant – Toddler – Preschool Services

a. **Mississippi Mills Childcare Centre**, 208 State Street, Almonte

Municipal Childcare Services started at this location in 1972. This location is not universally accessible for all users.

- i. Infant – 10 spaces
- ii. Toddler – 15 spaces
- iii. Preschool – 48 spaces

2. Toddler – Preschool Services

a. **Holy Name of Mary Catholic School**, 110 Paterson Street, Almonte (space shared with Catholic School Board)

- i. Toddler – 15 spaces
- ii. Preschool – 48 spaces

3. Before and After School Services

a. **Holy Name of Mary Catholic School**, 110 Paterson Street, Almonte (space shared with Catholic School Board).

- i. Kindergarten Before and After School – 26 spaces
- ii. School Age Before and After School – 45 spaces

b. **R. Tait McKenzie Public School**, 175 Paterson Street, Almonte

- i. Kindergarten Before and After School – 26 spaces
- ii. School Age Before and After School – 60 spaces

c. **Naismith Memorial Public School**, 260 King Street, Almonte

- i. Kindergarten Before and After School – 26 spaces
- ii. School Age Before and After School – 60 spaces

As indicated below in Section 8.8, shared agreements with the school boards provide the opportunity to allow for municipal childcare services directly at the schools where Before and After School Services are provided.

6.3 Service Level Assessment

Based on population forecasted and outlined in Section 3 of this document, the population of the 0-4 year age cohort has been increasing since 2011 with growth between 4.5% and 5% for every 5-year period. Using the 2021 population of the 0-4 year age cohort, and the current service level of 136 childcare spaces for children under 4 years old in Mississippi Mills as a reference, the service level provided by the Municipality to its community today is 1:5.



6.4 Constraints and Opportunities

6.4.1 Facility Improvements

The Mississippi Mills Childcare Centre is dated and requires updates to meet accessibility and program requirements. The Municipality recently initiated a design-build project to develop a new 12,000-square-foot (1,115 square metre) childcare centre in Almonte to replace the current Mississippi Mills Childcare Centre, located at 208 State Street in Almonte. The location of the new childcare centre is not yet confirmed but is planned to be located on an existing municipal lot. A possible location for the new centre is 34 Victoria Street in Almonte. The centre will be on one floor only and target occupancy date is September 7, 2026. The new facility will focus on the following: accessible services; affordability (through provincial funding); accountability (to the province); quality care; community use of the facility through integration of a kitchen space and separate entrance, which can provide additional revenue through rentals; special needs and therapy rooms; flexibility for parents; and space for future expansion. The new location will allow for an additional 78 childcare spaces with possible future expansion for the addition of 15 childcare spaces for toddlers.

6.4.2 Programs

Greening programs are to be integrated into Childcare services. Such greening programs envisioned include recycling, composting, eating better, and have greener / cleaner spaces.

Outdoor spaces are used as a “second classroom”, promoting the outdoor / nature experience and providing challenging play opportunities including interaction with heights.

6.4.3 Staffing

Because the wage is higher than the industry average, the municipal childcare services in Mississippi Mills see low turnover rates. There is currently a shortage of staff with three openings to be filled. The January 2025 postings used a new posting strategy for these openings, which employed social media and resulted in more potential candidates within a few days.

The new childcare centre is projected to need 12 additional full-time staff in the summer 2026.



7 | Culture and Municipal Events





7 Culture and Municipal Events

7.1 Overview

The Municipality offers a variety of cultural programs and municipal events and is nicknamed the “festival town”. Relative to its population size, the Municipality offers a large number of cultural programs and municipal events, which residents express general satisfaction, as per community engagement results.

Over the past three years, requests for events and bookings have increased. Currently, there is no online booking process in Mississippi Mills including for rentals of facilities and registration to programs. All bookings of municipal halls and community spaces are completed via phone or in person with all payments to be provided in person. Municipal halls and community spaces are typically booked for concerts and theatre performances, recreation programs such as yoga classes, art camps and choir lessons, weddings and private events. The Municipality established a booking protocol for the use of the AOTH where public performances and concerts are permitted and encouraged to book 18 months in advance; weddings and private events should be booked no earlier than 12 months in advance; community spaces for recreation programs are available for booking in blocks of 4 months.

Although there is no online booking portal, the Municipality does keep a detailed [Events Calendar](#) on the municipal website, which lists all upcoming events for the following several months. In addition, the online municipal newsletter, the MM Messenger, provides community news quarterly on everything from events and recreation to safety reminders and new regulations.

The Municipality has a Community Grant Policy to recognize the contributions made by community organizations and volunteer groups. Under this grant, facility rental is not included. An application process is available online where applicants can request financial grants. Separately from the grant, the Municipality lends tents, tables, etc. to the community for public events.

The cultural and community services are coordinated by the Manager of Community and Economic Development who oversees Almonte Old Town Hall Event Assistants (three to four assistants), an Event and Program Coordinator (added role in 2024 and shared with the Recreation Team), Administrative Assistants (shared with the Recreation Team) and Summer Positions fulfilling Information and Tourism roles.

7.2 Cultural Spaces Inventory

The Municipality offers a wide range of cultural facilities including not only library branches and museums, but also multi-purpose community spaces available to rent for private and public functions. Appendix A includes a series of maps providing the locations of cultural spaces available in the Municipality.



1. Community Spaces Owned by the Municipality of Mississippi Mills:

a. **John Levi Community Centre Banquet Hall**, 182 Bridge Street, Almonte

Located on the second floor of the building. The hall offers:

- i. 240 people capacity (standing)
- ii. 40 seat spaces (including tables)
- iii. Bar and Kitchen with Fridge, Stove and Sink
- iv. Cloakroom
- v. Elevator
- vi. Washrooms

b. **Almonte Curling Club Lounge**, 160 Bridge Street, Almonte

The lounge space welcomes users of the Almonte Curling Club and may be rented by the community when it is available and not used by the Club. This hall offers:

- i. 147 people capacity
- ii. Bar and Kitchen with Fridge, Stove and Sink
- iii. Washrooms

c. **Ron Caron Auditorium**, 14 Bridge Street, Almonte

Located in the Almonte Old Town Hall, this community space is a cultural hub in Mississippi Mills. A small heritage ticket booth welcomes users at the top of the stairs; an elevator also provides access to the hall. Used for programmed (i.e., yoga, youth dances, etc.) and rentals for unprogrammed functions (i.e., weddings, training sessions, etc.). Also used for plays and performances coming to Mississippi Mills. There is a small change room / backstage room available for performance events; Auditorium Fees include a surcharge of 2 dollars per ticket to assist the municipality with maintenance and repairs. The hall offers:

- i. 218 seat spaces for performance events
- ii. 180 seat spaces for private and public functions with alcohol
- iii. 100 seat spaces for wedding (including tables)
- iv. Grand piano (owned and rented out by Almonte in Concert)
- v. Kitchen with Fridge and Sink but without Oven
- vi. Sound / Lighting Equipment (with additional fees) – the lighting and sound systems are operated by sound and light local professionals.
- vii. Washrooms



- d. **Cedar Hill School House**, 270 Cedar Hill Road, Pakenham
Heritage building operated by the municipality but a committee raises money and runs events at the hall. The building is closed during winter months and the public may rent the space from spring to fall of each year. The building includes:
 - i. 60 people capacity
 - ii. Kitchen with Fridge and Stove
 - e. **Stewart Community Centre Banquet Hall**, 112 MacFarlane Street, Pakenham
This hall is also located on the second floor of the arena; the demand is high for this hall considering it is the only hall in Pakenham. This space is also used by the Dart Club. The hall offers:
 - i. 220 people capacity
 - ii. Bar and Kitchen with Fridge, Freezer, Stove, and Sink
 - iii. Cloakroom
 - iv. Elevator
 - v. Sound Equipment
 - vi. Washrooms
2. Community Spaces Not Owned by the Municipality of Mississippi Mills
- a. **Clayton Community Centre**, 147 Linn Bower Lane, Clayton
 - b. **Union Hall**, 1984 Wolf Grove Road, Almonte
3. Museums* (not owned by the Municipality)
- a. **Mill of Kintail Museum (MVCA)**, 2854 Ramsay Concession 8, Ramsay
 - i. **Dr. James Naismith Museum**, 2854 Ramsay Concession 8, Ramsay
This museum located at the Mill of Kintail is opened from Victoria Day weekend to Thanksgiving weekend.
 - ii. **Dr. R. Tait McKenzie Museum / M**
This museum is also located at the Mill of Kintail and is also opened from Victoria Day weekend to Thanksgiving weekend.
 - b. **Mississippi Valley Textile Museum**, 3 Rosamond Street E., Almonte
This museum is located in the Rosamond Mill Complex.
 - c. **North Lanark Regional Museum**, 647 River Road, Appleton
Located at the former Appleton Schoolhouse, this museum tells the story of the Town of Almonte and the Townships of Ramsay, Lanark, Beckwith, and Pakenham.

*The Municipality does not own the museums but provides operational funding to each museum.



4. Mississippi Mills Public Library*

- a. **Almonte Branch**, 155 High Street, Almonte
- b. **Pakenham Branch**, 128 MacFarlane Street, Pakenham

*The Library is listed in the Cultural Spaces Inventory as municipal programming, cultural events, etc. take place at the two branches. However, this Plan will not provide specific analysis and recommendations for the Library, as it engages in its own Strategic Planning process.

7.3 Museums

As summarized in Section 7.2 above, Mississippi Mills is the home of three museums: the North Lanark Regional Museum, the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, and the Mill of Kintail Museum where two smaller museum spaces are dedicated to renowned persons born and raised in Mississippi Mills: Dr James Naismith Museum and R. Tait Mackenzie Museum. The Municipality does not own the museums but provides operational funding to each of them.

It is unusual for a small municipality such as Mississippi Mills to have this relatively large number of museums; the number of museums is the result of previous municipal amalgamation, which brought the three museums into the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

This section will provide a brief background on each of the museums, an identification of current strengths and weaknesses, and details on municipal funding for the museums.

7.3.1 Background and History of Museums

1. North Lanark Regional Museum, 647 River Road, Appleton

Located in Appleton, the North Lanark Regional Museum was the first museum in the northern region of Lanark County. The museum's primary focus is on preserving the history of and telling the story of the Town of Almonte and the Townships of Ramsay, Lanark, Beckwith, and Pakenham. The North Lanark Museum is open year-round. Some of the specific challenges the North Lanark Regional Museum faces include:

- Difficulty in recruiting and retaining a Museum Coordinator / Curator, as the compensation is relatively low compared to other museums.
- Municipal funding has been decreasing over time, relative to program, operating, and facility needs, contributing to the challenge of hiring a full-time Coordinator / Curator.
- There is a need for some improvements and clarification of responsibility between the Museum and Municipality, including upgrades to the collections management system, maintenance of the well, and ongoing maintenance (e.g. general building and site maintenance, landscaping, snow removal).



2. Mill of Kintail Museum, 2854 Ramsay Concession 8, Ramsay

The Mill of Kintail includes the R. Tait Mackenzie and Dr. James Naismith Museums and is operated by the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA). The Mill is situated at a park that contributes natural and cultural heritage value to the community. Some of the specific challenges the Mill of Kintail Museum faces include:

- Some collections management and conservation issues exist with the collections that the museum own based on potential funding decisions.
- It should be noted that, due to recent provincial legislation changes related to how conservation funding can be used, there are challenges that have arisen with the MVCA's ownership of the museum.

3. Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, 3 Rosamond Street E., Almonte

The Mississippi Valley Textile Museum is operated out of a rehabilitated heritage building as part of the Rosamund Mill complex. This museum is popular locally and beyond and has thousands of visitors per year. The Museum has a 5-Year Strategic Plan that guides the operation of the museum going forward. Some of the specific challenges the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum faces include:

- Costs associated with the building's life cycle and with maintaining a large heritage building.
- While the Museum is quite popular and is in high demand for school programming, it can be difficult to provide programs to meet this demand.
- Additional staff are needed to expand capacity to maintain and conserve the collection and to meet the volume of bookings.

7.3.2 Museums Funding

All the museums in Mississippi Mills are independently owned and operated with the help of volunteers. The North Lanark Regional Museum is located on Mississippi Mills land. There are no staff at any of the museums that are municipal employees.

The Municipality does not provide funding for capital improvements to the museums but provides operational funding annually to each museum which equals 30% of their operating cost. All museums face funding issues which have, in the past, resulted in inter-museum competition for municipal funds. In total, the 2024 annual operational funding to museums by the Municipality of Mississippi Mills was \$116,087. This was broken down between the museums as follows:

- Mississippi Valley Textile Museum - \$74,309
- North Lanark Regional Museum - \$28,697
- Mill of Kintail Museum - \$13,081

The funding and operation of the Mississippi Mills museums differs from other nearby comparator Municipalities' museums. The Town of Perth and the Town of Carleton Place own and operate one museum each. The Town of Smiths Falls has two museums: one museum that is municipally owned and



operated and one that is independently owned and operated. The museums annual operational spending by the respective municipalities are as follows:

- Perth - \$220,000
- Carleton Place - \$57,000 (utilities, operation); \$74,500 (capital projects)
- Smiths Falls - \$225,000*

*In Smiths Falls, the municipally owned museum receives \$225,000. The independently operated museum also receives some municipal funding; this amounted to \$26,000 in 2023 and \$16,000 in 2024. The information reviewed did not provide how municipal funding for the independent museum was used.

Staffing arrangements differ slightly at each of the comparator municipalities.

- In Perth, museum staff are municipal employees and include two (2) full-time staff, two (2) part-time staff, and two (2) seasonal students. Total salaries and benefit cost approximately \$177,000.
- Museum staff in Carleton Place are not municipal employees.
- Smiths Falls' municipally run museum has two (2) full-time staff, one (1) seasonal annual contract, and two (2) summer students that are municipal employees. Total salaries and benefits cost approximately \$150,000. When possible, salaries and wages are offset with grants like Summer Jobs, YCW, etc.

For all three comparator municipalities, capital improvements to museum buildings are paid for by the Municipality, with the exception of the independently run museum in Smiths Falls.

7.4 Municipal Events

As indicated above, a wide variety of events are organized and hosted in Mississippi Mills. The following list represents current events:

1. Events organized and hosted by the Municipality
 - a. **Arbour Week**
 - b. **Canada Day Celebrations**, Almonte and Pakenham
 - c. **Community Awards**, Almonte
 - d. **Community Group Luncheons**
 - e. **Community Registration Nights** (spring and fall), Almonte
 - f. **Craft Beer Fest**, Almonte
 - g. **Holiday Night Parade**, Almonte
 - h. **Light Up the Night!**, Almonte
 - i. **Movie and Skate**, Almonte and Pakenham
 - j. **Santa Claus Parade Day**, Pakenham
 - k. **St. Patrick's Day Dance**, Pakenham



2. Events organized and hosted by the Municipality in partnership with community organizations
 - a. **Canadian Multi-Cultural Day**
 - b. **September 30 T&R**
 - c. **Movies in the Park**
 - d. **National Indigenous Peoples Day**
 - e. **55+ Expo**
 - f. **Volunteer Appreciation Event**
3. Events supported by the Municipality but organized and hosted by others
 - a. **Almonte Fair**, by NLAS
 - b. **Art in the Attic**, by Almonte Area Artists Association
 - c. **Augusta Fest**, by August St. Park Committee
 - d. **Black History Month Dance**, by Volunteer organizers
 - e. **Celtfest**, by Celtfest Committee
 - f. **Christmas in the Valley Artisans Show**, by Christmas in the Valley Artisans Committee
 - g. **Claytonfest**, by Clayton Cares
 - h. **Crown and Pumpkin Studio Tour**, by Crown and Pumpkin Committee
 - i. **Downtown Almonte Street Markets**, by Destination Almonte
 - j. **Fibrefest**, by MVTM
 - k. **Frostfest**, by Pakenham Civitan Club
 - l. **Kintail Country Christmas**, by MVCA
 - m. **Maple Run Studio Tour**, by Maple Run Committee
 - n. **Naismith 3on3**, by Naismith Association
 - o. **NL Highland Games**, by NL Highland Games
 - p. **Puppets Up!**, by Puppets Up! Committee
 - q. **Remembrance Day in Clayton and in Almonte**, by Almonte Legion
 - r. **Remembrance Day in Pakenham**, by Pakenham School
 - s. **5 Wednesdays in July**, by Augusta Street Park Committee
4. Other small events supported by the Municipality
 - a. **Bingo, Speaker Series, Family Dance, Various Events**, by Pakenham Civitan
 - b. **Car Bingo, Dances, Almonte Fair, Bus Fusion, etc.**, by North Lanark Agricultural Society
 - c. **Community Luncheons, Bingo, and Dances**, by Almonte in Concerts
 - d. **Concerts (3-5)**, by Festival of Small Halls
 - e. **Concerts (4-5)**, by Folkus
 - f. **Festival of the Wild Child**, by Madawaska Land Trust
 - g. **Halloween Activities, Kids Camp, Various Events**, by MMYC
 - h. **Indigenous related events**, by All My Relations
 - i. **Kids Events, Halloween Event, Tea on the Lawn, Apple Pie Fest, Classic Car Show, Strawberry Social, Speaker Series**, by North Lanark Regional Museum
 - j. **Music Events, Washer Toss Tournament, Battle of the Atlantic**, by Almonte Legion
 - k. **Pancake Breakfast, Blueberry Tea, Craft Sales, etc.**, by Union Hall Committee



- l. **Potluck and Mixer**, by The Inclusion Project
- m. **Pride Parade, Drag Show, Various Events**, by Mississippi Mills Pride
- n. **Speaker Series and Workshops**, by Almonte Lectures
- o. **Speaker Series and Workshops, Kids Activities** by Almonte Library
- p. **Speaker Series and Workshops**, by Almonte Readers and Writers
- q. **Strawberry Social, Euker, Apple Pie Social, etc.**, by Friends of Cedar Hill School House
- r. **Tea on the Lawn**, by Ramsay Women's Institute
- s. **Theater Performance (1)**, by ADHS
- t. **Theater Performances (1-2)**, by Humm Presents
- u. **Theater Performances (1-2)**, by Valley Players
- v. **Various Events**, by Clayton Hall and Clayton Cares Committee
- w. **Vernissages, Soup for Thought, Fashion Shows**, by MVTM

Additionally, programs and events such as French Club, Film in the Afternoon, Spanish Conversation Group, museums exhibitions and programming, bingo, and pub nights occur on a regular or semi-regular basis.

7.5 Public Art Installations and Murals

Multiple public art installations and murals are present in the Municipality; public art installations and murals may be located indoor or outdoor.

- **Shelter Tissage** (Main St. Metcalfe Feo Heritage Park)
- **James Naismith Statue** (Mill St. Downtown Almonte)
- **R Tait McKenzie Relief** (AOTH)
- **The Volunteer, R Tait McKenzie Soldier** (Almonte Cenotaph – Bridge St)
- **Canada 150 Art** – Notre Dame Deer (Gemmill Park Trail)
- **Canada 150 Art** – Clayton Musical Art (Clayton near Cenotaph)
- **Canada 150 Art** – Reciprocal Door (Blakeney Park)
- **Ferns Musical Fence** (Behind AOTH)
- **Lady** (Coleman Island Bridge Almonte the Mill Workers Walk)
- **Noreen Young Mouse** (Alameda – OVRT between Bridge and John St Almonte)
- **Dale Dunning Piece** (AD Hospital)
- **Dale Dunning Piece** (Alameda – OVRT between Bridge and John St Almonte)
- **Memorial Bench Sculptures** (Alameda – OVRT between Bridge and John St Almonte)
- **Debora Arnold Sculpture** (Alameda – OVRT between Bridge and John St Almonte)
- **The Seven Gifts** – A Truth and Reconciliation Project (Riverfront Park Almonte)
- **Union Hall Murals** (Union Hall – Floating Bridge Mural inside; Windows to the past outside)
- **Clayton Murals** (Clayton Hall and Clayton Dam Park)
- **Almonte Portrait Murals** (Hospital, Library, Downtown)
- **Farmers Market Mural** (Almonte High St Parking Area)
- **Pakenham Murals** (Community Centre Downtown)
- **Appleton Museum Mural** (NLHM)



7.6 Constraints and Opportunities

7.6.1 Bookings

It is a very common practice for municipalities to have an online booking portal through which bookings and reservations for community spaces as well as registration for programs and events can be done. The Municipality does not currently have an online booking portal nor a booking policy. These should be strongly considered, as booking portals and booking policies can support municipalities in the following ways:

- Creates a standardized and equitable process for booking.
- Organizes bookings and ensures that an up-to-date schedule for bookings and registrations is maintained.
- Centralizes bookings and registrations for ease of residents.
- Increases participation because information is in one place.
- Alleviates the responsibility of facilitating bookings and registrations over the phone.
- Provides an online payment system to ensure collection of fees ahead of booking or registration.

Additionally, the Municipality is expected to grow significantly over the coming years. The increased demand for services and programming will add pressure to the Cultural and Municipal Events, Recreation, and Community Services departments. To ensure operations remain efficient and effective through the projected population growth, online booking should be implemented.

It should be noted that the AOTH currently has a booking policy. The overall booking policy should be extended to the AOTH once implemented for consistency.

7.6.2 Community Spaces

There is an identified lack of community space in Mississippi Mills to meet the needs of the current population, which is only expected to grow over the next two decades. In particular, the following present challenges for the Municipality:

1. Over the past 3 years, there have been more requests for events and bookings.
2. There is a lack of outdoor space for events in Mississippi Mills.
 - a. Garden space at the AOTH is sometimes used for outdoor weddings for free, but this space is also a public space that could be leveraged for other events.
 - b. A new band stand / gazebo is being designed for Metcalfe Park; this gazebo should be completed in 2025.
3. There is no policy for rentals of exterior spaces / park spaces.

7.6.3 Rental Fees

Most of the halls in the Municipality are available to rent during the week with only the large halls available Friday to Sunday.



8 | Outdoor Recreation





8 Outdoor Recreation

8.1 Overview

Outdoor recreation, like parks, open spaces, trails, and their constituent amenities, supports the environmental, physical, social, and visual aspects of daily life in the Municipality and provide the community a wide range of opportunities for casual and organized recreation activities. The enjoyment of nature through accessible outdoor recreation spaces considerably improves community health and civic pride among individuals. Many studies confirm that exercising outdoors and in green surroundings improves both physical and mental health by reducing the impacts of stress and illnesses such as depression. Urban forests and natural areas provide environmental benefits such as weather protection, stormwater control, habitat for native vegetation, and greenhouse-gas reduction. Welcoming and safe outdoor recreation spaces are important to everyone's well-being. Well-designed outdoor recreation programs contribute to the Municipality's economic vitality, creates a sense of place, and contributes to the health of the community.

The Municipality delivers outdoor recreation services including parkland, trails, recreation amenities in parks and natural areas, and open spaces. Outdoor recreation spaces are valued among the Municipality of Mississippi Mills' residents and make up a key component of the community.

The Municipality has a total of approximately 70.6 hectares of parks and open spaces resulting in a service level of 4.78 hectares per 1,000 population. The 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan had a target provision level of 4.0 hectares per 1,000 population. The Municipality is expected to experience growth over the period of this Plan, which will require additional parkland to meet the 4.0 hectares per 1,000 population target and to maintain the current service level.

The Municipality is also directly involved in a wide range of service delivery activities related to parks, trails, outdoor amenities, and open spaces, including planning, budgeting, design, maintenance, operations, booking, programming, and permitting. The Municipality liaises with interest groups and users, including community groups, sports groups, and special event organizers. Planning, design, and development of outdoor recreation spaces are often completed by external consultants in consultation with Municipal staff; Municipal recreation staff are managed by the Recreation Manager.

8.2 Parks and Open Spaces Inventory

The Official Plan establishes a parkland hierarchy and classification system dividing open spaces into Neighbourhood Parks, Community Parks, and Regional Parks. The parkland hierarchy and classification system was created to guide the acquisition and development of open spaces. The following provides general definition of these types of open spaces, as indicated in the Official Plan.



1. **Neighbourhood Parks** are under 4 hectares (ha) in size and are intended to service predominantly local residents. They provide space for unorganized play activities, passive activities, playgrounds and small sporting courts or fields. The vast majority of parks in the Municipality are Neighbourhood Parks.
2. **Community Parks** vary in size between 1.5 to 10 ha and are located along or near arterial roads or collector roads and within the pedestrian network. Community Parks offer activities year-round and at different time of day including the evening.
3. **Regional Parks** vary in size between 10 ha and 70 ha and offer passive recreation on preservation and historical land, cultural and natural areas.

Additionally, the Official Plan highlights the objective of creating a network of pedestrian linkages between parks and open spaces throughout the Municipality.

The following provides a list of outdoor recreation facilities and amenities owned by the Municipality; currently, the Municipality owns 70.6 ha of parkland. As part of the development of this Plan, parks were reviewed and assessed in terms of the overall conditions of the outdoor recreation facilities and amenities. Appendix A provides a series of maps describing the locations of parks and open spaces owned by the Municipality.

1. Parks and Outdoor Recreation Facilities - Almonte

a. **Almonte Lawn Bowling**, 157 Robert Street, Almonte

This recreation facility is operated by the Lawn Bowling Club under an agreement as described in Section 8.8 below. The Club runs the municipal Lawn Bowling Memberships, and it was observed that membership has increased. The Club does not pay rent and is not required to contribute to the capital cost of the facility.

Although the lawn is in overall good conditions, the Lawn Bowling building is getting old and will need some upgrades and improvements to make it accessible to all users.

In 2025, bocce ball courts are planned to be added at the Lawn Bowling facility.



Figure 8: Almonte Lawn Bowling Building



b. **Augusta Street Park**, 81 Mercer Street, Almonte

This Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.5 hectares. The Municipality has completed significant changes to this park recently; the frontage to Mercer Street is fenced with post and rail fence. The following amenities are available in this park:

- i. Basketball Court – One Court
- ii. BMX Track
- iii. Community Gardens
- iv. Open Play Area
- v. Park Sign (Mercer Street only)
- vi. Pathway - Stonedust Only
- vii. Picnic Area
- viii. Playground and Swings (separated by a pedestrian bridge)
- ix. Rink (seasonal)
- x. Seating
- xi. Washroom (Seasonal)

Site observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: sections of post and rail fence to be replaced, play structures and bench pads to be connected to pathway, stonedust pathway should be upgraded to asphalt pathway, replacing sand in play area with engineered wood fiber, addition of engineered wood fiber under swing set, bridges may be narrow for wheelchairs and walkers.

c. **Coleman Island Park** (Graham Park), 30 Wellington Street, Almonte

This waterfront Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.5 ha. The following amenities are available in Coleman Island Park:

- i. Adult Fitness Components (along pathway)
- ii. Interpretation Panels
- iii. Pathway - Stonedust only
- iv. Open Play Area
- v. Seating
- vi. Trail (crushed stone to dirt path)

Site observation noted the requirements for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: boulders in pathway may not provide accessible access, bench pads to be connected to pathway, stonedust pathway should be upgraded to asphalt pathway.



Figure 9: Pathway in Coleman Island Park



d. **Don Maynard Park**, 39 Gale Street, Almonte

This Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.4 ha; this park is grassed only with no pathways provided. The following amenities are available in Don Maynard Park:

- i. Park Sign
- ii. Picnic Area
- iii. Public Garden
- iv. Open Play Area
- v. Seating

Site observation noted the requirements for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: no pathways, park sign is faded.

e. **Gemmill Park**, 186 Bridge Street, Almonte

This large Regional Park is the outdoor recreation hub for the community; it extends on approximately 24.9 ha. The Canada Day events occur in this park. The following amenities are available in Gemmill Park:

- i. Athletic Track
- ii. Baseball Field – One Field with Bleachers; Lit; sand infield
- iii. Basketball Courts – Two Courts
- iv. Disc Golf
- v. Pathway - Paved
- vi. Picnic Area
- vii. Playground and Swings - the playground has a rubberized surface
- viii. Seating
- ix. Shade Structure (two)
- x. Skateboard Park – Concrete
- xi. Sledding Hill
- xii. Splashpad – the only splashpad in the Municipality
- xiii. Soccer Field – One Field
- xiv. Tennis Courts – Three Courts; Fenced and Lit
 - 1. The courts are used and operated by the Almonte Tennis Club under a use agreement as described in Section 2.6.15. A membership to the Almonte Tennis Club is required to access the courts. The Club does not pay rent and is not required to contribute to the capital cost of the facility.
- xv. Walking Trails
- xvi. Washrooms / Fieldhouse

Site observation noted the requirements for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: tennis surfacing and fencing, bench pads to be connected to pathways, missing a pathway connection between arena parking lot and park parking lot, athletic track is overtaken by grass in areas, some disc golf are faded and difficult to find



f. **Houchiami Park**, Johanna Street, Almonte

This Neighbourhood Park is located between Paterson Street and Johanna Street providing a connector path between a collector road and a neighbourhood; it is approximately 0.2 ha in size. The following amenities are available in this park:

- i. Open Play Area – Sloped
- ii. Pathway - Paved
- iii. Seating

Site observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: no park sign.

g. **James Street Park**, 196 James Street, Almonte

This Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.2 ha and located at the intersection of James Street and Willam Street. The following amenities are available in James Street Park:

- i. Park Sign
- ii. Picnic Area
- iii. Playground and Swings
- iv. Open Play Area
- v. Seating

Site observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: replacing sand in play area with engineered wood fiber, no pathways, park sign is aging, bench pads to be connected to pathways.

h. **Kirkland Park**, 55 Mill Street, Almonte

This waterfront Neighbourhood Park is located downtown Almonte and is approximately 0.3 ha. The following amenities are available in Kirkland Park:

- i. Gazebo
- ii. Interpretation Panels
- iii. Picnic Area
- iv. Seating

Site observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: park sign is on plaque (not using typical park sign material) and difficult to read, park is used for snow storage.



Figure 10: Kirkland Park



i. **Mark's Lookout**, 101 Martin Street, Almonte

This waterfront Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.1 ha. The following amenities are available in this park:

- i. Lookout Structure
- ii. Seating

j. **Martin Street North Park**, Mitcheson Street, Almonte

This undeveloped park is approximately 6.3 ha. Different names were attached to this municipal land: Rosamond Park (1884), Martin Street North Park (2013), Lansdowne Park (2021) or sometime Lansdowne Natural Heritage Park (2021). The following amenities are available in this park:

- i. Walking Trail

k. **McIntosh Park**, 135 Thoburn Street, Almonte

This Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.45 ha. The following amenities are available in this park:

- i. Open Play Area
- ii. Park Sign
- iii. Pathway - Paved
- iv. Playground and Swings
- v. Seating

Site observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: bench pads to be connected to pathways, pathway should be connected to walkway block pathway.

l. **Meadowglen Park**, 207 Spring Street, Almonte

This Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.95 ha. The following amenities are available in this park:

- i. Adult Fitness Component – One Standalone Component
- ii. Basketball Court – One Court
- iii. Open Play Area
- iv. Picnic Area
- v. Playground
- vi. Rink (seasonal)
- vii. Seating

Site observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: no pathway connecting the different park amenities, park sign from Evelyn Street is old and not legible.



m. **Metcalf Geoheritage Park**, 250 Almonte Street West, Almonte

This waterfront Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.9 ha. The following amenities are available in Metcalfe Geoheritage Park:

- i. Boat Launch with Parking Area and Dock
- ii. Geoheritage Rocks
- iii. Interpretation Panels
- iv. Park Sign
- v. Pathway -Paved
- vi. Seating
- vii. Washroom Building

Site observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: bench pads to be connected to pathways,

n. **Mill Run Park**, Horton Street, Almonte

This Neighbourhood Park is located in the new Mill Run Estates Subdivision at the intersection of Sadler Drive and Horton Street; it is approximately 1.75 ha. The following amenities are available in Mill Run Park:

- i. Nature Walking Loop – 450m
- ii. Open Play Area
- iii. Parking Area
- iv. Pathway - Stonedust Only
- v. Playground
- vi. Picnic Area
- vii. Seating
- viii. Shade Structure (two)
- ix. Walking Trail

Site observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: stonedust pathway should be upgraded to asphalt pathway, no park sign.

o. **Munro Meadows Park**, Carl Lee Avenue, Almonte

This Neighbourhood Park is approximately 1.6 ha and includes the following amenities:

- i. Walking Trail

p. **R.W. MacGregor Memorial Ball Park**, 3131 Old Perth Road, Almonte

This Community Park is approximately 6.3 ha. This large park includes the following amenities:

- i. Baseball Field – One Field; Unlit
- ii. Park Sign
- iii. Parking Area
- iv. Seating including Bleachers
- v. Soccer Field – One Field
- vi. Washrooms



q. **Riverfront Estates Central Park**, Jack Dalgity Street, Almonte

This new Neighbourhood Park is approximately 1 ha and is located within Riverfront Estates Subdivision. This central park is framed by Merrithew Street, Van Dusen Street, Maurice Stead Street and Jack Dalgity Street. The following amenities are available in Riverfront Estates Central Park:

- i. On-Street Parking
- ii. Open Play Area
- iii. Park Sign
- iv. Pathway - Stonedust Only
- v. Picnic Area
- vi. Playground and Swings
- vii. Shade Structure
- viii. Soccer Field – One Field
- ix. Walking Trails

Site observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: stonedust pathway should be upgraded to asphalt pathway (grass is extending into pathway), bench pads should be connected to pathway, no park sign.

r. **Riverfront Estates Waterfront Park**, Spring Street, Almonte

This waterfront Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.6 ha; it is part of the Almonte Wellness Trail. The following amenities are available in Riverfront Estates Waterfront Park:

- i. Interpretation Panels
- ii. Pathway - Stonedust Only
- iii. Picnic Area
- iv. Small Boat Launch Pad with Dock – For Canoes and Kayaks
- v. Sculpture – Seven Gifts
- vi. Seating
- vii. Walking Trails

Site observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: stonedust pathway should be upgraded to asphalt pathway, bench pads should be connected to pathway, no park sign.



Figure 11: Seven Gifts Sculpture in Riverfront Estate Waterfront Park



- s. **Snedden-Casey Ball Field / Dog Park**, 337 Ann Street, Almonte
This Community Park is approximately 4.75 ha; it includes
 - i. Dog Park – Off-Leash: Temporary trial project using the fenced ball field. The trial project worked well and was appreciated by the community.
 - ii. Parking Area
 - t. **Veteran's Walkway Park**, 257 Old Perth Road, Almonte
This Neighbourhood Park is approximately 1.05 ha and is dedicated to the local veterans. Amenities in this park include:
 - i. Memorial Wall
 - ii. Pathway - Stonedust Only
 - iii. Seating areas
 - iv. Walking TrailsSite observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: stonedust pathway should be upgraded to asphalt pathway, bench pads should be connected to pathway, no park sign.
 - u. **Whitetail Ridge Park**, Antler Crescent, Almonte
This future Neighbourhood Park will be approximately 1.2 ha. Amenities for this park are still to be confirmed.
 - v. **Wylie Street Park**, 370 Wylie Street, Almonte
This Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.2 ha. This park is intended to be a passive naturalized area with a walking trail about a stormwater management pond. The following amenities are available in Wylie Street Park:
 - i. Basketball Half Court
 - ii. Picnic Area
 - iii. Open Play Area
 - iv. Playground and SwingsSite observation noted the requirement for lifecycle upgrades and accessibility improvements: no pathway connecting the different park amenities, no engineered wood fiber at the swing set. no park sign.
2. Parks and Outdoor Recreation Facilities - Appleton
- a. **Appleton Bay Park**, 510 River Road, Appleton
This Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.55 ha. The following amenities are available in Appleton Bay Park:
 - i. Boat Launch including Parking Area
 - ii. Park Sign
 - iii. Picnic Area
 - iv. Playground
 - v. Washroom (seasonal)
 - b. **Eleanor Wright Park**, Duke Street, Appleton
This Neighbourhood Park is approximately 0.4 ha and includes the following amenities:
 - i. Walking Trails



- c. **Jake Lubber's Field**, 647 River Road, Appleton
This Community Park is approximately 3.3 ha. The following amenities are available in this park:
 - i. Parking Areas
 - ii. Seating
 - iii. Soccer Fields – Two Fields
- 3. **Parks and Outdoor Recreation Facilities - Pakenham**
 - a. **Five-Span Bridge Park**, 491 Kinburn Side Road, Pakenham
This waterfront Neighbourhood Park is approximately 3.55 ha and is framed by the heritage stone bridge. The following amenities are available in Five-Span Bridge Park:
 - i. Boat Launch with Parking Area
 - ii. Park Sign
 - iii. Picnic Area
 - iv. Shade Structure
 - v. Washroom (seasonal)
 - b. **Fred Millar Field**, 106 Margaret Street, Pakenham
Fred Millar Field is considered part of Pakenham Community Park and includes the following amenities:
 - i. Soccer Fields – Two Fields
 - c. **Pakenham Community Park**, 106 Margaret Street, Pakenham
This waterfront Neighbourhood Park is approximately 1.2 ha. The following amenities are available at Pakenham Community Park:
 - i. Baseball Diamond – One Field; Lit
 - ii. Beach – Unsupervised
 - iii. Changeroom
 - iv. Park Sign
 - v. Parking Area
 - vi. Rink (seasonal) - Unboarded
 - vii. Skateboard Park – Prefabricated Modules
 - viii. Small Boat Launch Pad – For Canoes and Kayaks
 - ix. Soccer Field – Fred Millar Field
 - x. Walking Trails
 - xi. Washrooms
- 4. **Beaches**
 - a. **Almonte Beach – North Lanark Agricultural Society Fair Grounds and Agricultural Hall**, 195 Water Street, Almonte
In 2024, the Almonte Beach was only opened for 1 week due to poor water quality. The following amenities are available at the Almonte Beach:
 - i. Beach - Unsupervised
 - ii. Boat Launch
 - iii. Shade Structures (two)
 - iv. Washrooms



b. **Pakenham Beach – Pakenham Community Park**, 106 Margaret Street, Pakenham

The Pakenham Beach is part of Pakenham Community Park. The following amenities are available at the Pakenham Beach:

- i. Beach - Unsupervised
- ii. Changerooms
- iii. Picnic Area
- iv. Shade Trees
- v. Small Boat Launch

In addition to parks and open spaces owned by the Municipality, some parkland, owned by others, are available to the community:

5. Parks and Outdoor Recreation Facilities - Blakeney

a. **Blakeney Park**, 139 Blakeney Road, Blakeney

This Provincial Park is approximately 9.6 ha. The site is maintained by the Almonte Fish & Game Association. The following amenities are available in this park:

- i. Walking Trails

6. Parks and Outdoor Recreation Facilities - Clayton

a. **Clayton Taylor Park**, Tatlock Road, Clayton

This waterfront park is owned by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). The Municipality has an agreement with the MNR to complete maintenance at the park. It is located at the end of Clayton Lake where it becomes Indian River. The following amenities are available in the park:

- i. Baseball Field
- ii. Boat Launch including Parking Area
- iii. Park Sign
- iv. Picnic Area
- v. Playground
- vi. Sculpture
- vii. Seating
- viii. Shade Structure
- ix. Washroom (seasonal)

7. Conservation Areas

a. **Mill of Kintail Conservation Area**, 2854 Ramsay Concession 8, Almonte

This Conservation Area extends on approximately 7.4 ha.

8.3 Distribution of Parks and Open Spaces

It is important to provide equitable access to outdoor recreation spaces for the residents in the Municipality of Mississippi Mills. A spatial distribution of outdoor recreation spaces based on target walking distances of 500 metres (m) service radius at 5-10 minutes from parks indicates there is an overall good distribution of parks within the community. More specifically, parks throughout Almonte mostly cover the inner village with some gaps located in the periphery. In the villages of Appleton, Blakeney, Clayton, and Pakenham, it is found to be difficult to sufficiently cover these villages when there



are one to three parks for each community. Appendix B provides a series of maps of the Town and villages showing a service radius of 500m for each park.

All residents of rural areas generally do not have access to parks within walking distance, reflective of large property sizes and agricultural and manufacturing uses in these areas. Therefore, the provision of outdoor recreation spaces within settlement areas should take into account the total municipal population to allow service levels to meet the needs of population including rural dwelling residents. The 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommended that Community Parks have a service radius of 2 kilometres (km) and that Neighbourhood Parks have a service radius of 500 m. This service radii strives to ensure that there is good distribution of parks throughout residential areas; defining the most appropriate coverage and distribution of parks and open spaces will be undertaken as part of this Plan.

8.4 Trails and Pathways

Trails and pathways in the Municipality are available in multiple areas and settings including environmental conservation areas. Trails and pathways are recreation connectors separated from the Active Transportation corridor as defined in the Transportation Master Plan; when combining recreational trails and pathways to Active Transportation links a complete network of possibilities is provided to residents to stay active and healthy. As defined in the 2024 Transportation Master Plan, Active Transportation *“refers to a mode of travel that requires physical activity such as walking and cycling, to travel from one location to another. (...) The municipal active transportation network is highlighted by the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT), which was constructed in 2018 and forms a spine that runs north-south through the region. Additional facilities include pedestrian pathways, recreational/multi-use pathways, sidewalks, and some limited on-road cycling facilities.”*

The following trails and pathways include a mix of Municipally owned sites with other trail opportunities owned by others.

8. Trails and Pathways – Publicly owned

a. **Almonte Alameda**

This trail is located adjacent to the Almonte Library Branch and form part of the OVRT; it is owned by Lanark County. This section of the OVRT extends from Bridge Street to Church Street and is approximately 200 metres (m) in length. The Almonte Alameda is used as an event space and is equipped with power. Amenities along this trail include:

- i. Interpretive Signage
- ii. Public Art Pieces
- iii. Rows of Trees
- iv. Seating

b. **Almonte Lagoons Birding Complex**, Ramsay Concession 8, Almonte

The trail runs 150m to the Mike McPhail Bird Viewing Shelter. This is an ideal location to view hundreds of ducks and other migratory birds during the spring and fall seasons. The property is owned by the Municipality but maintained by the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists (MVFN). Amenities include:

- i. Small Woodlot
- ii. Observation Tower – Al Potvin.



c. **Almonte Wellness Trail**, Almonte

This interactive trail uses a section of the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT) and is educational and multi-generational. This trail includes:

i. Outdoor Fitness Stations and Stops

d. **Blakeney Park Trail**, 139 Blakeney Road, Almonte

The network of trails and pathways in Blakeney Park uses some footbridges to follow and traverse the Mississippi River through the Blakeney Falls.

e. **Coleman Island Park Trail** (Graham Park), 30 Wellington Street, Almonte

This waterfront trail extends from Wellington Street to Mill Falls.

f. **Eleanor Wright Park Trail**, Duke Street, Appleton

The trail in Eleanor Wright Park is available all four seasons from hiking to snowshoeing.

g. **Gemmill Park Trail**, 186 Bridge Street, Almonte

The trail in Gemmill Park is approximately 2 km in length and includes several observation points.

h. **Graystone Trail**, Appleton Side Road

This trail runs for 1 kilometre (km) from Greystone Estates to Appleton Side Road. Only cyclists and pedestrians are welcomed on this trail.

i. **High Lonesome Nature Reserve**, 867 Carbine Road, Pakenham

A network of 8 km of trails runs through this 200-acre property owned by the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (MMLT). The trail runs through the forests, over the hills and streams, by the ponds and through the meadows. The MMLT has committed to conserve High Lonesome as a nature reserve in perpetuity.

j. **Metcalfe Geoheritage Park Trail**, 250 Almonte Street West, Almonte

The trail is located near the Mississippi River Power Corp Hydro Plant at the west end of Mill Street. The Riverwalk, listed below, connects to this trail. Amenities along this trail include:

- i. Boat Launch with Public Dock
- ii. Geoheritage Display
- iii. Picnic Area
- iv. Public Art
- v. Public Washrooms
- vi. Seating

k. **Mill of Kintail**, 2854 Ramsay Concession 8, Almonte

This trail runs 4.7 km at the historic site of the Mill of Kintail. The trail is well marked and takes the visitors to the mill and over the bridge. The site and trail are operated by the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA). Other amenities at this site include:

- i. Gatehouse
- ii. Parking Area – at a cost
- iii. Picnic Area
- iv. Playground
- v. Washrooms



l. Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT)

This multi-use trail crosses the Municipality and provides 4-season opportunities for motorized and non-motorized users to explore the community. This trail is maintained by Lanark County; it crosses boundaries of Carleton Place, Almonte, and Pakenham. The 2024 Transportation Master Plan considers the OVRT as a utilitarian active transportation corridor considering it connects together multiple communities of the Municipality. The Mississippi Mills trailheads and parking areas are located on Reserve Street in Almonte and at 173 Waba Road in Pakenham.

m. Riverwalk, Almonte

A scenic walk along the Mississippi River in downtown Almonte, which is approximately 1.3 km in length. The Riverwalk also connects to the OVRT. Amenities along this trail include:

- i. Boardwalks
- ii. Interpretive Signage
- iii. Seating
- iv. Stairway

n. Rotary Centennial Trail, County Road 29

This trail is located between Carleton Place and Appleton; it is shared between the Town of Carleton Place and the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

o. Veteran's Memorial Walk, 257 Old Perth Road, Almonte

This pathway runs between Perth and Bridge Streets. The pathway is planted with 120 Norway maples dedicated to veterans. This trail is a joint venture between the Municipality and the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 240 Almonte.

8.5 Outdoor Amenities Inventory

The following outdoor amenities listed account for the total existing municipally-owned and operated supply; open play areas, park signs, picnic areas, seating areas, walking trails have not been quantified considering most of the parks and open spaces include these amenities.

Outdoor Amenities	Quantity
Athletic Track	1
Baseball Fields	3
Basketball Courts	4
Basketball Courts - Half	1
Beaches	2
Boat Launches – Small Boats	2
Boat Launches – Vehicular	4
BMX Track	1
Changerooms	1
Community Gardens	1



Disc Golf	1
Dog Park – currently as a pilot project	1
Gazebo	1
Lawn Bowling	1
Playground – with or without Swings	9
Rinks	3
Shade Structures	8
Skateboard Park	2
Sledding Hill	1
Soccer Fields – Full Size	7
Splashpad	1
Tennis Courts	3
Washrooms – Permanent	4
Washrooms – Seasonal	8

8.6 Outdoor Recreation Programs

Over the past several years, there has been an increase in the number of non-municipally run programs in Mississippi Mills. The following is a list of Outdoor Recreation Programs currently offered in Mississippi Mills:

- Recreational soccer (Pakenham)
- Almonte Tennis Club
- Lawn Bowling Club
- Little League
- Softball/lob ball
- Almonte Soccer
- Outdoor Skating (Augusta Street Park and Meadowglen Park, unprogrammed)
- Disc Golf (Gemmill Park)

8.7 Programs Fees and Charges

The following represents a high-level overview of the approach to fees and charges for recreation programs in the Municipality:

1. Most programs have a resident fee and a non-resident fee.
2. There is a “family” fee for soccer.
3. Soccer fees are towards children or family only.
4. There are no tournament rates for baseball fields and soccer fields.
5. There are no park rental fees / options in the Municipality.



8.8 Recreation Agreements

This section provides an overview of the agreements that are in place between the Municipality and other entities that support the delivery of recreation. These agreements include the use of outdoor municipal and non-municipal land or facilities and define the responsibilities of all parties for each agreement.

1. Use Agreements of Municipal Land

a. **Almonte Lawn Bowling Club**, 157 Robert Street, Almonte

The Municipality has an agreement with the Almonte Lawn Bowling Club for the lawn bowling facility. This is a 10-year agreement from September 2015 to September 2025. Under this agreement, the club is financially responsible for all operational costs, minor maintenance costs, and costs associated with preparing the water lines and water meter. The Club also administers the lawn bowling. The Municipality is responsible for all major renovations or maintenance costs and will work with the Club to determine cost estimates, apply for grants, and identify cost sharing options. Additionally, the Municipality is responsible for the water bill.

The Club is not charged monthly rent for use of the facility under this agreement.

b. **Almonte Tennis Club**, Gemmill Park, Almonte

The Municipality has a 10-year agreement with the Almonte Tennis Club, from August 2016 to August 2026. The Tennis Club operates and administers the annual tennis program and completes maintenance including maintenance to electrical panels, nets, and windscreen, minor surface repairs, and painting. While the Tennis Club is responsible for ongoing operations and maintenance expenses, the Municipality is responsible for the insurance coverage of the courts and for all major renovations and maintenance, with the understanding that the Club would provide major financial contributions for the agreed upon projects. The Municipality, in conjunction with the club, is to seek out grant opportunities to cover the capital costs for major renovations and upgrades.

The Club is not charged monthly rent for use of the facility under this agreement; the municipality also does not receive any portion of the membership fees.

2. Use Agreements of Non-Municipal Land

a. **North Lanark Agricultural Society**, 195 Water Street, Almonte

The North Lanark Agricultural Society facility is located on Haley Creek in Mississippi Mills. The Municipality's agreement with the Agricultural Society is for 10 years, from January 2019 to January 2029, and is mainly for use of the outdoor amenities. At the facility, there is access to the beach and a swimming program. Two portable stage pieces are stored in the barn through the winter months (December to May). The Society reserves the right to use the land for the Almonte Fair (third weekend of July) and the North Lanark Highland Games (third weekend of August).



The Municipality's responsibilities in the agreement with the Society include:

- i. Maintaining and paying for one portable washroom at the site from June 1 to August 31;
- ii. Cutting grass and trimming around buildings and fence lines;
- iii. Grading the access road as required;
- iv. Cleaning the beach; and
- v. Providing one waste receptacle to the existing boat launch between June 1 and August 31.

b. **Clayton Lake Dam Recreation Area**, Concession 2, Clayton

The Municipality's agreement with the Ministry of Natural Resources for Clayton Lake Dam Recreation Area is a 5-year agreement from January 2021 to December 2025. The agreement includes access to the boat launch, including the parking area. The Municipality's responsibilities include:

- i. Cutting the grass;
- ii. Cleaning the public washroom;
- iii. Monitoring and emptying waste receptacles; and
- iv. Maintaining equipment and grounds.

The Crown agrees to provide funding in the amount of \$450 per year and to make capital funds available as needed. The Crown also controls operations and works pertaining to the Dam structure, boat launch, road, access, signage, and parking area.

3. Shared Agreements

a. **Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario**

The shared agreement between the Municipality and the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario allows each organization to use certain facilities belonging to the other organization. The agreement began in 2019 and is to continue unless changed or terminated by one of the parties. No rental fees and charges are requested for the use of the facilities.

The agreement enables the municipality to use the following facility:

- i. Holy Name of Mary Catholic School

The agreement enables the School Board to use the following municipal facilities:

- i. Almonte and District Community Centre
- ii. Almonte and District Curling Rink
- iii. Gemmill Park Sports Facilities including the tennis courts and field house
- iv. Snedden-Casey Park
- v. McGregor Ball Park and Field



- vi. Appleton Sports Fields
- vii. Mississippi Mills Public Library – Almonte Branch
- viii. Mississippi Mills Public Library – Pakenham Branch

b. Upper Canada and District School Board

The shared agreement between the Municipality and the Upper Canada and District School Board allows each organization to use certain facilities belonging to the other organization. The agreement began in 2005 and is to continue unless changed or terminated by one of the parties. No rental fees and charges are requested for the use of the facilities.

The agreement enables the municipality to use the following facilities:

- i. Almonte and District High School and Playing Field
- ii. R. Tait McKenzie Public School and Playing Field
- iii. Naismith Public School and Playing Field
- iv. Pakenham Public School

The agreement enables the School Board to use the following municipal facilities without rental fees or charges requested for their use:

- i. Almonte and District Community Centre
- ii. Almonte and District Curling Rink
- iii. Stewart Community Centre
- iv. Pakenham Community Parks and Playing Fields
- v. Gemmill Park Sports Facilities including the tennis courts and field house
- vi. Snedden-Casey Ball Diamond and Field
- vii. McGregor Ball Park and Field (by reservation only)
- viii. Appleton Sports Fields

8.9 Constraints and Opportunities

8.9.1 Accessibility and Inclusion

The Municipality performs well on programming for seniors and older adults, this should be maintained and leveraged in the implementation of this Plan.

As part of the desktop review of parks and open spaces in the Municipality, it was observed that pathways are not present in all parks to link amenities and seating areas. Additionally, some parks and open spaces are not defined as municipal land, using visual cues such as park signage or standardized park furniture.



Additionally, surface treatments in parks and open spaces should be reviewed to confirm hard surface or safety surfacing for playgrounds provide access to all users and abilities.

8.9.2 Bookings

As described in the Culture and Municipal Events section above, residents do not generally find registering for programming to be easy with the requirement for in-person registration and payments.

8.9.3 Staffing

No lifeguards are present at the beaches due to cost and the poor water quality.

8.9.4 Amenities

There are no playground structures in municipal parks in Pakenham, but there is a playground at the elementary school that was funded by the Municipality and is open to the public. Efforts are being made to update signage accordingly.

8.9.5 Rentals

The following observations about community space rental fees should be notes:

1. There are no tournament rates for baseball fields and soccer fields.
2. There are no park rental fees / options in the Municipality.



9 | Indoor Recreation





9 Indoor Recreation

9.1 Overview

Indoor recreation spaces are important facilities for municipalities as they provide the opportunity for programmed events and activities for residents of all ages. Indoor recreation spaces also provide opportunities for recreation programming year-round and are more accessible for certain demographics for whom outdoor activities may be challenging. Indoor recreation facilities are social gathering places for residents to engage with one another or to engage in a shared activity regardless of age, gender, ability, or economic status (Ontario Recreation Facilities Association, 2025). Indoor recreation facilities include a range of types, such as arenas, libraries, community centres, gymnasiums, fitness centres, and more.

As with booking for cultural and event spaces, there is currently no online booking process in Mississippi Mills for registration to recreation programs and recreation spaces including ice pads. All advertising is published online via social media and the Municipality's website, while registration occurs in person at a Registration Event. There are two administration staff dedicated for bookings in Mississippi Mills including cultural, event, and recreation spaces and programs.

9.2 Indoor Recreation Facility Inventory

The Municipality owns and operates a series of indoor recreation facilities as indicated below; Appendix A provides a series of maps defining the locations of indoor recreation facilities available in the Municipality.

1. Arena Pads

a. **John Levi Community Centre – Arena Pad**, 182 Bridge Street, Almonte

Previously known as the Almonte & District Community Centre, this arena includes one (1) ice pad (85' x 200'), six (6) changerooms with showers and washroom facilities, and skate sharpening service. In 2010, the Municipality completed major upgrades and a building extension; the facility is now fully accessible including the spectator area, the changerooms, and washrooms. The refrigeration system and humidifier are not new, but the Municipality replaces components of the system every year to keep the system in good working conditions.

Although there is a kitchen space and counter, there is no current canteen available in the lobby of the arena.

Parking is provided to the west of the building and is full at time of events with no overflow parking available.

Seating is available on bleachers for 500 people. During the off-season, the slab is available for rent to welcome up to 500 people.



b. **Stewart Community Centre**, 112 MacFarlane Street, Pakenham

This arena includes one (1) ice pad (80' x 175') and five (5) changerooms with showers and washroom facilities. The Municipality completed major upgrades of this facility in 2013 including a building extension; the facility is fully accessible including the spectator area, change rooms, and washrooms. The refrigeration system and humidifier are not new, but the Municipality replaces components of the system every year to keep the system in good working conditions. This facility is on well and septic system.

Although there is a kitchen space and counter, there is no current canteen available in the lobby of the arena.

Seating is available on bleachers for 240 people. During the off-season, the slab is available for rent to welcome up to 500 people.

2. Curling Pads / Indoor Pickleball

a. **John Levi Community Centre – Curling Pads**, 182 Bridge Street, Almonte

The four (4) curling sheets are operated by the Almonte Curling Club as described in the agreement Section 9.6 below. In 2024, the Municipality upgraded all curling pads and replaced the curling refrigeration plant.

During the summer months, the pads are converted into four pickleball courts.

Additional to the ice pads listed above, the Municipality uses the community spaces described in Section 7 above to run and offer indoor recreation programs listed below such as yoga, youth dance, dance classes, fitness classes, and choir.

9.3 Distribution of Indoor Facilities

The indoor recreation facilities in Mississippi Mills are located in Almonte and Pakenham. This type of distribution is common for smaller and rural municipalities, as it focuses the indoor recreation facilities in the primary settlement areas. In Mississippi Mills, the Official Plan directs 70% of future growth to Almonte, as it is on full municipal servicing, and the remaining 30% to villages.

The current distribution of indoor facilities, between Almonte and Pakenham, is appropriate for Mississippi Mills. However, demand is increasing for these types of spaces, and more capacity is needed. The distribution of future indoor recreation facilities should be directed to Almonte and the villages in proportion to the direction for population growth.



9.4 Indoor Recreation Programs

The following is a list of Indoor Recreation Programs currently offered by the Municipality:

- Adult recreational badminton
- Adult recreational volleyball
- Pick-up hockey (municipal arenas)
- Recreational hockey (Pakenham)
- Babysitting Course
- Line Dancing
- Public skating (municipal ice rinks)
- Pickleball (winter in Pakenham and summer on Almonte Curling slab)
- Adult Yoga in Pakenham
- Seniors Shuffleboard (municipal facilities)
- 5-Span Strong (Pakenham)

As with Outdoor Recreation Programs, there has been an increase in Indoor Recreation Programs provided by non-municipal organizations over the past several years.

9.5 Programs Fees and Charges Summary

The following represents a high-level overview of the approach to fees and charges for programs in the Municipality.

1. Most programs have a resident fee and a non-resident fee.
2. Only the Line Dancing program offers “per class” fee versus “full season” fee option which is to be paid in full in advance.
3. The only program offering a youth versus adult rate is volleyball.
4. There is a “family” fee for hockey and public skating only.
5. Hockey fees are towards children or family only with the exception of pick-up hockey for adults at \$5 per session which is lower than any other program fee per session.
6. Public skating is the only program offering fees based on child, adult, senior, or family with fees per day or as a season pass.
7. There are no tournament rates for hockey rinks.

Because there is no municipal indoor pool, the Municipality started on January 1, 2024, to reimburse the difference between residents and non-residents fees as part of a pilot project. This reimbursement applies to public swim fees, swim lessons, and aquatic programs when residents of the Municipality visit one of the neighbouring pools located in Carleton Place, Arnprior, or West Ottawa.



9.6 Recreation Agreements

This section provides an overview of the agreements that are in place between the Municipality and other entities that support the delivery of indoor recreation. These agreements include the use of indoor municipal and non-municipal land or facilities and define the responsibilities of all parties of each agreement.

- a. **Almonte Inferno Junior Hockey Club**, John Levi Community Centre, 182 Bridge Street, Almonte, and Stewart Community Centre, 112 MacFarlane Street, Pakenham

The Municipality has an agreement with the Almonte Inferno Junior Hockey Club, which involves the use of both the John Levi Community Centre at 182 Bridge Street, Almonte, and Stewart Community Centre at 112 MacFarlane Street, Pakenham. This is a 3-season agreement for the 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025 seasons, ending March 2025 with the possibility to extend.

The Hockey Club is responsible for the cost and renovation upgrades to their change room at the John Levi Community Centre. The Hockey Club also pays an hourly rate for prime-time ice requirements, which may increase year to year as determined by Council, which is to be paid on a monthly basis. As well, the Hockey club manages an arena advertising program for the rink's boards and TV screen.

- b. **Almonte Curling Club**, John Levi Community Centre, 182 Bridge Street, Almonte

The Municipality's agreement with the Almonte Curling Club is a 1-season agreement from October 1, 2024, to March 30, 2025, a 26-week season.

Under this agreement, the Club is to:

- i. Pay monthly rent;
- ii. Use the Curling Pads and associated spaces between 6:30am and 12:00am except on statutory holidays;
- iii. Operate and administer the annual curling programs;
- iv. Maintain daily the ice surface including the purchase of supplies;
- v. Be responsible for minor repairs to the facility and equipment and for the purchase of equipment;
- vi. Be responsible for the booking and scheduling of events and activities in the Curling Facility; and
- vii. Permit the owner to book the Curling Facility for meetings and events at no charge.

The Municipality is responsible for:

- i. Providing and scheduling bar staff and for keeping a bar inventory;
- ii. Major repairs;
- iii. Janitorial services;



- iv. Initial startup of the ice plant; and
- v. Removing the ice from the facility.

9.7 Constraints and Opportunities

9.7.1 Accessibility and Inclusion

The recent building upgrades to the two arenas integrated accessibility features and make those buildings inclusive to all. Accessibility should remain a focus for all public recreation spaces in the Municipality.

9.7.2 Bookings

As with Cultural Spaces and Municipal Events, a key constraint the Municipality faces is the lack of an online booking system. The implementation of an online booking system would allow Mississippi Mills to keep up with municipal recreation best practices and population growth.



10 | Benchmarking





10 Benchmarking

10.1 Community Services Benchmarking

In 2023, Mississippi Mills created a Community Services Master Plan Benchmarking Data Report to look at municipalities comparable to Mississippi Mills and gain an understanding of their approach to service delivery. The municipal comparators included six (6) other municipalities with similar population: Severn, Greater Napanee, Loyalist, North Grenville, Russell, and Clarence-Rockland. The findings of the benchmarking exercise by the Municipality, summarized below, are organized by category:

1. Recreation

- a. Mississippi Mills has more facilities and fewer staff than its comparators.
 - i. All municipalities have at least one (1) arena / ice pad.
 - ii. Not all municipalities have a curling rink; it is sometime private.
 - iii. Pickleball is not available in all municipalities; it is often combined with tennis.
 - iv. All municipalities except for Severn have tennis courts.
 - v. Lawn bowling is only available in Mississippi Mills.
 - vi. Beaches are only found in Severn and Mississippi Mills.
 - vii. Not all municipalities have splashpads; North Grenville is the only municipality with an outdoor pool.
 - viii. Only Loyalist has a municipal indoor pool; Russell planned to have a municipal pool in 2026 and Clarence-Rockland partnered with the YMCA for their indoor pool.
 - ix. There were 20 parks in Mississippi Mills at time of the Benchmarking Exercise; the lowest number of parks is in Severn with 10 parks and the highest number of parks is in Loyalist with 35 parks.
- b. There are three approaches to recreation program delivery among comparators: internal staff, contract to outside groups (e.g. YMCA, Boy and Girls Club), or volunteer based.
- c. Community halls and buildings are either municipally operated or operated by others.
- d. There are various approaches to including capital in fees or having them property tax-funded.
- e. The construction costs of swimming pools and multi-use facilities are significant.

2. Events

- a. Mississippi Mills could benefit from the development of a formal in-kind policy.
- b. Mississippi Mills seems to have a more developed community awards policy than most comparators.
- c. Mississippi Mills promotes, facilitates, and delivers a large number of events relative to comparators.

3. Culture and Museums

- a. Mississippi Mills has more museums operating within the municipality than any of its neighbours.



4. Childcare

- a. The top childcare issue in Mississippi Mills is a shortage of staff, which occurs because of staff moving on to school ECE assistant positions or leaving their career in childcare altogether.
- b. Comparators' childcare centres are not considering expansion at this time.
- c. Many comparators have standalone centres that are dispersed throughout the district.
- d. There are strategic plans for childcare at the CSMS level (United counties of Prescott, Russell, and Lanark) which support growth including supporting retention and training of ECEs, but there is no funding for new builds.
- e. Waitlists continue to grow in all municipalities. Mississippi Mills' waitlist is over 600 names, many requiring immediate care or care within 2 years. The majority of families on the waitlist are from Mississippi Mills.

5. Libraries

- a. Programming at libraries among comparator municipalities is varied. Only three comparators (in addition to Mississippi Mills) offer programming specific to seniors.
- b. In municipalities with two branches, the majority of services are provided at both locations.
- c. All libraries offer proctoring services, but the vast majority charge a fee for this service, unlike Mississippi Mills.
- d. Fees and rental rates differ across comparator municipalities.

Rates and rental fees have also been reviewed as part of the benchmarking exercise; this review and analysis was completed by reviewing rates used by two (2) neighbouring municipalities: Carleton Place and Arnprior. The following provides a summary of the general findings:

6. Rates and Rental Fees

- a. Carleton Place has two (2) sizes of halls: large or small.
- b. There is no rental fee for parks in Mississippi Mills.
- c. Fees and rental rates differ across comparator municipalities.



11 | Strategic Directions





11 Strategic Directions

To guide the establishment of recommendations for the Municipality of Mississippi Mills Community Services Master Plan, a series of six (6) guiding strategies have been developed. These strategies set an approach towards recommendations and actions for this Plan.

11.1 Childcare

11.1.1 Vision

“Provide high-quality learning through accessible, inclusive, and equitable care that supports positive and responsive interactions amount children, parents, and staff, and fosters children’s exploration, play, and inquiry.”

11.1.2 Guiding Strategies

11.1.2.1 Service Level Targets

The population of the 0-4 year age cohort has been increasing since 2011, with growth between 4.5% to 5% for every 5-year period.

Table 5: Historical Population of 0-4 Year Age Cohort 2006-2021

Age Cohort	2006	2011	2016	2021
0 to 4	565	560	630	695

Given this historical population growth, it can be reasonably expected that the population of this age cohort will continue to grow at a similar rate. This could result in an estimated population of 766 children in the 0-4 age cohort by 2031. These children and families are serviced by the broader childcare ecosystem in the area, of which municipal childcare makes up a portion.

Table 6: Forecasted Population, 0-4 year old

2021 (actual)	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046
695	729	766	804	844	886

Considering there is currently a waitlist of more than 425 childcare spaces for children in the 0-4 age cohort, childcare in Mississippi Mills is underserved. Additional childcare spaces should be planned accordingly to ensure that there is sufficient childcare available for families who move to the area, as this is a top priority for young families. Using the 2021 population of the 0-4 year age cohort, and using the current 136 childcare spaces for children under 4 year-old in Mississippi Mills as a reference, the service level provided by the Municipality to its community is 1:5. To continue with the 2021 service level to the



end of this Plan (2032), a minimum of 153 childcare spaces for children under 4 year-old, or an additional 17 new childcare spaces minimum, should be provided to the community of Mississippi Mills.

Moreover, the Ontario Access and Inclusion Framework 2023 Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare System from June 2023 indicates that 1 childcare space per 2.7 children is a reasonable service level; it should be assumed this service level would be divided between municipal and private daycares. Given the split of municipal and private daycare spaces, it would be reasonable for **the Municipality to target a service level provision of 1 childcare space per 3.5 children**. This ratio is improved from the current provision level, which does not meet the current need, but is not as high as the Ontario Access and Inclusion Framework ratio, which represents a total of municipal and private spaces. **At 1 childcare space per 3.5 children, the Municipality would need to add 82 childcare spaces by the end of this Plan to keep up with expected population growth.**

11.1.2.2 Planning & Partnerships

Efforts should be made to connect with students enrolled in Early Childhood Educators (ECE) programs from nearby colleges, such as Algonquin Colleges, to **encourage student training at the Mississippi Mills Childcare facilities**. This may lead to a higher probability of retaining new ECEs post-college. Possibilities to expand funding programs for tuition, travel and employment supports with existing non-ECE staff should be explored through partnerships with Lanark County.

Earlier in the education process, the Municipality should **consider attending the career fairs organized by local high schools** to present and promote childcare opportunities in the community.

11.1.2.3 Improve & Enhance

To meet accessibility and program requirements and with the objective to provide more childcare spaces in a central location, **the current main childcare centre located at 208 State Street, should be relocated to a new facility**. The new facility should be designed to offer the opportunities to grow and expand as needed in the future, with the Municipality modelling budget allocation for childcare several decades into the future in order to meet demand. The new facility should focus on providing accessible and inclusive care for all children with rooms for special needs and therapy spaces.

Discussions around **inclusive space design that enable the delivery of care to children of various abilities** should occur with Connectwell. This discussion can address the need for inclusive spaces, both indoor and outdoor, that are appropriate for differently abled children so that more Mississippi Mills children are able to receive high-quality care.

Additionally, nature and forest school curricula are becoming more popular and in-demand. Elements from such a curriculum should be considered for inclusion in Mississippi Mills Childcare facilities, as this can help to attract parents and ECEs to Mississippi Mills. The new **childcare facility should include the outdoor spaces as “classrooms” with an emphasis on outdoor / nature experience** and providing a diversity of challenging play opportunities for all children. Additional efforts can be made to ensure that childcare programming is modern and desirable.



11.1.2.4 Promotion & Communication

Mississippi Mills childcare services should also **explore alternatives for provider/parent communication** through available apps or technology. Parents are increasingly interested in receiving updates about their child throughout the day or at day's end and the use of apps or technology would allow the parents to select their preferred notification approach. Public engagement showed that parents using childcare in Mississippi Mills are interested in more frequent and improved communications from the childcare facilities.

11.2 Culture and Events

11.2.1 Vision

“Use arts and culture to foster a strong sense of place, express community values, and enhance the landscape of Mississippi Mills. Arts, culture programming and community features contribute to the sense of place, local economy and to the general quality of life of the community.”

11.2.2 Guiding Strategies

11.2.2.1 Planning & Partnerships

Cultural production, programming, and events are organized and hosted by Mississippi Mills, and by other organizations such as not-for-profit groups and private providers, which is a common practice among other communities. In order for cultural programming to be expanded, support is generally needed from the Municipality through the provision of facilities/spaces, learning programs, and assistance in hosting events and programs. It is important that the Municipality **continues to support the provision of spaces for events and programs** and to **support and nurture local artists and organizations to increase their capacity, stability, and sustainability**. Investing in the Municipality's artists and art/culture organizations will enhance the Municipality's long-term strategy to support and retain professional artists in the community, thereby diversifying social, cultural, and economic opportunities. The Municipality should continue to work with artists and art/culture organizations to identify their specific needs for the delivery of successful cultural events and programming.

It is also important that the Municipality **continues to support arts and cultural events through community grants**; the grants and funding options should be reassessed regularly to meet the needs of the community. These initiatives are supported by the Community Official Plan, which communicates the importance of public art in Mississippi Mills.

Considering the importance of public arts for the community, the Municipality should **consider developing a Public Art Policy** outlining the process for new art installations and murals, defining responsibilities of the Municipality, and establishing the maintenance requirements of the art installations and murals. A Public Art Policy would also provide directions for any donations and overall funding of art installations and murals.



Continued partnerships between the Municipality and the Library and/or Museum are also important for the delivery of cultural services and programming. Opportunities should be **explored to expand these partnerships and to co-lead initiatives that would be beneficial to the whole community** such as a Collaborative Steering Committee for Museums.

11.2.2.2 Improve & Enhance

With the objective to reduce friction and potential confusion to groups and residents at time of booking community spaces for events, **a formal Booking Policy should be developed and made available online** on the municipal website establishing rules and, when needed, penalties for any cancellations. In addition, the Municipality should **consider investing in an online booking system** where online payment would be possible and the event calendar would be updated once a booking is approved by the Municipality.

With the goal to respond to the request for the booking of outdoor events, more specifically for weddings or other private events, **parks and open spaces should be reviewed to assess if they should be added to the list of rentable community spaces**. Related to this addition is the use of parkland and open spaces for private events; a Park Permitting / Park Lease Agreement should be developed to set rules and a framework for private use of public outdoor recreation spaces.

11.2.2.3 Promotion & Communication

Consideration should be given to promotion and advertisement of cultural programming and services. Although the Municipality has its own online newsletter provided quarterly, the MM Messenger, public engagement feedback indicated that some people did not partake in cultural programs or events because they were not aware of them. **Additional promotion and advertisement of the online newsletter should take place in the cultural and community spaces** to create awareness around events in the community and to increase the number of potential participants. Increasing the number of participants at cultural programs and events can increase the sense of community pride and encourage social interaction. The frequency of this online newsletter should also be reconsidered to remind members of the communities of upcoming events.

11.2.2.4 Monitoring & Maintenance

Like other programming, cultural programming and services can be improved by **creating opportunities for regular feedback from the public**. Seeking regular feedback through surveys or program feedback cards is helpful for gathering information that can inform improvements to programs in the future, helping participation remain high. Feedback should be sought on specific programs and their strengths and weaknesses, as well as on cultural programming as a whole to identify gaps that may exist in the types of programs offered.



11.3 Outdoor Recreation

11.3.1 Vision

“Enhance community well-being and individual health for people of all ages and abilities through opportunities for outdoor recreation and social interaction.”

11.3.2 Guiding Strategies

11.3.2.1 Service Level Targets

Currently, the Municipality owns approximately 70.6 ha of parkland. Based on the 2021 population for the Municipality of 14,740, Mississippi Mills provides parks and open spaces at 4.78 ha per 1,000 population. The 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan service level target was established at 4.0 ha per 1,000 population. As Mississippi Mills continues to grow, the Municipality should aim to **continue to maintain parkland provision at 4.0 ha per 1,000 population.**

As the population grows, it will be necessary to add more parkland to maintain this service level. It should be noted that future residential subdivisions planned for the next 5 to 15 years will add an estimated 10.24 ha to Mississippi Mills' parkland supply. However, with this additional parkland, the service level will still decrease to approximately 4.35 ha per 1,000 population by 2031 based on population projections. Although this is above the target service level of 4.0 ha per 1,000 population, these trends indicate that Mississippi Mills could fall below the target service level over time without continued parkland dedication given the relatively quick projected population growth. The Municipality should also aim to **provide an adequate supply of outdoor recreation facilities.**

11.3.2.2 Planning & Partnerships

To shape the future of parks, trails, and open spaces in Mississippi Mills, the Municipality should use the parkland classification system included in the Community Official Plan to **establish the list of active amenities to be included in each park**; many parks in the Municipality predominantly include passive recreation opportunities with seating and walkway trails and pathways.

Ongoing **coordination with developers** throughout the development approval process should be prioritized so that a balance is provided between obtaining new parkland, investment in park amenities, and the cost of operations and maintenance of new lands and/or amenities. Coordinating with developers early in the development process provides opportunities to create linkages between parks, open spaces and trails within the Municipality.

The Municipality should also **continue to involve the community during the planning and design of new parks and in major park improvement projects through public consultation.** Consultation with the community can provide valuable feedback in meeting the needs of the residents.



Finally, the Municipality should **continue to work with local agencies, community groups, volunteer organizations, and adjacent municipalities** (e.g. the Lanark County, Conservation Authority) to implement parks and trails upgrades. These upgrades can vary in scale and serve the broader region creating a more connected parks and trails system.

11.3.2.3 Improve & Enhance

Inclusivity, accessibility, and equitability should be at the forefront of parks, trails, and open spaces by removing barriers to participation. Parks and open spaces should support the accessibility needs of the community by connecting park amenities with pathways and providing universally accessible park furniture. Universal Design Principles result in flexible features in parks that make everyone feel more welcome and comfortable (i.e. hard surfaces for pathways, accessible park furniture, water fountains, etc.). Additionally, adding park signs to highlight the presence of parks and open spaces as public spaces should be considered.

Parks and open spaces should also be improved and developed with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in mind. A CPTED approach to design of public spaces is crucial for ensuring the good use of the spaces and safety for all users. A CPTED approach should also consider how operation and maintenance zones for staff and day-to-day activities are provided adjacent to parks, open spaces, and around recreation facilities. These operation zones include storage buildings, outdoor storage areas for equipment, excess material, and furniture. Adequate fencing should be provided to support good use of the municipal spaces.

11.3.2.4 Promote Active Living

Mississippi Mills' population is aging and changing; almost 50% of the population in 2021 was over 50 years old and less than 30% of the population was under 30 years old. Outdoor recreation spaces should aim to support and promote opportunities for active living. **A diversity of outdoor facilities targeted towards older adults but also youth should be provided to meet the growing demand for a mix of high to lower-intensity recreational activities.** Recreation opportunities in parks and open spaces should be provided through unstructured and structured experiences that encourage regular physical activity and healthy aging. Additionally, when planning for outdoor spaces, the Municipality should aim to **include outdoor facilities that are intergenerational and multi-purpose** so that they can accommodate all age groups simultaneously including youth, teenagers, and seniors. Combined opportunities for passive recreation (i.e., seating areas, trails, and shelters); parks and open spaces will provide community hubs for social interactions.

Outdoor recreation amenities such as the tennis courts and lawn bowling are owned and maintained by the Municipality but require a membership to clubs for residents to access and use. The Municipality should **consider Introduction Days for non-members** to experience new outdoor activities such as tennis and lawn bowling. Such Introduction Days may occur monthly or bi-monthly; amendments to existing use agreements would be required. It is also important that clubs be treated equitably in terms of support from the Municipality. For example, expectations for contributions toward capital costs or renovations should be similar. Due to the nature of the curling club, this specific arrangement may look different compared to other clubs.



During the community engagement, residents indicated the desire for outdoor pickleball courts in the community. Additionally, it was noted that there are no playground structures in municipal parks in Pakenham. The Municipality should **consider adding missing outdoor recreation amenities to provide a diversity of opportunities for all ages and abilities** including a new central location for outdoor pickleball courts and ensuring playground structures are available in all villages and community hubs.

Look for opportunities to **create linkages between existing pathways, trails and parkland** so that it is easier to travel throughout the Municipality using the park and trail system. New parkland can be identified in the development approval process, allowing new growth areas of the Municipality to be in proximity to parkland.

11.3.2.5 Embrace the Environment and Sustainable Design

To encourage community well-being, the Municipality should **promote connections with nature**. There is also a need to consider climate change in determining design and maintenance standards for outdoor facilities (including parks, sports fields, trails, and open spaces). Climate change leads to longer outdoor sport seasons, which causes excessive wear down of outdoor sports facilities and amenities, along with the need for more shade structures, tree canopy coverage and drinking fountains.

In alignment with promoting connections with nature, the Municipality should **review all the municipal waterfront land, access their conditions and develop a Waterfront Access Master Plan** to provide more public access to water and emphasize the importance of water as a resource and important natural feature for the community. Land that is within floodplains and along waterfronts should also be monitored closely to track impacts and useability of amenities.

11.3.2.6 Monitoring & Maintenance

With long term maintenance in mind, the Municipality should **identify potential opportunities for refurbishment of aging amenities**. This so that they can continue to properly service the growing community and review which amenities and spaces should be prioritized above others. One facility within the Municipality especially requiring renewal is the surface of the tennis courts; detailed review and analysis of the required renewal of the courts will be required.



Indoor Recreation

11.3.3 Vision

“Build a sense of community and offer a wide range of indoor recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities to encourage social interactions that support physical and mental health.”

11.3.4 Guiding Strategies

11.3.4.1 Service Level Target

Based on the benchmarking analysis completed by the Municipality in 2024 comparing Mississippi Mills with the Township of Severn, Town of Greater Napanee, Township of Loyalist, Municipality of North Grenville, Township of Russell and City of Clarence-Rockland, it was determined that indoor recreation amenities available in the Municipality are typically equal or above what is offered in the comparable communities. Currently, the service level for the different indoor recreation and community spaces using the 2021 population of 14,470 are as follows:

Table 7: Current Service Levels – Indoor Recreation

	Arena Pads	Curling Sheets	Community Halls	Pickleball Courts	Pools
Quantity of Amenity	2	4	3	4 (seasonal – summer)	0
Service Level	7,370	3,617.5	4,823	3,617.5	n/a

The Municipality should **continue to provide the current service levels for indoor recreational facilities**. Although the Municipality does not own and operate an indoor pool, only the Township of Loyalist from the municipalities assessed as part of the benchmarking analysis has an indoor pool that is municipally owned and operated; the City of Clarence-Rockland has an indoor pool but it is operated by a third party and the Township of Russell pool is under construction and to be opened in 2026. Hence, the lack of an indoor pool in Mississippi Mills is not unusual and does not necessarily need to be addressed.

One type of indoor recreation amenity that was not analysed is the presence of municipal gymnasiums. Currently, the Municipality does not own gymnasiums to provide opportunities for indoor basketball, badminton or other similar indoor recreation activities. The Municipality **should assess the need for an indoor pool and gymnasiums** as the community continues to grow.

11.3.4.2 Planning & Partnerships

As the population and demographic shifts occur, there will be a need for the Municipality’s recreational spaces to also shift and accommodate these changes. There is a need to **plan for the introduction of new, trending activities, age-friendly sports and age-specific programming**, such as for seniors and teens.



The Municipality should **encourage joint utilization of municipal and other publicly or privately owned space**, such as community rooms for after-school programming. Currently, the Municipality has agreements with the North Lanark Agricultural Society as well as several schools within the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario and the Upper Canada and District School Board. The Municipality should seek additional opportunities to partner with not-for-profit and private providers to provide more multi-purpose spaces as well as review and update operating agreements with groups who access community recreation facilities.

11.3.4.3 Monitoring & Maintenance

Quality municipal indoor recreation facilities are essential for the Municipality in offering effective and efficient recreation services that meet community expectations and needs. The Municipality should **continue to be proactive with infrastructure upgrades** to ensure the mechanical systems are efficient. Although the Municipality upgraded all its indoor recreation facilities to meet accessibility requirements, it should **continue to monitor and address accessibility** needs in all indoor recreation facilities. In addition to ensuring these recreational facilities are accessible within the interior, the Municipality should be proactive about the exterior accessibility; evaluations of parking lots, ramps, stairs, and walkways to entrances and exits for up-to-date accessibility requirements will contribute to meeting the community needs.

The Municipality should also **continue to monitor operating costs for facility maintenance** so that they can continue to properly service the growing community and review which facilities and spaces should be prioritized above others.

Consider using a climate-conscious approach and incorporating energy efficiency upgrades to reduce energy cost and carbon emissions and environmental footprints, and in the day-to-day operation and maintenance activities to reduce waste materials.

11.4 Programs and Services Delivery

11.4.1 Vision

“Offer and promote a wide range of programs for all ages, abilities, and identities with opportunities for participation, skills development, volunteering, social interactions, cultural, economic, and environmental developments.”

11.4.2 Guiding Strategies

11.4.2.1 Planning & Partnerships

While facilities and parks are important features and destinations in the Municipality, the delivery of various programs within these facilities and parks are key to keeping the community engaged and promoting a sense of community. The Municipality currently provides several recreational programs, including soccer, fitness classes, skills development (e.g. the babysitting course), badminton, and more.



Independent sports committees, organizations, groups or teams also run various programs within the Municipality, utilizing municipal, school board, or private facility spaces. **Maintaining these valuable partnerships with community organizations is necessary to ensure that the community is well-supported in terms of recreational and cultural programs.**

Some organized sports currently operate through formal partnerships or use agreements with other existing organizations, facility managers, and/or municipal staff for the use of specific municipally owned facilities. Not all external organizations maintain a formal partnership or agreement with the Municipality and there is no standardized approach to these ongoing, valuable partnerships. From an asset management perspective, a **standardized approach and agreement** is important to ensure there are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each party. Customization to reflect specific circumstances can be incorporated into such agreements, as needed. Standardization of agreements with recreational service providers would serve as a template for new and diverse types of programming to be introduced, as interested community members would have a clear roadmap for developing and regulating new, needed programming.

Based on community feedback, community needs, and recreation trends, the Municipality should **continue to provide diverse municipal programming**. Additionally, the collaboration between municipal staff, local sports and recreational organizations, and cultural programming providers (i.e., libraries, schools, etc.) should be promoted to support community-wide involvement for all ages and abilities while reducing service duplication or inefficiencies.

During the lifespan of this Plan, the Municipality should **continue to use share agreements with different entities for the use and the operation of facilities**. The Municipality should also **continue to strengthen partnerships with local sports and recreational organizations** that increase the economic development potential of the facilities or service in a manner that provides return on the investment into the facility. As noted above, the Municipality currently has existing agreements with the North Lanark Agricultural Society, recreation clubs, and local school boards.

11.4.2.2 Improve & Enhance

Where gaps in services exist, the Municipality should **develop new programs that align with the community's needs, specifically programming for seniors and teenagers**.

The Municipality should **consider the implementation of an online booking system for the rental of recreation facilities and to enroll in recreation programs**. This is a noticeable gap in the Municipality's service provision practices that is common among other Ontario municipalities. An online booking system is beneficial for several reasons. First, it creates a directory of all amenities and programs that are available for rental or registration, allowing residents to easily see what is available; this streamlines the booking process, which is currently done over the phone by municipal staff, as users input their own information. Second, the Municipality can more easily track the usage of amenities and participation to programs by having the information immediately available and well-documented. This contributes to the Municipality's ability to meet the needs of the population by, for example, implementing more sessions for high-demand programs or making improvements to amenities that are well-used. Third, online payment can be facilitated through the online booking system, which creates a simplified and more convenient payment and booking process for both the users and the Municipality.



11.4.2.3 Promote Active Living

Not everyone is an expert and everyone should be able to learn something new whatever their age! For all recreation and cultural programs, from children to seniors, **each program should offer a diversity of complexity combining the beginners, intermediates and advanced learners**. By offering this range of complexity within each program or class it provides the opportunity for all residents to learn new things, advance at their own rhythm and stay healthy.

11.4.2.4 Promotion & Communication

Increased promotion and advertisement of Municipality-run programs on various platforms is crucial to getting community members interested and aware of the opportunities and events happening in the Municipality, especially with the high number of new people moving into the community. A lack of awareness of what the Municipality has to offer was a recurring theme from the public consultation, which can be resolved by improving and increasing promotional and advertisement initiatives. The frequency of the online newsletter MM Messenger should be reconsidered to remind members of the communities of upcoming events and consider alternative methods of promotion to younger audiences.

A decline in volunteerism is a trend seen across Ontario municipalities. **Attracting, maintaining, and incentivizing volunteerism throughout the year** should be a key goal throughout the lifetime of this Plan.

11.4.2.5 Monitoring

Monitor success and needs regularly by providing regular opportunities for community members to indicate satisfaction and provide feedback. Usage and participation rates of rentals and recreational programming should also be evaluated to better respond to community needs as they change over time; community feedback may also be incorporated to improve service policies and procedures.

11.5 Projects, Staff, and Finance

11.5.1 Vision

**“Deliver successful childcare, cultural, community, and recreation initiatives
in a sustainable, effective, and efficient manner
while maintaining qualified staff and resources.”**

11.5.2 Guiding Strategies

11.5.2.1 Planning & Partnerships

When developing parks and other childcare, culture, or recreation amenities and facilities, the Municipality should **work with design consultants to meet industry standards** for the development of all types of amenities.



Integrating recommendations and insights from the Municipality's Asset Management Plan and capital lifecycle planning can assist with noting which amenities or facilities are reaching the end of their lifecycle and require maintenance. Keeping an updated internal list of parks and recreation assets within the Municipality can provide guidance for the planning of new facilities and improvements as needed. The Municipality should **continue to demonstrate fiscal responsibility** through the cost-efficient management of facilities and resources and apply reasonable and appropriate user fees that are annually reviewed.

Good staff management and structure are key to the smooth day-to-day operation of the childcare, culture, and recreation departments in the Municipality. As the Municipality's population increases, ensuring that the childcare, culture, and recreation departments have an **adequate number of full-time and flexible part-time staff to maintain existing facilities, operate more programming, and plan for growth** is key to delivering high quality parks, recreation, childcare, and culture services. **Attracting and maintaining qualified team members throughout the year** should also be a key goal for the Municipality.

The shared positions between the Economic Development Department and Recreation Department are a good holistic approach to deliver services to the community; **as the Municipality grows, the roles and responsibilities of the shared positions should be reassessed** to respond to the needs of the community.

11.5.2.2 Improve & Enhance

The Municipality should **continue to complete feasibility studies and conceptual planning** for major capital projects for parks and facilities well in advance to be ready to take advantage of funding and partnership opportunities as they arise.

In continuity with the surcharge fees associated to auditorium fees, the Municipality should **consider a cost recovery approach to support childcare, culture, and recreation facilities and amenities and help offset the maintenance, renovation, and restoration costs**.

11.5.2.3 Monitoring

Long-term sustainability of facilities and infrastructure systems should be maximized by utilizing thoughtful design to ensure services are provided in a safe, reliable and affordable way. **Life-cycle audits for parks and facilities should be undertaken regularly** to identify opportunities for the redevelopment, renovation, or decommissioning of amenities and facilities.

To create an effective department which is well-managed, efficient, and innovative, the Municipality should **implement a process to encourage continuous service improvement** by identifying service areas for review annually with the goal of improving service, function, and efficiency.



12 | Recommendations





12 Recommendations

The recommendations developed for the Community Services Master Plan are the result of the public consultation done by Mississippi Mills, staff feedback, industry trends analysis, and the assessment of needs and gaps of services provided by the Municipality. The recommendations cover actions related to childcare; culture and events; capacity-building and service level requirements; collaboration and partnerships; communications and promotion; indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities and amenities; and seasonality. The recommendations work together to create a holistic vision for the Municipality.

The recommendations in this document have been developed to holistically meet the needs of the Municipality and were guided by the five (5) goals and priorities of the **Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing**; these goals and priorities have been modified and adapted to ensure they are not only applicable to recreation but also to childcare, culture, and community services.

1. **Supportive Environments** – Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation and help to build strong, caring communities.
2. **Inclusion and Access** – Increase inclusion and access to childcare, culture, and recreation for all ages and abilities.
3. **Active Living** – Foster active living through physical recreation and social interactions.
4. **Connecting People and Nature** – Help people connect to nature.
5. **Capacity and Availability** – Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of childcare services, cultural spaces and public art, community services, and recreation amenities.

The recommendations have been created to work together and recognize the unique context of Mississippi Mills within Eastern Ontario. Some recommendations will have greater relevance and importance for certain communities or neighbourhoods over others. The recommendations provided in this document are not intended to be a definitive list, as additional capital repairs, operating expenditures, and other initiatives outside the scope of this Plan may be identified and prioritized on an as-needed basis throughout the lifespan of this Plan. The recommendations are meant to serve as a guide to drive Mississippi Mills' Childcare, Culture, Community Services, and Recreation activities forward over the next seven years. This Plan also sets a general course for meeting the needs of the community as the Municipality grows, and infrastructure improvements are required.

The recommendations listed here are based on what is needed and important to provide continued growth of the relevant community services at the present time. The recommendations were created with the consideration of priority and of budgeting pressures in order to present recommendations that are both useful and feasible. The impacts of changing provincial priorities and policies on these recommendations will need to be continually monitored for their potential implications for funding and legislation related to the areas of interest of this Strategic Plan.

Taking all the components listed above in consideration, the recommendations are divided into the following sections: 1) Childcare; 2) Culture & Events; 3) Recreation; 4) Programs & Services, 5) Projects, Staff, and Finances; it should be noted that Outdoor and Indoor Recreation have been combined together considering some aspects of the recommendations are applicable to both outdoor and indoor activities.



12.1 Childcare

12.1.1 Service Level Targets

1. The population of the 0-4 year age cohort has been increasing since 2011, with growth between 4.5% to 5% for every 5-year period. Given this historical population growth, it can be reasonably expected that the population of this age cohort will continue to grow at a similar rate. This could result in an estimated population of 766 children in the 0-4 age cohort by 2031. These children and families are serviced by the broader childcare ecosystem in the area, of which municipal childcare makes up a portion. Considering there is currently a waitlist of more than 425 childcare spaces for children in the 0-4 age cohort, childcare in Mississippi Mills is underserved. Additional municipal childcare spaces should be planned accordingly to ensure that there is sufficient childcare availability for families who move to the area, as this is a top priority for young families. Using the 2021 population of the 0-4 year age cohort, and the current service level of 136 childcare spaces for children under 4 years old in Mississippi Mills as a reference, the service level provided by the Municipality to its community today is 1:5. To continue with the 2021 service level to the end of this Strategic Plan (2032), a minimum of 153 childcare spaces for children under 4 years old, or an additional 17 new childcare spaces minimum, should be provided to the community of Mississippi Mills.

Moreover, the Ontario Access and Inclusion Framework 2023 Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare System from June 2023 indicates that 1 childcare space per 2.7 children is a reasonable service level; it should be assumed this service level would be divided between municipal and private daycares. Given the split of municipal and private daycare spaces, it would be reasonable for **the Municipality to target a service level provision of 1 childcare space per 3.5 children**. This ratio is improved from the current provision level, which does not meet the current need, but is not as high as the Ontario Access and Inclusion Framework ratio, which represents a total of municipal and private spaces. **At 1 childcare space per 3.5 children, the Municipality would need to add 82 childcare spaces by the end of this Plan to keep up with expected population growth.**

12.1.2 Planning, Policies & Partnerships

2. The Municipality should **connect with college students enrolled in Early Childhood Educators (ECE) programs** to present and promote employment opportunities in childcare in the community and to encourage student training at the Mississippi Mills childcare facilities. This may lead to a higher probability of attracting and retaining new ECEs post-college to the municipality. Possibilities to expand funding programs for tuition, travel, and employment support with existing non-ECE staff should be explored through partnerships with Lanark County.
 - a. Connect with ECE students from nearby colleges, such as Algonquin College and St. Lawrence College.
 - b. Attend career fairs organized by local high schools.



12.1.3 Improve & Enhance

3. To meet accessibility and program requirements and with the objective to provide more childcare spaces in a central location, **the current main childcare centre located at 208 State Street should be relocated and expanded to a new facility in Almonte.**

The new facility should be designed to offer the opportunities to grow and expand as needed in the future, which would allow the budget to be modelled across the coming decades. The new facility should focus on providing accessible and inclusive care for all children with rooms for special needs and therapy spaces. The new facility should also provide the opportunity to rent the community spaces/rooms to community members on weekends providing additional revenue to the Municipality (note: this does not include the daycare space).

4. **Each municipal childcare facility should consider the outdoor spaces as “classrooms”.** Outdoor classrooms should focus on outdoor and nature experiences and provide a diversity of challenging play opportunities for all children.
5. **Childcare spaces should be inclusive and equitable to enable the delivery of care to children of various abilities in the community.** Inclusive spaces include both indoor and outdoor environments; all spaces should meet accessibility and inclusivity various needs for differently abled children to allow children to fully participate. The Municipality should engage with Connectwell as part of the process to improve inclusivity and equitability of childcare services. Inclusivity and equitability should also be framed to meet provincial standards but would not include the provision of special health services (i.e. providing nurses), which is not feasible for childcare facilities unlike schools.
6. Co-location of **multi-generational services should be considered when possible**, such as including childcare facilities within or adjacent to seniors retirement homes , or integrating seniors or adults recreation facilities with childcare facilities to create inter-generational connections, as there are many benefits for individuals of all ages when generational divisions are minimized in public services.

12.1.4 Promotion & Communication

7. Mississippi Mills Childcare Services should **continue to provide regular and detailed provider / parent communication** through available apps or technology, like Lillio, the app currently in use. Parents are increasingly interested in receiving updates about their child throughout the day or at day's end and the continued and increased use of existing technology allows parents to select their preferred notification approach. Public engagement showed that parents using childcare in Mississippi Mills are interested in frequent and improved communications from the childcare facilities. As technological advancements occur, the Municipality should make **efforts to stay apprised of potential improved options that could come to market.**

12.2 Culture & Events

12.2.1 Service Level Targets

8. It is important that the Municipality **continue to support the provision of spaces for events and programs in the community.** Cultural production, programming, and events are organized and hosted by Mississippi Mills and other organizations such as not-for-profit groups and private providers, which is a common practice among other communities.



9. The Municipality should also **continue to support and nurture local artists and organizations to increase their capacity, stability, and sustainability**. Supporting the Municipality's artists and art/culture organizations will enhance the Municipality's long-term strategy to support and retain professional artists in the community, thereby diversifying social, cultural, and economic opportunities. The Municipality should continue to work with artists and art/culture organizations to identify their specific needs for the delivery of successful cultural events and programming. The Municipality should also help to facilitate relationships between local artists and developers to provide opportunities for art installations (e.g. murals, sculptures) to be included in new developments and should encourage the creation of art that is linked to local heritage.
10. The Municipality should **continue to support arts and cultural events through community grants, ensuring that these are allocated fairly and equitably to provide a variety of arts and cultural events**.
11. **The Museums should remain independent** (not municipally owned).

12.2.2 Planning, Policies & Partnerships

12. **Consider the development of a Partnership and Sponsorship Policy** specific to community events to seek alternate revenue sources to enhance programs and services provided by the Municipality and offset the cost to provide community festivals, events, etc. A Partnership and Sponsorship Policy provides a framework for staff to explore, execute, administer, and manage sponsorship opportunities and agreements in supporting programs and community events to enhance the experience as participants and visitors. A minimum annual investment should be set towards sponsorships, and each sponsor should be recognized year-round or at the sponsored community event. Partnership and sponsorship agreements should include responsibilities of all parties and conditions of the sponsorship.
13. The Municipality should **establish an inventory catalogue of venues available for community uses that could be made available to the community**. The inventory catalogue should identify equipment available (i.e. electrical outlets, seating, trash receptacles), capacity of the spaces, and be updated as improvements are made to support planning of maintenance works required.
14. Acknowledging the importance of public arts for the community, the Municipality should **consider formalizing a Public Art Policy** outlining the process for new art installations and murals, defining the responsibilities of the Municipality and artists and establishing the maintenance requirements of art installations and murals. A Public Art Policy should provide directions for collection, commissions, exhibitions, and overall funding of art installations and murals.
15. The Municipality should **review resource allocation and Municipal Funding requirements to maintain existing and future Public Art**.
16. The Municipality should **expand the partnerships with the Museums and develop co-lead initiatives** that would be beneficial to the whole community. Continued partnerships between the Municipality and the Library / Museum are also important for the delivery of cultural services and programming.
 - a. **Develop a Partnership Agreement for Museums** to define, at a minimum, the responsibilities of the Municipality and each Museum, space and staff allocation per Museum, funding allocation, etc. It would be beneficial for all three (3) Museums to be included in the same Partnership Agreement with the Municipality. As part of this Partnership Agreement, a shared pool of Museum staff could be created to strengthen the collaboration between the museums.

Municipal funding would be provided based on financial requirements to a set limit established by Council.
 - b. **Create a Collaborative Steering Committee for Museums** including members of each Museum and the municipality to work collaboratively to formalize joint actions and initiatives.



17. The funding amount for each **Museum operating costs should remain at 30% of their operating budget**, until a Partnership Agreement with the Museums is developed and signed; funding amount should be reviewed based on the Partnership Agreement.

12.2.3 Improve & Enhance

18. The Municipality should **explore various options, venues, and spaces to accommodate, encourage, and promote visual arts and performing arts**, including hallways, lobby areas, community halls, street corners, parking lots, pocket parks, partnered private studios, etc. Public Art may also be integrated to site furniture and urban design features. Additionally, the Municipality should explore developer contributions to Public Art.
19. **Performance stages, including those indoor and outdoor, should be accessible to all users and presenters for impromptu and scheduled acts, within reason.** The Municipality should look for ways to encourage fair and equitable access to the Gemmill Park stage and AOTH stage.
20. The Municipality should **continue to encourage programs for heritage protection and interpretation, continuing to integrate opportunities for the Municipality to expand ways heritage and art is recognized**, protected, and promoted, and integrated in the community. The Municipality should stay up-to-date on new technologies and techniques for heritage promotion and programs, considering the following:
 - a. Integrate more heritage components into displays and public features.
 - b. Collaborate with local First Nations and other Indigenous organizations to protect and interpret Indigenous sites, stories, and artifacts.
 - c. Explore new opportunities to integrate heritage and culture into special events.
 - d. Collaborate with Museums to inform the community about historical events and dates.

The Municipality should make efforts to formally recognize heritage and art in Ramsay, as local historical figures James Naismith and R. Tait McKenzie were born in Mississippi Mills. This may be done through a ceremony, plaques, street and park names etc.

12.2.4 Promotion & Communication

21. Consideration should be given to the promotion and advertisement of cultural programming and services. Although the Municipality has its own online newsletter provided quarterly, the MM Messenger, public engagement feedback indicated that some people did not partake in cultural programs or events because they were not aware of them.
 - a. **The frequency of this online newsletter should be reconsidered to remind members of the communities of upcoming events.**
 - b. **The online municipal newsletter should be promoted and advertised in cultural and community spaces** to encourage more residents to subscribe, which will increase awareness around events in the community and increase the number of potential participants. The number of participants at cultural programs and events can increase the sense of community pride and encourage social interaction.



12.3 Recreation

12.3.1 Service Level Target

22. Currently, the Municipality owns approximately 70.6 ha of parkland. Based on the 2021 population for the Municipality of 14,740, Mississippi Mills provides parks and open spaces at 4.78 ha per 1,000 population. As Mississippi Mills continues to grow, the Municipality should aim to **continue to maintain parkland provision at 4.0 ha per 1,000 population**.

The recommended spatial distribution of parks within a community suggests a target walking distance of 500m or 5-10 minutes from outdoor recreation spaces. Considering the rurality of the Municipality, this service radius of 500m should apply to the Neighbourhood Parks only with an extended service radius of 2km for Community Parks. Appendix A provides a series of map with locations of parks including anticipated and proposed locations for new or additional parks based on approved new subdivisions and to meet the service levels.

23. As indicated under the Park Classification requirements of the Community Official Plan, Community Parks should be provided to ensure that 0.5 to 1.0 ha of park is available for every 1,000 population. There are currently three (3) Community Parks in the Municipality: Martin Street North Park, R.W. MacGregor Memorial Ball Park, and Snedden-Casey Park. Combined, these parks meet the requirements set forth in the Community Official Plan. The Municipality should **continue to provide Community Parks service level at 0.5 to 1.0 ha per 1,000 population**.
24. The Municipality should **continue to deliver unique recreation amenities such as the lawn bowling facility and the golf disc amenity in Gemmill Park**.
25. The Municipality should **continue to maintain the current service levels for outdoor recreational facilities**:
- a. Seven (7) soccer fields; as the community grows, the Municipality should target 1 soccer field per 4,000 population.
 - b. Two (2) skateboard parks; and
 - c. Four (4) basketball courts.
26. The Municipality should **continue to provide the current service levels for indoor recreational facilities**:
- a. Two (2) arena pads
 - b. Four (4) curling sheets
 - c. Four (4) community halls
 - d. Four (4) indoor seasonal pickleball courts (transitional over the curling sheets during the summer) – considering this part of the building does not receive air conditioning, **a feasibility study should be completed for the addition of such system**.

12.3.2 Planning, Policies & Partnerships

27. **Develop and adopt a Public Lands Acquisition Policy**, as stated in Community Official Plan section 3.8.5.2, to guide staff and Council on the acquisition of new lands through purchase, donation, or co-ownership. The Public Lands Acquisition Policy should consider the requirements, per the Community Official Plan, for the Municipality “to acquire and develop additional parkland where needed.” This Policy should define a management framework, an acquisition process, and a disposal process.

The Public Lands Acquisition Policy should also set minimum standard parcel criteria for parks when accepting the conveyance of land as parkland. The following provides examples of criteria when assessing land as future parkland.



- a. Land to be conveyed to the Municipality must satisfy the following conditions:
 - i. Lands are free and clear of all legal and other encumbrances wherever possible.
 - ii. Lands are continuous in nature meaning they are not broken into multiple, unusable spaces or lots. Record of site conditions should satisfy a Phase I ESA.
- b. Land is deemed unusable when:
 - i. The land has or will be conveyed to the Municipality for stormwater management purposes, highways, roadways, walkways, or other non-parkland purposes.
 - ii. There is presence of natural hazards including flood prone lands.
 - iii. Adjacent land uses are noxious or hazardous (such as heavy industrial uses).
 - iv. The location, grade and configuration of lands are constrained or undesirable.
 - v. Having unsuitable or unstable soil conditions.
 - vi. It includes utility rights-of-way or easements wherever possible.
 - vii. There is contamination as determined by an Environmental Site Assessment.
- c. Applicant must restore the land to be conveyed as parkland to a condition satisfactory to the Municipality.

The Municipality should **regularly review the Parkland By-Law's criteria for parks when accepting the conveyance of land as parkland**. The Municipality's Parkland By-Law 15-78 provides the basis for determining whether new parkland, the acceptance of cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication or an appropriate combination thereof will apply when reviewing Draft Plans of Subdivision or Condominium, Zoning By-Law Amendments, Site Plan Applications, or Consent Applications. During the lifespan of this Strategic Plan, provincial regulation and policies may impact how parkland can be identified for conveyance purposes by allowing landowners to select parkland based on provincial criteria. If provincial policy changes occur, the Municipality should consider how the Parkland By-Law aligns with such policy changes and how it can continue to support the conveyance of parkland.

28. In continuity of the Public Land Acquisition Policy, the Municipality should **consider establishing a Reserve Fund for the development of recreation trails, cycling paths, sidewalks, and pedestrian walkways**. As stated in the Community Official Plan section 3.8.5.2 (4), the Reserve Fund "may (also) be used for the acquisition of necessary lands."
29. The Municipality should **consider using cash-in-lieu of parkland to cover expenses related to the development of detailed design plans of new parks** to allow the municipality to advance design and be ready when external funding is made available.
30. The Municipality should continue to employ its Parkland Classification system and Park Development Standards set out in the Community Official Plan under section 3.8 of the Plan. To assist staff and developers in the development of parkland and trails, the Municipality should **develop a Park Development Manual**. A Park Development Manual would incorporate the Parkland Classification system and Park Development Standards from the Community Official Plan, into an implementable manual the Municipality can rely on for park and trail development, standards and maintenance.

The Park Development Manual should further define the parkland classification requirements ranging in size and scale, identify inclusive and accessible park amenities, define a mix of active and passive amenities to users in parks / trails and identify maintenance standards and cycles. The Park Development Manual should be used to guide the development of park and trail spaces for new developments, including infill and intensification projects, which are subject to site plan control applications but also when existing parks and trails are enhances and upgraded.

The following elements should be included as part of the Park Development Manual:



- a. **Review of the Parkland Classification System**, as outlined in the Community Official Plan under Development Standards for Parks. The Parkland Classification System should integrate defined design criteria, preliminary lists of amenities for each type of park, requirements for parking and lighting, and vegetation targets.
 - b. **The need for clear park signage and identification**, as outlined in the Community Official Plan under Development Standards for Parks. To ensure consistency and accessibility, a consistent style and recognizable format should be used for all municipal parks, trails and open spaces.
 - c. **Guidelines associated to shade features and accessibility**. These guidelines should define possible shade structures and all accessibility requirements including around benches and picnic tables. Seating opportunities and shade should be provided at key locations and be accessible to all users.
 - d. **Pathway and trails standards** including different types of surface treatments including asphalt pathways, crushed stone walkways, and nature trails. Pathways connecting to popular park amenities should also include bike racks and, in key locations, bike repair stations.
 - e. **The Park development process and requirements**. Identifying the process for development of municipally built parks / trails, whereby a developer conveys parkland to the City as part of a Planning Act application, and requirements for park block preparation.
 - f. **The integration with adjacent or nearby parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities**.
 - g. **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**, as described in Recommendation 46.
31. Under the municipal Facility Use Policy, the Municipality should **introduce a Park Permitting / Lease and Facility Permitting / Lease for the use of parks and indoor municipal facilities for business ventures and private events**, such as weddings. An agreement under the Facility Use Policy should be required when a private event:
 - a. Requests for the use of more than 50% of the park; or
 - b. Requests for the use of the main amenity area of a park; or
 - c. Will involve the participation of more than 100 people or where the renter is running a for-profit operation; or
 - d. Requires changing the locations and layouts of furniture and features; or
 - e. Introduces new temporary features / structures such as tents, chairs, and air-inflated structures.
 - f. Requires Municipal resources (e.g. staffing, equipment, etc.) that are beyond the typical parks operations.

Parks and facilities outside of those listed in the Facility Use Policy should not be considered as available to host events or business ventures.
32. As part of the overall planning of the community, **improve digital planning tools by consolidating the existing recreation layers in the Municipality's ArcView GIS system with the lot and parcel boundaries, and municipal addresses**. Additionally, the ArcView GIS system should provide defined blocks of land for each park and open space. Currently, some parks within the GIS data are not following parcel boundaries and may be divided by other GIS data. Multiple parcels that make up a park should also be combined into one parcel. An up-to-date planning tool aligned with municipal parcel fabric will provide the ability to highlight opportunities and constraints at time of reviewing proposals from developers.



33. The Municipality should **update the municipal Facility Use Policy** to establish clear guidelines for the use and rental of municipal indoor and outdoor facilities by user groups and members of the public. This Policy should also specify the list of parks and facilities to which the Policy applies. It should be noted that insurance for community facility use would likely be required.
34. **Create a formalized application process for new cultural and recreation programs and / or amenities** proposed by residents and community groups. This process would put the responsibility of conducting the required research and analysis of preparing background studies into the justification and feasibility of the project onto the applicant and not the Municipality. The application process should consider needs, trends, and costs for the proposed opportunity.

The following steps are the minimum required steps for this process:

 - a. Call-up for Ideas – The Municipality opens annually or bi-annually an application period to receive ideas. By setting a specific calendar for the application of proposed new programs and / or amenities, residents and community groups are provided the opportunity to detail their project in terms of their objectives, needs, planning stages, and anticipated costs and long-term maintenance.
 - b. Proposal Review and Interviews – All ideas are reviewed by the Municipality Team and interviews are conducted with the residents and community groups as required.
 - c. Municipal Decision – The final recommendations are provided to Council for approval. When approved and constructed, the project / amenity becomes Municipal Asset.
35. **Consider the acquisition or shared acquisition of vacant buildings or buildings that are for sale, as potential additional public spaces to accommodate community growth.** The focus should be on acquiring sites at centralized locations offering multi-use possibilities for the Town. An Asset Management Strategy should be developed to guide future acquisition of buildings.
36. As indicated in the Community Official Plan under Parkland Classification, the Municipality should **establish an inventory guide of available parkland and open spaces.** The inventory guide should be updated as improvements are made to outdoor recreation amenities to support planning of maintenance works required.
37. Seeing that adjacent municipalities have successful beaches and trained lifeguards, the Municipality should approach the Town of Carleton Place and Town of Arnprior to **coordinate and review the feasibility to develop a larger group of trained and qualified lifeguards for the regional beaches.**
38. **Develop a Master Plan for Gemmill Park** to review the interconnectivity of all sport fields / courts, trails, pathways, parking, water and winter activities. The Master Plan should include all existing and possible future park amenities to be included in this park. The Master Plan should take into account existing site conditions including topography and drainage. Possible trending sport amenities to be considered include the following:
 - a. Pickleball courts – shared use with tennis courts and/or separate/dedicated
 - b. Volleyball courts
39. To encourage community well-being, the Municipality should **promote connections with nature.**
 - a. The Municipality should **review all municipal waterfront land, assess their conditions and develop a Waterfront Access Master Plan** to provide more public access to water and emphasize the importance of water as a resource and important natural feature for the community. At a minimum, the **Waterfront Access Master Plan** should:
 - i. Describe the importance of the Mississippi Lake and Mississippi River, Clayton Lake, White Lake, and the Madawaska River, as stated in the Community Official Plan, and plan for the enhancement of these water bodies as public waterfront spaces.



- ii. **Identify public access point(s)** along its main water bodies.
 - iii. Review and assess the conditions and long-term operations of the two beaches (i.e., Almonte and Pakenham).
 - iv. **Develop a Beach Master Plan** including the two municipal beaches (i.e., Almonte and Pakenham).
 - v. **Closely monitor land that is within floodplains** and along waterfronts to track impacts and useability of amenities.
 - vi. **Promote the conservation of biodiversity** through naturalized and vegetated shorelines and waterways by identifying areas of significant ecological value such as wetlands and old growth forests.
 - b. With the goal to create a strong network of trails and pathways between villages, the Municipality should **develop a Trails and Pathways Master Plan**. Such Master Plan would boost local tourism and provide the following:
 - i. **Identify current trails and pathways** for recreation and leisure.
 - ii. **Promote the Ottawa Valley Recreation trail as a structural trail and destination** within the Municipality.
 - iii. **Incorporate water access points**.
 - iv. **Propose missing links** including requirements for land acquisition. An example of a missing link highlighted by the residents during the public consultation is between Riverside Park and Appleton.
40. The Municipality should evaluate options for indoor pool facilities and the provision of aquatics programming. The Municipality should **undertake an indoor aquatics feasibility study during the lifespan of this Strategic Plan that explores possible options and their suitability for the community**. It should be noted that this cost cannot be recouped through Development Charges. The following options should be considered in the feasibility study.
- a. **A shared-used agreement with neighbouring municipalities** for residents of the Municipality to access their pools and aquatic programs at a reduced rate (from the non-resident rates).
 - b. **The continuation of current reimbursement of program fees** to residents who enrol in area aquatics programs.
 - c. **A new aquatics facility in Mississippi Mills** with partners such as public-private partnerships. The new aquatics facility should, at a minimum, also include considerations for gymnasium spaces, community kitchen, multi-purpose rooms, and storage spaces to provide programs for youth and seniors. The facility should also promote visual arts, performing arts, and theatre plays.
 - d. **Taking no action** and maintaining the status quo for indoor aquatics.
41. **When new subdivisions in the Municipality are under review in the planning process, include active recreation amenities such as playgrounds and other suitable recreation amenities**. New parks are currently often created and primarily used as open space, and the Municipality should focus on integrating active amenities.
42. **Establish and maintain ongoing coordination with Municipal planning staff and developers throughout the development approval process** so that opportunities to incorporate new parkland and/or outdoor recreation facilities are identified early in the process, including strategies to incorporate new parkland, trails and facilities with the existing system and confirming the ongoing operations and maintenance of the space.

Plans of Subdivision and other new development should provide opportunities to promote the development of new trails and links to improve connectivity and enhance the existing trails system.



43. **Develop relationships with the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), Lifesaving Society, Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO), and Ontario Recreation Facility Association (ORFA).**
- a. **Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA)** – The CPRA is a national organization that is dedicated to realizing the full potential of recreation and parks as a major contributor to community health and vibrancy. The organization shares resources, collaborates with other groups and communities, and supports its provincial and territorial parks and recreation member organizations.
 - b. **Lifesaving Society** – The Lifesaving Society is a provider of programs, products, and services that are designed to prevent drowning, including training programs, Water Smart public education, drowning research, aquatic safety management, and lifesaving sport.
 - c. **Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO)** – The PRO is a non-profit organization that connects members across Ontario. Members are post-secondary students, municipal staff, community agencies, and independent operators that deliver parks and recreation services. The PRO engages in parks and recreation research, advocacy, and education.
 - d. **Ontario Recreation Facility Association (ORFA)** – The ORFA is a not-for-profit recreation organization whose members operate and manage recreation facilities in municipalities, educational institutions, and government agencies across Ontario. The ORFA provides leadership in training and development as well as products and services for the benefit of the recreation facility profession.

12.3.3 Improve & Enhance

44. **Renew the three (3) tennis courts.** Although used exclusively by the Almonte Tennis Club, the tennis courts are owned by the Municipality. The surfacing of the tennis courts was temporarily patched in 2024 and will require full renewal. Refer to Recommendation 36 associated with the development of a Master Plan for Gemmill Park.
45. **Removing barriers to participation by improving accessibility, inclusivity, and equitability in parks, trails, and open spaces.** Accessibility in outdoor spaces should address, at a minimum, bench types and locations, waste receptacle access, pathway surfacing, playground surfacing, play structures, access to play areas, etc. Existing outdoor recreation amenities should be assessed for their accessibility and inclusivity with a detailed list of required upgrades, updated yearly.

All new recreational trails should be designed to follow Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards, where possible, providing appropriate surfacing and accessible slopes. The Municipality should identify gaps in paving, unsafe pedestrian crossings, and inadequate signage and lighting along existing trails and make the necessary upgrades so that all residents are encouraged to choose active living options and active transportation modes of travel.

46. **Design new parks with a Crime Prevention Through Environment Design (CPTED) approach. Upgrades and enhancements to existing parks and outdoor spaces should also align with CPTED principles.** CPTED main objectives include encouraging the diverse use of outdoor space to help establish informal surveillance within public spaces, and promote the presence of people in public spaces in order to avoid isolated areas.

A CPTED approach should consider how operation and maintenance zones for staff and day-to-day activities are provided adjacent to parks and open spaces and around recreation facilities. Operation zones include storage buildings, outdoor storage areas for equipment, and excess material and furniture. Adequate fencing should be provided to support good use of the municipal spaces.

The following three principles apply when developing outdoor spaces through the lens of CPTED. Combining these principles can improve safety for all users:



- a. Provide ways to encourage natural surveillance of a space by increasing the visual permeability, adding lights in strategic locations, and reducing the presence of walls, opaque / privacy fences, and overgrown vegetation.
 - b. Utilize natural and facilitated methods of access to control areas that are not encouraged for public use, such as maintenance areas, by way of fences, low walls, gates, and landscaping. It should be noted that a minimum of two (2) accesses / egresses should always be provided in a controlled area.
 - c. Provide territorial reinforcement of the “sense of ownership”, such as using signage and symbols that represent community ownership or surveillance. The territorial reinforcement is also encouraged with a multi-use space where there is a diversity of activities and uses provided to users.
47. **The Lawn Bowling Building should be revitalized** to meet club requirements and to be added as a community space as rentable space.
48. Following the success of the pilot project to convert the ball diamond at Snedden-Casey Ball Park into a dog park, the Municipality should **officialise the dog park and rename the park “Snedden-Casey Park”** to eliminate the confusion created with the mention of “ball park” in its name. Additionally, additional park amenities should be integrated to make this park a complete dog park:
- a. Gated entry access points (more than one entry),
 - b. Shaded seating,
 - c. Water station (for dogs and residents), bag dispenser and waste receptacles maintained all-year round.

12.3.4 Promote Active Living

49. The Municipality should **consider adding missing outdoor recreation amenities and programs, to provide a diversity of opportunities and access for all abilities and ages from youth to teenagers, to adults, and seniors** providing a mix of high to low-intensity recreational activities. Examples of recreation opportunities that have been mentioned by residents and users include, but should not be limited to the following:
- a. Additional splashpad – based on locations and availability of municipal services. A possible location to be considered for a new splashpad include the parkland in the new Weavers Way Subdivision. Augusta Park remains an option if the bridge over the creek is widened to provide an accessible route for residents and visitors; regrading requirements in this park may also require more work.
 - b. Pickleball courts (four courts) as described in Recommendation 38.
 - c. Waterfront programs including canoe / kayak
50. **With youth in mind, the Municipality should offer more youth-oriented recreation opportunities in multiple locations and spread throughout the Municipality.**
- a. **Consider adding fitness hubs including obstacle courses for teens and young adults.**
 - b. **Consider the addition of a multi-sports pad for all season sports** including for outdoor ice hockey in the winter and basketball posts / lines during warm season use. Multi-use pads are generally successful in eastern Ontario and should be considered to broaden the range of activities available in the winter as well as the warmer months. A possible location to be considered for this new multi-sports pad include the parkland in the new Weavers Way Subdivision.
 - c. **Consider adding a pump track or BMX track by completing a feasibility study for such amenity.**



51. The Municipality should **consider Introduction Days at recreation facilities for non-members to experience club sports**, such sports would include tennis and lawn bowling. The tennis courts and lawn bowling are owned and maintained by the Municipality but require a membership to clubs for residents to access and use. Such Introduction Days may occur bi-weekly to provide ample opportunity for participation; amendments to existing use agreements would be required.

12.3.5 Building a Sustainable Community

52. **Consider climate change in determining design and maintenance standards for outdoor facilities** (including parks, sports fields, trails, and open spaces). Climate change leads to longer outdoor sport seasons, which causes excessive wear down of outdoor sports facilities and amenities, along with the need for more shade structures, tree canopy coverage and drinking fountains.
53. **Take a climate-conscious approach when developing new or renovating existing indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and amenities.** A climate-conscious approach includes:
 - a. The provision of outdoor refreshing stations / amenities in parks, open spaces, along trails, and pathways. Outdoor refreshing stations and amenities can include mist / cooling stations, splashpads, access to beaches, water bottle filling stations, and shade structures.
 - b. The reduction of energy cost, carbon emission, and environmental footprint.
 - c. Considering energy conservation and generation in the planning of new amenities and facilities.
 - d. Reviewing day-to-day operations and the maintenance of recreation facilities.
 - e. Incorporating more sustainable design features into the development of parks and facilities such as bioswales, raingardens, rainwater harvesting stations, and pollinator gardens.
 - f. Utilizing locally sourced and sustainable building materials where possible.
54. **Promote and implement the Municipality's Guidelines for Tree Conservation and Planting** to encourage the preservation of the existing forests and the planting of more trees. This can be leveraged to aim for a specific canopy cover for parks and new developments, which can offer shaded resting areas. The guidelines should be implemented to add the management of invasive species such as the European buckthorn and the management of infestation and diseases of trees including but not limited to the Dutch Elm Disease and Emerald Ash Borer.
55. **Increase the sustainability and renewal of facilities and infrastructure systems** to ensure their long-term sustainability, utilizing thoughtful design to ensure services are provided in a safe, reliable and affordable way.

12.3.6 Promotion & Communication

56. **Utilize technology to improve communication and service delivery and to promote recreation programs and events offered by the Municipality.**
 - a. Increase use of a variety of social media platforms to publish recreation and parks programming / events information as they come up.
 - b. Share the e-newsletter, the MM Messenger, with schools.
 - c. Create unique 'hashtags' or geolocations within the Municipality, for social media use, to garner online engagement.
 - d. Develop and post online promotional videos for special announcements, engagement, and to promote events and recreation projects.



12.3.7 Monitoring & Maintenance

57. The Municipality should **continue to be proactive with infrastructure upgrades to ensure the mechanical systems are efficient and kept in good conditions**; maintenance and improvements should be reviewed and completed regularly and as needed.
58. The Municipality should **continue to monitor and address accessibility needs in all indoor recreation facilities**. In addition, the Municipality should be proactive about the exterior accessibility; evaluations of parking lots, ramps, stairs, and walkways to entrances and exits for up-to-date accessibility requirements will contribute to meeting the community needs.
59. **Undertake life-cycle audits for parks and facilities** to identify opportunities for the redevelopment, renovation, or decommissioning of amenities and facilities. **Continue to monitor operating costs for facility maintenance**, and work to schedule capital investments according to the life cycling costing of the facility through internal resources.
60. With long term maintenance in mind, the Municipality should **identify opportunities for refurbishment of aging amenities and identify any deficiencies and opportunities for upgrades**. This type of review should be completed yearly. This will enable appropriate servicing for the growing community and will review which amenities and spaces should be prioritized above others.
 - a. Tennis court surfacing is required. As part of the renewal of the courts, the existing topography and drainage patterns should be reviewed and geotechnical assessments should be completed.

12.4 Programs & Services Delivery

12.4.1 Planning, Policies & Partnerships

61. **Continue to foster open collaboration and work closely with community groups, local organizations, not-for-profit, and private partners** to support:
 - a. Youth, Older Adults, and Seniors - Consider strategies to support these age groups, including becoming a designated 'youth-friendly community', providing dedicated space within Municipal facilities for age-specific services, and coordination of programming activities.
 - b. Recreation Programs - Duplication of events and service offered should be avoided.
 - c. Arts and Cultural Programs and Events - Sections of downtown parks, public plazas, and/or streets could host new outdoor performances and cultural events such as food truck festivals, 'pub night in the park', etc.
 - d. Joint Utilization of Multi-purpose Spaces - A variety of groups have multi-purpose spaces available for community use including schools and churches.
 - e. Economic Development Potentials in a manner that provides return on investment into the community.

Community groups, local organizations, not-for-profit organizations, and private partners should be actively consulted so that programming and services are provided in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. Community engagement may include participation as a stakeholder group.

Add online webpage to provide information to residents these groups, programs, events, and spaces and about how to foster connections.

62. **Continue to host quarterly community group networking events** to encourage networking and collaboration between organizations.



63. **Review and implement Operating Agreements and Facility Agreements with community partners** to set guidelines for the provision of fair and equitable access to facilities by all organizations and community groups.
- During the lifespan of this Plan, **update and standardize Lease Agreements** with the different recreation partners and organization for the use of facilities. Lease agreements should include rental conditions, rental of spaces and cost-recovery strategies based on the facility (refer to Recommendation 87).
 - As demand increases for recreational facilities, **consider strengthening Facility Allocation Policies** specific to amenities (i.e. sportsfield / ice) and space allocation. In addition to the provision of fair and equitable access, Facility Allocation Policies prioritize key age groups (i.e. youth, adults, seniors) who have limited access to recreation, improve partnerships and increase efficiency for uses. Facility Allocation Policies may also implement residency recognition which prioritizes residents over non-residents for time allocation, ensuring the tax base paying for services is given priority. In addition, the primary user groups should be engaged to forecast future needs.
 - Develop and implement a formalized Community Partnership Framework Policy** for the use of municipal facilities by all third-party volunteer groups. A Community Partnership Framework is built into a Facility Rental Agreement and aims to have all users of tax-based facilities collaborate on an equal access agreement. Aspects covered by such a framework include:
 - Permitted hours of use of a facility;
 - Discounted costs (if any);
 - Maintenance expectations of the municipality versus the community group.The Community Partnership Framework Policy should be transparent and developed in consultation with all existing and potential community partners.
64. The Municipality should also **continue to work with local associations and organizations to grow and expand recreational opportunities and programming for all age groups** that enable and support unstructured, self-structured, and low-cost activities, in addition to local sports and other organized activities. Local associations and organizations include but should not be limited to the Mississippi Mills Youth Centre, the Senior Active Living Centre, etc.
65. The Municipality should **undertake a joint planning exercise between the Recreation and Culture Department and Public Works and Roads Department** to determine if a combined maintenance and storage facility is required and where it should be located; the analysis for a maintenance and storage facility should review the space requirements, estimated budget and funding sources.
66. The Municipality should **continue to work with volunteers and consider creating a Volunteering Committee** made up of interested residents that can be involved in various municipal events and programming.
67. **Promote volunteering programs to encourage community involvement** and the success of events and recreation programming to increase participation and retention of volunteers. The following should be considered:
- Create a formalized online volunteer intake form.
 - Work with local high schools to integrate the mandatory volunteering hours required for secondary school students.
 - Promote the Community Awards program and policy already in place in Mississippi Mills, under which exceptional volunteers can be recognized for their contributions to the community.



12.4.2 Improve & Enhance

68. With the objective to modernize, digitize, and streamline the booking experience, the Municipality should **invest in an online Booking Platform for both facility bookings and program registration**. A Booking Platform would remove the need for in-person or call-in registration, enabling online payment and automatically updating the registration offerings and calendars when a booking is approved by the Municipality.

A policy should be developed and made available online on the municipalities website establishing rules and, when needed, penalties for any cancellations of bookings.

The implementation of an online Booking Platform should be preceded by considering the budgetary implications and planning for the ongoing cost of the platform, which could include annual licensing fees in addition to a one-time cost to purchase the system.

69. With the objective to offer a wide range of programming for all age groups, the Municipality should **complete a detailed review and assessment of all programming needs and requirements**, including facility allocation, space availability, costs, etc.
70. The Municipality should **expand the variety of payment categories** (i.e., youth, adult, seniors) **and options for scheduled classes and programs** (i.e. by class, multi-class, or an all-inclusive membership to all facilities and programs).

12.4.3 Promote Active Living

71. **Continue providing municipal programming that promotes opportunities for active living in partnership with community groups** and in alignment with community feedback, needs, and trends; such as fitness classes, gaming nights, art classes, seniors / teen programming, and programming that does not involve or require team-style play.
72. **Recreation and cultural programs should offer a diversity of difficulty combining the beginners, intermediates, and advanced learners**. By offering this range of complexity within each program or class, there are opportunities for all residents to learn new things, advance at their own rhythm and stay healthy.
73. **Continue to offer municipal summer camp programming**.

12.4.4 Promotion & Communication

74. **Locate Community Involvement information such as community associations, groups, organizations, etc., on a single webpage on the Municipality's website**. This webpage can provide information and direct web links when online material is available online so that residents and users can easily find the information that they are looking for without searching through multiple sites.

12.4.5 Monitoring & Maintenance

75. **Every three years, undertake a Satisfaction Survey with residents** to understand cultural, recreational, and community needs, to understand satisfaction with currently provided services, and to identify gaps in service. Feedback should be sought on specific programs and their strengths and weaknesses, as well as on cultural programming as a whole to identify gaps that may exist in the types of programs offered.



76. **For municipally-run programs, annually evaluate the usage, participation, satisfaction, and costing rates of the space / amenity used to offer a program.** This could be done through online satisfaction surveys and through the recommended online booking system.
Community feedback will also provide input on trends and current gaps in programming not provided by private entities.
77. **Reassess Municipal Community Grants and funding options for community groups regularly** to meet the needs of the community.

12.5 Projects, Staff, and Finances

12.5.1 Service Level Targets

78. **The Mississippi Mills Development Services, Planning and Engineering Department should continue to oversee the planning and development of future parkland including the detailed design and tender process** considering this department has the engineering and land use planning expertise as well as the staffing resources.
79. The Municipality should **continue to contract the ground maintenance of cemeteries** (i.e., mowing the grass).

12.5.2 Planning, Policies & Partnerships

80. **Complete feasibility studies and conceptual planning for major capital projects for parks and facilities** in preparation of funding and partnership opportunities as they arise.
81. **Work with a park design consultant** to provide park plans meeting industry standards for the development of parks and open spaces, support accessibility to park features, and support financial feasibility.
82. As the Municipality grows, **continue to formalize, maintain, and explore additional roles within the Recreation and Economic Development Departments**; the managers and team leads should report to the Recreation Manager as further facilities, amenities, and services are added to the municipality.
 - a. More facilities, parks, and programs will require more staff resources to manage including operational and seasonal staff.
 - b. Should the Municipality undertake a municipality-wide Human Resources Plan, the following should be considered for the departments related to Childcare, Culture, and Recreation. Departments, like Economic Development, should be included as appropriate if resources are shared between departments.
 - i. Succession planning, staff retention, and cross-training.
 - ii. Review of roles, workload, growth, and operational pressures.
 - iii. Growth of staff satisfaction through creation of an awards and recognition program.
 - iv. The shared positions between the Economic Development Department and the Recreation Department represent a good, holistic approach to deliver services to the community. As the Municipality grows, the roles and responsibilities of the shared positions should be reassessed to respond to the needs of the community.
 - v. Building staff leadership capacity by attracting and maintaining qualified team members and staff who are passionate about what they do and are committed to building a strong and healthy community.



1. Increase competency-based professional development opportunities and programs for staff to develop knowledge, increase capacity, and grow their expertise.
 2. Provide new job skills training to staff and internship opportunities for youth, young adults, and newcomers.
83. Good staff management and structure are key to the smooth day-to-day operation of the childcare, culture, and recreation departments in the Municipality. As the Municipality's population increases, ensuring that the childcare, culture, and recreation departments have an **adequate number of full-time and flexible part-time staff to maintain existing facilities, operate more programming, and plan for growth** is key to delivering high-quality parks, recreation, childcare, and culture services. Attracting and maintaining qualified team members throughout the year should also be a key goal for the Municipality.
84. **Assess and improve the process around Municipal Funding provided to the community** including all organizations, community groups and Museums, to confirm eligibility, benefits and results around these funds and support equitably local organizations and events. All funding recipients should be required to submit a report detailing how the funding received was used; these reports should be submitted and approved by staff.
 - a. **Review funding structure and related policies and bylaws.**
 - b. **Review the municipal Community Grant Program to include midrange funding options** for individuals and organizations seeking to sponsor free local performances in municipal spaces.
 - c. **Explore new joint use agreements** with surrounding municipalities.
 - d. **Consider sponsorship opportunities** (i.e. rink boards advertisements, naming rights, events, etc.).
85. The Municipality should **maintain a centralized list of External Funding** received for culture, community services, and recreation programs and amenities including past and contemplated fundings that come from external organizations or from other levels of government.
86. The Municipality should **actively review future potential External Funding opportunities** supporting childcare, culture, community services, and recreation. The Municipality should be a member of Ontario Grant Watch websites and applications to receive notifications of local, provincial, and federal funds and grants related to recreation. Other examples of External Funding opportunities include:
 - a. The Ontario Trillium Foundation – Through the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Government of Ontario's Community Building Fund invests to support municipalities for the repair, renovation or retrofitting of existing sport and recreation facilities.
 - b. The Association of Municipality Ontario (AMO) – Through the Canada Community Building Fund, the AMO supports the construction and renewal of recreational facilities and networks.
 - c. Ontario Museum Association (OMA) – This association shares funding opportunities for museums to achieve their missions.
 - d. Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG) Program – This grant program, administered under Regulation 877 of the Ontario Heritage Act, is available to encourage local community museums.
87. In continuity with the surcharge fees associated with auditorium fees, the Municipality should **consider a cost recovery approach** to support childcare, culture, and recreation facilities and amenities to help offset the maintenance, renovation, and restoration costs. The Municipality should consider cost recovery activities, such as:
 - a. **Indoor Recreation Capital Restoration Fund**, to be included in enrollment costs for all municipal programming. The Indoor Recreation Capital Restoration Fund would be



created to help offset the maintenance, renovation, and restoration costs required by indoor recreation facilities. The Indoor Recreation Capital Restoration Fund should be a portion of the total municipal programming fees associated with municipal programs; however, they should be shown separate from user fees and represent 3% to 5% of the user fees.

- b. **Rental Restoration Fund**, to be included in booking costs for all municipal spaces used for private events. The Rental Restoration Fund would help offset the maintenance, renovation, and restoration costs of rental spaces in the municipality. The Rental Restoration Fund should be part of the rental cost but shown separately from the rental fees; it should represent 20% to 30% of the rental fees.
- c. **Club Restoration Fund**, to be included as part of the use agreements with recreation clubs. The Club Restoration Fund would help offset the maintenance, renovation, and restoration costs of spaces and amenities reserved for the use of specific recreation clubs only. The Club Restoration Fund should be part of the use agreement but shown separately from the agreement fees; it should represent 10% to 20% of the annual fees.



13 | Implementation Strategy





13 Implementation Strategy

The implementation of the recommendations presented in the previous section is accomplished through an implementation strategy. This strategy provides guidance in ensuring that the most critical recommendations are dealt with in a timely fashion while less critical recommendations are implemented over the lifespan of the Plan based on staff and fiscal capacity. Simply put, the higher the priority, the sooner the recommendations should be implemented. All recommendations are important and, if properly implemented, will benefit childcare, cultural services and events, recreation, programming, and service delivery in the Municipality. The priority and timing of recommendations in this section are organized into the following four categories:

Table 8: Types of Priorities

Priorities			
Short Years 1 and 2 of the Plan	Medium Years 3 to 5 of the Plan	Long Years 6 and 7 of the Plan	Ongoing Years 1 to 7 of the Plan

Each recommendation is also defined by type: Studies and Policies, Operational, or Capital Investment. Anticipated costs are provided below as design costs for Studies and Policies recommendations and design and construction costs for Capital Investment recommendations; all operational recommendations are anticipated to be performed in house by Municipal Staff. Details on each recommendation are provided in the Recommendations Section of this Strategic Plan.



Table 9: Recommendations and Implementation Strategy - Childcare

#	Recommendations	Priority	Anticipated Design Cost	Anticipated Construction Cost	Anticipated Total Cost	Type
1	Add 82 additional childcare spaces	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
2	Connect with students enrolled in Early Childhood Educators programs	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
3	Relocate and expand the main childcare centre	Short	\$300,000	\$6,000,000	\$6,300,000	Capital Investment
4	Consider the outdoor spaces as “classrooms”	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
5	Engage with Connectwell on inclusive spaces	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
6	Co-locate multi-generational services	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
7	Continue to provide regular and detailed provider/parent communication	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	Total	-	\$300,000	\$6,000,000	\$6,300,000	-

Table 10: Recommendations and Implementation Strategy – Culture & Events

#	Recommendations	Priority	Anticipated Design Cost	Anticipated Construction Cost	Anticipated Total Cost	Type
8	Continue to support the provision of spaces for events and programs	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
9	Continue to support local artists and organizations	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
10	Continue to support arts and cultural events through community grants	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
11	Museums should remain independent.	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
12	Develop a Partnership and Sponsorship Policy	Short	\$20,000	-	\$20,000	Studies and Policies
13	Establish an inventory catalog of municipal venues	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational



14	Formalize a Public Art Policy	Medium	\$30,000	-	\$30,000	Studies and Policies
15	Review resource allocation and Municipal Funding to maintain Public Art	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
16	Expand partnerships with the Museums	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	a) Develop a Partnership Agreement	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	b) Create a Collaborative Steering Committee	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
17	Museum funding of the operating costs to remain as 30% of operating budget	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
18	Explore various options, venues, and spaces for the visual and performing arts	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
19	Improve accessibility to performance stages	Medium	\$50,000	\$300,000	\$350,000	Capital Investments
20	Continue to encourage programs for heritage protection and interpretation	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
21	Improve promotion and advertisement of culture through the MM Messenger	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	Total	-	\$100,000	\$300,000	\$400,000	-



Table 11: Recommendations and Implementation Strategy – Recreation

#	Recommendations	Priority	Anticipated Design Cost	Anticipated Construction Cost	Anticipated Total Cost	Type
22	Maintain parkland provision at 4.0 ha per 1,000 population	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
23	Maintain Community Parks service level at 0.5-1.0 ha per 1,000 population	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
24	Maintain the Lawn Bowling Facility and golf disc amenity at Gemmill Park	Ongoing	-	\$100,000	\$100,000	Operational
25	Maintain service level for outdoor recreation facilities	Ongoing	-	-	-	Operational
	a) Seven (7) soccer fields	Ongoing	-	\$140,000	\$140,000	Operational
	b) Two (2) skateboard parks	Ongoing	-	\$20,000	\$20,000	Operational
	c) Four (4) basketball courts	Ongoing	-	\$30,000	\$30,000	Operational
26	Maintain service level for indoor recreation facilities	Ongoing	-	-	-	Operational
	a) Two (2) arena pads	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	b) Four (4) curling sheets	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	c) Four (4) community halls	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	d) Four (4) indoor seasonal pickleball courts – Complete a feasibility study to add air conditioning	Medium	\$30,000	-	\$30,000	Studies and Policies
27	Develop and adopt a Public Lands Acquisition Policy	Short	\$20,000	-	\$20,000	Studies and Policies
28	Establish a Reserve Fund for new trails, paths, sidewalks, and walkways	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
29	Consider using cash-in-lieu for development of park design plans	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational



30	Develop a Park Development Manual	Short	\$30,000	-	\$30,000	Operational
31	Introduce a Park and Facility Permitting / Lease system for the use of municipal facilities	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
32	Improve digital planning tools (i.e., Municipal ArcView GIS system)	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
33	Update the Municipal Facility Use Policy	Short	\$20,000	-	\$20,000	Studies and Policies
34	Create a formal application process for new proposed activities / amenities	Medium	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
35	Consider the acquisition of vacant buildings	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
36	Establish inventory of parkland and open spaces	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
37	Coordinate and review the feasibility to train lifeguards	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
38	Develop a Master Plan for Gemmill Park	Medium	\$60,000	-	\$60,000	Studies and Policies
39	Promote connections with nature	Medium	-	-	-	Studies and Policies
	a) Develop a Waterfront Access Master Plan	Medium	\$40,000	-	\$40,000	Studies and Policies
	b) Develop a Trails and Pathways Master Plan	Medium	\$40,000	-	\$40,000	Studies and Policies
40	Undertake an indoor aquatics feasibility study to explore options to provide aquatic programs to residents	Long	\$85,000	-	\$85,000	Studies and Policies
41	Include active recreation amenities in new parks	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
42	Establish and maintain coordination between Municipal recreation and planning staff and developers	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
43	Develop relationships with CPRA, PRO, ORFA	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
44	Renew the three (3) tennis courts	Short	\$100,000	\$450,000	\$550,000	Capital Investment
45	Improve accessibility, inclusivity, and equitability in parks, trails, and open spaces	Ongoing	\$15,000 (for standards)	\$105,000 (\$15,000 per year for 7 years)	\$120,000	Operational



46	Design new parks with a CPTED approach	Ongoing	-	-	-	Operational
47	Revitalize Lawn Bowling Building	Long	\$70,000	\$350,000	\$420,000	Capital Investment
48	Officialize Snedden-Casey dog park and rename park to "Snedden-Casey Park"	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	a) Gated entry access points	Medium	\$30,000	\$75,000	\$105,000	Capital Investment
	b) Shaded seating	Medium	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$35,000	Capital Investment
	c) Water station, bag dispenser, waste receptacles	Medium	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$35,000	Capital Investment
49	Add missing outdoor recreation amenities and programs	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	a) One additional splashpad	Medium	\$30,000	\$200,000	\$230,000	Capital Investment
	b) Pickleball courts (four courts)	Long	\$25,000	\$200,000	\$225,000	Capital Investment
	c) Add waterfront programs	Long	\$25,000	\$100,000	\$125,000	Capital Investment
50	Offer more youth-oriented recreation opportunities	Medium	-	-	-	Capital Investment
	a) Add fitness hubs (two locations)	Medium	\$25,000	\$150,000	\$175,000	Capital Investment
	b) Add a multi-sports pad for all season sports	Medium	\$25,000	\$250,000	\$275,000	Capital Investment
	c) Add a pump track or BMX track	Long	\$25,000	\$200,000	\$225,000	Capital Investment
51	Implement Introduction Days for non-members to experience club sports	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
52	Consider climate change in the design of parks and maintenance standards	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
53	Take a climate-conscious approach to developing and renovating facilities/amenities	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
54	Promote the Municipality's Guidelines for Tree Conservation and Planting	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational



55	Increase sustainability and renewal of facilities and infrastructure systems	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
56	Use technology to improve communication and promote Municipal programs	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
57	Continue to be proactive with infrastructure upgrades of mechanical systems	Medium	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
58	Continue to monitor and address accessibility needs in all indoor recreation facilities	Ongoing	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$60,000	Operational
59	Undertake lifecycle audits for parks and facilities	Medium	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
60	Identify opportunities for refurbishment of aging amenities	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	Total	-	\$725,000	\$2,470,000	\$3,195,000	-

Table 12: Recommendations and Implementation Strategy – Programs & Services Delivery

#	Recommendations	Priority	Anticipated Design Cost	Anticipated Construction Cost	Anticipated Total Cost	Type
61	Continue to foster open collaboration with community groups, local organizations, not-for-profit and private partners	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
62	Continue to host quarterly community group networking events	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
63	Review and implement Standardized Facility Agreements with community partners	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
64	Continue to work with local groups to expand recreational opportunities and programming	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
65	Undertake a joint planning exercise between the Recreation Department	Long	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational



	and Public Works and Roads Department					
66	Continue to work with volunteers and consider creating a Volunteering Committee	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
67	Promote volunteering programs to encourage community involvement	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
68	Invest in an online Booking Platform	Short	\$25,000	-	\$25,000	Operational
69	Complete a detailed assessment of programming needs and requirements	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
70	Expand the variety of payment categories and options for scheduled classes and programs	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
71	Provide programming that promotes active living	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
72	Offer a diversity of difficulty levels within activities	Medium	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
73	Continue to offer municipal summer camp programs	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
74	Locate Community Involvement information on a single webpage on the Municipality's website	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
75	Undertake a Satisfaction Survey for users and residents every three years	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
76	Evaluate usage, participation, satisfaction, and rates of municipally run programs annually	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
77	Regularly reassess community grants and funding options for community groups	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	Total	-	\$25,000	-	\$25,000	-



Table 13: Recommendations and Implementation Strategy – Projects, Staff, and Finances

#	Recommendations	Priority	Anticipated Design Cost	Anticipated Construction Cost	Anticipated Total Cost	Type
78	The Development Services, Planning, and Engineering Department should continue to oversee future parkland projects	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
79	Continue to contract the ground maintenance of cemeteries	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
80	Complete feasibility studies and conceptual planning for major capital projects	Ongoing	<i>Part of other studies</i>	<i>Part of other studies</i>	<i>Part of other studies</i>	Studies and Policies
81	Work with park design consultant on new parks	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
82	Continue to monitor roles within Recreation and Economic Development Departments	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
83	Ensure adequate full-time and part-time staffing to meet current and future needs	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
84	Assess and improve the process for Municipal Funding provided to the community	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
85	Maintain a centralized list of External Funding	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
86	Review future potential External Funding opportunities	Ongoing	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
87	Consider a cost-recovery approach to support facilities and amenities	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	a) Indoor Recreation Capital Restoration Fund	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	b) Rental Restoration Fund	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	c) Club Restoration Fund	Short	<i>In house</i>	-	<i>In house</i>	Operational
	Total	-	-	-	-	-



Table 14 below provides the overall summary of the anticipated cost for the capital projects and studies based on their category. The categories including only in house cost have not been included in this summary.

Table 14: Implementation Summary of Capital Projects and Associated Studies

	Anticipated Design Cost	Anticipated Construction Cost	Anticipated Total Cost
Childcare	\$300,000	\$6,000,000	\$6,300,000
Culture & Events	\$100,000	\$300,000	\$400,000
Recreation	\$725,000	\$2,470,000	\$3,195,000
Programs & Service Delivery	\$25,000	-	\$25,000
Total	\$1,150,000	\$8,770,000	\$9,920,000*

*It should be noted that a total of \$6,300,000.00 for the new childcare facility to be built in 2025-2026 is included in the \$9,920,000 anticipated total cost.

The anticipated cost for the capital projects listed as recommendations in this Master Plan may also be divided based on their priorities: ongoing, short, medium, and long-term projects. Table 15 below provides a general breakdown assuming projects designed during one period will be implemented during the same period, but it should be noted that their implementation may extend into the following period. Timing for implementation should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly during the lifespan of this Master Plan as projects are being initiated and implemented.

Table 15: Implementation Summary based on Types of Priorities

	Anticipated Design Cost	Anticipated Construction Cost	Anticipated Total Cost
Short – Years 1 to 2	\$515,000	\$6,450,000	\$6,965,000
Medium – Years 3 to 5	\$380,000	\$1,025,000	\$1,405,000
Long – Years 6 to 7	\$230,000	\$850,000	\$1,080,000
Ongoing – Years 1 to 7	\$25,000	\$445,000	\$470,000
Total	\$1,150,000	\$8,770,000	\$9,920,000



13.1 Budget Considerations

The following budget considerations are associated with the estimated costs in Table 8:

- Estimated costs are based on 2024/2025 market prices.
- Estimated costs do not include the municipal in-house and administrative costs.
- For Capital Investment projects, the detail design phase will confirm the cost for implementation; design considerations may reduce or increase implementation costs.

13.2 Operation and Maintenance

Associated to the childcare and recreation investments recommended as part of this Master Plan, operation and maintenance requirements will increase by including regular inspections, maintenance, and repairs. Operation and maintenance costs have not been considered in the costing exercise above; for each capital project and investment, additional costs should be considered including a 5% fund for programming and equipment and a 5% cost for annual operation and maintenance.

13.3 Financial Strategy

Funding the recommendations listed above should be through a variety of methods including current strategies (i.e., user fees, Development Charges, Capital Financing, grants, etc.) but also through in-house projects and partnerships with local businesses and community organizations.

The following provides different sources of funds for new municipal projects:

Cash in Lieu of Parkland

When a new development is proposed, the Municipality may accept a cash contribution instead of taking land for the development project. This Cash In Lieu of Parkland must be used for the acquisition of new parkland or the improvement of existing parks and recreational facilities.

Development Charges

Development charges can be levied against development land to pay for increased capital costs required for construction related to an increased need for services arising from development. Development charges can be used for capital costs related to services such as libraries, parks and recreation (excluding land acquisition), and childcare, and other types of infrastructure. The charges cannot be used for operational costs or maintenance expenses. The Municipality can collect Development Charges to enlarge a service it already offers to accommodate a growing population, but it is not allowed to use DCs to create new types of parks and recreation services.



Canada Community – Building Fund

This fund is used for a variety of purposes, including Community Development projects such as recreational facilities, cultural centres, and libraries.

Formerly known as the Gas Tax Fund.

Grant from Other Governments

From time to time, the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario announce specific programs for investment in municipal infrastructure. These grants sometimes come through organizations such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities or the Trillium Foundation who act on behalf of the government. These are not typically on-going programs, and they cannot be counted on to provide a predictable stream of funding to the Municipality. However, when these programs do come up, the Municipality can make applications for grants for projects, and this does help pay for improvements.

User Fees

The Municipality is permitted to charge user fees under the Municipal Act. User fees are intended to defray the costs of providing a service or running a facility and charged to the users of the recreational or cultural facility.

Municipal Property Taxes

Whenever a municipality chooses to do a capital works project that is not covered by another source of funding, the only remaining source of funds is the property tax. The Municipality passes an annual capital budget that includes improvements to municipal infrastructure, and projects are prioritized by the Council on the recommendation of Municipal staff.



14 | References





14 References

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A

Appendix

Facilities Inventory



COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

Strategic Plan for Childcare, Culture, Community Services and Recreation

MUNICIPALITY OVERVIEW

FACILITIES

- 1 UNION HALL
- 2 CEDAR HILL SCHOOL HOUSE

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

- 1 MILL OF KINTAIL CONSERVATION AREA
- 2 R.W. MACGREGOR MEMORIAL PARK
- 3 MUNRO MEADOWS PARK
- 4 WHITETAIL RIDGE PARK

TRAILS & PATHWAYS

- OTTAWA VALLEY RECREATIONAL TRAIL (OVRT)

LEGEND

- Town of Mississippi Mills Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Expressway / Highway
- Major Road
- Watercourse
- Parks and Open Space
- Waterbody
- Wooded Area

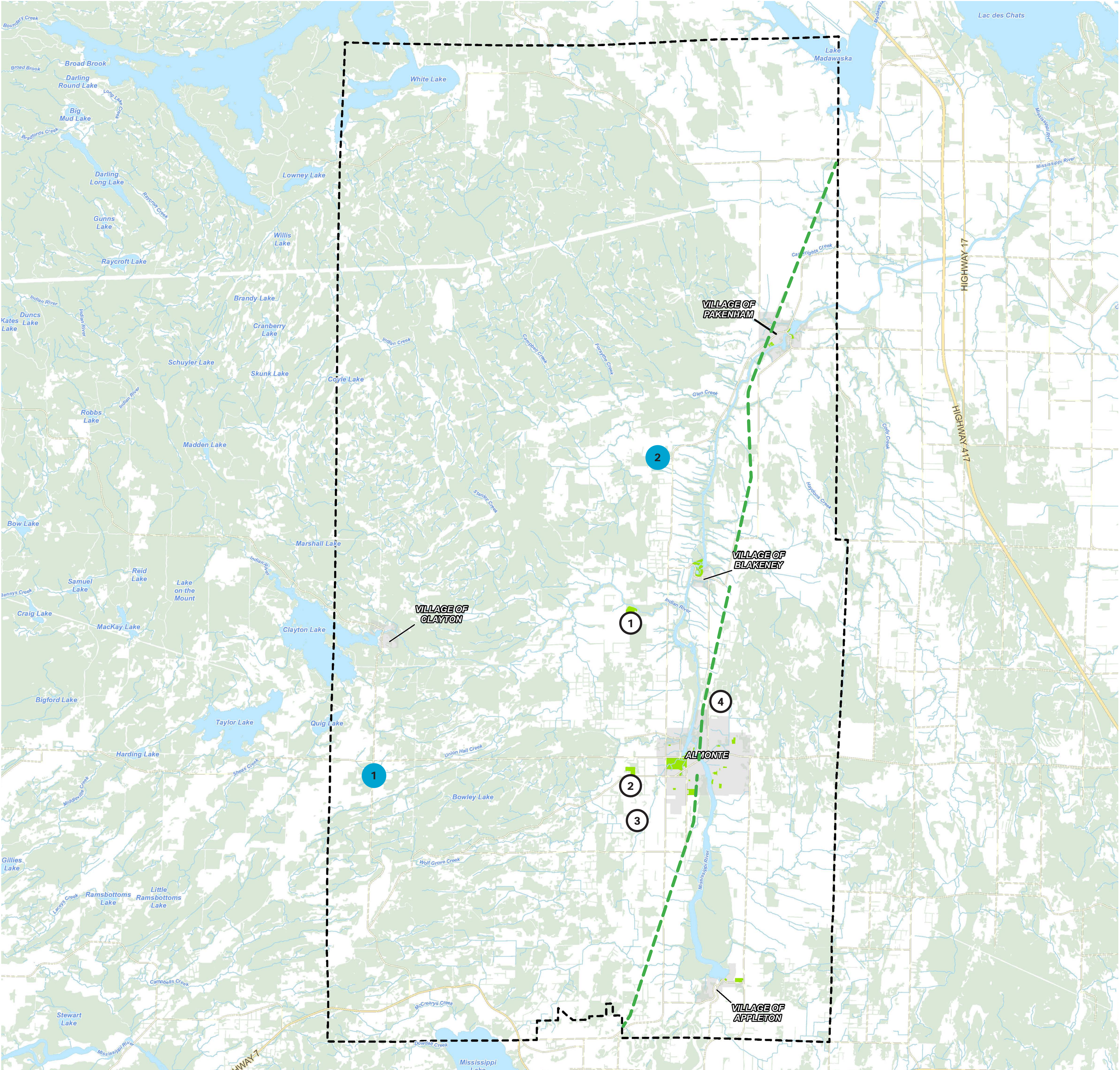
0 2.5 5 km



Notes
1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
2. Contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence – Ontario, and the Open Government Licence - Canada, accessed 2025.
3. Town of Mississippi Mills Official Plan mapping provided by the Town of Mississippi Mills.



Mississippi
Mills



TOWN OF ALMONTE

MUNICIPALLY-OWNED

- 1 ALMONTE LIBRARY
- 2 ALMONTE OLD TOWN HALL
- 3 JOHN LEVI COMMUNITY CENTRE

OWNED BY OTHERS

- 4 MISSISSIPPI VALLEY TEXTILE MUSEUM
- 5 NORTH LARKNAR FAIR GROUNDS

- 1 ALMONTE LAWN BOWLING
- 2 AUGUSTA STREET PARK
- 3 COLEMAN ISLAND PARK
- 4 DON MAYNARD PARK
- 5 GEMMILL PARK
- 6 HOUCIAMI PARK
- 7 JAMES STREET PARK
- 8 KIRKLAND PARK
- 9 MARK'S LOOKOUT
- 10 MARTIN STREET NORTH PARK
- 11 MCINTOSH PARK
- 12 MEADOWGLEN PARK
- 13 METCALF GEOHERITAGE PARK
- 14 MILL RUN PARK
- 15 RIVERFRONT ESTATES CENTRAL PARK
- 16 RIVERFRONT ESTATES WATERFRONT
- 17 SNEDDEN-CASEY PARK
- 18 VETERAN'S WALKWAY PARK
- 19 WYLIE STREET PARK

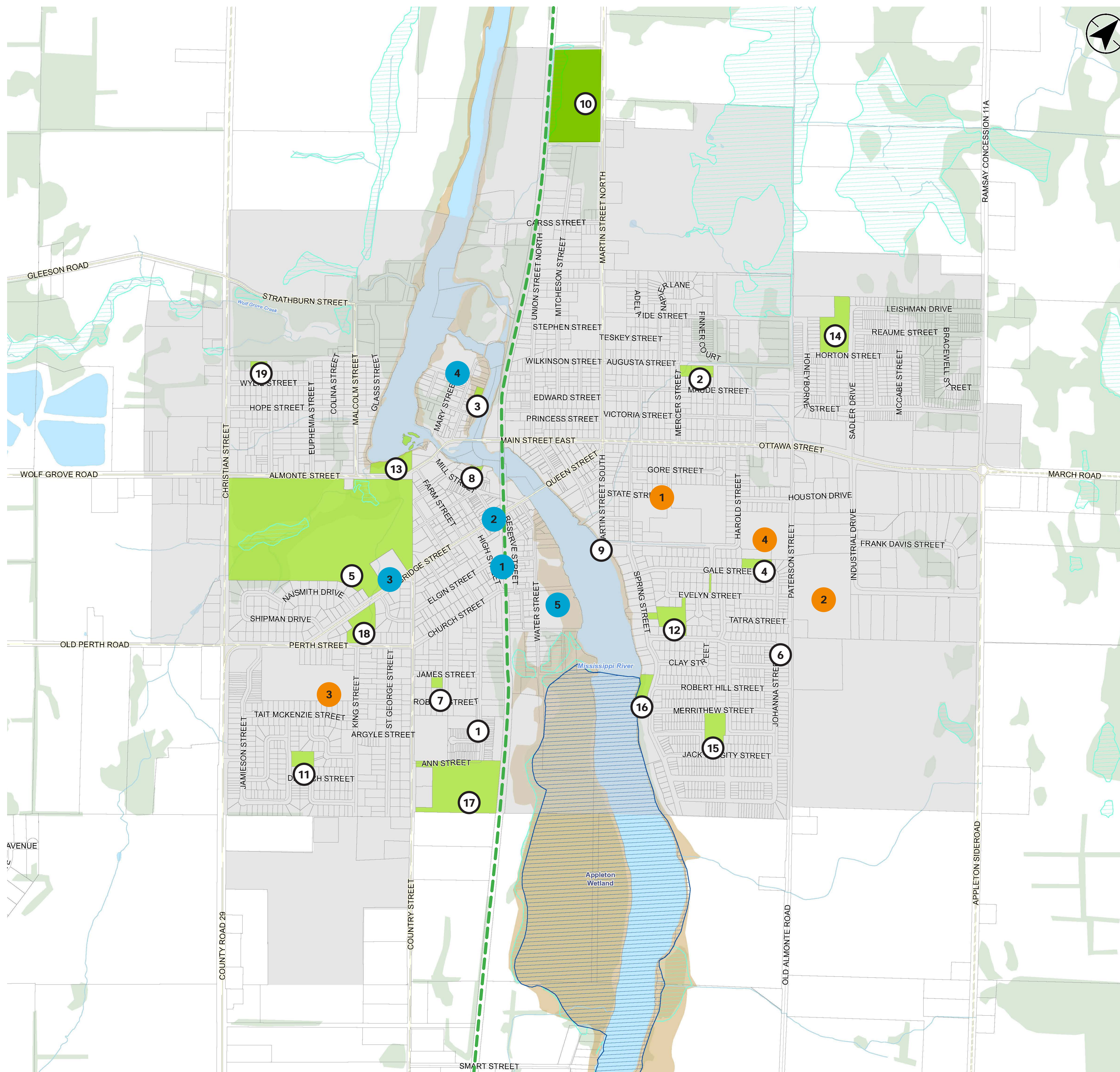
- 1 MISSISSIPPI MILLS
CHILDCARE CENTRE
- 2 R.TAIT MCKENZIE
PUBLIC SCHOOL
- 3 NAISMITH MEMORIAL
PUBLIC SCHOOL
- 4 HOLY NAME OF MARY
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

— — OTTAWA VALLEY RECREATIONAL TRAIL (OVRT)

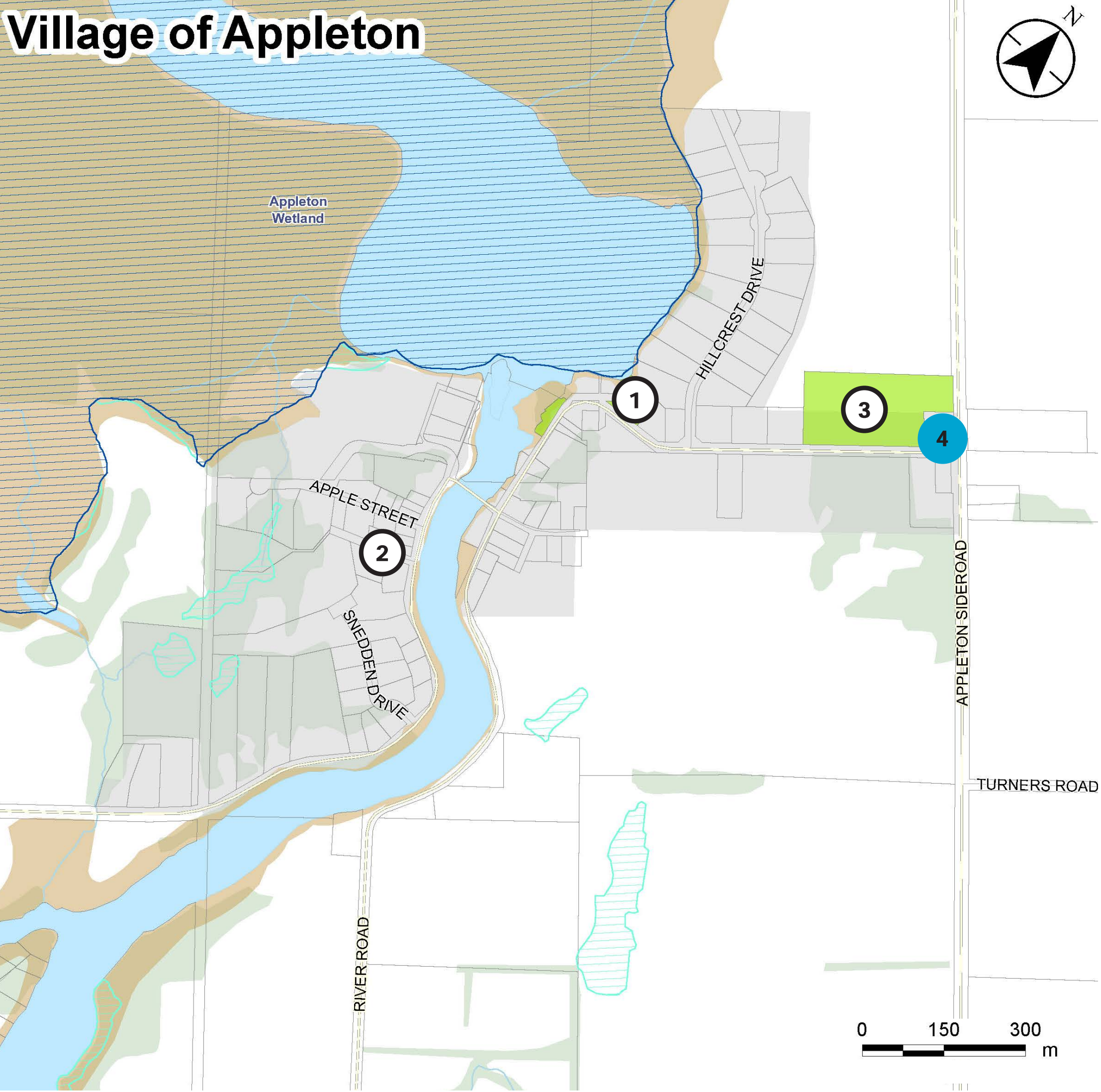
- Village Boundary
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Floodplain Overlay
- Parcel Boundary
- Parks and Open Space
- Wetland - Evaluated (Provincial)
- Wetland - Not evaluated per Ontario
- Wooded Area

Notes

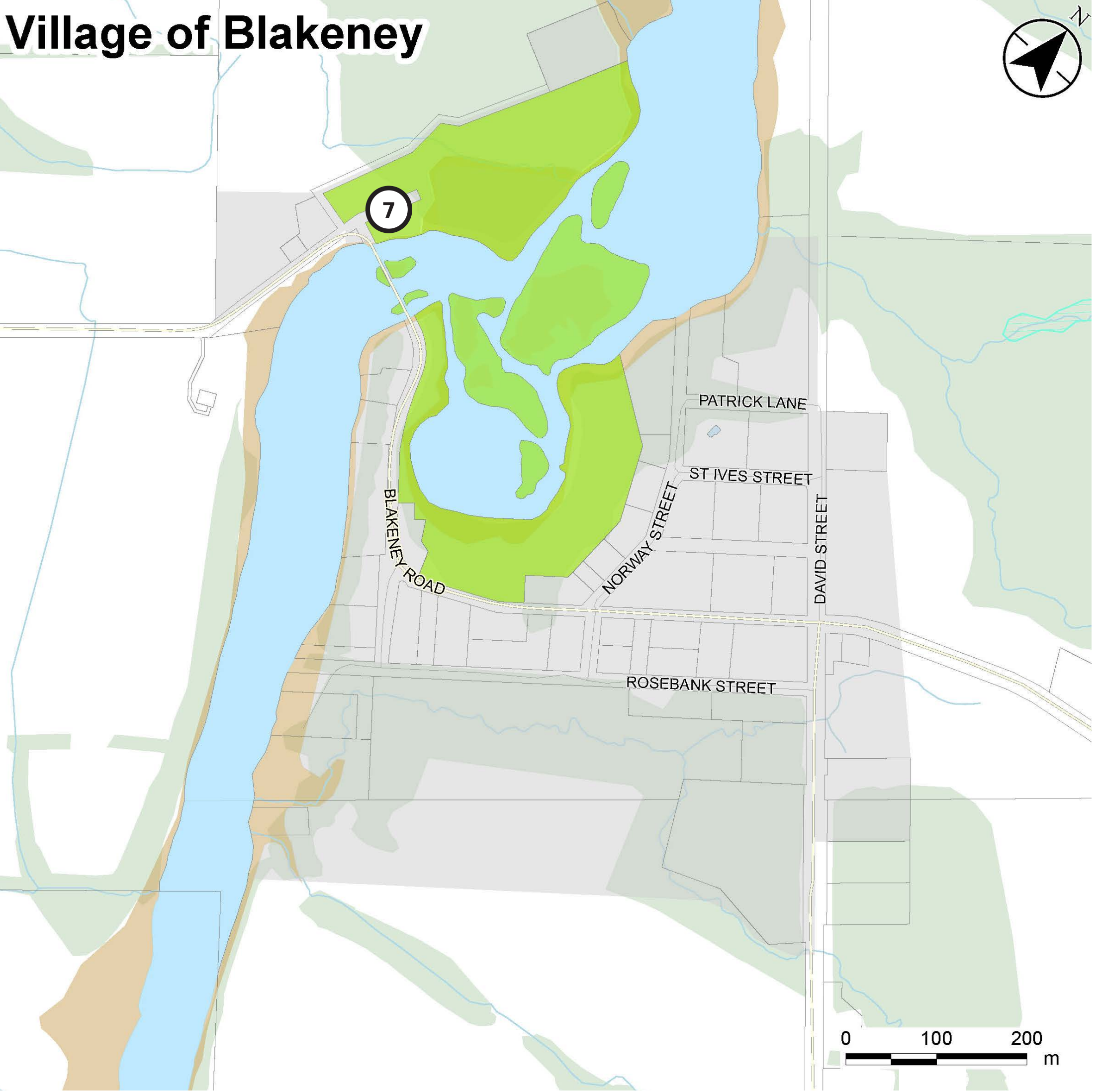
1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
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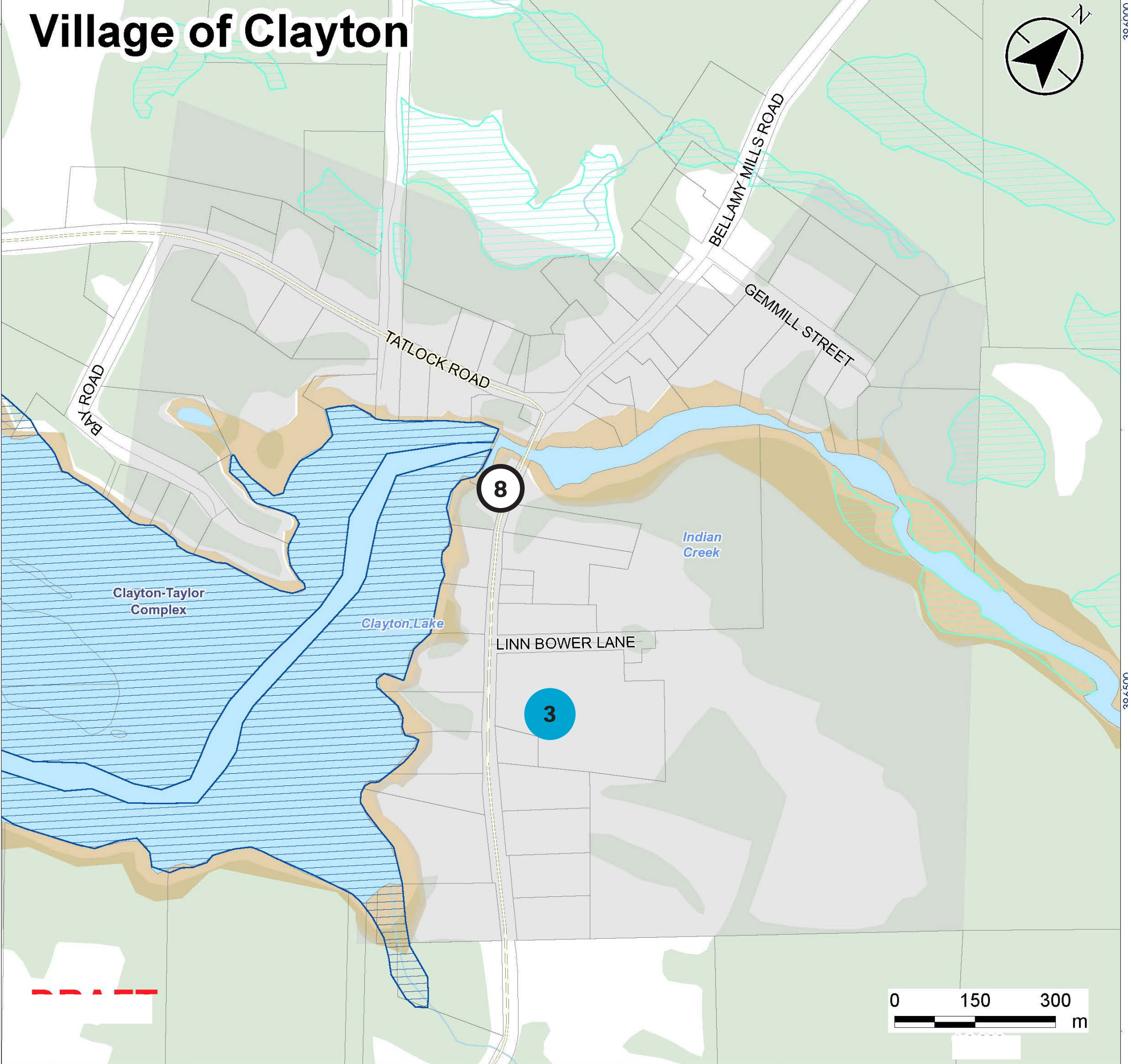
Village of Appleton



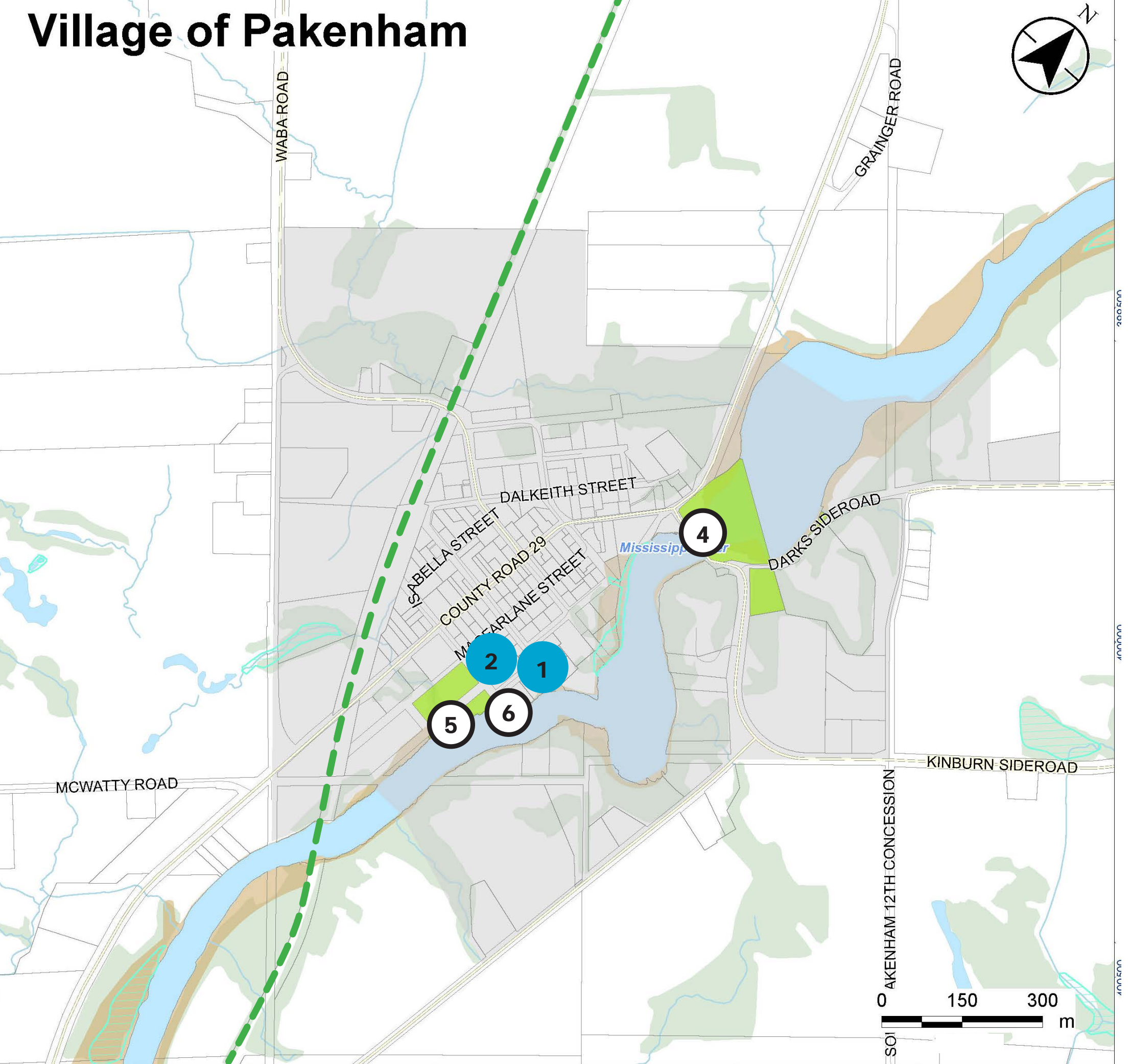
Village of Blakeney



Village of Clayton



Village of Pakenham



COMMUNITY SERVICES
MASTER PLAN

Strategic Plan for Childcare, Culture,
Community Services and Recreation

VILLAGES OF APPLETON, BLAKENEY,
CLAYTON, AND PAKENHAM

FACILITIES

MUNICIPALLY-OWNED

- 1 PAKENHAM LIBRARY
- 2 STEWART COMMUNITY CENTRE

OWNED BY OTHERS

- 3 CLAYTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
- 4 NORTH LANARK REGIONAL MUSEUM

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

MUNICIPALLY-OWNED

- 1 APPLETON BAY PARK
- 2 ELEANOR WRIGHT PARK
- 3 JAKE LUBBER'S FIELD
- 4 FIVE-SPAN BRIDGE PARK
- 5 FRED MILLAR FIELD
- 6 PAKENHAM COMMUNITY PARK / BEACH

OWNED BY OTHERS

- 7 BLAKENEY PARK
- 8 CLAYTON TAYLOR PARK

TRAILS & PATHWAYS

OTTAWA VALLEY RECREATIONAL TRAIL (OVRT)

LEGEND

- Village Boundary
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Floodplain Overlay
- Parcel Boundary
- Parks and Open Space
- Wetland - Evaluated (Provincial)
- Wetland - Not evaluated per Ontario
- Wooded Area

Notes
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B

Appendix

Parks and Open Spaces Distribution



COMMUNITY SERVICES
MASTER PLAN

Strategic Plan for Childcare, Culture,
Community Services and Recreation

TOWN OF ALMONTE
DISTRIBUTION OF
PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

FACILITIES

MUNICIPALLY-OWNED

- 1 ALMONTE LIBRARY
- 2 ALMONTE OLD TOWN HALL
- 3 JOHN LEVI COMMUNITY CENTRE

OWNED BY OTHERS

- 4 MISSISSIPPI VALLEY TEXTILE MUSEUM
- 5 NORTH LANARK FAIR GROUNDS

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

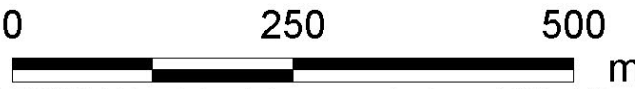
- 1 ALMONTE LAWN BOWLING
- 2 AUGUSTA STREET PARK
- 3 COLEMAN ISLAND PARK
- 4 DON MAYNARD PARK
- 5 GEMMILL PARK
- 6 HOUCHIAMI PARK
- 7 JAMES STREET PARK
- 8 KIRKLAND PARK
- 9 MARK'S LOOKOUT
- 10 MARTIN STREET NORTH PARK
- 11 MCINTOSH PARK
- 12 MEADOWGLEN PARK
- 13 METCALF GEOHERITAGE PARK
- 14 MILL RUN PARK
- 15 RIVERFRONT ESTATES CENTRAL PARK
- 16 RIVERFRONT ESTATES WATERFRONT
- 17 SNEDDEN-CASEY PARK
- 18 VETERAN'S WALKWAY PARK
- 19 WYLIE STREET PARK

TRAILS & PATHWAYS

- OTTAWA VALLEY RECREATIONAL TRAIL (OVRT)

LEGEND

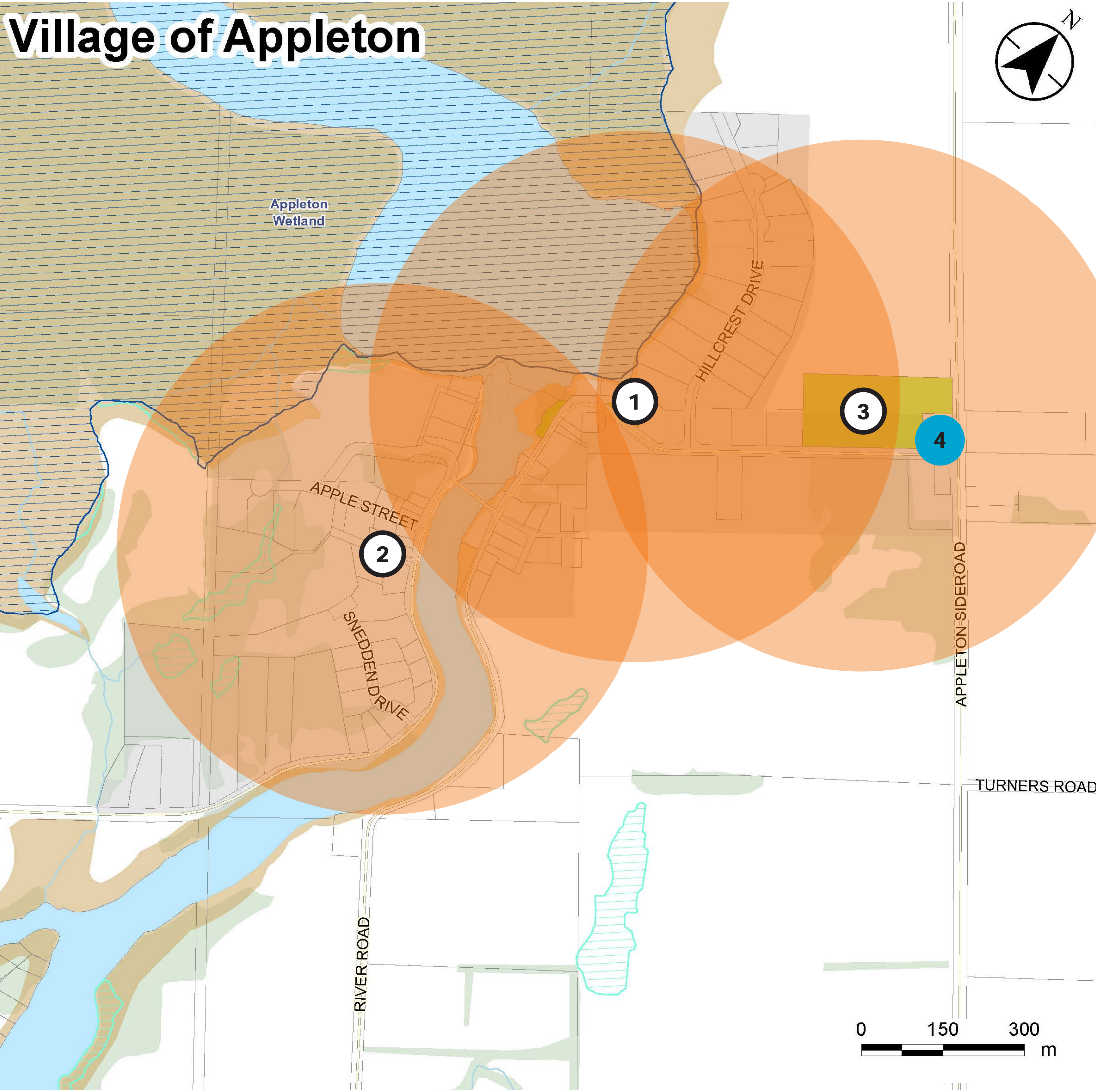
- Village Boundary
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Floodplain Overlay
- Parcel Boundary
- Parks and Open Space
- Wetland - Evaluated (Provincial)
- Wetland - Not evaluated per Ontario
- Wooded Area
- 500m Service Radius



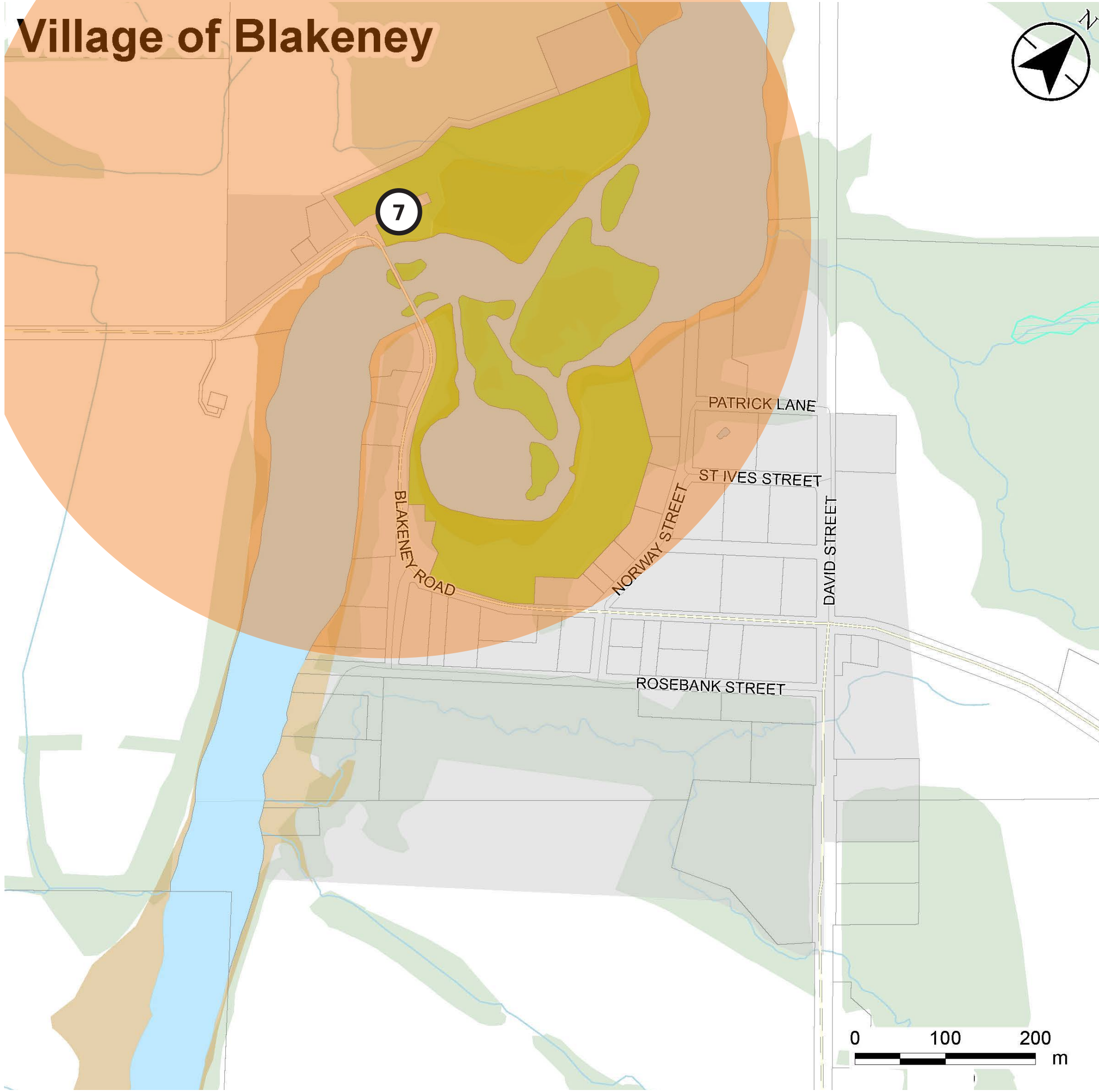
Notes
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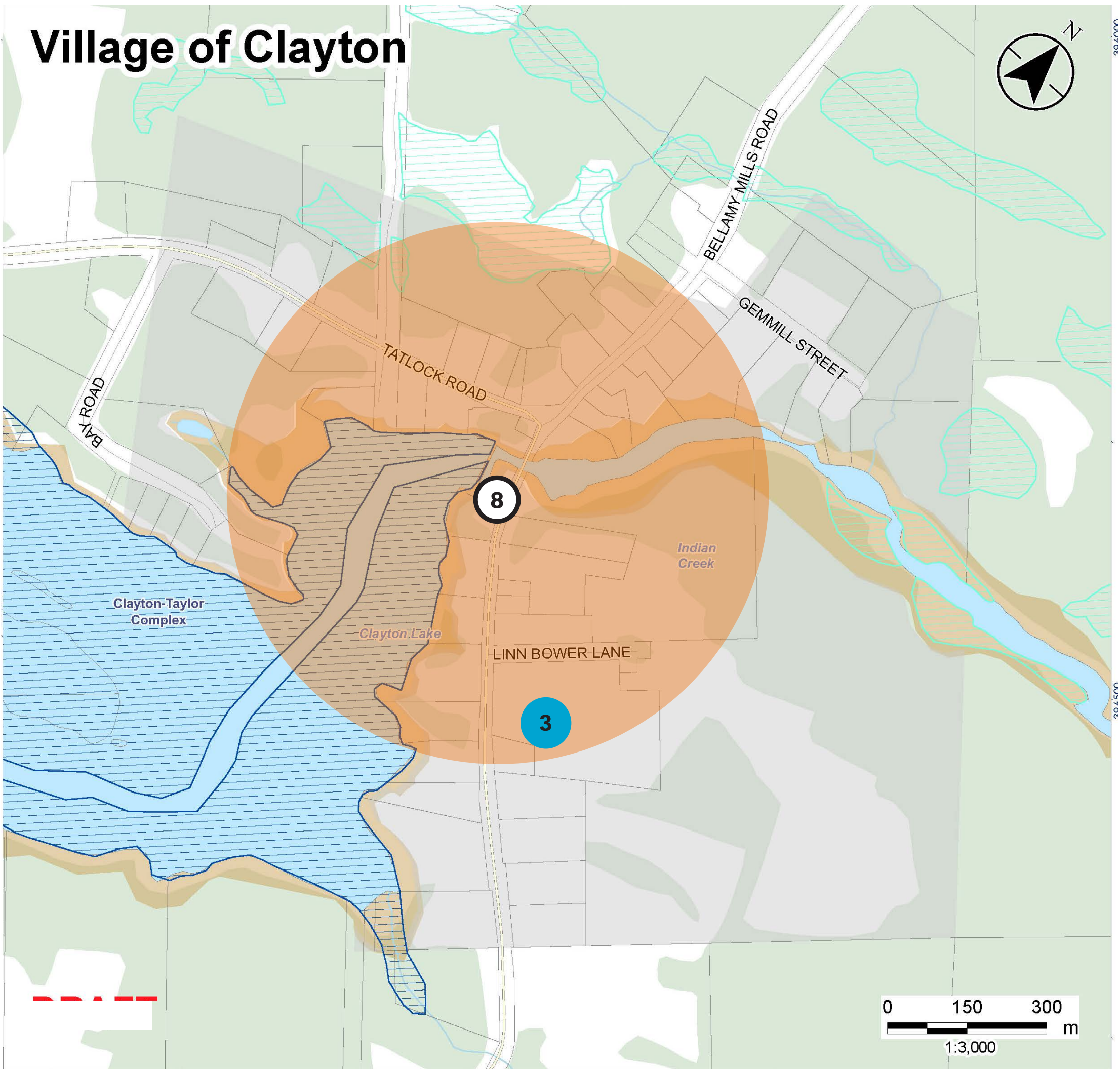
Village of Appleton



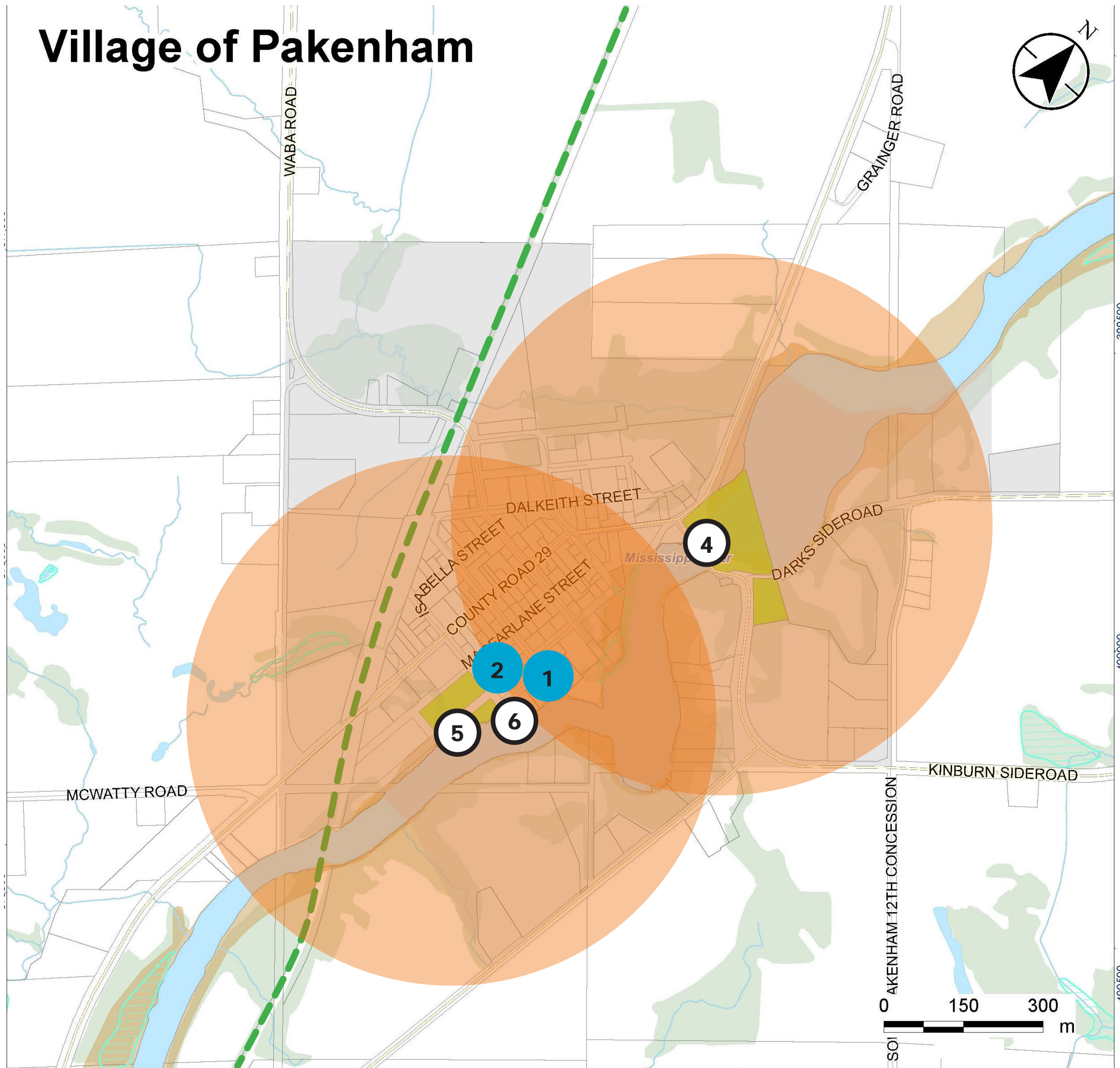
Village of Blakeney



Village of Clayton



Village of Pakenham



COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

Strategic Plan for Childcare, Culture, Community Services and Recreation

VILLAGES OF APPLETON, BLAKENEY, CLAYTON, AND PAKENHAM DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

FACILITIES

MUNICIPALLY-OWNED

- 1 PAKENHAM LIBRARY
- 2 STEWART COMMUNITY CENTRE

OWNED BY OTHERS

- 3 CLAYTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
- 4 NORTH LANARK REGIONAL MUSEUM

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

MUNICIPALLY-OWNED

- 1 APPLETON BAY PARK
- 2 ELEANOR WRIGHT PARK
- 3 JAKE LUBBER'S FIELD
- 4 FIVE-SPAN BRIDGE PARK
- 5 FRED MILLAR FIELD
- 6 PAKENHAM COMMUNITY PARK / BEACH

OWNED BY OTHERS

- 7 BLAKENEY PARK
- 8 CLAYTON TAYLOR PARK

TRAILS & PATHWAYS

— OTTAWA VALLEY RECREATIONAL TRAIL (OVRT)

LEGEND

- Village Boundary
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Floodplain Overlay
- Parcel Boundary
- Parks and Open Space
- Wetland - Evaluated (Provincial)
- Wetland - Not evaluated per Ontario
- Wooded Area
- 500m Service Radius

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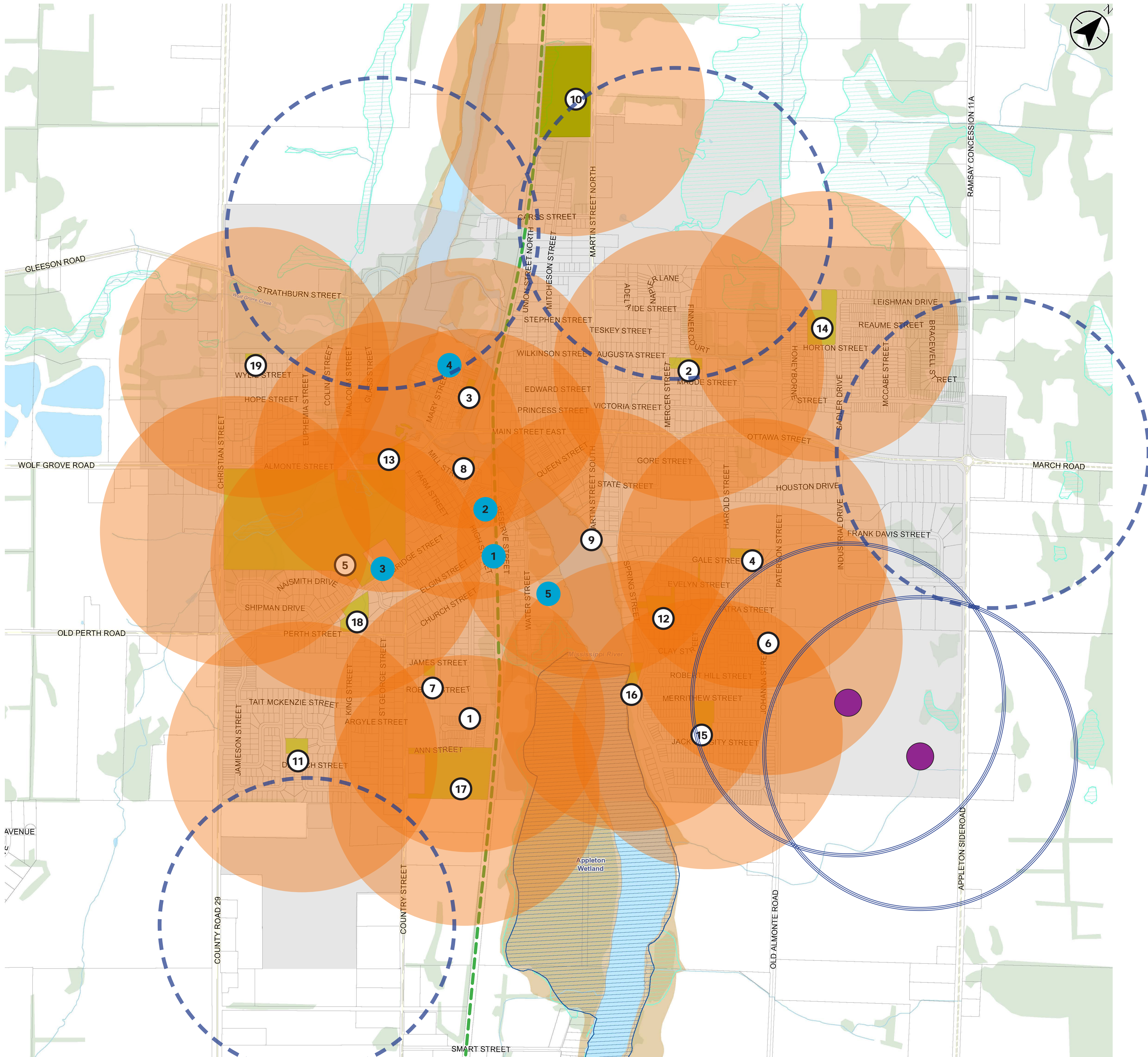
Mississippi
Mills



C |
Appendix

Parks Anticipated Distribution





COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

Strategic Plan for Childcare, Culture, Community Services and Recreation

TOWN OF ALMONTE ANTICIPATED DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

FACILITIES	PARKS & OPEN SPACES
MUNICIPALLY-OWNED	① ALMONTE LAWN BOWLING
① ALMONTE LIBRARY	② AUGUSTA STREET PARK
② ALMONTE OLD TOWN HALL	③ COLEMAN ISLAND PARK
③ JOHN LEVI COMMUNITY CENTRE	④ DON MAYNARD PARK
OWNED BY OTHERS	⑤ GEMMILL PARK
④ MISSISSIPPI VALLEY TEXTILE MUSEUM	⑥ HOUCHIAMI PARK
⑤ NORTH LANARK FAIR GROUNDS	⑦ JAMES STREET PARK
	⑧ KIRKLAND PARK
	⑨ MARK'S LOOKOUT
	⑩ MARTIN STREET NORTH PARK
	⑪ MCINTOSH PARK
	⑫ MEADOWGLEN PARK
	⑬ METCALF GEOHERITAGE PARK
	⑭ MILL RUN PARK
	⑮ RIVERFRONT ESTATES CENTRAL PARK
	⑯ RIVERFRONT ESTATES WATERFRONT
	⑰ SNEDDEN-CASEY PARK
	⑱ VETERAN'S WALKWAY PARK
	⑲ WYLIE STREET PARK

TRAILS & PATHWAYS

— OTTAWA VALLEY RECREATIONAL TRAIL (OVRT)

LEGEND

Village Boundary	500m Service Radius
Major Road	Planned / Future Park
Minor Road	Planned / Future 500m Service Radius
Watercourse	Recommended Park 500m Service Radius
Floodplain Overlay	
Parcel Boundary	
Parks and Open Space	
Wetland - Evaluated (Provincial)	
Wetland - Not evaluated per Ontario	
Wooded Area	

0 250 500 m

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