

8. Parks, Recreation, Arts, Culture and Heritage

When thinking about things that are key in creating a place where people love to live, hard services such as water, sewer, power and snow removal certainly play a role. Soft services like well designed and maintained parks and recreational facilities, quality spaces for arts and culture, and the preservation of local heritage also play a key role in creating a city that residents enjoy living in and proudly call home. Parks, recreation, arts, culture and heritage are all quality of life components of Sault Ste. Marie that can build community and local pride, boost our local economy and improve our health and environment.

What We Know

Key Points

- Only about 16% of total parkspace in Sault Ste. Marie is owned and operated by the City. Other public organizations such as the Conservation Authority provide significant amounts of recreational space. Numerous local organizations and user groups play an important role in programming public space.
- The parkspace system in Sault Ste. Marie includes community parks, neighbourhood parks, parkettes and linear parks (trails). Many include equipment for active play or sports, but some simply function as green spaces to enjoy passively.
- Total amount, equitable distribution and suitable programming are critical components in determining appropriate parkspace service levels. Generally, residential neighbourhoods in the Sault have walkable access to enough parkspace with suitable programming.
- While school yards are technically not parks, they often function as public recreational or green spaces. As local school boards continue to close underutilized schools, we risk losing the recreational spaces offered as part of school properties.
- The powers under Section 42 of the Planning Act, which allow municipalities to collect parkland or cash in lieu of parkland in relation to development and redevelopment proposals, are underutilized.
- Sault Ste. Marie has a vibrant arts and culture community that could benefit from stronger collaboration and support from both public and private sectors.
- There are currently 38 designated heritage sites in Sault Ste. Marie, of which over two-thirds are located in the Downtown.
- A number of neighbourhoods in the Sault have a unique history and character, and their designation as “Locally Significant Heritage Areas” is meant to help maintain their uniqueness and appeal.
- The City is required to plan for and enforce the conservation of archaeological resources, and to consider the interests of Indigenous communities in the process.

Parks and Recreation in Sault Ste. Marie

There are three important considerations when planning for a community's parkspace:

1. Is there enough parkspace for the community?
2. Is parkspace, especially neighbourhood parks, equitably distributed throughout the community?
3. Do parks contain the appropriate amenities and programming levels?

The majority of parks in Sault Ste. Marie can be generally classified into four categories:

Community Parks (Including community facilities)

Serve residents living in all parts of the City and beyond. Examples of City-owned community parks include Strathclair Park, Bellevue Park and Clergue Park. There also exist significant community parks not owned by the City, such as Hiawatha Highlands, Fort Creek Conservation Area and the Sault Ste. Marie Canal National Historic Site. Community facilities such as the John Rhodes Community Centre and Northern Community Centre are also defined as parkspace.

The main distinction between a community park and a neighbourhood park is that community parks contain facilities and attributes that attract residents from throughout the community and beyond. Therefore, they must be located and designed to be fully accessible, with amenities such as on-site parking and pedestrian facilities.

Community parks may also contain amenities aimed at servicing the immediate neighbourhood, in a manner similar to neighbourhood parks.

Neighbourhood Parks

Mainly serve residents living near them, with amenities generally designed to accommodate youth recreational needs, but also offer appropriate spaces and amenities for a broader demographic.

Neighbourhood parks should be located to be the focal point of a neighbourhood and designed to be safe inviting spaces with adequate sightlines to public streets. Typically, amenities such as on-site parking is not required as part of a neighbourhood park.

Neighbourhood parks can include amenities that attract residents from beyond the immediate area, albeit at a smaller scale than those provided in a community park.

Parkettes

Primarily exist and should be further developed in the Downtown core, providing small-scale leisure amenities, as well as cultural and social interaction opportunities. Examples include the March Street Stage and Queenstown Commons.

Linear Parks (Trails)

Act as both recreational space and utilitarian connections between separate parts of the city. The John Rowswell Hub Trail is our signature linear park.

Amount of Parksapce in Sault Ste. Marie**Table 8.1: Public Parksapce in Sault Ste. Marie Per 1,000 Residents.***Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie.*

Park type	Total area (hectares)	Area per 1,000 residents (hectares)
All Public Parksapce	1966.8 ha	26.8 ha
Public Parksapce Not City-owned	1648.9 ha	22.5 ha
All City-owned Parksapce	317.9 ha	4.3 ha
City-owned Community Parks	239.2 ha	3.3 ha
City-owned Neighbourhood Parks	78.7 ha	1.1 ha

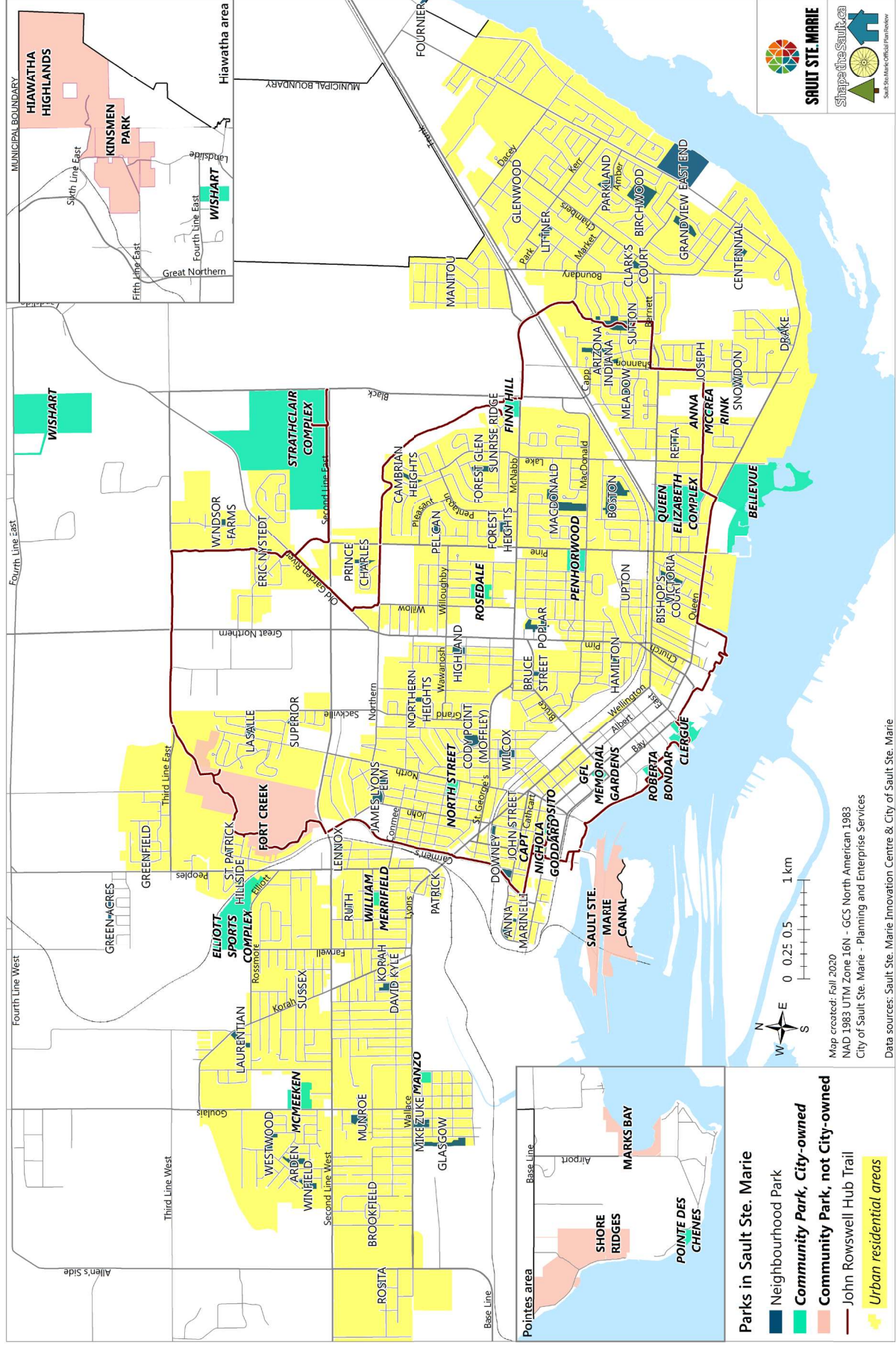
Approximately 84% of the total parksapce in the community is not owned by the City. This includes large Conservation Areas such as Hiawatha Highlands, Shore Ridges Wetland, Fort Creek and the Canal Site. While not City-owned, these spaces provide important recreational open space for the community and beyond. The City should continue to work with the various owners of these public spaces to support continued public access and programming.

Some Municipalities have established minimum targets (area/1,000 residents) for the provision of various types of parksapce. For example, Guelph aims to provide no less than 2.6 hectares of community parks and 0.7 hectares of neighbourhood parks per 1,000 residents. Sudbury aims to provide at least 3 hectares of community parks and 1 hectare of neighbourhood parks per 1,000 residents. When only considering City-owned parkland, the Sault currently exceeds all of the minimum parksapce provision targets reviewed. When considering all publicly accessible parkland, the City is well served by ample parksapce.

Distribution of Parksapce in Sault Ste. Marie

When considering the distribution of parksapce, neighbourhood parks within the Urban Settlement Area are generally the focus. Outside the Urban Settlement Area, the rural development pattern of low density and large lots significantly reduces the need for neighbourhood parksapce.

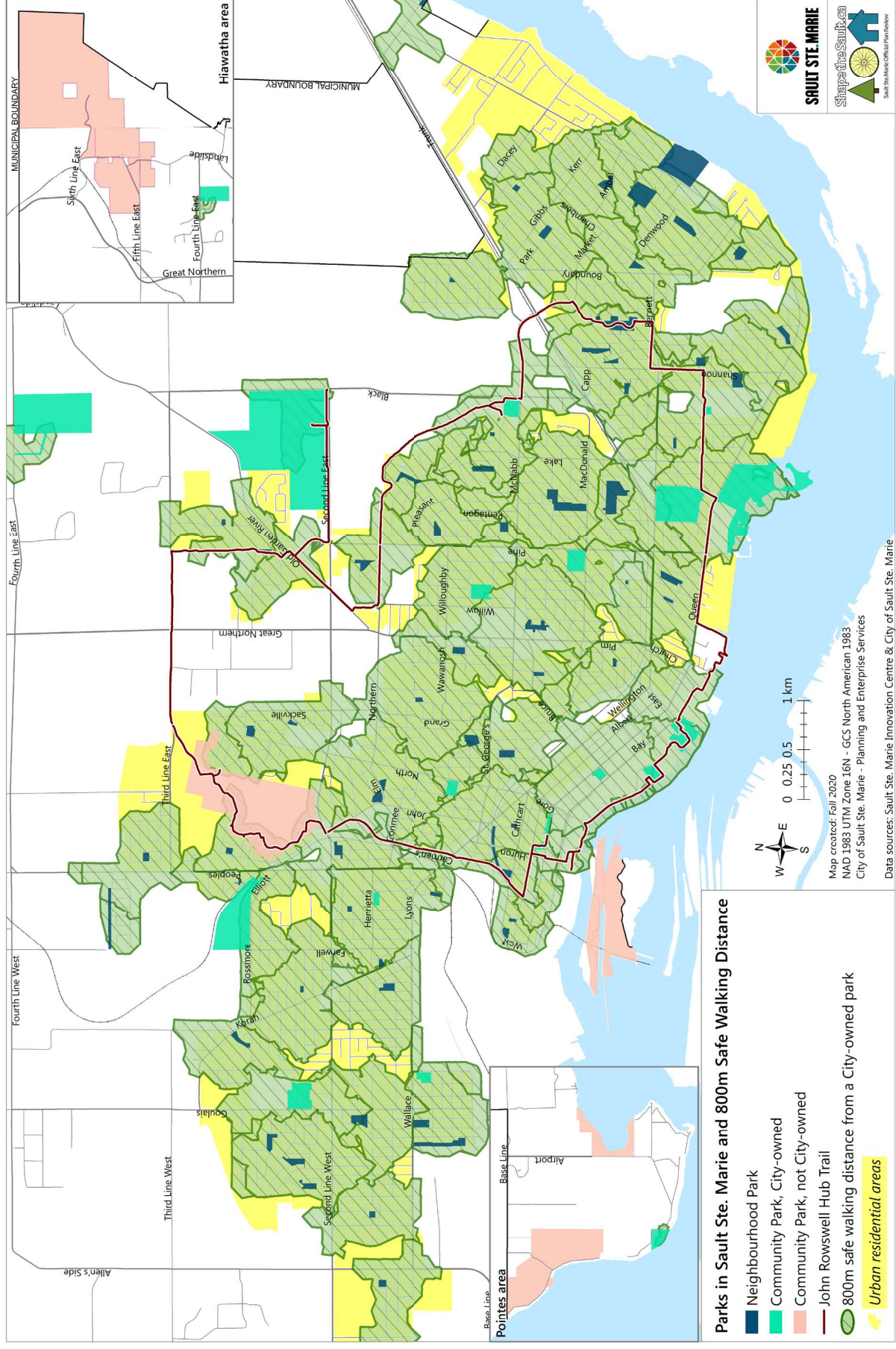
Figure 8.1: Map of Public Parks in Sault Ste. Marie.
 Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie.



The map in Figure 8.2 shows the overall distribution of City-owned parks, including the *'Immediate Service Area'* of those parks, which considers a safely walkable radius of 800 metres (1/2 mile or 10-minute walk) without the need to cross major barriers such as non-signalized intersections of one or more arterial road(s).

The majority of the Sault's urban residential areas are within the immediate walkable service area of a City-owned park; however, there do exist some gaps. Some of these gaps can be attributed to draft approved residential subdivisions on the fringes of the urban area that have not yet developed. For example: The Eastside and Queensgate Subdivisions east of Dacey Road, and the Greenfield Subdivision at Third Line and Old Goulais Bay Road. These subdivisions have dedicated parkland to the City which will be established as the subdivisions continue to develop. There are also gaps resulting from a lack of safe pedestrian crossings at arterial roads. A notable example is Bellevue Park and Queen Street East. The recent installation of the pedestrian crossover at Queen Street and Churchill Boulevard has significantly increased the number of homes within the immediate walkable service area of Bellevue Park. In other cases, the installation of a walkway can also significantly increase the walkable service area of some parks.

Figure 8.2: Parks in Sault Ste. Marie and Each City-owned Park's Immediate Service Area (800-metre Safe Walking Distance).
 Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie and Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre.



It is also important to consider other demographic and socio-economic factors when assessing the equitable distribution of parkspace throughout the community. Table 8.2 below ranks the top 10 parks for 5 key indicators. This information is also useful in determining appropriate amenity and programming levels based upon nearby demographics and socio-economic factors.

Table 8.2: Demographic and Socio-economic Analysis of Those Living Near Municipal Parks (Within 800-metre Safe Walking Distance).

Source: Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre & Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population.

Rank	Highest population	Most children and youth (age 0–19)	Most seniors (age 65+)	Most low-income residents	Most low-income children (age 0–17)
1 st	Parkland	Parkland	Rosedale	Rosedale	Rosedale
2 nd	North Street	Birchwood	Indiana	Esposito	Westwood
3 rd	Sutton	North Street	Clergue	John Street	Poplar
4 th	Downey	Westwood	North Street	Downey	Downey
5 th	Indiana	East End	Parkland	GFL Memorial Gardens	Sutton
6 th	Rosedale	Downey	Sutton	Captain Nichola Goddard	Parkland
7 th	John Street	Sutton	Meadow	Clergue	Penhorwood
8 th	Birchwood	William Merrifield	Northern Heights	Sutton	Arizona
9 th	William Merrifield	Forest Heights	Superior	Poplar	John Street
10 th	Arizona	Indiana	Forest Heights	North Street	Arden Street

Parkspace Amenities and Programming

The City of Sault Ste. Marie has developed and maintained a **Parks and Recreation Master Plan**¹⁸ since 2016, last updated in 2019. The current Parks and Recreation Master Plan identifies strategic, operational and amenity upgrade and programming priorities for the short, medium and long term. The Master Plan states five guiding principles for the development of parks and recreation in Sault Ste. Marie:

1. Provide a diversity of parks, open spaces and recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

¹⁸ Available at: <https://saultstemarie.ca/Cityweb/media/PWT/Parks/Parks-Master-Plan.pdf>

2. Ensure all residential areas are served by recreational facilities and ensure this infrastructure is accessible by a variety of modes of transportation.
3. Identify recreational opportunities that enable and support unstructured, self-scheduled, multi-ability and low-cost activities, in addition to local sports and other organized activities.
4. Support recreation events in the community that foster physical activity and enhance quality of life in the community, especially in the Downtown.
5. Support inclusive, affordable and high-quality sports, recreational, arts and cultural programs throughout the community.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan also recommends several strategies for the development of parks and recreation:

1. Work closely with community organizations to support recreational programs and avoid duplication; where gaps exist, City staff will work to fill gaps by seeding the development of new programming.
2. Annually evaluate usage and participation rates to respond to community need.
3. Monitor and seek out funding support from different levels of government and service groups; proactively develop “shovel ready” projects and new program ideas based on community priorities to be in a position to leverage new funding opportunities.
4. Encourage joint utilization of municipal and other publicly owned open space.
5. Encourage subsequent development of the John Rowswell Hub Trail as a facility for recreation, leisure and active transportation within the City.

In support of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the City recently developed a five-year **Park Revitalization Plan** that identified specific neighbourhood parks in need of investment and updates to better serve nearby residents. Every municipal park was given a priority score indicating its need, based on the following factors:

- Condition and age of park equipment.
- Amenities available at the park.
- Neighbourhood walkability/access to the park.
- Total nearby population.
- Percentage of the nearby population that is considered low-income.

School Closures

While school yards are technically not parks, they often function as public recreational or green spaces. For example, many school yards have sports and play equipment that families and children are free to use. There are also City-owned parks that abut school yards. As local school boards continue to close underutilized schools, Sault Ste. Marie residents risk losing the recreational spaces offered as part of school properties, which include not only the outdoor amenities, but also school gyms, which were made available to a variety of formal and informal user groups on evenings and weekends.

The following are some notable examples of former schools that about or provide significant green space in neighbourhoods:

- Rosedale School abuts Rosedale Park near Willow Avenue and McNabb Street, which is currently home to the City's lone Ultimate Frisbee field.
- St. Bernadette's School abuts Forest Heights Park near Pine Street and McNabb Street, which currently has a community garden and playground equipment.
- William Merrifield School abuts William Merrifield Park on Patrick Street in the west end, which has tennis courts and one of the City's outdoor rinks.
- The Sir James Dunn site in the east end just north of Algoma University's campus is a significant open green space.

Trails in Sault Ste. Marie

Trails are a significant feature of Sault Ste. Marie's recreation system. They function both as linear parks and as components of the city's active transportation network. There are two major trail systems that currently exist in Sault Ste. Marie:

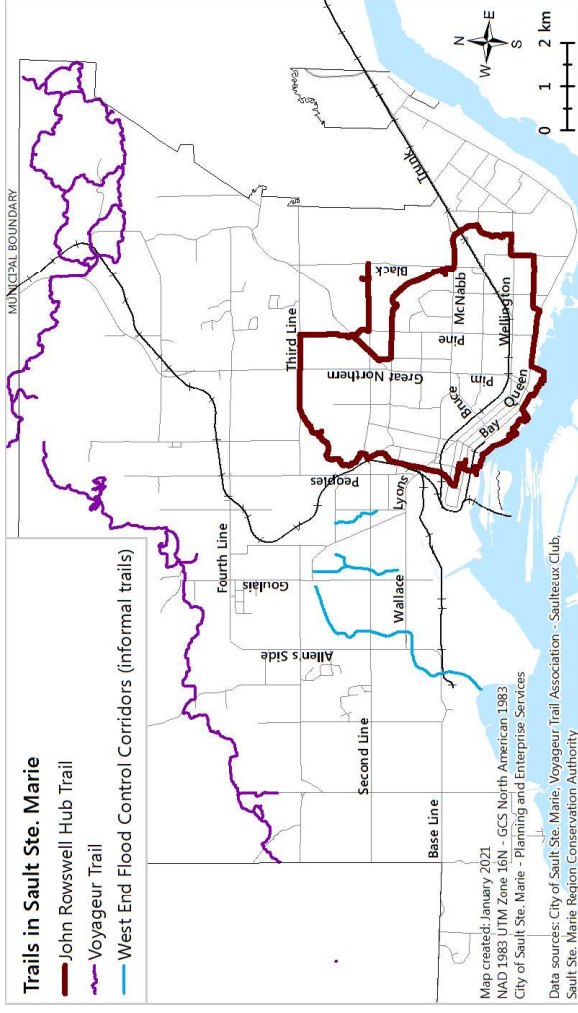
- **John Rowswell Hub Trail:** A City-maintained trail that forms a circle connecting the Downtown waterfront, Algoma University, Finn Hill, Sault Area Hospital, Fort Creek and Carmen's Way. More spokes for the Hub Trail are planned, for example in the west end and the former St. Marys Paper (Machine Shop) area. Its current length is approximately 25 km.
- **Voyageur Trail — Sauteaux Section:** A volunteer-maintained trail network that traverses the rural northern portion of the city in and around the Precambrian Uplands and Hiawatha Highlands. Its current length within Sault Ste. Marie is approximately 50 km.
- **The flood control corridors in the city's west end** are not intended to be recreational trails, but these corridors are used by some residents and groups for casual walking and hiking. The majority of these corridors are maintained by the Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority and total approximately 10 km:
 - Bennett-West Davignon Flood Control Corridor, which runs along the western edge of the city's urban area and is 6.5 km in length.
 - Central Creek Flood Control Corridor, which runs behind Korah Collegiate and Vocational School on Goulais Avenue and is 2.5 km in length.
 - East Davignon Flood Control Corridor, which runs just west of Farwell Terrace and is 1.1 km in length.

The Sault does not currently have a comprehensive master plan that outlines the expansion and integration of all non-motorized trail networks, including sidewalks and cycling paths within street rights-of-way. Generally, a new master plan for trails will need to consider:

- Developing new trails on public lands. Where private lands are considered, appropriate agreements between the City and the landowner shall be required.
- Recognizing informal trails, and where appropriate working towards formalizing them.

Figure 8.3: Map of the John Rowswell Hub Trail, Voyageur Trail and West End Flood Control Corridors.

Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie; Voyageur Trail Association Saulteaux Club; Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority.



Parkland Dedication

Section 42 of the Planning Act gives municipalities the ability to collect parkland or cash in lieu of parkland as a condition of any development and redevelopment. The Planning Act establishes the following maximum parkland dedication requirements:

- Not exceeding 2% of land area or cash in lieu of, for commercial and industrial development and redevelopment.
- Not exceeding 5% of land area or cash in lieu of, for all other types of development and redevelopment, such as residential and institutional.
- For higher density residential developments, the following alternative rates may be utilized:
 - 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units.
 - Cash in lieu of 1 hectare per 500 dwelling units.

Currently, parkland is dedicated to the Municipality as part of any Draft Plan of Subdivision approval. Cash in lieu of parkland is collected as a condition of new commercial, industrial and residential lot creation by severance, as well as for rural residential subdivisions (pursuant to Planning Act Sections 51.1 and 53). Payment is determined based upon the value of the land the day before development commences and the funds must be deposited into a special account and used for a variety of parkland and recreational facility upgrades.

Table 8.3: Annual Cash in Lieu of Parkland Payments (2008-2019).

Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie.

Year	Total Annual Cash in Lieu of Parkland Deposits
2008	\$24,676
2009	\$26,303
2010	\$45,175
2011	\$30,893
2012	\$106,940
2013	\$75,194
2014	\$67,936
2015	\$178,525
2016	\$53,189
2017	\$84,813
2018	\$83,817
2019	\$68,986
TOTAL	\$846,447

Annual cash in lieu of parkland deposits fluctuate, depending upon the amount of new residential, commercial and industrial lot creation that occurred. The balance within the cash in lieu of parkland fund as of October 2020 is \$436,762.

The City only collects parkland or cash in lieu of parkland where new lots are being created, whereas Section 42 of the Planning Act permits collection of parkland or cash in lieu of parkland from almost all development and redevelopment projects. Most other communities do use this provision. Utilizing the full scope of powers outlined in Section 42 of the Planning Act represents a significant opportunity to generate additional funds for the provision, maintenance and upgrade of parkland. Doing so also recognizes the parkland requirements associated with redevelopment proposals and residential intensification projects.

Under Sections 42, 51.1 and 53 of the Planning Act, if parkland has been or is required to be conveyed to the Municipality or a payment in lieu has been received or is owing, no additional conveyance or payment may be collected for subsequent development or redevelopment unless:

- a. There is a change in the proposed development or redevelopment which would increase the density of development; or
- b. Land originally proposed for development or redevelopment for commercial or industrial purposes is now proposed for development or redevelopment for other purposes.

Many municipalities outline a variety of arrangements aimed at maximizing the community benefit of developments, such as a combination of land and cash, or dedication reductions (land or cash) in exchange for in-kind contributions.

It is recommended that the City further explore applying parkland dedication/cash in lieu of requirements to a much wider variety of development applications. It is also recommended that the City develop a Parkland Dedication Guideline that clearly communicates the City's expectations related to parkland dedication and communicates flexible arrangements aimed at maximizing the community benefit.

Section 37 of the Planning Act also grants municipalities the ability to impose **Community Benefits Charges** to specific developments. Funds generated can be utilized for, among other things, capital improvements to parks and community facilities. Community Benefits Charges apply to a wider range of initiatives than just parkland and recreational facilities, and is discussed later in the [Implementation and Monitoring Chapter](#).

Arts, Culture and Heritage in Sault Ste. Marie

Culture in Sault Ste. Marie

In 2019, the City of Sault Ste. Marie's FutureSSM team undertook a process to develop a community-wide plan for arts, culture and heritage. The resulting **2019–2024 Community Culture Plan**¹⁹, adopted by City Council in September 2019, indicated that Sault Ste. Marie has the following cultural strengths:

- A vibrant art, culture and heritage community.
- A strong volunteer base.
- A strong relationship to natural heritage within the city and the surrounding region.
- A strong presence of Indigenous heritage.
- Being a border city that can attract American tourists with relative ease.

The Community Culture Plan also identified a number of weaknesses in the Sault's arts and culture scene:

- Lack of municipal staffing resources for arts and culture.
- Funding issues for cultural organizations.
- Lack of a standalone public art policy.
- Lack of a strong coordinated approach.

Finally, the Community Culture Plan highlighted a few opportunities to enhance culture in the city:

- A strong synergy between ongoing Downtown revitalization initiatives and the potential contribution of arts, culture and heritage to a vibrant Downtown.
- Ability to leverage private sector support for arts and culture.
- Potential to develop new spaces or repurpose existing spaces for arts and culture.
- Greater collaboration with local Indigenous communities.
- Stronger efforts in engaging Sault Ste. Marie's young people.

National Historic Sites

National Historic Sites are those that have been identified as having historic significance on a national level and may include public or privately owned facilities. There are three National Historic Sites in Sault Ste. Marie:

- The Sault Ste. Marie Canal National Historic Site.
- The Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site.

¹⁹ Available at: <https://futuresm.com/projects/community-cultural-plan/>

- The Algoma Central Engine House.

Designated Heritage Sites under the Ontario Heritage Act

Designated Heritage Sites are those that have been identified as having historical significance at a Provincial and local level. Designated property owners are required to maintain the overall character and attributes associated with the heritage designation. Owners are also eligible for property tax rebates and grants, to assist with the additional costs often associated with maintaining and enhancing heritage attributes. To date, the local Municipal Heritage Committee has designated **38 Heritage Sites through the Ontario Heritage Act**. The age of the designated buildings and structures range from the early 19th century to the mid-20th century.

- 27 are located in the Downtown.
- 6 are located in the Simpson Leo Upton McGregor area.
- 2 are located on the Algoma University campus.
- Only 1 site is located outside the city's urban area: The Buchan House at Mockingbird Hill Farm.

Table 8.4: Current Designated Heritage Sites in Sault Ste. Marie.

Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie.

Heritage Site	Location
1035 Queen Street East	1035 Queen Street East
1164 Queen Street East	1164 Queen Street East
1902 Family Residence	115 Upton Road
34-36 Herrick Street	34-36 Herrick Street
911 Wellington Street East	911 Wellington Street East
Algonquin Hotel	864 Queen Street East
Barnes Block	3-7 Queen Street East
Barnes-Fawcett Block	358-366 Queen Street East
Bishop Fauquier Memorial Chapel	1540 Queen Street East
Bishop Fauquier Memorial Chapel Cemetery	1540 Queen Street East
Buchan House — Mockingbird Hill Farm	943 Landslide Road
Central United Church	160 Spring Street
Clergue Blockhouse	831 Queen Street East
Consolidated Lake Superior Company General Office Building	75 Huron Street
Coronation Block	234-238 Queen Street East

Heritage Site	Location
Dawson Block	708-714 Queen Street East
Eastbourne	1048 Queen Street East
Ermatinger Old Stone House	831 Queen Street East
Forest Research Laboratory	875 Queen Street East
Hussey Block	244-246 Queen Street East
International Hotel Stone Cairn & Plaque	311 Queen Street East
Louis Joliet Plaque	Huron Street at Canal Drive
Machine Shop — Mill Square	83 Huron Street
McLeod Family Residence	143 McGregor Avenue
North West Company Lock	75 Huron Street
Old Post Office Building — SSM Museum	107 East Street
Old Town Cemetery	1186 Queen Street East
Ontario Provincial Air Service Hangars — Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre	69 Church Street
Precious Blood Cathedral	778 Queen Street East
Red River Expedition Plaque	Queen Street West at Huron Street
Rotary Welcome Cairns	1 Russ Ramsay Way
Sault Ste. Marie Cenotaph	426 Queen Street East
Sault Ste. Marie Courthouse	426 Queen Street East
Sault Ste. Marie Memorial Tower	269 Queen Street East
The Great War of 1914-1918 Veteran's War Memorial	Gore Street at Wellington Street
The Voyageurs Plaque	Queen Street West at Huron Street
Upton (Wemyss Simpson House)	10 Kensington Terrace
Wellington Square Townhouses	778 & 780 Wellington St East and 189, 191 & 193 Pim St

Locally Significant Heritage Areas

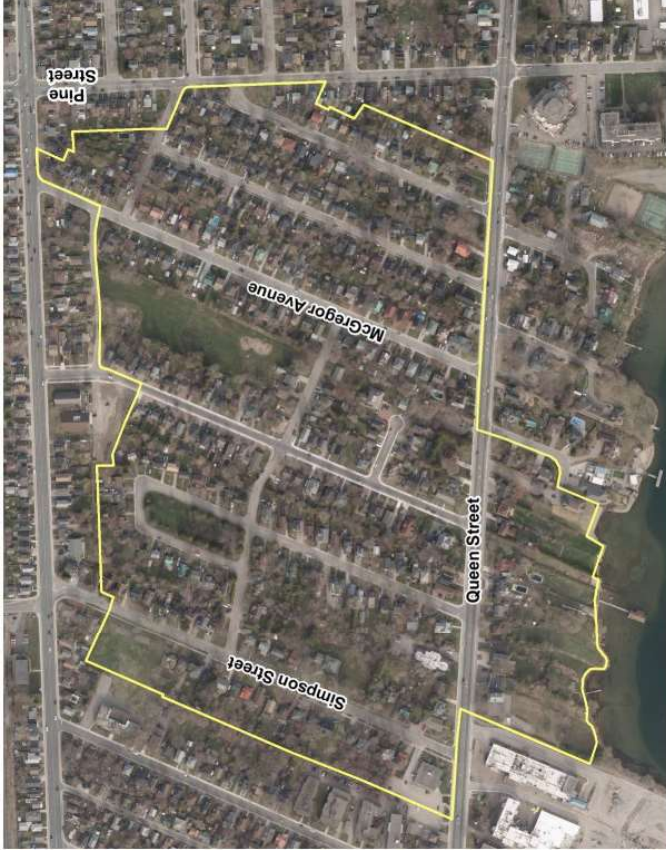
The City's Municipal Heritage Committee has identified specific neighbourhoods as "**Locally Significant Heritage Areas**", which are areas considered to have a unique history and character. The intent is to establish appropriate design guidelines and allow the Municipal Heritage Committee to comment upon Planning Act applications and public works projects that occur in these neighbourhoods. The identification of

these neighbourhoods as Locally Significant Heritage Areas is not to designate them as protected Heritage Conservation Districts as per the Ontario Heritage Act.²⁰

1. **Simpson Leo Upton McGregor (S.L.U.M.)** — the area just east of Downtown from Simpson Street to Riverview Avenue.

Figure 8.4: Aerial Photo and Outline of the Simpson Leo Upton McGregor Heritage Area.

Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie.



²⁰ For more information on Locally Significant Heritage Areas, including their histories, evaluation criteria and proposed policies, visit: <https://shapethesault.ca/heritage>

2. **Monterey Gardens** — the wartime housing (victory homes) area on top of Pim Hill between MacDonald Avenue and McNabb Street, east of Pim Street to Weldon Avenue.

Figure 8.5: Aerial Photo and Outline of the Monterey Gardens Heritage Area.

Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie.



3. **Pim Hill** — the area on both sides of Pim Street from the CP Rail line north to Summit and Borron Avenues.

Figure 8.6: Aerial Photo and Outline of the Pim Hill Heritage Area.

Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie.



4. Lower Pim — the eastern part of Downtown in the area of Pim, Church, Herrick and Pilgrim Streets.

Figure 8.7: Aerial Photo and Outline of the Lower Pim Heritage Area.

Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie.



5. Downtown Queen Street — Sault Ste. Marie's traditional main street, between Gore Street and Church Street.

Figure 8.8: Aerial Photo and Outline of the Downtown Queen Street Heritage Area.

Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie.



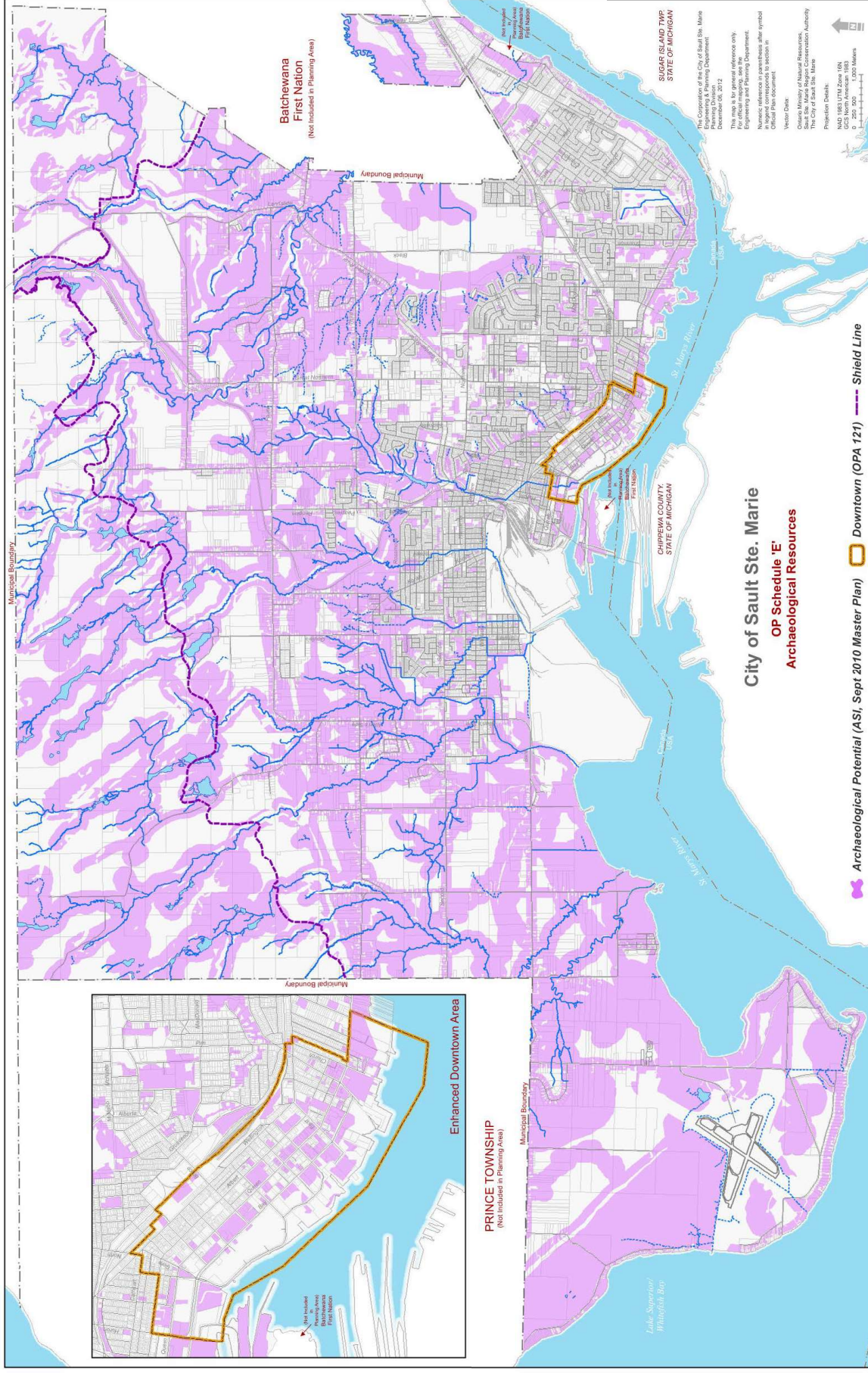
Archaeological Resources

As required by the Province, the City must plan for and enforce the conservation of archaeological resources and consider the interests of Indigenous communities during the process.

The City completed a **Master Plan of Archaeological Resources**²¹ in 2011. According to this Master Plan, there are **36 archaeological sites registered within Sault Ste. Marie**, which date from 10,000 years ago through to the 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition, the City maintains an inventory of lands that have been identified to have “archaeological potential”.

²¹ Available at: <http://www.saultstemarie.ca/Cityweb/media/Engineering-and-Planning/Planning/Strategic%20Long%20Range%20Planning/PlanningManualDec2011.pdf>

Figure 8.9: Areas with Archaeological Potential in Sault Ste. Marie (Existing Schedule 'E').
Source: City of Sault Ste. Marie and Archaeological Services Inc., Master Plan of Archaeological Resources.



What We Heard

Key Themes Heard on: Parks, Recreation, Arts, Culture and Heritage

Parks and Recreation

- Strong support for protecting municipal park space and green space. If a park appears to be underutilized, the City should add new activities — for example: community gardens, sports amenities, events — and create better transportation connections to the park to attract residents to use them. Bar should be set very high for disposal of parkland.
- With respect to the different categories of parks, more residents felt the City should focus on both neighbourhood parks and linear parks, compared to residents who felt the City should focus on community parks.
- Strong support for enabling use of the west end flood control corridors as recreational trails.
- Create better transportation connections to parks and recreational areas across the city through active transportation routes (walking and cycling) and public transit. Examples commonly cited as places in need of better connections include the Hiawatha area, Strathclair Park, the west end in general, Pointe des Chenes Park and Bellevue Park.
- Significant concern for losing public recreational space as more schools are closed and redeveloped. Residents suggested allowing use of closed schools and school yards as dog parks, community gardens and community hubs.
- The City should consider equitable distribution of recreational amenities across the city, especially considering many people, including many seniors, do not drive.
 - Dog parks were commonly given as an example of a recreational amenity that should be located more evenly across the city.
 - Some residents felt that too many recreational amenities are located Downtown, while others felt too many amenities are located too far away from residents and should instead be placed Downtown.
- City should continue the 5% for parkland or cash in lieu system for new development. These funds should go to the specific neighbourhood where the development is occurring.
- The City should consider allowing use of cash in lieu of parkland funds for public art and street or park furniture.
- Find ways to increase public access to the river and shoreline, for example, by constructing a canoe and kayak launch.

Arts and Culture

- There is strong support for encouraging the creation of affordable shared studio spaces for arts and culture.
- The City should incentivize the use of vacant spaces for artists' studios or arts and culture presentation spaces, as well as for housing.
- Support for incorporating art into land use planning. One example of a potential benefit is beautifying the city's excess of asphalt and parking lots.
- Create better transportation connections to arts and cultural spaces across the city, especially within the Downtown core. A commonly given suggestion is a Downtown shuttle bus.
- Planning for arts and culture should consider and make space for a diversity of demographics, especially youth and people of minority ethnic or religious backgrounds.

- In addition, the stakeholder and community engagement that was conducted by FutureSSM and Lord Cultural Resources for the **Community Culture Plan** produced a number of key findings:
 - More support from the City is needed for arts and culture in terms of providing operational funding, placing a higher value on arts, culture and heritage, and using the City's influence via municipal planning tools and other means to leverage resources for arts and culture.
 - Arts, culture and heritage can play a big part in engaging local youth and encouraging youth to stay in the community.
 - There is a lack of diversity in offerings of cultural activities in Sault Ste. Marie, and that is a key reason why many residents do not participate in cultural activities here.
 - Local Indigenous culture is a strong part of Sault Ste. Marie, but more can and should be done to improve relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, as well as between Indigenous peoples and the City.

Heritage

- General support for the identification of Locally Significant Heritage Areas and making efforts to conserve their heritage value.
 - Some residents suggested additional areas that could be considered, specifically the Steelton area with its Italian immigrant history and the Canal District area (Gore Street, Albert Street West, Huron Street, etc.) with its Metis, French and Finnish history.
- The City should have better inclusion, involvement and representation of local Indigenous communities and Indigenous culture, for example in public art and heritage protection.

What We Propose




Proposed Official Plan Policies on: Parks and Recreation

The Parkspace System

1. **Community parks** contain facilities and features that attract residents from all parts of the city and beyond. Community parks provide significant built or natural facilities for organized and unorganized recreational activities, as well as facilities to accommodate a wide variety of social and cultural activities. Community parks may also contain facilities that serve the surrounding area in a manner similar to neighbourhood parks.
 - a. Community parks shall be designed and maintained to be easily accessible from all parts of the city and beyond, including having easy access to public transit, adequate on-site parking, and appropriate pedestrian facilities.
2. **Neighbourhood parks** contain facilities and features that serve residents living near them. Neighbourhood park amenities are generally designed to accommodate youth recreational needs, but should also offer appropriate spaces, such as shaded seating areas and other amenities for a broader demographic. Typical features include play structures, pathways, gathering areas, unlit sports fields, community gardens and multi-use pads/courts. Typically, parking is not provided within neighbourhood parks.
 - a. Neighbourhood parks can include amenities that attract residents from beyond the 800-metre walkable service radius, albeit at a smaller scale than those provided in a community park.
 - b. Neighbourhood parks shall have a walkable service radius of about 800 metres, without the need to cross major barriers, such as non-signalized intersections at arterial streets. It is a goal of this plan to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that all residential areas are within the 800-metre walkable service radius of a neighbourhood park.
 - c. Neighbourhood parks are generally not provided in the Rural Area or required as part of any rural estate subdivisions.
3. **Parkettes** primarily exist and will be developed in the Downtown core, providing small scale recreational, cultural and social interaction opportunities. Parkettes may also be developed as a temporary use until such time that a property is developed or redeveloped.
4. **Linear parks (trails)** are both recreational spaces and utilitarian connections between separate parts of the city. Further policies related to the overall connectivity of on and off-street trails, sidewalks and walkways can be found in the [Urban Design and Mobility Chapter](#).
 - a. The City will continue expanding the multi-use path network and it is recommended that a new master plan for trails and other active transportation infrastructure be developed, with the overall goal of developing a cohesive and comprehensive city-wide trail system that connects people and places through a network that is off-road wherever possible and supported by on-road links where necessary. Generally, the expanded trail network shall consider:
 - i. Developing new trails on public lands. Where private lands are considered, appropriate agreements between the City and the landowner shall be required.

- ii. Recognizing informal trails, and where appropriate working towards formalizing them — for example, the west end flood control corridors.

Location, Design and Programming of Parkspace

The City recognizes the need to accommodate unique and growing park needs created by new development, especially residential intensification.   

- The **Parks and Recreation Master Plan** and the **Park Revitalization Plan** shall generally guide the provision and replacement of parkspace amenities and programming.
- Public parks shall be located, designed and maintained to provide safe, attractive and inviting spaces for a wide variety of seasonal recreational uses and cultural activities, with consideration for safety and accessibility for all ages and abilities.
- In considering the location of new parks in existing neighbourhoods or new subdivisions, the following criteria shall be followed. Parks should:
 1. Front onto public streets, rather than hidden behind lots.
 2. Be centrally located in terms of the area the park serves.
 3. Be co-located with other community amenities where possible.
 4. Be accessible by all residents easily and safely.
- Opportunities to meet food system needs, increase urban tree canopy cover and manage stormwater shall be considered in the planning, design and operation of all parkland areas.
- The City will continue to work with local service providers, non-profits and user groups to assist in the programming of parkspaces, including public spaces not owned by the City.

New Uses in Parks

The Official Plan will recognize and support a wide variety of recreational and cultural activities that can be appropriately accommodated in all City parks and recreational spaces. When assessing requests to add or change uses or activities in City parks and recreational spaces, the City shall consider:

- Level of demand or interest.
- Whether the change will make the space more inclusive or more accessible.
- Whether the change will significantly impact the current function of the space.
- Groups served by the change and how well-served those groups currently are.
- Neighbourhood benefits and impacts, including a review on the anticipated traffic to be generated by the use and the availability of either on-site parking or on-street parking along abutting streets.
- Cost or ease of implementation.
- Equitable spatial distribution across the city of the specific type of recreational amenity.

Proponents wishing to add or change a use in a park are required to provide public notice and host a neighbourhood meeting to obtain feedback from neighbours, prior to Council approval of such changes.

Selling City-Owned Parkspace

Disposing of City-owned lands identified as named municipal parks is generally discouraged. It is important to note that there are existing City-owned parcels that may be zoned for parks and recreation, but are not necessarily identified as named municipal parks. The following policies shall guide decisions upon disposing of named municipal parks:

- Opportunities to repurpose parkspace to increase usage should be proactively and thoroughly investigated before it is deemed surplus.

- The surrounding area shall be assessed to ensure that future development does not increase the demand for parkspace. This should include an assessment of the potential for a demographic shift, especially where the predominant land use in the area is residential.
- Are there nearby, easily accessible parks capable of supporting parkspace needs of the surrounding neighbourhood?
- Does the park pose a safety concern? If so, are there other means by which this concern can be mitigated?
- Is the park located in a manner that significantly impacts the feasibility of developing the surrounding area? Can the park be relocated to a nearby location as part of any future development?
- Disposing of parks that contain natural heritage features such as fish habitat or wetlands, or development constraints such as flood prone areas or significant slopes, is discouraged.

Prior to the sale of City-owned parkspace, the City shall provide public notice and host a neighbourhood meeting to obtain feedback from neighbours, prior to Council making a decision on selling the park.

Parkland Dedication (Section 42 of the Planning Act)

- Commercial and industrial development and redevelopment, including new lot creation shall provide 2% of land or cash in lieu of land.
- Institutional and residential development and redevelopment, including new lot creation shall provide 5% of land or cash in lieu of land.
- The City may also apply the following alternative rates for higher density residential developments:
 - 1ha/300 dwelling units; or
 - Cash in lieu of 1ha/500 dwelling units.
- The City shall develop a **Parkland Dedication By-law** for the purposes of collecting parkland or cash in lieu of parkland for redevelopment projects as specified in the By-law.

It is recommended that the City develop a **Parkland Dedication Guideline** that outlines the City's expectations related to parkland dedication and communicates flexible arrangements aimed at maximizing community benefit.

- The dedication of parkland or cash in lieu of parkland will be generally guided by the following:
 - For commercial and industrial development, cash in lieu of parkland is generally preferred. However, where circumstances warrant, such as mixed-use developments with a significant residential component or large-scale commercial or industrial development, parkland dedication may be contemplated.
 - For small-scale residential developments, including infill development, residential intensification, and rural residential development, cash in lieu of parkland is generally preferred. However, where circumstances warrant, such as a lack of parkland within the 800-metre service standard, parkland dedication may be contemplated.
 - For large-scale residential developments, including Draft Plans of Subdivision or Condominium, higher density residential development or mixed-use developments with a significant residential component, dedication of parkland is generally preferred. However, where circumstances warrant, such as sufficient nearby parkland, cash in lieu of parkland may be contemplated.

- Where parkland is dedicated, the lands shall be acceptable to the City, suitable for recreational purposes and free of encumbrances. A Record of Site Condition under the Environmental Protection Act may also be required prior to dedication.
- The City may accept a smaller parkland dedication in consideration of improvements made by the developer upon lands to be dedicated. Improvements may include site work such as servicing, clearing, grading or landscaping, or the installation of amenities such as playground equipment, playing fields or park furniture.
- Where cash in lieu of parkland is provided, these monies may be utilized in the immediate vicinity of the development or in other areas or to fund city-wide recreational projects and other public amenities.
- The City may waive or accept a smaller cash in lieu of parkland payment in consideration of improvements made by the developer to a park within close proximity to the proposed development.

School Sites

Although not City-owned parks, it is recognized that school sites play an important role in providing publicly accessible park space.

- Where school sites are offered for sale, the City shall review and determine if the property or a portion of the property is required for a neighbourhood park, based upon the 800-metre service standard.
- Redevelopment proposals for former school sites shall have special regard for open space provision and proponents may be required to provide parkland in accordance with the parkland dedication policies of the Official Plan.

Access to the Waterfront







- Public access to Sault Ste. Marie's waterfront is an important consideration. New development or redevelopment proposals may be required to provide lands that support public access to the waterfront.
- Generally, the City will not dispose of any parkland or City-owned land that abuts the water, unless such land does not have direct access to a publicly owned roadway or is otherwise landlocked by abutting private property.

Hiawatha Master Plan

- Work with stakeholders to develop a master plan for uses, activities and developments in the Hiawatha area, as well as transportation to the area.

Proposed Official Plan Policies on: Arts, Culture and Heritage

Arts and Culture

- Support public art in the Downtown, the waterfront and throughout the city. Public art will be considered when reviewing landscaping requirements.  
- Explicitly include artists' studios and small-scale maker spaces as permitted home-based businesses, exempt from parking requirements. This is further discussed in the [Land Use Compatibility Chapter](#).  
- Maintain and develop the Downtown as Sault Ste. Marie's centre for culture and entertainment:  
 - Incentivize reuse of vacant Downtown buildings and lands, including for arts and culture purposes.
 - Seek opportunities for adaptive reuse of City-owned spaces in the Downtown, including buildings and parking lots, laneways or other underused sites. Make these available to arts and cultural groups for permanent or temporary use.
 - Explore the need and feasibility of a community arts and creative centre in the Downtown.
 - Support and encourage programming including live music, visual art and other creative expression in the streets and public spaces throughout the Downtown.
 - Continue efforts to beautify, animate and activate the Downtown waterfront.

Heritage

- Development and site alteration on land identified as having the potential to contain archaeological resources is not permitted prior to an Archaeological Assessment, unless there is evidence of prior significant soil disturbance on the site.
- The City will proactively work with local Indigenous groups on heritage conservation efforts, including increasing awareness and recognition of local Indigenous culture and places of significance.
- Development and site alteration on Designated Heritage Properties is not permitted unless their heritage attributes are not impacted, subject to review by the Municipal Heritage Committee.
- Promote continued functional use of heritage properties while preserving their heritage value.
- Require the Municipal Heritage Committee to review and comment upon Planning Act applications and municipal projects within identified Locally Significant Heritage Areas.