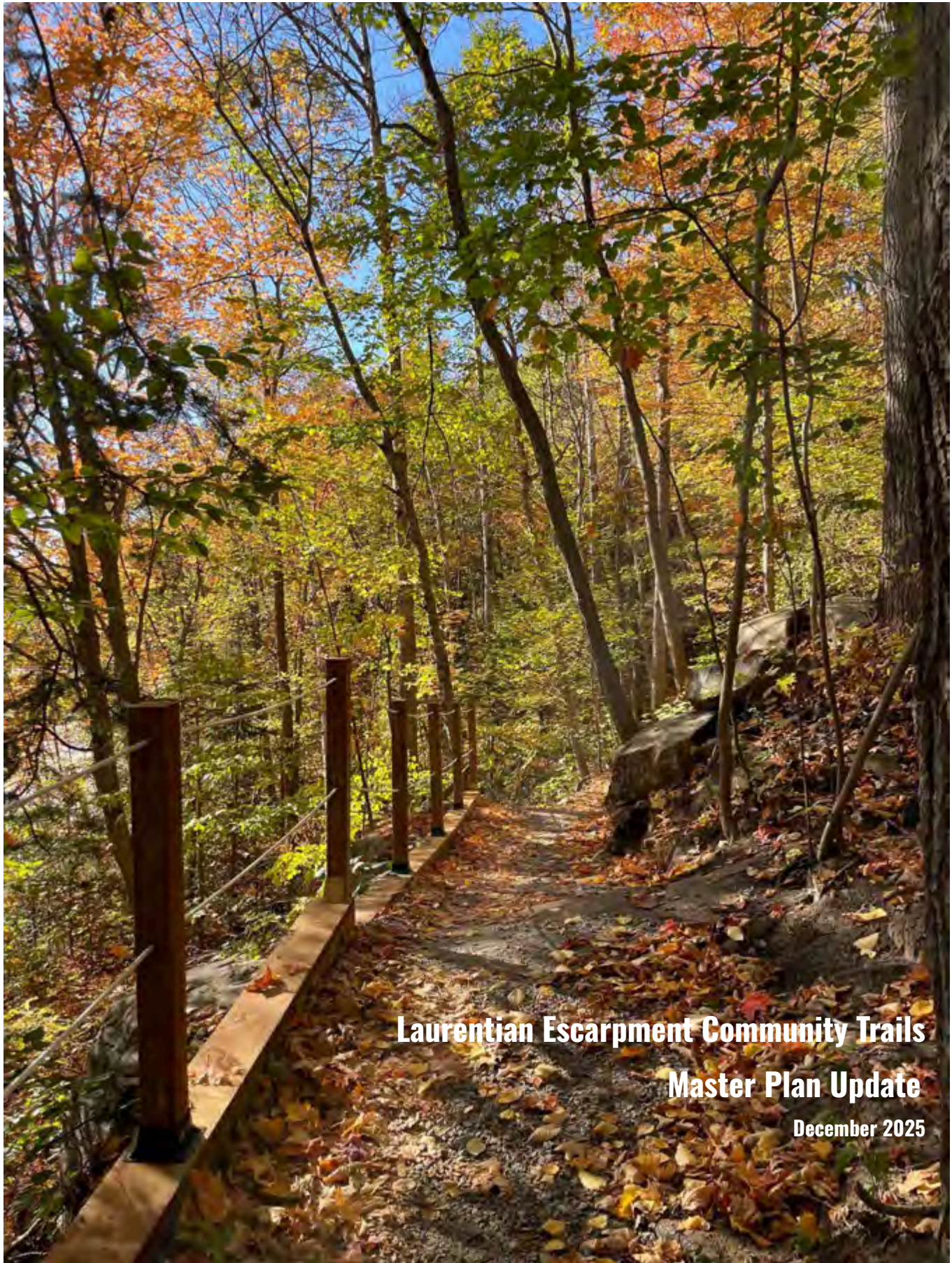




Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails
Master Plan Update
December 2025

Acknowledgments

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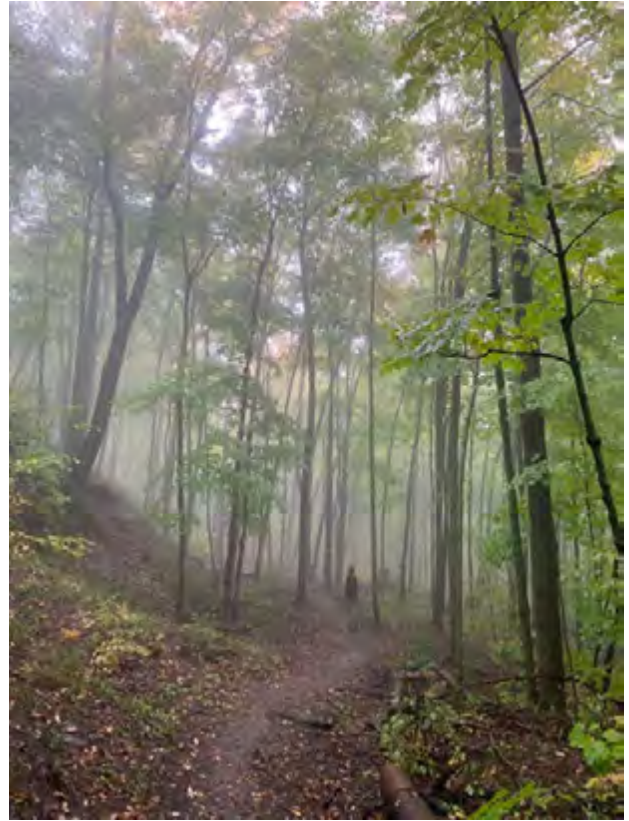
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Introduction & Background

The Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails are a four-season network of multi-use trails in North Bay, Ontario offering opportunities for hiking, trail running, environmental education, mountain biking, fat biking, and other low-impact recreational activities. The trails are valued both as a local community resource and as a regional outdoor recreation destination, showcasing distinctive natural features, scenic vistas, and trail experiences for users of all skill levels. Although a comprehensive *Trails Master Plan* was prepared for the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority in 2014, it was never implemented due to a number of land tenure and capacity issues thus leaving the network without a coordinated vision for trail development, maintenance, and management. This Master Plan update provides an opportunity to apply current best practices in trail design, sustainability, and tourism readiness, while leveraging local expertise, volunteer capacity, and new trail opportunities not available in earlier years.

Discovery Routes is a regional charitable organization dedicated to preserving public access to trails, stewardship, and outdoor recreation across the Near North. As the lead coordinating organization for this *Master Plan Update*, Discovery Routes provides project management, community engagement, fundraising, and strategic oversight, ensuring the trail network is developed in alignment with community priorities, sustainability objectives, and long-term operational capacity.



The North Bay Mountain Bike Association (NBMBA) is a key community partner in the planning, development, and long-term stewardship of the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trail network. As a volunteer-driven organization, NBMBA plays a central role in trail construction, maintenance, and user engagement, helping ensure the trail system is safe, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of local riders and other trail users. Through close collaboration with Discovery Routes, and other partners, NBMBA supports the ongoing management and maintenance of the trails, contributing technical expertise and volunteer capacity that support both community use and trail-based tourism.

In addition to Discovery Routes and NBMBA, the long-term protection and public access of the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails depends

on collaboration with a range of landowners, agencies, and community partners. Key stakeholders include the North Bay - Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA), as stewards of the Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area with a mandate for conservation and environmental education; the City of North Bay and the Department of National Defence (DND) as

Previous Studies & Reports

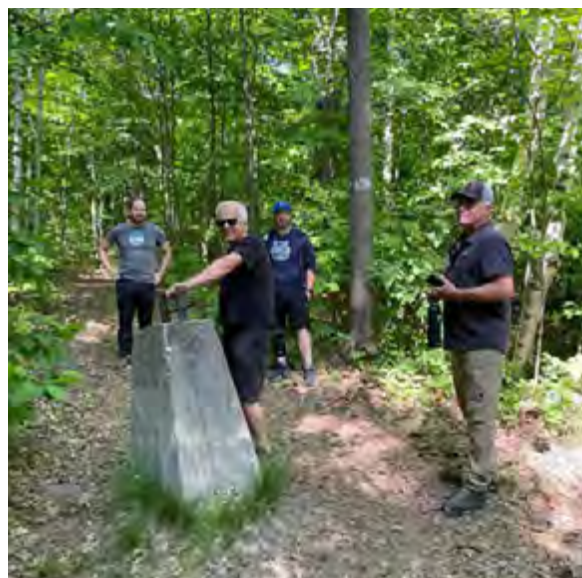
This *Master Plan Update* builds on decades of work already completed in planning the trail network led by the NBMCA and other local advocacy groups.

Concerns relating to unsanctioned trail building arose in 2011 regarding safety, liability and private land issues and resulted in a comprehensive assessment of the existing trails. Following community outreach, Alpine Bike Parks was commissioned by the NBMCA in 2014 to prepare the *Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area Trail Network Master Plan*¹. The plan included a comprehensive review of the existing conditions including GPS mapping of existing trails, review of trail use patterns, and assessment of ecological constraints. Trail conditions were evaluated for sustainability, safety, drainage, user experience, and integration within the broader network. Terrain scouting assessed slope, soils, vegetation, hydrology, rock features, and scenic and cultural values to identify suitable areas for future development. Key opportunities included well-drained south- and west-facing slopes and abundant on-site rock for durable trail construction, while constraints included flat or excessively steep terrain, sensitive habitats, and soil conditions that limit grades and certain trail features. The plan also identified the key management issues as erosion of trails, user

landowners within the trail network; private landowners who support continued trail access; and Laurentian Ski Hill, which provides facilities, amenities, and event infrastructure that enhance year-round trail use. Together, these partners play complementary roles in ensuring the trail system is protected and managed responsibly for future generations.

conflicts, access, signage and wayfinding and development of unauthorized trails.

In follow up to the Master Plan, a 2017 report² commissioned by the NBMCA and prepared by FRI outlined a 3-part trails proposal including multi-use cross-country trails network, downhill bike trails and a community bike park. At the time, the trail system had grown to approximately 27 km. Many of the trails were created without the consent of the NBMCA and other property owners.



¹ Alpine Bike Parks. *Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area Trail Network Master Plan*. 2014.

² FRI Corp Ecological Services. *Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area Proposal*. 2017.

Community Engagement

A comprehensive public engagement strategy was launched in 2024 to better understand current use of the Laurentian Escarpment trail network and to explore new opportunities and constraints that have emerged since the 2017 FRi report. The engagement process was designed to capture input from a wide range of trail users, partners, and stakeholders to inform the *Master Plan Update*.

An online public survey was available in late 2024 and gathered feedback on preferred trail activities, access points, frequency of use, and overall user experience. Respondents were also invited to identify key issues, concerns, and opportunities for improvement within the trail network. A total of 252 responses were received from a diverse mix of trail users. A summary of the survey results is provided in Appendix 1.



In addition to the online survey, targeted interviews and discussions were held with known user groups and partners, including Discovery Routes, the North Bay Mountain Bike Association, local running clubs, event organizers, Laurentian Ski Hill representatives, and environmental educators. These conversations provided valuable insight into operational needs, stewardship priorities, and opportunities for collaboration.

To support ongoing communication, a project webpage was established to share updates, collect email sign-ups, and distribute seasonal project updates.



Current trail use patterns were also assessed using data from popular recreation platforms, including Trailforks (mountain biking), AllTrails (hiking), and user data provided by the private analytics firm Propulso. This data helped validate public feedback and provided an additional lens on trail popularity, user distribution, and seasonal trends.

Trail Tourism Readiness Assessment

The Trans Canada Trail (TCT) Trail Tourism Readiness Tool³ was used to evaluate how the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails could attract and support trail-based visitors while maintaining a high-quality experience for local users. Trail tourism readiness is defined by TCT as a measure of how prepared a trail is to welcome visitors and function as a travel-motivating attraction, with higher ratings reflecting greater consistency, quality, and appeal to longer-haul markets. The assessment evaluates key criteria including: governance and approvals; planning and maintenance; trail uniqueness, branding and marketing; visitor amenities and services; and, available staffing and funding. Trails are positioned along a readiness continuum namely Visitor Ready, Market Ready, or Export Ready and range from locally focused use to nationally and internationally significant destinations. Applied at the outset of this *Master Plan Update* in August 2024, the tool helped identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities within the network to guide sustainable development, balance tourism growth with community use, and support a coordinated trail tourism strategy. The results are included in Appendix 2. The assessment will be revisited periodically to track progress and ensure the trail network continues to align with shared goals for sustainability, user experience, and local economic benefit.



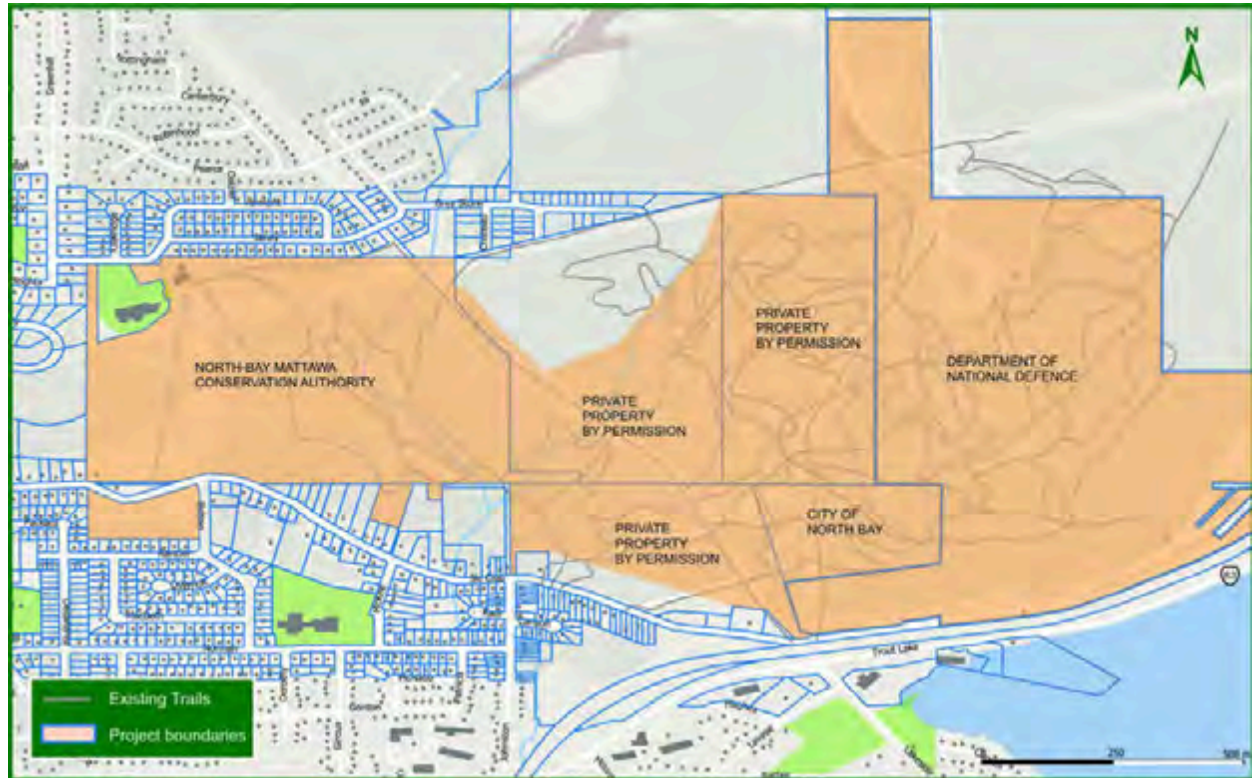
³ Trans Canada Trail. *National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-use Trails in Canada: Classification of Trails, Trail Experiences & Trail Tourism Readiness*. Dec 2021.

Trails Master Plan

Scope and Management Permissions

The *Laurentian Escarpment Trails Master Plan Update* includes a network of recreational trails that span across properties owned by the North Bay - Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA), City of North Bay, Department of National Defence

(DND) and two private land developers: Ski Ridge Estates and Nordfibre Company and Golden Estates Limited (See Map 1). Until recently, the only sanctioned trails were the 1.9km *McNutt Family Trail* within the Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area (LECA) and the 6.4km *Richardson Ridge Trail* that extends beyond the boundary of the NBMCA-owned lands.



Map 1: Property ownership showing scope of Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails network

As of December 2025, the land tenure agreements are in place with 4 of 5 property owners.

A Memorandum of Understanding between NBMCA and the North Bay Mountain Bike Association permits the use and maintenance of existing trails and the development and construction of new trails within the lands owned and operated by the NBMCA.

A Trail Licence Agreement between Nordfibre Company and NBMBA grants use and operation of

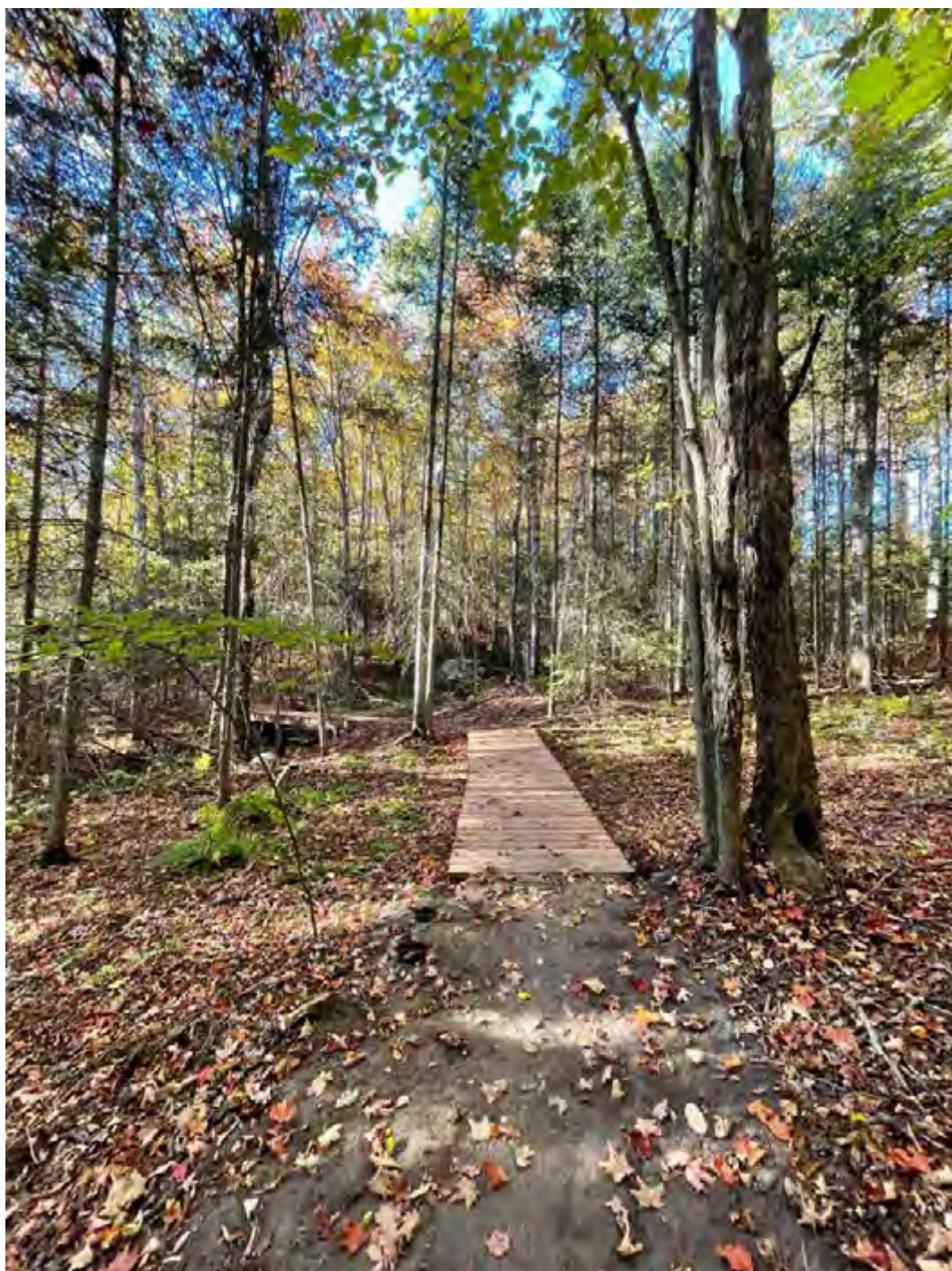
the properties within a defined area for the purpose of a multi-use recreational trail and access.

A Letter of Authorization has been received from Ski Ridge Estates to allow the NBMBA to proceed with trail improvements outside a defined area slated for housing development.

Participation and funding support has been received from the City of North Bay to improve the trail network through improved access, trailhead

enhancements, safety of users with the installation of a pedestrian crossing at Ski Club Road.

Negotiations with DND are being led by the NBMCA with a draft License of Occupation in final stages as of December 2025.



Trail Network Improvements

Overview

Best practices in trail design have been applied to the development of the trail network to ensure safety, sustainability, and high-quality user experiences. Trail design parameters reflect the permitted activities and the intended technical level of challenge for each trail and activity-optimized route. To minimize user conflict and enhance safety, trails will be optimized for specific activities and clearly communicated through signage, mapping, and trail etiquette messaging.

As a general guideline, trails optimized for four-season hiking will follow Trans Canada Trail (TCT) design standards⁴, while trails optimized for mountain biking will be developed in accordance with IMBA's Guidelines for Successful Mountain Bike Trail Development⁵. The network is designed to create a series of stacked-looped experiences providing varying levels of difficulties and trail lengths. Specific technical trails located on steep downhill slopes will be directional and designated for bike-only use, with parallel or nearby routes provided for hikers.

A series of activity-optimized routes will be marked by use and difficulty. Hiking routes will include easy and moderate options, while mountain biking will be supported through a mix of cross-country, climb, and flow trails across three difficulty levels. Technical Trail Features (TTFs) will be installed to enhance challenge and rider experience, supporting both local use and trail-based tourism and events. Winter use of the trail network will be supported through designated, groomed fat biking routes.

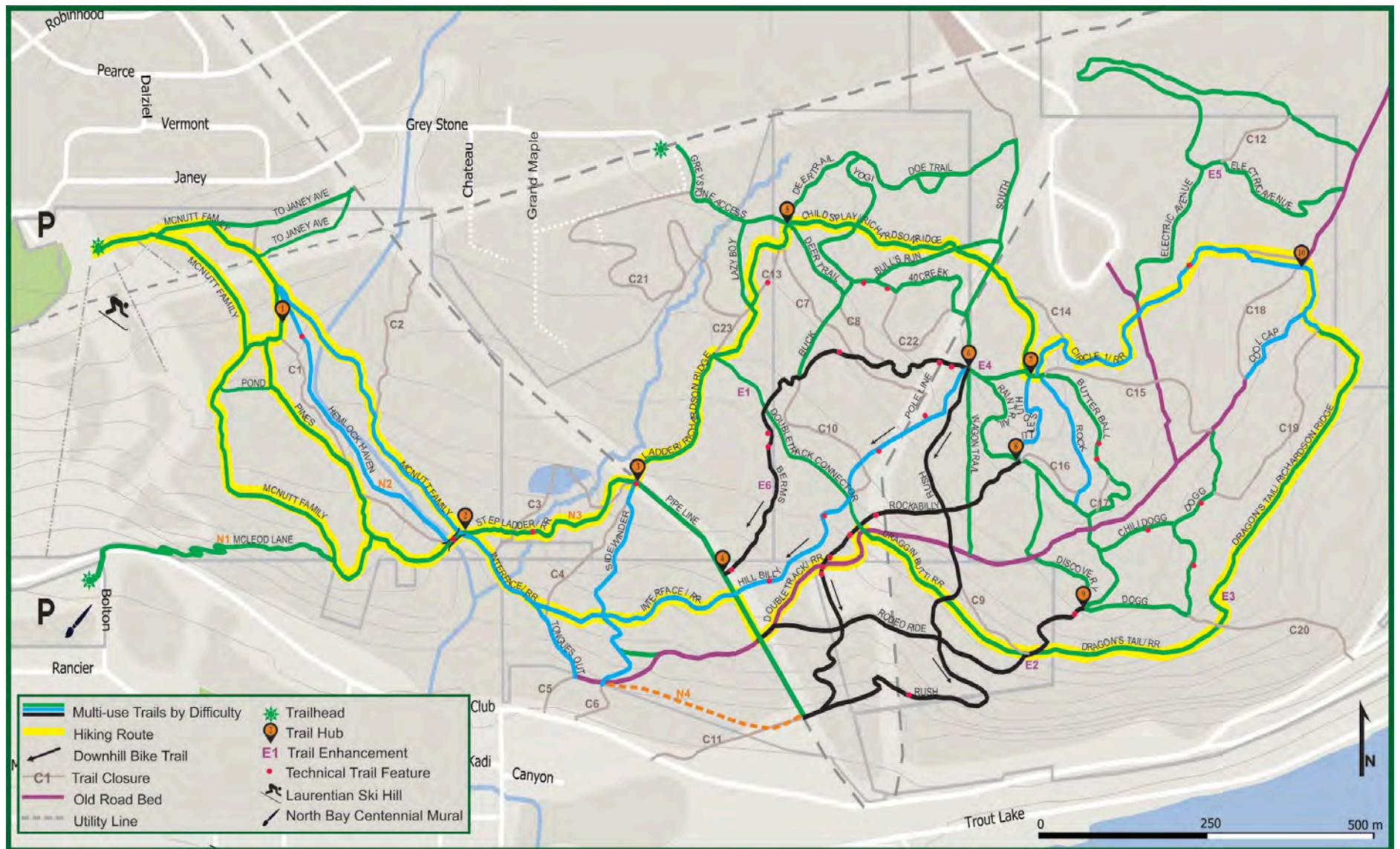
The development of adaptive trails is a longer-term goal for future phases of the network. These trails will be designed to provide accessible and inclusive experiences for users of varying abilities, once the initial network is established.

Overall, the trail network illustrated in Map 2 is designed to be fun, safe, inclusive, and appropriately challenging for a wide range of users.



⁴ Trans Canada Trail. *National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-use Trails in Canada: Classification of Trails, Trail Experiences & Trail Tourism Readiness*. Dec 2021.

⁵ IMBA. *Mountain Bike Trail Development: Guidelines for Successfully Managing the Process*.



Map 2: Trail network improvements map including new trails, trail enhancements and trail closures

Trailheads and Access

Well-designed trailheads and access points are a critical component of any trails network. They support safe and authorized access for local users while also shaping first impressions and delivering the orientation, amenities, and consistency expected by visitors. In alignment with TCT's Trail Tourism Readiness framework, the proposed trailhead improvements focus on strengthening wayfinding, improving safety and accessibility, supporting four-season use, and providing dependable access to services.

The *Upper Laurentian Trailhead* at 15 Janey Avenue will continue to function as a primary access point to the network. Improvements include an updated trail map, regulatory signage, and visitor information at the existing kiosk. Opportunities will be explored with the Laurentian Ski Hill to provide year-round public access to washroom facilities during designated hours and as the staging area for trail events.

The *Lower Laurentian Trailhead* at 701-900 Ski Club Road serves as a primary four-season access point and is currently the only sanctioned parking lot at the lower end of the trail network. Improvements include a new trailhead kiosk with regulatory signage, upgrades to the parking lot with capacity of at least 50 vehicles, and a storage container for trail maintenance equipment. The City of North Bay installed a new pedestrian crossing in 2025 to support the safety of trail users crossing Ski Club Road at the intersection of Bolton Drive.



The *Grey Stone Access* will function as a secondary upper trailhead, providing direct access to the central portion of the trail network where the trail grade is less steep. A temporary access point is located at the end of Grey Stone Avenue and includes limited parking. As adjacent residential development proceeds, a small permanent parking area with signage and a formal trailhead is planned.

A fourth formal access point at the lower southeast end of the trail network should be considered for future development to reduce unauthorized access and trespass from adjacent private lands. A number of informal entry points are currently being used along Ski Club Road. Establishing a sanctioned trailhead in this area would improve user safety and support better management of the trail network.

New Trails and Existing Trail Enhancements

This section outlines the additions and enhancements to the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trail network. New trails are designed to complement the existing system, to improve connectivity, accommodate a range of skill levels, and enhance both local and visitor experiences. The alignment and construction methods of all new trails and trail enhancements reflect best practices in sustainable trail design, minimizing long-term maintenance requirements while protecting surrounding soils and vegetation.

The new *McLeod Lane* is named in honour of the McLeod Family whose land was used by Laurentian Ski Club from 1925 until 1947 when it was eventually purchased by the club. Coincidentally, the McLeod is also a useful trail building tool. The 500m switchback trail connects the Lower Laurentian Trailhead to the *McNutt Family Trail*. It features a rope rail that functions as both a retaining wall and guide for users adding a distinctive visual element to the trail. Over 185 volunteer hours were invested in the construction of this trail during the spring and summer of 2025. Using handheld tools, volunteers moved rock and spent hours benchcutting to create a sustainable, erosion resistant trail tread along the challenging escarpment terrain. [Map Ref N1]



Hemlock Haven is a new 550m side slope benchcut trail winding through the hemlock trees from the upper *McNutt Family Trail*, along the western edge of the Johnson Creek valley bank and ending at the Johnson Creek bridge. Its purpose is to divert mountain bikers away from the main *McNutt Family Trail* hiking route, and provide a sustainable gradient of climb for the return to the Upper Laurentian Trailhead. A 1.2m x 6.7m footbridge crossing a tributary to Johnson Creek was constructed in 2025 by volunteers under a permit from NBMCA. [Map Ref N2]



Step Ladder is a new 520m climb trail following the escarpment's natural contours from the Johnson Creek bridge to the bottom of *Ladder Trail*. The new trail provides a sustainable alternative to the existing trail through a low lying muddy area as well as providing a more gentle grade for the uphill climb. A series of boardwalks and a 1.2m x 6.7m footbridge crossing Armstrong Creek were built by volunteers. [Map Ref N3]

A new trail connection is proposed at the exit of *Rush/Rockabilly* to provide linkage to *DoubleTrack* and *Tongues Out* within the permitted property boundaries. Currently, trail users access these trails via informal entry points across private land along Ski Club Road. Since these private lots will be developed in the future, establishing a sanctioned trail connection within the authorized network is critical to maintaining continuity, preventing trespass, and protecting long-term access. [Map Ref N4]

Table 1 outlines all new trails and existing trails either in place in 2025 or proposed for enhancements in a later stage of development when resources are available.



Table 1: New Trails and Existing Trail Enhancements

Map Ref	Trail Name	Property	Notes	Status in 2025
N1	McLeod Lane	NBMCA	Description above	complete
N2	Hemlock Haven	NBMCA	Description above	complete
N3	Step Ladder	private	Description above	complete
N4	New Trail	private	Description above	planned
E1	Doubletrack Connector	private	Used as return to Ladder Trail. Action: Improve drainage and reroute onto adjacent slope where possible to improve upward transition.	planned
E2	Rodeo Ride	City	Entrance off Dragon's Trail descends a fall line and is severely eroded. Action: Reroute entrance east off Dragon's Tail and realign the upper Rodeo Ride to connect.	planned
E3	Dragon's Tail	DND	Sharp turn half way along trail. Action: Realign with softer turn benchcut bypass on upper right side of turn or install berm	planned
E4	Rush/ Hillbilly	DND	Realign trail entrances	planned
E5	Electric Avenue	DND	Boardwalk improvements	planned
E6	Berms	private	Enhancing constructed berm features, replacing boardwalk, replacing and improving exit features.	planned
E9	Pulled Pork	private	TBD	planned

Trail Closures

Trail closures are a key tool for managing the sustainability of the network and protecting sensitive areas. Specific trail segments outlined in Table 2 will be decommissioned to improve user safety, reduce erosion, remove redundant trails

and simplify the trail network for a better overall experience. A proactive approach including signage explaining the rationale to decommission the trail segment fixed to temporary snow fencing will be used to ensure the effectiveness of these closures.

Table 2: Trail Closures

No.	Trail Name	Property	Notes
C1	Sometime She Goes	NBMCA	Unsustainable trail replaced by Hemlock Haven
C2	Slideshow	NBMCA	Steep, overgrown and rarely used
C3	Ridge	private	Original trail in area of new stormwater pond/ housing development
C4	Trail	private	Follows fall line, thus heavily eroded, steep, and unpleasant to travel in either direction
C5	Tongues Out - exit	private	Within housing development area
C6	Sidewinder - Exit	private	Within housing development area
C7	Cross Trail	private	Redundant Trail
C8	Deer Trail - east	private	Unsafe intersection with downhill bike only Berms Trail
C9	Draggin Butt	city	Unsustainable, redundant
C10	Buck - lower	private	Redundant, unsustainable
C11	Rockabilly/ Rush - bottom	private	Outside project area
C12	Short Circuit	DND	Redundant
C13	Express	private	Redundant
C14	Circle 1	DND	Old trail, overgrown
C15	Rabbit	DND	Trail overgrown / minimal use/ unsustainable
C16	Rock - end	DND	Decommission end of trail to reduce intersections at hub
C17	Butterball shortcut	DND	Redundant
C18	Doubletrack segment	DND	Trail not being used, eroded, redundant
C19	Diaper	DND	Trail overgrown, wet, eroded, redundant
C20	Flightmare	DND	Outside scope of project
C21	Hooty	private	Within housing development area
C22	40 Creek Loop lower	private	Redundant, unsustainable
C23	Old Ladder segment	private	Steep, unsustainable, redundant

Technical Trail Features

Technical Trail Features (TTFs) are purpose-built elements incorporated into trails to increase technical challenge and improve trail sustainability. Within the LECT network, TTFs are used selectively to manage speed, address erosion-prone areas and create engaging trail experiences. Features identified in Table 3 include boardwalks, berms,

jumps, drops, and steep grades. TTFs enhance the quality of mountain bike optimized trails while remaining compatible with multi-use trail objectives. The Resort Municipality of Whistler's *Whistler Trail Standards: Environmental and Technical Trail Features* are used as the guiding document for the installation of all TTFs.

Table 3: Technical Trail Features

No.	Trail Name	Level of Difficulty	Type
TTF1	Hemlock Haven	beginner	1.2m x 6.7m footbridge
TTF2	McNutt Family	beginner	1.2m x 6.7m - Johnson Creek footbridge
TTF3	Step Ladder	beginner	21 feet x 48 inches
TTF4	Ladder	beginner	Footbridge - 8' x 40" - existing to be replaced in 2026
TTF5	Express	intermediate	3 wooden jumps - with go-arounds
TTF6	40 Creek	various	3 x wooden ramps varying in size and height with go-arounds
TTF7	40 Creek at Bulls Run	beginner	Skinny - narrow log
TTF8	Berm - Top	intermediate - advanced	Drop - 2.5'
TTF9	Berm - past Pole line	intermediate - advanced	Vertical drop of 4' with go-around
TTF10	Berms	beginner to advanced	Series of 12 Berms - built of natural terrain
TTF11	Berms		Series of Drops ranging 2 - 4' vertical height - natural terrain
TTF12	Berms- exit at Pipeline	beginner to advanced	Wooden structure drop 6' gap - replaced in 2026 , 40' X 48"
TTF13	Hill Billy	advanced	Rock feature - drop 3' - has b-line
TTF14	Hill Billy		Steep Hill
TTF15	Hill Billy		Wooden structure - Ramp Jump - rollable- 2'
TTF16	Hill Billy	Intermediate, advanced	Drop - 2' - wooden structure
TTF17	Rockabilly	Intermediate, advanced	Steep incline
TTF18	Rockabilly	Intermediate, advanced	Drop - natural terrain
TTF19	Rockabilly	Intermediate - advanced	Jump - natural terrain
TTF20	Rockabilly	Intermediate - advanced	Natural drop
TTF21	Rockabilly	intermediate	Cement wall of water reservoir - steep cement decline
TTF22	Rush		Natural rock drop
TTF23	Rodeo		Natural rock drop
TTF24	Butterball		Wooden structure drop - to dirt transition - 3'
TTF25	Butterball		Wooden structure drop - to dirt transition - 2'
TTF26	Dogg	intermediate - advanced	Wooden and rock roll - 3' height
TTF27	Circle C1	advanced	DJ Log Ride - elevated 3' skinny , 30' long
TTF28	Wagon Trail		Teeter Todder

Trail Routes Optimized by Activity

Hiking Routes

The *McNutt Family Trail* within the Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area is an established, easy 1.9km hiking route with optional side trails that allow users to shorten or extend their walk. Accessed from the Upper Laurentian Trailhead, the trail's close proximity to the NBMCA and Laurentian Ski Hill facilities makes it especially well suited for educational use. The trail is regularly used by school groups and day camps and has hosted educational features such as an interactive story walk promoting literacy and nature appreciation, a forest ecology outdoor classroom, and a pond study area.



The *Richardson Ridge Trail* is an intermediate 6.4km route, well suited for hiking, dog walking and trail running. As part of this *Master Plan Update*, the original trail alignment was modified to enhance the hiking experience and reduce potential conflict with mountain bikers travelling at high speed in a downhill direction. The route features varied terrain, including sustained climbs and steep sections that require a higher level of

fitness, providing a challenging and rewarding experience.

Mountain Bike Routes

XC Bike Route is designed to connect most of the cross-country bike trails within the LECT network. The indicated direction is the most ideal for riding flow, and keeps users in the upper trail loops to minimize overall descent and the need to climb the escarpment. These are mostly easy trails, and all constructed trail features provide a bypass. Most of the trails are shared-use and multi-directional.

Enduro Bike Route combines all five enduro descent tracks for those looking to make multiple long descents on their ride. These include four segments labelled black and one blue. Most can be ridden by intermediate riders by controlling speed and bypassing marked Technical Trail Features such as drops and jumps. Some segments in this route are signed as bike-only, downhill trails.



Winter Routes

Designated low grade trails that meet a standard for ease of grooming will be groomed for winter use for both walking and fat biking. A winter trails route map will be developed annually and signed separately should various factors necessitate a route change. For example, closing certain winter

trail segments in the spring during low snow months can reduce further compaction of the snow and allow the snow on the trail to melt sooner. Groomed trails generally take longer to open for summer use due to the compaction of the snow during use or grooming.

Adaptive Routes

Adaptive trails are modified to be inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities using specialized equipment. Trails often feature wider surfaces, smoother transitions, and gentler grades than standard trails, allowing users of adaptive bikes (handcycles, recumbents, e-assist) or all-terrain wheelchairs to experience nature and trail riding. As discussed in the network overview, the development of a series of adaptive trails is a longer-term goal for future phases of the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails network. Design standards have been applied to new trails and TTF's taking into consideration trail segments that could be designated in a continuous adaptive mountain biking route.



Signage & Wayfinding

Effective signage and wayfinding are essential for a safe and enjoyable trail experience that enhances the trail network's tourism appeal.

In 2025, *Gneiss Trail Company* prepared a Trail Sign Plan following an initial trail audit that identified needs for signage and wayfinding along with additional recommendations on trail work and closures to ease navigation challenges and improve the trail experience. The plan emphasizes consistency, durability, accessibility, and safety, ensuring visitors of all abilities can easily navigate the trails.



The following section outlines recommended sign types, placement, and general guidelines to enhance user experience and support a well-organized, visitor-friendly trail system.

Trail Difficulty Rating

The trail network uses the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) trail difficulty rating system to communicate the level of challenge for both hiking and mountain biking trails. This standardized system uses colour-coded ratings and

symbols to help users choose routes that match their abilities, comfort level, and desired experience.



Green Circle: Easy trails suitable for beginners and casual users. These routes feature gentle grades, wider tread, stable surfaces, and minimal technical obstacles, making them appropriate for families, new hikers, and entry-level riders.



Blue Square: Trails intended for intermediate users with some experience. These routes may include steeper grades, narrower tread, variable surfaces, and moderate technical features that require greater skill and attention.



Black Diamond: Trails designed for advanced users only. These routes may include sustained steep grades, narrow tread, significant elevation change, and challenging technical features that demand advanced skills, fitness, and experience.

Trailhead Kiosk

The trailhead kiosk design aligns with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), recognizing the outdoor and natural setting of the trail network. Signage uses clear, plain language, high-contrast colour combinations, legible sans-serif fonts, and a consistent layout to ensure information is readable and accessible to a wide range of users. Where feasible, kiosks will be mounted at accessible viewing heights and located to allow clear approach and visibility.

Trailhead information on the kiosk includes a trail

map, permitted uses, trail difficulty ratings and route suggestions for hiking and mountain biking. Project partners including land managers and funders are also recognized.



Trail network regulations and trail user etiquette and other safety messaging will be posted on separate signs (See Safety and Regulatory Signs).

Kiosks will be installed at all official trailheads with a possible variation for the sign at the Upper Laurentian Trailhead to recognize the partnership with the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority's existing signage.

Trail Network Hub

Ten sites within the trail network have been identified for trail hubs (see Table 4). These spots are decision points and intersections with more than 4 trail choices. Trail hubs will have a small overview map of the trail system with an identifiable location marker, route information and emergency contact information.

Table 4: Location of Trail Hubs

Hub	Location	Trails	No of trails	Property
H1	46.33718, -79.42844	Pines, Hemlock Haven, Janey St Access, McNutt Family Trail	4	NBMCA
H2	46.33323, -79.42498	Interface, McNutt Family Trail, Step Ladder	3	NBMCA
H3	46.33407, -79.42156	Ladder, Pipe Line, Sidewinder, Step Ladder	4	private
H4	46.33216, -79.41962	Berms, Pipe Line, Hill Billy, Interface	4	private
H5	46.33812, -79.41855	Ladder, Greystone Access, Doe Trail, Child's Play, Deer Trail	5	private
H6	46.33575, -79.41506	Berms, Pole Line, Hill Billy, Rush, Rain Trail, Wagon	6	DND
H7	46.33565, -79.41388	Childs Play, Hill Billy, Rock, Butter Ball, Circle C1, Little South	6	DND
H8	46.33435, -79.41402	Rain, Rockabilly, Discovery, Little South, Trail	4	DND
H9	46.33193, -79.41283	Discovery, Rain, Dogg, Rodeo Ride	4	DND
H10	46.33745, -79.40844	Doubletrack, Circle C1, Dragon's Tail	4	DND

Directional Signs

In the past, trails within the Laurentian Escarpment network were marked by a variety of quirky, handmade signs and intermittent conservation area signs. As a legacy to the community of trail users who have advocated for the protection and continued use of the trails over the years, the handmade signs will be relocated to the Lower Laurentian Trailhead to be displayed alongside the mural celebrating 100 years of community involvement on the Laurentian Escarpment.



Replacing the old, inconsistent signs will be new comprehensive trail name signage. A variety of materials were considered for the signage with the preferred being High Tac reflective decals on carsonite posts. This option provides an easy to install long lasting trail marker that is also flexible to prevent injury and sign damage if the sign is hit.

Each trail will be identified by its own sign at the beginning, end, and all trail intersections. Information on the decal includes the trail segment name, level of difficulty, length, permitted trail activity icons, and liability message.

Additional decals may be installed on the carsonite post to relay other information such as route markers for the suggested hiking and mountain

bike routes; direction to trailhead parking; etc.

Table 5 shows examples of each sign type proposed for the LECT.



Downhill Bike Only Trail Signs

Five trail segments within the network are proposed as one-way, bike-only downhill trails to reduce user conflict and improve safety for mountain bikers and other trail users. These segments will utilize a distinct signage system that differs from standard multi-use trail markers to clearly communicate their intended use and direction of travel. “Do Not Enter” signage will be installed at the base of each downhill segment to discourage uphill travel and unauthorized access. Additional signage at the top of each trail will promote safe riding practices and encourage users to assess trail conditions, difficulty, and their skill level before descending. See Table 5 for the design of each of these signs.

Technical Trail Feature & Regulatory Signage

The trails within LECT network certain technical trail features (TTFs) identified in Table 3 will be identified by TTF signage. These features include jumps, drops, and steep grades. See Table 5 for design.

Regulatory signage will be installed at the intersection of the trail and Ski Club Rd instructing cyclists to dismount and use the pedestrian crossing. See Trail Regulation section for other regulatory signs to be installed by NBMCA.

The location of all signs is tracked in a spreadsheet and mapped for operations and maintenance planning.

Table 5: Trail marker design and specifications

Trail Name & Information Signs	
	Trail Name Markers Installed on carsonite posts at the beginning and end of each trail segment, and all trail intersections. 3.15"x6.25" High Tac Reflective Decal
	Hike Route Markers Installed on carsonite posts along suggested hiking routes. 3.15"x3.15" High Tac Decal
	Bike Route Markers Installed on carsonite posts along suggested mountain bike routes. 3.15"x3.15" High Tac Decal
	Downhill Bike Only Segment Signs Installed at the top of bike only downhill trail segments 12"x18" Aluminum Composite Sign



DO NOT ENTER

Installed at bottom of each of the downhill bike only trails
12"x18" Aluminum Composite Sign

Installed on carsonite post at multi-use trail intersections
3.15"x6.25" High Tac Reflective Decal

Technical Trail Feature & Regulatory Signage



Downhill Trail Safety Sign

Placed on bike priority downhill trails to promote safe riding practices.

12"x18" Aluminum Composite Sign



Cyclist Dismount RB-70

Placed on the trail at pedestrian crossing at Ski Club Road

12" x 12" Aluminum Composite Sign



Steep

Placed to identify steep descents on trails that require skilled technique to ride. Sign placed at least 2 meters ahead of TTF

6"x6" Aluminum Composite Sign



Drop

Placed to identify drop TTFs that cannot be rolled. Sign placed at least 2 meters ahead of TTF

8"x6" Aluminum Composite Sign



Jump Ahead

Placed to identify jumps that are not rollable or have gaps. Sign placed at least 2 meters ahead of TTF

8"x6" Aluminum Composite Sign

Trail Regulations

The North-Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority has mandatory rules for the trails under their jurisdiction to protect public safety and sensitive habitats within the Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area. These rules are enforceable and apply to all users at all times, regardless of activity or season. The following rules will apply to the entire Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails network.

- Owners must keep their pets on a leash at all times and “stoop and scoop”
- No motorized vehicles permitted on trails with exception of authorized maintenance vehicles
- No hunting
- Do not damage or remove plants, picnic tables or other area property
- Camping is not permitted
- Campfires are not permitted
- Alcoholic beverages and drugs, including cannabis, are not allowed
- We strongly encourage not smoking on our trails to limit the chances of fire



Operations & Maintenance

Operations

At the time of this *Master Plan Update*, a formal operations framework for the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails has not yet been established. The long-term sustainability of the trail network will require the development of a clear governance structure, defined partner roles, and landowner approved operational policies related to access, permitted uses, seasonal management, signage, public communication, volunteer training and risk management. As trails are formalized and land use agreements further secured, Discovery Routes, in collaboration with NBMBA, landowners, and other key stakeholders, will work toward establishing an operations model that reflects available capacity, volunteer support, and sustainability. This *Master Plan Update* provides the foundation for future operational planning and will guide the development of policies and procedures needed to safely and effectively manage the trail network over time.

Trail Maintenance

Since the ongoing maintenance of the trail network will be primarily performed by volunteers, it is critical that clear inspection and maintenance protocols are established in consultation with the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority and adequate resources are in place. To protect volunteers and landowners, liability insurance and safety protocols will be established for all formal maintenance activities. Together, these practices will ensure that the trail network remains safe and enjoyable for all users while supporting sustainable volunteer stewardship over the long term.

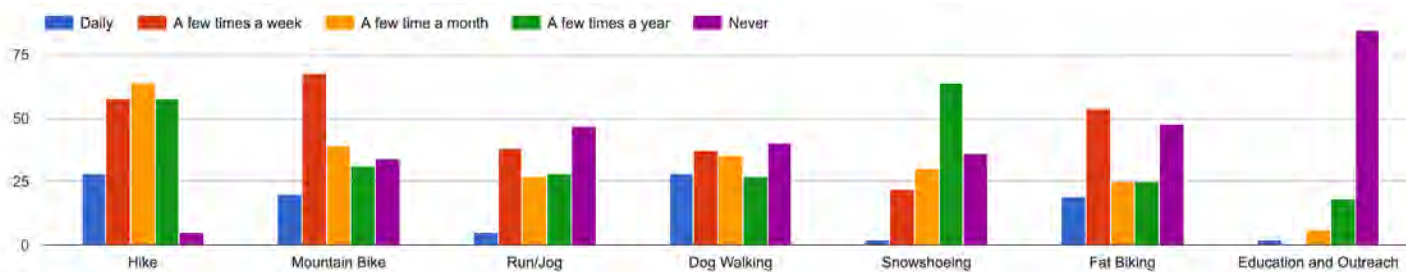
Volunteers will need to be trained to conduct regular trail inspections and undertake repairs as required. This includes the removal of fallen trees, clearing brush, fixing damaged or missing wayfinding signage, inspections of technical trail features and structures and repairs and alterations to the trail tread to reduce erosion.

Appendix 1: Survey Results

Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails Project Public Survey Summary

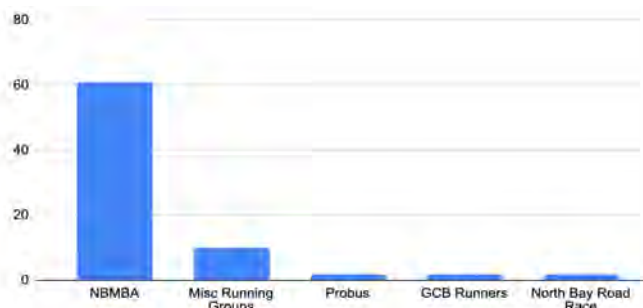
The charts below are a summary of the results of the *Laurentian Escarpment Public Engagement Survey* released on November 12, 2024. 252 respondents between Nov 12 and December 31, 2024. Its intent is to provide public guidance to the development of the *Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails Master Plan Update*.

What activities do you do on the trails and how often? 252 responses

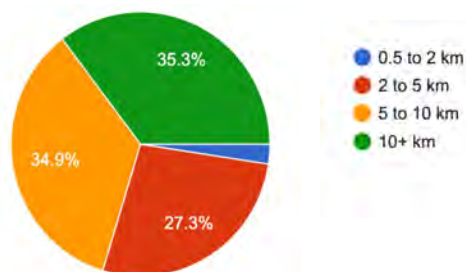


Are you affiliated with a club or organization that use these trails? 146 responses

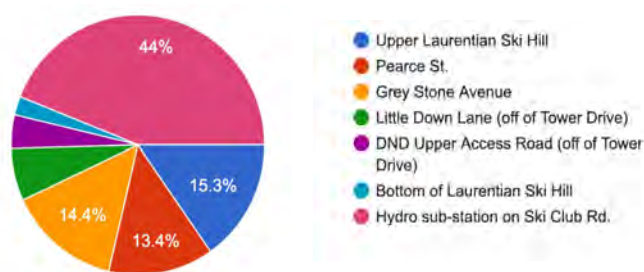
In addition to the responses below, other groups identified were Living Fit, Nipissing Naturalists and Outdoor Education Class (West Ferris).



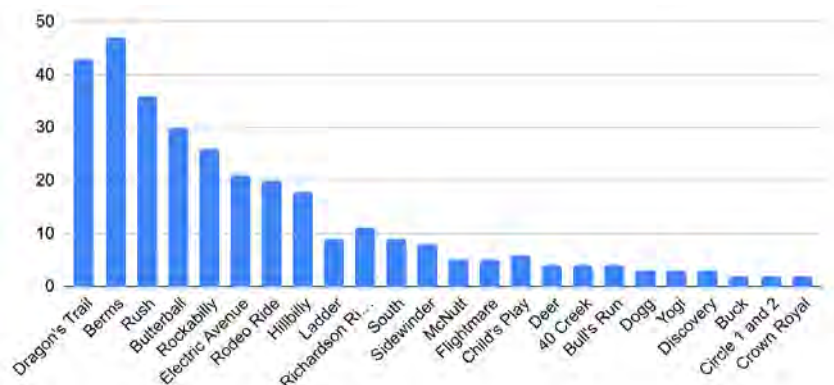
How far (approx) do you travel on a trail outing? 249 responses



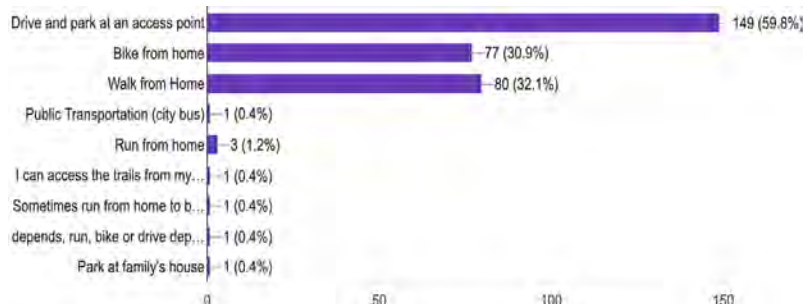
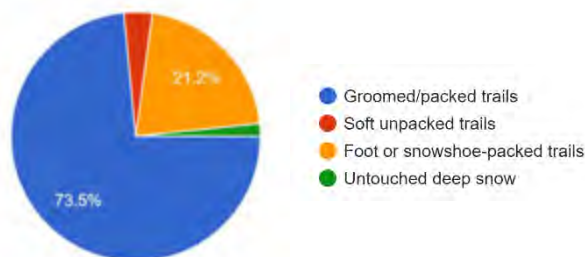
Which access point do you primarily use? 248 responses



Do you have any favourite trails? List and tell us why. 156 responses

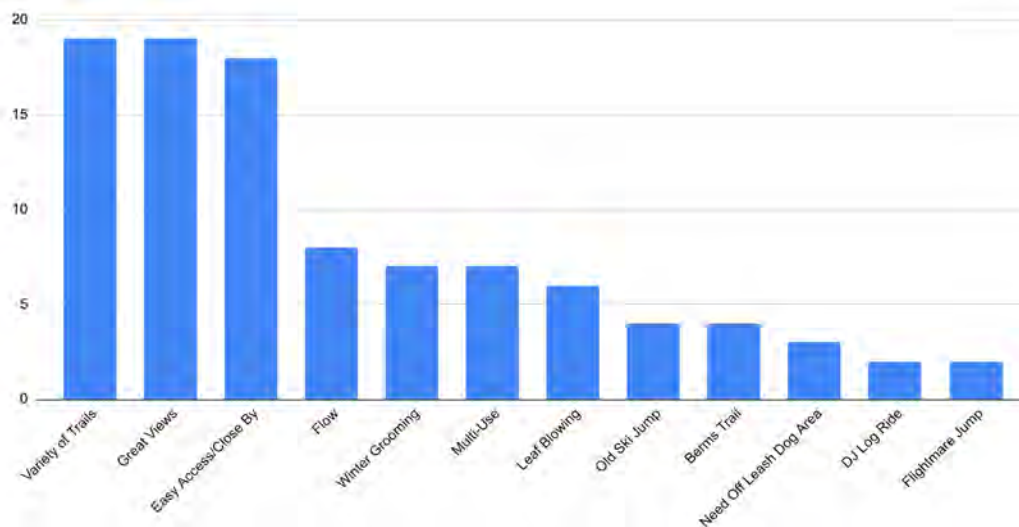


For winter trail use, what type of trails do you prefer to use? 245 responses

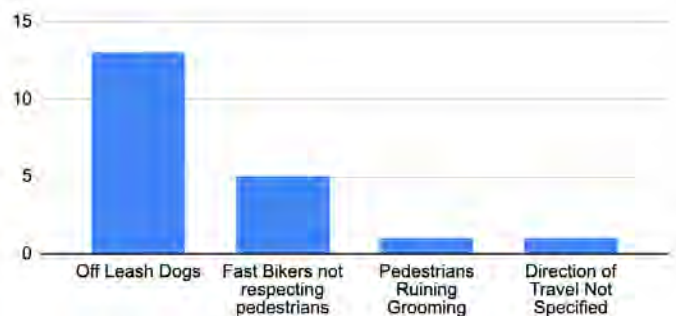


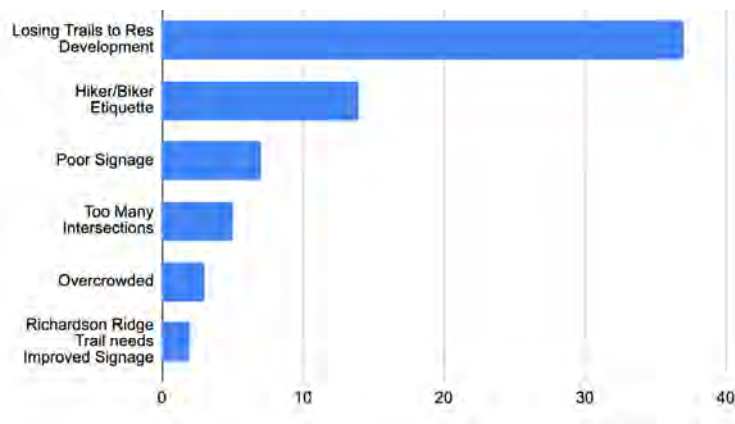
How do you get to the trailhead? 249 responses

What are stand-out features of this trail network that should be exemplified either through promotion or network design? 150 responses



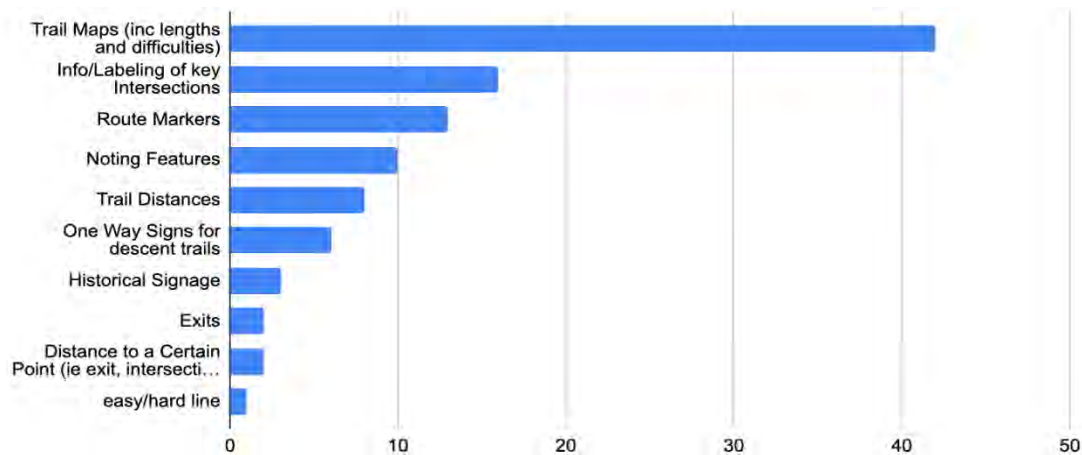
Have you had conflict with other trail users? 247 responses 85% of respondents answered No.
If yes, elaborate. 43 responses



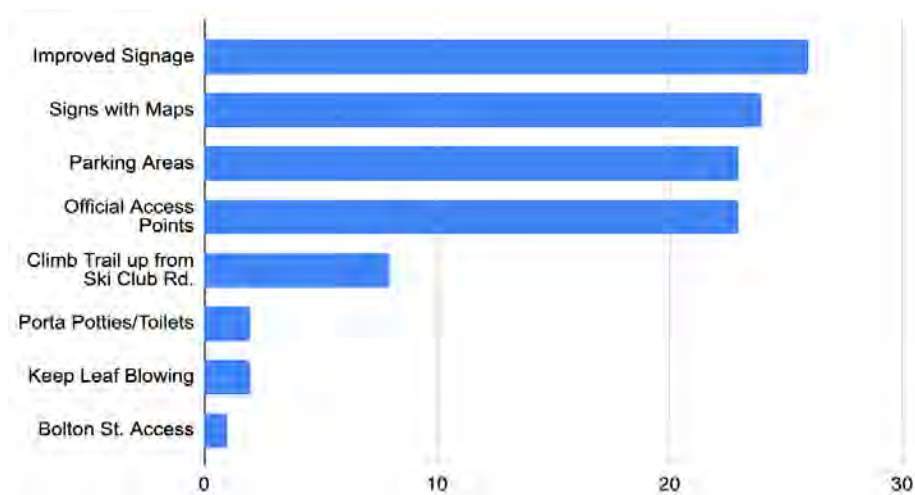


What are some concerns you have about the trails? 188 responses

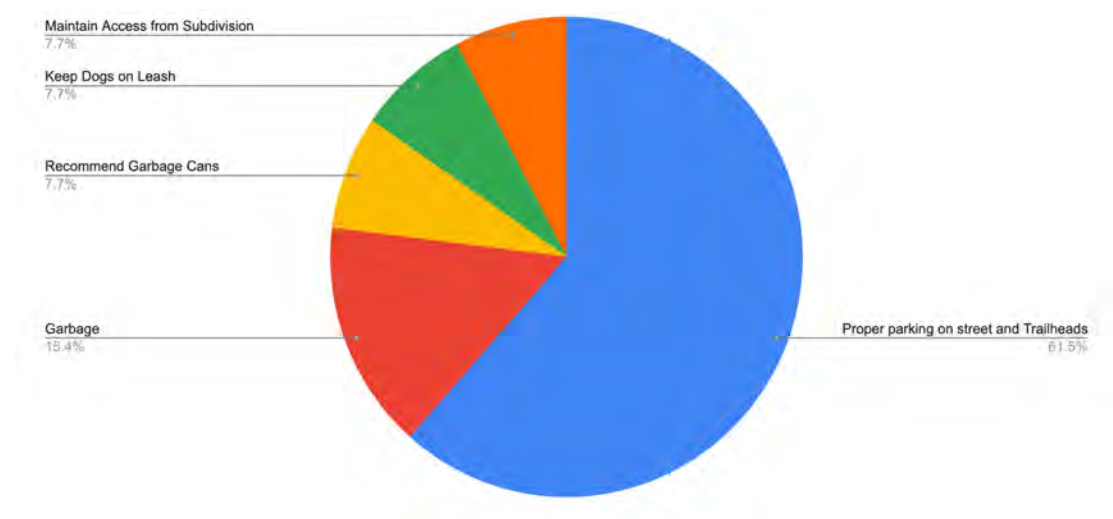
In addition to route markers can you suggest any signage enhancements that would improve the user experience? 146 responses



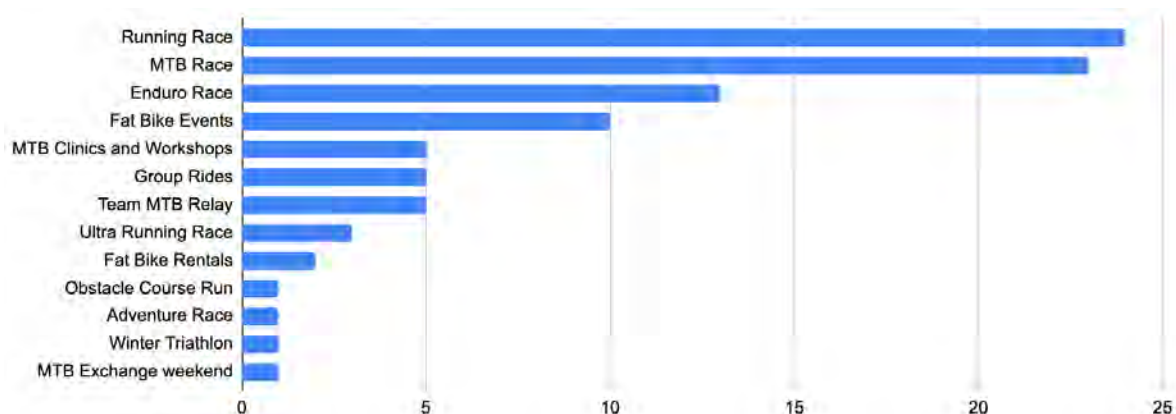
What upgrades to the trail network would make it easier and more convenient for users to access them? 152 responses



For non-trail users living adjacent to the trail network, list any concerns or comments that might help us develop a management strategy with everyone's best interest in mind. 37 responses



Please provide suggestions for trail event(s) you would like to see occur on these trails. 85 responses



Appendix 2: Trail Tourism Readiness Assessment

**Trail Tourism Readiness Evaluation Tool developed by Trans Canada Trail
applied to the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails, North Bay, ON**

APPROVALS, PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE						Aug 2024	Dec 2025	Notes
Question	Response Options	Tourism Readiness Classification	Score	Weight	Max Score			
Has your trail been formally approved by the land manager or land owner?	Yes	If no, the trail is not visitor ready	1	1	1	0	1	DND remaining
	No		Not visitor ready					
Has a trail operator formally accepted responsibility for operations of trail including active management and maintenance?	Yes	If no, the trail is not visitor ready	1	1	1	0	1	North Bay Mountain Bike Association thru MOU
	No		Not visitor ready					
Has an approved management plan and/or master plan been prepared to guide the development and management of the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	2	4	0	4	Trails Master Plan Update
	No		0					
Does the approved management plan and/or master plan address how the trail will be developed and managed to grow trail tourism?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	2	4	0	4	
	No		0					
Has a visitor management plan been developed to guide the management of visitation on the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	0	3	Tourism is mentioned but needs further consideration
	No		0					
Are the trail classification, permitted uses and rules of use clearly communicated to visitors at the trailhead and on-trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	2	4	0	4	Signs installed by Spring 2026
	No		0					
Have all of the following signage types been installed on the trail-wayfinding, regulatory, safety/ warning, responsible use?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	2	4	0	4	Final installation by Spring 2026
	No		0					
How often are trail conditions formally inspected and documented?	Weekly	Not a filter for classification.	2	1	2	0	1	While not formal, inspection happens regularly through volunteer involvement. Not documented at this time.
	Monthly		2					
	Quarterly		1					
	Annually		0					
	No set inspection schedule		0					
When serious maintenance problems that create visitor safety or environmental risks are identified, which best describes how quickly your organization can address those concerns?	Problems addressed immediately	If delays may occur due to lack of funding or capacity, the trail cannot be higher than visitor ready.	2	2	4	0	2	Volunteer directed
	Minor delays may occur		1					
	Extended delays may occur due to lack of funding or capacity		Visitor ready					
Which of the following best describes how often regular maintenance is undertaken on your trail?	Weekly	If there is no set maintenance schedule, the trail cannot be higher than visitor ready.	2	2	4	0	2	Maintenance by volunteers
	Monthly		2					
	Quarterly		1					
	Annually		0					
	No set maintenance schedule		Visitor ready					
Does your organization have a long-term sustainable funding model to support capital asset replacement and renewal?	Yes	Not filter	2	3	6	0	0	Needed!
	No		0					

UNIQUENESS						Aug 2024	Dec 2025	Notes
Question	Response Options	Tourism Readiness Classification	Score	Weight	Max Score			
Which of the following best reflects the uniqueness of the visitor experience that your trail provides?	Locally unique	If locally unique, the trail cannot be higher than visitor ready	Visitor ready	2	8	4	4	length of trails, diversity of terrain and difficulty levels for MTB, in heart of city
	Provincially/territorially unique		2					
	Nationally unique		3					

	Internationally unique		4					
Please describe why your trail is provincially/ territorially/ nationally/internationally unique	Open Ended	N/A						See above
Can the trail support multi-night trips or be combined with other trails to support multi-night trips?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	6	6	Three Towers Trails, local hotels
	No		0					

BRANDING, MARKETING								
Question	Response Options	Tourism Readiness Classification	Score	Weight	Max Score	Aug 2024	Dec 2025	Notes
Has a user-friendly website been developed to support trip planning and to generate interest in the trail?	Yes	If no, trail cannot be higher than visitor ready	2	3	6	0	6	Discovery Routes
	No		Visitor ready					
Has a visitor-focused mobile device application (including off-line capabilities where relevant) been developed to support and enhance the visitor experience?	Yes	Not filter for classification	2	3	6	0	0	Could be added to Driftscape but likely not the market
	No		0					
Has a distinct and unique trail brand been developed and incorporated into marketing materials, website, on-trail signage?	Yes	If no, trail cannot be higher than visitor ready	2	3	6	0	3	Co-branded with MTB, DRT0 and NBMCa
	No		Visitor Ready					
Is the trail being deliberately marketed to potential visitors at each stage of the visitor "pathway to purchase"?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	0	6	Thru TNB
	No		0					
Which of the following best reflects the level of Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) that is currently marketing your trail? (select all that apply)	Local DMO	Not a filter for classification	1	3	12	9	9	Tourism North Bay (DMO); NeOnt (regional); Destination Northern ON (provincial)
	Regional DMO		2					
	Provincial/territorial DMO		3					
	Destination Canada		4					
	Trail is not marketed by any DMO		Visitor ready					
Has your organization, or a Destination Marketing Organization that you work with, established a library of high resolution and compelling photos and video footage to support marketing of the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	1	2	2	0	2	
	No		0					
Does your organization, or a Destination Marketing Organization that you work with, work to attract and host international media and travel trade familiarization tours?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	0	0	Not yet, but TNB will be partner
	No		0					
Is your trail currently integrated into any visitor experience packages that are sold through Travel Trade?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	4	8	0	8	Thru TNB
	No		0					

VISITOR AMENITIES, SERVICES								
Question	Response Options	Tourism Readiness Classification	Score	Weight	Max Score	Aug 2024	Dec 2025	Notes
Which of these best reflects the level of quality and design of visitor comfort and convenience amenities on your trail?	No amenities are offered	If no amenities or only basic amenities are offered, the trail cannot exceed visitor ready.	Visitor ready	3	6	0	3	Trailhead parking, washrooms at ski hill for events
	Basic		Visitor ready					
	Mid-range		1					
	High-end		2					
Do trail visitors have easy access to market or export ready accommodations on or near the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	6	6	Nearby franchise hotels, AirBNB, other
	No		0					
Are the accommodations appropriately distributed along the trail to service visitors for each night of their journey on the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	6	6	As above
	No		0					
Is there a clustering of market or export ready visitor attractions on or near the trail that are promoted to trail visitors to enhance their experience?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	6	6	Laurentian Ski Hill, etc
	No		0					

Have communities on or near the trail developed signage and visitor information strategies to attract trail visitors into their communities?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	6	6	TNB promotes trails and cycling, MTB Our Way In NB
	No		0					
Have communities along or near the trail developed a welcoming and inviting atmosphere for trail visitors (e.g. welcome signage, themed banners, beautification)?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	0	0	Could be improved
	No		0					
How frequently is the trail animated through events/ festivals/competitions that attract visitors to the trail from beyond the local community?	Never	Not a filter for classification	0	3	6	0	3	Enduro Race - MTB; Global Fat Bike Day; Running events planned
	Periodically, but not regularly		1					
	Annual schedule of events		2					
Do private or public sector entities offer regular, dependable and bookable transportation services to help visitors access the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	0	0	Few bike rentals in city
	No		0					
Does your organization maintain staff, or have another similar arrangement, where trained customer service personnel are available to respond to enquiries about the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	4	8	0	0	
	No		0					
When an enquiry about the trail is received, which of the following best reflects how long it typically takes to respond?	Within 24 hrs of enquiry	Not a filter for classification	3	4	12	0	0	
	Within week of enquiry		2					
	Over a week from enquiry		1					
	If/as we can		0					
Does your organization, or one of your partners (e.g. DMO), provide training to frontline staff and businesses in the tourism industry about the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	3	6	0	0	Discovery Routes could provide trail training with regional scope to TNB partners/ members
	No		0					
Do local elected officials actively reference the trail as both an important quality of life and economic asset in the community/region?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	2	4	0	0	TBD - if possible
	No		0					
Are local tourism businesses knowledgeable about the trail and effective trail ambassadors?	Yes	Not a filter for classification	2	2	4	0	0	As above, DRTO could provide training with regional scope to TNB partners
	No		0					

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Max Score</u>	<u>Total Aug 2024</u>	<u>Total Dec 2025</u>
Approvals, Planning, Management, Maintenance	40	0	26
Uniqueness	14	10	10
Branding, Marketing	52	9	34
Visitor Amenities & Services	82	24	30
TOTAL	188	43	100