

Municipality of

Trent Hills



PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

April 2026



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We recognize the traditional keepers of this land and, specifically our neighbours of the Alderville First Nation, with a formal territorial acknowledgement.

Trent Hills is the Gunshot Treaty Lands of 1788. It is on these lands and on the shores of the big lake, the Mississauga Anishinabeg met with the Crown to facilitate the opening of these lands for settlement.

Let us be reminded of the responsibility we all have in making sure that we respect these lands and waters that give us life and sustain our livelihoods.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank all community members who shared their ideas, aspirations and insights through public and stakeholder consultation. In particular, we are appreciative of the Municipality of Trent Hills staff team who contributed their time, knowledge and expertise to the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan:

- Peter Burnett
- Kira Mees
- Kelli Stapley
- Jim Peters

thinc. mehak, kelly
& associates.

IMAGE SOURCES

All images are provided by the Municipality of Trent Hills or taken by thinc, unless otherwise noted.



Welcome to the Trent Hills Parks & Recreation Master Plan (Executive Summary)

Think of this Plan as Trent Hills' **roadmap** for the future of parks and recreation. Over the next **20 years** (up to 2045), it will guide how to build, improve, and take care of **the places we play and gather**. This includes our:

- indoor recreation buildings
- sports fields and facilities
- parks and trails

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan should be read in conjunction with the Active Transportation and Trails Master Plan (2024), Official Plan, and other municipal documents.



How the Plan was made

The Municipality hired an expert team — thinc design and Mehak, Kelly & Associates — to help create the Master Plan. They worked on the project for a full year, from Spring 2025 to Spring 2026, and broke the work down into three main steps:

Phase 1: Gathering Information

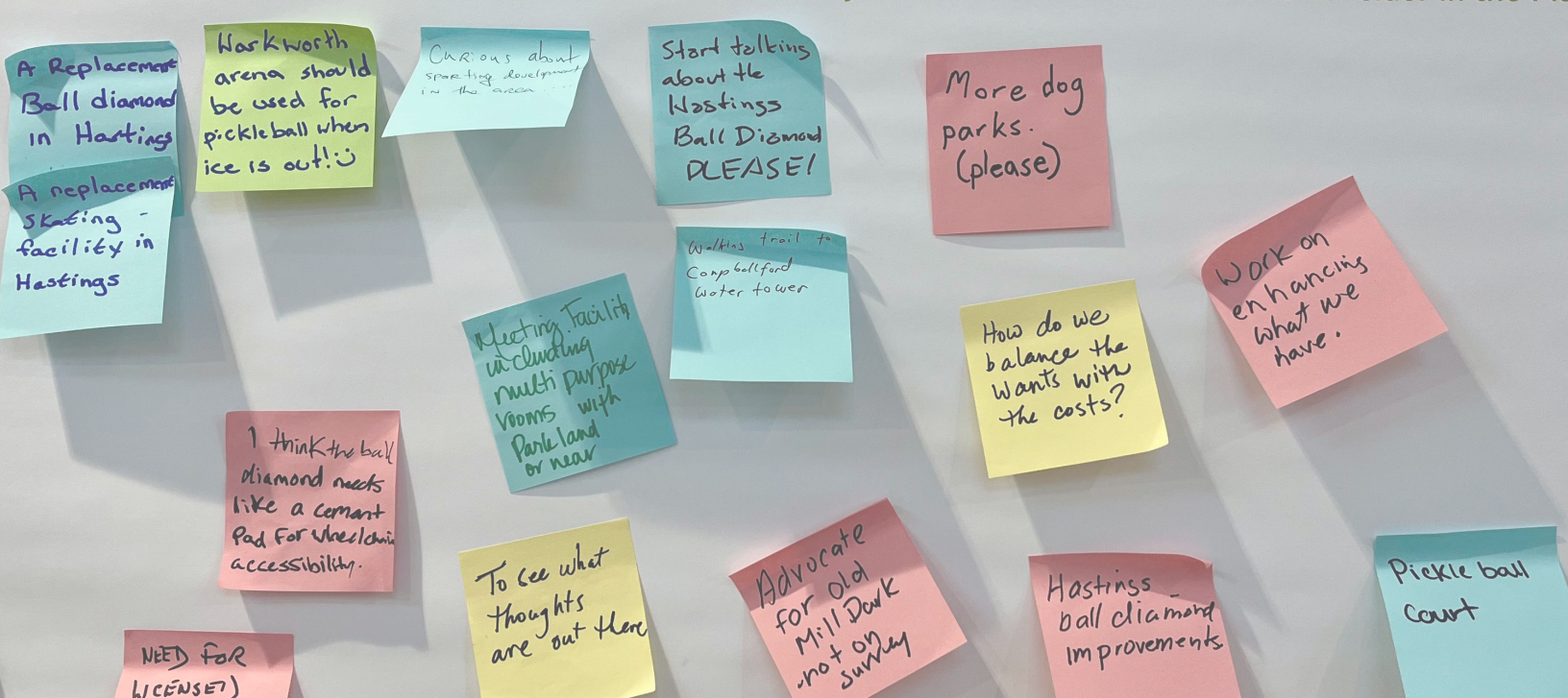
First, we needed to understand what Trent Hills already has. Our consulting team prepared maps and inventories, reviewed policies, and studied population data to get a clear picture of the community.

Phase 2: Listening to the People

Next, we sent out surveys by phone and online to residents, Council, staff, and local sport and recreation groups. We also visited parks and facilities in Trent Hills and met with people to hear their ideas and vision for the future.

Phase 3: Writing the Plan

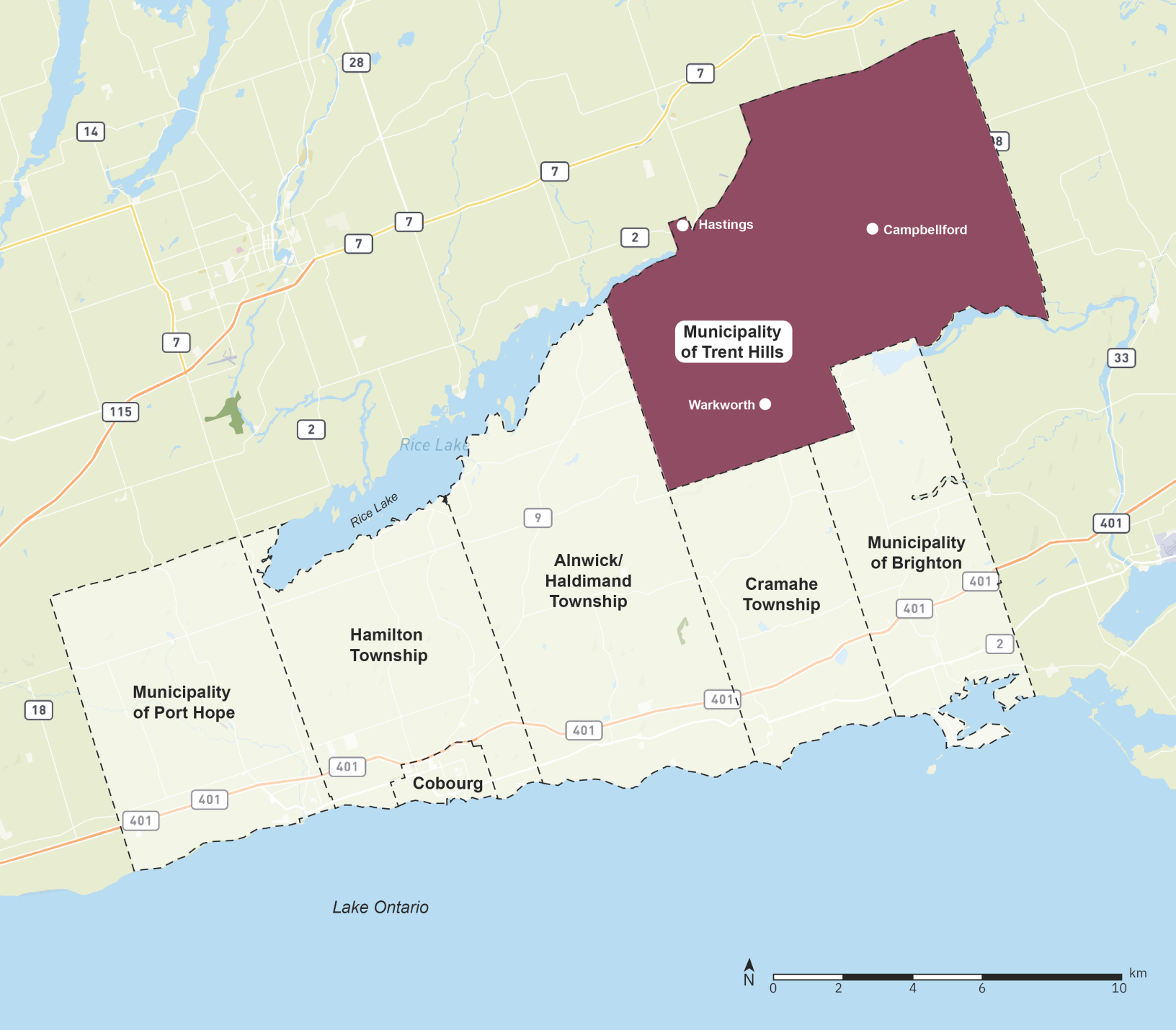
Finally, we looked at how well current parks and facilities were working and trends for the next 20 years. We wrote a draft of the plan, discussed it with staff, and shared it with the public for feedback. We discussed and made revisions before presenting to Council.



To make sure the Master Plan reflects what the community truly needs, the project team gathered feedback from a wide range of voices during the summer of 2025. They started by surveying municipal staff and Council members to understand how current parks and recreation services are running behind the scenes. They also sent a special survey to local sports leagues, service clubs, and community groups to learn more about how they use municipal parks, sports facilities, and indoor spaces for their regular programs and special events. To hear directly from the public, the team collected responses through an open online survey and conducted a telephone survey with randomly-selected households to get a more accurate, statistical picture of residents' views. They also hosted an in-person community workshop. Through these efforts, the team was able to hear from a mix of ages, household types, and neighbourhoods across Trent Hills.

After preparing a draft Plan, the team shared the materials and recommendations with the community through two focus groups, an in-person open house, and online feedback form.

- 300** randomly-selected households surveyed by telephone
- 136** respondents to public online survey
- 48** attendees at Public Open House
- 31** surveys from parks & recreation user groups
- 28** attendees at Community Visioning Workshop
- 26** questionnaires completed by Council and staff
- 8** emails and feedback forms submitted by the public
- 5** meetings with a Steering Committee of municipal staff
- 2** focus groups with 13 key community stakeholders



Northumberland County Communities

Community Context

Trent Hills has a current population of **13,861** in a land area of 513.85 km². Most households consist of couples without children or people living alone. Trent Hills has an older population compared to the rest of the county and province, with seniors aged 65 and over making up the largest single age group.



How will the community change?

Over the 20-year timeline of this Master Plan, the Municipality's population is expected to grow to **15,827** by 2045. Most of these new homes and families will be located in the urban area of Campbellford. As Trent Hills grows, the

community will continue to age. It is anticipated that the number of seniors (especially those over 75) will increase. Understanding these trends will be key to planning the right types of parks, facilities, and programs for the future.



Summary of Recreation Facilities Recommendations

The Big Picture: Focus on Making Better Use of What We Have

Recently, Trent Hills took a major step forward by opening the Sunny Life Recreation and Wellness Centre, bringing new features like an indoor pool, a state-of-the-art NHL size ice rink, and fitness spaces to the community. Because this was a large investment and residents prefer to keep property taxes low, the Master Plan does not recommend building any major new indoor facilities in the near future. Instead, the focus for the foreseeable future is on maintaining current buildings, partnering with others, and making better use of spaces the Municipality already owns.

Trent Hills has a good mix of outdoor sports facilities — including ball diamonds, soccer fields, and tennis/pickleball courts — in Warkworth, Campbellford, and Hastings. As with indoor facilities, the data shows that the Municipality does not need to build major new outdoor sports facilities right now. Instead, the Master Plan recommends maximizing the use of existing facilities and focusing on maintenance and upgrades.

The facility assessments are summarized on the following pages. For details and rationale on the 34 recommendations for Recreation Facilities, please see section 2.0 of the Master Plan.

Ice Pads

The two existing ice rinks in Warkworth and Campbellford are enough to meet the community's needs right now. If ice time gets tight, the Municipality should adjust scheduling or slightly extend operating hours rather than building a third rink. The need for another pad should be re-evaluated in 10 years.

Event Halls & Community Kitchens

While some residents asked for large banquet halls or community kitchens, the data shows that the existing municipal hall in Warkworth is used infrequently. Furthermore, local churches, Legions, and private clubs already offer rental spaces. The Municipality should continue to make basic repairs to its halls and help advertise the community-owned spaces available for rent.

Indoor Facilities' Maintenance & Upkeep

When asked what needs be improved, the community's message was clear: take care of what we have. Residents want to focus on keeping existing facilities clean, making sure things like roofs and lights are repaired, and ensuring spaces are accessible to everyone.

Hastings Field House

People want more access to the indoor courts, turf, and walking track. Rather than expanding the building, the Municipality should monitor use and reorganize the schedule where feasible. By reducing rentals to out-of-town groups, more time can be freed up for local residents. The Municipality could also use a website or app to show people when the track and gym are least busy.

Fitness & Dance Studios

The YMCA just opened two new fitness/dance studios inside the Sunny Life Centre. The Municipality has an agreement to let the YMCA take the lead on indoor fitness programs. If residents ask for more studio activities in the future, staff and the YMCA will work together to figure out the best way to provide them.

Gymnasiums

Trent Hills does not own a municipal gym, and building one is too expensive right now. Instead, the Plan recommends creating a formal agreement with the District School Board so the community can use school gyms for sports and events.

Ball Diamonds & Soccer Fields

Right now, municipal ball diamonds and soccer fields are mostly used on weeknights, leaving them largely empty on weekends. Because there is so much unused weekend time, Trent Hills does not need to build any new fields or diamonds to keep up with population growth over the next 20 years. Instead of building more, the focus should be on encouraging leagues to schedule games and practices on weekends.

Since the large soccer fields at Warkworth Park are rarely used (and the mini field there floods too often to use), these spaces could be changed to “multi-purpose” fields that can be used for other sports like football.

The local soccer club asked for smaller fields with permanent nets for children. The Municipality should work with the club to figure out the best way to do this with existing fields.

Tennis & Pickleball Courts

The Municipality currently has two shared tennis/pickleball courts. Pickleball is very popular, and sharing courts between the two sports can sometimes cause scheduling conflicts. The Municipality should monitor use of these courts: if they get too busy, the Plan recommends changing the current courts back to “tennis only” and building 2-4 brand new, dedicated pickleball courts on municipal land.

Outdoor Facilities' Maintenance & Upkeep

When asked what needs to improve, sports groups said they want better washrooms, more storage, more seating/bleachers, and better ongoing maintenance (like weeding and trimming) at existing fields.

Importantly, several municipal ball diamonds and soccer fields are located on land owned by the local Agricultural Societies. Before spending money on upgrading things like lights or washrooms at these locations, the Master Plan recommends signing formal, updated agreements with the landowners so everyone is clear on the rules and responsibilities.

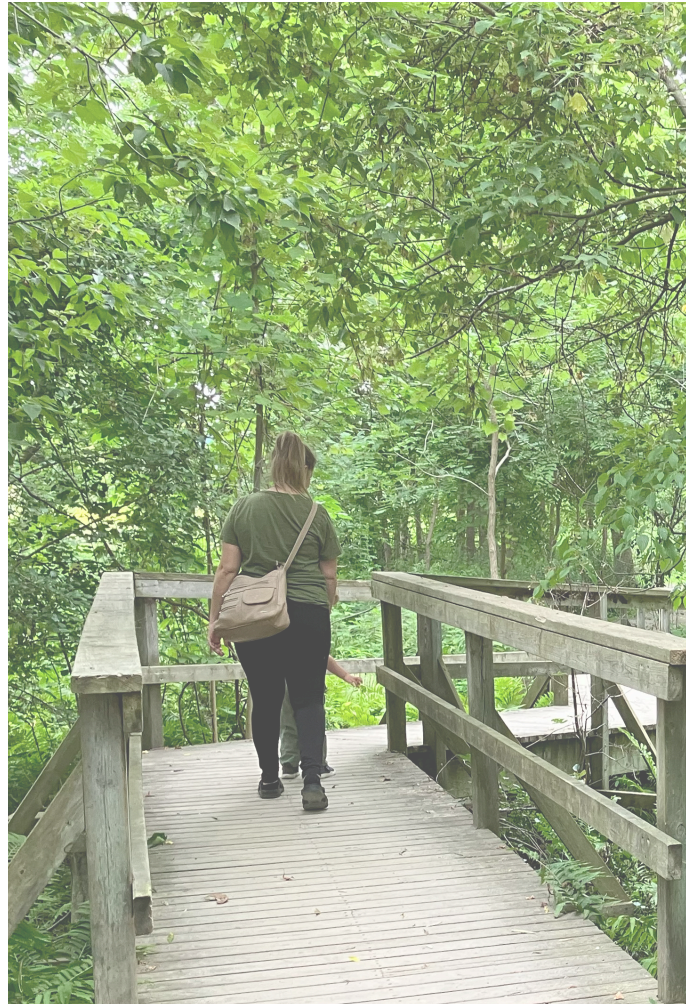


Summary of Parks & Open Spaces Recommendations

The Big Picture: Safe, Accessible, and Welcoming Parks

Trent Hills currently has about 72 acres of public parkland that includes green spaces, trails, playgrounds, skate parks, and water access points. As the Municipality grows over the next 20 years, the Master Plan focuses on making sure every park is easy to use, comfortable, and accessible for people of all ages and abilities. The Plan also outlines a goal for new housing developments to provide land or funding to build 10-16 acres of new parkland. This ensures that as more people move in, everyone still has plenty of green space to play, exercise, and relax.

The parks assessments are summarized on the following pages. For details and rationale on the 49 recommendations for Parks and Open Spaces, please see section 3.0 of the Master Plan.



Growing & Organizing Parkland

Clear, Consistent Park Names & Categories

Currently, some parks go by a few different names, which can be confusing. Moving forward, the Plan recommends ensuring every park has one official name that is used consistently on all maps, signs, and websites.

To make planning easier, the Plan introduces a “classification system” that organizes all municipal parks into four clear types: Community Parks, Waterfront Parks, Neighbourhood Parks, and Parkettes.

Securing Parkland

When new neighbourhoods are built, the Municipality needs a way to ensure parks are included. The Plan recommends creating a formal Parkland Dedication By-law and a Cash-in-Lieu Policy. These rules legally require housing developers to either give the Municipality a piece of land for a new park, or pay a fee that will be used to improve existing parks.

Trent Hills should also update its Official Plan to match new provincial housing laws (like Ontario’s Bill 23) to make sure the right amount of land and development fees are being collected from builders.

The Plan recommends that any new parks should be at least 0.5 acres in size. Tiny pieces of land are hard to use, and larger spaces can accommodate amenities like playgrounds and sports courts. When possible, the Municipality should combine smaller pieces of land to create bigger, more connected parks.

Upgrades for Comfort & Safety

Accessibility

All new and updated parks should focus on “universal design.” The Plan discusses features like accessible paths, a new mobility mat at the beach, and accessible seating so everyone can enjoy public spaces.

Washrooms

Building new public washrooms is incredibly expensive — often costing up to \$1 million due to the need for winterized pipes and heavy-duty, vandal-proof materials. To solve this problem affordably, the Plan recommends using signs and online maps to direct park visitors to existing public washrooms nearby. The Municipality could also explore creative partnerships with local businesses to act as designated restrooms for park-goers. During the term of this Plan, the Municipality should explore the possibility of a modern, self-cleaning “smart” toilet in one of its larger Community Parks.

Shade, Seating & Water

The Plan recommends a tree planting program to replace aging trees and add more shade. Existing park benches and picnic tables should be gradually replaced with year-round, accessible options. Drinking water fountains/bottle fillers should be available at all current and future Community Parks.

Signage

Every park should have one official name and clear, matching signs that reflect that name and the Municipality of Trent Hills brand. The Plan also recommends adding distance markers to popular walking paths like the Millennium Lilac Trail and the trail around the canal in Campbellford.



Conceptual designs for inspiration, generated by artificial intelligence.

What to Build (and What to Wait On)

Playgrounds

The Municipality should add accessible swings to Mill Creek Park and Fowlds Millennium Park. When older playgrounds need replacing, they should be updated with better, softer safety surfacing. A natural playground should be installed at Hillside Park (see page 18 for more information).



Conceptual image for inspiration, generated by artificial intelligence.

Skate Parks & Splash Pads

Based on current population size, the current supply of one splash pad and two skate parks is enough for the term of this Plan.

Basketball Courts

Basketball is growing in popularity. Trent Hills has a half outdoor paved court at Fowlds Millennium Park in Hastings. The plan recommends building three full outdoor courts (one in each village) over the next 20 years.

Outdoor Fitness Equipment

Trent Hills should consider installing modern fitness pieces like climbing boulders and balance beams in one park in each village, and work with developers to include outdoor fitness equipment in new park parcels. Further consultation with residents should explore expressed interest in outdoor walking and running tracks.

Outdoor Rinks

Warmer weather and volunteer burnout are making natural rinks much harder to maintain. The Municipality should continue supporting community groups who want to build and manage new natural ice rinks by helping them find safe, shaded locations and setting clear rules.

Community Gardens

The Plan recommends supporting any local groups interested in building and running new community gardens on municipal parkland.

Off-Leash Dog Areas

Trent Hills' current population size means that one dog park is needed for the community. The Plan focuses on promoting the existing off-leash area located at Ferris Provincial Park and working with the province to try and keep it open during the winter months. The Municipality could also work with developers to create a leash-free walking trail when new neighbourhoods are built.

Outdoor Event Spaces

Future parks should include amenities like parking and proper power and water hook-ups, where possible, to accommodate events and activities. A covered stage/bandshell should be installed at the Hastings Village Green (see page 19 for more information).

Art, Culture & Heritage

The Plan recommends creating a formal Public Art Policy to help fund and plan creative projects alongside local artists. This could involve adding murals, sculptures, or even brightly painted picnic tables to everyday public spaces. Trent Hills could also create dedicated "Art Parks" or special "Culture Corners" in each village to proudly showcase the community's creative spirit.

Priority Park Projects



Hillside Park

This highly visible park near Downtown Campbellford, local schools, day care, and the Public Library should be transformed into a vibrant hub. This draft concept plan proposes new amenities focused on community and learning: an outdoor classroom, natural playground (prioritizing materials like logs and boulders instead of plastic), gateway feature, bandshell with amphitheatre seating, self-cleaning washroom, and accessible pathways, seating, lighting, and signage.

Legend

1. Self-cleaning washroom facility
2. Bandshell (with level area in front)
3. Natural amphitheatre seating on the hill
4. Natural playground
5. Accessible park walkways and lighting
6. Updated accessible concrete sidewalks
7. Parking lot with accessible parking stalls
8. Maintain natural tree canopy
9. Additional seating and picnic areas
10. Natural outdoor classroom
11. Gateway feature (timber and limestone)
12. Accessible parking stall along Booth Street
13. Park lighting and wayfinding signage



Hastings Village Green

This draft concept plan proposes a “Village Green” in the heart of Hastings, focused on community gathering through a large, flexible open lawn anchored by bandshell. New outdoor fitness equipment will complement the existing children’s playground, and a picnic shelter with storage and washrooms will help support year-round activity (including the beloved winter ice rink). The design also proposes relocating Pisces Pete to a feature garden gateway.

Legend

1. Updated parking lot with accessible parking spaces
2. Gateway to main path from parking lot
3. Park lighting and wayfinding signage
4. Road to stage
5. Bandshell
6. Picnic shelter with storage and self-cleaning washrooms
7. Existing location of ice rink
8. Fitness equipment
9. Existing playground
10. Existing white spruce for annual Christmas tree
11. Feature garden gateway with relocated Pisces Pete



Summary of Service Delivery Recommendations

The Big Picture: How Programs Are Run

In Trent Hills, the Municipality acts as a “facility provider” rather than a program operator. This means that staff take care of buildings and parks, but rely on the YMCA, the Public Library, and local volunteer groups to run sports leagues, programs, and events. Because the YMCA is now a major provider of health and fitness programs, the Municipality will work closely with them to avoid offering the exact same services.

The service delivery assessments are summarized on the following pages. For full details and rationale on the 20 recommendations for Service Delivery and Implementation of all recommendations, please see sections 4.0 and 5.0 of the Master Plan.



Program Trends & Ideas

Pickleball and Padel

Pickleball is booming (with over 1.54 million Canadians playing), and a similar enclosed-court sport called Padel is also growing. Trent Hills should monitor trends in emerging sports to support decision-making and facility development.

Nature Prescriptions

Doctors are now prescribing “nature time” to improve physical and mental health. Trent Hills can support this by promoting existing and future trail walks, “geocaching” (GPS treasure hunts), guided nature tours, and other activities.

Equipment Library

The Plan recommends working with the Trent Hills Public Library to expand the “Library of Things” so residents can borrow sports gear — like basketballs, volleyballs/nets, baseballs/bats, soccer balls, and Frisbees — just like they borrow books. Local organizations, service clubs, and businesses can be approached to sponsor/supply the equipment.

Indigenous Placekeeping

The Master Plan recommends working directly with Indigenous communities and groups to bring their traditions, art, and knowledge into local parks and recreation programs and spaces.

Intergenerational Programs

Seniors make up 31% of the population in Trent Hills. The Plan supports programs that bring youth and seniors together to share skills, play games, and more.

Park Crawl

The Plan suggests developing a Trent Hills Park Crawl event or self-guided activity that promotes visiting parks in each of Warkworth, Hastings, and Campbellford.

Support, Accessibility & Tracking

Supporting Volunteers

Local community groups said they need help with things like fundraising, advertising, and finding volunteers. The Plan supports the Municipality's plan for an on-going volunteer recognition program to thank the people who make local recreation possible.

Policies for Fair Play & Park Upgrades

There is a priority list to decide how ice time is scheduled at the arena. If outdoor soccer fields and ball diamonds get too crowded in the future, similar guidelines should be made to ensure field time is shared fairly. The popular Bench and Tree Donation Program works well and could be expanded so residents can also donate things like bike racks, picnic tables, or sports nets.

Tracking the Data

The Municipality should use its booking software to track exactly how much facilities are being used. This data will help decide when it's time to build something new or change a schedule.

Accessibility & Safety

When upgrading or building new spaces, look into fully accessible designs, like "Field of Dreams" baseball diamonds or multi-sport courts that anyone can use, regardless of their ability level. To keep parks and arenas safe, the Plan recommends creating an "RZone" policy of zero tolerance for violence, bullying, or vandalism by players, coaches, or parents.

Clear Agreements

The Municipality has formal agreements with the YMCA, local agricultural societies, and conservation authorities to keep shared spaces running smoothly. These are reviewed on a regular basis. If new groups (like a dedicated pickleball club) want to regularly use municipal courts, staff can create new agreements to outline the rules.

Adapting to Trends

Tracking the data means the Municipality won't end up with underused facilities. If a sport is growing quickly today but loses popularity in a few years, Trent Hills can easily scale back its building plans before any money is spent.



Implementation

The Master Plan includes **107 ideas** to help guide Trent Hills over the next **20 years**. This Executive Summary provides an overview. For full details and rationale on the recommendations, please view the full Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Yearly Check-ins

Every year, when the Municipality undertakes its annual budget, staff will look at the data (like facility bookings) to update the Master Plan in real time.

10-Year Review

A lot can change in two decades! Halfway through the Master Plan's 20-year timeline, there should be a comprehensive review to ensure the goals still match the community's needs.

It is important to know that the recommendations are flexible suggestions, not strict rules. Before any major decisions are made, the Municipality will continue to ask for the community's feedback and get official approval from Council.

Many of the recommendations are simple, day-to-day tasks that municipal staff can weave into their regular routines. Other ideas — like building new park features or doing major repairs — are larger projects. These will require their own special budgets to cover the costs of design, consultation, permits, and construction.



Capital Cost Summary of Master Plan Recommendations' Implementation by Service Area & Time Frame

Service Area	# of Recos	Short Term (Years 1-5)	Medium Term (Years 6-10)	Long Term (Years 11-20)	Total Capital Cost Estimate
Recreation Facilities	36	\$540,000	TBD	TBD	\$540,000+
Parks & Open Spaces	49	\$95,000	\$400,000+	TBD	\$495,000+
Service Delivery	20	—	—	—	—
Implementation	2	—	\$85,000	—	\$85,000
TOTAL	105	\$635,000	\$485,000	TBD	\$1,120,000+

