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Item No. 13.1.1
Community Planning and Economic Development
December 3, 2025

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council
FROM: Jacqueline Hamilton, Acting Commissioner of Operations
DATE: October 16, 2025
SUBJECT: Lake Banook Coordination Plan

ORIGIN

January 28, 2020 Regional Council motion (Item 15.3.1)

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT Halifax Regional Council assess the need for a new Master Plan for Lake Banook, that would include all stakeholders, after Canoe '22

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

March 5, 2024 Regional Council motion (Item 13.1.1)

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare the Coordination Plan as outlined in the staff report dated July 17, 2023 and return to Regional Council with a staff report.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, Regional Council directed staff to assess the need for a new master plan for Lake Banook following Canoe '22. The motion originated following a presentation from International Canoe Federation (ICF) organizers, who identified that additional improvements were required to ensure the lake remains a viable host venue. In 2024, staff returned to Regional Council to identify that past master plans for the lake and its surrounding parkland continue to have merit. It was recommended that a Coordination Plan be developed, which would evaluate, update, and prioritize the improvements identified in the previous master plans, which would be further informed by consultation with the stakeholders and the community. This is the basis under which the Coordination Plan has been developed.

The Coordination Plan identifies three categories in organizing how prospective project improvements should be implemented:

1. ICF Improvements: These improvements support competition use and ensure the lake's readiness for future events. They include items such as electrical power cabinets, recapitalization assessments of existing infrastructure, re-surfacing, installing drainage infrastructure, and re-grading within several parks.
2. General Improvements: These improvements support the parks' ability to accommodate large spectator events and enhance daily use by the community. They include the recapitalization of Henry Findlay Park's playground, seating improvements, green infrastructure projects, and

initiatives directed towards maintaining the lake's water quality.

3. **Supplementary Improvements:** These improvements serve a similar function to the General Improvement, but due to considerations such as their cost or impact to parks, are only to be considered as additional funding arises or coordinated alongside larger capital projects. Improvements identified within this category include undergrounding the utility lines along Prince Albert Road, a public washroom in Lions Beach Park, and accessibility improvements to Silvers Hill Park.

It is recommended that improvements be phased over multiple budget cycles, while those related to ICF events be implemented at least a year prior to the next World Championship. While it is ideal that general improvements be implemented alongside ICF infrastructure and within the same recommended timeframe, this may not be feasible due to budget constraints. As a result, they should be constructed on an ongoing basis, both before and following subsequent World Championships.

The approval of the Coordination Plan ensures that Lake Banook remains a premier paddling venue and can continue hosting ICF events. By coordinating improvements and timelines, the potential for risks associated with lost oversight, diminished water quality, and the inability to host future events is reduced.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council adopt the Lake Banook Coordination Plan to guide improvements to the parkland and associated areas surrounding Lake Banook.

BACKGROUND

Lake Banook is a large freshwater lake in downtown Dartmouth; as the first lake in the Shubenacadie Canal System, it holds cultural and ecological significance at both local and regional levels. Its central location and proximity to residential neighbourhoods have made it a key recreational hub for the community, while its near 1000m length and north-to-south orientation have earned it recognition as premier natural racecourse by international and national paddling organizations.

In 2019, Lake Banook was selected as the host venue for the International Canoe Sprint World Championships and Paracanoe Championships (World Championships), and had previously hosted the event in 1989, 1997, and 2009. Prior to the two previous World Championships, the parkland surrounding the lake underwent a series of improvements to support these events. In January 2020, Regional Council passed a motion directing staff to "assess the need for a new Master Plan for Lake Banook, that would include all stakeholders, after Canoe '22". The motion followed a presentation from International Canoe Federation (ICF) organizers, who identified that additional investment in parkland improvements were required for the lake to continue hosting future paddling events.

In March 2024, staff returned to Regional Council to identify that past master plans completed for the lake and its surrounding parkland continue to have merit. It was recommended that a Coordination Plan be developed, which would evaluate, update, and prioritize the improvements identified within the previous plans, which would be further informed by consultation with stakeholders and the community. This is the basis under which the Coordination Plan has been developed.

DISCUSSION

Engagement

The plan's development included engagement with internal and external parties related to the event. Additional information regarding these sessions is outlined in the What We Heard Report (Attachment B) and Section Two of the Coordination Plan (Attachment A)

Internal Engagement - 2022

Staff, ICF organizers, and representatives from the paddling community were interviewed to review ICF requirements, consider Canoe '22's successes, evaluate how parks could be improved, and review recommendations from the completed master plans. Through this process, it was identified that while many of improvements from previous master plans remain relevant, there are several projects that have not been realized. In addition, it was determined that some improvements are not feasible due to constraints related to landownership, environmental concerns, cost, and practicality.

Draft Coordination Plan - Summer to Winter 2024

Following Regional Council's direction to prepare a Coordination Plan, a draft version was developed and shared with the public through an online engagement program on 'Shape Your City Halifax'. A survey asked a series of questions to understand the community's values, parkland use, and for input on the draft plan's recommendations. It was open to the public from November 25 to December 20, 2024. A total of 1,800 people were informed about the survey and 218 individuals participated. In addition to the online engagement, an open house was hosted at Kiwanis Grahams Grove Community Building on December 2, 2024. Approximately 30 people were in attendance.

Feedback from these sessions was used to identify overlooked opportunities, potential conflicts between user groups, and how improvements should be prioritized in the final plan.

Additional Engagement - Spring 2024 – Spring 2025

ICF organizers and the Atlantic Division of Canoe Kayak Canada (ADCKC) were routinely consulted throughout the plan's development process. Feedback informed both the draft and final versions of the Coordination Plan.

Lake Banook Coordination Plan Highlights

The Coordination Plan's recommendations pick up from the projects that have yet to be implemented from the previous master plans. It combines and prioritizes them to identify how they should be implemented. Feedback from the engagement sessions were used to refine recommendations to ensure they meet ICF's requirements, support community use, and are feasible from budgetary and maintenance perspectives.

The following recommended improvement projects from the Coordination Plan are highlighted:

Common Park Improvements

Common improvements that are not specific to any one park that surrounds Lake Banook have been identified. They include measures to maintain water quality, electrical power cabinets, green infrastructure initiatives, improvements to park signage, shade infrastructure, drinking fountains, efforts to manage off-leash dogs, and improvements to the parks' maintenance, seating and lighting infrastructure.

Individual Park Improvements

Highlights of improvements specific parks around the lake include:

Birch Cove Park: Improvements to existing seating areas, park lighting, and the existing washroom facility are recommended to support the park's passive recreational uses. Green infrastructure initiatives are identified to help maintain the lake's water quality, support animal habitat, and improve biodiversity.

Oakwood Park: Recommendations include re-surfacing the park's central area, paving new and existing pathways to improve accessibility, drainage and green infrastructure initiatives, and a drinking fountain. Signage that communicates park closures and alternative walking routes are also recommended to improve the community's parkland experience.

Henry Findlay Park and Lions Beach Park: Recommendations focus on improving the park's use as a host venue during ICF events while also enhancing daily community use. They include installing drainage and green infrastructure, an electrical power cabinet, invasive species removal, and a public washroom. The playground was temporarily dismantled during the last competition due to a lack of space within the park, which led to the suggestion that it be permanently removed. However, the playground was identified as an important facility for the local community and should remain within the park. Its recapitalization is included within the draft 2026/27 capital budget with the recommendation that its footprint is condensed to provide additional space for athletes' tents during ICF competitions. The plan also identifies the temporary closure of a portion of Hawthorne Street to accommodate additional tents during the next event.

Silvers Hill Park: The plan identifies several improvements to enhance the Silvers Hill's existing infrastructure are identified. They include a switchback trail, recapitalization assessments, shade infrastructure, green infrastructure, and improvements to Boosenech Plaza. Undergrounding the power lines is also recommended but should only be considered if larger capital projects are planned for Prince Albert Road or the surrounding area.

Lake Banook Regional Park: Improvements that address the safety and capacity of the multi-use pathway are identified, which include its recapitalization assessment, pavement markings, and the implementation of additional active transportation facilities on Prince Albert Road. Projects that support the community's recreational use and event programming, such as additional seating, interpretive programs, public art initiatives, green infrastructure, and recapitalization assessments are also recommended.

Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park: To support event use, an electrical power cabinet, dock improvements, and a recapitalization assessment of the 1000m judges' tower are recommended. The plan also identifies improved pathways, drainage infrastructure, shoreline naturalization, and seating improvements to support its passive recreational uses.

Brookdale Crescent Park and Multi-use Trail: Connectivity between Brookdale Crescent Park and Birch Cove Park was identified as priority during the engagement sessions. Previous plans recommended that an easement should be secured across private properties, which is not feasible due to the cost and amount of time that may be required. Improving on-street connections by elevating Brookdale Crescent's priority for a sidewalk, additional crosswalks, and implementing a wayfinding system should be pursued instead. Interpretive programs and signage that highlight the African Nova Scotian community, The Avenue, which was formerly located in the Crichton Park neighbourhood are also identified.

Additional information regarding these initiatives and their approximate locations can be found in Section Three of the Coordination Plan (Attachment A).

Other Initiatives

In addition to the projects identified within the Coordination Plan, there are other initiatives planned for the area surrounding Henry Findlay Park. They include:

1. The replacement of the culvert under Hawthorne Street, which includes the fish ladder around the lock; and,
2. The need to finalize the Memorandum of Understanding with Halifax Water on the operation of the gate

valve which controls Lake Banook's water levels.

The plan identifies improvements that should be coordinated alongside these initiatives to ensure the project are considered within their scope, minimize park closures and disturbances, and to streamline costs.

Implementation

An overview of the proposed timeline for identified improvements is provided in Section Four of the Coordination Plan (Attachment A). Improvements are grouped into three categories: ICF, General, and Supplementary Improvements. Timelines are identified within the plan, but those required to meet hosting standards for future World Championships use should be prioritized for implementation.

While it is ideal that all improvements are implemented within their identified timeframes, this may not be feasible due to budget constraints. As a result, general improvements should be implemented on an ongoing basis, both before and following subsequent World Championships. Due to their cost and potential impact to the existing parkland, supplementary improvements should only be considered alongside larger capital projects, or as additional funding becomes available.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Coordination Plan provides guidance for implementing park improvements over multiple budget cycles and identifies how projects should be prioritized as funding becomes available. Various business units were consulted to ensure that proposed improvements might be included with upcoming business plans, capital priorities, and larger projects. Funding may be supplemented through municipal programs, such as Environment and Climate Change's Build Back Better or Small Project Bundle, as well as contributions from other orders of government and sports organizations.

The plan contains high level recommendations. In addition, due to the length of the identified timelines, the potential for project scopes to change, and the likelihood of inflation, cost estimates have not been prepared. However, the recapitalization of the playground in Henry Findlay Park has been identified in the 2026/27 draft capital budget with an estimated cost of \$200,000. This project will include shade infrastructure, which may be supplemented with \$30,000 in funding from the municipality's Build Back Better program. In addition, green infrastructure projects, such as shoreline naturalization and rain gardens, are intended to be phased over the next ten years, with projects that are currently underway. Past naturalization initiatives have ranged from \$25,000 to \$50,000 per installation, with ongoing assessments costing \$1,000 to \$5,000. Based on recently completed work, the estimated cost to install a rain garden is \$40,000.

Elevating the priority of other facilities – such as sidewalks or multi-use pathways – may require additional funding, which would be identified as Active Transportation projects. Encouraging residents and local clubs to act as park stewards under the municipality's new Park Stewardship Project could also help to offset costs related to the implementation and maintenance of specific improvements.

RISK CONSIDERATION

The primary risk of not adopting the Coordination Plan is the lack of an up-to-date plan to guide improvements to the parkland and associated areas surrounding Lake Banook. The absence of a Coordination Plan may compromise Lake Banook's ability to host future competitions and meet community recreation needs. The Coordination Plan guides potential funding, capital expenditures, and effective project delivery.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An online engagement program was hosted through 'Shape Your City Halifax' and was open to the public

from November 24 to December 20, 2024. The survey reached approximately 3,200 people. 1,800 were informed, and 218 participated. An open house session was held on December 2, 2024 at Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park. Approximately 30 people attended.

Staff also engaged with ICF organizers, Atlantic Division of Canoe Kayak Canada, North Star Rowing Club, and the Dartmouth Dragon Boat Association to identify improvements that support ICF events and meet the needs of local paddling organizations.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The Coordination Plan identifies several environmental initiatives, including green infrastructure projects, that would enhance water quality and help address beach closures that have recently occurred. Other suggested improvements include measures to introduce new sun shading and provide additional drinking fountains.

ALTERNATIVES

1. The Community Planning and Economic Development Committee or Regional Council could request changes in the proposed Coordination Plan. This may require additional review, possible additional engagement with the community and paddling organizations, and an additional staff report depending on the extent of the changes being requested.
2. The Community Planning and Economic Development Committee could decline to recommend that Halifax Regional Council adopt the Lake Banook Coordination Plan.
3. Regional Council could decline to approve the proposed Coordination Plan.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Schedule 3, Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee Terms of Reference, of Administrative Order Number One, *the Procedures of the Council Administrative Order*

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S., 2008, c.39

Purposes of the Municipality

7A The purposes of the Municipality are to

[...]

(b) provide services, facilities, and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality;

[...]

Municipal expenditures

79A (1) subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if

(a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality.

Area improvement and promotion

70 (1) The Municipality may

(a) beautify, improve, and maintain property owned or leased by the Municipality.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A Lake Banook Coordination Plan
Attachment B What We Heard Report

Report Prepared by: Elizabeth Bray, Landscape Architect, Policy & Planning. 902.240.4314

LAKE BANOOK COORDINATION PLAN

Park Plan Report

November 2025

HALIFAX

Policy & Planning | Parks & Recreation

Contents

Executive Summary

Background
Coordination Plan Projects
Key Findings and Improvements

Introduction

1.1	Project Background	1
1.2	Purpose and Scope	1
1.3	Context	1

Engagement

2.1	Internal Engagement	3
2.2	Community Engagement	3
1.4	Additional Engagement	4

Proposed Improvements

3.1	Common Park Improvements	5
3.2	Birch Cove Park	9
3.3	Oakwood Park	11
3.4	Henry Findlay Park and Lions Beach Park	13
3.5	Silvers Hill Park	17
3.6	Lake Banook Regional Park	19
3.7	Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park	23
3.8	Brookdale Crescent Park and Multi-use Trail	25

Implementation

4.1	ICF Improvements	27
4.2	General Improvements	30
4.3	Supplementary Improvements	33

Executive Summary

Background

Lake Banook is a large freshwater lake located within downtown Dartmouth. As the first lake in the Shubenacadie Canal System, it is culturally and ecologically significant at the local and regional levels. Its central location and proximity to residential neighbourhoods have made it an important recreational hub for the local community, while its near 1000m length and north-to-south orientation have earned it recognition as a premier natural racecourse by international and national paddling organizations.

In January 2020, Regional Council directed staff to “assess the need for a new Master Plan for Lake Banook, that would include all stakeholders, after Canoe '22”. The motion followed a presentation from International Canoe Federation (ICF) organizers, during which it was identified that future improvements are required to ensure the lake's ability to host future competitions.

Staff returned to Regional Council to identify that past master plans for the lake and its surrounding parkland continue to have merit. It was recommended that a Coordination Plan be developed, which would evaluate, update, and prioritize the improvements identified within the previous master plans, which would be further informed by consultation with stakeholders and the community. This is the basis under which the Coordination Plan has been developed.

Coordination Plan Projects

The Coordination Plan's recommendations pick up

from the projects that have yet to be implemented from previous master plans. It prioritizes improvements and identifies project timelines to ensure work is implemented effectively, meets competition requirements, and enhances use for the local community.

Recommendations have also been assessed for their budgetary and maintenance feasibility and refined through feedback from engagement sessions to ensure they address the current needs of the lake and its surrounding parkland.

Key Findings and Improvements

The following are key findings, themes, and improvements that are identified within the Coordination Plan:

- The plan is intended to guide future enhancements to the parkland surrounding Lake Banook. It recommends how improvements should be implemented based on phasing, anticipated Capital projects, and coordinated to minimize park disruptions. Other identified projects are to be timed with any announcement of the next ICF Canoe Sprint World Championship (World Championships) to ensure technical requirements are current and to maximize potential funding opportunities.
- While many of the projects from the previous master plans remain relevant, some were not considered as viable due to constraints such as private land ownership, environmental considerations, or practicality.

Implementation

Prospective capital project improvements are outlined in Section Four of this document, and are grouped into three categories:

- Recommendations that support ICF events: These improvements should be prioritized for implementation and include drinking fountains, electrical power cabinets, re-grading surfaces, drainage infrastructure, and recapitalization assessments of existing infrastructure. While some of these improvements can be installed as budget and funding opportunities arise, many should be implemented at least within a year prior to next World Championship.
- General Improvements: These recommendations improve the parks' ability to support large spectator events and also enhance daily use for the community, but are not considered technical requirements. While it is ideal for all improvements to be implemented within the specified time frames, they may not be feasible due to budget constraints. General improvements projects should be implemented on an ongoing basis, both before and following subsequent World Championships.
- Supplementary improvements: These enhancements support similar functions as the previous section. However, due to considerations such as cost or their impact to existing parkland, they should only be considered as additional funding becomes available, coordinated alongside larger capital projects, or as recapitalization is required.

Fig. 1 Lake Banook at Sunrise



Park Improvements

- Birch Cove Park was traditionally used as the athletes' village for previous events, and has undergone a series of improvements to support high-intensity competition use as a result. However, during Canoe '22, it was determined that the park should no longer be considered to host the athletes' village as its steep terrain is not compliant with accessibility standards and para-athletes must be located away from other athletes. As a result, improvements that enhance the park's passive recreational use and environmental initiatives to help maintain water quality and support habitat are identified.
- To improve accessibility during Canoe '22, the athletes' village was relocated to Henry Findlay Park. The change in venue allowed all the athletes to be located within the same area for the first time in the event's history. This was considered a success by organizers and led to the decision that the site should be considered as the athletes' village for all future ICF competitions. To accommodate this use, parkland improvements are required, which include grading, invasive species removal,

and drainage infrastructure. In addition, during Canoe '22, an existing popular playground had to be temporarily dismantled with the suggestion that it be permanently removed. However, the parkland and playground have been identified as important to the community. A plan to temporarily close a portion of Hawthorne Street to accommodate the athletes' village has been developed. This enables a reinvestment in the playground and for it to remain during future paddling events.

- Maintaining Lake Banook's water quality was identified as the top priority during internal and external engagement sessions. Strategies such as green infrastructure, naturalization initiatives, managing waterfowl, and educational outreach are recommended to address this concern.
- During the community engagement sessions, many respondents identified that Lake Banook Regional Park's multi-use pathway is crowded and the speed and variety of users causes safety concerns. A recapitalization assessment is recommended, in addition to the implementation of an urban shoulder facility on Prince Albert Road. An educational

campaign that educates users on pathway etiquette should also be considered.

- The existing signage and wayfinding system that surrounds the lake is visually inconsistent, and should be updated to ensure the information it conveys is relevant, inclusive, and reflects the area's cultural diversity and heritage. Possible interpretive programs and the location of signs are identified that could incorporate Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian history, alternative storytelling methods, signage, and public art.
- The multi-use pathway ends at Brookdale Crescent and provide access between parks on the lake's western shoreline is fragmented. As a result, the pathway's connectivity was identified as a primary concern during the community engagement sessions. A direct trail connection along the shoreline, upon privately owned lands, is not feasible due to cost, potential time frames, and practicality. As a result, connectivity should be improved by enhancing the road network with wayfinding, additional infrastructure, and prioritizing a sidewalk on Brookdale Crescent.

Introduction

This section provides an overview of the project's background, the document's intent, and a description of the parkland surrounding Lake Banook.

1.1 Project Background

Lake Banook is a large freshwater lake located within downtown Dartmouth. As the first lake in the Shubenacadie Canal System, it is culturally and ecologically significant at the local and regional levels. Its central location and proximity to residential neighbourhoods have made it an important recreational hub for the community, while its near 1000m length and north-to-south orientation have earned the lake recognition as a premier natural racecourse by international and national paddling organizations.

In January 2020, Regional Council directed staff to “assess the need for a new Master Plan for Lake Banook, that would include all stakeholders, after Canoe '22”. The motion followed a presentation from International Canoe Federation (ICF) organizers, during which it was identified that future improvements are required to ensure the lake's ability to host future competitions.

Staff returned to Regional Council to identify that past master plans for the lake and its surrounding parkland continue to have merit. It was recommended that a Coordination Plan be developed, which would evaluate, update, and prioritize the improvements identified within the previous master plans, which would be further informed by consultation with stakeholders and the community. This is the basis under which the Coordination Plan has been developed.

1.2 Purpose and Scope

The Coordination Plan's primary purpose is to ensure the lake's continued ability to host future ICF World Championships. As these events have the highest technical standards, meeting their requirements also ensures the lake remains viable host venue for other competitions. Recommendations also focus on enhancing the community's long term recreational use.

Two plans have been completed to guide park improvements prior to 2009 and 2022 competitions: the Sullivans Pond and Lake Banook Master Plan (2007 Plan) and the Lake Banook Water Sport Park Concept Plan (2019 Plan). While many of their recommendations remain relevant, there is currently no document that consolidates, oversees, and prioritizes their outstanding improvements.

In response, the Coordination Plan identifies these improvements and recommends time frames to ensure their cohesive and effective implementation. Recommendations have been organized to align with other enhancements and allow work to be phased across budget cycles or as funding becomes available. They have also been assessed for their budgetary and maintenance feasibility and refined through feedback from stakeholder and engagement sessions to ensure they address the current needs of the lake and its surrounding parkland.

1.3 Context

There are eight municipal parks surrounding Lake Banook (Fig. 2): Birch Cove Park, Oakwood Park, Henry Findlay Park, Lions Beach Park, Lake Banook Regional Park, Silvers Hill Park, Grahams Grove Kiwanis Park, and Brookdale Crescent Park. The parks range in their size and level of development, but all offer expansive views of the lake, along with trails, seating, and a range of facilities that support recreational and event uses. With the exception of Henry Findlay Park and Silvers Hill Park, all of the parks offer public water access.

The Trans Canada Trail (multi-use pathway) is located on the eastern side of the lake and provides a continuous network between Henry Findlay Park and Brookdale Crescent Park. It connects users to the Shubie Park trail system, downtown Dartmouth, and the Crichton Park neighbourhood. There is not a multi-use pathway along the lake's western side, but parks can be accessed using the existing on-street network.

In addition, Birch Cove Park, Silvers Hill Park, and Lake Banook Regional Park have undergone significant improvements prior to previous World Championships that include public washrooms, the paving and repair of pathways and boardwalks, spectator seating, towers at the 200m, 500m, and 1000m marks, public art, interpretive signage, improvements to the judges' tower, an accessible dock, and a new facility and park improvements within Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park.

Fig. 2 Lake Banook – Surrounding Context



Engagement

This section provides an overview of the engagement sessions, summarizes their key findings, and highlights the process used to develop the Coordination Plan.

2.1 Internal Engagement

Staff, ICF organizers, and representatives from the paddling community were interviewed to review ICF requirements, consider Canoe '22's successes, and evaluate how parks could be improved. The following key findings emerged:

- Several of the previous plans' improvements have been implemented, but many remain unrealized. While these plans identify priorities, an update that reflects completed work and adjusts timelines may be required to guide future park improvements
- Several recommendations from the previous plans are not feasible due to constraints such as land ownership, environmental concerns, cost, and staff capacity.
- The athletes' village was traditionally located in Birch Cove Park but was moved to Henry Findlay Park during Canoe '22. This allowed para-athletes and other athletes to be located in the same area for the first time in the event's history. The relocation was considered successful, which led to the recommendation that Henry Findlay Park be used as the host venue for all future ICF events.
- As a result, Birch Cove Park should no longer be considered to host the athletes' village. Improvements should focus on enhancing its passive recreational uses for the community and environmental initiatives

- While successful, Henry Findlay Park's improvements to its grading and existing layout and additional infrastructure are required to support the athletes' village.
- The existing playground within Henry Findlay Park was temporarily removed to accommodate athlete's tents. However, it should remain in place for during future ICF competitions.

2.2 Community Engagement

Draft Coordination Plan

A draft version of the plan was prepared based on the previous plans' outstanding improvements, engagement sessions, site analysis, and a review of relevant documents. It was circulated amongst event organizers and the public for feedback and communicated:

- Key challenges, proposed improvements, and potential programming changes to the parkland surrounding Lake Banook;
- Park enhancements needed to meet technical standards and support the lake's continued use as a host venue for ICF competitions; and
- Improvements to support the community's daily recreational uses.

Shape Your City

An online engagement program was hosted through 'Shape Your City Halifax' and was open to the public from November 25 to December 20, 2024. The survey presented the draft Coordination Plan and asked a series questions to understand how the public uses and values Lake Banook and its surrounding parkland. Feedback was used to refine the improvements identified within this document.

The survey was promoted through the municipality's social media account. Two weeks after its launch, a decline in participants was identified. In response, the municipality launched an additional campaign, which led to a noticeable increase in participants for the remaining duration. In total, 1,800 people were informed of the survey and 218 participated.

Open House

An open house session was held on December 2, 2024 at Kiwanis Grahams Grove Community Building. Panels of the draft plan were presented to the public for review. Staff were in attendance to respond to questions, prompt discussions, and gather feedback. Approximately 30 people attended.

Key Findings

The following items were identified as emergent themes from the survey and open house:

- Most respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the proposed improvements. Birch Cove Park (42.9%), Henry Findlay Park (40.1%), and Lake Banook Regional Park (39.7%) were the top ranked in the "Strongly agree" category.
- Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park (7.3%), Lake Banook Regional Park (5.5%), and Birch Cove Park (5.0%) received the lowest overall approval rating.
- Birch Cove Park (24.0%), Henry Findlay Park (22.5%), and Lake Banook Regional Park (21.9%) were the top-ranked for parks where additional improvements should be considered. Common recommendations included improved park maintenance, additional seating and waste facilities, and pathway improvements.
- When asked to identify additional improvements that were missing from the overall park system, the largest portion of participants (27.9%) identified the lack of trail connectivity between Birch Cove Park and Brookdale Crescent Park. Several also identified the need for improved park lighting.
- Over half of respondents (55.7%) use Silvers Hill to watch paddling events. Of these participants, almost one-quarter said it was due to the park's distance from the racecourse (24.0%). The fewest number of respondents selected the existing power lines as the reason (4.2%). Survey participants were the least interested in seeing additional improvements to Silvers Hill Park.
- Respondents identified maintaining the lake's water quality (203 of 219 respondents), managing stormwater (176 of 219 respondents), and addressing the conflicting uses between cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles on the multi-use pathway as the

most important improvements (120 of 219 respondents).

- Participants were the least interested in additional access points for swimming (21 of 219 respondents), improving Boosenech Plaza (18 of 219 respondents), and updating signage around Lake Banook (15 of 219 respondents). However, both signage (85 of 219 respondents) and water access points (80 of 219 respondents) were top ranked in the "Somewhat important" category, where they received a comparatively higher number of responses. This suggests there is a greater interest in seeing these improvements implemented than not.
- Respondents felt the mixture of users and overcrowding creates safety issues on the multi-use pathway (27.5% identified "Yes, on a regular basis, and 34.9% identified "Sometimes"). Painting the pathway to delineate facilities, educating the public about pathway etiquette, and implementing on-road facilities were commonly recommended strategies to improve user safety.
- Many participants identified that paddling competitions impact their use of the parks. Additional washrooms, drinking water, and hand-washing facilities (155 of 214 respondents), improved seating (102 of 214 respondents), and advance notice of park closures and alternative routes (93 of 214 respondents) were commonly identified as facilities that would improve their experience.
- Respondents noted the increased number of Canada geese in the parks and identified the need for a waterfowl management strategy.
- Open house attendees and survey respondents expressed concern regarding the lake's water quality. During the open house, many noted that there was an increase in

visible sediment along the Prince Albert Road shoreline, particularly after periods of heavy rainfall.

- Survey participants identified interest in additional naturalization initiatives (53.4% "very interested" 25.6 "Somewhat interested"). However, several said they would like the efficacy of the project in Birch Cove Park to be determined before additional work is implemented. Respondents also recommended that future initiatives should not conflict with water access and the recreational use of the lake.

1.4 Additional Engagement

The plan's development process also included engagement with local paddling organizations, ICF organizers, and the Atlantic Division of Canoe Kayak Canada (ADCKC). In addition to similar findings from the community engagement sessions, the following items were also noted:

- The presence of weeds within the lake has increased dramatically in recent years and regular mowing is required during events;
- If water quality is not maintained, Lake Banook could be overlooked for future events;
- A drinking fountain is required to host the athletes' village;
- Permanent electrical power cabinets are required within Henry Findlay Park and Grahams Grove Park; and
- The 200m, 500m, and 1000m towers should be identified for a recapitalization assessment.

Proposed Improvements

This section provides an overview of common park improvements (Fig. 6). Those that are specific to individual parks are identified in the following subsections.

3.1 Common Park Improvements

Water Quality

Lake Banook's water quality has declined in recent years, which has affected use by the local community and sports organizations. The following strategies are recommended as a broader approach to maintaining water quality and to complement other initiatives, such as green infrastructure projects:

- **Educational Outreach:** An campaign should be developed to educate nearby property owners on alternative land management practices that can help reduce pollutants like fertilizers from entering the lake. To achieve this, Lake Banook should be included in the Dartmouth Lakes watershed management planning pilot led by Environment & Climate Change
- **Water Fowl Management:** While dense vegetation, such as the recently naturalized shoreline in Birch Cove Park, can help deter geese, a dedicated Waterfowl Management Strategy should be developed to manage their population.
- **Weed Harvesting:** Aquatic weeds can interfere with boating and other recreational activities. Routine harvesting has proven effective in managing vegetation and should continue with additional harvesting during events to prevent accumulation.

- **Stormwater Quality:** Additional stormwater infrastructure and strategies are required beyond park boundaries. These could include treatments to improve stormwater quality before it enters the lake from nearby roads, parking lots, and outfalls, as well as installing additional rain gardens, similar to the recently completed project on Rixdale Drive, in areas where stormwater is known to enter the lake.

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is identified in all the parks and includes initiatives such as naturalized planting, invasive species removal, living shorelines, and rain gardens. These projects can also help maintain water quality by capturing and filtering stormwater before it enters the lake, and also provides other benefits like improved biodiversity and animal habitat.

To manage costs and ensure their effective implementation and maintenance, projects can be phased over a series of budget cycles. The approximate location and details of the specific initiatives are outlined in the following subsections and are informed by existing recreational uses and environmental priorities. In addition, the implementation of green infrastructure initiatives should also incorporate the following practices:

- Projects should be located in areas that can be regularly maintained - particularly during the first three years - to ensure their long-term success.

- Work should be communicated to residents before being implemented to provide an opportunity for discussion and feedback.
- Paddling clubs should be consulted when determining the location of future initiatives to ensure it does not restrict their use, access to Lake Banook, and that technical event requirements are upheld.
- The Park Stewardship Program should be promoted to residents to support the implementation and care of green infrastructure. The program allows residents to adopt a park for a minimum of two years, during which they assist with park maintenance by performing tasks such as gardening, garbage collection, and maintaining planted beds. All required materials are provided to the municipality.
- Projects that support water quality initiatives - such as those located near stormwater outfalls, restrict waterfowl from accessing the lake, and help manage stormwater - should be prioritized.
- Improvements to new and existing pathways should consider alternative paving materials, such as permeable pavers. However, these materials must also comply with accessibility and maintenance standards and should also be able to withstand heavy foot traffic.
- Future projects should accommodate the existing rip rap on the lake's shoreline to



Fig. 3 Electrical power cabinet wrapped in public art decal

- ensure wave action is properly buffered and proper paddling competitions are maintained.

Electrical Infrastructure

Electrical power cabinets control, distribute, and protect electrical power, as well as supply the necessary voltage to equipment required for hosting events. During previous competitions, temporary electrical infrastructure was installed in Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park and Henry Findlay Park. However, due to the relocation of the athletes' village, costs, and security concerns, permanent electrical power cabinets are required in both parks.

To meet technical requirements, organizers specified that a 120/240V system that can also support European equipment is required. Its configuration should replicate the existing electrical power cabinet located in the Mic Mac Canoe Club's parking lot.

Power cabinets should also be wrapped in a decal that features public art or archival imagery so that it can integrate with plan's signage and public art initiatives (Fig. 3)

Shade Provision and Drinking Fountains

Heat mapping was carried out across the municipality to assess patterns of vulnerability. The results rank areas from very low to very high vulnerability based on three factors: exposure to extreme heat, sensitivity of the population, and capacity to adapt.

Lake Banook and the surrounding parkland are identified as having a moderate level of heat vulnerability. To reduce park users' exposure to extreme heat and related health risks, shade sails or structures, planting trees, and other cooling measures are recommended.

In addition, during Canoe '22, a water source to supply clean drinking water to athletes was not available. Plastic water bottles were provided instead, which is not recommended for future events. Drinking fountains are recommended in several parks to address these needs, but those identified in Henry Findlay Park or Oakwood Park should be prioritized to ensure drinking water is available during the next World Championships.

Drinking fountains should be installed in proximity to existing water laterals within the park to minimize disturbances. They can also be coordinated alongside larger Capital projects to minimize costs, which may be further offset through municipal funding programs.

Park Lighting

With the exception of Oakwood Park and Silvers Hill Park, the Park Lighting Strategy identifies all the the parkland as in need of lighting improvements. New infrastructure should be implemented over a series of budget cycles

or alongside other improvements and that the Strategy is used to inform its appropriate selection and placement.

It is also recommended that new lighting along the multi-use pathway between Henry Findlay Park and Brookdale Crescent Park is prioritized for the following reasons:

- It is used heavily year-round by pedestrians, cyclists, and runners;
- Users experience low visibility during periods of the year with limited daylight due to the lack of pedestrian-focused lighting, which limits use and causes safety concerns; and
- It is a popular route for commuters, as it provides connections to downtown Dartmouth, Halifax, Shubie Park, and key shopping areas.

Signage

The existing signage surrounding the lake is visually inconsistent and should be updated to ensure its information is relevant, inclusive, and reflects the area's cultural diversity and heritage. To do so, improvements to the park's wayfinding and interpretive signage programs are recommended and should be developing to include the following elements:

- Signage that identifies flow patterns should be installed at existing water access points to provide a visual delineation of paddling lanes, their uses, and potentially reduce conflicts between user groups.
- Interpretive signage and related programs should communicate the range of uses and communities that have been historically linked to Lake Banook. Diverse storytelling methods — such as sound and archival imagery — should also be considered to allow users to engage with different languages and recorded oral histories.



Fig. 4 Archival photography can be used to communicate paddling's legacy on the lake. Credit: Municipal Archives



Fig. 5 Archival photography can be used to convey themes like climate change. Credit: Municipal Archives

- Signage should represent Lake Banook's cultural ties to the African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw communities.
- Audio interpretive program like the existing system in Point Pleasant Park should be considered to complement interpretive signage. The program could be supported by different technological applications, such as an app or QR codes, which would enable changes and updates to made to reflect various events.
- Archival imagery should be featured throughout the parks on signage and infrastructure to showcase the lake's history. Images can be selected and updated on regularly to communicate themes likes climate change, the history of paddling, and diversity (see Figs. 3 to 4)
- A cohesive aesthetic should be developed and used on all new signage surrounding the lake to improve the parkland's identity and improve navigation. The recently installed wayfinding program along the multi-use pathway could be used to inform future design decisions.

Park Maintenance

The need for improved park maintenance was commonly identified during the public engagement sessions. Additional waste receptacles should be installed whenever other park improvements are underway or when site furniture requires replacement.

In addition, residents and paddling clubs should be encouraged to become Park Stewards, which may help improve park cleanliness and maintenance.

Seating Improvements

Seating improvements are identified within several parks, and should be applied to new and existing infrastructure. Future improvements should be

implemented to incorporate the following:

- Site furniture should be positioned to optimize the plan's identified viewsheds, which will help support passive recreational activities and provide additional spectator seating;
- Furniture should be installed in compliance with accessibility standards whenever possible; and
- Furniture should be consistent in its design and materiality.

Off-leash Dogs

Although off-leash activities have been identified by residents and during site visits, none of the parks surrounding Lake Banook have designated off-leash areas. Dur to the parks' proximity to residences and the lake, an designated off-leash area cannot be accommodated. Instead:

- Signage that communicates all dogs must remain on-leash should be clearly located within all the parks; and
- Bag dispensers and waste receptacles should be provided near sodded areas and at entrances to encourage owners to clean up after their pets.

Fig. 6 Common Park Improvements



3.2 Birch Cove Park

Birch Cove Park is located on Lake Banook's western shoreline. The majority of the site contains mature forest, dense understorey vegetation, and steep slopes that descend towards the lake. Gravel trails from the western access points transition into paved surfaces in the park's lower, flatter portions. The park is a popular swimming destination and contains a lifeguarded beach, but water quality issues have led to frequent summertime closures in recent years. Passive recreational activities - such as bird watching, enjoying scenic views, and picnicking - are popular among visitors.

The park has traditionally hosted the athletes' village during previous World Championships and has undergone several improvements to support this use. They include: A public washroom facility, the implementation and recapitalization of an accessible dock, and paved pathways. However, the village was relocated to Henry Findlay Park during Canoe '22 to improve accessibility, which was considered a success by ICF organizers.

As a result, Birch Cove Park should no longer be considered as a host venue for the athletes' village and should be improved to support long-term recreational uses by the community. The following improvements have been identified (Fig. 9):

Green Infrastructure

A portion of the park's shoreline was naturalized in 2024 to limit waterfowl's access to the lake and help maintain its water quality. This project should continue to be maintained and remain in its existing location.

The following green infrastructure initiatives are also recommended:

- Naturalizing heavily sloped areas to improve stormwater quality and prevent erosion;

- Installing rain gardens at the base of slopes; and
- Removing and replacing invasive species with native vegetation that enhances habitats for birds and other wildlife.

Lighting

As lighting improvements take place, the existing standards should be improved to minimize light pollution, reduce disturbances to animal habitats, and enhance the pedestrian realm.

Existing Washroom

The existing washroom facility's roof has been identified for repair, and the facility should be repainted. As the building becomes due for replacement, it should be upgraded to meet the municipality's current washroom standards (Fig. 7).

In addition, the washroom and drinking fountain have seasonal and daily closures that impact their availability. Signage that clearly communicates closures should be installed on the facility and at park entrances.

Seating Area

The park existing benches and picnic tables are mostly located in its central, grassed areas, which does not comply with accessibility standards. Replacements to the existing seating should include accessible site furniture and be installed in accordance with accessibility guidelines.

In addition, the viewshed in Fig. 8 can be used to inform the location and orientation of site furniture to enhance scenic views of the lake and surrounding area.



Fig. 7 The existing washroom facility has been identified for improvement



Fig. 8 Existing conditions: Viewsheds should be considered as new seating is implemented within the park

Fig. 9 Proposed Improvements to Birch Cove Park



3.3 Oakwood Park

Oakwood Park connects the western portion of the park system between Henry Findlay Park and Birch Cove Park, making it a popular walking and running route for the local community.

North Star Rowing Club and ADCKC maintain and operate buildings and docks within the park under community partnership agreements. During competitions, the site is used as a disembarkment area and provides spectator seating during smaller events. To improve these uses, the following improvements have been identified (Fig. 12):

Pathway Improvements

To improve accessibility and connectivity between entrances, it is recommended that the existing footpath is paved and portions of the existing pathways are re-surfaced. The transition between the new and existing pathways should also be smooth, use the same materials, and maintain a consistent grade to further improve accessibility.

Areas Identified for Resurfacing and Drainage Concerns

An area identified for resurfacing was hydroseeded in 2024 but failed to establish due to heavy foot traffic and uses. The existing condition of the area can also be attributed to the lack of an eavestrough on the rowing clubs' storage facility and the slope of nearby paved surfaces. To address these concerns, an eavestrough should be installed on the storage facility. A French drain along the building's foundation is also recommended to capture additional stormwater and reduce the possibility of future erosion.

ADCKC and North Star Rowing should be consulted when determining the location of the identified infrastructure to avoid impact from heavy traffic and to ensure their use is not affected. In

addition, materials used for re-surfacing must be able to withstand the area's consistent use throughout the summertime months. As a result, hydroseeding should no be considered due to maintenance challenges and cost.

Alternative Walking Routes

Survey respondents identified that competition related park closures impact their use of Oakwood Park and access to the surrounding park system. However, these closures are required by sports organizations, which stipulate that the public should not be able to interact with athletes during competitions. As a result, portions of the park must be closed during regattas.

Possible alternative routes through the park are identified in Fig. 12. Once a suitable route is determined, it should be communicated on clear, legible signage both prior to and during events to maintain connectivity and improve the community's parkland experience.

Drinking Fountain

A drinking fountain is recommended to support use by the community, athletic clubs, and ICF competitions. The proposed location is based on existing water laterals within the park to minimize disturbances and impact to existing trees.

Green Infrastructure

The former ornamental garden in front of Oakwood House was a popular destination for community members. Representatives from the North Star Rowing Club have expressed interest in re-establishing these gardens, which could be achieved through the park stewardship program. Green infrastructure initiatives can also be supported by using native species in the garden to

improve biodiversity and resiliency.

Rain gardens should also be installed to complement previously identified drainage infrastructure. In addition, permeable pavers should also be considered for new and existing pathways to help capture and improve stormwater.

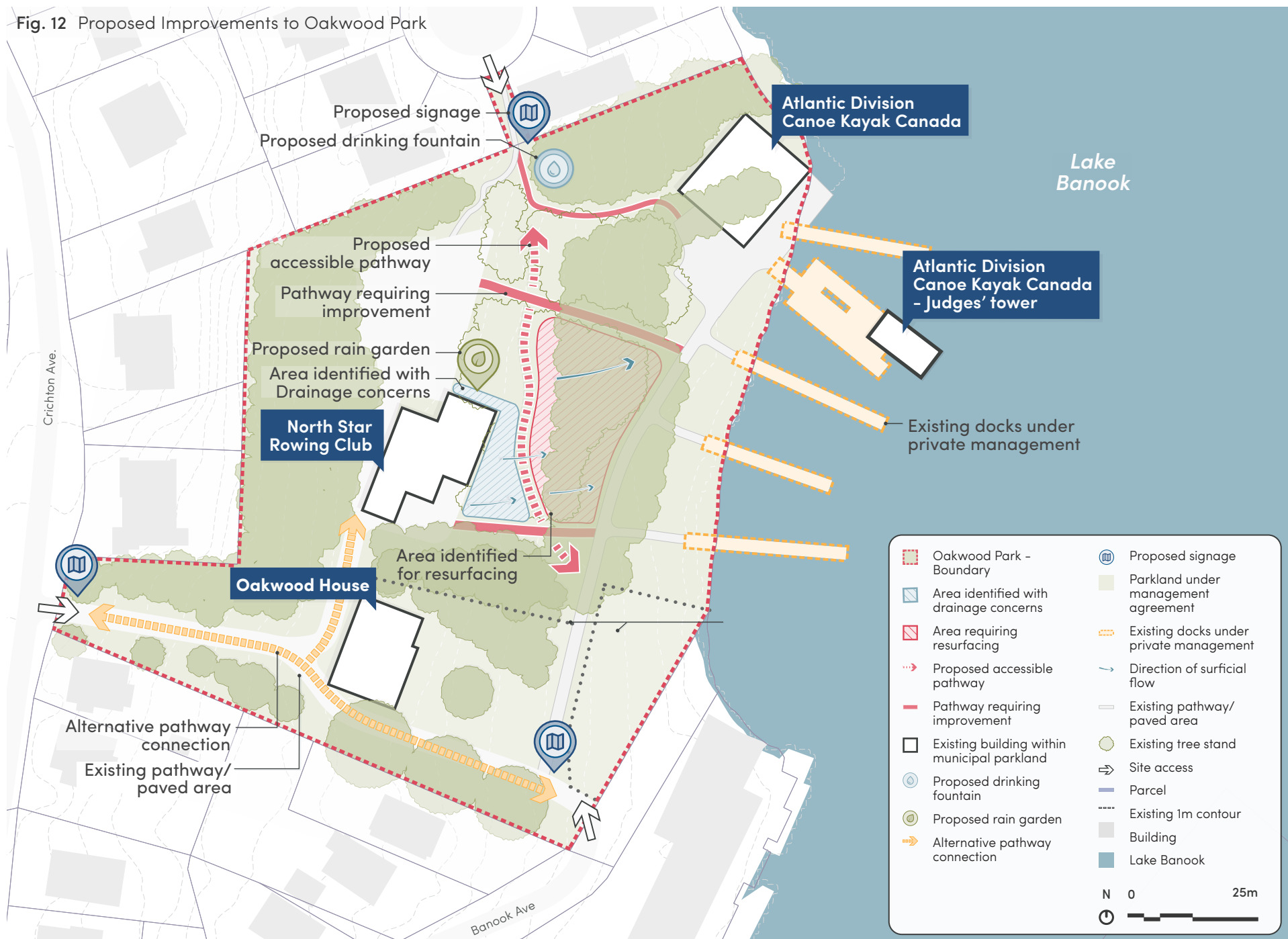


Fig. 10 Existing condition: Park use during regattas



Fig. 11 Existing condition: Pathway requiring improvement

Fig. 12 Proposed Improvements to Oakwood Park



3.4 Henry Findlay Park and Lions Beach Park

Henry Findlay Park is located at the southern tip of Lake Banook. It is accessible from Hawthorne Street, Bolton Terrace, Nowlan Street, and Banook Avenue, the latter of which connects users to the western portion of the park system through the existing sidewalk and road network. The park contains a playground, historic lock, and a water controlling weir.

Lions Beach Park is located to the northeast of Henry Findlay Park and has a dock for public water access, a sodded unsupervised beach area, and storage sheds. The multi-use pathway runs through Henry Findlay Park and connects to Sullivans Pond Park from the Hawthorne Street entrance. It also extends along the southern boundary of Lions Beach Park and provides access to the lake's eastern shoreline.

Improvements to the lock and Hawthorne Street are anticipated within the next five years. Some recommendations can be phased over multiple budget cycles, while others have been identified for implementation at the same time as the upgrades to the lock and street. Coordinating these improvements can help reduce repeated disturbances, park closures, and may help streamline costs.

To meet the community's needs (Fig. 16) while fulfilling the venue requirements for the athletes' village (Fig. 17), the following improvements have been identified:

Playground

There is not a suitable alternative location for the playground within the existing catchment area. As a result, the playground can be retained in its current location. When the structure is recapitalized, its footprint should be condensed and relocated towards the park's northwestern boundary to create additional space for athletes'

tents during competitions. This area can also be used as a play lawn by the community. Shade infrastructure should also be provided to ensure user comfort during the summertime and minimize heat exposure.

Drainage

During periods of heavy precipitation, stormwater flows from residential properties along the park's western boundary and collects in the area identified in Fig. 16. As a result, the ground becomes oversaturated and unusable for portions of the year.

French drains were installed in this area in 2025. Regular monitoring after significant storm events is recommended to determine their effectiveness, ensure the area's suitability for staging the athletes' village, and support the community's recreational uses.

If additional infrastructure is required, coordinating its installation with the playground's recapitalization is recommended to minimize park disturbances and closures.

Green Infrastructure

Rain gardens should be installed near the existing French drains to provide additional capture and improve stormwater quality before it enters the lake. Permeable pavers that comply with accessibility, maintenance, and event standards should also be considered.

Invasive species removal is identified in the area identified in Fig. 16 and can be incorporated into Parks Naturalization or Environment and Climate Change budget cycles. Removal is also recommended in the areas surrounding the lock, but should be carried out in coordination with the anticipated improvements to the lock.



Fig. 13 Existing conditions: The area around the playground is sometimes unusable due to poor drainage conditions



Fig. 14 Naturalization efforts should also focus on the removal of invasive species that are prevalent within the park.



Fig. 15 The 2007 Plan makes recommendations for how the area could be improved

Area Identified for Improvement

The area identified for improvements in Fig. 16 was roughly graded prior to Canoe '22 to accommodate athletes' tents. Following the competition, picnic tables were installed.

However, additional grading and surface improvements are recommended to ensure the area can withstand heavy rainfall during the next ICF event. In addition, paving and re-aligning the pathway around the existing gym equipment would improve accessibility and the site's overall function.

The 2007 Plan contained recommendations to improve the area by clearing vegetation, providing interpretive signage about historic Indigenous encampments known to use the lake, and creating a picnic and bird watching area (Fig. 15). These should be considered to enhance the site's recreational use and ensure its ability to support the athletes' village during potential climatic events. This work should be coordinated with the lock's recapitalization so that work can be informed by its final footprint and potentially streamline budgets and reduce repeated park closures.

Temporary Closure of Hawthorne Street

The recapitalized playground will be constructed using concrete footings, which will prevent its temporary removal when the park is being used as an athletes' village. To accommodate the tents that were previously located in the playground area during Canoe '22, a portion of Hawthorne Street can be temporarily closed (Fig. 17).

Access to Hawthorne Street should be maintained using the same traffic control measures as for Bolton Terrance and Nowlan Street during previous World Championships, which will require additional coordination prior to the event. In addition, park entrances, nearby residences, and existing hydrants must remain accessible to Halifax Fire & Emergency. During the plan's development, Halifax Transit identified that alternative bus routes are possible for the area, but additional confirmation will be required during the planning process for the next event.

Drinking Fountain

A drinking fountain is required within Henry Findlay Park or Oakwood Park to meet competition requirements. ICF organizers identified Henry Findlay as their preferred location to support programming needs.

The existing water lateral on Hawthorne Street can be used to provide a connection to the proposed drinking fountain. Installation should be done at the same times as the improvements to Hawthorne Street to optimize access to underground utilities.

Proposed Washroom

The need for a public washroom was identified throughout the engagement process. Although a facility is not identified in the HRM Washrooms & Drinking Fountain Strategy, one could be constructed as additional funds became available. Doing so would serve the needs of athletes, the high number of children who use the playground,

and beach and multi-use pathway users.

The 2007 Plan proposes a new washroom in Lions Beach. Its location is identified in Fig. 16 and Fig. 17. An additional electrical power cabinet and drinking fountain can also be included within the facility to support competition and recreational uses.

Electrical Infrastructure

The location for the electrical power cabinet was recommended by ICF organizers due to its central position within the park. In addition, a blind conduit should also be run across the bridge to provide power to the parking lot area and minimize tripping hazards during competitions.

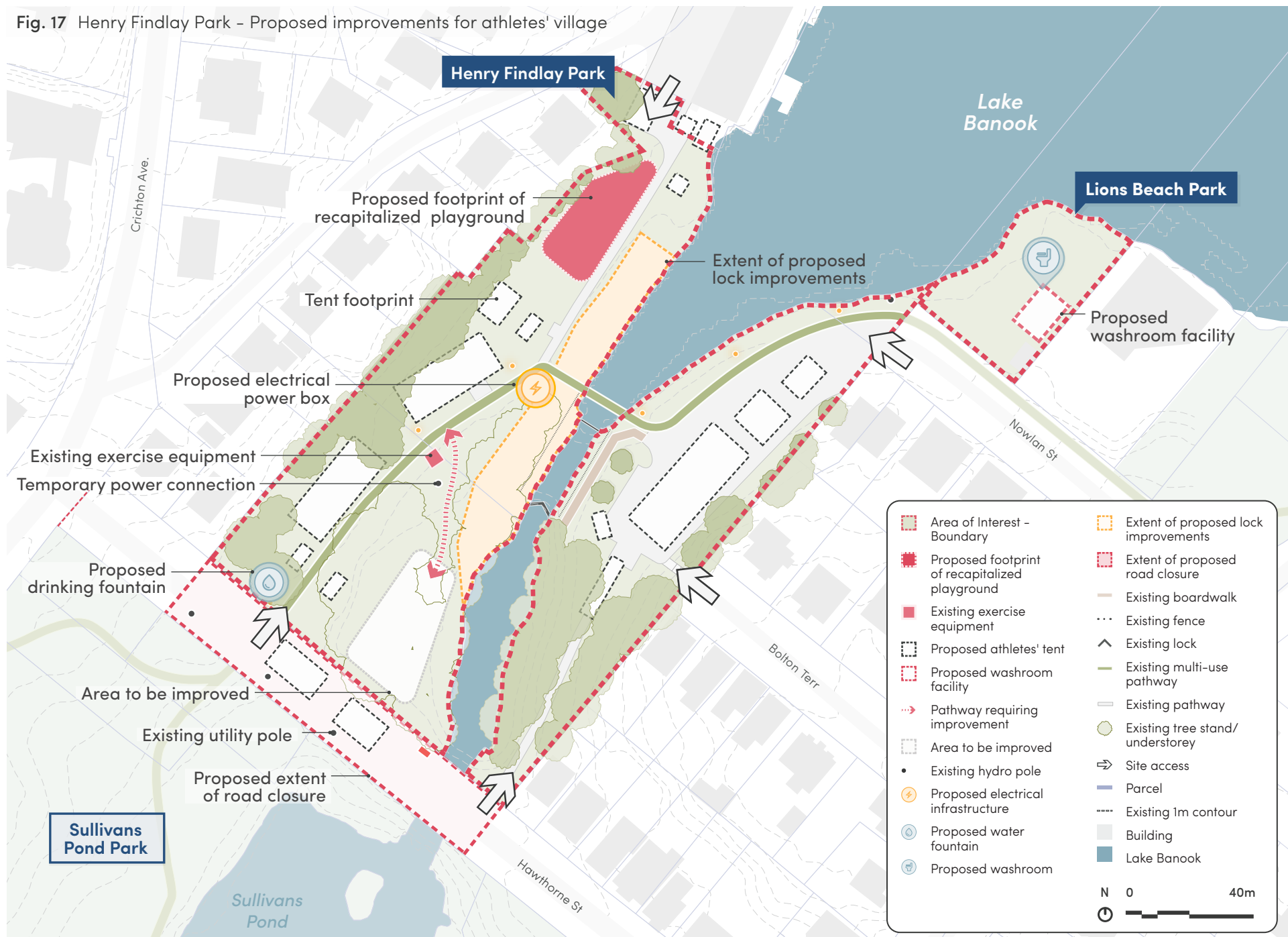
Nova Scotia Power identified the existing facilities along Hawthorne Street as their preferred connection and recommended that power is brought into the park underground. Ground conduits should also be considered to reduce the number of exposed cords and potential tripping hazards.

Providing electrical capacity beyond the immediate needs identified by organizers would also help minimize the need for future upgrades and potential disturbances to the parkland. Installation should be coordinated to align with improvements to Hawthorne Street. ICF organizers should also be consulted to determine whether additional utilities, such as fibre optic cables, should also be brought into the park at this time. Once installed, temporary power sources within the park should be removed.

Fig. 16 Henry Findlay Park - Proposed improvements for community use



Fig. 17 Henry Findlay Park - Proposed improvements for athletes' village



3.5 Silvers Hill Park

Silvers Hill Park is located to the west of Lake Banook, with Prince Albert Road forming its western boundary and Sinclair Street to its east. The park is accessible from both roads. Its direct view of the finish line has resulted in several improvements for previous World Championships that include a spectator seating area, bleachers, paved pathways, and an accessible viewing platform along Sinclair Street. The park is also a popular destination for the community due to its expansive views of the lake and surrounding area. While there are walking trails throughout the park's wooded area, they are not regularly used due to their unimproved condition.

The following improvements are recommended (Fig. 19):

Interrupted Viewshed

A spectator seating area was constructed prior to Canoe '22. However, overhead power lines along Prince Albert Road obstruct direct views of the finish line (Fig. 18), while the existing tree stand blocks the remainder of the racecourse. As a result, many spectators prefer to use Lake Banook Regional Park.

Both of the previous plans recommend undergrounding the power lines. However, cost estimates for this work are high, making it unrealistic as a standalone improvement. Doing so would only improve views for a portion of the racecourse. However, in the event major capital work is planned along Prince Albert Road, undergrounding the power lines should be considered within the project scope to streamline costs. Clearing portions of the forested area to improve views is not recommended.

Accessibility

An accessible viewing platform was incorporated

into the recent recapitalization of the bleachers. However, the remainder of the site is inaccessible due to stairs that connect to all pathways providing site access. Replacing the set of stairs that link the viewing platform to the site with a switchback is recommended to be done to improve accessibility, but should only be completed alongside larger park improvements.

Infrastructure Requiring Condition Assessment

The wooden staircase that connects to Sinclair Street was not included in the previous scope of improvements. A recapitalization assessment is required to determine whether additional improvements are required.

Shade Provision

The recent improvements to the seating area did not include any shade infrastructure. As a result, the area is fully exposed to the sun for most of the day, which may affect the number of people willing to use the space and the duration of their visit. Providing shade - either by planting trees or installing shade sails - is recommended to improve user comfort, which may encourage longer visits and enhance the site's overall function.

Boosenech Plaza

The 2007 Plan recommended a plaza to create a sense of entry into the park and that it be named Boosenech Plaza, meaning "Let us Take a Journey Over Water by Canoe" in Mi'kmaw. Following the 2007 plan's approval, the plaza was constructed; however, additional recommendations - such as interpretive signage, bollards, and trash receptacles - have not been implemented. The 2019 Plan also recommended accommodating food trucks in front of the plaza area during major events when the road is closed to vehicular traffic.



Fig. 18 Existing Condition: Power lines interrupt view of the race course's finish line

These improvements, combined with hand-washing, water stations, and similar amenities, are recommended to increase the park's visibility, improve the visitor experience, and encourage additional use during the next World Championship event.

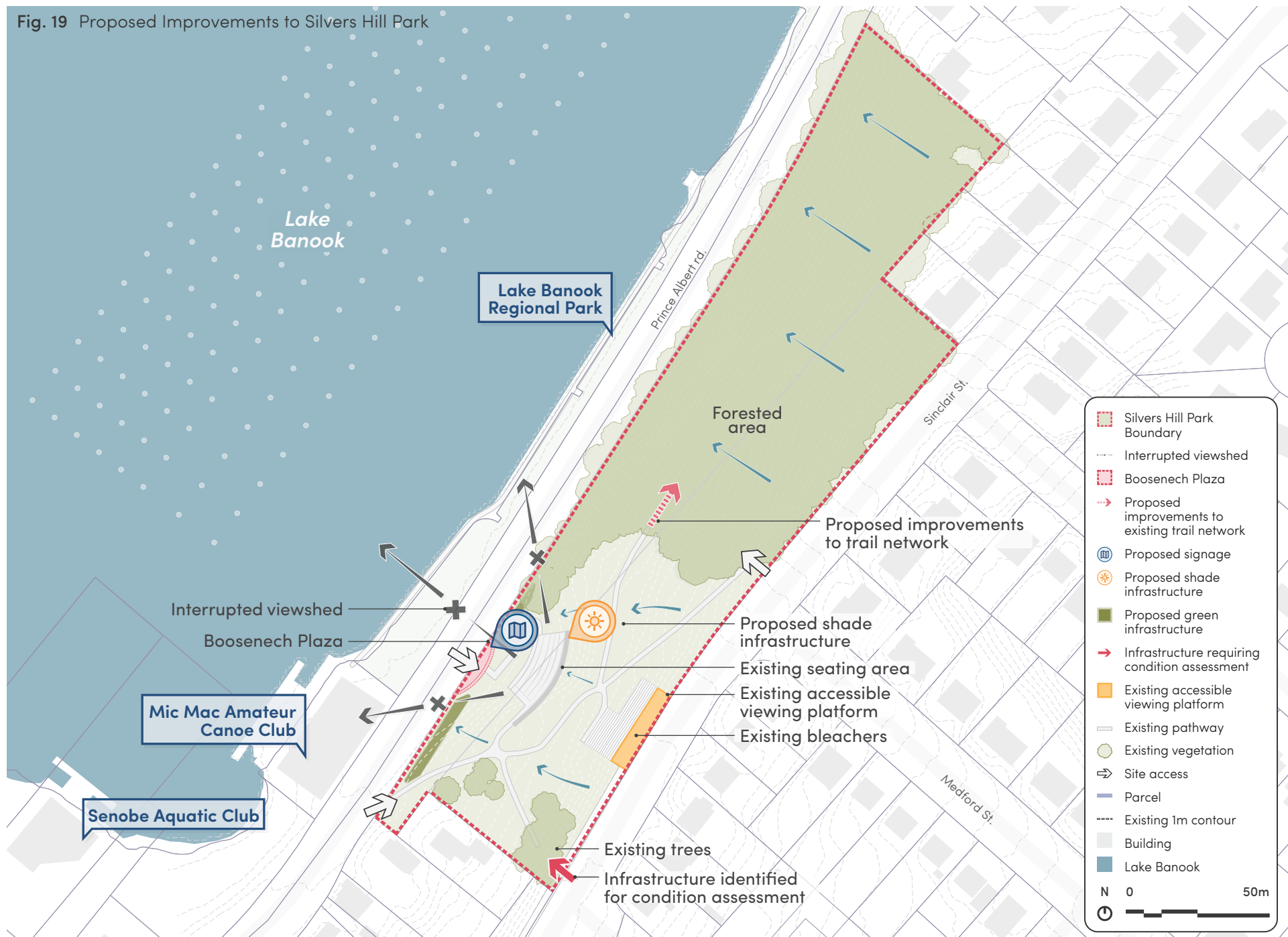
Green Infrastructure

The 2007 Plan recommended planting low vegetation to stabilize the park's steep slopes. This can be implemented along the portion that borders Prince Albert Road to slow, capture, and cool stormwater before it enters the lake, stabilize slopes, and enhance biodiversity.

Trail Improvements

Recent pathway improvements connect to the existing trail system to the park's wooded area. These trails should be improved to provide additional passive recreational uses for the community, but should only be considered alongside larger improvement projects.

Fig. 19 Proposed Improvements to Silvers Hill Park



3.6 Lake Banook Regional Park

Lake Banook Regional Park spans the majority of the lake's eastern shoreline and contains the 200m and 500m judges' towers, a boardwalk, water access, interpretive panels, and seating areas. The multi-use pathway runs the length of the park, and connects the park system between Henry Findlay and Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park.

During competitions, spectators set up tents and chairs on the boardwalk and grassed areas. Outside of events, the multi-use pathway is popular amongst runners, cyclists, and pedestrians and the seating areas are commonly used by residents enjoying scenic views. A set of stairs at the 500m mark provides public access to the lake for launching non-motorized boats, skating, swimming, and other recreational activities.

The park has undergone a series of improvements to prepare for previous paddling events. However, many were completed several years ago and require recapitalization. Others were planned, but have yet to be established. The following improvements are recommended (Fig. 25 - Fig. 28):

Conflict Points

The parking lot beside Mic Mac Amateur Aquatic Club is often busy, which results in vehicles blocking the multi-use pathway and creating safety concerns for its users. Limited parking availability in the area also leads to increased roadside parking on Prince Albert Road, with many users crossing the road outside the designated crosswalk to access the park.

The 2019 Plan recommended clearing portions of the forested area in Silvers Hill Park and constructing a retaining wall to create additional parking spaces along the eastern side of Prince Albert Road. However, tree removal within the park is not desirable due to their maturity, slope

stabilization, and environmental benefits. The 2007 Plan identified similar concerns for pedestrian safety, but proposed alternative solutions that included extending the sidewalk along Silvers Hill Park and relocating the crosswalk to provide a direct connection to the parking lot. Due to location of the existing utilities within the park, the cost to do so would be significant. This work should only be pursued in conjunction with planned improvements to Prince Albert Road or when the power lines are installed underground.

In addition, high visibility pavement markings where the multi-use pathway crosses the parking should be implemented to improve driver awareness and help mitigate safety concerns.

Signage

As noted in Section 3.1 - Common Park Improvements, interpretive programs are planned throughout the park system. Given the popularity of the multi-use pathway and that the park contains the largest expanse of Lake Banook's shoreline, launching the audio interpretive program or similar initiatives within this area can help raise awareness and encourage participation.

Signage that explains the meaning of the hieroglyph on the public art installation located on the corner of Prince Albert Road and Nowlan Street is also recommended.

Public Art

Public art should be integrated throughout the park and installed on existing site amenities, such as the banners on Prince Albert Road, the boardwalk's bumpers, and the existing electrical power cabinets. The program should consider hiring local artists on a defined basis (e.g. annually, bi-annually) to create new programs

and use temporary, cost-effective installation methods so that work can be updated regularly to reflect current events and themes. In addition, projects like the audio interpretive program in Point Pleasant Park or the City of Ottawa's MONAHAN project (Fig. 20) can be integrated into wayfinding and signage initiatives to create a cohesive system.



MONAHAN Public Art

Public Art Precedent
City of Ottawa, Ontario

MONAHAN is a public art commission by the City of Ottawa that offers an audio-interpretive experience to park visitors. The project features a series of sound clips that reflect the wetland's history and natural habitat. On each visit, the sound clips are re-shuffled to create a new listening experience and educational opportunity. The program can be accessed by scanning QR codes that are embedded on site furniture and signage throughout the site

Fig. 20 MONAHAN signage featuring QR code (source: City of Ottawa)

Green Infrastructure

Hard infrastructure, the park's proximity to Prince Albert Road, and invasive species along the shoreline may impact Lake Banook's water quality (Fig. 21). Green infrastructure, such as living shorelines and invasive species removal, are recommended to address these concerns and provide additional shoreline stabilization. In addition, infrastructure should be focused in locations where there are known stormwater outfalls into the lake complement water quality initiatives.

Multi-use Pathway and Infrastructure Requiring a Condition Assessment

The existing multi-use pathway has several sections in need improvement. In addition, user conflicts - particularly with the increased use of e-bikes and e-scooters - have been identified to an extent that makes users feel unsafe. During the community engagement sessions, it was also identified that the pathway becomes overcrowded and difficult to use during events.

The Integrated Mobility Plan and Active Transportation Priorities Plan recommend an Active Transportation Greenway on Prince Albert Road, which has been constructed. However, recent engagement led by Active Transportation has further highlighted the need for additional infrastructure along Prince Albert Road. Implementing a paved shoulder is recommended to disperse users and improve connections to the planned active transportation facilities on Grahams Grove. To do so, improvements to Prince Albert Road will require a higher priority in the upcoming revision to Active Transportation Priorities Plan. Public education campaigns that promote cyclist and pedestrian etiquette could further enhance user safety.

Fig. 26 - Fig. 28 identify facilities that require a condition assessment, including the existing

200m and 500m judges' towers, the staircase, a portion of the shoreline, and the existing bump-outs. Approximately 50m of the existing boardwalk was improved in 2021, beginning at the 500m tower, but the remainder should be included in the assessment. If recapitalization to the towers is required, the future design should include dock hook-ups on their foundation to improve use during events.

Any recapitalization identified as necessary should be completed the year prior to the next World Championships.

Seating Area

Seating improvements are recommended. Their location was informed by the 2019 Plan, which also included design precedents for these area that should be considered during the detailed design phase (Fig. 22).

Retaining walls that provide seating were constructed in the park's southern area during previous improvements and have proven popular with spectators and community members. This design should be continued throughout the park to create additional seating and maintain a consistent park aesthetic. It is also recommended that a single style of park furniture is selected and installed to improve continuity in the park (Fig. 23). Furniture should also be installed on concrete pads that connect directly to the multi-use pathway to improve accessibility.

Enhanced Maintenance Area

The existing boundary for the enhanced maintenance area currently includes approximately half the park. As future improvements take place, this boundary should be expanded to include the entire park, which may help ensure the same level of maintenance and infrastructure within the park.



Fig. 21 Existing condition: Naturalization efforts should address the removal of invasive species along the shoreline



Fig. 22 The 2019 Plan provides design precedents for seating areas/viewing platforms



Fig. 23 Existing condition: Site furniture is inconsistent

Fig. 24 Lake Banook Regional Park - Figure Legend

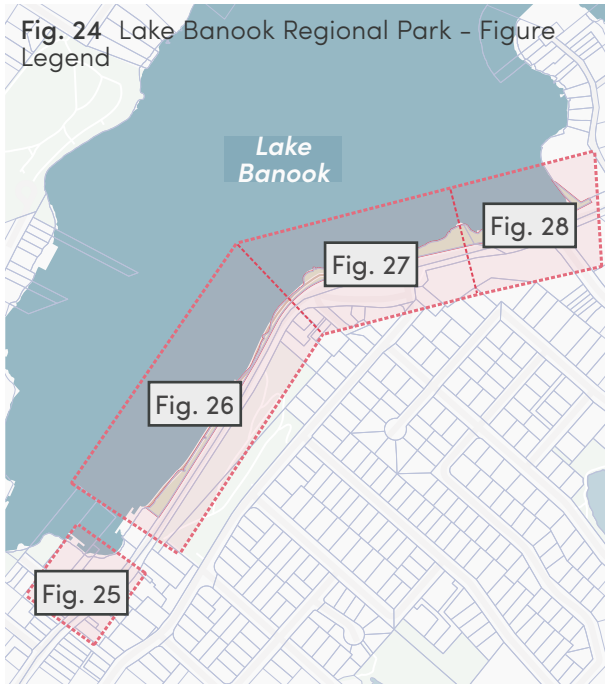


Fig. 25 Proposed Improvements to Lake Banook Regional Park

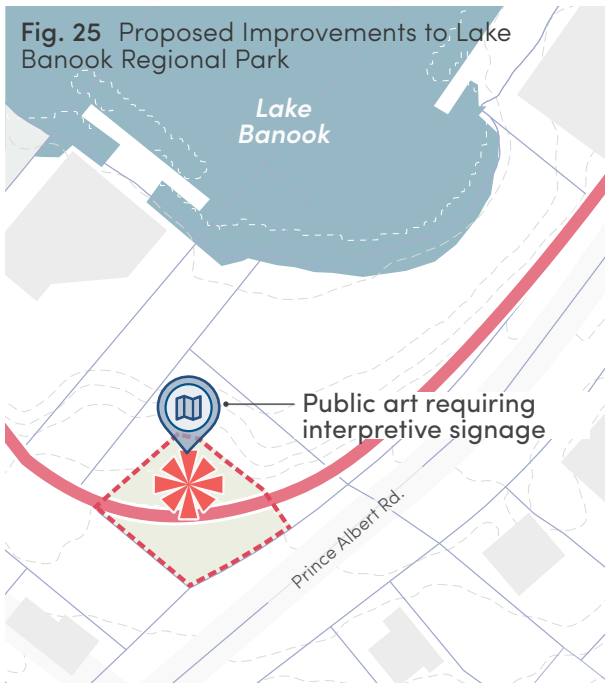


Fig. 26 Proposed Improvements to Lake Banook Regional Park

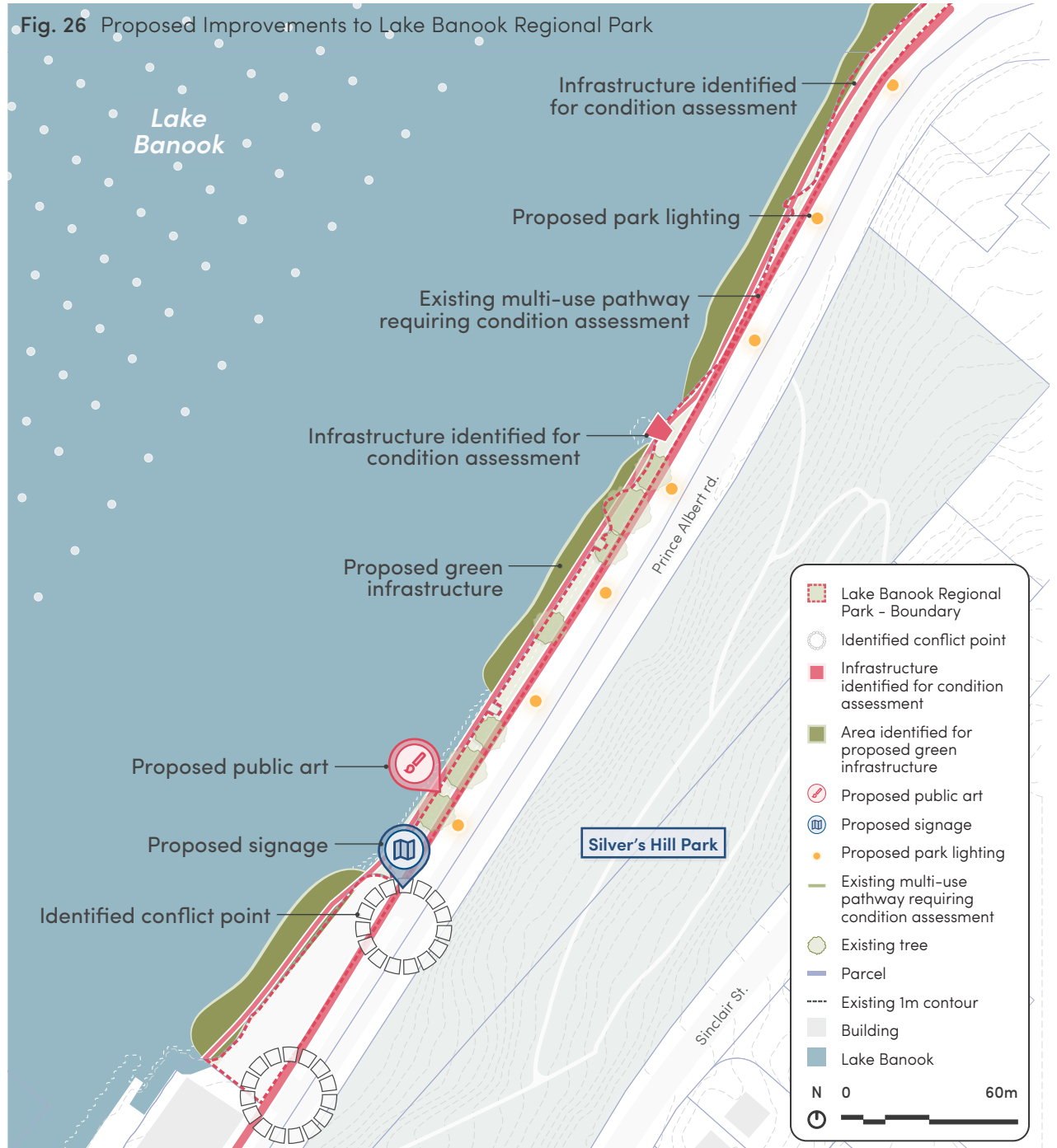
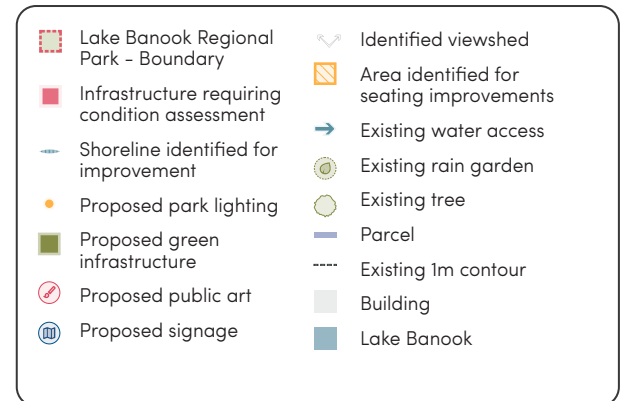
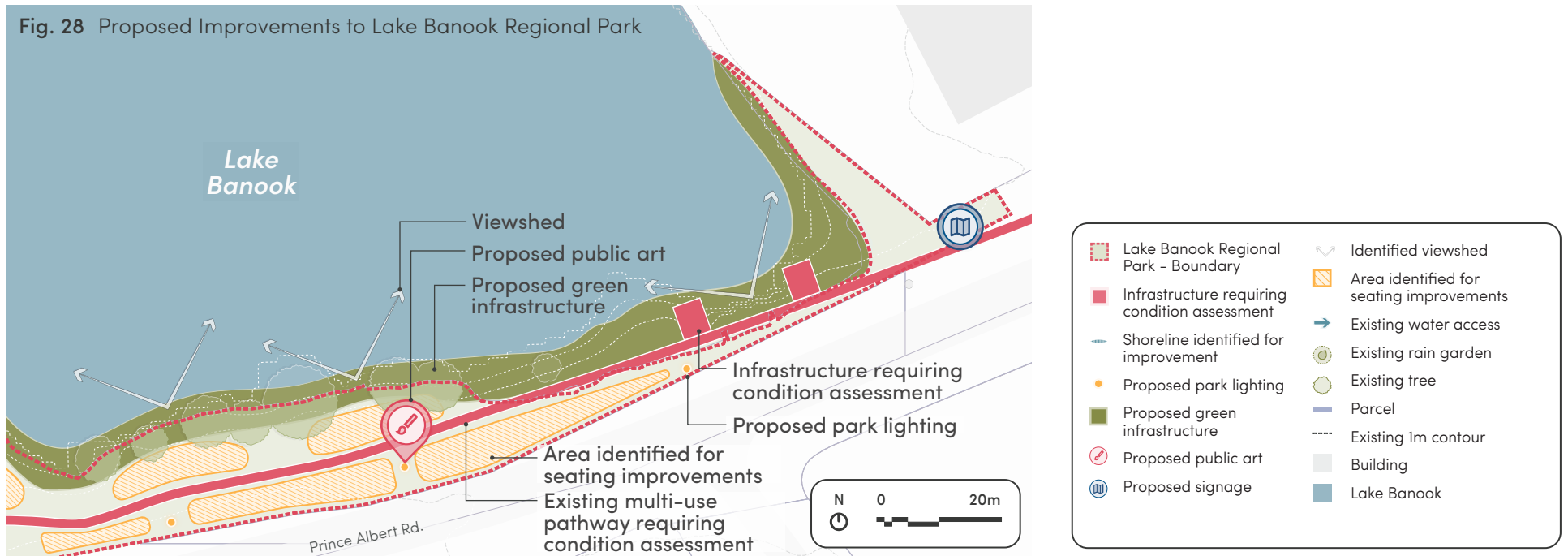


Fig. 27 Proposed Improvements to Lake Banook Regional Park



Fig. 28 Proposed Improvements to Lake Banook Regional Park



3.7 Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park

Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park offers several facilities, including walking trails, a public dock, open lawn space, and picnic areas. In 2023, a new multi-use facility was completed which contains the Kiwanis Club of Dartmouth, Dartmouth Dragon Boat Association, public deck space, a canteen, public washrooms, and a bottle refill station.

The park is also a popular gathering location for running, cycling, and paddling clubs. Though recent improvements have enhanced the park's condition and use, the following have been identified (Fig. 30):

Trail and Seating Improvements

Portions of the park are grassed and steeply sloped. A paved pathway is recommended to create a continuous walking loop and improve accessibility. Additional accessible picnic tables, benches, and waste receptacles should also be installed within the park as required to enhance.

Drainage

Due to historic infilling, the park experiences poor drainage in the areas identified in Fig. 30. After heavy precipitation, this area can become unusable as water pools or flows towards the forested area instead of draining into the lake. While French drains currently exist, installing additional drainage infrastructure in the identified location could help capture and redirect stormwater.

Green Infrastructure

Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park was originally an island but was later infilled to connect the park to the mainland, which has resulted in water quality issues that affect the lake's recreational use. To address these concerns, the 2019 Plan proposed

re-instating a canal to improve water circulation, but this is not recommended due to the cost and requirements for maintaining emergency access during events. Fountains were recommended in the draft Coordination Plan, but were identified as being a potential safety hazard and potentially unsuitable due to the lake's depth.

Instead, green infrastructure initiatives should be implemented to help address water quality issues, which include installing rain gardens in the areas identified with poor drainage. In addition, lawn maintenance should be adjusted to stop an additional 1-2m from the existing vegetation along the park's shoreline. This may allow additional vegetation to establish, which could improve water quality by deterring waterfowl accessing the lake.

Electrical Infrastructure

An electrical power cabinet is required to host events. Organizers recommended the location shown in Fig. 29 and Fig. 30 due to its proximity to the judges' tower. The existing utility poles along the gravel path are the preferred connection point, though alternative connections exist elsewhere in the park. Nova Scotia Power recommends that power lines be installed underground to reduce the risk of contaminating the soil and water. Doing so would also help preserve existing vegetation that would have to be removed if power was brought in overhead due to Nova Scotia Power's clearance requirements. Technical requirements should be reviewed at the time of installation to determine whether additional utilities, such as fibre optic cables, are also required.

1000m Judges' Tower

A recapitalization assessment of the 1000m judges' tower is required, which should be completed at the same time as other assessments.

During previous engagement sessions, accessibility concerns about how the dock connects to the existing shoreline were identified. To improve this connection, a concrete pedestal should be installed on the shoreline to anchor dock sections. The pedestal must be high enough to accommodate changing water levels, and the dock section should be designed to allow off-season storage. Fig. 29 identifies the required dimensions.

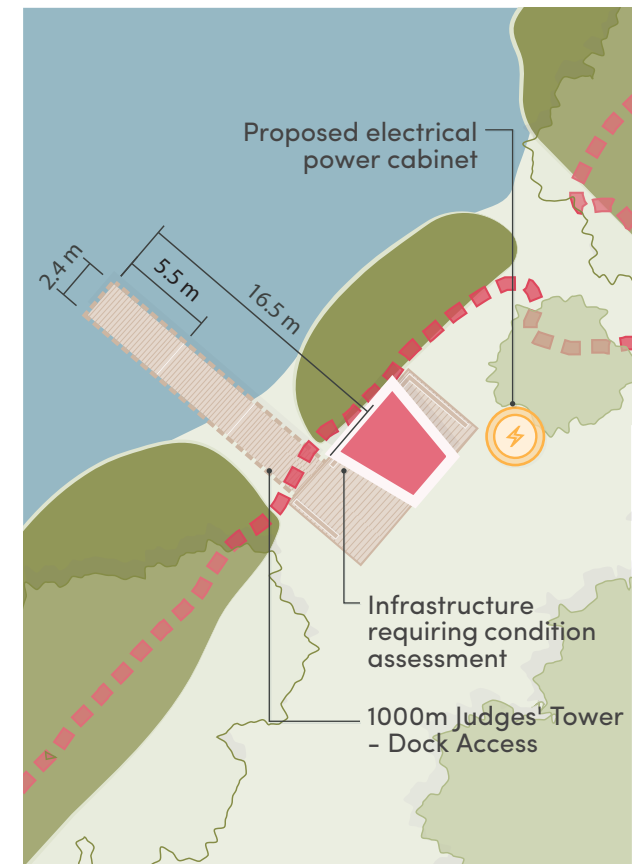


Fig. 29 Proposed improvements to the 1000m judges' tower and surrounding area

Fig. 30 Proposed Improvements to Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park



3.8 Brookdale Crescent Park and Multi-use Trail

Brookdale Crescent Park is located on the northwestern shoreline of Lake Banook. The multi-use pathway connects the park to Brookdale Crescent, the broader trail network, and Shubie Park through an easement on privately owned land. Portions of the multi-use trail outside of Brookdale Crescent Beach have also been improved. The pathway ends at Brookdale Crescent and park users must use the existing road and sidewalk network to access nearby residential areas and parks located along the lake's western shoreline.

The park offers expansive views of the entire lake and provides water access for swimming, non-motorized boating, paddle boarding, and skating.

With the M District Development currently underway, both the park and its trail connections are expected to see an increase in users in the future. To enhance connectivity and the park's function, the following improvements are recommended (Fig. 33):

Signage

While signage and wayfinding are identified in all of the parks, clear, visible wayfinding is essential within Brookdale Crescent Park to improve navigation. Signage should be located at the park's entry points and communicate how the existing road network can be used to access the surrounding parkland and residential area.

The multi-use pathway also provides a connection to the Crichton Park neighbourhood, which is the former location of African Nova Scotian community, The Avenue. The proposed interpretive signage and audio interpretation programs should be continued into the surrounding residential areas to create an opportunity to explore this part of the lake's history and strengthen connections between the park and surrounding area.

Trail Connection

The need to improve trail connectivity from Brookdale Crescent was one of the most commonly identified improvements during the community engagement sessions.

The 2019 Plan recommended securing an easement by expropriating land or by acquiring individual lots as they become available. However, this is not recommended due to high property costs and length of time this may require. The plan also identified a possible connection that could be secured through an easement between Edenbank Terrace and Lakeside Terrace. However, this is no longer feasible due to recent construction on one of the properties. A direct physical connection along the shoreline is also unlikely as these lands are long standing private properties - several of which include water lots – which impact the feasibility of installing a water bridge or boardwalk.

Improving the existing street connection with additional wayfinding is the most practical solution to improve connectivity. Brookdale Crescent is currently ranked as a low priority for a new sidewalk, but its recognition of the streets as an important trail connection could improve its likelihood of implementation. Additional crosswalks and sidewalks along Crichton Avenue and Mic Mac Boulevard should also be considered to enhance connectivity between the parks and improve pedestrian safety.

Green Infrastructure

Living shorelines projects are identified along the multi-use pathway between Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park and Brookdale Crescent Park. These initiatives can help maintain water quality by filtering and cooling stormwater from Grahams Grove and the highway, which has been identified as a possible contributor to the decline in Lake Banook's water quality.

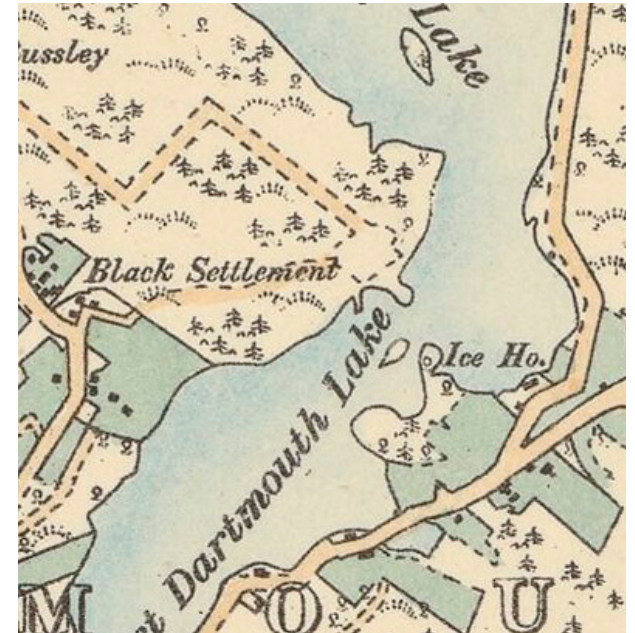


Fig. 31 Historic map showing The Avenue's approximate location. Credit: Dartmouth Heritage Museum



Fig. 32 Archival imagery of the Avenue's residents performing a baptism on Lake Banook. Credit: Dartmouth Heritage Museum

Fig. 33 Proposed Improvements to Brookdale Crescent and Multi-use Trail



Implementation

This section summarizes the proposed improvements, organizes them into three groups, and ranks them in terms of their priority. Additional information and the departments involved in the project's delivery are also identified.

4.1 ICF Improvements

The following chart identifies improvements needed to keep the lake a viable venue for future ICF competitions. Implementation timelines are related either to the announcement of the next World Championship, which has not yet been confirmed, or to specific municipal budget cycles.

Identified Improvement	Park	Priority	Proposed Timeline	Department	Additional Notes
1.1 Re-surfacing and Drainage	Oakwood Park	Medium	To be coordinated with improvements to ADCKC's athletic facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment & Climate Change Parks Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eavestrough to be installed in coordination with North Star Rowing Club Drainage infrastructure should precede re-surfacing and should be monitored to ensure it is effective. Surface should be improved following the completion of the athletic facility. Cost of green infrastructure initiatives (permeable paving, rain gardens) may be offset through the municipal grant programs such as Build Back Better or Small Projects Bundle funding Stream available through Environment & Climate Change (ECC)
1.2 Pathway improvements	Oakwood Park	High	Prior to next World Championship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work should be implemented the year prior to the next event or coordinated with improvements to ADCKC's athletic centre

4.1 ICF Improvements - Continued

Identified Improvement	Park	Priority	Proposed Timeline	Departments	Additional Notes
1.3 Drinking fountain	Oakwood Park	High	Prior to next World Championship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment & Climate Change Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of one drinking fountain must be installed in either of the identified locations prior to the next event Work should be coordinated with improvements to ADCKC's athletic facility Cost of installation can be offset through previously identified municipal grant programs available through ECC
1.4 Improvements to seating area	Henry Findlay Park	Medium	Coordinated alongside lock improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work should be coordinated with lock improvements, which will inform the amount of available space for this improvement
1.5 Electrical power cabinet	Henry Findlay Park & Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park	High	Prior to next World Championship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical power cabinet in Henry Findlay should be coordinated with improvements to Hawthorne Street Electrical cabinet improvements should be coordinated with potential recapitalization of 1000m judges' tower (Item 1.8) If conduits are installed underground, event organizers should be consulted to determine whether there are additional technical requirements that must be met and included (i.e. fibre optic cables, additional voltage).
1.6 Re-grading and drainage infrastructure	Henry Findlay Park	High	Coordinated alongside lock improvements or the playground's recapitalization (Item 2.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment & Climate Change Parks Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If additional drainage infrastructure or re-grading is necessary, it should be done when the playground is recapitalized (2026) or during improvements to the lock Cost of installation can be offset through previously identified municipal grant programs available through ECC

4.1 ICF Improvements - Continued

Identified Improvement	Park	Priority	Proposed Timeline	Departments	Additional Notes
1.7 Temporary closure of Hawthorne Street	Henry Findlay Park	High	Closures and re-routing to be coordinated during event planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events • Fire & Emergency • Transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be included in the operating costs of the event
1.8 Recapitalization assessment	Silvers Hill Park, Lake Banook Regional Park & Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park	High	2025-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recapitalization will determine the scope, prioritization, and when work should be included within future budget cycles • If identified, recapitalization to the towers within Lake Banook Regional Park and Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park should be completed the year prior to the World Championship
1.9 Proposed dock and concrete pedestal	Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park	High	To be coordinated based on findings from the recapitalization assessment (Item 1.8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks Operations • Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and budget should be coordinated with ADCKC to replicate the installation and management of the the existing docks within Oakwood Park • If the recapitalization of the 1000m judges' tower is required (Item 1.8) the dock and pedestal should be included within its scope • If recapitalization is not required, the dock and pedestal should be included within the next available budget cycle

4.2 General Improvements

The following improvements are not required to meet ICF standards, but can help ensure the success of future events by improving how parks function and their ability to accommodate large spectator events. The following enhancements would also support daily community use

The improvements identified in Section 4.1 should be prioritized. However, the subsequent chart identifies where improvements can be coordinated to ensure park enhancements are streamlined, minimize disturbances and closures, and reflect the outcomes of previous engagement sessions.

In the event some of the improvements cannot be implemented within the identified timeline due to funding or budget constraints, medium priority items should be constructed following the next major paddling event. In these circumstances, prioritization can be determined by identifying parks with the greatest number of medium to high priority items, or by using the chart to group improvements that can be installed at a later date without impact the success of the next ICF event.

Identified Improvement	Park	Priority	Proposed Timeline	Departments	Additional Notes
2.1 Water quality	All parks	High	Work to begin in 2026 and be incorporated over a series of budget cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment & Climate Change Parks Naturalization Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to be led by Parks Naturalization and Environment & Climate Change based on the projects identified within this plan.
2.2 Signage	All identified parks	Medium	Wayfinding and interpretive program to be included within the 2027-2028 budget Other initiatives to be completed alongside other improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work can be phased across budget cycles Other initiatives (e.g. wrapping electric distribution centres in archival imagery or a decal) should be completed as other improvements (i.e.: Item 1.5) are installed.
2.3 Alternative Walking Routes	Oakwood Park	Medium	2026-2027 budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative route to be confirmed with ADCKC and signs installed within parks

4.2 General Improvements

Identified Improvement	Park	Priority	Proposed Timeline	Departments	Additional Notes
2.4 Park Lighting	Multi-use pathway between Henry Findlay Park and Brookdale Crescent Park	Medium	To be coordinated alongside improvements to the multi-use pathway (Items 2.9 to 2.11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighting should include access to fibre optic cables to support event requirements
2.5 Playground recapitalization	Henry Findlay Park	High	2026-2027 Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work will be identified within the upcoming budget cycle
2.6 Shade Infrastructure	Henry Findlay Park & Silvers Hill Park	Medium	<p>Henry Findlay Park: To be coordinated with other improvements</p> <p>Silvers Hill Park: Prior to next event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment & Climate Change Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry Findlay: Infrastructure to be coordinated with Items 1.4 and/or 2.5 Cost of installation can be offset through previously identified municipal grant programs available through ECC
2.7 Boosenech Plaza	Silvers Hill Park	Low	Prior to next World Championship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating and costs for the identified amenities to be included in the planning process for the next major ICF event.
2.8 Public Art	Lake Banook Regional Park	Medium	As funding becomes available through allocations from Capital improvements or alternative funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget would be based on the 1% allocated from Capital improvements or through additional event funding Initiatives to complement signage (Item 2.2) and park infrastructure (i.e.: Item 1.5) can be completed on an as-needed basis
2.9 Multi-use Pathway-Improvements to existing condition	Lake Banook Regional Park	Medium	Prior to next World Championship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Transportation Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements and maintenance to the multi-use trail to be determined by Active Transportation

4.2 General Improvements

Identified Improvement	Park	Priority	Proposed Timeline	Departments	Additional Notes
2.10 Conflict Points-Pathway delineations	Lake Banook Regional Park	High	To be coordinated with improvements to the multi-use pathway (2.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Transportation Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work can be coordinated alongside improvements to the multi-use pathway (Item 2.9) or when the urban shoulder facility is implemented (Item 2.11)
2.11 Multi-use Pathway- Urban Shoulder Facility	Lake Banook Regional Park/ Prince Albert Road	Medium	Following approval of the revised version of the Active Transportation Priorities Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Transportation Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility to be identified in the upcoming revised version of the Active Transportation Priorities Plan
2.12 Seating Improvements - retaining wall and bump-outs	Lake Banook Regional Park	Medium	Prior to next World Championship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work could be coordinated with items 2.8 to Fig. 32 or alongside improvements resulting from the recapitalization assessment
2.13 Drainage	Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park	Medium	As needed or alongside other improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment & Climate Change Parks Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could be coordinated with improvements resulting from the recapitalization assessment (Item 1.8), green infrastructure improvements (Item 2.1), or the installation of the installation of the electrical power cabinet (Item 1.5)
2.14 Trail Connection	Brookdale Crescent Park	High	2027 and onward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Transportation Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalk on Brookdale Crescent should be prioritized for implementation Active Transportation to highlight need for improved sidewalks and connectivity between Brookdale Crescent Park and Birch Cove Park Signage initiatives that include wayfinding (Item 2.2) to improve navigation throughout the trail system

4.3 Supplementary Improvements

The following improvements were identified in the report and are based on common recommendations from the previously completed plans and engagement sessions.

While these improvement would enhance the daily use of parkland and

events, due to factors - such as cost, extent of the work, or because they are considered as supplementary to parkland that has undergone a series of improvements - they should only be considered alongside larger capital projects within the immediate area or as recapitalization is required.

Identified Improvement	Park	Priority	Proposed Timeline	Departments	Additional Notes
3.1 Existing washroom facility	Birch Cove Park	Low	Improvements have been identified for 2026-2027 budget cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings Operations 	
3.2 Park Lighting	Birch Cove Park	Low	Can be installed alongside other improvements to the park or as lighting is installed in the other identified parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is existing lighting infrastructure that should be replaced as new lighting is installed to enhance the pedestrian realm and improve animal habitat
3.3 Seating area	Birch Cove Park	Low	As recapitalization or replacements are required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Capital Parks Operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New site furniture should be oriented to optimize identified view planes Accessibility can be improved by selecting and installing site furniture comply with accessibility standards
3.4 Washroom facility	Henry Findlay Park	Medium	As funds become available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified during internal and external engagement sessions The cost to construct and maintain the washroom facility is a significant factor Additional funding would be required.
3.5 Park Lighting	Henry Findlay Park	Medium	To be coordinated alongside the electrical power cabinet (Item 1.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighting would enhance the proposed infrastructure on the multi-use pathway and expand the park's usable hours during periods of the year with limited daylight hours

4.3 Supplementary Improvements

Identified Improvement	Park	Priority	Proposed Timeline	Departments	Additional Notes
3.6 Underground power lines along Prince Albert Road	Silvers Hill Park & Lake Banook Regional Park	Low	To be considered alongside larger capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Works Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergrounding the power lines would improve the viewshed of the finish line. However, previous estimates to do so exceeded \$1 million dollars. This improvement should only be considered if additional capital or funding becomes available, or if major road improvements are planned where work or budgets could be combined.
3.7 Accessibility	Silvers Hill Park	Low	To be coordinated alongside future improvements to the park or through a specific request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An accessible viewing platform was integrated into the bleachers during the previous scope of improvements to the park A switchback should only be considered if extensive improvements are proposed to the park due to its potential to impact the park's grading, existing accessibility accommodations, and the number of improvements that have been considered within the park
2.8 Trail improvements	Silvers Hill Park	Low	To be constructed only through request or alongside other improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail improvements should only be considered if extensive improvements are proposed to the park
2.9 Conflict Point-Sidewalk and Crosswalk Relocation	Lake Banook Regional Park	Medium	To be considered alongside larger capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning & Design Traffic Operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the potential relocation of power lines, the park's existing grades, and consequent cost, this improvement should only be considered alongside improvements to Prince Albert Road

4.3 Supplementary Improvements

Identified Improvement	Park	Priority	Proposed Timeline	Departments	Additional Notes
2.10 Drinking Fountain	Lake Banook Regional Park	Low	To be installed as funding becomes available or alongside other improvement projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment & Climate Change Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimize disturbances and costs, work should be coordinated alongside work that would allow access to existing water laterals
2.11 Enhanced maintenance area	Lake Banook Regional park	Low	To be completed alongside improvements identified within Lake Banook Regional Park (Items 2.8 to 2.12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Operations Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to expand the boundary of the enhanced maintenance area should be prepared for Council once the improvements identified in the park are complete
2.12 Trail and seating	Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park	Low	Work to be completed alongside other improvements (Items 1.5, 1.8 and 2.1) or as funding becomes available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Operations Strategic Planning & Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As additional seating is required or replaced, it should be oriented to enhance view planes and improve accessibility Measures to improve drainage (Item 2.13) should precede or accompany trail improvements

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Lake Banook Coordination Plan

March 2025

HALIFAX

Introduction

Document Intent

The intent of this document is to provide an overview of the common themes and overall approval ratings and the survey's emergent themes.

Origin of the Coordination Plan

Lake Banook is a large freshwater lake located within downtown Dartmouth. As the first lake encountered between the Shubenacadie Canal and the Minas Basin, it holds cultural and ecological significance at the municipal and regional levels. Its central location and proximity to residential neighbourhood have made it an important recreational hub for the local community, while its near 1000m length and north-to-south orientation have earned its recognition as a valuable natural racecourse by international and national paddling organizations.

In January of 2020, Regional Council passed a motion to "assess the need for a new Master Plan for Lake Banook, that would include all stakeholders, after Canoe '22". This recommendation originated from discussions with International Canoe Federation (ICF) organizers, who indicated that Lake Banook could be overlooked in the future unless significant improvements were made to meet the event's increasingly technical standards.

In March 2024, staff responded to the motion with the recommendation that a master plan was not required and a Coordination Plan should be developed instead. The report outlined that the plan would identify park improvements based on recommendations from Lake Banook's two previously completed master plans. The motion was approved by Regional Council with the stipulation for public consultation to ensure the final plan's recommendations support community use and meet hosting requirements for future ICF events.

Engagement

The plan's engagement process included internal stakeholder interviews, a Shape Your City Survey, and a public open house.

Shape Your City Survey

The Shape Your City survey ran from November 25, 2024 to December 20, 2024. A total 3,200 people were aware of the survey and had visited at least one page online. 1,800 people were informed, meaning they had engaged with one piece of online content, and 218 people participated in the survey.

A decline in engagement was identified two weeks after the survey opened. In response, the municipality launched a social media campaign to increase public awareness. An improvement in visitor numbers was noted for the remainder of the survey's duration.

Open House Engagement

An open house session was held on December 2, 2024, at the Kiwanis Grahams Grove Community Building. Illustrative boards from the draft Coordination Plan were presented to encourage public discussion. There was approximately 30 people in attendance.

Stakeholder Engagement

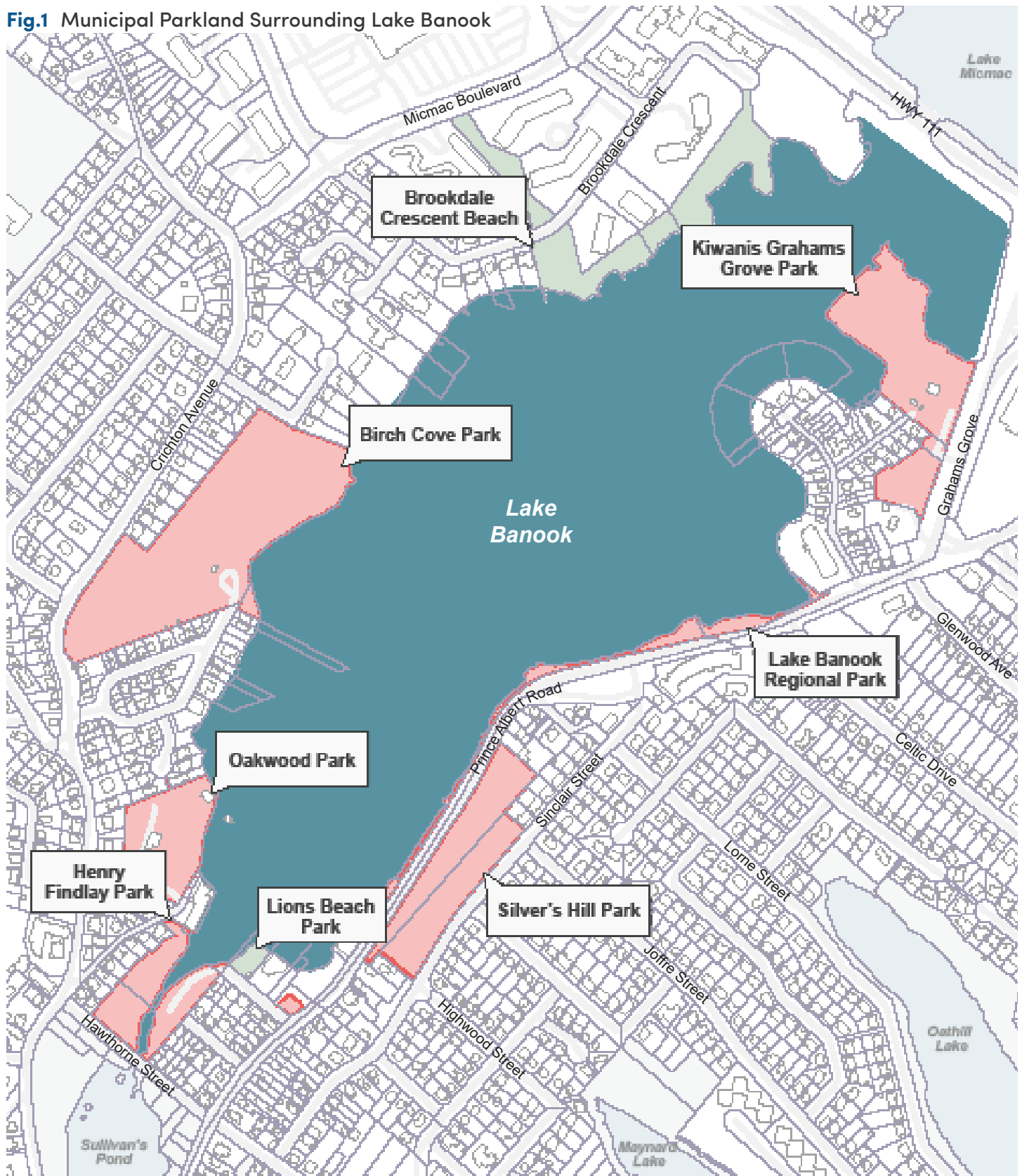
Staff conducted internal engagement sessions with municipal and provincial staff, representatives from the paddling community, and organizers from the ICF event. Conversations focused on developing an understanding of technical requirements and the improvements required to host future events.

Outcome

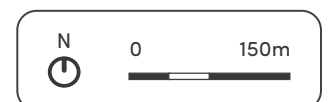
Feedback from the open house and stakeholder engagement sessions will be reviewed alongside Shape Your City's survey results. Comments will be used to refine the proposed improvements to develop the final plan, which will be presented to Regional Council for approval.

Once approved, the plan will be used to guide infrastructure improvements over a series of Capital budget cycles. Recommendations will focus on ensuring the lake's readiness to host future events and enhancing facilities for community use.

Fig.1 Municipal Parkland Surrounding Lake Banook



- Municipal parkland identified for improvement
- Municipal parkland not identified for improvement
- Parcels
- Roads/parking lot
- Existing buildings
- Lake Banook
- Water



Part One

Improvements to the Municipal Parkland Surrounding Lake Banook

This section asked participants to rate their level of support for the overall improvements being proposed within the Lake Banook Coordination Plan

Overall Park Improvements

A map detailing the parkland identified for improvements and common recommendations was presented to survey users. Improvements included: Proposed locations for wayfinding/signage and naturalization projects, and water quality considerations.

Approval for the Overall Park Improvements

Respondents were asked to review the proposed improvements within the municipal parkland and rate their level of agreement (Fig.1):

- Over 75% (85%) of respondents approved of the Coordination Plan's recommendations: 47.9% strongly agree and 37.4% agree
- "Strongly disagree" was the most unpopular category (3.2%), followed by respondents who identified that they did not have an opinion (3.7%)
- Less than 10% (7.8%) of respondents disagree with the proposed improvements.

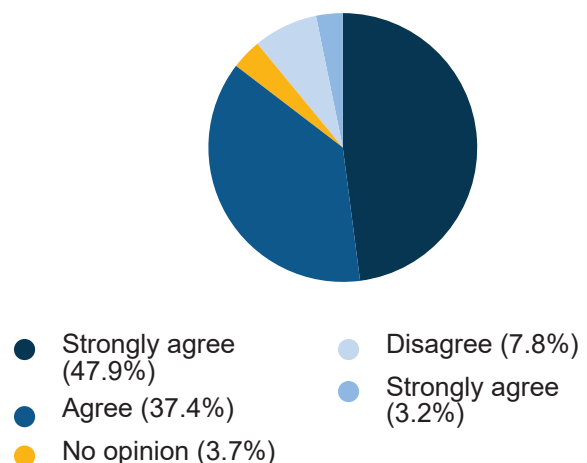
Comments

Respondents were asked to provide additional comments about the improvement:

Water Quality: The largest portion of respondents identified additional support for the recommendation to maintain the lake's water quality (21 of 106 respondents). Some participants supported the proposed naturalization projects (5 of 106 respondents), but others felt that naturalization was not an adequate solution and that other initiatives, such as stormwater management, filtration, and a management plan that includes the larger watershed should be considered (3 of 106 respondents).

Conflicting User Groups: Several participants raised concerns about the lack of access to municipal parkland and its trails during regattas and ICF events and recommended that the plan include strategies to improve public access (14 of 106 respondents). Some also expressed concern that improvements focused too heavily on ICF uses rather than long-term recreational uses that would support the community (6 of 106 respondents).

Fig.2 Please rate your agreement with the following statement: "I support the overall proposed improvements that have been identified for the municipal parkland surrounding Lake Banook."



Additional Improvements

Participants were asked whether they felt additional improvements were necessary beyond those that had been recommended within the plan (Fig.3):

- The majority of respondents (45.7%) did not know/were unsure.
- Almost half of the participants (40.6%) selected “Yes”
- 13.7% of respondents of users did not think additional improvements were required.

Comments

They survey asked participants to identify the improvements that should be included within the final version of the plan:

Trail Connectivity: The largest portion of participants identified the lack of trail connectivity between Birch Cove Park and Brookdale Crescent Park as their primary concern (24 of 86 respondents).

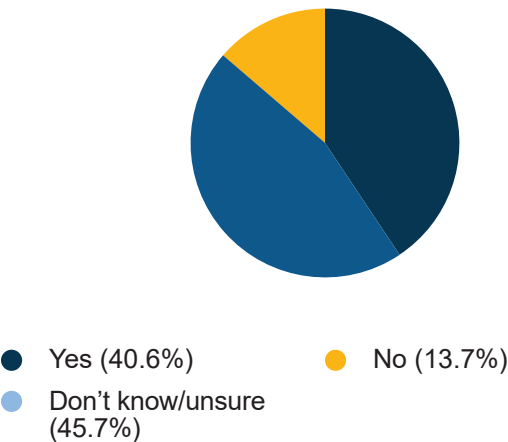
Washrooms and Drinking Water: Several respondents identified the need for additional washroom facilities and water fountains to support community use (16 of 86).

Maintenance: Improvements to maintenance and infrastructure, such as additional garbage cans, re-paving existing park pathways (14 of 86 respondents), and lighting (9 of 86 respondents) were identified by participants. In addition, survey users said that the condition of the existing multi-use pathway that connects Lake Banook Regional Park to Brookdale Crescent Park should be improved (9 of 86 respondents).

Lighting: Several respondents identified the need for improved lighting within the parks (9 of 86). Recommended locations included the trails in Brookdale Crescent and along Lake Banook Regional Park’s multi-use pathway.

Signage: Many participants highlighted the need for improved signage surrounding the lake (10 of 86). Recommended topics included: Education panels about the lake’s history and ecology, wayfinding between parks, and flow patterns (how different user groups use the lake).

Fig.3 Are there additional improvements that you think should be included?



Individual Park Improvements

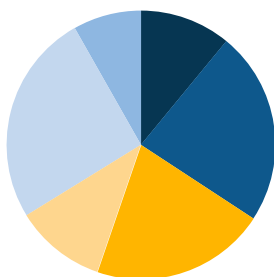
The remainder of the section focused on the individual parks identified for improvement. Respondents were asked about how their current park use and a series of questions related to the plan’s recommendations. The identified parks have been grouped by question to facilitate comparison and discussion.

Park Visitation

Respondents were asked how often they visit each of the parks (Fig. 3 to 8):

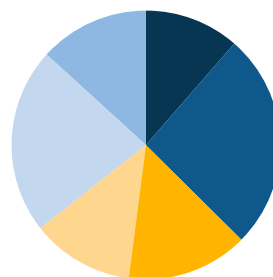
- Lake Banook Regional Park (18.3%), Henry Findlay Park (13.0%), and Oakwood Park (11.4%) were identified as the top three parks respondents visit every day.
- Silver’s Hill Park (15.1%), Oakwood Park (13.2%), and Henry Findlay park (8.4%) received the highest number of responses in the “Never” category, which indicates these parks have the lowest visitation rates.
- Silver’s Hill Park received the highest ranking in the “Less than once per month” category (36.1%) and the lowest ranking in the “Daily visitation” category, indicating that it comparatively receives the fewest visitors.
- “A few times per week” was the most popular category overall.
- The “Never” category had the lowest response rate, meaning respondents are unlikely to never visit a park.

Fig.4 Birch Cove Park - Visitation



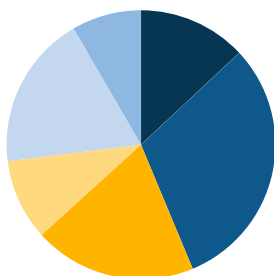
- Every day (11.0%)
- A few times per week (23.3%)
- Once every couple of weeks (21.0%)
- Once per month (11.0%)
- Less than once per month (25.6%)
- Never (8.2%)

Fig.5 Oakwood Park - Visitation



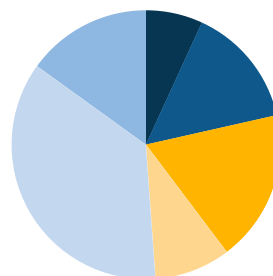
- Every day (11.4%)
- A few times per week (26.0%)
- Once every couple of weeks (14.6%)
- Once per month (12.3%)
- Less than once per month (22.4%)
- Never (13.2%)

Fig.6 Henry Findlay Park - Visitation



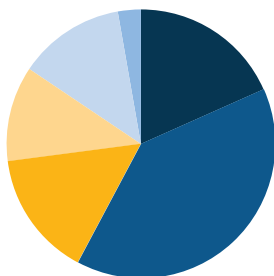
- Every day (13.0%)
- A few times per week (30.7%)
- Once every couple of weeks (19.5%)
- Once per month (9.8%)
- Less than once per month (18.6%)
- Never (8.4%)

Fig.7 Silver's Hill Park - Visitation



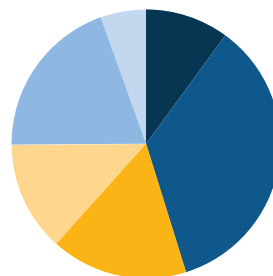
- Every day (6.8%)
- A few times per week (14.6%)
- Once every couple of weeks (18.3%)
- Once per month (9.1%)
- Less than once per month (36.1%)
- Never (15.1%)

Fig.8 Lake Banook Regional Park - Visitation



- Every day (18.3%)
- A few times per week (39.4%)
- Once every couple of weeks (15.1%)
- Once per month (11.5%)
- Less than once per month (12.8%)
- Never (2.8%)

Fig.9 Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park - Visitation



- Every day (10.0%)
- A few times per week (35.2%)
- Once every couple of weeks (16.4%)
- Once per month (13.2%)
- Less than once per month (19.6%)
- Never (5.5%)

Approval

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement for the proposed improvements identified within the individual parks (Fig.10 to 15):

- Birch Cove Park (42.9%), Henry Findlay Park (40.1%), and Lake Banook Regional Park (39.7%) were the top ranked in the “Strongly agree” category.
- Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park (7.3% “Strongly disagree”), Lake Banook Regional Park (5.5% “Strongly disagree”), and Birch Cove Park (5.0% “Strongly disagree”) received the lowest approval rating.
- Two of top three parks in the “Strongly disagree” category — Birch Cove Park and Lake Banook Regional Park — were also among the top-ranked and received more votes in the “Strongly agree” category, indicating that more participants were in favour of the recommendations.

Comments

Participants were asked to identify additional improvements that should be considered within the final plan:

Birch Cove Park: Participants expressed support for the proposed naturalization projects (15 of 74 respondents). However, many also raised concerns about the limitations the pilot project created for beach access (10 of 74 respondents). Other identified needs included: Addressing off-leash dogs (6 of 74 respondents), additional seating (4 of 74 respondents), maintenance concerns (7 of 74 respondents), and improvements to the existing pathways and washroom facilities (4 of 75 respondents).

Oakwood Park: The need to improve trail accessibility was identified by the largest portion of respondents (9 of 63). In addition, participants also supported the proposed pathway improvements (5 of 63 respondents) and re-grading the park to address drainage (5 of 63 respondents). Many also recommended that implementation of durable ground cover that could withstand the park’s heavy foot traffic and recreational uses (6 of 63 respondents).

Henry Findlay Park: The most respondents identified approval for keeping the playground in its existing location (36 of 90 respondents). However, some participants did not approve of the proposed improvements (13 of 90 respondents) and identified the following concerns: Too much focus on programming for ICF events (9 of 90 respondents), the need for continued park and playground access during events (7 of 90 respondents), and a lack of proposed facilities that support daily use by the local community (13 of 90 respondents).

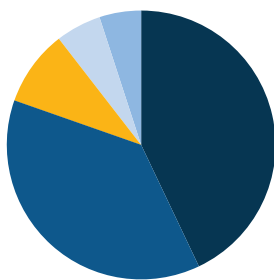
Silver’s Hill Park: The powerline’s removal was the most popular recommendation (13 of 59). Some respondents identified that it is the forested area, not the powerlines, that obstructs views of the racecourse and recommended the partial removal of the forested area (6 of 59 respondents). Participants also stated that the recommendations were unnecessary, as the park had already undergone a sufficient number of improvements prior to previous ICF events (7 of 59 respondents).

Lake Banook Regional Park: The need to improve the existing multi-use pathway was identified by the most respondents (12 of 71). Participants were also concerned that the swimming access points could pose safety risks between swimmers and boaters in the lake and recommended their reconsideration within the final plan (11 of 71 respondents).

Respondents also identified additional support for the following recommendations: Addressing the conflict points between the parking lots and multi-use trails, (7 of 71 respondents), naturalization (10 of 71 respondents), seating improvements (7 of 71 respondents), and reducing the speed and volume of traffic on Prince Albert Road (5 of 71 respondents).

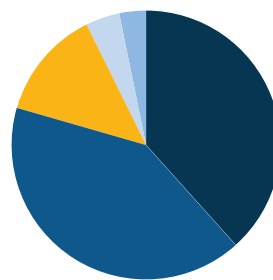
Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park: Participants expressed concern with the proposed fountain (14 of 73 respondents) and swimming access points (14 of 73 respondents) due to potential safety hazards for swimmers; however, many also identified support for these amenities (“water fountain” 11 of 73 respondents and “access points” 10 of 73 respondents). In addition, it was recommended that the dragon boat community’s use within the park and on the lake should be considered in the final plan (13 of 73 respondents).

Fig.10 Birch Cove Park – Approval Rating



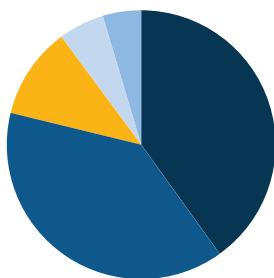
● Strongly agree (42.9%) ● Disagree (5.5%)
● Agree (37.4%) ● Strongly disagree (5.0%)
● No opinion (9.1%)

Fig.11 Oakwood Park– Approval Rating



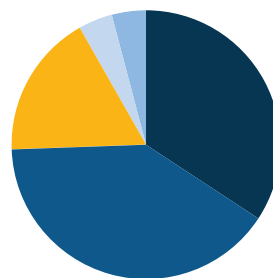
● Strongly agree (38.4%) ● Disagree (4.1%)
● Agree (41.4%) ● Strongly disagree (3.2%)
● No opinion (13.2%)

Fig.12 Henry Findlay Park – Approval Rating



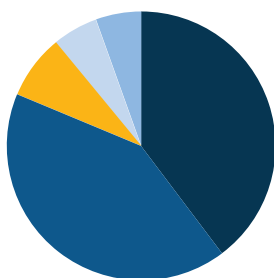
● Strongly agree (40.1%) ● Disagree (5.5%)
● Agree (38.7%) ● Strongly disagree (4.6%)
● No opinion (11.1%)

Fig.13 Silver’s Hill Park – Approval Rating



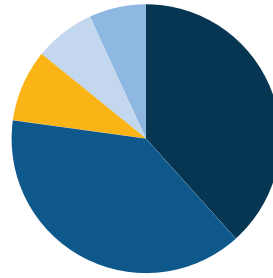
● Strongly agree (34.2%) ● Disagree (4.1%)
● Agree (40.2%) ● Strongly disagree (4.1%)
● No opinion (17.4%)

Fig.14 Lake Banook Regional Park – Approval Rating



● Strongly agree (39.7%) ● Disagree (5.5%)
● Agree (41.6%) ● Strongly disagree (5.5%)
● No opinion (7.8%)

Fig.15 Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park – Approval Rating



● Strongly agree (38.4%) ● Disagree (7.3%)
● Agree (38.8%) ● Strongly disagree (6.8%)
● No opinion (8.7%)

Additional Park Improvements

Respondents were asked to identify whether they felt additional park improvements should be included in the final plan (Fig. 16 to 21):

- Birch Cove Park (24.0%), Henry Findlay Park (22.5%), and Lake Banook Regional Park (21.9%) were the top parks where participants identified that additional improvements were required.
- Respondents identified Silver's Hill Park (27.5%), Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park (26.0%), and Oakwood Park (26.5%) as the top parks that did not require additional improvements.
- Birch Cove Park was the only park where "Yes" (24.0%) received a higher response rate than "No [additional improvements were not required]" (22.6%).

Comments

Respondents who indicated that additional improvements were required were asked to provide additional details:

Birch Cove Park: Many respondents noted that the existing washroom facility required improvement (7 of 47). Participants also expressed a need for improved trail connection to Brookdale Crescent Park (5 of 47 respondents). Additionally, concerns about maintenance, as well as the addition of more waste receptacles, seating, and picnic areas, were identified (15 of 47 respondents)

Oakwood Park: Paving the existing desire path (6 of 31 respondents) and supporting the plan's proposed re-grading (6 of 31 respondents) were the most common improvements. Participants identified the need for drinking fountains (5 of 31 respondents), improved public access (4 of 31 respondents), and the need for signage communicating public and private uses (5 of 31 respondents). Additional garbage cans and improved maintenance was also recommended by several users (5 of 31 respondents).

Henry Findlay Park: Many respondents recommended the implementation of a permanent washroom facility to complement the playground and beach areas' uses (10 of 44 respondents). Participants also noted that the multi-use pathway is

frequently used, but its location, limited capacity, and the speed that users travel causes safety concerns within the park. The need for improved delineation between cyclists and pedestrians was identified (6 of 44 respondents).

Additional recommendations included: Improvements to the existing playground (4 of 44 respondents), the relocation of the gym equipment (4 of 44 respondents), and changes to existing parking lot's size (4 of 44 respondents).

Silver's Hill Park: Survey participants recommended the relocation of the existing crosswalk to address pedestrian-related safety concerns (7 of 31 respondents). The need for additional washroom or drinking water facilities (5 of 31) and improvements to the pathway through the park's wooded area (4 of 31) were also identified.

Lake Banook Regional Park: The most respondents identified concern for the existing multi-use pathway (15 of 44). Recommendations included re-paving and implementing separate cycling facilities. New drinking fountains and washroom facilities (7 of 44 respondents), maintenance concerns (6 of 44 respondents), and the need to address the identified conflict points (4 of 44 respondents) were also recommended.

Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park: Improving lake access for launching non-motorized watercraft received the highest response rate (5 of 41 respondents), but some individuals echoed comments regarding safety concerns that additional water access could cause for swimmers (2 of 41 respondents).

Respondents also identified the need to improve seating along the park's shoreline (3 of 41) and address off-leash dogs within the park (3 of 41 respondents). In addition, many supported the proposed location of the naturalization initiatives (3 of 41) and recommended a strategy to address the Canadian geese population (3 of 41 respondents).

Fig.16 Birch Cove Park – Additional Improvements

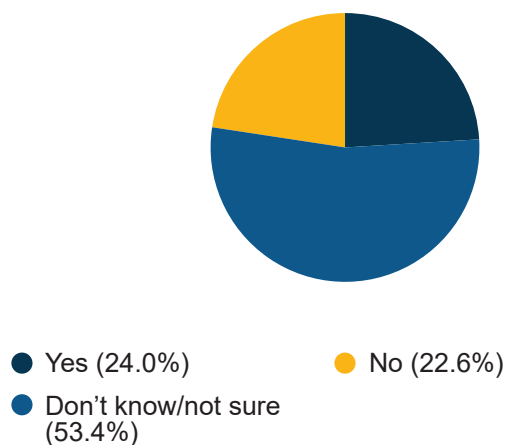


Fig.17 Oakwood Park – Additional Improvements

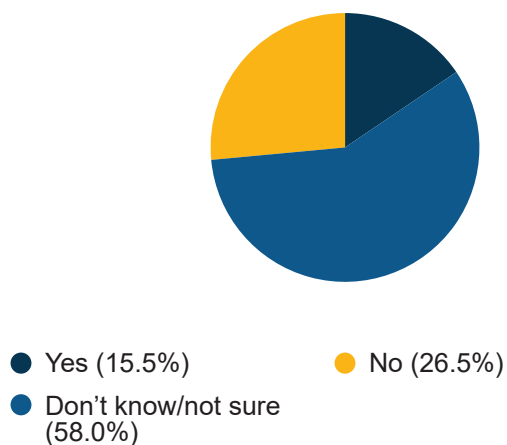


Fig.18 Henry Findlay Park – Additional Improvements

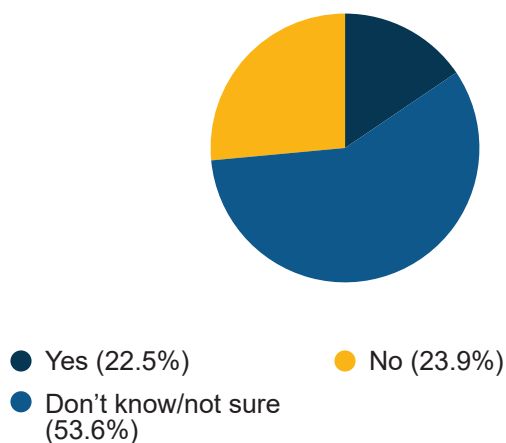


Fig.19 Silver's Hill Park – Additional Improvements

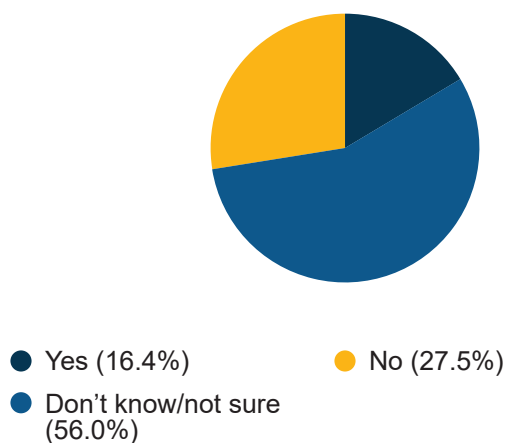


Fig.20 Lake Banook Regional Park – Additional Improvements

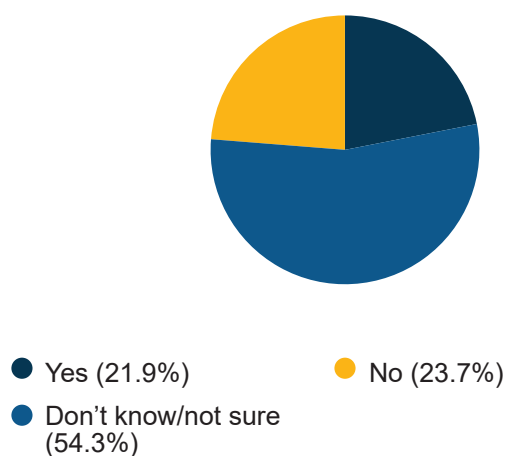
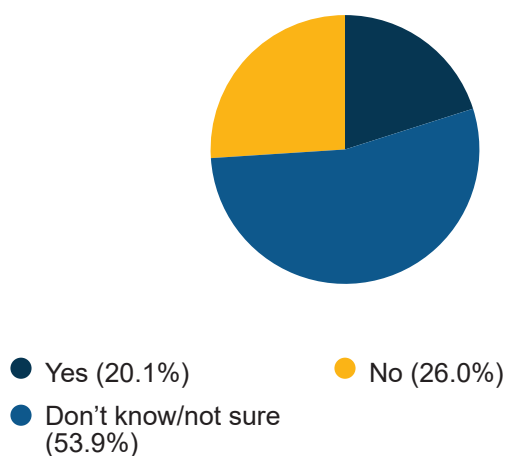


Fig.21 Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park – Additional Improvements



Part Two

Interest and Phasing

The second section of the survey asked participants how they engage with paddling events and how the existing facilities could be enhanced to support daily community use. Respondents were also asked to identify their interest in the Coordination Plan's proposed improvements to understand how they should be prioritized.

Silver's Hill Park Spectator Seating

Respondents were asked whether they use the spectator seating in Silver's Hill Park to watch paddling events (Fig.22):

- Over half of the respondents (55.7%) watch paddling events from the park
- 44.3% do not.

Participants who selected "No" were asked why (Fig.23):

- Over half (66.7%) of survey respondents selected "Other"
- Almost one-quarter (24.0%) of respondents identified that the park was "Too far from the racecourse"
- "Cannot access the seating area"(5.2%) and "Power lines interrupt view" (4.2%) were the least popular options.

Lake Banook Regional Park - Multi-use Pathway

Participants were asked whether the mixture of users creates issues along the multi-use pathway (Fig.24):

- "Sometimes" (34.9%), "Yes, on a regular basis" (27.5%) and "Yes, but only during events" (13.3%,) were the most popular options.
- "Never" (1.4%), "Don't know/not sure" (3.7%), and "No, if rarely ever" (19.3%,) were the least popular options.

Comments

Respondents recommended painting the pathway to delineate user groups or implementing separate active transportation facilities (34 of 109). Several participants identified additional safety concerns created by different user groups sharing the pathway (30 of 109 respondents), and commented that their

Fig.22 Do you use Silver's Hill Park to watch paddling events?

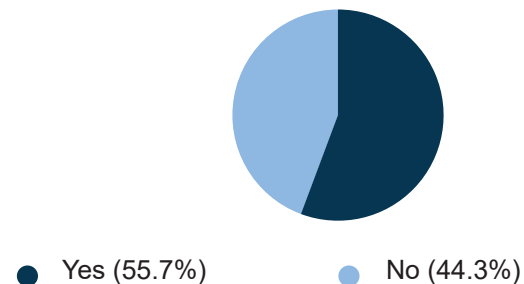


Fig.23 If you selected no, which of the following options best matches why you selected no:

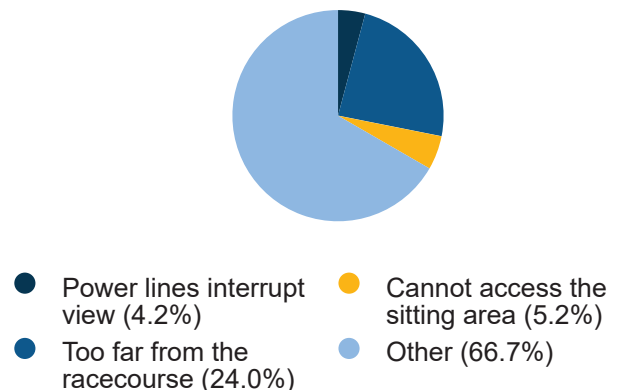


Fig.24 Do you believe a mixture of users (including, cyclists, e-scooter users, and pedestrians) along the pathway creates issues?

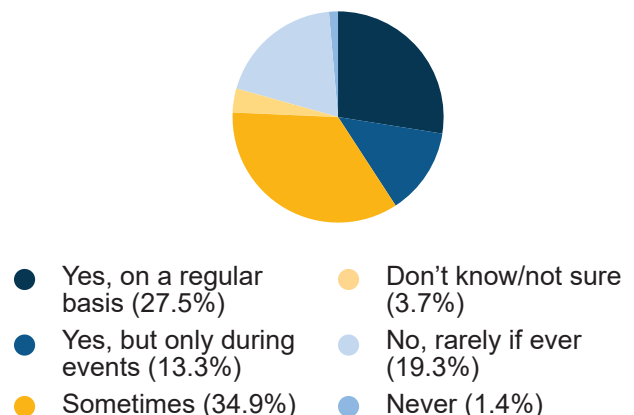
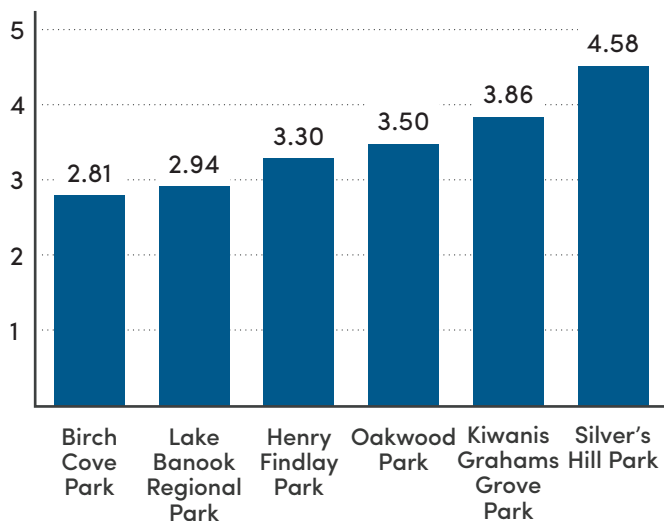


Fig.25 Please rank the following parks in order of importance for implementation based on the proposed improvements (1= most important, 6 = least important)



Multi-use Pathway Comments - Continued

safety was impacted by the increased frequency and speed of e-bike and e-scooters (27 of 109 respondents) and that conflicts between user groups increased during events. A strategy to mitigate conflicting uses was recommended (14 of 109 respondents).

In addition, respondents suggested that developing an educational campaign about active transportation etiquette could improve user safety (11 of 109 respondents).

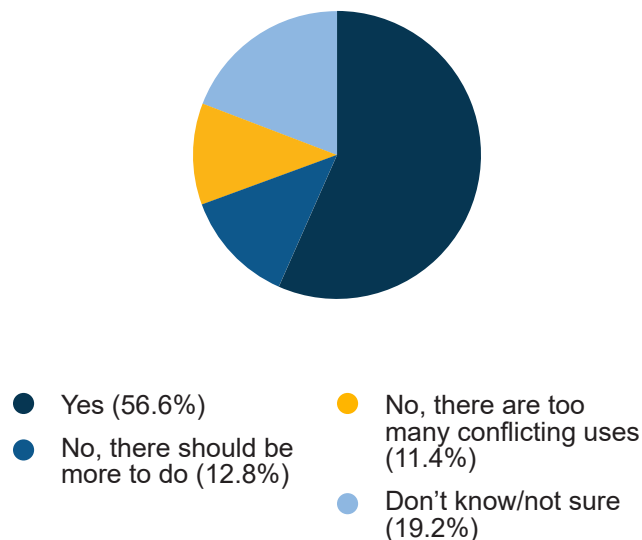
Park Improvements

Participants were asked to rank the order in which they would like park improvements implemented.

Lower numbers indicate more interest, whereas higher numbers indicate less importance (Fig.25):

- Respondents identified the most interest in seeing park improvements implemented in Birch Cove Park, followed by Lake Banook Regional Park and Henry Findlay Park.
- Participants are the least interested in the improvements identified in Silver's Hill Park, followed by Kiwanis Grahams Grove Park, and Oakwood Park.

Fig.26 Once all the improvements are implemented, do you feel Lake Banook's parkland will have the right balance of activities.



Park Balance

Respondents were asked whether they thought the municipal parkland surrounding Lake Banook would have the right balance of activities if the improvements were fully implemented (Fig.26):

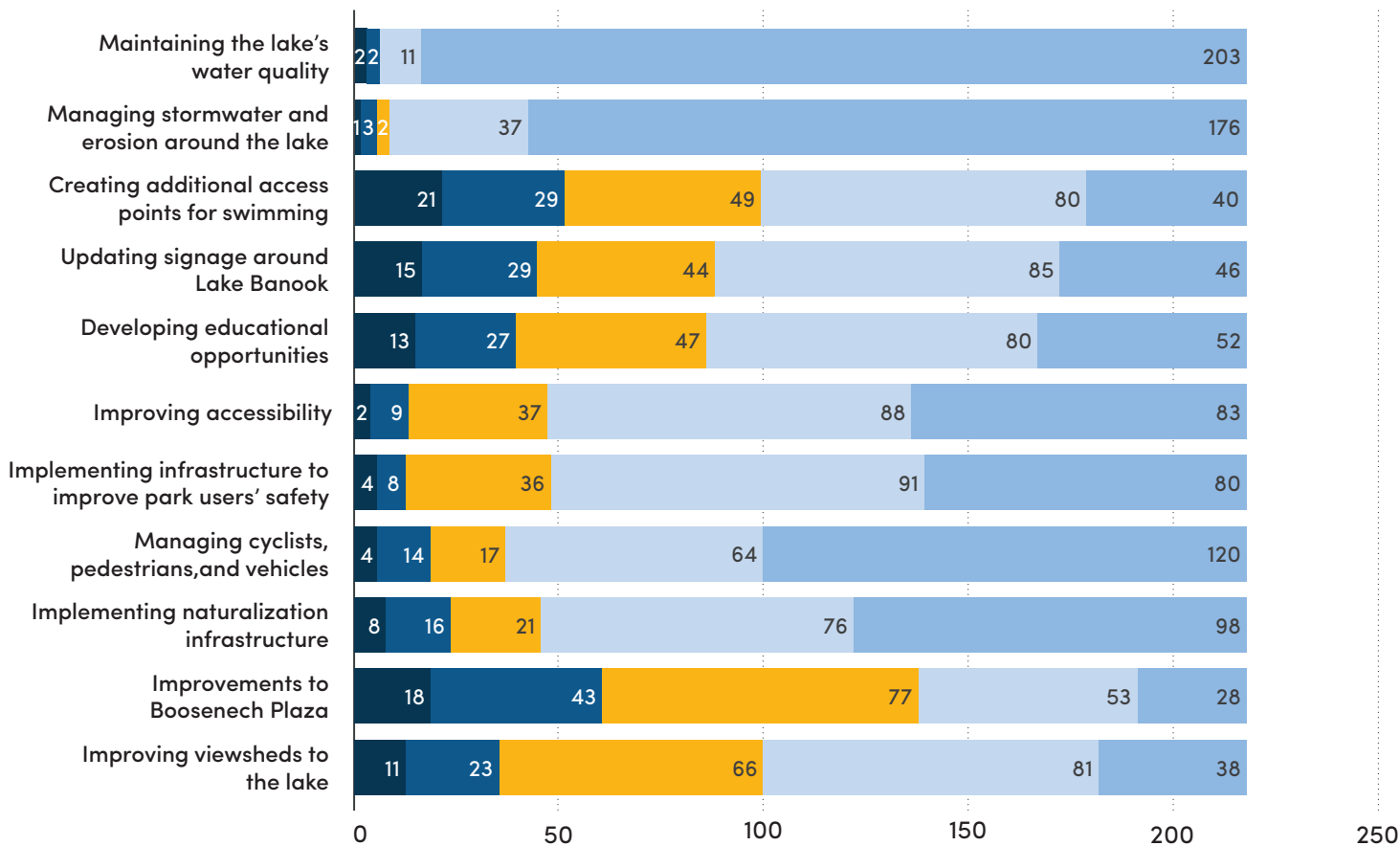
- The majority of participants (56.6%) selected "Yes".
- Over a quarter (24.2%) did not think there would be the proper balance: 12.8% said there should be more things to do and 11.4% said there were too many conflicting uses.
- 19.2% said they were didn't know/unsure whether the parkland would have the proper balance of activities`

Additional Comments

Respondents who selected "No" were asked to provide additional context:

- The most respondents identified concern that the plan did not address or resolve conflicts between the lake's user groups (11 of 52 respondents). Other concerns, such as too much focus on event programming (7 of 52 respondents), and not enough on supporting recreational use by the community (10 of 52 respondents), were also identified.

Fig.27 Please prioritize the following categories of improvement, based on what is important to you:



Very important

- 1. Maintaining water quality (203 of 219 respondents)
- 2. Managing stormwater (176 of 219 respondents)
- 3. Managing cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles (120 of 219 respondents)

Somewhat important

- 1. Updating signage around Lake Banook (85 of 219 respondents)
- 2. Improving viewsheds to the lake (81 of 219 respondents)
- 3. Additional access points for swimming (80 of 219 respondents) and developing educational opportunities (80 of 219 respondents)

Neutral/no opinion

- 1. Improvements to Boosenech Plaza (77 of 219 respondents)
- 2. Improving viewsheds to the lake (66 of 219 respondents)
- 3. Additional access points for swimming (49 of 219 respondents)

Somewhat unimportant

- 1. Improvements to Boosenech Plaza (43 of 219 respondents)
- 2. Updated signage around Lake Banook (29 of 219 respondents) and additional access points for swimming (29 of 219 respondents)
- 3. Developing educational opportunities (27 of 219 respondents)

Not at all important

- 1. Additional access points for swimming (21 of 219 respondents)
- 2. Improvements to Boosenech Plaza (18 of 219 respondents)
- 3. Updating signage (15 of 219 respondents)

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Neutral/no opinion
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not at all important

Implementation Priorities

Respondents were asked to prioritize the plan’s improvements based on their perceived importance (Fig.27):

- Maintaining water quality (203 of 219 respondents), managing stormwater and erosion (176 of 219 respondents), and managing cyclists, pedestrians and vehicular traffic (120 and 219 respondents) were the top ranked improvements in the “Very important” category.
- None of the top-ranked improvements in the “Very important” category was top-ranked in another.

“Creating additional access points for swimming” was one of the top-ranked improvements in the “Somewhat important category” (80 of 219 respondents). However, it also appeared as one of the highest ranked improvements in the following categories:

- Neutral/no opinion (49 of 219 respondents)
- Not at all important (18 of 219 respondents)

Two proposed improvements were top three in “somewhat unimportant” and “not at all important” categories:

- Improvements to Boosenech Plaza (43 and 18 of 219 respondents)
- Updating signage around Lake Banook (29 and 15 of 219 respondents) was the second most popular option in the “Somewhat unimportant” category, but was also the top ranked option in the “Somewhat Important” category (43 of 219 respondents).

Parkland Experience

Participants were asked how their parkland experience could be improved during events (Fig.28):

- “Access to public washrooms, drinking water, and hand washing stations” (155 of 214 respondents) and “defin[ing] spaces/areas to accommodate both spectators and regular park users” (128 of 214 respondents) and “Communication regarding parkland closures (109 of 214 respondents) were the most popular options
- “Improved seating to accommodate spectators (102 of 214 respondents), “Offering and

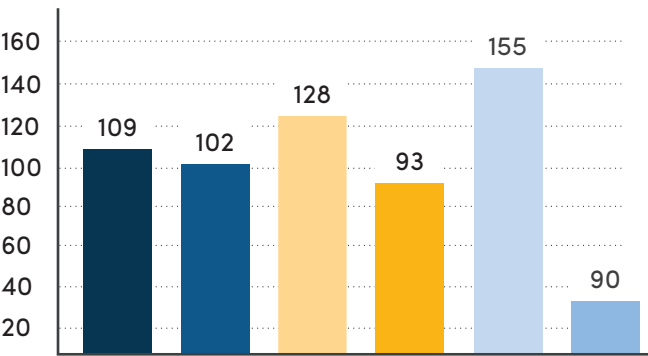
communicating alternative trail routes when parks are closed due to events (93 of 214 respondents), and “Other” (29 of 214 respondents) were the least popular options.

Paddling Competitions

Survey participants were asked to describe what they enjoy about paddling events and any concerns they have:

- The most respondents expressed support for paddling’s benefit to the local community, particularly for its youth (50 of 130 respondents). Many also enjoyed watching competitions (40 of 130 respondents) and said that doing so renews their appreciation for the lake and the recreational opportunities it provides (21 of 130 respondents).
- The events’ energy (16 of 130 respondents), proximity to the racecourse (14 of 130 respondents), and the historical importance of paddling in Dartmouth (8 of 130 respondents) were also positively identified by several survey users.

Fig.28 Throughout the year, there are several paddling events that take place. How could Lake Banook’s parkland experience be improved during these events? Select all that apply:



- Communication regarding parkland closure
- Improved seating areas to accommodate spectators
- Define spaces/areas to accommodate both spectators and regular park users
- Offering and communicating alternative trail routes when parks are closed due to events
- Access to public washrooms, drinking water, and hand washing stations
- Other (please specify)

- The most respondents indicated the lack of parking during events as their primary concern (20 of 119 respondents). Additionally, traffic created by street closures (15 of 119 respondents), and disruptions, such as noise pollution and litter (9 of 119 respondents) were also noted by survey users.
- Several participants expressed their repeated concern about restricted public access to the parkland during events (18 of 119 respondents)

Naturalization

A pilot naturalization project was implemented by the municipality in the 2024. The plan identifies the proposed location of several similar initiatives throughout the municipal parkland surrounding Lake Banook. The survey asked respondents to rate their level of interest (Fig.29):

- Over three quarters of respondents identified interest: 53.4% were very interested, and 25.6% were somewhat interested.
- 9.6% did not know or were unsure.
- 11.4% were not interested.

Additional Comments

Almost half of the survey's respondents (30 of 66) identified additional support for naturalization. However, some said they would only approve of future initiatives if the efficacy of the pilot project was measured and was determined to be effective (4 of 66 respondents).

Participants also identified conflicts between the pilot project and public water access as their primary concern (9 of 66 respondents), with many saying they were not supportive because the pilot project limits the use of Birch Cove Park's beach (7 of 66 respondents). Others said that naturalization would not improve or maintain the lake's water quality and is an unnecessary expenditure (5 of 66 respondents).

Fig.29 During spring 2024, the municipality implemented a naturalization project within Birch Cove Park. Please rate your level of interest in having similar initiatives implemented throughout the municipal parkland surrounding Lake Banook:

