

Public Engagement Report



Town of Cobourg Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Date: June 2026

Prepared by: Communications Department



Background

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan establishes a 10-year vision and framework for the planning and delivery of parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, programs, events, and related services within the Town of Cobourg. As a strategic planning document, it is intended to align with existing municipal plans and policies, provide guidance to staff and Council, and inform annual budget and capital planning through 2036.

This updated Plan consolidates and advances previous planning work while responding to current conditions and emerging community priorities. Recommendations contained within the Plan were prepared by the consulting team and informed by technical analysis and public input. Council will ultimately consider the Plan and determine the extent, timing, and manner in which its recommendations are implemented.

Phase One Engagement Summary

The development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan began with a comprehensive community engagement process in Fall 2025. Residents were invited to share their perspectives through an online survey, a community workshop, and a statistically representative telephone survey. Additional input was gathered from Town Council, staff, community organizations, user groups, seniors, youth, and local sports associations.

Feedback collected during this first phase of engagement informed the preparation of the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Phase Two Engagement Summary

The draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan public engagement process was launched on the Town of Cobourg's online engagement platform, Engage Cobourg, on May 20, 2026. The draft plan is organized into four key areas: Parks and Open Spaces; Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities; Programs and Events; and Service Delivery. Recommendations within each area were developed by the consulting team based on community input, technical analysis, facility and usage data, municipal priorities, related plans and policies, and industry trends.

Interested members of the public were encouraged to review and submit feedback on the draft plan via Engage Cobourg or by submitting their feedback in person at an Open House on May 25. To encourage as many people from the broader community to participate as possible, the survey did not require registration and submitting name and email was optional, allowing for anonymity.

A communications campaign to drive residents to the Engage Cobourg online public engagement platform was managed by the Communications Department through a variety of vehicles and tactics, including:

Online Engagement Tools

The Engage Cobourg project provided an open-ended feedback form for each section of the Plan (Parks and Open Spaces, Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities, Programs and Events, and Service Delivery), as well as a general feedback form on the homepage that was not specific to any section.

In addition, the homepage included the “Gather” tool, which functions like a digital sticky note, allowing respondents to provide brief feedback. Responses submitted through this tool were published on the homepage for others to view, and users could “heart” responses submitted by other participants.

Communications and Marketing

- Public Notices x3 (one to announce the community Open House at the Cobourg Community Centre on May 25, 2026; one to announce online engagement opening on Engage Cobourg; and one to remind residents to participate in online engagement)
- Social Media posts and reminders about the online engagement and Open House
- Engage Cobourg posters, displayed in Municipal buildings and given to Task Force members to distribute
- Advertisement on the Cobourg Community Centre's digital scoreboard
- 24 lawn signs placed in parks and key locations in town
- Roadside mobile display sign
- Radio advertisements on 93.3 myFM and 89.7 FM
- Today's Northumberland digital ad
- Business cards with a QR code directing public to Engage Cobourg
- Cobourg Transit vehicle wraps - one bus, and one van
- Tax Bill Insert
- Engage Cobourg newsletter subscriber emails x2

Phase Two Engagement Summary (continued)



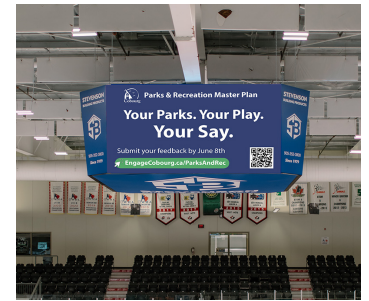
Business card with QR code



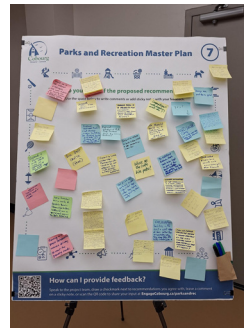
Posters displayed in Municipal Buildings



Lawn signs on display around Cobourg



CCC score clock



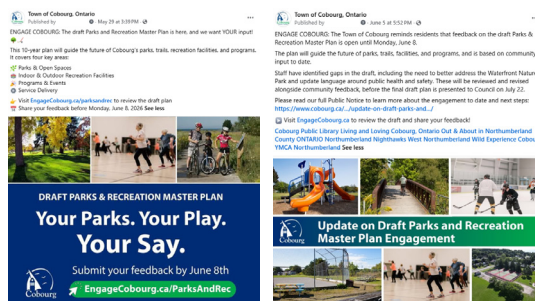
Community Open House at the Cobourg Community Centre (May 25, 2026)



Cobourg Transit Bus



Cobourg Transit Van



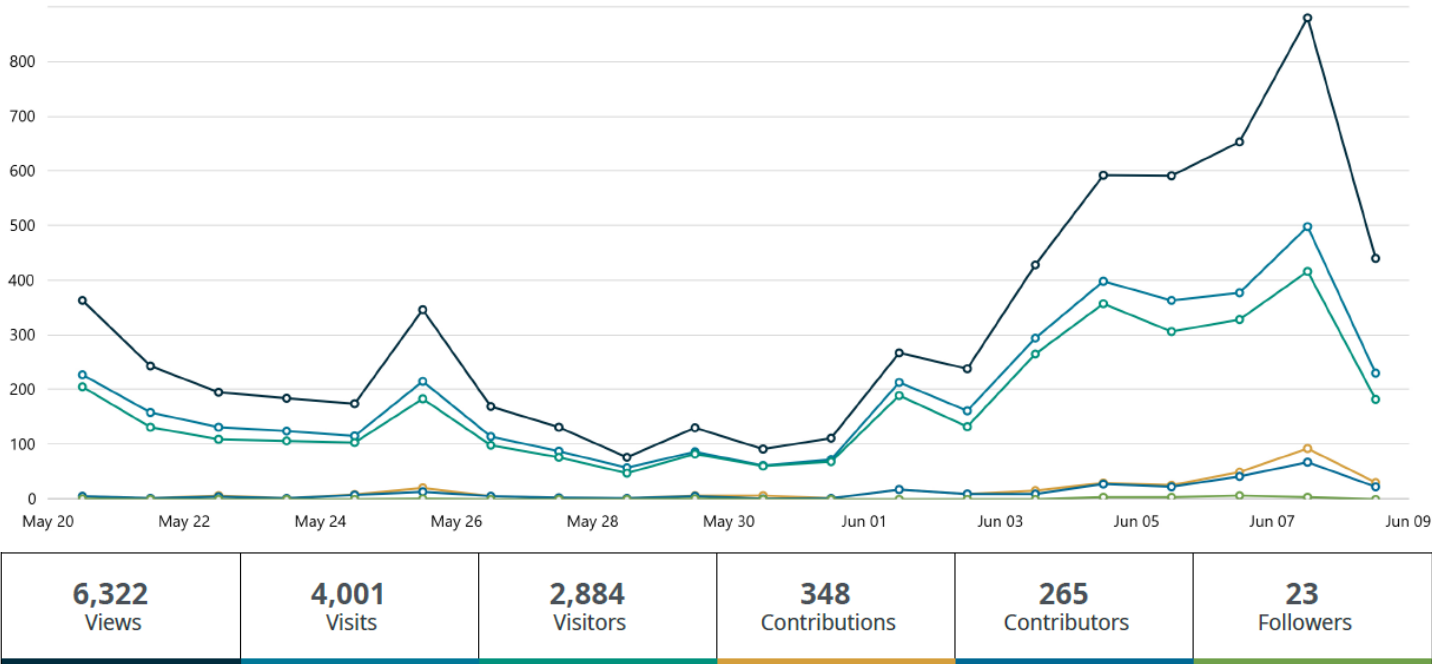
Social Media posts promoting Engage Cobourg



Roadside mobile sign display

Performance Summary

Information regarding key visitation and utilization metrics for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Engage Cobourg page:



Definitions

- Views:** The number of times a visitor views any page on a site
- Visits:** The number of end-user sessions associated with a single visitor.
- Visitors:** The number of unique public or end-users to a site. A visitor is only counted once, even if they visit a site several times in one day.
- Contributions:** The total number of responses or feedback collected through the participation tools.
- Contributors:** The unique number of visitors who have left feedback or contributions on a site through the participation tools.
- Followers:** The number of visitors who have 'subscribed' to a project using the 'Follow' button.

Contributions by Activity

Contributions by activity is a breakdown of contributions across each tool offered through Engage Cobourg's Parks and Recreation Master Plan project page:

Activity	Contributions	%
 Form	313	89.94%
 Gather	35	10.06%

Activities

This is a breakdown of each feedback activity offered via Engage Cobourg and how many contributors/ contributions each one received in order of highest to lowest:



Parks and Open Spaces

Contributions

140

Contributors

135

Age of Respondents

90 respondents answered, 50 skipped

AGE	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Under 18	0	0
18-24	0	0
25-34	10	11.11%
35-44	13	14.44%
45-54	16	17.78%
55-64	16	17.78%
65-74	24	26.67%
75-84	9	10%
85+	1	1.11%
Prefer Not to Say	1	1.11%



Indoor & Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Contributions

98

Contributors

95

Age of Respondents

66 respondents answered, 32 skipped

AGE	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Under 18	2	3.03%
18-24	0	0
25-34	5	7.58%
35-44	21	31.82%
45-54	14	21.21%
55-64	5	7.58%
65-74	16	24.24%
75-84	2	3.03%
85+	0	0%
Prefer Not to Say	1	1.52%



Parks & Rec Master Plan - General

Contributions

44

Contributors

43

Age of Respondents

24 respondents answered, 20 skipped

AGE	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Under 18	0	0%
18-24	1	4.17%
25-34	1	4.17%
35-44	3	12.50%
45-54	3	12.50%
55-64	8	33.33%
65-74	4	16.67%
75-84	2	8.33%
85+	0	0%
Prefer Not to Say	2	8.33%



Gather Tool

Contributions

35

Contributors

34

Age data was not collected for respondents who used the Gather Tool.



Programs and Events

Contributions

21

Contributors

20

Age of Respondents

11 respondents answered, 10 skipped

AGE	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Under 18	0	0%
18-24	0	0%
25-34	1	9.09%
35-44	3	27.27%
45-54	3	27.27%
55-64	2	18.18%
65-74	2	18.18%
75-84	0	0%
85+	0	0%
Prefer Not to Say	0	0%



Service Delivery

Contributions

10

Contributors

10

Age of Respondents

4 respondents answered, 6 skipped

AGE	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
Under 18	0	0%
18-24	0	0%
25-34	0	0%
35-44	1	25%
45-54	0	0%
55-64	1	25%
65-74	2	50%
75-84	0	0%
85+	0	0%
Prefer Not to Say	0	0%

Feedback Summary

This Engagement Report focuses on the online feedback gathered through the Town's Public Engagement website, EngageCobourg.ca. In addition to Engage Cobourg, community members shared feedback through attending the in-person Open House, and contacting members of the Project Team directly over phone or email.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to submit their feedback. This report summarizes the main themes of what was gathered through Engage Cobourg responses.

What We Heard

The community is deeply invested in Cobourg's parks and recreation future.

Many residents took the time to share detailed, thoughtful feedback — a clear sign that parks and recreation matter. Residents praised the town's natural assets, including its waterfront, Victoria Park, and the Cobourg Community Centre, and expressed strong enthusiasm for improvements to trails, playgrounds, splash pads, and sports facilities.

The most prominent concern raised was public safety in parks.

A significant number of responses objected to language in the draft plan relating to encampments and harm reduction infrastructure in parks, asking that those issues be addressed through social services, housing, and public health channels rather than through parks policy. At the same time, a smaller number of respondents supported the plan's compassionate framing, urging the town to take a coordinated, evidence-based approach that protects safety for all while respecting the dignity of vulnerable residents.

Residents also raised specific concerns about key facilities.

The proposed phase-out of Centennial Pool drew strong opposition, with many residents disputing the plan's usage data and calling for the pool to be preserved and upgraded. Respondents called urgently for progress on an indoor pool, whether through a municipally-owned facility at the CCC or a formal YMCA partnership, noting that the issue has been unresolved for nearly two decades. Youth hockey leagues flagged a critical shortage of ice time, particularly girls' programs, and baseball families called for the revitalization of Donegan Park to restore it as a tournament-quality destination.

Across all topics, residents asked for a plan with more ambition, specificity, and accountability.

Many felt the draft relied too heavily on words like "explore" and "consider," without clear timelines, funding commitments, or measurable outcomes. Respondents asked Council to treat this plan not as a maintenance checklist, but as a genuine vision for what Cobourg's parks and recreation system should look like in 2036 — one that attracts young families, serves seniors and newcomers, and makes Cobourg one of the best communities in Ontario to live and play.

Recurring Themes

1. Encampments and Drug Use in Parks

Estimated frequency: ~160–180 responses (45–50%)

Encampments, safety and drug use in public parks were the most dominant theme, due to language on pages 61–62 of the draft plan recommending syringe disposal bins and non-stigmatizing signage. Respondents across all age groups and topic forms objected strongly, arguing parks are not the appropriate venue for social services responses. A smaller minority urged compassion and a coordinated approach rather than blanket enforcement.

"Official planning documents should clearly reflect the primary purpose of parks and recreation facilities rather than adopting language that could be used to advance broader political objectives unrelated to their core function. Parks belong to everyone, and their planning and management should be guided first and foremost by the interests of the entire community."

2. Save Centennial Pool (Outdoor Pool)

Estimated frequency: ~60–70 responses (17–20%)

The draft plan's suggestion to close the outdoor Centennial Pool once it requires replacement sparked a strong community response. Respondents cited its affordability, accessibility, historical value (operating since 1967), and growing post-COVID usage. Some respondents disputed the plan's claim that use is declining. Several noted that swimming lessons in Lake Ontario are unsafe and unacceptable as an alternative.

"The statement within the document is inaccurate — 'While the pool is still being operated in the summer months, use is declining.' Their numbers have (been) increasing, not declining."

3. More Ice Time and Indoor Facilities (CCC Expansion)

Estimated frequency: ~50–60 responses (14–17%)

Residents involved in sports leagues flagged a critical shortage of ice time, particularly for youth hockey and girls' programs forced into late-night slots. Calls for an additional ice pad at the CCC were frequent. There were also consistent complaints about the cleanliness of the existing CCC facility (i.e. dirty glass, debris around boards, and inadequate maintenance).

"More ice! At least once ice pad if not more being added. U15 and U18 girls should not have to be having to start their ice at 930-1030pm. Not acceptable."

4. Indoor Pool — Town Ownership or YMCA Partnership

Estimated frequency: ~45–55 responses (13–16%)

Separate from the outdoor pool issue, many respondents called for a publicly accessible indoor pool — either municipally owned at the CCC or developed through a formal YMCA partnership. Frustration was directed at the plan's passive "wait and see" stance on the YMCA expansion, which has reportedly been stalled for over a decade. Residents also raised affordability concerns, noting the YMCA requires a paid membership.

"Rather than merely stating that plans are unknown from the YMCA about an indoor pool, please consider working together with them as the Municipality of Trent Hills did for their facility in Campbellford."

5. Tennis vs. Pickleball at Sinclair Park

Estimated frequency: ~25–30 responses (7–9%)

A focused response from tennis players pushed back against the plan's recommendation to convert Sinclair Park courts exclusively to pickleball. Respondents disputed usage data, noting pickleball players already have multiple venues (YMCA, CCC, Dink Den, Port Hope), and argued courts can continue to be shared. Some also flagged that a 2023 cost analysis had already recommended building new dedicated pickleball courts at the CCC rather than repurposing Sinclair.

"We have had 25% increase in tennis members this year... The number on pickleball members is declining at Sinclair Park. It has dropped from 100 to 60. Your numbers in the report are incorrect."

6. Baseball Diamonds and Donegan Park Revitalization

Estimated frequency: ~20–25 responses (6–7%)

Multiple respondents highlighted deteriorating conditions at Donegan Park (i.e. rotting bleachers, inadequate lighting, no washrooms or concession stand). Baseball registrations were noted to be surging following the Blue Jays' World Series run, and several pointed out the plan's data may be outdated. Respondents called for investment to restore the facility as a regional tournament destination.

"Donegan Park was once a destination field, but instead it has been left to deteriorate and is an embarrassment when hosting local tournaments... An investment to revitalize Donegan would have long-term economic benefits as tournaments bring in significant revenue to the town's local businesses."

7. Waterfront and Victoria Park Campground

Estimated frequency: ~30–40 responses (9–11%)

The future of Victoria Park campground is a divided issue: some want it relocated or transformed into a multi-use waterfront destination with restaurants, green space, and gathering areas; others strongly want it preserved as-is for its economic and cultural value. Boardwalk maintenance (missing bricks, rotting structures, unsafe conditions), beach overcrowding, and parking costs were concerns for many respondents.

"I have enjoyed the campground over the years but fully appreciate it is time for change. Please consider using this prime waterfront land for enjoyment of more people. I envision a dedicated picnic area with more obvious areas for recycling and garbage disposal, maybe some food vendors, something to keep the kids safe and occupied like mini putt or a beautiful playstructure."

8. Playgrounds, Splash Pads and Youth Spaces

Estimated frequency: ~20–25 responses (6–7%)

Families reported regularly travelling to Port Hope, Baltimore, or other communities because Cobourg's playgrounds are dated, poorly maintained, and lack modern amenities. Requests for additional splash pads (particularly in the north end, away from crowded beach areas) and a better skate park were common. Several parents cited safety concerns keeping children out of parks altogether.

"As a parent of two young children, we frequently go to Port Hope or Baltimore to use their playgrounds as they are better maintained, modern, and simply have more options."

9. Accountability, Implementation and Measurable Outcomes

Estimated frequency: ~15–20 responses (4–6%)

A thoughtful cross-section of respondents, particularly in the Service Delivery and Parks & Open Spaces forms, noted the draft plan lacked concrete timelines, targets, and accountability mechanisms. They described the plan as a "wish list" full of language like "look into," "explore," and "consider." Several called for annual public reporting, a mid-term review, and defined performance indicators

"A plan without measurable outcomes is a wish list... The Town does not need another document that sits on a shelf. It needs a plan that residents can track, measure, and hold Council accountable for delivering."

10. Trails, Greenspace and Urban Forest

Estimated frequency: ~15–20 responses (4–6%)

Respondents across several forms called for better trail connectivity, paved multi-use paths throughout the town's core, and more intentional urban tree planting. Some flagged that the plan references the 2018 Urban Forest Management Plan but includes no budgeted tree-planting commitments. Climate resilience (shade, flood plains, heat mitigation) was raised as an increasingly urgent concern.

"We need trees for ecological reasons — these must be costed and budgeted. We need the right trees in the right places, budgeted and timed."

Top Gaps or Under-Addressed Issues in the Draft Plan

1. Clear Policy Direction On Encampments, Public Drug Use, and Park Safety

Many respondents feel the draft plan does not clearly separate parks planning from housing, addiction, public health, and social-service policy. They want clearer language on enforcement, park purpose, safe access for families/seniors/children, and coordination with the proper agencies.

2. A Bold, Actionable Recreation Infrastructure Plan

The feedback repeatedly asks for more specificity on what will actually be built, upgraded, or expanded over 10 years — especially pools, ice, splash pads, playgrounds, basketball courts, skateparks, ball diamonds, turf, and youth amenities.

3. Aquatics Strategy

Respondents feel the plan under-addresses the future of Centennial Pool, the need for an indoor pool, warm-water/therapy aquatics, affordable lessons, and partnership options.

4. Maintenance-First Asset Management

Many feel the plan does not adequately confront the current condition of core assets: boardwalk, pier, washrooms, playgrounds, benches, trails, diamonds, CCC cleanliness, lighting, and waterfront infrastructure.

5. Family and Youth-Focused “Signature” Projects

Respondents want clearer commitments to destination playgrounds, splash pads, youth courts, skate/pump track infrastructure, informal gathering spaces, and safe low-cost activities for children and teens.

6. Universal Accessibility and Inclusion Standards

The draft is seen by some as too conditional on accessibility, for example, wording like “where possible” is criticized. Respondents want universal design, accessible washrooms, shade, seating, water, pathways, and inclusive programming embedded as baseline requirements.

7. Waterfront Vision and Campground Decision-Making

The plan appears under-resolved on the future of Victoria Park Campground, waterfront commercialization, boardwalk/pier renewal, public gathering spaces, resident access, tourism pressure, and preserving Cobourg’s low-rise waterfront character.

8. Year-Round Programming and Winter Activation

Residents see missed opportunity in winter use: outdoor skating, markets, fire pits, walking routes, winter festivals, saunas/cold plunges, youth pop-ups, and partnerships with local businesses or service clubs.

9. Environmental Protection, Trees, and Natural Heritage

Respondents ask for stronger commitments to tree canopy, climate resilience, naturalization, West Beach/ecological protection, community gardens, pollinator/native planting, and stormwater/Low Impact Development approaches.

10. Implementation, Metrics, and Public Reporting

Several responses call for annual progress reporting, measurable indicators, timelines, budgets, responsible departments, partnership commitments, and a clear mechanism for residents to report safety/maintenance issues and see follow-up.



Parks and Open Spaces

Number of Responses - 140

What We Heard

Across the Parks and Open Spaces responses, the strongest recurring theme is concern about public safety and the intended purpose of parks. Many respondents want the draft plan to remove or substantially revise language related to encampments, public drug use, syringe disposal bins, and harm-reduction signage, and instead emphasize safe, clean, family-friendly, law-abiding public spaces.

Beyond that dominant issue, the most common themes are practical and place-based: respondents want the Town to repair and maintain existing assets, especially washrooms, boardwalks, cobble paths, and waterfront infrastructure; invest in family and youth amenities such as playgrounds, splash pads, courts, skateparks, and outdoor rinks; strengthen natural heritage, trails, cycling, tree canopy, and open-space protection; and develop a clearer strategy for the waterfront, beach, campground/trailer park, and resident access.

Top 5 Recurring Themes: Parks and Open Spaces

1. Safe, Family-Friendly Parks; Opposition to Encampments, Drug Use, and Syringe-Bin Recommendations

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~70+

Many respondents want parks to remain safe, clean, lawful, family-oriented recreation spaces and strongly object to plan language or recommendations that appear to accommodate encampments, public drug use, syringe disposal bins, or non-stigmatizing drug-use signage in parks. These concerns are repeatedly linked to children, seniors, families, washrooms, playgrounds, needles, public confidence, and enforcement.

"Parks are for recreation, not housing or social services."

"No encampments, no open drug use, no needle drop off."

"I oppose syringe disposal bins in parks, especially near playgrounds and family areas."

"Our parks need to be safe spaces for our children and youth."

2. Maintenance, Washrooms, and Repair of Existing Infrastructure

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~35–40

Respondents repeatedly say existing parks and waterfront assets are deteriorating and need attention before or alongside new investments. Common concerns include closed or inadequate washrooms, boardwalk and cobble-path hazards, benches, lighting, signage, garbage, dead trees, winter clearing, and general waterfront upkeep.

"More washrooms that are open to the public."

"Please fix the cobble pathways; they are dangerous to walk on."

"The main boardwalk at Victoria Park Beach is seriously degraded."

"Assign more resources to upkeep existing infrastructure."

3. Family, Youth, Playgrounds, Splash Pads, and Active Outdoor Recreation

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~30-35

Many respondents want more and better outdoor amenities for children, youth, and families. Requests include destination playgrounds, upgraded play structures, splash pads beyond the waterfront, basketball courts, outdoor rinks, skatepark improvements, picnic tables, pump tracks, outdoor fitness equipment, disc golf, and youth gathering spaces.

"Kids need somewhere to play."

"Cobourg could really use more playgrounds. Especially one that gives a real wow factor"

"A splash pad beyond the waterfront would be great!"

"Cobourg needs an official basketball court by the CCC and others around town."

4. Natural Heritage, Tree Canopy, Trails, Cycling, and Open-Space Protection

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~30-35

Respondents ask for stronger protection and enhancement of natural assets. This includes tree planting, native species, biodiversity, community gardens, trails, cycling infrastructure, bike/scooter parking, West Beach and Waterfront Nature Park protection, and preservation of 117 Durham as park/open space. Several comments raise concerns about development, servicing, road access, soil testing, and loss of green space.

"Cobourg's tree canopy is not adequate."

"Expand dedicated bike lanes to connect east west and north south out of Cobourg."

"The Master Plan should include a clear natural heritage protection strategy for the West Headland, West Beach and the Waterfront Nature Park."

"Cobourg must not build condos or apartments at 117 Durham."

5. Waterfront, Beach, Campground/Trailer Park, and Resident Access

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~25-30

The waterfront is viewed as one of Cobourg's most important public assets, but respondent views differ on its future. Some want the Victoria Park Campground retained; others want it reduced, moved, or repurposed for green space, restaurants, patios, picnic areas, winter uses, kayak rentals, or broader public access. Several also raise concerns about beach crowding, parking, resident access, washrooms, and waterfront character.

"The Waterfront Nature Park and West Beach need more protection."

"Leave Victoria Park campground as it is."



Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Number of Responses - 98

What We Heard

Across the Recreation Facilities responses, the strongest recurring theme is the need for a clear aquatics strategy. Many respondents want the Town to keep, upgrade, or replace Centennial Pool, and to treat a new or improved indoor pool as a priority rather than a future possibility. Residents frequently described pools as important for swimming lessons, water safety, AquaFit, seniors' exercise, affordability, youth employment, and year-round community health; several also questioned the draft plan's pool usage data and asked for a more active Town/YMCA partnership.

Beyond aquatics, the most common themes are facility upgrades, access, and future capacity. Respondents want the Town to invest in baseball diamonds and sport amenities, especially at Donegan Park, with repeated requests for washrooms, concessions, bleachers, lighting, batting cages, shade, pathways, parking, and tournament-quality facilities. Many also asked for more indoor turf, soccer facilities, outdoor basketball courts, pickleball and tennis access, additional ice time or outdoor skating opportunities, and flexible multi-use spaces that support both organized sports and informal recreation.

Respondents also emphasized that recreation facilities should be accessible, affordable, clean, and designed for a growing and changing community. Common concerns included CCC parking and cleanliness, aging change rooms and washrooms, limited public access to some courts and programs, and the need for more youth-focused, senior-friendly, low-barrier, and drop-in recreation options. Overall, the feedback suggests residents want a more ambitious, practical, and clearly implemented facilities plan that maintains existing assets, responds to current demand, and prepares Cobourg for future growth.

Top 5 Recurring Themes: Recreation Facilities

1. Aquatics: Indoor Pool, Therapy Pool, and Centennial/Outdoor Pool

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~38-40

The strongest recurring theme is the need for better public aquatics. Respondents want a public indoor pool, warm therapy/teaching pool, swimming lessons, lane swim, aquaFit, senior-friendly water exercise, and affordable access. Many also strongly support keeping, renovating, rebuilding, or replacing Centennial/outdoor pool access rather than closing it. Several challenge the draft plan's pool-use data and argue that swimming cannot be replaced by splash pads or lake swimming.

"Need 2 pools for a community of our size: one regular length pool and a warm therapy pool."

"We must ensure that Centennial Pool continues into the future."

"A pool is 100% essential to this community."

"You can't learn to swim in a splash pad."

"Lower usage should not be a criteria for closing the pool."

2. Baseball Diamonds and Donegan Park Upgrades

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~28-30

A major cluster of comments focuses on baseball and softball infrastructure, especially Donegan Park. Respondents say baseball participation has grown significantly and that facilities need upgrades to support house league, competitive play, adult slo-pitch, and tournaments. Requested improvements include washrooms, concession, bleachers, lighting, batting cages, better playing surfaces, accessible pathways, shade, parking, water stations, power, and tournament-quality diamonds.

"Would love to see Donegan Park be updated. Safe and secure washrooms, canteen open during tournaments, pathways and lighting."

"New washroom and concession building... covered spectator seating... batting cages... accessible pathways... tournament-quality championship diamond."

"Ball is an exploding sport with registration numbers only continuing to climb."

3. Multi-Sport Capacity: Indoor Turf, Courts, Ice, and Year-Round Facilities

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~25-30

Respondents want more flexible recreation capacity that can serve multiple sports, seasons, and age groups. Indoor turf or a field house is repeatedly requested for soccer, baseball, lacrosse, rugby, football, pickleball, basketball, walking, fitness, and winter training. Outdoor basketball courts, more public skating, more ice, tennis/pickleball access, and multi-use courts also appear frequently. Some respondents caution that ice-only facilities may be less flexible than multi-sport spaces.

"It would be nice to see a 'dome-style' turf option in the plan."

"A bubble-type multi-use facility to offer soccer, lacrosse, football, baseball, pickleball etc. training year round."

"Please make an indoor turf facility a priority."

"Build more outdoor courts."

"There should be way more public skating events."

4. Maintenance, Cleanliness, Accessibility, and Basic Amenities

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~22-25

Many respondents say existing recreation facilities need better upkeep and basic amenities. Concerns include CCC cleanliness, dirty rink glass and stands, aging pool washrooms/change rooms, unsafe bleachers, Donegan washrooms, field conditions, pathways, shade, seating, lighting, water access, and accessibility. Respondents often frame maintenance as essential before or alongside new capital projects.

"Please make maintaining our facilities a priority."

"The area between the track and the wall is quite dirty, and should be cleaned more frequently."

"Modern, accessible washroom facilities... enhanced accessibility and pathways."

5. Implementation, Data Accuracy, Partnerships, and Public Access

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~20-25

Respondents say the draft plan is too vague and needs more concrete commitments, accurate data, transparent assumptions, user-group consultation, and operational planning. This theme includes concerns about Centennial Pool usage data, Sinclair tennis/pickleball usage, baseball registration and tournament demand, CCC/YMCA partnership decisions, CCC parking, public court access, and access for seniors, youth, families, low-income residents, informal users, and people with disabilities..

"The plan seems very vague and unambitious."

"I see no actual plans to improve our facilities, parks, playgrounds. It's all 'investigate, look at, hope to.'"

"The statistics... regarding year-over-year usage at Centennial Pool were inaccurate."

"Recreation infrastructure should serve children, youth, families, seniors, newcomers, people with disabilities, low-income residents, and informal users."

"I am a member at the YMCA, however I find it very expensive for a senior."



Programs and Events

Number of Responses - 21

What We Heard

Feedback on the Programs and Events section is generally constructive and supportive. The strongest recurring message is that residents want the Town to activate parks and facilities through inclusive programming for all ages, including children, youth, working adults, seniors, families, newcomers, BIPOC residents, and people with accessibility or affordability barriers.

The most common requested improvements are low-cost and drop-in opportunities, more evening and weekend programs, broader arts and culture programming, and better supports such as equipment lending, beach wheelchairs, reliable transit, coordinated event calendars, and stronger program promotion. Respondents also want events to be refreshed and evaluated, so annual programming stays interesting and well-attended.

Overall, the feedback asks for a programming approach that is year-round, flexible, affordable, inclusive, well-promoted, and supported by the right spaces and infrastructure.

Top 5 Recurring Themes: Programs and Events

1. More Programming for All Ages and Life Stages

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~15

The most common theme is a desire for broader programming that serves children, youth, adults, seniors, families, newcomers, BIPOC residents, and people with different abilities. Respondents want the Town to activate parks, facilities, trails, beaches, courts, and public spaces through programming — not just build or maintain them.

"A progressive Parks and Recreation Master Plan should not only build facilities. It should activate them."

"Events need to have some mixed for people of all ages and diversity."

"More activities through the year for children with different options."

2. Low-Cost, Free, Drop-In, and Accessible Opportunities

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~12

Many respondents say existing recreation facilities need better upkeep and basic amenities. Concerns include CCC cleanliness, dirty rink glass and stands, aging pool washrooms/change rooms, unsafe bleachers, Donegan washrooms, field conditions, pathways, shade, seating, lighting, water access, and accessibility. Respondents often frame maintenance as essential before or alongside new capital projects.

"I also support an equipment lending library."

"Free or low fee drop in gym times for pre-schoolers."

"Rental beach-wheelchairs available at our waterfront."

"The Town should ask: Who is participating? Who is missing?"

3. Arts, Culture, Music, Food, Film, and Creative Programming

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~9

Respondents want the programming strategy to go beyond sports and fitness. They ask for arts, music, dance, film, food, cultural events, workshops, lecture series, crafts, photography, repair cafés, and stronger arts programming for seniors. Arts programming was described as supporting "health, social connection, and overall well-being of older adults."

"Need more arts and music events."

"I would encourage stronger and more consistent promotion of arts and culture programming alongside traditional recreation activities."

"Our own version of the old Caribana where different cultures can showcase their culture & food."

4. Evening, Weekend, Seasonal, and Year-Round Programming

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~8

Several respondents say programming should be available outside weekday/daytime hours, especially for working adults. Others ask for year-round programming such as winter activities, park crawls, scavenger hunts, cold-weather toddler gym, waterfront activation, and flexible seasonal options.

"How about programs on evenings and weekends?"

"More recreational events available on evenings and weekends for working adults."

"Park crawls with scavenger hunts — all year round."

"Gym programs for toddlers... especially during cold weather months."

5. Facilities, Infrastructure, Access, and Promotion Must Support Programming

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~8

Respondents say programming cannot succeed without the right spaces, transportation, promotion, and support infrastructure. They state the need for multifunctional spaces, better volleyball/basketball space, swimming facilities, neighbourhood recreation hubs, reliable transit, better event infrastructure, coordinated calendars, and stronger promotion.

"Using high schools with no air conditioning for volleyball and basketball limits the availability."

"Relying on a single splash pad is no longer sufficient for our growing community."

"Key to recreation for many is an improved and reliable transit service."

"Coordinated calendar of events where residents can see what's happening a month ahead."



Service Delivery

Number of Responses - 10

What We Heard

Service Delivery feedback focuses less on new amenities and more on how the plan will actually be delivered, measured, maintained, funded, and coordinated. Residents want measurable outcomes, annual reporting, implementation tracking, and a mid-point review so the plan does not become a “wish list.”

The most frequent operational theme is partnership and collaboration. Respondents point to the YMCA, CCC, school boards, tourism partners, volunteers, cultural organizations, community agencies, public health, housing services, outreach, bylaw, and police as important delivery partners. At the same time, several comments emphasize that parks staff should not be expected to manage complex issues such as encampments, substance use, mental health, washroom misuse, or discarded sharps alone.

Overall, respondents are asking for a clearer service-delivery model: measurable implementation tracking, stronger maintenance standards, resident reporting tools, defined partnerships, coordinated safety/public-health roles, costed tree and climate actions, and practical fiscal tools such as volunteers, sponsorships, shared facilities, and third-party activation.

Top 5 Recurring Themes: Service Delivery

1. Implementation, Accountability, and Measurable Outcomes

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~3

Respondents note the plan needs a stronger implementation framework to track progress over time. They want annual public reporting, measurable indicators, a mid-point review, and clear evidence that recommendations are being delivered rather than left as broad intentions.

Suggested indicators include recommendation completion, accessibility upgrades, washroom access, lighting, shade, park maintenance, safety concerns, youth programming, low-cost recreation, and participation by age group or neighbourhood.

"A plan without measurable outcomes is a wish list."

"The Town should provide annual public reporting on progress."

2. Evening, Weekend, Seasonal, and Year-Round Programming

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~5

The most frequently mentioned service-delivery mechanism is partnership. Respondents want stronger collaboration with the YMCA, CCC, school boards, Northumberland Tourism, community/cultural groups, third-party operators, volunteers, and public-health or social-service partners. Collaboration is seen as a way to deliver facilities, activate underused spaces, improve programming, and share resources.

"A partnership with the YMCA and CCC is necessary."

"Collaboration between groups seldom occurs."

3. Maintenance, Cleanliness, and Operational Standards

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~8

Respondents identify gaps in day-to-day service quality, especially cleaning and maintenance of the CCC, public washrooms/portapotties, and parks after major events. They want stronger maintenance standards, better cleaning, and clear expectations for event organizers to prevent or repair damage to green space and trees.

"The CCC needs to be deep cleaned and maintained better."

"Good maintenance is the best way to prolong the life of our beautiful facility."

"Community organizations that want to sponsor major events like Ribfest must mitigate the damage to Victoria Park trees and green space."

4. Resident Access, Programming Gaps, Trees/Climate, and Fiscal Responsibility

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~4-5

A smaller but recurring theme is that service delivery should better reflect resident needs and responsible use of resources. Comments identify gaps in evening programming for working adults, resident access and parking near Victoria Beach, budgeted tree planting and shade, developer-led park planning, volunteer coordination, sponsorships, naming rights, and careful use of tax dollars.

"One of the named big gaps is programming for the 20–49 group."

"We need trees for ecological reasons, these must be costed and budgeted."

"The Town should have on staff a volunteer coordinator."

"Put tax paying money to good use."

5. Public Health and Washroom Concerns

Contributions Mentioning Theme: ~3

Respondents say parks staff should not be left to manage complex public-health and safety issues alone. Comments raise concerns about housing insecurity, mental health, substance use, encampments, and discarded sharps. Respondents ask for structured coordination with appropriate agencies.

One respondent observed consistent drug use in Victoria Park portapotties and said, "something has to be done." Another opposed drug consumption or syringe disposal sites in or near parks and recreation centres.

"Parks staff should not be expected to manage housing insecurity, mental health, substance use, encampments, or complex social issues alone."

Use of Artificial Intelligence in Analysis

Communications staff reviewed all comments submitted through the public engagement process. Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used to assist in identifying common themes, topics, and trends within the feedback. The results of the AI-assisted analysis were subsequently reviewed by staff and informed the preparation of this report.

