



LABRADOR WEST

PARKS AND TRAILS MASTERPLAN

FINAL REPORT

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COMMISSIONED BY
TOWN OF LABRADOR CITY



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1.0 Introduction

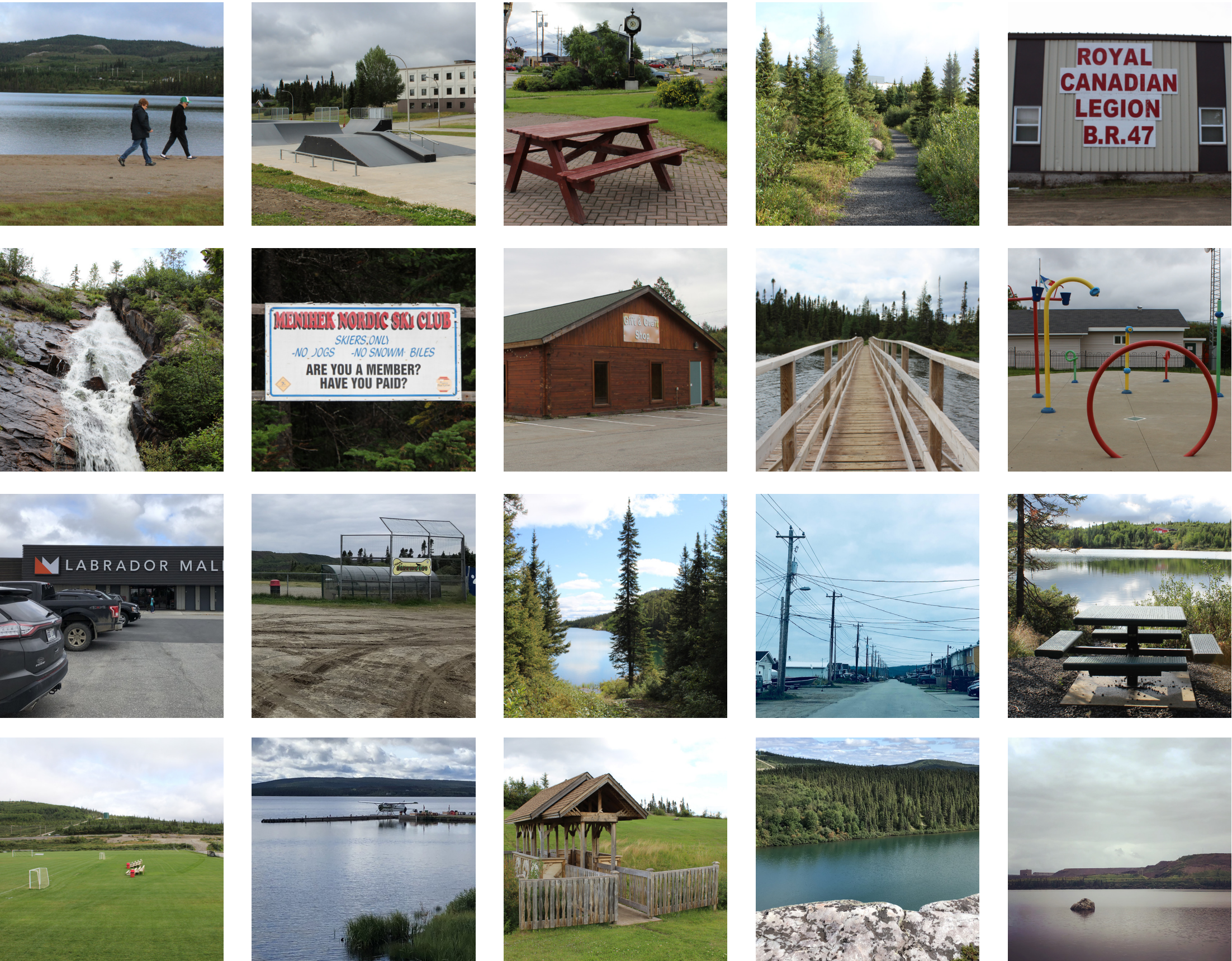
In late summer of 2018, Fathom Studio was commissioned by the Town of Labrador City to create a regional parks and trails masterplan including schematic design for three park sites. This document is a collaborative process between Fathom, the Town of Labrador City, and the masterplan steering community made up of local councillors, business owners, concerned citizens and representatives of the Iron Ore Company and Gateway Labrador Inc. The process included several site visits, community consultations, as well as an online survey, with great effort given to tailoring the final masterplan and schematic design to fit the needs of the Labrador West community, as well as visitors. The Labrador West Parks and Trails Masterplan includes both the municipalities of Labrador City and Wabush and is envisioned to be a comprehensive guidebook in shaping the future recreational framework of the Labrador West Region.

The overarching goal of the Labrador West Parks and Trails Masterplan is to accessibly connect and celebrate the many natural, cultural, and recreational assets Labrador West has to offer. Within this context, the masterplan seeks to establish a hierarchy of gateway experiences throughout the proposed trail network, with an emphasis along the Trans Labrador Highway at Tanya Lake as well as Gateway Labrador. Labrador West is well situated to welcome visitors to the region as it is the first community to enter when arriving from the Quebec border. Because of Labrador West’s northern location, consideration of shifting seasonal uses and designing for the winter season has been a key design challenge. Designing for seasonality has been interwoven throughout the masterplan. Finally, consolidation of recreational uses to one centralized hub was highlighted as a primary goal of the masterplan. This allows for prime park areas such as Tanya Lake and Al Thoms Recreation Area, which have previously hosted more static programming such a baseball fields, to be reconfigured for more flexible and scalable programming—accommodating a number of different uses that serve both

neighbourhood and regional needs, residents and tourists alike.

Labrador West, as a whole, has a multitude of natural, recreational, and cultural assets scattered throughout. However, many of these indoor and outdoor destinations are spread across the region, with no, or inconsistent, pedestrian or active transportation connections. The Parks and Trails Masterplan builds upon existing parks and trail infrastructure to create a comprehensive trail network that unites the community, and harmonizes a variety of uses including hiking, cycling, ATVing, snowmobiling, and vehicular traffic.

[RIGHT]
Existing conditions



2.0 Labrador West

2.1 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

History and Economy

Labrador West is situated in the ancestral territory of the Montagnais Innus, who have hunted and fished across the vast boreal landscape for time immemorial.¹ Modern settlement of the Labrador West region owes entirely to the region’s abundance of iron ore deposits. Iron ore was discovered by A.P. Low in the region known as the “Labrador Trough” in 1896 and has comprised all of Canada’s iron ore production for the past 50 years.²

Iron ore extraction began seriously in the 1930s and the process was further industrialized in the 1950s with the establishment of the railway from Knob Lake to Sept-Îles, Quebec. In the late 1950s, The Iron Ore Company of Canada began the 'Carol Project', the first large scale mining project in the region. At the time, there was no existing infrastructure to house the men and women working in the mine. Labrador City was initially settled as a temporary worker camp in 1960 and laid out according to a masterplan created by the Iron Ore Company of Canada. In 1961 the town became incorporated as the Local Improvement District of Labrador City and soon after the camp-style housing was replaced by single-family homes.³ In 1962 the mining camp at Wabush Lake was laid out, which would later become the Town of Wabush in 1967, designed by the architects of the Montreal Expo, Fiset and Deschamps.⁴

Since the 1960s, Labrador West has been one of the world’s most important iron-ore producing regions. Although there have been a few recessions, notably during the 1980s and again as recent as 2015, the mines have continued to employ workers and have fostered thriving auxiliary economies. Labrador West is now home to a diverse population of over just over 9,000 according to the 2016 census.⁵

source:
1 Native Land Atlas. <https://native-land.ca/>. (Accessed Nov. 2018); Innu (Montagnais-Naskapi). <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/innu-montagnais-naskapi>. (Accessed Nov. 2018).
2 Newfoundland and Natural Resources. "Mineral Communities of Newfoundland and Labrador: Iron Ore," Geological Survey Mineral Commodities Series, No. 7, p. 1; Labrador West. "History: 100 Years in the Making," <https://labradorwest.com/stay/history/>. (Accessed Nov. 2018).
3 Heritage Newfoundland and Labrador. Labrador West. (<https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/politics/labrador-west.php>. (Accessed Nov. 2018).
4 Labrador West. "History: 100 Years in the Making," <https://labradorwest.com/stay/history/>. (Accessed Nov. 2018).
5 Stantec Consulting Ltd. Town of Labrador City Municipal Plan 2018-2028. p. 8

Environment

The northern climate and boreal forest ecosystem are defining elements of the region’s landscape and way of life. Labrador is known as the “Big Land” with expansive forests, rivers, lakes and less than one percent of the overall region converted for development.⁶ Conifer tree species dominate the region’s landscape, which includes species such as white spruce, black spruce, tamarack, balsam fir, and jack pine. A more limited presence of broadleaf trees such as trembling aspen, balsam poplar, and white birch, are also distinctive of this ecozone.⁷ Common herbaceous plants of the area include labrador tea, sheep laurel, bunchberry, twinflower, starflower, bluebead lily, sweet gale, and leatherleaf.⁸

Common animal species found in the region include: black bear, lynx, gray wolf, red fox, beaver, red squirrel, snowshoe hare, porcupine, southern red-backed vole, meadow vole, ermine, and eastern heather vole.⁹ Sedentary forest-dwelling caribou are also prevalent throughout the area but are classified as a threatened by the provincial Endangered Species Act. The local caribou herd of Lac Joseph reached its peak population in the 1860s with over 6,000 animals, declining to 1,282 in 2009.¹⁰

Boreal and taiga ecosystems serve a global role in providing habitat for more than 300 species of breeding land birds. The boreal habitat is of high importance to finches, warblers, sparrows, and thrushes. Labrador West is also home to several rare birds including: harlequin duck, short-eared owl, rusty blackbird, barrow’s goldeneye, and peregrine falcon.¹¹

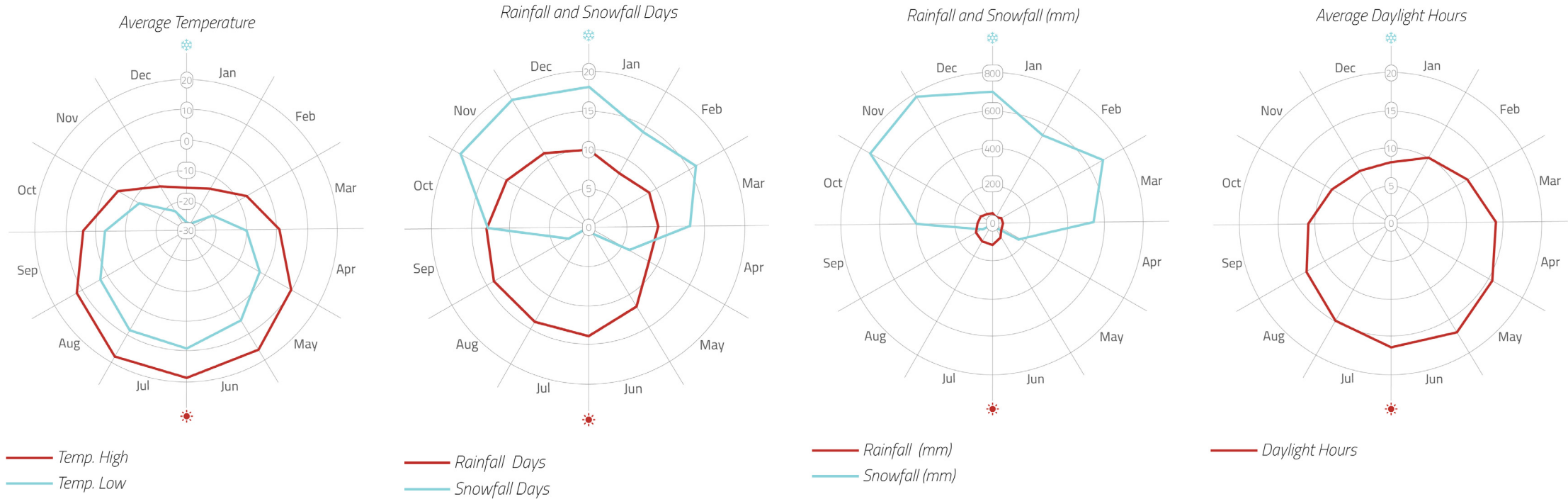
Labrador West's surrounding undulating hills, lakes, and forests offer spectacular views and immersive natural recreation experiences. From hiking to snowmobiling, bird watching to ice fishing, there are many activities to enjoy during every season of the year.

6 L. Notzl, R. Greene and J.L. Riley. 2013. Labrador Nature Atlas. Vol. I. Nature Conservancy of Canada, Toronto, Ontario. p. 12
7 Ibid. p. 80
8 Ibid. p. 82
9 Ibid. p. 16-19
10 Ibid. p. 27
11 Ibid. p. 34-63



Climate

The Labrador West Region is located north of the 53rd parallel and is characterized by a subarctic climate of long cold winters and short cool summers. Below-zero temperatures usually last from mid-October to the beginning of April and remain relatively cool throughout the year, rarely reaching above 20° C in July and August. Average temperatures range from a low of -30° in winter to 20° in summer. Labrador West typically experiences an average of over 160 days of snow each year with continuous snow cover above 10cm for the entire winter season. Finally, the region has about 1 hour of daylight more during the summer months and 1 hour less of daylight in the winter due to its northern location (in comparison with more southerly locations).



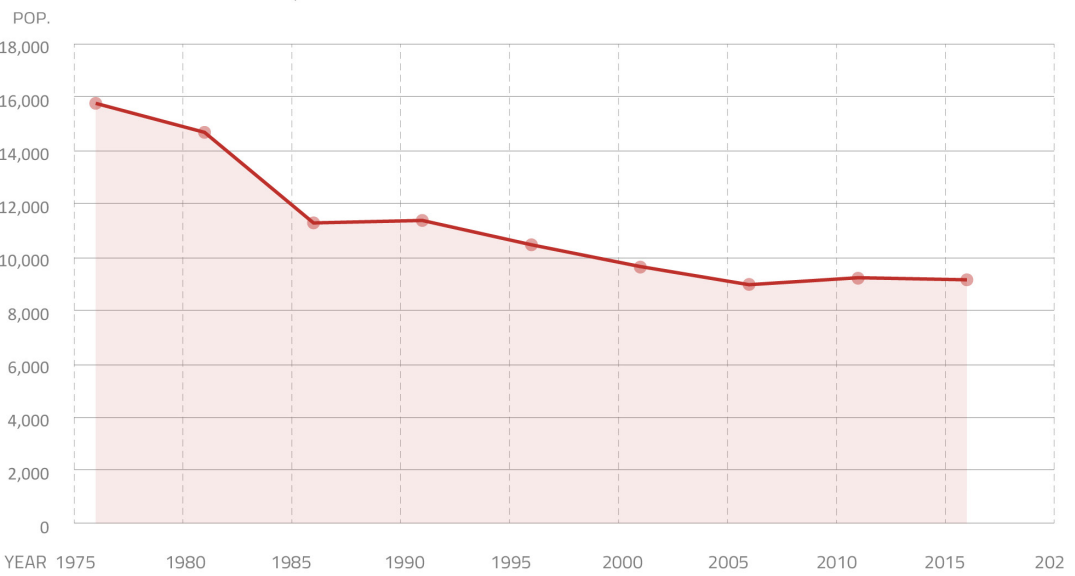
source: Canadian Climate Normals 1981–2010 Station Data, Wabush Lake A. Climate—Environment and Climate Change Canada. http://climate.weather.gc.ca/climate_normals/ (Accessed October 2018) Labrador City, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada—Sunrise, Sunset, and Daylength. <https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/canada/labrador-city> (accessed October 2018)

Demographics

The population of Labrador West has followed a general pattern of decline since its peak in the mid-1970s from 16,000 to just over 9,000 in 2016. The region's population numbers are closely tied with global market demand for iron-ore as the mining industry is the primary employer for many of the town's residents. Because of the uncertain and fluctuating nature of the iron-ore industry, employment opportunities are subject to boom and bust cycles, most notably in the early 1980s and again more recently in 2006 and 2015.

Unlike many of smaller communities in Atlantic Canada, Labrador West is a relatively new and young population as it was first settled in the early 1960s. Because of employment opportunities related to the mining industry, the region continues to attract and retain families and working-aged adults, the latter accounting for over 70% of the population—slightly higher than other main cities in Atlantic Canada. The young population helps to keep up the demand for diverse and high quality outdoor recreation. In recent years the municipality has made numerous improvements to existing recreation facilities and has also added new outdoor

Labrador West Population Trends

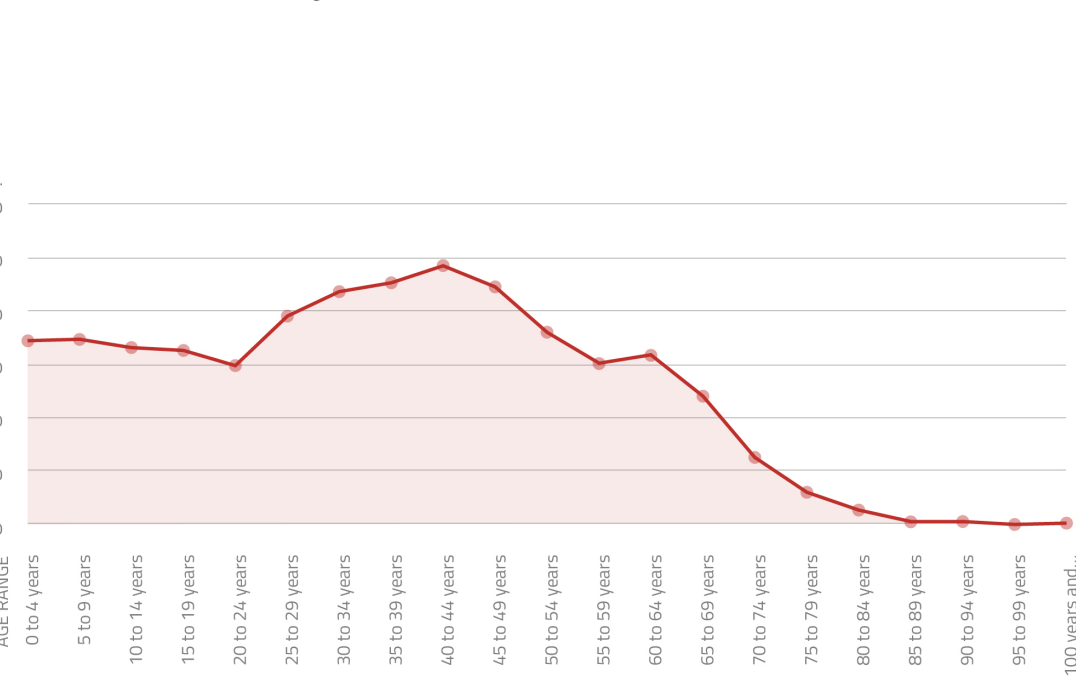


source: Statics Canada. Census Profile, 2016 Census for Labrador City and Wabush. www.statcan.gc.ca

facilities such as a skate park, pump track, and basketball courts. Additionally, outdoor recreation must take into account its growing senior population—for the first time, Labrador West has a notable and growing senior population (14.6%) as people decide to stay in Labrador West following retirement.

The Labrador West region is also quite culturally and ethnically diverse in spite of its small population. According to the 2016 census for Labrador City and Wabush, approximately 9% of the population identified as having aboriginal identity (First Nations, Metis, or Inuit) and 4.3% of the population identified as visible minority. Although the population of first generation immigrants is fairly low at 5.7%, the community has recently experienced an influx of new Canadians, with approximately 67.5% of the total immigrant population arriving in Labrador West between the years 2011-2016. In consideration of this current demographic trend, it is important that outdoor recreational and cultural programming also address needs of Labrador West's increasingly diverse community.

2016 Labrador West Age Distribution



2.2 COMMUNITY RECREATION ASSESSMENT

In 2011 MMM Group was engaged to evaluate the recreation needs for the Labrador West Region. Their findings were put forth in the Recreation and Parks Master Plan for the Labrador West Region. In the 2011 document, an inventory of the then-current facilities in the region is documented and gaps identified. Since the publication of the 2011 report, the Towns of Labrador City and Wabush have implemented many of the recommended changes. While a few gaps remain, the overall picture of recreation in the Labrador West Region is more complete.

As part of this report, an updated evaluation of recreation facilities has been completed, with a focus on outdoor facilities, relevant to the masterplan. The activities from the 2011 report were included, as well as some additional items—facilities added within the region and facilities that are becoming common in comparable communities across Canada. In the 2011 report, seven communities of similar size and climate to Labrador City, as well as the City of St. John's, were used to determine how well the recreation needs of residents of Labrador West were being met. Those same communities have been used for comparison in this update.

Compared to the other municipalities of a similar scale, the Labrador West Region at its current population level performs well across most categories. The areas where Labrador West residents are under-served are playgrounds, outdoor swimming pools, and tennis courts. The 2011 report identified playgrounds and outdoor skating as areas in need of improvement. Since the publication of the MMM report, two outdoor rinks have been created with varying success. The heavy snows make the outdoor rinks difficult to maintain. Tennis courts have been removed in favour of other desired activities including basketball and four-square. While new playgrounds have been constructed, the community remains under-served; an additional six playgrounds are required to bring Labrador West on par with the averages used for this comparison. While Labrador West does not have an outdoor swimming pool, the short summer season and availability of two beaches make the construction of a pool an impractical use of resources.

To supplement this study, a public consultation meeting (November 2018) and online survey were used to gather community feedback on the perceived gaps in recreational facilities. The outcomes from these consultations are summarized in section 3.o.

	FACILITY/RATING	Availability				Condition					Ownership		Location	
		Quantity	Below Average	On Par	Above Average	Good	Fair	Upgrade Needed	Unknown	Varies by Location	Public	Private	Labrador City	Wabush
WINTER ❄️	Ice Rink (indoor)	2			●			●			●		●	●
	Ice Rink (outdoor)	2		●							●		●	
	Cross Country Skiing	30km			●	●						●	●	
	Down Hill Skiing	1			●				●			●	●	
	Tobogganing Hill	1		●			●				●		●	
	Snowmobile Trail	800km			●	●							●	●
	Curling	1			●			●			●		●	
	Soccer Field (indoor)	1			●	●					●		●	
SUMMER ☀️	Community Playground	4	●							●	●		●	●
	Outdoor Pool	0	●											
	Public Beach	2		●							●		●	
	Splash Pad	1			●	●					●		●	
	Ball Diamond	6			●		●				●		●	●
	Soccer Field (outdoor)	4			●	●					●		●	
	Football/Rugy Field	1		●		●					●		●	
	Tennis Court	1	●			●					●		●	
	Foursquare	3			●	●					●		●	
	Basketball Court (Outdoor)	1		●		●					●		●	
	Skate Park	1			●	●					●		●	
	Pumptrack	1			●	●					●		●	
	Mountain Bike Trail	50 km			●									
	ATV Trail	12 km			●					●			●	●
	Walking/Hiking Trails	12km			●					●	●		●	●
	Dog Park	1			●		●				●		●	
ALL SEASON ❄️☀️	Golf Course	1			●	●						●	●	
	Indoor Pool	1			●	●		●			●			●
	Multi-Purpose Gymnasium	1		●				●			●			●
	Dance School	2			●				●			●	●	
	Martial Arts School	3			●				●			●	●	
	Fitness Gym	2			●				●			●	●	
	Gymnastics Club	1			●			●				●	●	

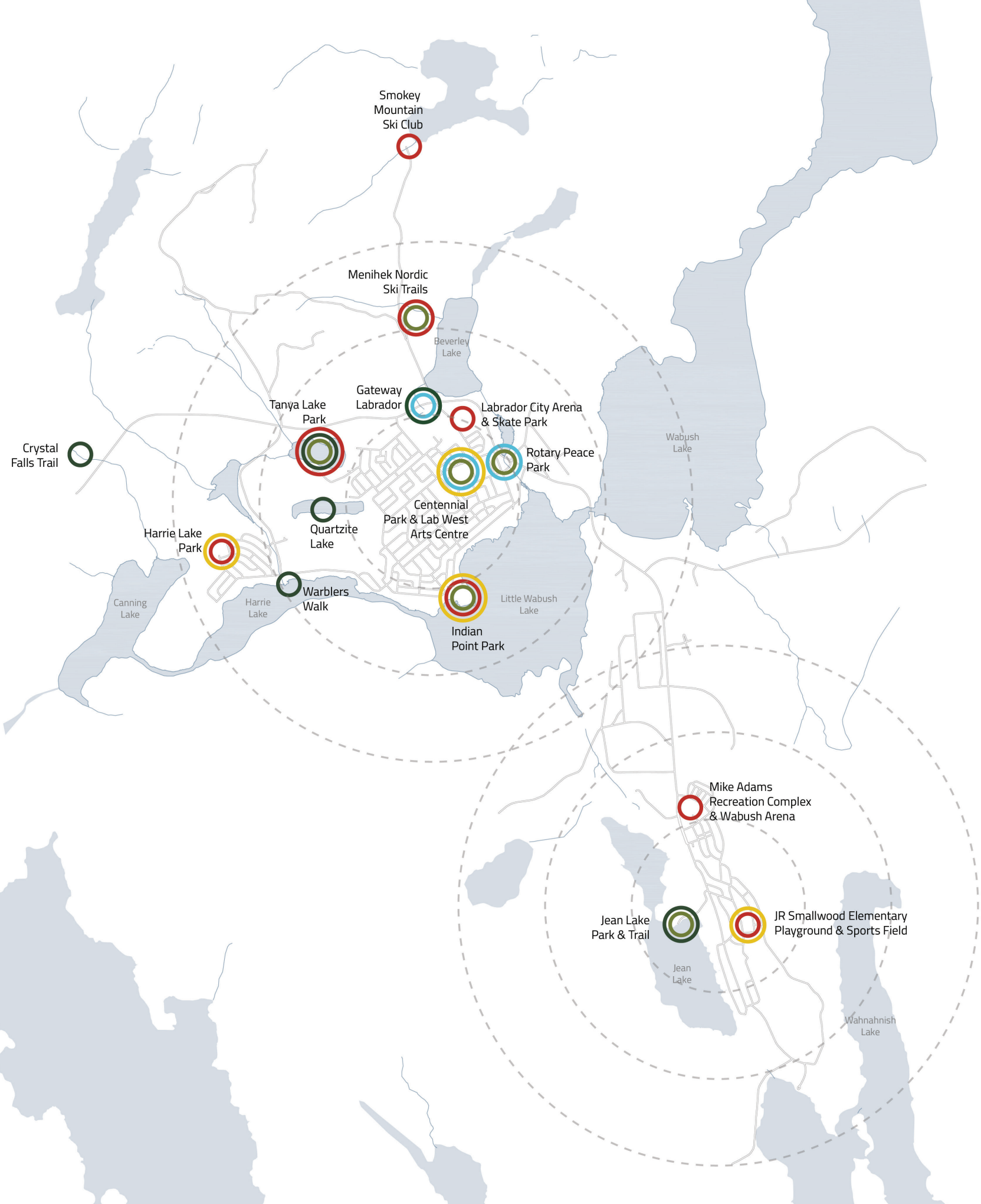
Existing Destinations

Due to Labrador City's and Wabush's compact natures as planned communities, most outdoor recreation, indoor sports, and cultural facilities are located within a 1km radius, the equivalent of a 12 minute walk, of each respective municipality. Despite this proximity, it is very common for residents to drive cars or other motorized vehicles to and from their desired destination. Travelling by motorized vehicle, whether car, ATV, or snowmobile in winter, is preferable for many residents due to the extreme cold temperatures of the region's sub-arctic climate. Furthermore, the reliance on motorized vehicles is also an outcome 1960s town planning.

The long, cold winters as well as 1960s car-centric planning have resulted in a lack of connectivity for pedestrians or cyclists. The goal of this masterplan is to enhance active transportation connectivity between destinations, while also accommodating diverse modes of transportation for all-season use.

LEGEND


-  Park/Open Space
-  Nature Recreation
-  Sport Recreation
-  Playground
-  Cultural Hub
-  1km Radius




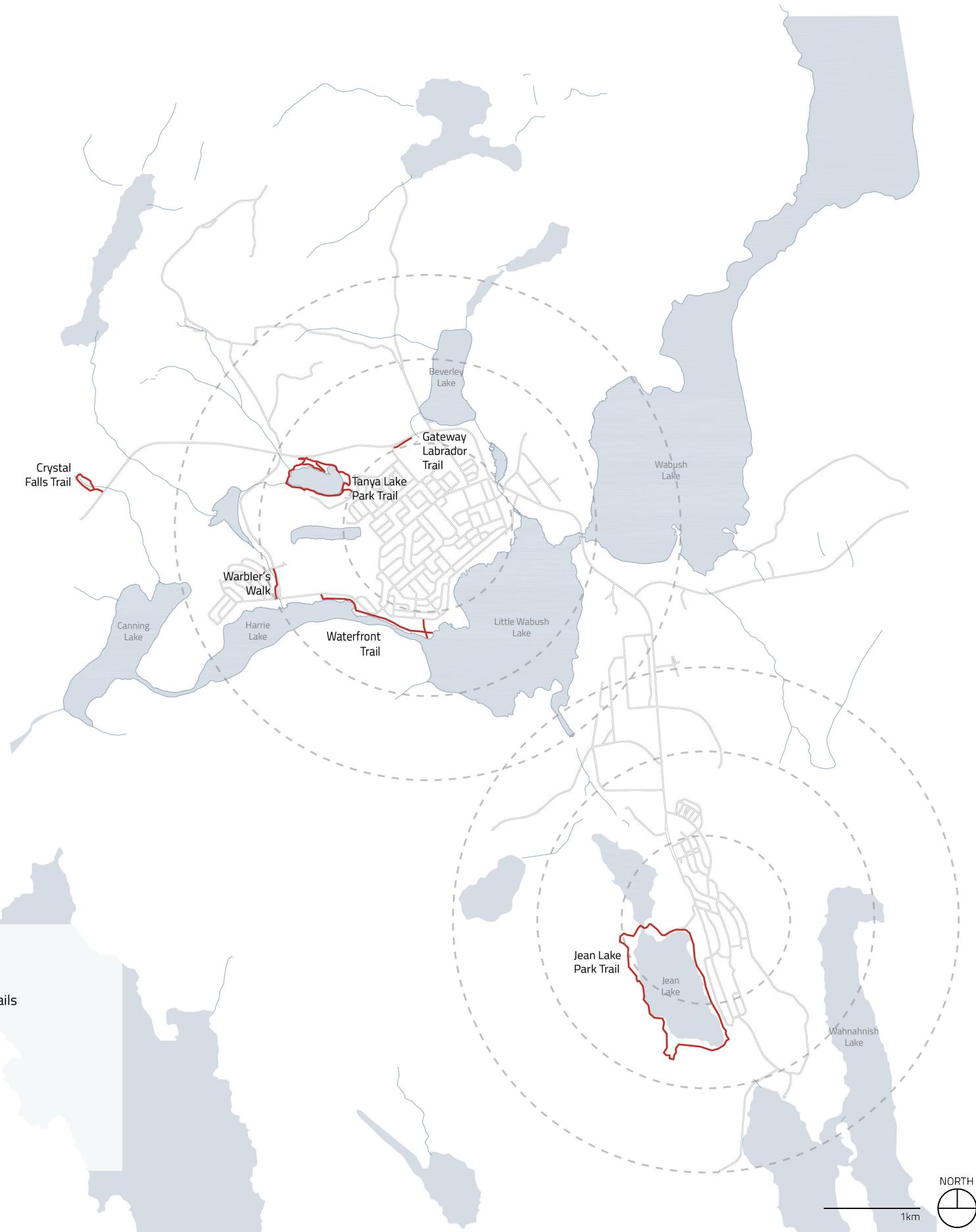
Existing Hiking Trails

There are several existing hiking trails of varying difficulty and accessibility in close proximity of both Labrador City and Wabush. Some trails are maintained regularly, while others have suffered from lack of annual upkeep. Currently, trails at Tanya Lake and segments of trail at Jean Lake are well groomed and accessible to a broad range of abilities. The Crystal Falls trail is more challenging as it involves a steep incline and a rocky, irregular walking surface; but also provides a spectacular view of Labrador City and Wabush Lake. Other trails at Gateway Labrador, Warbler's Walk, and along the waterfront are relatively short lengths, however they lack connectivity with the larger network, and are in need of maintenance.

LEGEND

 Existing Hiking Trails

 1km Radius



Existing Alternative Transportation Network

An overlay of all existing transportation trails including hiking, ATV, snowmobile, and cross country ski trails, reveals that the region has an extensive existing trail network. There is great potential to incorporate or re-purpose existing trails into a multi-use active transportation network.

There are currently disparities between the various existing types of trails, with respect to maintenance and condition. For example, snowmobile trails are formally designed to connect to a larger regional trail system and maintained by the local White Wolf Snowmobile Club, while ATV trails are informally made by local residents and have no overseeing organization.

Working together to accommodate a trail network for all users would enhance accessibility and safety.

LEGEND

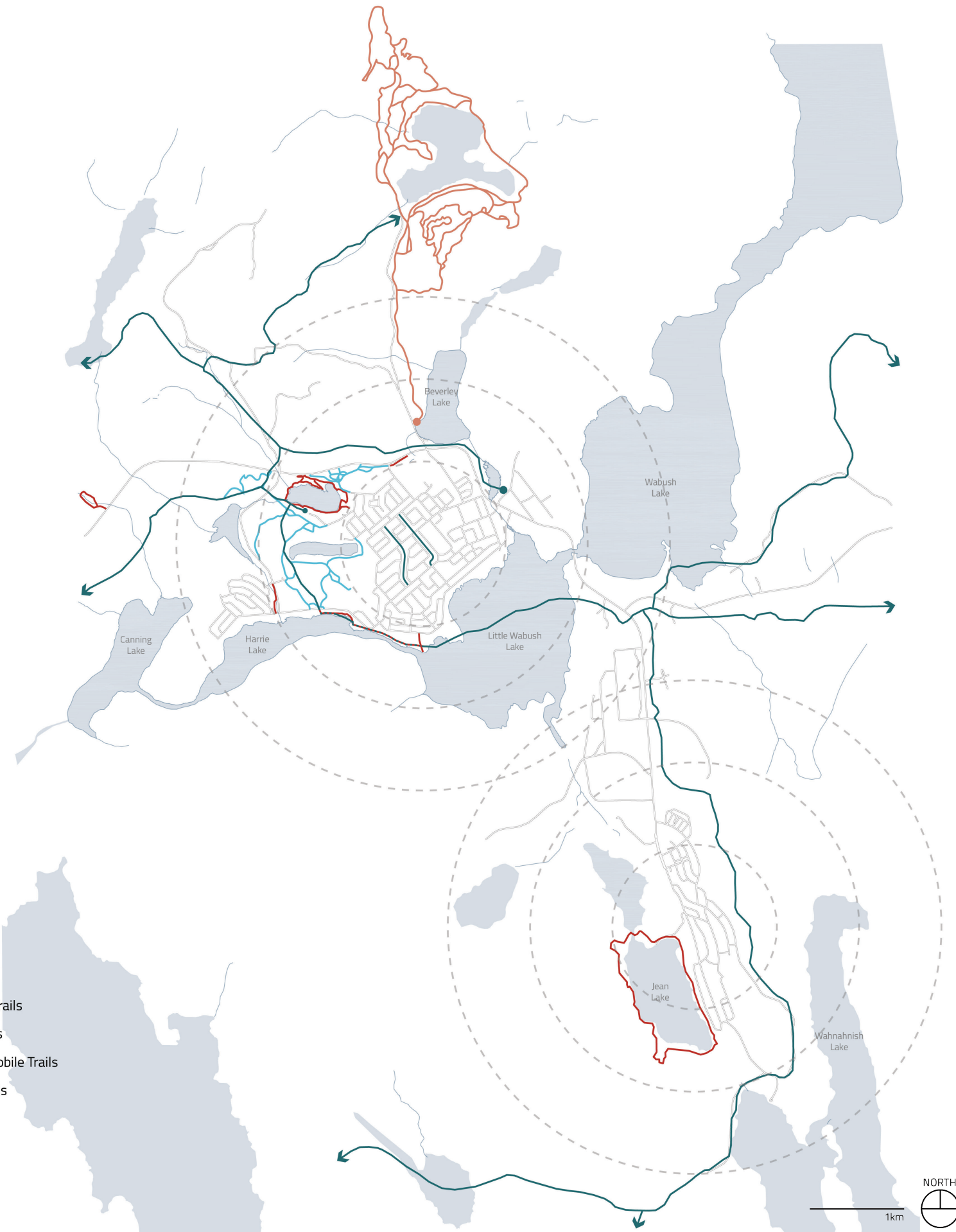
 Existing Hiking Trails

 Existing Ski Trails

 Existing Snowmobile Trails

 Existing ATV Trails

 1km Radius

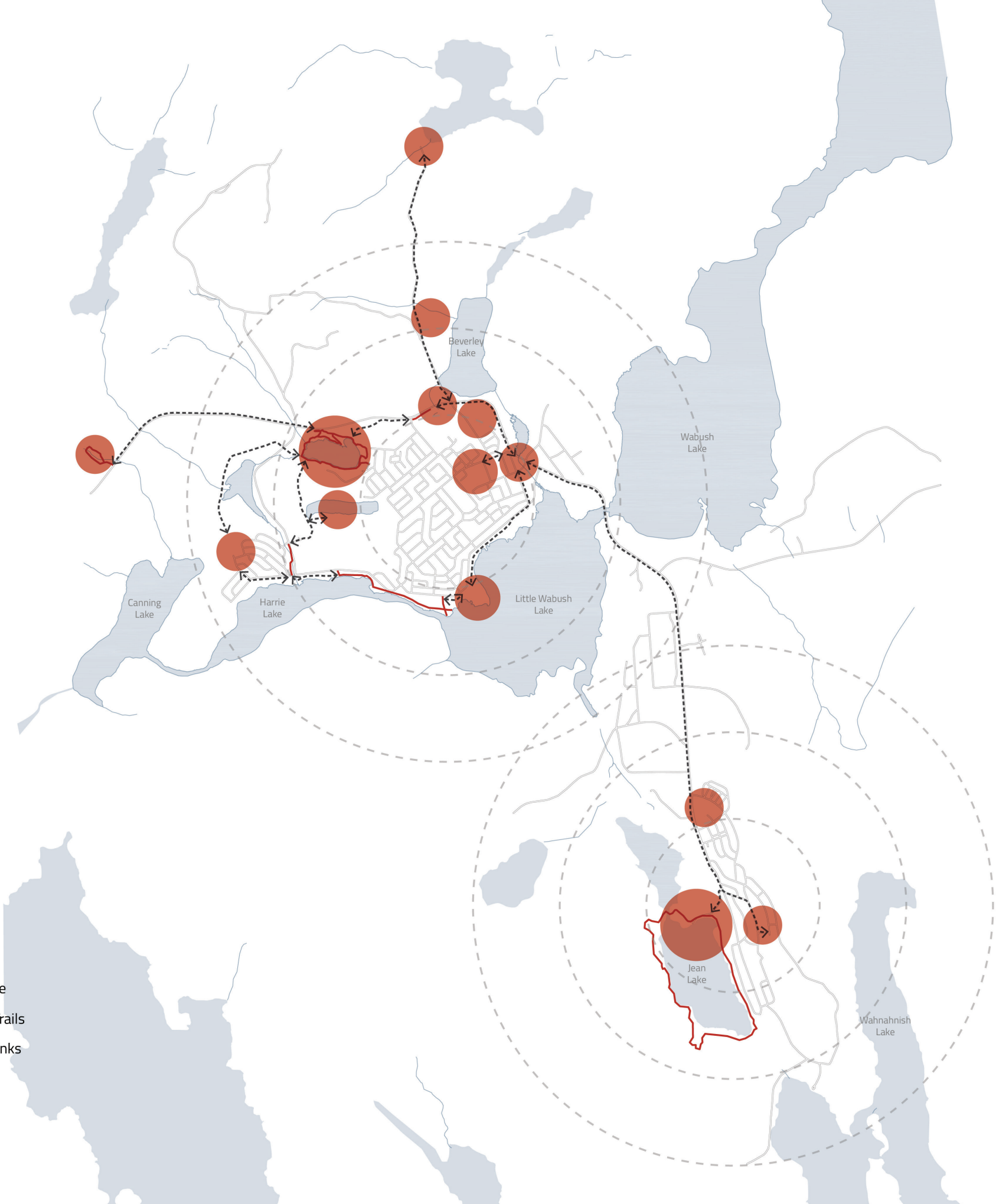


2.3 OPPORTUNITIES

Making Connections

The goal of The Parks and Trails Masterplan is to build on existing infrastructure to create a multi-use trail network that connects major community destination nodes, and improves accessibility for a variety of users ranging in age and ability. Labrador West has many high-quality recreation amenities and a beautiful surrounding natural landscape. There is great potential for the trail network to become a major asset to the local community as well as a draw for tourists. The contrast of natural scenery with the industrial landscape of the mines is striking and evocative; it provides a unique and authentic experience of what life is like in the Canadian sub-arctic.

- LEGEND
- Destination Node
 - Existing Hiking Trails
 - ↔ Proposed Trail Links
 - 1km Radius



Tourism Opportunities

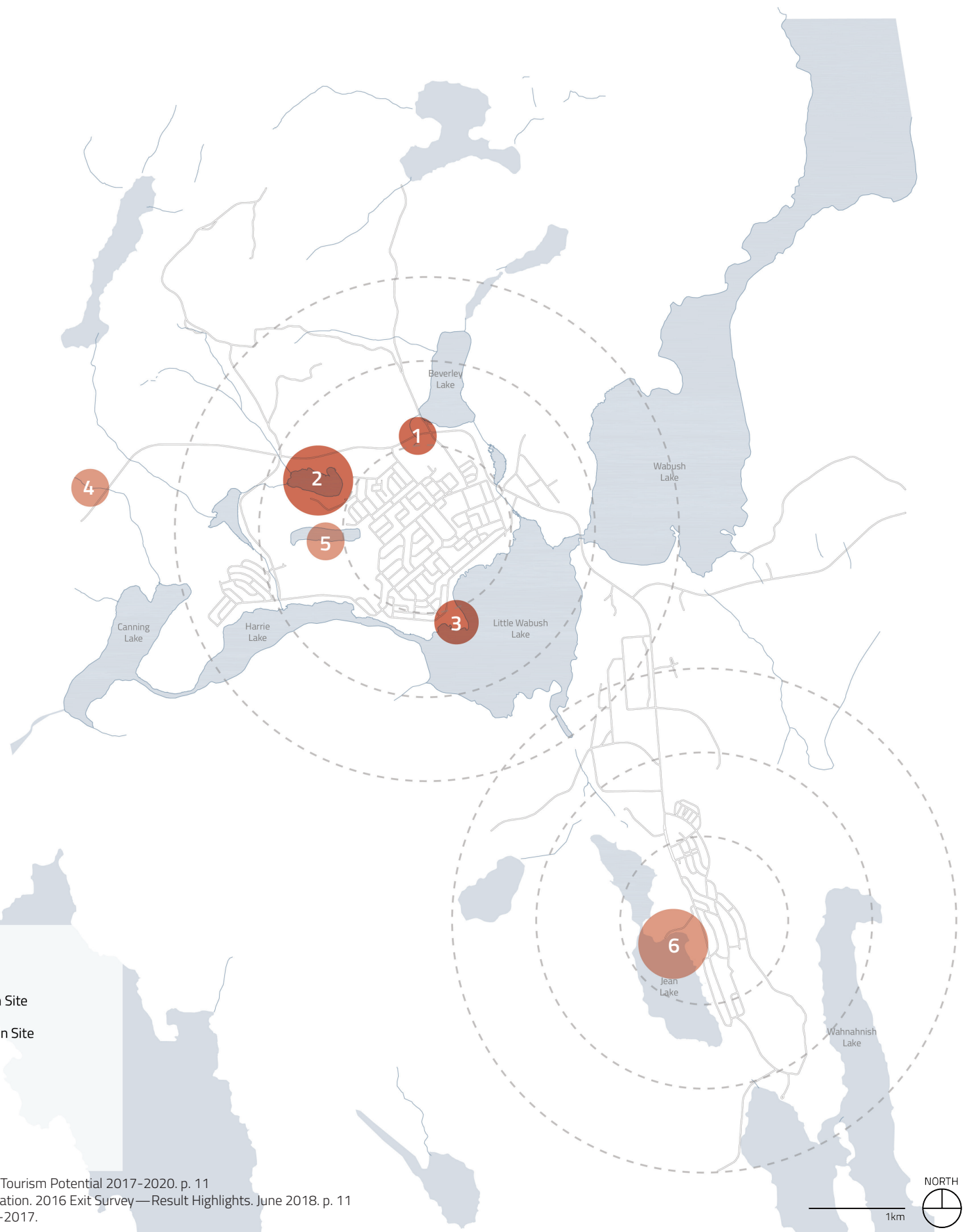
Tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador has been increasing steadily over the past decade. While Labrador West is primarily sustained by a thriving mining industry, the region has key ingredients required to foster a local tourism sector.

Destination Labrador has identified two primary target markets for the Labrador region as "Outdoor Exploring" and "Cultural/ Aboriginal Touring."¹ The community has made steps in a positive direction with the creation of Gateway Labrador as the tourist welcome centre visibly located along the main highway and close to natural parks and trails. The creation of this masterplan will also help to enhance connectivity to important tourist destinations in Labrador West.

Although the majority of the province's tourism industry is concentrated in Newfoundland, with Labrador making up 6.6% of the total overnight stays according to 2016 visitor surveys², visitation to Gateway Labrador increased 59% from 2016 to 2017.³ Tourism is clearly a viable developable industry for Labrador West.

LEGEND

- Schematic Design Site
- Tourist Destination Site
- 1km Radius



source:
1 Randy, Letto. Destination Labrador. Dare to be Different—Labrador's Uncommon Tourism Potential 2017-2020. p. 11
2 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Tourism, Industry, and Innovation. 2016 Exit Survey —Result Highlights. June 2018. p. 11
3 Gateway Labrador. Recorded Visitors to Gateway Visitor Information Centre 2016-2017.

Schematic Design Sites and Tourism Destinations

- Schematic Design Sites
- 1. Gateway Labrador*
 - 2. Tanya Lake Park and Trail
 - 3. Al Thoms Recreation Area

- Tourism Destination Opportunities
- 4. Crystal Falls Trail
 - 5. Quartzite Lake
 - 6. Jean Lake Park and Trail



* Photo by Brad Dillon

[RIGHT]
Gateway Labrador

Photo by Brad Dillon

As part of the masterplan work, Fathom has been tasked with undertaking the schematic design of three key destination sites: Gateway Labrador, Tanya Lake, and Al Thoms Recreation Area.

Gateway Labrador

Gateway Labrador is located along the main Trans-Labrador Highway and is the first welcome centre for travellers entering Labrador from the Quebec border. The log-cabin style building opened in 2003 and houses a tourist information centre, The Labrador Rose Boutique, and the Edmund Montague Exhibition Hall. The Exhibition Hall boasts an extensive exhibit showcasing Labrador West's geography, history, and culture. It is the only museum and tourist centre in the region and thus a key destination and meeting point for any tourist visiting the area.

Although the proposed trail system may be accessed at several points along the network loop, as the main tourist hub, Gateway Labrador has great potential to become the primary entry point to the regional trail network and can provide amenities to trail users such as washroom facilities and visitor orientation.



[RIGHT]
Tanya Lake

Tanya Lake Park and Trail

Tanya Lake is an important forested municipal park and trail in the region. The site offers spectacular natural scenery within the city limits, a 3km walking trail, and has been recently upgraded with picnic tables and seating at various points along the lake. Tanya Lake was once a very popular hang-out spot amongst local residents, but has become less frequented in recent years as facilities have declined or been removed. The upgrades have certainly helped to attract more people to the site, but better connectivity and a more diverse range of outdoor programming and facilities will invite more users and provide additional opportunities for events and organized programs. It is also one of the only parks where swimming is permitted.



Al Thoms Recreation Area

Al Thoms Recreation Area is situated at Tamarack Drive on the Labrador City side of Wabush Lake. The park offers one of the best views of the lake and Wabush mine in the distance, thus creating a fantastic opportunity to experience industrial tourism from a safe vantage point. Currently, most of the park open space is taken up by two softball fields, a dog park, and a playground. However, all of the existing facilities are in need of upgrades and some should be considered for relocation to an accessible centralized location such as the Labrador City Arena. The playground, for instance, sits in a low-lying, isolated area of the park and experiences drainage issues near the various pieces of play equipment. According to the recreation needs assessment undertaken by Fathom, Labrador West currently ranks above average in availability of ball field amenities (see Recreational Needs Assessment, p. 10).

Where park edges meet water, vegetation growth is thick with alders and a mix of deciduous shrubs and coniferous trees. Some thinning and selective clearing may be required to make trail connections between this site and future trail links along the waterfront.

[RIGHT]
View of Wabush Lake and mine
from Al Thoms Recreation Area



[RIGHT]
Menihék Cross Country Ski Trail

Embracing Seasonality

One major challenge in designing outdoor recreation and amenities in a sub-arctic climate is activating outdoor parks and trails during the winter months. The Winter Cities Institute based in Edmonton, Alberta has created guidelines on how to make cities more livable in the winter. The primary design elements include the following:

- 1. Incorporate outdoor design strategies that use landforms and planting to block prevailing winds, and place outdoor gathering spaces in the protected areas of the site.
- 2. Orient design in order to maximize sunshine and take advantage of daylight hours.
- 3. Employ the use of colour to liven up the winterscape.
- 4. Provide interest using outdoor lighting to extend outdoor use after sunset. Be mindful of intensity, spread, contrast, and colour of the lighting.
- 5. Provide infrastructure that supports desired lively outdoor winter activities, improves comfort, and access in cold and snowy weather.¹

Many cities in Canada and internationally have recently begun to take a more active approach to wintertime programming. Winter design competitions for warming huts and outdoor light installations have become very common and proven to be extremely successful in getting people outside. Winnipeg, Manitoba, began hosting the Warming Huts competition at the forks of the Assinaboine and Red Rivers in 2009. Since its inception, the competition has gained international acclaim, featuring a mix of local and world famous architects and designers. The installations remain throughout the duration of the winter skating season and attract over 4 million visitors each year.²

Labrador West is already a very active and engaged community. Both municipalities of Labrador City and Wabush, as well as community groups, have done great work at programming winter events and festivals. Local events like the Winter Lights Celebration in December and the Labrador City Winter Carnival in March are very popular with activities for a broad range of ages. The Cain's Quest Snowmobile Race, which takes place in March, is one of the longest snowmobile races in the world and is a major draw for the local community as well as international visitors.

There is a lot of opportunity for the Labrador West region to capitalize on their long winter season. Festivals centred around temporary installations like warming huts, light exhibits, or even more ephemeral structures made out of ice or snow, extend beyond the initial festival event as installations remain accessible to the public throughout the duration of the season.

Designing outdoor trails and parks spaces where winter recreation and events can take place comfortably and accessibly is a main priority for any future outdoor improvements.



source:
1 Winter Design Guidelines: Transforming Edmonton into a Great Winter City. Winter City Edmonton. December 2016.
2 Warming Huts: an Art and Architecture Competition on Ice. www.warminghuts.com. (Accessed November 2018)

Outdoor Events and Programming

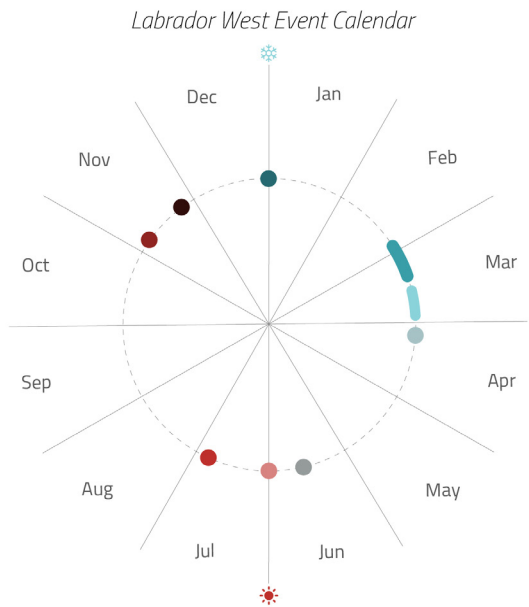
Labrador West is home to a vibrant and engaged community. Community members play a large role volunteering their time and attending special events and ongoing programming throughout the year. It is this can-do mentality that speaks to the resilient character of the community and ensures its success in the future. There is no doubt that Labrador West has the potential to deliver high quality events and year-round programming that will help to invigorate the community's parks and trail system. The Parks and Trails Masterplan aims to create a framework for the future of the Labrador West Community that local residents can stand behind, steward, and find a sense of pride in. This involves designing community spaces and trail systems that meet spatial, amenity, and safety needs of diverse user groups and allows for flexibility for future growth and change in user demands. The active use and animation of public spaces ensures a thriving and healthy community. The existing calendar of events can be further supported through the design of high-quality spaces and facilities.

[RIGHT]
1. Cain's Quest Snowmobile Race
2. Winter Carnival Barbecue
3. Winter Carnival Snow Sculpture

Photos by the Town of Labrador City



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- *First Night Celebrations, Dec. 31*
- *Cain's Quest Snowmobile Race, Feb. 28-Mar. 10*
- *Winter Carnival, Mar. 16-26*
- *Great Labrador Loppet, Apr. 6*
- *Iron City Duathlon, Jun. 16*
- *Canada Celebrations, Jul. 1*
- *Annual Labrador West Regatta, Jul. 26*
- *Guy Fawkes Day, Nov. 5*
- *Winter Lights, Nov. 25*



2



3

2.4 CHALLENGES

Accommodating for Pedestrian and Vehicular Traffic

ATVs and snowmobiles are very much a part of everyday life in Labrador West as both modes of transportation are used as everyday commuter transportation and recreation. Both types of trails are accessible within the town limits of Labrador City and Wabush, with varying degrees of formalization and ongoing maintenance. Snowmobile trails are more formalized as they are maintained by the White Wolf Snowmobile Club, which oversees 800 km of trails in the region and collects fees for seasonal trail passes.¹ ATV trails on the other hand, are not maintained by any formal organization and create the most conflict with pedestrian traffic during warmer months. While the Parks and Trails Masterplan's primary focus is on pedestrian trail connections, it also aims to address the needs of all trail users. Integrating both pedestrian and motorized vehicle trails as part of a larger regional network must ensure increased attention to safety and better accessibility for all members of the community.

Currently, the areas around Tanya and Quartzite Lakes have the most informal ATV trails. Anecdotal research has shown that the reason for the high number of routes in this area is due to changing seasonal conditions, as different trails are accessible at different times of year (i.e. some trails are too wet for use at certain times of year). With proper grading and design, there is potential for some ATV trails to be consolidated, which would provide an opportunity to re-purpose redundant ATV trails as active transportation or dedicated hiking trails. During the November 2018 public consultation session, participants were asked to mark on a map of the region what routes they typically use with their recreational vehicles. This information is documented in the Community Engagement section.

source:
¹ White Wolf Snowmobile Club. www.white-wolf.net

[RIGHT]
ATV tracks at Quartzite Lake Beach



3.0 Community Engagement

3.1 THE PROCESS

The success of any plan is dependent on the participation, involvement, and support of the local community. In mid-November of 2018, the Labrador West Parks and Trails Masterplan commenced with a series of engagement meetings that included the steering committee, stakeholder group, and a broader community workshop. Each meeting provided a platform to ensure that everyone had equal opportunity to share their knowledge, concerns, and ideas surrounding trails and the three parks included in the schematic design process: Al Thoms Recreation Area, Tanya Lake, and Gateway Labrador. In addition, an online survey was posted to ensure everyone in the community had the chance to voice their opinion in an anonymous forum.

While a more detailed summary of the engagement process follows, the overall feedback from the sessions was both positive and informative. It is clear that outdoor recreation in the community of Labrador City and Wabush is extremely important to the community. The community utilizes its open space for a variety of activities, but most importantly engages with trails to connect to the beauty of their surrounding natural environments. Trails are used by a variety of user groups including walkers, hikers, snowmobilers, and ATV users, which indicates the necessity of safe trail design. There was a common consensus regarding the need for a strong trail network that connects the community's of Labrador City and Wabush, as well as to the variety of parks in the Labrador West Region.

November 13 | Public Meeting



The Bucket List

As part of the community engagement session, stakeholders were asked to break into groups and collectively select programming and amenity elements they would like to see at each schematic design site. The given list of options was determined based on existing infrastructure as well as a gap analysis of current programming and amenities. The exercise was used to narrow down and synthesize top improvement priorities for the specific sites. The findings presented in this document represent a ranked tally of desired elements from all participating groups.

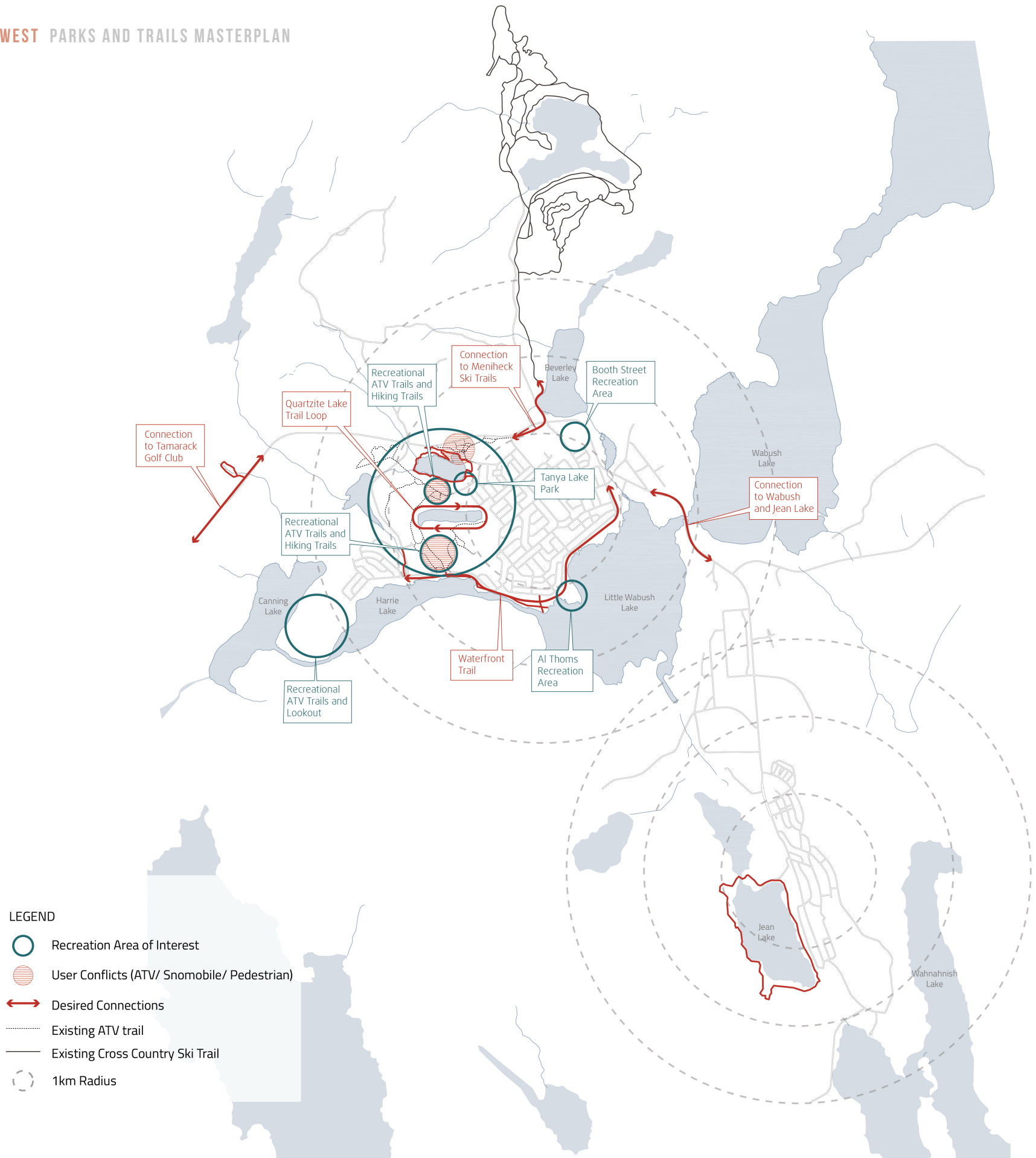
Top priorities for Gateway Labrador included a picnic area and RV parking, followed closely with interpretive features, improved washrooms, and outdoor bench seating. Washrooms and a boat launch were ranked as priorities for Al Thoms Recreation Area, followed by improved softball and playground structures. Finally, at Tanya Lake Park, priorities were placed on providing washrooms, picnic areas, and a designated sledding hill. Secondary priorities for Tanya Lake included a large outdoor gathering space, shade structures, and bench seating.

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Picnic | Outdoor Gathering Space | Play Area | Outdoor Movies |
| Bench | Shade Structure | Sledding | Outdoor Event Space |
| Lounge Seating | Interpretive Signage/ Features | Softball | Parking |
| Washrooms | Dog Walking | Baseball | RV Parking |
| Hiking Trail | Lookout | Skating | Boat Launch |

Ranked priorities
for schematic
design sites





Cognitive Trail and Open Space Mapping

A second component of the engagement session was a cognitive mapping exercise to draw existing trails and amenities on a provided base plan of the Labrador West region. This exercise was used to initiate conversation surrounding critical trails, hierarchy of trails, user-groups, as well as demarcate areas of conflict.

The adjacent diagram (left) locates key points of the community's response.

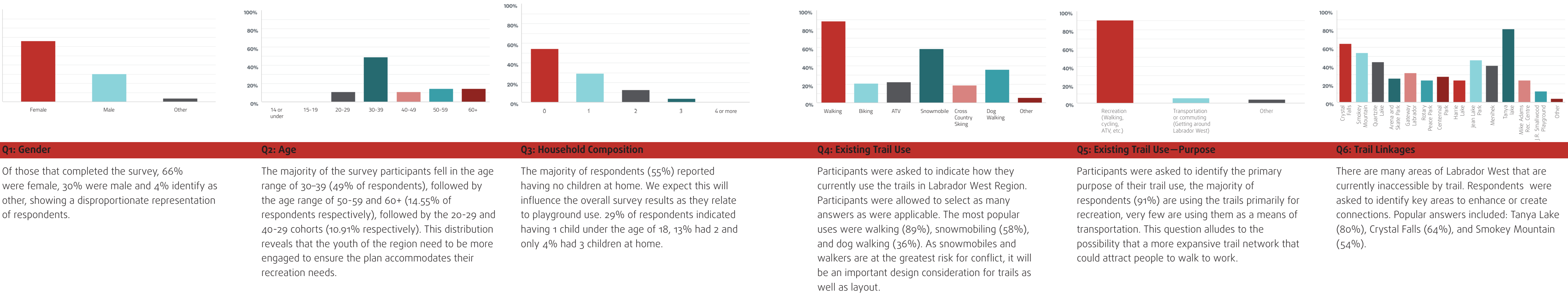
- » A trail to connect Labrador City and Wabush is essential
- » A waterfront trail on Little Wabush Lake would help connect Wabush to current open space and trail amenities in Labrador City
- » There is opportunity to connect Gateway Labrador to the Menihek Ski Trail network
- » Quartzite lake trail is heavily utilized by dog walkers, and would benefit from being connected as a full loop.
- » The Tamarack golf club offers an amazing look off vantage of the region and should be connected via a trail.
- » Areas to the North and South of Quartzite Lake are heavily utilized by the regions youth for both ATVing and Snowmobiling, requiring a hierarchy of pathways to avoid possible pedestrian conflict.
- » The peninsula between Canning Lake and Harrie Lake offers beautiful views with potential to formalize otherwise underutilized trails.
- » Recreational fields would benefit from being consolidated into one area for ease of programming and opening up key waterfront space at Al Thoms Recreation Area for other outdoor amenities.

This exercise was helpful in solidifying observations noted during the first site visit in early September. Many of these comments carry through the online survey comments which follow.



3.2 SURVEY

The survey was presented during the community workshop as well as via an online survey. A variety of questions were used to gain an understanding of user, use, activity, programming, desired improvements, and vision. Responses to each question are summarized below.



Q7: Outdoor Summer Activities

While Labrador West has a relatively short summer season, there are a broad range of activities available to area residents during these months. Participants were asked to share which activities they, and members of their household, participate in. The most popular activities included Walking (84%), Biking (55%), Swimming (47%), ATVing (41%) and Boating (41%). This information will help inform our facilities gap analysis, and create designs that better accommodate these activities.

Q8: Outdoor Winter Activities

The winter season in Labrador West is longer and colder than that experienced by much of Canada. Ensuring ample recreation opportunities to keep residents active and outdoors during these months will help foster a healthy community. Popular activities include Snowmobiling (76%), Snowshoeing (63%), and Tobogganing/Sledging (45%).

Q9: Facility Use

Labrador West has several recreation facilities. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they, or members of their household used these facilities. Many of the facilities have more of a youth focus and a majority of respondents indicated they do not have children living at home. These demographics skew the results. Further evaluation filtering for households with children may paint a different picture.

Q10: Transportation to Facilities

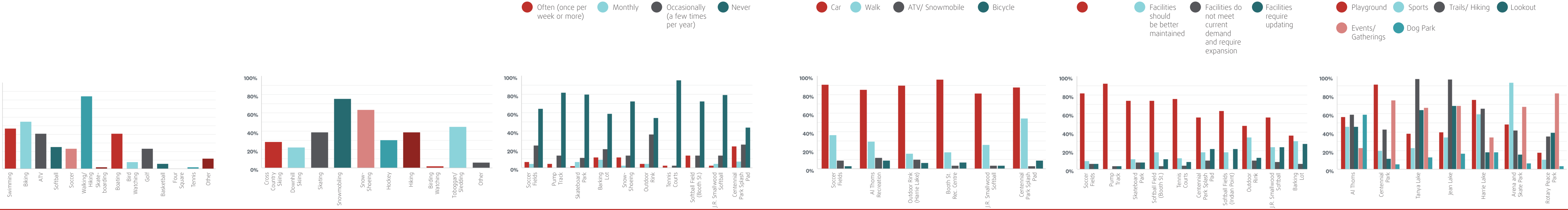
In order to understand how people move around Labrador West, participants were asked to indicate the modes of transportation typically used to reach facilities in Labrador West. Respondents were able to select multiple options, if applicable. Cars were the most popular for all facilities (80% or more) which indicates the necessity of appropriate parking planning and facilities.

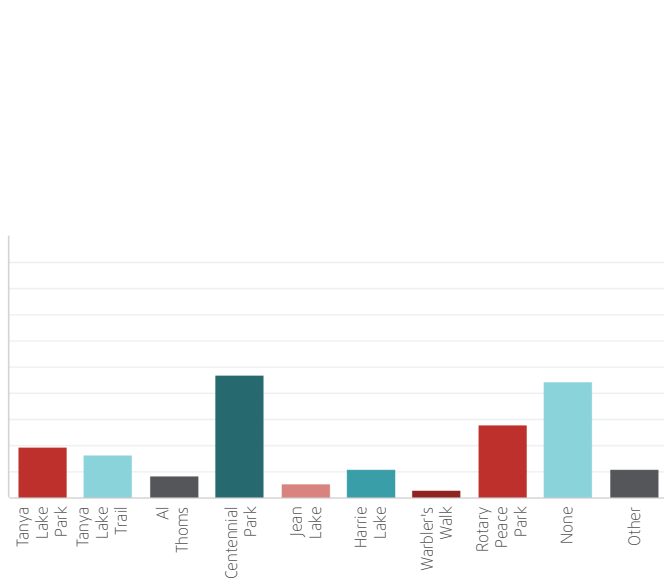
Q11: Facility Improvements

Participants were asked to indicate what facilities they felt were most in need of improvements, and what type of improvements were needed. The “Barking Lot” was generally ranked first for needing improvement and maintenance. The Pump Track and Soccer Fields were also both noted to be in need of updates.

Q12: Programming

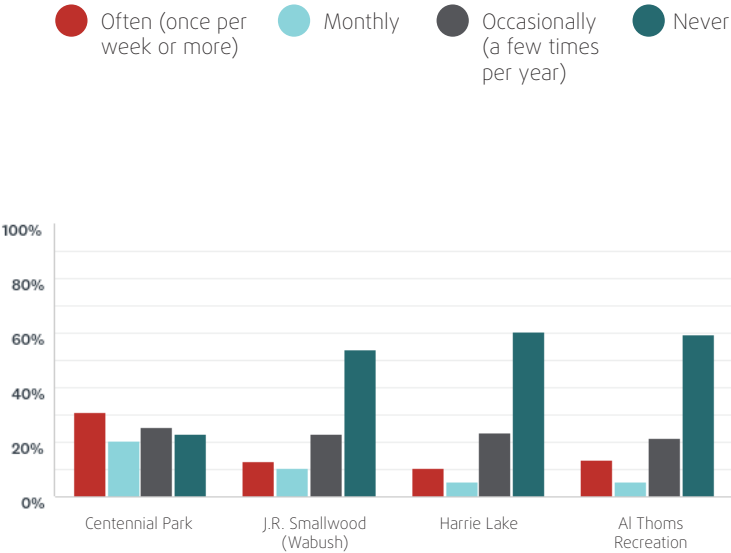
Participants were asked to indicate what types of facilities were, in their opinion, best suited for various sites around Labrador West. Centennial Park and Harrie Lake were the most popular choices for playgrounds, the current Labrador City Arena as a sporting facility, Tanya Lake and Jean Lake as areas for trails, Al Thoms Recreation Area as a dog park, and Rotary Peace Park the most popular for a gathering and event space.





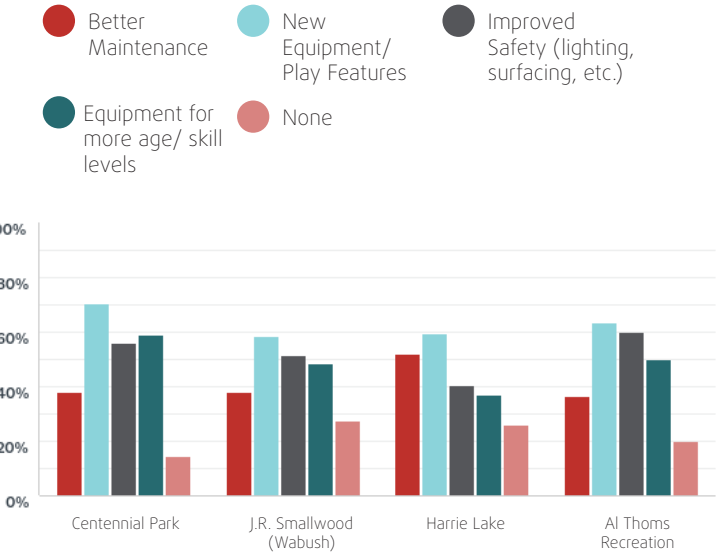
Q13: Dog Free Zones

Dogs, both on and off leash, can be a hot topic in communities. Participants were asked if there are any areas they feel should be dog-free. Response rates on this question were low, 36% of respondents opted not to respond to this question. Centennial Park, primarily a playground, is the only site with a significant number of votes (47%), 44% of those who chose to answer indicated they felt dogs should be permitted in all locations.



Q14: Playground Use

Participants were asked how often they, or members of their household, visited the playgrounds in Labrador West. A majority of respondents (55%) indicated they do not have children living at home. The responses for this question will be further analyzed to evaluate frequency of use by those households with children only. Of all survey responses, Centennial Park was the most popular playground with 31% indicating at least weekly use.



Q15: Playground Improvements

Participants were asked to evaluate the condition of the current playground facilities. Respondents indicated a need for new play features at all facilities with Centennial Park being the most in need (71%). Better maintenance and safety (lighting, surfacing etc.) were also frequently requested for all facilities.

community centre
waterfront walking trail
trail between lab city and wabush
designated snowmobile trails
bike trails
restrict dog access on trails
designated parking area
more trees
dog park obstacle course
no additional sports fields
trail committee

Q16: A Vision

Participants were asked to provide any additional feedback about what they feel could be done to enhance the open space network in Labrador West. Creating a trail between Labrador City and Wabush, implementing bike trails, and restricting dog access to certain areas of the trail were the three most common comments in the survey. Other comments included a new community centre, a continuous waterfront walking trail, designated snowmobile trails within the urban core, designated parking area at the former Scout Lodge location away from the sledding hill, more trees planted, no additional sports fields, a dog obstacle course, and the suggestion to establish a trail committee to oversee the implementation and continued maintenance of the trail system.