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# **Recreation and Culture Master Plan**

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**2026 – 2036**

## Acknowledgements

The preparation of the Town of Deep River Recreation and Culture Master Plan has been a collaborative effort, and our consulting team is grateful for the guidance and support we received throughout this process.

We would like to acknowledge Dave McCarthy for his steady leadership, clear direction, and ongoing support as the staff lead for this project. Dave's role in framing priorities, asking thoughtful questions, and helping to keep the work aligned with the Town's broader strategic direction was invaluable.

We also extend our sincere thanks to Jessy Pace, whose support with communications, logistics, and coordination ensured that engagement activities ran smoothly. Christian Kaiser and Sean Patterson provided important review and direction at key stages, helping to refine the Plan and confirm that recommendations are realistic, implementable, and well-aligned with operational realities.

Above all, we wish to recognize the residents, volunteers, community organizations, and partners who contributed their time and ideas. Through surveys, focus group sessions, interviews, and conversations, community members shared candid feedback about their experiences, priorities, and hopes for the future of recreation and culture in Deep River. Their input directly shaped the Plan's goals, recommendations, and implementation framework, ensuring that this document is reflective, positive, and actionable.

As consultants, we are honoured to have supported the Town in this important work. We are excited to watch the Plan come to life over the coming years and to see how Deep River continues to build on its strengths in recreation, arts, culture, and the natural environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

*Kim and Kevin*

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# Highlights

## Mission

We build community through play, culture, and connection.

## Vision

A vibrant, inclusive community powered by engagement, culture, and active living.

## 5 Strategic Directions

- Regional partners & sustainable finances
- Outdoors for generations
- Service delivery excellence
- Culture at the heart
- Renew the places we rely on

## What's in the Plan

- 28 core recommendations across the 5 directions (e.g., regional cost-sharing, waterfront and trail investment, cultural animation, technology and service upgrades, long-term facility renewal).
- 160+ supporting actions with short, medium, and long-term timing to guide day-to-day decisions and budgeting.

## What it Delivers

- Clear roadmap for facilities, parks, programs, and culture to 2035.
- Practical tools for annual priorities, funding, and performance tracking.

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# Introduction

## Project Outcome

A Recreation and Culture Master Plan is a strategic document developed by municipalities to guide the planning, development, and delivery of recreation and culture services, facilities, and programs over a defined period. For the Town of Deep River, the plan covers a 10-year period. The Master Plan is both a vision and an action plan, outlining how Deep River – and north Renfrew – can foster active, healthy, and connected lifestyles through public recreation and culture opportunities.

It should be acknowledged that recreation and culture services in Deep River are provided through a combination of public (municipal) and private (e.g., non-profit organizations) efforts that include provision of facilities, programming, events, and other activities. And, while the Master Plan is designed to inform municipal investment in recreation and culture; it also recognizes the key role that external delivery agencies fill. As such, the Master Plan will help build on existing relationships and partnerships with the overall goal of creating a vibrant and engaged community.

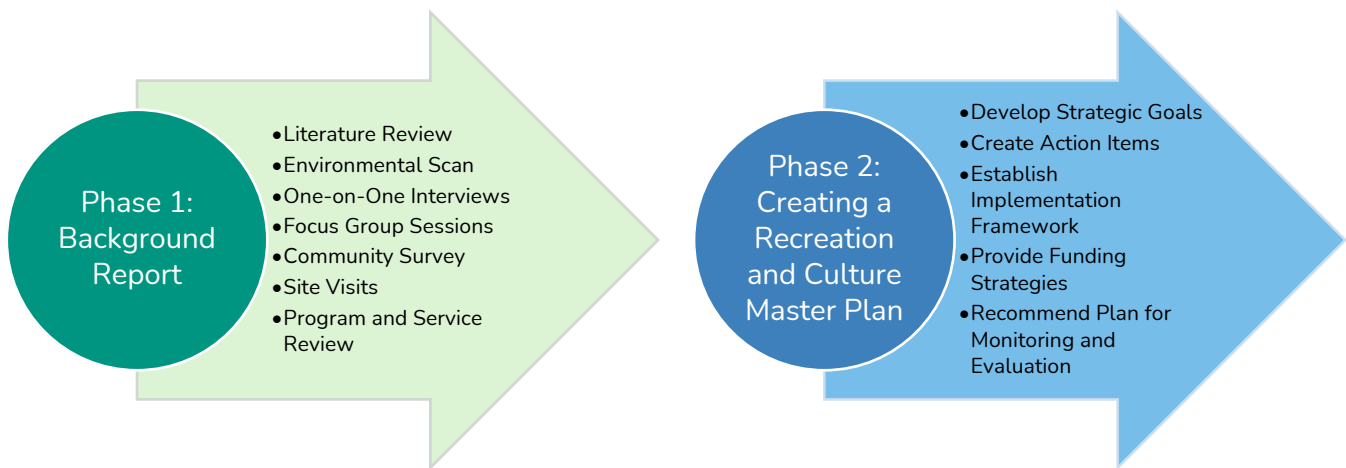
This Master Plan is informed by information and data collected throughout Phase 1, which is compiled in the Background Report for additional context.

## Project Approach

To accomplish this outcome, the Consulting Team utilized a two-phase approach. The steps within Phase 1, the Background Report, ensured that all necessary information and opinions were collected to inform the Master Plan. Phase 2 of this project is this Recreation and Culture Master Plan document. This document results from the development of a mission, vision, values, recommendations, and implementation framework that will guide recreation and culture service delivery in Deep River.

A well-informed process ensures recommendations and attainable implementation strategies that accurately represent the community needs and wants in a meaningful way.

A comprehensive, two-phase approach is being used to developing Deep River's Recreation and Culture Master Plan.



## Background and Context

### Deep River's setting and role

Deep River is a compact, walkable riverside community with an exceptional natural setting along the Ottawa River. Its beaches, parks, trail network, and downtown are closely linked, giving residents and visitors easy access to outdoor recreation and community spaces. Although the Town has a modest permanent population, its recreation and culture facilities serve a much larger regional catchment, including nearby rural areas, visitors, and workers connected to Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) and other employers.

Deep River's strategic plans emphasize quality of life, strong collaboration with neighbours, reliable infrastructure, and diverse recreational and cultural opportunities as core to the Town's future. The Recreation and Culture Master Plan is a key tool to advance these priorities.

### Facilities, parks, and cultural assets

Deep River offers a broad mix of recreation and culture amenities for its size, including an arena, pool, community and meeting spaces, beaches, waterfront parks and marina, playgrounds, sports fields, and an expanding trail system. The community also benefits from a vibrant library, active arts and culture groups, and regional assets such as Upper Ottawa Valley GLAM partners and local heritage organizations.

Facility assessments completed for this Plan confirm that several core assets are aging and will require significant renewal or replacement over the next decade. Several community organizations also own and operate their own facilities, and face similar challenges. At the same time, smaller investments in accessibility, comfort, and multi-use design can unlock more year-round value from existing spaces.

## **Community and stakeholder input**

Community engagement for the Master Plan included a public survey, interviews and workshops with community organizations, user groups, and partners, and discussions with Council and staff. Residents expressed strong pride in Deep River's natural setting, outdoor amenities, and sense of community, and identified several recurring themes:

- Desire to protect and enhance beaches, trails, and the waterfront while improving access, amenities, and connections.
- Interest in more programming for youth, older adults, and intergenerational social connection.
- Recognition of the importance of arts, culture, and heritage to community identity and tourism.
- Appreciation for volunteers and community partners, and concern about burnout and limited capacity.
- Awareness of financial constraints and the need for sustainable funding and regional collaboration.

Feedback from the municipality, cultural organizations, and other service providers emphasized opportunities to advance Truth and Reconciliation, inclusion, and cultural visibility in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

## **Key challenges**

The Background Report highlights several structural challenges that shape this Plan:

- Aging infrastructure and limited capital capacity
  - The arena, pool, and other key facilities are aging, and many outdoor amenities need reinvestment, while available capital funding is constrained.
  - Many other facilities, not owned and operated by the Town, face the same challenges
- Small tax base, regional service role
  - Deep River's population is relatively small compared to the number of people who use its facilities, making cost-recovery and fair regional cost-sharing critical.

- Volunteer and partner capacity
  - Many programs and events depend on a small group of dedicated volunteers and community organizations, which can limit growth and innovation.
- Climate change and environmental pressures
  - Changing weather patterns, shoreline conditions, and extreme events are affecting outdoor rinks, waterfront areas, and operations.

## Key opportunities

At the same time, the Background Report identifies important strengths and opportunities:

- Exceptional outdoor setting
  - The Ottawa River waterfront, beaches, and trail systems position Deep River as an outdoor recreation hub and potential tourism draw.
- Strong sense of community and engagement
  - Residents show high levels of attachment, volunteerism, and willingness to support local projects through time, fundraising, and ideas.
- Strength in numbers
  - With more than one hundred community based groups and organizations who support a range of programs and services ensuring there is something for everyone.
- Existing cultural and educational strengths
  - The library, arts groups, heritage partners, and regional GLAM network offer a strong foundation to expand cultural programming and storytelling.
- Strategic partnerships
  - Connections with CNL, schools, health providers, Indigenous partners, and neighbouring municipalities create opportunities for shared facilities, programs, and funding.

## How this Plan responds

The Recreation and Culture Master Plan translates these findings into five strategic goals focused on:

1. Building regional partnerships and sustainable finances.
2. Protecting and leveraging outdoor assets “for generations.”
3. Delivering excellent, modern, and inclusive services.
4. Placing culture at the heart of community life.
5. Renewing the places residents rely on through thoughtful asset management.

The remainder of the Plan outlines the recommendations, actions, funding approaches, and performance indicators that will help Deep River move from today's realities to this shared future.

# Mission, Vision, Values

## Mission

We build community through play, culture, and connection.

## Vision

A vibrant, inclusive community powered by engagement, culture and active living

## Core Values

### **Inclusion and Accessibility**

Embrace diversity and ensure programs, spaces, and opportunities are welcoming and accessible for all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and cultures – recognizing the importance of Indigenous heritage and multicultural participation.

### **Collaboration and Volunteerism**

Strengthen partnerships with local organizations, volunteers, and residents – acknowledging their essential roles in program delivery, community development, and innovation.

### **Well-Being and Connection**

Prioritize physical, mental, and social wellness through activities that build relationships, support lifelong learning, and foster community pride.

### **Environmental Stewardship**

Protect and showcase Deep River's natural assets, promoting sustainable practices and outdoor experiences that enhance the community's relationship to its unique setting by the Ottawa River.

### **Adaptability and Innovation**

Respond proactively to demographic changes, emerging community needs, and recreation trends with flexible, forward-thinking programming and facilities.

### **Integrity and Accountability**

Commit to transparent planning, use of resources, and ongoing dialogue with the community to achieve measurable progress and continuous improvement.

## Alignment with Strategic Plan

The recommended mission, vision, and values for Deep River’s Recreation and Culture Master Plan align well with the strategic priorities outlined in the Town’s current Strategic Plan (2024-2027), which places a strong emphasis on building a healthier and more inclusive community, developing a long-term recreation and culture plan, and strengthening social wellness through inclusive opportunities and partnerships.

## Key Strategic Plan Linkages

- The strategic plan’s objectives explicitly support recreation and culture as central to community well-being, inclusion, and long-term planning.
- There is a focus on creating accessible, welcoming environments and strengthening collaborations, which matches the proposed values around inclusion, volunteerism, and partnership.
- The strategic plan underscores environmental stewardship and the importance of the natural setting, which directly supports values around protecting and showcasing Deep River’s environment.
- Strategic priorities also include adapting to demographic changes and supporting innovation, which align with adaptive and forward-thinking recommendations in the Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

## Big Moves (Strategic Direction)

### Strategic Goal 1: Regional Partners, Sustainable Finances

Strengthen regional partnerships and cost-sharing agreements to reflect Deep River's broader service role, while advancing long-term financial stewardship and sustainability for recreation and culture through smart investment, diversified funding, and fair, transparent pricing.

### Strategic Goal 2: Outdoors for Generations

Deep River's beaches, parks, marina, and trails are among the community's greatest points of pride, heavily used by residents and visitors and central to quality of life and tourism potential. At the same time, the Background Report highlights the need to better leverage these outdoor assets as economic drivers, while protecting them from climate and environmental pressures, to support both community wellbeing and local business.

### Strategic Goal 3: Service Delivery Excellence

Position the Recreation and Culture Department as the community's leader and changemaker by streamlining policies and processes and working collaboratively with community organizations and non-municipal partners to modernize recreation technology and deliver seamless, high-quality services, programs, and spaces.

### Strategic Goal 4: Culture at the Heart

Celebrate and advance arts, culture, and (local, natural, scientific, and Indigenous) heritage by creating intentional multi-cultural spaces, improving access to schools and other cultural venues, and building on existing programs to introduce new events and experiences that reflect Deep River's diverse community and stories.

### Strategic Goal 5: Renew the Places We Rely On

Address aging recreation and culture infrastructure through integrated, long-term asset management that prioritizes safety, accessibility, multi-use design, and fiscal responsibility, ensuring the arena, pool, community spaces, and outdoor facilities remain welcoming and sustainable.

## Recommendations

There are a total of 28 recommendations, and they are categorized into 5 strategic directions designed with consideration for prudent fiscal management, recreation as an economic driver for tourism, service delivery excellence, celebrate and advance cultural programming/services and regional partnerships/cost sharing agreements. Details on the timing and prioritization of recommendations, approaches for financing and mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress will also be discussed.

# Strategic Goal 1: Regional Partners, Sustainable Finances

## Goal Statement

Strengthen regional partnerships and cost-sharing agreements to reflect Deep River's broader service role, while advancing long-term financial stewardship and sustainability for recreation and culture through smart investment, diversified funding, and fair, transparent pricing.

## Recommendations

### Strengthen Regional Cost-Sharing and Collaboration

Work with neighbouring municipalities to establish fair, transparent cost-sharing agreements that reflect Deep River's broader service role and support equitable regional access to recreation and culture facilities and programming.

### Advance Revenue Integrity Through Annual Fee Reviews

Implement an annual user fee review as part of the recreation and culture budget process, adjusting rates where necessary to maintain alignment with service costs, market conditions, and cost-recovery targets.

### Diversify Funding Through Partnerships, Sponsorships, and Fundraising

Engage local businesses, community organizations (including schools, Indigenous groups, CNL, and the library), and residents as investors in Deep River's recreation and culture future through sponsorships, naming rights, co-delivery partnerships, and visible community fundraising campaigns.

### Establish a Recreation Capital Reserve with Dedicated Funding Streams

Create a sustainable reserve fund for major renewals and upgrades by dedicating consistent annual contributions to a capital reserve, supplemented by modest, clearly communicated surcharges on select rentals and registrations. This fund can be used to leverage matching grants related to facility investment.

## Performance Indicators

Indicator	What it Tells Us	Desired Direction
Regional contribution ratio	Extent to which neighbouring municipalities contribute to Deep River facilities and programs (via agreements or direct support)	Increasing or stable, aligned with regional use
Cost-recovery trend	Overall cost-recovery level for recreation and culture (e.g., net cost per capita or % cost-recovery)	Stable or improving over time
Annual user fee review completed	Whether a documented fee review is completed and communicated each year	Completed annually
Diversity of funding sources	Share of total revenues coming from non-tax sources (fees, grants, sponsorships, donations, surcharges)	Increasing or stable
Capital reserve health	Recreation capital reserve balance and contributions compared to simple lifecycle benchmarks	Moving toward agreed benchmark
Grant and fundraising success	Number and value of successful grants and community fundraising campaigns per year	Increasing or stable

## Strategic Goal 2: Outdoors for Generations

### Goal Statement

Establish Deep River’s beaches, parks, marina, and trail systems as signature outdoor assets that support everyday resident use, drive recreation-related tourism, and strengthen the local economy, while protecting the natural environment for future generations.

### Recommendations

#### Expand and Connect Trail Systems

Expand, connect, and enhance Deep River’s land and water trail systems to provide safe, accessible routes between neighbourhoods, major parks, the waterfront, and downtown for people of all ages and abilities, while linking local routes with regional trail networks to promote recreation and support active transportation.

#### Promote Nature Connection and Health

Promote nature connection and health in collaboration with local landowners and volunteer trail and stewardship organizations, encouraging regular time in nature and outdoor recreation for all ages and abilities through shared programming, thoughtful design, and coordinated partnerships that recognize the physical, mental, and social health benefits of nature.

#### Create an Integrated Waterfront Approach

Strengthen the waterfront as a connected economic and recreation hub by better linking the marina, beaches, waterfront parks, and downtown, and enhancing facilities, amenities, programs, and events to improve the overall resident and visitor experience.

#### Adapt to a Changing Climate

Integrate climate adaptation into parks and recreation planning and operations by embracing progressive and innovative measures to reduce risks and build resilience to changing water levels, extreme weather, and shifting seasons.

#### Lead in Environmental Stewardship

Act as a leader in environmental stewardship by protecting and enhancing natural spaces, implementing sustainable practices, and promoting environmental education to ensure the continued beauty and health of parks and natural areas for future generations.

## Enhance Community Pride, Beautification, and Amenities

Strengthen community pride, beautification, and everyday use of outdoor spaces through targeted amenities, policies, and programs.

### Performance Indicators

Indicator	What it Tells Us	Desired Direction
Trail and active transportation connectivity	Kilometres of maintained trails/active routes and number of key destinations connected by accessible routes	Increasing over time
Outdoor participation and usage	Estimated use of beaches, parks, marina, and trails (counts, registrations, event attendance, survey feedback)	Increasing or stable
Access to nature and play	Proportion of residents within a short walk of a park, trail access, or play space; perceived ease of access	Increasing or stable
Environmental stewardship actions implemented	Number of new or ongoing stewardship initiatives (tree planting, habitat projects, education, waste/recycling improvements)	Increasing over time
Climate adaptation measures in place	Number of parks/facilities with climate-resilient features (shade trees, drought-tolerant landscaping, stormwater features, etc.)	Increasing over time
Outdoor events and tourism activity	Number of outdoor events/tournaments and qualitative feedback from local businesses about outdoor-related visitation	Increasing or stable

## Strategic Goal 3: Service Delivery Excellence

### Goal Statement

Position the Recreation and Culture Department as the community's leader and changemaker by streamlining policies and processes, modernizing recreation technology, and working collaboratively with community organizations and non-municipal partners to deliver seamless, high-quality services, programs and spaces.

### Recommendations

#### Engage Staff, Volunteers, and Workplace Culture

Invest in staff and volunteers through ongoing training, clear roles, and recognition, and foster a positive, collaborative workplace culture where people feel valued, supported, and equipped to deliver excellent service.

#### Build Community Capacity and Volunteerism

Support and collaborate with community organizations, volunteers, and partners to expand the depth and breadth of community offerings, build local leadership capacity, share delivery of programs and events and increase access to and use of non-municipal spaces.

#### Enhance Communications and Brand Presence

Strengthen communications, marketing, and branding to increase awareness, make it easier for residents to find and register for opportunities, and grow participation in recreation and culture programs.

#### Modernize Technology for Efficiency and User Experience

Leverage modern recreation software and digital tools to streamline operations, enhance customer service and communication, and support data driven decision-making.

#### Strengthen Program Quality, Inclusion, and Older Adult Services

Design and refine programs to support active living, healthy lifestyles, and social connection for all ages, with particular attention to inclusive opportunities and welcoming, age-friendly services for older adults in Deep River.

## Clarify Policies, Standards, and Accountability

Develop and maintain clear policies, service standards, and performance metrics to guide decision-making, track outcomes, and demonstrate accountability and continuous improvement in service delivery.

### Performance Indicators

Indicator	What it Tells Us	Desired Direction
Resident satisfaction with services	Overall satisfaction rating with recreation and culture services from periodic surveys	Stable or improving
Staff and volunteer engagement	Retention, participation in training, and simple engagement measures for staff and volunteers.	Stable or improving
Program participation and reach	Total program registrations/unique participants, by age group and key populations	Increasing or stable
Digital adoption and convenience	Percentage of registrations and bookings completed online; basic feedback on ease of use	Increasing over time
Partnerships and volunteer activity	Number of active community partners, volunteers, and co-delivered programs/events	Increasing or stable
Policy and KPI maturity	Number/percentage of key policies, procedures, and KPIs in place and reviewed on a set cycle	Increasing over time

## Strategic Goal 4: Culture at the Heart

### Goal Statement

Celebrate and advance arts, culture, and heritage by building on existing programs and creating intentional multi-cultural spaces, improving access to schools and other cultural venues to introduce new events and experiences that reflect Deep River's diverse community and stories.

### Recommendations

#### Strengthen Cultural Partnerships and Programming

Work with schools, Indigenous partners, cultural organizations, and community groups to co-create and expand cultural programs, workshops, and experiences that reflect Deep River's local stories, creativity, and river-based heritage.

#### Expand and Optimize Cultural Spaces

Increase access to, and creative use of, cultural spaces including schools, libraries, museums, and non-traditional venues by encouraging shared use, pop-up and outdoor cultural spaces, and flexible, multi-purpose cultural hubs.

#### Animate the Community with Cultural Events

Support a diverse range of community-driven arts, culture, and heritage events throughout the year, partnering with local volunteers and cultural groups to sustain and grow existing festivals and performances, use indoor and outdoor venues to celebrate local talent, attract visitors, and strengthen community pride.

#### Promote Local Artists and Cultural Assets

Enhance promotion and storytelling about local artists, cultural organizations, and heritage assets through coordinated marketing, cultural branding, and regional outreach, raising awareness of Deep River as a cultural destination.

#### Advance Truth, Reconciliation, and Inclusion

Collaborate with Indigenous communities and apply the principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) to ensure cultural spaces, programs, and events are welcoming, respectful, and accessible to everyone, and support ongoing Truth and Reconciliation learning and action.

## Sustain and Expand Cultural Mapping

Sustain and expand cultural mapping activities to identify, document, and regularly update Deep River’s cultural assets, using this information to guide planning, investment, storytelling, and tourism development.

### Performance Indicators

Indicator	What it Tells Us	Desired Direction
Cultural event volume and attendance	Number of arts, culture, and heritage events supported/hosted annually and estimated attendance	Increasing or stable
Diversity and inclusiveness of offerings	Share of events/programs that are multicultural, Indigenous-led, accessible, or explicitly IDEA-focused	Increasing over time
Artist and cultural organization engagement	Number of local artists and cultural groups engaged in municipal initiatives each year	Increasing or stable
Cultural space utilization	Use of key cultural spaces (e.g., library rooms, pop-ups, outdoor hubs) through bookings/events	Increasing or stable
Truth and Reconciliation progress	Number and type of TRC-aligned initiatives implemented annually (education, signage, partnerships, etc.)	Increasing and sustained
Cultural mapping updates and use	Frequency of updates to the cultural map/inventory and how often it is referenced in planning or promotion	Updated regularly and actively used

## Strategic Goal 5: Renew the Places We Rely On

### Goal Statement

Address aging recreation and culture infrastructure through integrated, long-term asset management that prioritizes safety, accessibility, multi-use design, and fiscal responsibility, ensuring the arena, pool, community spaces, and outdoor facilities remain welcoming and sustainable.

### Recommendations

#### Define Maintenance Standards and Lifecycle Practices

Establish clear maintenance standards, inspection routines, and service levels for all major facilities and parks, using lifecycle best practices to keep assets safe, accessible, and in a state of good repair.

#### Plan Long-Term Renewal and Multi-Use Spaces

Develop an integrated long-term facilities strategy that prioritizes high-impact investments, supports multi-use and flexible design, and guides the phased renewal, repurposing, or expansion of arenas, pools, community spaces, and outdoor facilities.

#### Improve Operational Efficiency and Shared Use

Pursue energy, staffing, and operating efficiencies, and expand shared-use and partnership models to increase utilization of existing spaces, reduce operating costs where feasible, and grow the effective supply of recreation and culture space.

#### Proactively Pursue Grants and External Funding

Maintain shovel-ready concepts and systematically apply for federal, provincial, and regional grants and other external funding to accelerate capital renewal and maximize local dollars.

#### Prioritize Safety and a Sense of Security

Address safety and risk proactively through well-lit and well-designed spaces, regular inspections, and appropriate security and education measures so that residents feel safe and confident using facilities and parks at all times.

#### Renew and Adapt Library and Cultural Spaces

Enhance library and related cultural spaces to improve accessibility, flexibility, and their role as community hubs.

## Performance Indicators

Indicator	What it Tells Us	Desired Direction
Asset condition and state of good repair	Percentage of recreation and culture assets rated fair or better in asset management data	Stable or improving
Renewal funding vs. lifecycle need	Annual renewal spending compared to estimated lifecycle requirement (renewal funding ratio)	Moving toward agreed range
Priority capital project progress	Status of key capital projects from the Plan (not started / in progress / completed / deferred)	Steady progress year over year
Facility utilization and multi-use	Utilization levels for major facilities and number of spaces operating as multi-use or shared-use hubs	Increasing or stable
Energy efficiency and operating performance	High-level energy/utility trends for major facilities, particularly after efficiency upgrades	Improving or stable
Safety and accessibility improvements	Number of safety, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), and accessibility upgrades completed each year (parks, facilities, library)	Increasing over time

## Implementing the Plan

This plan is intended to guide Town of Deep River staff and Council through to 2036, providing a clear bridge from high-level goals to day-to-day decisions about programs, spaces, partnerships, and investment. This section outlines how actions will be sequenced over time, how they align with Council’s strategic direction and the Town’s fiscal framework, and how progress will be monitored, reported, and refined as conditions change.

### Purpose and approach

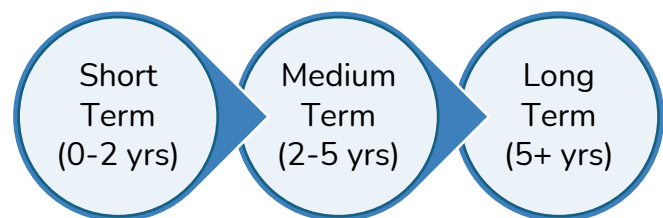
Implementation of the Recreation and Culture Master Plan is an iterative process, not a one-time exercise, and should be integrated into the Town’s annual business planning, asset management, and budget cycles. The Implementation Table in Appendix A translates each recommendation into concrete actions with indicative timing, providing a living workplan that can be adjusted as opportunities and constraints evolve.

### Using the Implementation Table

Actions in Appendix A are organized under the Plan’s five strategic goals and categorized as short, medium, or long term to signal likely sequencing, not rigid deadlines. Short-term actions generally focus on foundation-building (policies, quick wins, and planning studies), medium-term actions emphasize scaling and integration, and long-term actions address major capital projects and system-wide shifts, often dependent on external funding and partnerships.

When using the Implementation Table, staff should:

- Confirm which actions are realistic to initiate or continue in the upcoming year, given staff capacity, funding, and Council direction.
- Identify dependencies (for example, policies or studies that must precede capital design and construction) and sequence actions accordingly.
- Note where one action advances multiple goals (for example, a waterfront project that supports “Outdoors for Generations,” “Culture at the Heart,” and “Renew the Places We Rely On”) and reflect this in business cases and reports.



## Annual prioritization and budgeting

Determining priorities is an exercise that should be revisited each year prior to the Town's operating and capital budget development. It is expected that Council will make final decisions on individual projects, service levels, and funding sources through its regular budget process, using the Master Plan as a key reference point alongside other corporate plans such as the Strategic Plan and Asset Management Plan.

## Factors that may shift priorities

While the indicative timing in Appendix A provides a roadmap, priorities will inevitably shift as conditions change, and the Plan is intended to be flexible enough to accommodate this. In addition to the availability of municipal funding, factors that might change priorities include:

- **Public safety and risk** – Actions or projects required to address safety, accessibility, or regulatory compliance concerns should advance ahead of less urgent initiatives.
- **Asset condition and failure risk** – Deteriorating facilities or amenities identified through asset management updates may require accelerated renewal, replacement, or decommissioning.
- **Grant and partnership opportunities** – Time-limited external funding, donations, or partnership offers may justify bringing forward shovel-ready projects that align with the Plan's goals.
- **Demand, usage, and satisfaction trends** – Sustained changes in participation, waitlists, or user feedback may warrant re-sequencing actions to expand or refine services with the greatest community impact.
- **Regional and institutional initiatives** – New strategies or investments by neighbouring municipalities, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, educational institutions, health partners, Indigenous communities, or other agencies may create opportunities for joint projects or shared facilities.
- **Legislative and policy changes** – Updates to provincial regulations, funding programs, accessibility standards, or climate-related requirements may necessitate adjustments in timing, scope, or design.
- **Climate and environmental conditions** – Shifts in weather patterns, water levels, or environmental risk may accelerate or reshape projects related to waterfronts, outdoor rinks, or parks and trails.

## Roles, accountability, and communication

Successful implementation depends on coordinated roles across the organization:

- Council sets direction, approves budgets, and champions the Plan's vision in dialogue with residents and partners.
- Senior management integrates Master Plan priorities into corporate planning, asset management, and inter-departmental initiatives.
- Recreation and culture staff lead day-to-day implementation, monitor performance, and maintain relationships with community organizations, volunteers, and regional partners.

Transparent communication is essential to maintain trust and momentum. The Town should:

- Provide annual public updates on progress, celebrating achievements and acknowledging delays or changes in direction.
- Use multiple channels (for example, website, social media, newsletters, library and facility displays) to highlight upcoming projects and opportunities for involvement.
- Recognize partners, volunteers, sponsors, and funders who contribute to implementation, reinforcing a culture of shared ownership.

By embedding this Implementation framework into regular municipal practice, Deep River can move steadily from vision to action, adapting as needed while maintaining a clear line of sight between daily decisions and the long-term recreation and culture outcomes the community has identified as most important.

## **Funding Strategies**

Implementing the Recreation and Culture Master Plan will require ongoing investment of time, funding, and community partnership. While the Town's tax base remains the foundation for operating and capital budgets, Deep River will rely on a mix of complementary tools to deliver on the Plan's vision in a financially responsible way.

### **Capital reserves and lifecycle planning**

Deep River will continue to integrate recreation and culture facilities into its corporate asset management and long-term financial plans, dedicating stable funding for renewal and replacement over time. Establishing and maintaining a dedicated recreation capital reserve, with clear annual contributions and transparent reporting, will provide a reliable foundation for major upgrades and allow the Town to respond to urgent needs when they arise.

### **Grants and external funding**

The Town will proactively pursue federal, provincial, and regional grants – using shovel-ready concepts and the approved Master Plan to demonstrate need, community alignment, and readiness. When possible, capital projects will be bundled and timed to coincide with grant programs, and successes and lessons learned will be shared with Council and the community.

### **Community sponsorships, fundraising, and naming rights**

Deep River's residents, businesses, and community organizations have a strong history of investing their time and resources in local facilities and programs. The Town will build on this by offering structured sponsorship and naming opportunities, supporting visible fundraising campaigns for priority projects, and recognizing donors in meaningful ways, while ensuring all partnerships align with community values.

### **User fees, surcharges, and cost-sharing**

Fair and transparent user fees will continue to play an important role in supporting sustainable operations, guided by regular fee reviews and clear cost-recovery principles. Where appropriate, modest, project-specific surcharges on select rentals or registrations may be used to help fund major improvements, and regional cost-sharing arrangements with neighbouring municipalities will be pursued to reflect Deep River's broader service role.

### **Partnerships and innovative funding streams**

Partnerships with health, education, cultural, Indigenous, and private sector partners can unlock new funding streams and shared investments in programs, spaces, and equipment. Over time, Deep River will look to strengthen these relationships and explore innovative tools – such as social prescribing initiatives, joint-use agreements, and targeted pilot projects – that deliver community benefit while sharing financial responsibility.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

The Town of Deep River should consistently review and evaluate implementation of the Recreation and Culture Master Plan to ensure it remains aligned with community needs and Council priorities. This requires ongoing monitoring of key data, including annual facility and program usage, resident engagement, activity trends, user satisfaction, and regular dialogue with community organizations and regional partners. Annual reporting on plan implementation is essential to support transparent decision-making and to inform adjustments to resource allocation and priorities.

A thorough review of the Plan demands a clear commitment from staff involved in the planning, financing, and delivery of recreation and culture services, as well as from Council. The following steps can guide Deep River’s annual review and continuous-improvement process.

## **Past year evaluation**

- Evaluate the past year’s activities, including progress on recommendations and actions, status of capital projects, and the launch or continuation of key initiatives.
- Review changes in participation and usage across facilities, programs, and events, and summarize feedback from residents, user groups, and community organizations.
- Use the Performance Indicators (previously listed with each goal statement) to support performance monitoring

## **Assessment of challenges and opportunities**

- Annually identify and discuss key challenges (e.g., funding constraints, staffing, legislative or political changes) and opportunities (e.g., grants, donations, partnerships, new developments).
- Consider financial and operational implications and determine what modifications or re-sequencing of actions are needed for the upcoming year.

## **Next-year projections and workplan**

- Prepare an annual staff report that prioritizes short-term projects and actions for the next year, based on Master Plan recommendations, budget limits, asset management priorities, community input, and partnership opportunities.
- Identify any “shovel-ready” initiatives to position the Town for grant applications and other external funding opportunities.

### **Prioritization and communication**

- Confirm project and action priorities with the senior management team and Council, ensuring alignment with the Town's Strategic Plan and fiscal framework.
- Communicate project status, priorities, and planned initiatives clearly to staff, Council, and the community through regular reporting and updates.

### **Quarterly review and ongoing adjustments**

- Establish a quarterly check-in to review progress on the annual workplan, track key performance indicators, and address barriers or emerging opportunities.

Bring forward any required budget amendments or new funding requests tied to time-sensitive opportunities, grant intakes, or emerging community needs.

By adhering to this structured monitoring and evaluation process, Deep River can ensure that its recreation and culture services remain responsive to evolving community needs, support continuous improvement, and align with Council's commitment to accountability, transparency, and performance measurement.

## Summary

Completing a Recreation and Culture Master Plan demonstrates the Town of Deep River's commitment to enhancing community well-being, fostering belonging, and protecting the natural and cultural assets that make the Town unique. This process has provided an opportunity to reflect on how residents, regional users, and partners experience recreation and culture today, and to establish a clear vision and roadmap for the next decade. The Plan focuses on the key priorities identified through a rigorous, two-phase planning and engagement process and provides practical, actionable recommendations to sustain and strengthen quality of life in Deep River.

## Key Achievements

Key accomplishments through the planning process include:

- A comprehensive assessment of Deep River's recreation and culture system, including facilities, parks, trails, programs, cultural spaces, funding, and regional usage patterns.
- Development of a multi-dimensional action plan structured around five strategic goals: regional partnerships and sustainable finances, outdoors for generations, service delivery excellence, culture at the heart, and renewing the places the community relies on.
- Robust engagement with residents, user groups, volunteers, community organizations, and Town staff and Council to foster collaboration and collective action.
- Integration of evidence-based practices, local data (including usage, movement, and demographic trends), and lessons from other rural and small-town contexts to inform Deep River's approach.
- A clear emphasis on inclusivity, accessibility, Truth and Reconciliation, and equity to ensure that people of all ages, abilities, cultures, and backgrounds can benefit from recreation and cultural opportunities.

## Next Steps

Moving forward, the focus will be on:

- Implementing the Plan’s recommendations in collaboration with key stakeholders and regional partners, leveraging their expertise, resources, and networks to support shared priorities.
- Establishing ongoing monitoring and evaluation, including the use of performance indicators linked to each strategic goal, to track progress, respond to challenges, and adjust priorities as circumstances evolve.
- Continuing to engage community members, volunteers, and partners to gather feedback, test new ideas, and ensure that services remain responsive, financially sustainable, and aligned with Deep River’s values and strategic direction.

## Conclusion

Through this planning process, Deep River has affirmed that recreation, arts, culture, and the natural environment are central to its identity and future, and that the Town is ready to act – wherever and whenever feasible – to advance this shared vision. Successful implementation of the Recreation and Culture Master Plan will require addressing aging infrastructure and financial pressures, leveraging the Town’s exceptional outdoor setting and cultural strengths, and following through on the recommendations outlined in this document to benefit residents and regional users for years to come.

# Appendix A - Supporting Actions and Implementation Framework

## Strategic Goal 1: Regional Partners, Sustainable Finances

### Goal Statement

Strengthen regional partnerships and cost-sharing agreements to reflect Deep River’s broader service role, while advancing long-term financial stewardship and sustainability for recreation and culture through smart investment, diversified funding, and fair, transparent pricing.

Recommendation	Supporting Action	Short	Medium	Long
<b>Strengthen regional cost-sharing and collaboration</b> Work with neighbouring municipalities to establish fair, transparent cost-sharing agreements that reflect Deep River’s broader service role and support equitable regional access to recreation and culture facilities and programming.	Review and update existing regional service and cost-sharing arrangements (or informal practices) to reflect current facility use, travel patterns, and Deep River’s role as a service hub.			
	Develop a clear regional cost-sharing framework (principles, methodology, and communication tools) that can be used consistently in discussions with neighbouring municipalities.			
	Explore joint planning tables with adjacent municipalities to identify shared priorities, grant opportunities, and coordinated investments in recreation and culture.			
	Report annually to Council on regional use, revenues, and cost-sharing contributions to maintain transparency.			
<b>Advance revenue integrity through annual fee reviews</b> Implement an annual user	Conduct an annual review of user fees compared with direct costs, cost-recovery targets, and comparable municipalities, and recommend adjustments as needed.			

fee review as part of the recreation and culture budget process, adjusting rates where necessary to align with service costs, market conditions, and cost-recovery targets.	Adopt a transparent pricing policy that distinguishes between core/essential services, enhanced services, and commercial use, with corresponding cost-recovery expectations.			
	Build a simple fee classification and discount structure (e.g., youth, seniors, low-income supports) to balance affordability and sustainability.			
	Communicate fee changes clearly to users, including rationale and how revenues support reinvestment in facilities and programs.			
<b>Diversify funding through partnerships, sponsorships, and fundraising</b> Engage local businesses, organizations (including schools, Indigenous groups, CNL, and the library), and residents as investors in Deep River’s recreation and culture future through sponsorships, naming rights, co-delivery partnerships, and visible community fundraising campaigns.	Build, foster and formalize partnership agreements with non-profit organizations, volunteer groups, businesses and other community agencies to support service delivery			
	Establish ethical guidelines and a sponsorship review process to ensure partnerships align with community values.			
	Recognize sponsors and donors through events, plaques, digital promotion, and storytelling that highlights community impact.			
	Launch themed public fundraising campaigns focused on specific capital or program priorities, using online platforms and local business partnerships for matching donations.			
	Celebrate community donors at municipal events and through ongoing communications to maintain engagement and momentum.			
	Develop structured, tiered sponsorship and naming-rights opportunities for facilities, amenities, and programs, open to organizations and individuals.			
	Establish ‘Friends of’ type groups to help raise funds through community events, sponsorship and campaigns			

<p><b>Establish a recreation capital reserve with dedicated funding streams</b></p> <p>Create a sustainable foundation for major renewals and upgrades by dedicating consistent annual contributions to a capital reserve, supplemented by modest, clearly communicated surcharges on select rentals and registrations and used to leverage matching grants.</p>	Allocate a defined annual contribution (e.g., a percentage of recreation asset value or a fixed budget amount) to a dedicated recreation capital reserve, reviewed periodically against lifecycle and community needs.			
	Integrate reserve contributions and planned draws with the 10-year capital plan and corporate asset management system, prioritizing renewal of aging facilities and critical safety/accessibility upgrades.			
	Introduce modest, project-specific surcharges on facility rentals, registrations, and select programs, dedicated solely to capital improvements and tracked in a transparent way.			
	Communicate the purpose of surcharges and reserve funding clearly to users and the community, including opportunities for optional donations at registration.			
	Provide annual public reporting on reserve balances, surcharge revenues, how funds were used, and anticipated future needs; benchmark reserve and surcharge practices against similar municipalities where possible.			

## Strategic Goal 2: Outdoors for Generations

### Goal Statement

Establish Deep River’s beaches, parks, marina, and trail systems as signature outdoor assets that support everyday resident use, drive recreation-related tourism, and strengthen the local economy, while protecting the natural environment for future generations.

Recommendation	Supporting Action	Short	Medium	Long
<b>Expand and connect trail systems</b> Expand, connect, and enhance Deep River’s land and water trail systems to provide safe, accessible routes between neighbourhoods, major parks, the waterfront, and downtown for people of all ages and abilities, while linking local routes with regional trail networks to promote recreation and support active transportation.	Develop well-designed trailheads with consistent wayfinding, maps, information panels, benches, garbage and recycling bins, cycling supports and bike racks, accessible parking, and basic amenities.			
	Continue and expand the wayfinding project, including updated trail and community maps (digital and physical) to help residents and visitors navigate Deep River’s outdoor assets.			
	Maintain and improve a clear trail classification system (length, difficulty) so users can choose routes appropriate to their abilities.			
	Minimize risk by training volunteers, clearly posting rules and regulations, and etiquette for multi-use.			
	Improve connectivity between local trails and regional trail systems, including signage and safe access points.			
	Review and update the Accessibility Plan to identify, grade, and upgrade accessible trail segments and associated amenities where feasible.			

<p><b>Promote nature connection and health</b> Promote nature connection and health in collaboration with local landowners and volunteer trail and stewardship organizations, encouraging regular time in nature and outdoor recreation for all ages and abilities through shared programming, thoughtful design, and coordinated partnerships that recognize the physical, mental, and social health benefits of nature.</p>	Create opportunities to be active outdoors through strong trail systems, StoryWalks, well-maintained parks and playgrounds, and safe pedestrian corridors.			
	Host or co-host outdoor programs such as day camps, guided hikes, and nature-based activities in parks, beaches, and trails.			
	Promote beaches and upgrade amenities to support non-motorized water activities (e.g., kayak/canoe launches, storage, signage).			
	Implement accessibility upgrades in parks and trails (e.g., accessible surfacing, routes and wayfinding, seating, shade structures and trees, bicycle parking, and playground safety improvements).			
	Provide low-cost, flexible play opportunities in green spaces without playgrounds (e.g., loose-parts play, informal games areas).			
	Enhance active transportation options, including loops and accessible pathways connecting neighbourhoods, facilities, and amenities (e.g., paved sidewalks/shoulders, gravel/aggregate paths in natural areas, as appropriate to site).			
	Host and support programs – ideally in green spaces – that include environmental education such as learning about local wildlife, ecosystems, or sustainable practices.			
<p><b>Create an integrated waterfront approach</b> Strengthen the waterfront as a connected economic and recreation hub by better linking the marina, beaches,</p>	Showcase and enhance the waterfront and marina as prime recreation and community destinations by adding or improving slips, Wi-Fi access, shade, seating, and accessibility features.			
	Develop a Recreation Waterfront Plan that coordinates amenities, events, and programs at beaches, parks, and waterfront spaces (e.g., music, movies, festivals, tournaments).			

waterfront parks, and downtown, and enhancing facilities, amenities, programs, and events to improve the overall resident and visitor experience.	Host tournaments and events in parks, trails, and open spaces to encourage tourism and local spending.			
	Grow the Town Lending Hub equipment inventory (including accessible equipment) to support access to water-based and outdoor recreation for all residents.			
	Create a central “hub” (physical and/or digital) for community information and brochures about local tourism and outdoor experiences.			
	Facilitate training for frontline staff and interested local businesses so first encounters with tourists and new residents are welcoming and well-informed.			
	Work with the local arts community to bring cultural elements into outdoor spaces (e.g., Poetry Posts, history highlights on trails, special events).			
	Highlight Deep River’s unique nuclear history, including the development of Nobel Park downtown.			
<b>Lead in environmental stewardship</b> Act as a leader in environmental stewardship by protecting and enhancing natural spaces, implementing sustainable practices, and promoting environmental education to ensure the continued beauty and health of parks and	Introduce and expand earth-friendly practices in day-to-day operations (e.g., recycling, automatic lighting, powering down electronics, reduced single-use materials).			
	Install combination garbage/recycling bins at strategic locations and explore supporting community composting initiatives where feasible.			
	Explore installation of EV charging stations at parks and public buildings, in alignment with corporate climate and infrastructure planning.			
	Work with local environmental leaders (e.g., conservation authorities, field naturalists, Indigenous community, Algonquin			

natural areas for future generations.	College) as partners in environmental education, citizen science, and joint initiatives.			
	Work with Indigenous partners to design and install multimedia signage along the waterfront path that builds awareness of Indigenous history and stewardship.			
<b>Adapt to a changing climate</b> Integrate climate adaptation into parks and recreation planning and operations by embracing progressive and innovative measures to reduce risks and build resilience to changing water levels, extreme weather, and shifting seasons.	Investigate and monitor environmental and climate-related trends (e.g., extreme weather, changing water levels, shorter winters) that impact service delivery, and adjust operations accordingly.			
	Use trees as natural shade solutions and support canopy restoration initiatives (e.g., “Restore the Canopy”).			
	Prioritize planting of native species in tree planting and ornamental beds to support local biodiversity and climate resilience.			
	Support active transportation options (walking, cycling) as a mechanism to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.			
	Apply LEED-inspired principles and other sustainability standards when planning major facility investments and upgrades.			
	Monitor changing weather patterns to adapt services (e.g., outdoor rink feasibility, waste can deployment timing, arena ice season duration and cost).			
<b>Enhance community pride, beautification, and amenities</b> Strengthen community pride, beautification, and everyday	Explore development of a dog park in a suitable location, with community involvement in design and operations.			
	Create a commemorative bench and tree planting policy to provide meaningful recognition options while supporting canopy and amenity goals.			

use of outdoor spaces through targeted amenities, policies, and programs.	Develop a seasonal beautification program that engages residents, community groups, and the Horticultural Society in planting, clean-ups, and small-scale park improvements.			
	Expand reach and improve promotion of existing resources such as Upper Ottawa Valley GLAM walking tours and “things to do” lists through consolidated marketing.			

### Strategic Goal 3: Service Delivery Excellence

**Goal Statement**

Position the Recreation and Culture Department as the community’s leader and changemaker by streamlining policies and processes and working collaboratively with community organizations and non-municipal partners to modernize recreation technology and deliver seamless, high-quality services, programs, and spaces.

Recommendations	Supporting Action	Short	Medium	Long
<b>Engage staff, volunteers, and workplace culture</b> Invest in staff and volunteers through clear roles, training, and recognition, and foster a positive, collaborative workplace culture where people feel valued, supported, and equipped to deliver excellent service.	Update the departmental organizational chart and job descriptions to align with current and emerging service delivery needs and review them periodically.			
	Increase staffing levels where required to support safe, sustainable operations and reduce risk.			
	Continue to refine staff attraction and retention processes (e.g., salary reviews, training opportunities, appropriate staff workspaces, flex time, networking and professional development).			
	Maintain memberships and affiliations with relevant professional bodies to support staff learning and best practices.			
	Build and foster the volunteer community through clear policies, onboarding, training, and ongoing recognition.			
	Clarify roles and responsibilities for staff, community organizations, and volunteers for all municipal and non-municipal facilities, programs, events, and services.			
	Develop and communicate a clear vision for the Recreation and Culture Department as the community leader in recreation			

	services, including regular meetings with community organizations and visible presence at programs and events.			
	Support the efforts of Emergency Services and the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) by clarifying parks and recreation’s role in emergency response and training staff accordingly.			
<b>Enhance communications and brand presence</b> Strengthen communications, marketing, and branding to improve awareness of recreation and culture opportunities, make it easier for residents to find and register for activities, and grow participation in recreation and culture programs.	Develop and implement a Recreation and Culture Communication Strategy (marketing plan), including consistent branding, storytelling, and key messages.			
	Provide an interactive, up-to-date online calendar of activities, programs, and events.			
	Prepare seasonal or quarterly recreation and culture guides that profile activities offered by the Town and community partners.			
	Use monthly digital newsletters and regular social/local media updates to share successes, upcoming opportunities, and key changes.			
	Showcase Town achievements and communicate upcoming projects and initiatives to build trust and engagement.			
<b>Build community capacity and volunteerism</b> Support and collaborate with community organizations, volunteers, and partners to expand the depth and breadth of community	Develop a Volunteer Engagement Framework that covers recruitment, onboarding, training, supervision, recognition events, and succession planning.			
	Improve collaboration with partners by hosting annual or semi-annual meetings to review program delivery, share calendars, and strengthen communication (e.g. non-municipal infrastructure facilities, cultural organizations)			

offerings, build local leadership capacity, share delivery of programs and events and increase access to and use of non-municipal spaces.	Provide capacity-building opportunities for community organizations (e.g., grant-writing workshops, governance training, exploring shared financial/treasurer support models).			
	Capitalize on Deep River’s strong volunteer base by aligning volunteer interests and expertise with community needs and consider a community volunteer fair or “speed-dating” model to connect volunteers and organizations.			
	Expand youth volunteer opportunities and explore models such as a Teen Advisory Committee in partnership with the library.			
	Work with community partners to improve and formalize enhanced access to non-municipal spaces; and to plan for long-term infrastructure related projects.			
<b>Modernize technology for efficiency and user experience</b> Leverage recreation software and digital tools to streamline operations, enhance customer service and communication, and support data-informed decision-making	Fully implement and optimize recreation software (e.g., Univerus/BookKing) for program registration, facility rentals, and online payments.			
	Improve access to Wi-Fi and basic tech infrastructure in key public spaces (e.g., parks, marina, campground, arenas, community facilities) to support on-site administration and user experience.			
	Use digital and online tools to improve communications, promotions, and engagement.			
	Expand use of engagement and analytics platforms (e.g., ActiveXchange) and local data collection to support targeted service delivery and performance monitoring.			
	Explore use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital assistants to support staff with tasks such as marketing content, data analysis, FAQs, and customer support.			

	Integrate digital tools for marketing, communications, scheduling, and internal workflow management.			
<p><b>Strengthen programs, inclusion, and older adult services</b></p> <p>Design and refine programs to support active living, healthy lifestyles, and social connection for all ages, with particular attention to inclusive opportunities and welcoming, age-friendly services for older adults in Deep River.</p>	Undertake a program service review to identify gaps, overlaps, and opportunities to work in partnership with external organizations.			
	Offer recreation programs directly where gaps exist, and identify services better suited to partner delivery.			
	Establish a youth-led recreation council to provide ongoing input on program design, scheduling, and outreach.			
	Create a suite of youth-specific programs (e.g., evening drop-ins, maker spaces, creative arts, e-sports) by using underused facilities.			
	Support the health, mobility, and social connection of older adults through barrier-free, wellness-focused programs (e.g., seated exercise, pole walking, Tai Chi, social fitness).			
	Host intergenerational wellness programs in both core and surrounding areas, combining activity with social time.			
	Provide accessible equipment loans (e.g., resistance bands, mats) and one-on-one fitness orientation for participants aged 55+.			
	Celebrate older adult contributions (e.g., Seniors Month, participant spotlights in communications).			
	Develop a strategy to respond to emerging trends (e.g., from Zumba to HIIT to pickleball to future activities) so the department can pilot and scale new offerings.			
	Promote both structured and unstructured opportunities for social engagement, recognizing the impacts of social isolation.			

<b>Clarify policies, standards, and accountability</b> Develop clear policies, standards, and metrics to guide decision-making, support consistent service delivery, and demonstrate accountability and continuous improvement.	Formalize recreation-related policies, procedures, and processes where they do not exist, and ensure consistent implementation across the division.			
	Clarify roles and responsibilities for advisory committees, staff, and volunteers; streamline governance structures to reduce overlap and inefficiency.			
	Develop and track departmental key performance indicators (KPIs) linked to participation, satisfaction, financial performance, and equity/inclusion.			
	Adopt proactive, data-driven planning and financial practices to support sustainability and continuous improvement.			
	Maintain ongoing feedback loops (e.g., surveys, focus groups, digital suggestion boxes) and use results to adjust services and communications.			
	Ensure annual evaluation of programs, services, and communication strategies using established metrics.			

## Strategic Goal 4: Culture at the Heart

### Goal Statement

Celebrate and advance arts, culture, and heritage by building on existing programs and creating intentional multi-cultural spaces, improving access to schools and other cultural venues to introduce new events and experiences that reflect Deep River's diverse community and stories.

Recommendations	Supporting Action	Short	Medium	Long
<b>Strengthen cultural partnerships and programs</b> Work with Indigenous communities, schools, artists, and cultural organizations to co-create programs and experiences that reflect local stories and support lifelong learning	Partner with Indigenous groups, local artists, and historians to share stories and support cultural programming.			
	Proactively expose youth to local culture by facilitating interactions between schools and local cultural organizations, and by establishing an annual “art day” model.			
	Link secondary school volunteer requirements with cultural groups and activities so students can support events and gain experience.			
	Introduce cooking, art, and language classes featuring diverse cultures, facilitated by local culture bearers or external partners.			
	Develop and support “pop-up” cultural displays (e.g., art along trails, temporary exhibits at parks or gardens).			
	Expand grants or micro-funding streams that enable community-led cultural projects and events.			
<b>Expand and optimize cultural spaces</b> Increase access to and creative use of cultural	Expand programs into non-municipal venues such as schools, churches, businesses, and community halls where appropriate.			
	Create or adapt multi-use spaces that can serve as cultural hubs or incubators, using new or repurposed spaces.			

spaces, including non-municipal venues, and support flexible, multi-use cultural hubs and incubators	Encourage greater use of public spaces (parks, waterfront, civic buildings) for cultural activities and installations.			
	Inventory community spaces suitable for visual arts displays and exhibitions (e.g., municipal offices, library, community centres, restaurants).			
	Coordinate with local artists to display their work, including clear purchase information, and consider a standard finder's fee to reinvest in cultural initiatives.			
<b>Animate Deep River with cultural events</b> Support a diverse range of community-driven arts, culture, and heritage events throughout the year, partnering with local volunteers and cultural groups to sustain and grow existing festivals and performances, use indoor and outdoor venues to celebrate local talent, attract visitors, and strengthen community pride.	Pilot new cultural events (e.g., culture weeks, newcomer celebrations) in partnership with schools and community groups.			
	Host signature cultural events, festivals, and tournaments (e.g., Indigenous powwows, music/symphony events, multicultural celebrations), scaled from small to large offerings.			
	Establish a predictable rhythm for cultural programming (e.g., "First Saturdays") to build community and visitor expectations around regular cultural experiences.			
	Explore creative uses and economic opportunities connected to beaches and waterfront spaces as venues for cultural events.			
<b>Expand and optimize cultural spaces</b> Increase access to and creative use of cultural	Expand programs into non-municipal venues such as schools, churches, businesses, and community halls where appropriate.			
	Create or adapt multi-use spaces that can serve as cultural hubs or incubators, using new or repurposed spaces.			

spaces, including non-municipal venues, and support flexible, multi-use cultural hubs and incubators	Encourage greater use of public spaces (parks, waterfront, civic buildings) for cultural activities and installations.			
	Inventory community spaces suitable for visual arts displays and exhibitions (e.g., municipal offices, library, community centres, restaurants).			
	Coordinate with local artists to display their work, including clear purchase information, and consider a standard finder's fee to reinvest in cultural initiatives.			
<b>Promote local artists and cultural assets</b> Improve local and regional awareness of Deep River's cultural resources, artists, and stories through coordinated promotion, branding, and partnerships	Produce an annual Recreation & Culture events calendar that includes municipal and partner offerings.			
	Build and maintain an open, updatable inventory of local artists, artisans, and cultural groups to support visibility and networking.			
	Advance and leverage the Upper Ottawa Valley GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) network to create recreational and cultural pathways, joint initiatives, and shared marketing.			
	Use joint initiatives to improve access to and preservation of local heritage, increase users/visitors for all partners, and support volunteer-driven organizations.			
	Consider shared summer students or positions (grant-funded) to support GLAM partners.			
	Create a Poet Laureate function and Youth Laureate to celebrate local culture.			

<b>Advance Truth, Reconciliation, and inclusion</b> Embed Truth and Reconciliation and Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) principles into cultural planning, programs, and services to ensure welcoming, respectful experiences for all.	Support research and awareness-building about the history of Indigenous peoples in the Deep River area.			
	Provide learning opportunities for staff, Board/committee members, and the community in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (e.g., land acknowledgements, shared learning events).			
	Centralize resources, templates, and guidance to help local organizations develop informed land acknowledgements and next steps.			
	Work with Indigenous partners to create multimedia signage along the waterfront path that builds awareness of Indigenous history and perspectives.			
	Offer cultural competency training for frontline staff and nonprofit/business partners, in collaboration with the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP).			
	Provide welcome information for newcomers (e.g., Town and library welcome packages; language-accessible supports or volunteer “ambassadors”).			
	Grow LIP “Culture Connect” activities in Deep River and invite “Open Doors” style programs in local cultural spaces.			
<b>Foster a welcoming, inclusive environment</b> Apply IDEA principles across parks, recreation, and culture	Continue to advance compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).			
	Support actions and events that celebrate diverse cultures and identities.			

to create welcoming, accessible spaces and programs for all residents.	Create inclusive spaces and programs as capital and staffing capacity allows (e.g., gender-neutral, barrier-free, age-friendly spaces).			
	Foster opportunities for newcomers and marginalized groups, recognizing language and cultural barriers that may limit participation.			
	Offer inclusive recreation and culture nights that specifically welcome LGBTQ+ participants, newcomers, and residents of diverse backgrounds.			
<b>Sustain and expand cultural mapping and digital heritage</b> Sustain, expand, and share cultural mapping activities and digitization efforts to document and promote Deep River’s cultural assets.	Maintain and update cultural mapping and consider making it publicly available through an interactive online map.			
	Learn from communities with established cultural maps (e.g., Hastings County, Aurora, Minto) regarding best practices for updating and maintaining data.			
	Review and promote awareness of existing heritage guides/pamphlets that feature significant buildings, sites, and monuments (adapted to Deep River context).			
	Develop and implement a digitization plan for unique local records (photographic, textual, video), seeking resources to execute it.			
	Digitize relevant local records (e.g., NRTs and other heritage materials) to enhance access and inform decision-making.			
	Record or livestream cultural events and presentations to extend access and build a local digital archive.			

## Strategic Goal 5: Renew the Places We Rely On

### Goal Statement

Address aging recreation and culture infrastructure through integrated, long-term asset management that prioritizes safety, accessibility, multi-use design, and fiscal responsibility, ensuring the arena, pool, community spaces, and outdoor facilities remain welcoming and sustainable.

Recommendations	Supporting Action	Short	Medium	Long
<b>Define maintenance standards and lifecycle practices</b> Establish clear maintenance standards, inspections, and lifecycle practices for all major facilities and parks to keep assets safe, accessible, and in a state of good repair.	Continue and refine comprehensive facility condition assessments to identify structural, mechanical, and accessibility needs.			
	Develop annual maintenance plans for key asset types (e.g., playground inspections and repairs).			
	Invest in capital improvements that extend the life of existing recreation infrastructure where cost-effective.			
	Enhance end-user experience by maintaining or upgrading amenities such as washrooms, seating, refreshments, and site furnishings.			
<b>Plan long-term renewal and multi-use spaces</b> Develop an integrated long-term facilities strategy that prioritizes high-impact investments, supports multi-use design, and guides	Develop a 10-year capital plan for recreation and culture facilities aligned with the corporate Asset Management Plan.			
	Plan for renewal or life-extension of existing facilities according to asset management priorities.			
	Invest in the arena making improvements to accessibility (new ice slab and elevator) that also allow for new programming opportunities in the upper level			

renewal, repurposing, or expansion of arenas, pools, community spaces, and outdoor facilities.	Enhance end-user experience with improvements such as investing in kitchen improvement in the upper level at the arena and through the addition of a golf simulator			
	Explore the feasibility of a multi-use recreation hub that centralizes active living, learning, and community gathering under one roof, including a community-informed feasibility and location study.			
	Develop multi-year capital renewal plans and proactively seek grants (e.g., Community Sport & Recreation Infrastructure-type funds) to implement projects.			
	Increase utilization by exploring alternative and seasonal uses for facilities (e.g., fitness equipment and golf simulator in the arena off-season, disc golf in parks).			
	Create and enhance accessible, barrier-free multi-use spaces (e.g., arena upper hall) and expand storage where needed to support year-round programs.			
	Explore options for Riverside Park and the waterfront as regional attractions for tournaments, tourism, and expanded leisure activities (e.g., pickleball, cricket).			
	Invest in business planning for the marina (usage patterns, service options, revenue streams, non-motorized boating) and consider underutilized parkland for repurposing or disposition if parkland targets are still met.			
	Create outdoor recreation standards that define minimum amenities by park classification (e.g., seating, signage).			
<b>Improve operational efficiency and shared use</b> Pursue energy, staffing, and	Explore and implement high-efficiency HVAC, LED lighting, and other energy systems to improve comfort, sustainability, and lifecycle costs.			

operating efficiencies, and expand shared-use and partnership models to increase utilization of existing spaces, reduce operating costs where feasible, and grow the effective supply of recreation and culture space.	Expand Wi-Fi and tech infrastructure in facilities to support digital bookings, hybrid events, and participant connectivity.			
	Inventory non-municipal recreation facilities that can be used for municipal or partnership programming.			
	Foster partnerships with organizations such as health providers, schools, and the library to co-deliver services and maximize facility use.			
	Support local fundraising committees for capital projects (e.g., communications, small incentives, event support) and leverage naming rights/sponsorships to complement municipal investment.			
<b>Proactively pursue grants and external funding</b> Maintain shovel-ready projects and actively pursue grants and external funding to accelerate improvements and maximize local dollars.	Identify and maintain a list of shovel-ready projects with concept plans, cost estimates, and community benefit rationales.			
	Assign clear responsibility for grant scanning, research, and applications, including an up-to-date calendar of priority funding programs.			
	Bundle related capital projects (e.g., hall renewals, accessibility upgrades) into coordinated grant submissions where appropriate.			
	Use the approved Master Plan and asset management data to clearly demonstrate need and alignment in applications.			
	Report grant application outcomes to Council and the public, celebrating successes and sharing learning from unsuccessful attempts.			
<b>Prioritize safety and a sense of security</b> Address safety and risk	Apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles (e.g., lighting, sightlines, clear entrances and exits) to new and existing spaces.			

proactively in parks and facilities so residents feel comfortable and confident using recreation and culture spaces.	Ensure well-lit parks, clear signage, and design that supports passive surveillance and safe movement.			
	Consider dedicated youth spaces with strong adult allies and positive programming.			
	Use community gardens and food forests in appropriate locations as both social spaces and tools to address food security.			
	Make improvements in at least one dedicated park to better support families with neurodivergent children (e.g., enclosed spaces, quiet zones, communication boards).			
<b>Renew and adapt library and cultural spaces</b> Enhance library and related cultural spaces to improve accessibility, flexibility, and their role as community hubs.	Complete an accessibility audit of library spaces and prioritize key improvements.			
	Install dividers to support more flexible use of the program room and consider a small sound-proof space for meetings and exam proctoring.			
	Upgrade library shelving to mobile, accessible units that also enable flexible lounge or program space.			
	Renew library lounge areas with comfortable seating, gathering zones, and updated carpeting, including youth-specific areas.			
	Assess feasibility of a walk-out library basement exit to improve accessibility (noting 2026 budget timing).			
	Assess feasibility of library expansion to create additional multi-use community space.			