



Trail Town Assessment Insight Report

Frontenac K&P Trail & Tay Havelock Trail in Sharbot Lake, Ontario

Assessment conducted on November 18, 2024

Background & Overview

The Trail Town Assessment for Sharbot Lake, Ontario, was conducted in November 2024. Participants included local volunteers and trail users, municipal representatives, and individuals from the tourism and economic development sectors. The group met at the trailside restaurant, Belong Sharbot Lake before and after the assessment for coffee and a meal. The assessment involved a walking review of the community and its connection to the K&P Trail, focusing on how well the town caters to trail users and identifying opportunities for improvement. This initiative aims to enhance Sharbot Lake's position as a trail-friendly destination.



Sharbot Lake

Sharbot Lake is a rural community in the Township of Central Frontenac, intersected by two regional rail trails: The Frontenac K&P Trail and the Tay-Havelock Trail. These trails serve as a critical link for cyclists, hikers, snowmobilers and ATV Riders and other outdoor enthusiasts travelling through the region, and together these trails form part of the Trans Canada Trail, a 28,000 km network of trails across Canada.

The community of Sharbot Lake offers scenic views, proximity to a waterfront park, and various small businesses. However, limited signage, inconsistent wayfinding, and underutilized amenities present challenges to creating a seamless trail-town experience.



In Town Observations & Recommendations

Key Observations:

1. Participants noted the charm of Sharbot Lake's small-town atmosphere and the potential for eco-tourism.
2. Businesses are dispersed, and signage to guide visitors along the trail, as well as to and from main street is inconsistent or lacking in key areas.
3. The town lacks sufficient bike racks, benches, and public washrooms, which are essential amenities for trail users.
4. Community assets like the waterfront park and local restaurants are strong draws but need better integration with the trail.

Recommendations:

1. Install wayfinding signage connecting the trail to key town amenities, such as the waterfront park and restaurants.
2. Develop a unified branding strategy for trail signage and promotional materials.
3. Add bike racks, benches, and a year-round public washroom near the trailhead.
4. Highlight local businesses and attractions through trailhead maps and interpretive signage.
5. Simplify the amount and type of signage.



On the Trail Observations & Recommendations

Key Observations:

1. The trail through Sharbot Lake is well-maintained and provides scenic views.
2. There is a lack of clear entry/exit points and consistent trail signage.
3. Some trail users expressed concerns about safety at road crossings and the presence of parked vehicles on the trail.
4. Thomson's Cut and the Railway Park were identified as unique features with potential for further development.

Recommendations:

1. Enhance safety at road crossings with better markings and enforcement of no-parking zones. Consider pavement painting to define the trail through the community and along the waterfront park.
2. Develop Thomson's Cut and the Railway Park as trailhead hubs with interpretive signage, directional signage and picnic areas.
3. Collaborate with local Indigenous communities to incorporate cultural elements into the trail's design.
4. Improve accessibility by adding shade structures and rest areas along the trail.



Additional Observations

Points of Agreement

- Participants agreed on the need for consistent trail signage and better wayfinding, to and from trail, as well as through Thomson's Cut as there are areas where it is not clear you are still on a trail as the trail goes through a parking lot.
- There was strong support for enhancing the integration between the trail and the town's core amenities.
- Many noted the beauty and potential of Sharbot Lake's waterfront and Thomson's Cut as key assets.

Divergent Opinions

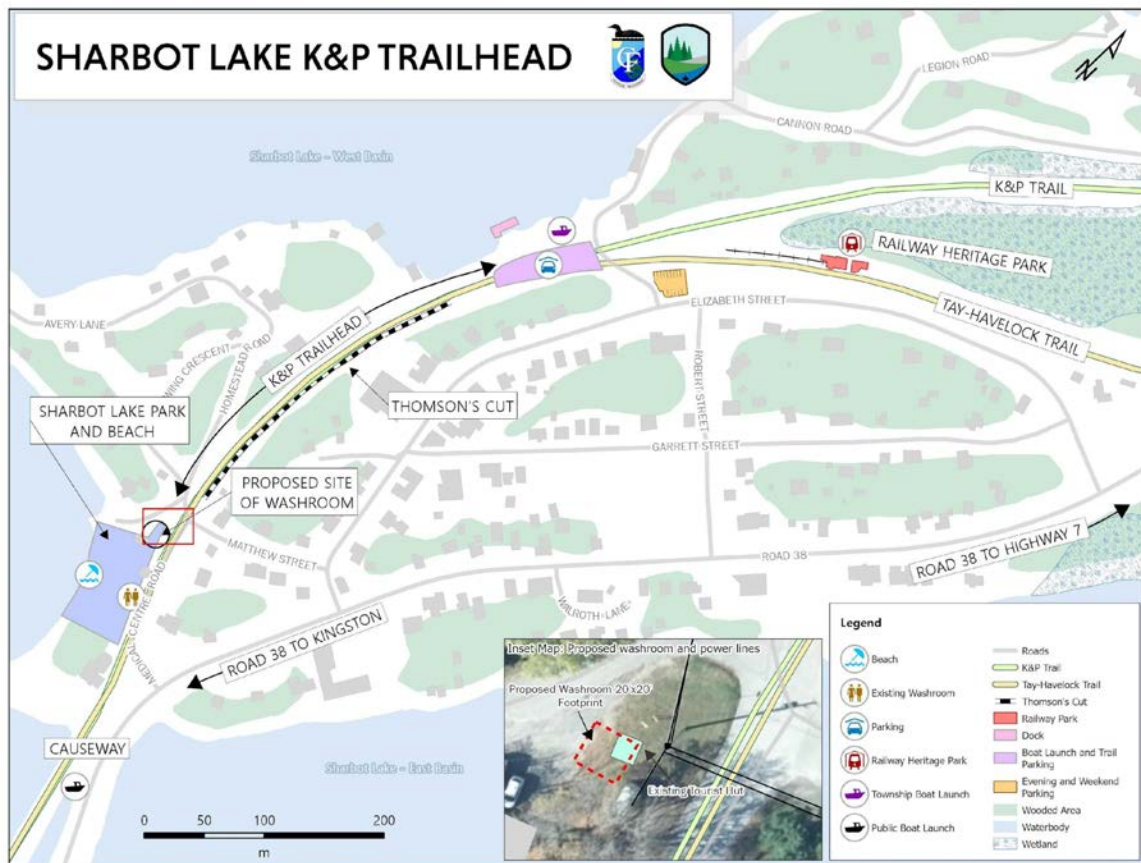
- Some participants viewed the trail's signage as adequate, while others found it confusing and inconsistent.
- There were mixed opinions on the adequacy of current parking facilities for trail users.
- Disagreement existed on whether additional development might detract from the town's small-town charm.



Observations of Interest

- Suggestions were made to explore eco-tourism opportunities, such as guided tours, partnerships, or bike rentals with local businesses.
- The idea of incorporating Indigenous cultural elements and educational signage along the trail was raised.
- One participant highlighted the need for EV charging stations to attract a broader range of visitors.
- Adding artwork in key areas was noted as being an attraction for trail users.

Map of Sharbot Lake



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