

Township of Greater Madawaska Calabogie Secondary Plan

What We Heard Progress Report 1



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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of public engagement for this project is to provide a structured, inclusive, and community-driven public consultation throughout the development of the Calabogie Secondary Plan. As a dynamic, seasonal, and tightly connected community, Calabogie's local knowledge and lived experience are essential to shaping a plan that reflects its identity, values, and aspirations.

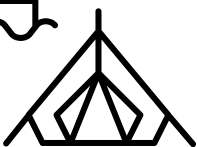
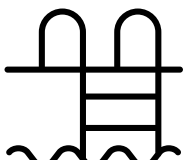
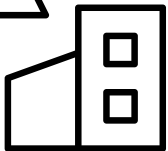
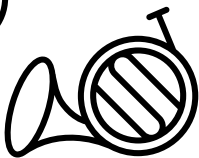
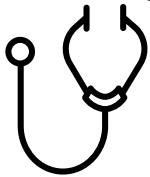
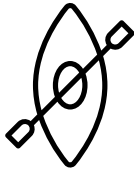
A thoughtful engagement can be the difference between a plan that checks boxes and one that generates true community ownership and long-term value. This What We Heard Progress Report provides findings and a summary of the first part of the public engagement for the Calabogie Secondary Plan.

Figure 1. View on the Calabogie Lake from Barnett Park.

2.0 Process and Approach

The Calabogie Secondary Plan is a significant planning initiative that will help guide growth, development, and conservation in a community that is experiencing increasing interest as both a residential and recreational destination. The engagement process plays a critical role in shaping the direction of the plan by ensuring that the voices, perspectives, and lived experiences of rights holders and interested parties are meaningfully reflected. The engagement process includes digital surveys, a dedicated project web page, in-person events, targeted interviews, and creative workshops. Emphasis was placed on meeting people within familiar and well-used community spaces. Feedback collected throughout each phase of the project will be clearly documented and integrated into the planning process. Rights holders and/or interested parties will be able to see how their contributions influence the development of the Secondary Plan. Feedback collected throughout the first phase of the public engagement for this project – online survey, and in-person open house and three pop-ups – is the subject of this What We Heard Progress Report. Please note that there will be a second What We Heard report for the next phases of public engagement.

3.0 Main Themes/Topics



What People Value

- **Community character:** small-town atmosphere, close-knit community, and welcoming feel.
- **Natural setting:** lakes, forests, trails, and four-season recreation opportunities.
- **Waterfront and outdoor lifestyle:** Barnet Park, Calabogie Lake, Eagles Nest, and trail networks.
- **History and heritage:** logging and mining heritage, K&P railway, and small-town traditions.
- **Balance of tourism and amenities:** unique, small-scale tourism and local businesses.

Key Challenges

- **Housing:** lack of affordable rentals, seniors' housing, and mid-sized family options; tension with short-term rentals.
- **Mobility:** car dependency, speeding, unsafe intersections, lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes, lack of alternatives to driving a private car.
- **Infrastructure and services:** limited healthcare, grocery options, waste management, and accessibility for seniors.
- **Waterfront access:** dominated by private docks, with few public amenities, trails, or gathering spaces.

Cultural Identity & Heritage

- Desire for more recognition of **industrial (logging, railway and mining) history, and Indigenous history.**
- Interest in more **cultural events and activities celebrating small town's history and preservation** of historic sites.
- Emphasis on maintaining **Calabogie's uniqueness**—resisting large franchises and protecting small-town traditions.

Overall Priorities

- Protect small-town charm and natural beauty while planning for growth.
- Improve housing diversity and affordability.
- Enhance mobility, safety, and accessibility.
- Strengthen community spaces, services, and cultural recognition.
- Ensure tourism development benefits residents and doesn't overshadow local needs.

The following pages will provide detailed insights into the first phase of public engagement for the Calabogie Secondary Plan that took place in June-July of 2025.

4.0 Online Survey and Interactive Mapping

Summary

Online Survey and Interactive Mapping Exercise was implemented to gain a comprehensive understanding of what residents, visitors, local business owners and persons working in Calabogie value the most about it and what challenges are the most important to them. Through an online survey and interactive mapping tool, we collected valuable data and insights from the community.

The online survey received a strong response, with 234 participants sharing their perspectives on various aspects of living and working in Calabogie. Topics covered included suitability and affordability of housing, modes of commuting and ease of getting around, and associated with it encountered barriers, access to amenities, and what features of the village are considered unique. Additionally, the interactive mapping tool allowed residents to pinpoint specific areas within the village that are meaningful to them and areas that they would like to see improved in the future. This provided valuable insights into the strengths and areas for improvement in Calabogie.

Survey and Interactive Mapping Results

A total of 232 responses were received for the online survey conducted through ArcGIS Surveys.

The survey was comprised of 15 questions, beginning with general inquiries such as age, respondent's connection to the village and how much time on average they spend in Calabogie in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of the respondents.

Section 3 of the survey delved into the obstacles and challenges that people encountered finding suitable and affordable housing in Calabogie, getting around the village and experiencing any issues with transportation, infrastructure and/or services.

Sections 4 and 5 focused on interactive mapping and perceptions associated with the area, i.e. special places and desired improvements.

The subsequent section will provide a summary of the survey results, highlighting the key findings and takeaways that offer valuable insights into the community's perceptions and attitudes towards Calabogie and their experiences with housing, transportation and other services.

Respondents' Profile

147 FULL-TIME RESIDENTS

23 REGULAR VISITORS

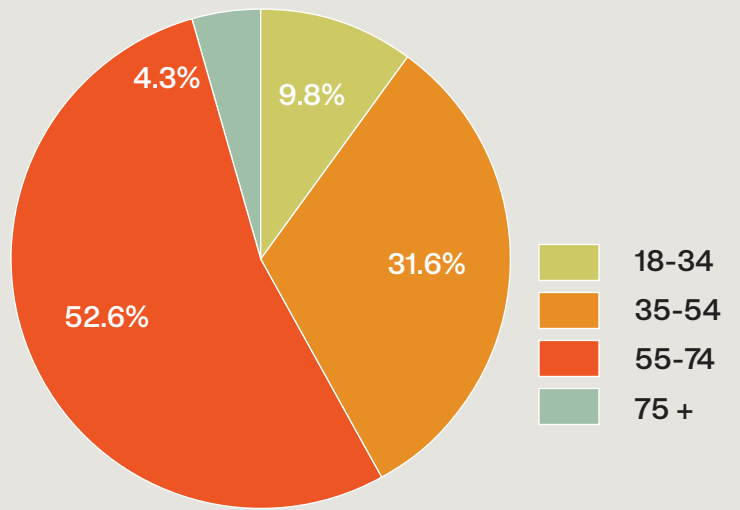
38 SEASONAL RESIDENTS

10 RESIDENTS WORKING IN CALABOGIE

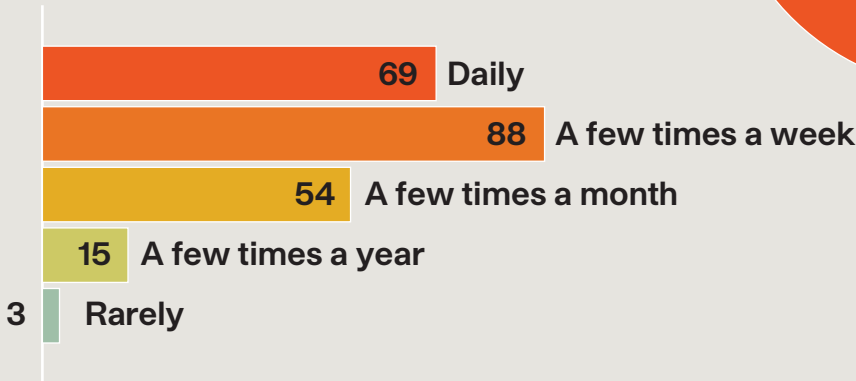
27 SECONDARY PROPERTY OWNERS

12 BUSINESS OPERATORS

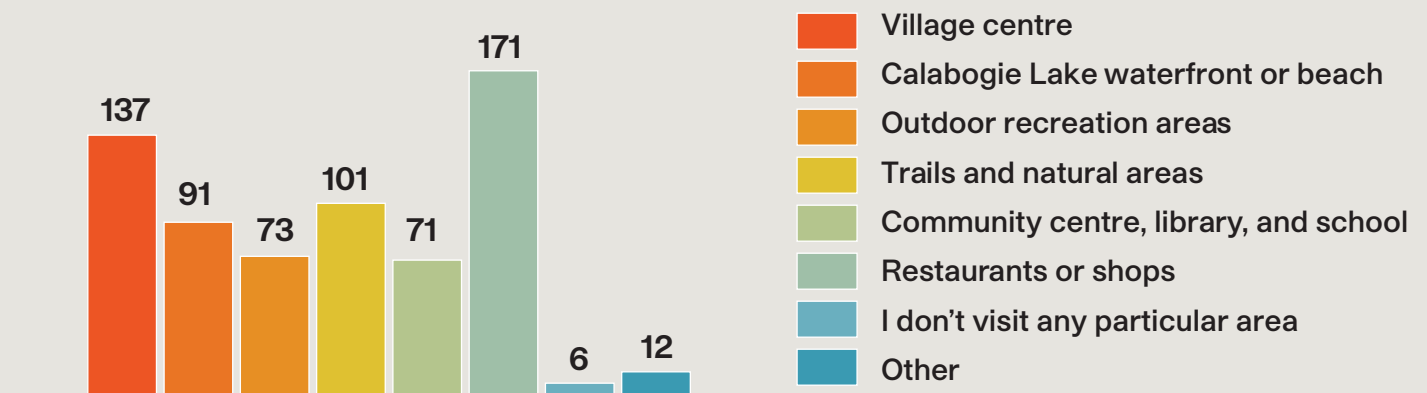
Age of Respondents



How often do you spend time in Calabogie?



What parts of Calabogie do you visit most often?



Respondents' Profile

63% of survey respondents self-identified as residents living in Calabogie full-time, while 16% self-identified as seasonal residents. 11.5% own the property in Calabogie but live elsewhere and nearly 10% visit Calabogie regularly for recreation and tourism. 5% of respondents operate a business in Calabogie.

Over 50% of respondents are 55-74 years old, while around 32% of respondents are 35-54 years old. Around 10% of 18-34 years old participated in the survey, and 5% of respondents are 75 years old or older.

37% of respondents visit Calabogie Village a few times a week. Around 30% spend time in Calabogie Village daily, while 23% a few times a month and 6% a few times a year. Only 1% of respondents do so rarely. Majority of responses, 73%, indicated that shopping and restaurants are the key attraction for residents and visitors, and 58% of responses indicate that Village centre is the next key area that people gravitate to. Somewhat equal representation, at 30-40%, was gained by Calabogie natural features: 39% visit Calabogie Lake waterfront or beach most often, 31% outdoor recreation areas, and 43% visit trails and natural areas. 30% of respondents visit community centre, library or school most often.

What respondents value the most and find unique about Calabogie

Residents value the sense of small close-knit community and people, local feel of commercial spaces, natural beauty, and outdoor lifestyle in Calabogie today. Its uniqueness lies in being a small, welcoming village with big recreational offerings and a rare four-season hub that blends nature, amenities, and tourism while resisting over-commercialization.

Key themes emerged with the responses to the two survey questions about what respondents value the most and find unique about Calabogie:

- **Sense of Community**
 - Strong emphasis on friendliness, helpfulness, and “small town feel.”
 - Community spirit and neighbourly support are highly valued.
 - Many noted pride in long-term roots and intergenerational connections.
- **Natural Environment**
 - Peace, quiet, and tranquility of the area.
 - Access to lakes, rivers, forests, trails, and open space.
 - Appreciation of clean water, natural beauty, and wildlife.
- **Outdoor Recreation**
 - One of the few small communities offering a full range of year-round recreation: ski hill, golf courses, motorsports track, TV/ snowmobile trails, water sports, hiking, snowshoeing, boating, fishing.
 - Access to crown land and trails.
 - Described as a “mountain town.”
- **Tourism & Local Economy**
 - Distinct role as a recreation hub attracting seasonal visitors while retaining a strong resident community.
 - Tourism (ski hill, lake, events) fueling local businesses.
- **Blend of Amenities & Natural Assets**
 - Unique combination of small-town living

with extensive recreation, restaurants, and local shops.

- Picturesque village setting on the waterfront with accessible trails and beaches.
- A balance between wilderness and modern amenities that few regional communities can match.
- **Amenities in a Small Village**
 - Value in having essentials (grocery, LCBO, pharmacy, hardware store, restaurants, library) while keeping a rural lifestyle.
 - Preserved village feel with mix of services without “big box” stores and over-commercialization.
 - Balance between remoteness and convenience.
- **Proximity & Accessibility**
 - Rural, peaceful setting but within reach of Ottawa, Renfrew, and Arnprior.
- **Lifestyle & Atmosphere**
 - Quiet, safe, unpretentious, welcoming environment.
 - Relaxed, easy lifestyle away from urban congestion.
 - Charm and authenticity of a true cottage community.
- **Unique Identity**
 - Rich history (logging, Madawaska River).
 - Signature features like the Causeway Walk, Calabogie Peaks, motorsports park.

Access to Housing

Around 50% of respondents stated that they haven’t experienced issues with finding suitable housing for themselves or don’t know anyone having troubles finding suitable housing in Calabogie. Whereas nearly 30% of respondents claimed the opposite, i.e. having experienced troubles or knowing someone who has experienced troubles finding suitable housing in Calabogie. Around 15% of respondents expressed uncertainty about access to housing.

According to respondents, the most common housing challenges are housing affordability, availability of rental options and availability of suitable housing for seniors. 77% of respondents placed lack of affordable housing options within their top three housing challenges, 65% of respondents placed lack of rental options within their top three housing challenges, and 54% of respondents placed lack of seniors housing options within their top three housing challenges. 32% of respondents expressed concerns with the lack of housing options for young families, 31% of respondents raised concerns associated with impacts of short-term rentals, and 19% of respondents are concerned with lack of smaller units, such as duplexes and townhomes.

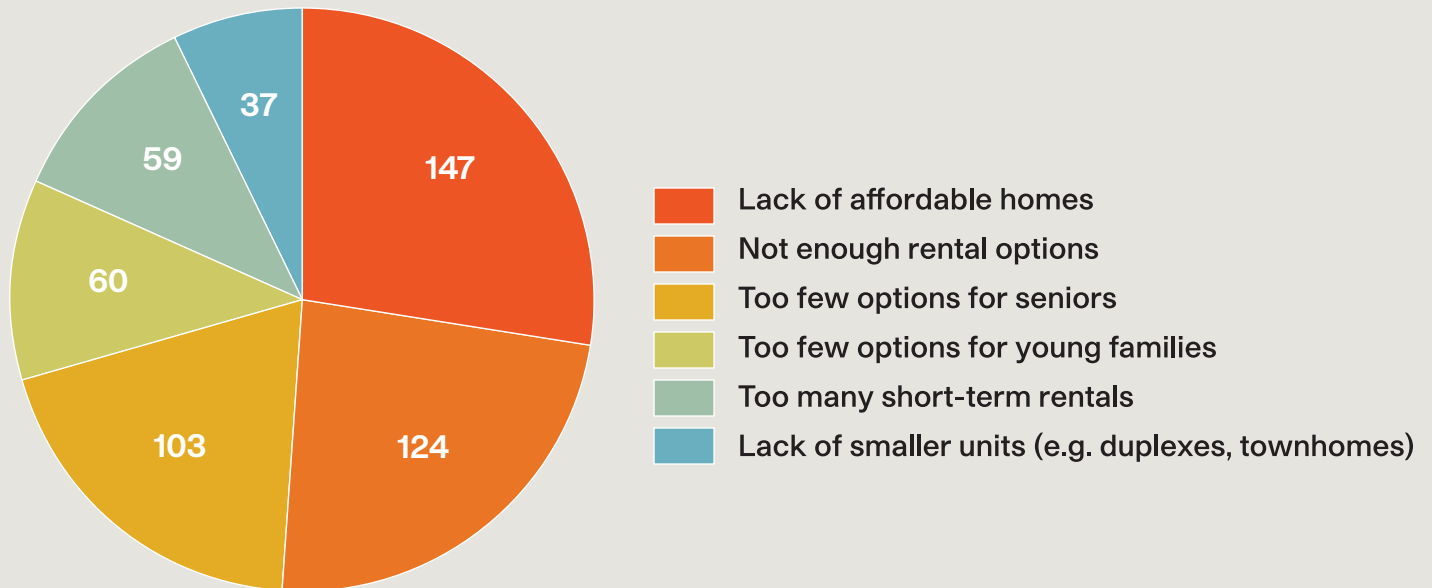
Key recurring themes emerged when the respondents were asked to elaborate on other challenges with housing in open-ended comments:

- **Short-term rentals (STR) tension (both directions):**

While some respondents expressed concerns with too many short-term rentals in the area, and specifically short-term rental investments that are driving up prices for locals, some provided a counter response that new stricter short-term rentals

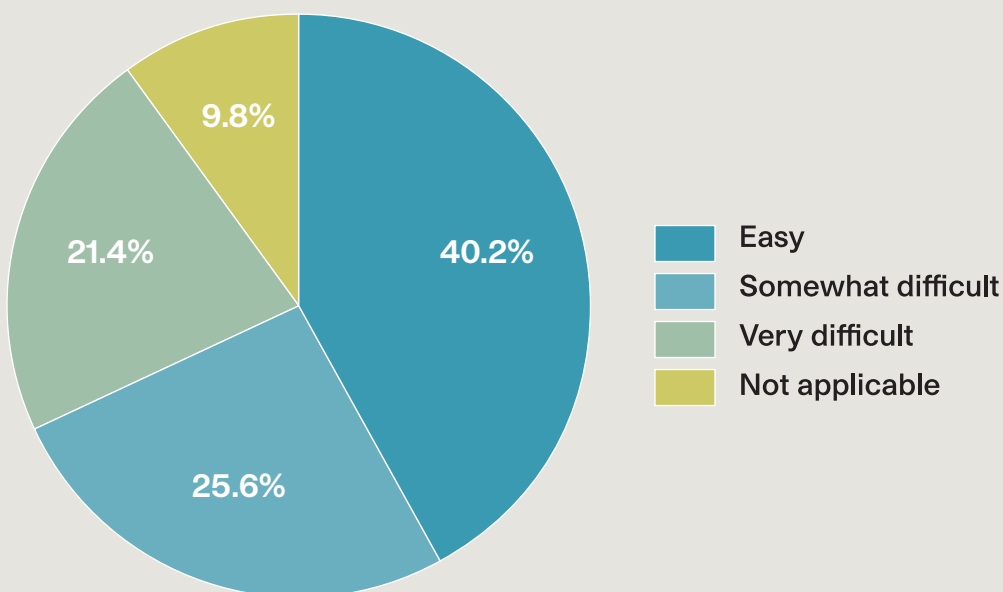
Access to Housing

Most common housing challenges according to respondents
(number of top 3 responses)



Mobility

How easy is it to get around Calabogie Village Centre without a car?



regulations make it harder for owners to afford to keep homes.

- **Planning & policy concerns:**
 - Planning regulations and policies were noted as restrictive and not beneficial for residents.
 - It was pointed out that residual land owned by the township can be identified and repurposed for multi-residential development.
 - Lack of rules around vacant land and abandoned properties that can be repurposed for housing.
 - Concerns with lack of waterfront protection.
- **Gaps in the housing mix:**
 - “Not enough mid-market homes (too many top-tier or very old ‘fixers’).”
 - It was acknowledged that more small units/duplexes and purpose-built rentals are needed for workers & seniors, as well as more affordable apartments for younger people.
 - Some noted lack of accommodations with accessibility features.
- **Affordability for locals:**
 - It was noted that Calabogie has become unaffordable for those who grew up here
 - High property taxes were noted in few responses as well.

Mobility in Calabogie Village

40% of respondents find it easy to get around Calabogie Village without a car, whereas 25% find it somewhat difficult and 21% of respondents find it very difficult. Around 10% of respondents identified it as not applicable.

When asked about transportation issues in Calabogie in an open-ended question manner, the respondents see transportation in Calabogie as a serious gap in safety and accessibility, especially for pedestrians, cyclists, seniors. The absence of transit and taxis, combined with speeding and nearly absent sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure along roads, makes the community heavily car-dependent and risky for non-drivers.

The following key transportation issues were identified by survey respondents:

- **Lack of Public / Alternative Transportation**
 - No taxis, Uber, or bus/shuttle service available, making residents reliant on private vehicles, which makes it a particular concern for seniors and people who need access to services or do not drive/have a vehicle.
- **Road Safety & Speeding**
 - Speeding through the village and on main roads (511, 508, Lanark Road) was raised by the respondents repeatedly.
 - “Blind intersections” at Mill Street/511 and library/school corners.
 - Concerns for school children crossing and school bus signs being ignored by drivers.

- **Sidewalks, Walkability, and Accessibility**

- Lack of sidewalks and safe pedestrian infrastructure; where sidewalks exist, they are narrow, poorly connected, and not maintained in winter.
- Roads are unsafe for strollers, seniors with mobility devices, or general pedestrian use.
- ATVs and large vehicles sharing roads make walking dangerous.
- Lack of safe crosswalks, bike lanes, and paved shoulders.

- **Cycling and Active Transportation**

- Unsafe cycling conditions on 508 and 511 (no shoulders, heavy traffic, logging trucks).
- Requests for bike lanes, safe shoulders, or a loop connection around the lake.
- Concerns with winter maintenance of sidewalks.
- Interest in a boardwalk or better waterfront pedestrian access.

- **Parking & Village Layout**

- Parking shortages on busy weekends/ events, especially at restaurants and brewery.
- Waterfront roadsides used as on-street parking and restrict already limited pedestrian access to the waterfront.
- Lack of signage directing traffic during peak demand to the parking lot at the community centre.
- Village is spread out and lacks a walkable

“core” or hub to facilitate pedestrian infrastructure in the village and provide ease of access to amenities without driving a car.

- **Seasonal & Tourism Pressures**

- Sidewalk and pedestrian safety issues heightened by tourists’ vehicle traffic volumes.
- ATVs/snowmobiles crossing roads unsafely during peak times.

Water Access / Boat Docking

- Lack of public boat docking areas; residents and visitors want better integration between lake access and the village core.

Occasional comments about garbage disposal trips (as there is no municipal garbage pick-up in the village) and gas station hours emerged, though these are peripheral to transportation mobility.

Overall, the most pressing issues are:

- **Car-dependency:** Without a car, moving around Calabogie is very difficult.
- **Safety concerns:** Speeding, lack of sidewalks, unsafe crossings, and no cycling infrastructure.
- **Missing alternatives:** No local transit, cabs, or rideshares.
- **Tourism impacts:** Illegal parking on the waterfront, and seasonal surges highlight infrastructure gaps.
- **Desire for walkability:** Strong calls for sidewalks and maintenance of sidewalks in winter months, bike lanes, waterfront boardwalk, and safer pedestrian links between neighbourhoods, lakefront, and businesses.

Infrastructure and services in Calabogie

53% of respondents are concerned with road and sidewalk conditions. The second most voiced, by around 35% of respondents, concern is access to healthcare and social services. Just over 20% of respondents expressed concerned with both lack of access to local retail and lack of access to food and groceries. 8% of respondents are concerned with parkland and access to parks, and around 7% are concerned with lack of community facilities (e.g., recreation, library, gathering space).

When asked about infrastructure and service provision in Calabogie in an open-ended question manner, the following key themes emerged:

• **Public Safety & Emergency Services**

- Concerns that there is not enough police presence and patrolling in busy/tourist seasons, leading to unsafe drinking while driving and speeding.
- Concerns about limited availability of doctors and the local medical centre not keeping up with demand. Some residents pay privately for out-of-town care.

• **Roads, Sidewalks & Active Transportation**

- Road conditions: Complaints about rough, poorly maintained roads.
- Sidewalks: Very few, uneven, and not maintained in winter:
 - Unsafe for children.
 - Inaccessible for seniors, strollers, or people with mobility issues.
- Bike & walking access:
 - Requests for bike lanes connecting ski

hill to town and around the lake.

- Frustration that the K&P Trail / Causeway stopping abruptly.

- General lack of safe, continuous paths for walking and cycling.

• **Waterfront & Public Access**

- Strong concern over private docks occupying public waterfront. While waterfront is public domain, many areas are fenced off or marked as “private.”
- Requests for:
 - More public docks to support access to shops/restaurants.
 - A developed waterfront trail/boardwalk with picnic and recreation areas.
 - More waterfront recreation for public use.

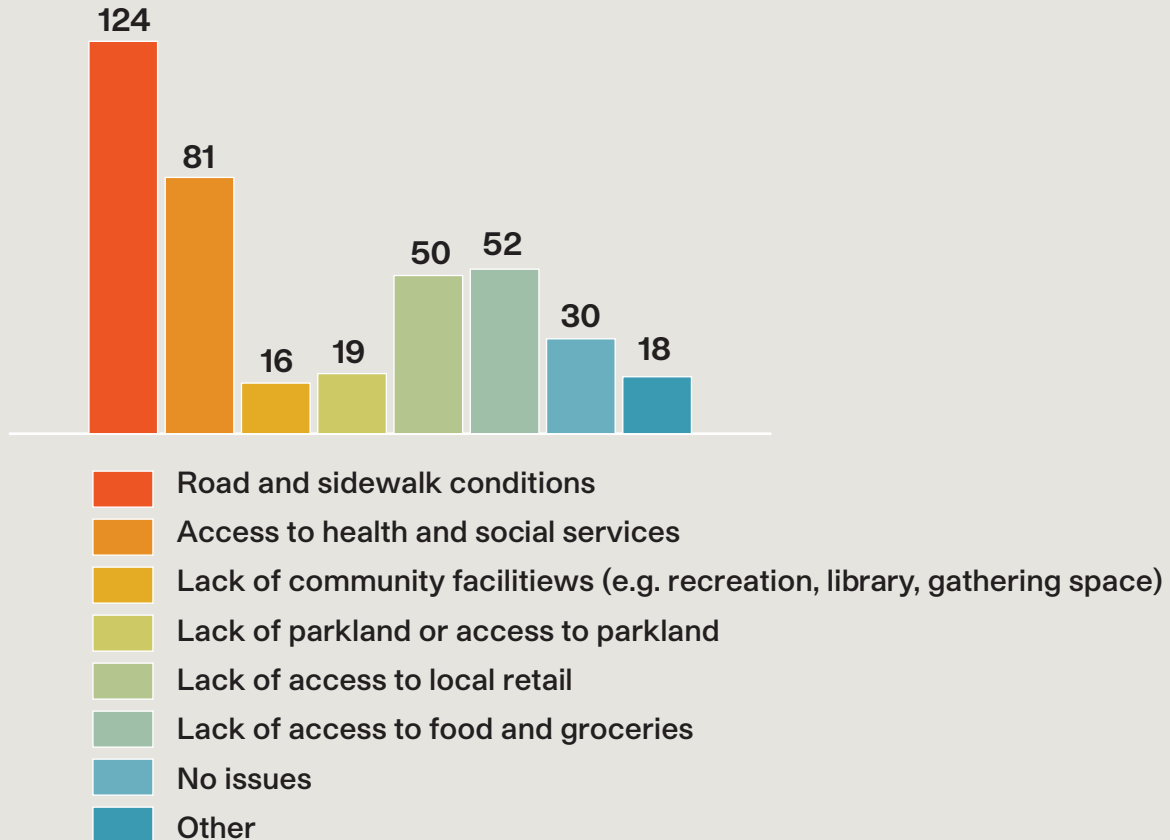
• **Retail, Restaurants & Amenities**

- Grocery services:
 - Charbonneau is valued but too small for growing demand.
 - A larger grocery store is needed to meet needs of residents & visitors.
 - Lack of gas or groceries after 7 PM was identified as an issue.
- Restaurants: Residents want more diverse dining options.

• **Community Facilities & Recreation**

- Suggestions for:
 - Public gym, pool, and workout spaces.

Infrastructure and Services



- Community centre to be open more often for seniors and general use.

- Concern that lot sizes are too small for densification, need for central water & wastewater system in village core.

• Waste & Utilities

- Waste disposal:
 - Concerns over no waste pick up.
 - Complaints about residents being forced to drive long distances to use distant waste sites, especially around Calabogie village.
 - Requests for better waste/recycling receptacles in the village.
- Water/wastewater infrastructure:

Overall, residents want Calabogie to balance tourism development with residents' needs. Key gaps are in public safety, healthcare, walkability, and waterfront access. At the same time, there is strong demand for expanded grocery/retail options, recreational facilities, and modernized infrastructure. The waterfront is repeatedly described as a missed opportunity that should be developed for public use, trails, and access, rather than being dominated by private docks.

“ It is a missed opportunity that there is limited waterfront recreation opportunities within the core of the village. Having the community dock is a great asset! ”

“ That everyone, who wants to walk somewhere, is limited to the side of the road, this is an issue for me. There should be more options. Traffic is not the slowest or the safest these days. ”

“ Sidewalks are not accessible to those with disabilities and who still walk. Sidewalks are uneven and not maintained in the winter. ”

“ The waterfront on front street should be developed for walkers and general public. ”

“ Calabogie has become unaffordable for those who grew up here. ”

“ Charbonneau's is a fantastic service to our community but sometimes very chaotic/dangerous to access. It's getting busier here and soon will need expanded grocery store service for the community & visitors. ”

“ Adding some bike lanes all the way from the ski hill towards the town would be nice. ”

“ Medical building cannot keep up with demands of our population. ”

“ Lots too small for densification and development of a modest village core. To solve, need to install central water & wastewater facility to serve Village Core. ”

“ Need taxi services. ”

“ Adding some bike lanes all the way from the ski hill towards the town would be nice. ”

“ Waste disposal. The Village may be fine, but your residents in other areas of Greater Madawaska are being forced to drive to the disposal site farthest away from them. ”

Photos from site visit (July 25-26, 2025)



Figure 2. Private docks along the waterfront (Madawaska Street)



Figure 3. Parked cars along the waterfront (Madawaska Street)

Interactive Mapping

As part of the survey, respondents contributed feedback using an interactive mapping tool. Their responses have been summarized and organized by theme below. Selected quotes are also included, referencing specific locations on the map that correspond to the comments provided.

To view the full version of the interactive mapping, follow the link:

<https://arcg.is/0r4zXz2>

Why this place is meaningful to respondents

- **Waterfront & Natural Beauty**
 - Most frequently mentioned and emotionally valued.
 - Calabogie Lake, Madawaska St. waterfront, Barnet Park, Heritage Point, Causeway, and Eagles Nest were repeatedly cited.
 - Reasons:
 - Scenic views and peacefulness.
 - Swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, picnicking.
 - Family traditions: weddings, anniversaries, camping, cottages in ownership for generations.
 - Strong calls to protect waterfront as public domain and prevent private docks from monopolizing access.
 - Desire for boardwalks, trails, cafes, and public amenities along the lakefront, possibly making it one-way street.
- **Community Hubs & Facilities**
 - Community Centre & Rink – Seen as the hub for events like winter carnival, Taste of the Valley, hockey tournaments, markets, pancake breakfasts, euchre, darts.
 - Charbonneau's Grocery & LCBO – A central hub for locals; valued as essential for daily life and community connections.
 - Library – Important for learning, book clubs, and social activities.
 - Medical Centre, pharmacy, post office, and home support services – Recognized as critical services anchoring community well-being.
- **Churches & Heritage**
 - St. Andrew's United Church and Most Precious Parish Catholic Church were noted for their spiritual role, social events, food bank support, weddings/funerals, and multi-generational ties.
 - Heritage sites – Octagon House, old train station, cenotaph, historic homes and buildings along Madawaska St.
- **Parks, Trails & Recreation**
 - Barnet Park was noted as a community space with strong attachments: weddings, family gatherings, childhood memories. Some frustration about overuse by day visitors.
 - K&P Trail & Causeway are loved by the community for the opportunity for walking, biking, connecting to nature; frustration that the trail is incomplete and causeway underutilized.

- Eagles Nest & hiking trails – Described as iconic, scenic, but overcrowded on weekends.
- Calabogie Peaks, golf courses, ski hill, snowshoe trails – Valued as year-round recreational amenities.
- **Social & Commercial Spaces**
 - Cafés, Brewery, Redneck Bistro – mentioned as social hubs where residents meet friends, enjoy food, and support local businesses.
 - Corner of Calabogie Rd and Francis St was identified as a commercial hub and it was noted that more places and more amenities are needed in similar hubs.
 - The Lodge – Viewed as a family gathering space with beautiful views.
- **Personal & Family Connections**
 - Strong references to:
 - Cottages and family properties owned through generations.
 - Personal milestones: marriages, anniversaries, first dates.
 - Childhood memories of growing up or spending summers in Calabogie.
- **Overarching Themes**
 - Community + Nature: Places are special because they bring people together (events, services, worship) and connect them to nature (lake, trails, hills).
 - Identity & Memory: Special places anchor personal histories and community identity.

Overall, respondents see Calabogie's waterfront, heritage, and community hubs as the heart of what makes Calabogie special. These are tied to deep personal memories, community gatherings, and the natural beauty of the area. Protecting public access to the lake, preserving heritage buildings, and maintaining vibrant community spaces are seen as critical to safeguarding Calabogie's identity.

Why this place is meaningful to you ?

Barnet Park is a beautiful parkland space with a lot of facilities and room to grow.

Barnet Park is special because we can get together as a community at the beach and open space and share a sense of belonging.

It has historical significance to the area and is used by both locals and visitors.

The corner of Francis and Calabogie had the most resources for when we need something quickly: food, mail, medicine, drinks etc. We need more of this.

Charbonneau's is the heart of the village!

Oh Ella cafe is a phenomenal shop and meeting place.

Wonderful spot for recreational activities. Grandkids love going here.

The community hall and rink is the hub of many things happening in Calabogie. Celebrations, winter carnival, hockey tournaments, taste of the valley etc all take place at the hall and rink.

Waterfront is what sets the village apart from other small villages. It is calming and so peaceful.

Waterfront is very pretty and a nice area for locals and visitors to walk and spend time.

This private home was the Calabogie Train Station on the K&P Railroad.

I love Heritage Point. It's a nice place to have a picnic in the summer.

Stories, traditions and cultural identities that should be better recognized in planning and public spaces

• Local History & Heritage

- Logging Industry:
 - Calabogie's lumbering past and log drives should be recognized as part of the heritage.
 - Calls for interpretive plaques, museums, or storytelling spaces about shanties, logging camps, and timber rafting.
- Railway (K&P / MJ O'Brien):
 - Strong references to the K&P Railway and its role in Calabogie's development.
 - Desire for signage or trail markers linking heritage rail sites (e.g., train station, causeway remnants).
- Mining & Hydro:
 - Recognition of Black Donald Graphite Mine and its role in shaping Centennial Lake.
 - Hydro history (Ontario Hydro, dams, power influence) seen as under-acknowledged.
- Historic Sites & Buildings:
 - Heritage Point, old homesteads, Octagon House, Barnett Park, train station, and churches identified as needing preservation and

interpretive signage.

• Indigenous & Multicultural Heritage

- Indigenous presence:
 - Multiple mentions that Indigenous history and cultural ties are not represented in Calabogie.
 - Suggestions to include Indigenous stories (e.g., Manitou Mountain, sacred areas like Eagle's Nest).
- Early Settlers & Cultural Groups:
 - Recognition of Gaelic-speaking settlers, French, German, Polish, British, and other immigrant communities.
 - Requests for plaques telling the story of diverse cultural groups who shaped the village.

• Traditions & Community Identity

- Festivals & Events:
 - Canada Day fireworks ("waterfall" style) and community festivals are treasured and should continue.
 - Past events (e.g., Taste of the Valley, fairs) should be revived and celebrated in public spaces.
- Veterans & Local Heroes:
 - The cenotaph, local veterans, and long-standing community volunteers deserve more recognition.
 - Calls for plaques, memorials, or displays honouring community contributions.
- Small-town Values:

- Emphasis on protecting Calabogie’s authentic, small-village atmosphere.
- Explicit opposition to big-box stores, chain restaurants, and “city-style” development.

- **Nature, Recreation & Traditional Practices**

- Outdoor Heritage:
 - Recognition of fishing, hunting, trapping traditions (e.g., Billy Bompas).
 - Respect for traditional rural practices that some feel new residents and tourists overlook.
- Natural Icons:
 - Eagle’s Nest and waterfront seen as spiritual and cultural landmarks that should be respected and highlighted.
 - Calls for interpretive elements about natural history, conservation, and traditional land use.

- **Concerns & Perspectives**

- Tourism vs. Residents:
 - Some respondents feel too much attention is given to tourists and not enough to full-time residents and families.
 - Planning should prioritize local community needs first.
- Balance & Inclusion:
 - Comments stress finding a balance between preserving heritage and welcoming new residents.

- Some warned against over-commercialization that could erase small-town identity.

Overall, respondents want planning and public spaces in Calabogie to better reflect its history and identity, particularly logging, railway, hydro, mining, Indigenous presence, and community traditions. They also want to preserve the small-town character against commercialization, while celebrating the contributions of veterans, settlers, and long-standing families.

What respondents would like to see in Calabogie in the future?

- **Waterfront Development**
 - Strong calls for public access to the waterfront: boardwalks, docks, swimming areas, seating, interpretive panels, and green spaces.
 - Many want restaurants, cafes, and shops along Madawaska Street and the lakefront.
 - Desire for public docks/marina (instead of mostly private), with mooring spots for boaters to access the village.
 - Festivals, outdoor events, beautification, and preserving heritage while making waterfront more walkable.
- **Shops, Restaurants & Grocery**
 - The #1 request: a larger, well-stocked grocery store (Charbonneau's considered insufficient).
 - More restaurants, bakeries, cafés, artisan shops, boutique retail.
- **Recreation & Family Amenities**
 - Splash pads, children's parks, skateboard park, dog park, daycare expansion, soccer fields, sports trails.
 - Seasonal swimming docks, picnic areas, shaded seating, public gardens.
 - Skate skiing trails and mountain biking infrastructure to grow year-round tourism.
 - Public activity centres, library expansion, indoor pool, community theatre.
- **Health & Seniors Services**
 - Expanded medical centre, more doctors/nurse practitioners, pharmacy, emergency capacity.
 - Seniors housing (apartments, townhomes, retirement village) so seniors can remain in the community.
 - Requests for bigger daycare (current one nearing capacity).
- **Transportation, Connectivity & Safety**
 - Bike lanes, walking paths, and trails, including across the causeway.
 - Calls for bridge/causeway connections (but mixed opinions – some strongly oppose).
 - Traffic calming (speed bumps, safer cycling, pedestrian access).
 - Some want better waste disposal facilities closer to town.
- **Tourism & Economic Development**
 - Spa to complement ski hill resort.
 - Artisan village and cultural attractions (calls for a small theatre, festivals).
 - Year-round activities to draw visitors beyond ski season.
 - Some want denser village core with walkable shops, sidewalks, and a community "main street" feel.
- **Preservation vs. Development**
 - Split opinion:
 - Some want more development (shops, tourism, densification, retail).

- Others want to “leave it alone” or only add modest improvements, fearing overdevelopment like it happened in other places.
- Desire for heritage preservation (Barnet Park, Eagles Nest, history plaques).

- **Overall Themes**

- Access & Equity: open waterfront for all, not just private owners.
- Community Needs First: grocery, health, daycare, seniors’ housing.
- Tourism as opportunity, but balanced with preserving small-town charm and livability for residents.
- Family-Friendly Spaces: splash pads, dog park, sports fields.
- Mixed Feelings on Growth: some want big investments, others prefer minimal change.

What would you like to see here in the future?



Other amenities or improvements that would make Calabogie a better place to live, work, or visit

- **Shops, Services & Dining**
 - Strong demand for more/bigger grocery stores (modern, full-service, affordable).
 - Desire for more restaurants, bakeries, cafés, pubs, and diverse dining (breakfast options, international food, ice cream shops).
 - Calls for retail expansion: clothing, gift shops, antiques, crafts, small mall, co-op, farmers/flea market.
 - Requests for later business hours and year-round support.
- **Housing & Community Facilities**
 - Affordable housing and apartments.
 - Senior housing/retirement homes and accessible living.
 - Expanded medical clinic/health centre and more access to doctors.
 - Daycare facilities, secondary school, community centre.
 - Gym/fitness facilities, co-working spaces, larger library, cultural venues (art gallery, museum, craft centre).
- **Tourism & Recreation**
 - Festivals, events, live music, outdoor patios, family-friendly attractions.
 - Waterfront improvements: public docks, marinas, boardwalks, splash pads, beaches, boat fuel stations.
- Recreational spaces: dog parks, sports leagues, improved rink, public pool.
- Expanded and maintained trails, walking paths, cycling infrastructure, interpretive plaques.
- Protecting nature/aesthetic character while attracting tourism.
- **Transportation & Accessibility**
 - Sidewalks and pedestrian access across the village (including winter maintenance).
 - Bike lanes and wider paved shoulders on Hwy 508.
 - Better traffic management: speed control, speed bumps, safety crossings, reduced truck traffic.
 - Shuttle, cab, taxi, or Uber service during peak seasons.
- **Infrastructure & Services**
 - Garbage and recycling pickup (major complaint, especially given taxes).
 - Improved water/sewer services.
 - Better internet service (high-speed access).
 - Better signage, beautification (flowers, flags, benches, pride in village).
 - Public washrooms at key locations.
 - Parking expansion (especially near grocery store, trails, and waterfront).
 - Improved snow removal.
- **Identity & Planning**
 - Develop a village core/downtown hub on Madawaska St or central area.

- Protect small-town feel and natural character; caution against “cookie-cutter” or oversized developments.
- Urban design improvements, reclaiming waterfront for public use.
- More heritage, cultural, and interpretive spaces.
- Balance resident-first planning with tourism-driven economy.
- **Mixed Opinions**
 - Some feel current amenities are sufficient and want to preserve charm without large commercial chains (e.g., Starbucks, McDonald’s).
 - Others emphasize major retail and grocery expansion as urgent.

Overall, residents want Calabogie to grow in a balanced way—adding essential services (grocery, healthcare, housing), improving infrastructure and walkability, and building tourism and recreation options—while protecting the small-town charm, natural setting, and community identity.

What We Learned So Far

The survey shows that Calabogie is valued for its unique balance of small-town character, strong sense of community, and its natural setting of lakes, forests, and trails that support four-season recreation. Residents appreciate the friendly atmosphere, the availability of essential shops and restaurants without the intrusion of big-box retail, and the proximity to larger centres while maintaining peace and rural charm. The waterfront, the ski hill, the K&P trail, and historic elements like logging and railway heritage emerged as defining parts of local identity.

At the same time, respondents highlighted significant pressures on infrastructure, services, and housing. Sidewalks are scarce, unsafe, and not maintained in winter, while speeding, poor crossings, and the lack of bike lanes make walking and cycling difficult. Healthcare access is strained, with the medical centre and doctors unable to meet demand, and lack of alternative to driving transportation options, grocery access, and waste services are also recurring concerns. The waterfront in particular is a source of tension—many see it as underutilized and encroached upon by private docks, with a strong desire for it to be reclaimed and programmed as public space with boardwalks, picnic areas, and public docks linking businesses to the lake. Housing affordability and availability are also pressing issues, especially the lack of rentals, seniors’ housing, and mid-sized “missing middle” options, alongside debate over the short-term rentals.

5.0 July 25–26, 2025 Public Engagement Events

Summary

The second part of public engagement reached out to around 50 residents through interactive events, such as outdoor pop-ups and an Open House. The valuable input received from these activities has been summarized in the following section and will be utilized to guide the development of Calabogie Secondary Plan along with the survey findings.

Lakeside Open House

July 25, 2025

The Open House, held at Barnet Park, took place from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. With a turnout of around 10 guests, the event held an open format room where attendees could share their thoughts, concerns, and ideas regarding their community. The following summarizes the valuable insights and discussions that took place at the Open House:

- **Causeway as a missing link to Calabogie:** Many identified as old causeway as a link to other communities that is now missing and emphasized the need to return it.
- **Lack of parkland for community gatherings:** Participants noted the lack of programmed parkland in general and in Barnet Park; some expressed the desire to have a dog park.
- **Speed control:** Participants noted the need for speed reduction measures such as speed bumps, one way road traffic, and lower maximum speed allowances.
- **Tourism and short-term rentals:** Community sees staggering tourist numbers and Airbnb accommodation pressures.
- **Garbage pick-up:** Participants noted concern over lack of waste pick-up.
- **Waterfront access:** Several stated that the village could benefit from a public marina or docks.
- **Additional amenities and recreation:** Many expressed the need for diversification of activities and amenities, i.e. existing restaurants close at 8 pm, there is no sports bar and no spa. The village core with streets designed for pedestrian use and with various shops to meet daily needs was suggested, together with new permanent public library, a business centre with rental offices and a new post office.
- **Racetrack and ATVs:** Such vehicles were described as an issue due to noise.
- **Integration of the nature:** Many expressed a strong desire for blending with and preservation of nature while planning for growth in the community, especially protecting the wilderness and the natural beauty.
- **Housing:** Participants noted on numerous occasions the need for seniors housing in the community, as well as small housing for those wanting to downsize and affordable housing for “hourly wage” earners.

- **Seniors infrastructure:** As a solution to the lack of seniors housing issue, it was suggested to build a seniors centre with affordable housing units to allow people to age in place. Some identified a vacant strip of land on Mill Street as a possible location for it.
- **Healthcare:** There were strong calls among participants for a medical centre or a health hub.
- **Heritage:** Some participants identified the Indigenous history and logging history in Calabogie as currently underrepresented, as well as K&P crossing not enough celebrated. Additionally, multiple participants shared a strong desire for more cultural events in Calabogie.
- **Trails:** Participants identified the system of trails on the mountains to be protected with motorized traffic to be redirected off K&P trail, as well as trail reconnection via Hwy 511 at Hydro Dam with limited traffic on Barryvale and around golf course. Some also noted that the trail systems need some improvements, with K&P trail continuing over the causeway.



Figure 4. Lakeside Open House engagement event on July 25, 2025

Photos from site visit (July 25-26, 2025)



Figure 5. Township's property along Mill Street, close to Calabogie Road



Figure 6. Vacant public land along Francis Street



Figure 7. Vacant public land along Calabogie Road, behind Most Precious Parish Catholic Church



Figure 8. View on the Most Precious Parish Catholic Church and elementary school

Outdoor Pop-ups

July 26, 2025

During the public engagement process, the project team organized outdoor pop-up events at three strategic locations to engage with residents and facilitate discussions on active transportation. The first location was the Barnet Park Lakeside, a popular destination for enjoying parks, with a fishing derby being held at the same time as a community engagement pop-up. About 10 members attended this pop-up. The second location was at the Heritage Point, providing an opportunity to connect with individuals involved in recreational activities there and cycling. The third location was at the Calabogie outdoor rink with a farmers market happening at the same time, providing an opportunity to connect with individuals of various backgrounds who were running their errands and shopping. The pop-ups operated from 10 am to 12 pm, with the Framers Market Pop-up being open until 1 pm and engaged with over 40 people. These carefully chosen sites allowed us to interact with a diverse range of community members and gather valuable insights and feedback on pressing needs within the community and how residents envision the future of Calabogie and how it will grow.

At these outdoor pop-ups, our team set up interactive booths where community members could approach our team and share their thoughts, ideas, and concerns regarding their community and engage in interactive envisioning activity that facilitated the discussion around the future of Calabogie. The following is a summary of the key points we heard from participants at the sessions.

Heritage Point Pop-up Findings

- **Improved commercial and recreational amenities:** Participants expressed interest in

improvements to shopping street, boardwalk along the waterfront, and identified multi-use pathways as more beneficial for the community compared with cycling infrastructure and sidewalks.

- **Designated swimming areas:** Participants stated that only minimal improvements to this infrastructure are needed.
- **Sitting areas and improved waste disposal:** Participants identified lack of garbage cans and picnic tables at Heritage Point.

Barnet Park Pop-up Findings

- **Concerns about development and governance:** Participants expressed concerns about the perceived lack of municipal organization and leadership in planning and development. Several attendees questioned the Township's ability to coordinate and communicate effectively, particularly as it relates to land use decisions in the waterfront area.
- **Skepticism toward commercial development at the waterfront:** Many participants were opposed to introducing commercial uses along the waterfront, citing concerns over loss of public access, impacts to the natural character of the area, and the potential disruption of existing recreational and residential uses.
- **Tensions around public versus private waterfront use:** Residents expressed concern that increased public access or formalized amenities near the waterfront might interfere with existing private docks or diminish their personal enjoyment of the shoreline. Some noted a fear that planning decisions might prioritize seasonal or tourist activity over local use.

- **Perceived barriers to supporting local business:** Despite resistance to commercial development at the waterfront, some participants also worried that the Township's current approach to development could drive out existing or potential small business owners. There was frustration about what some perceived as a restrictive or disorganized regulatory environment that hinders business investment.

Farmers Market Pop-up Findings

- **Healthcare for seniors:** Senior participants shared lived experience with the lack of healthcare options within the community to accommodate aging population needs.
- **Housing for seniors and aging in place:** It was reiterated that community lacks housing that meets accessibility needs or needs of senior residents who would like to downsize and move into a smaller accommodation.
- **Access to amenities for aging population:** Senior participants shared lived experience associated with challenges to move around Calabogie when the driving license is lost. There are not taxis and aging population are relying on requesting these services from neighbours. It was also noted that it is too long to walk to the amenities and there is no comprehensive pedestrian infrastructure to accommodate this. It was stated that this lack of infrastructure to age in place squeezes out seniors to urban hubs like Renfrew.
- **Improvements to the waterfront access:** It was reiterated that improvements to the waterfront, like boardwalk, are much needed. One participant noted that while boardwalks are great for attracting visitors, they are also great for seniors and their recreation.
- **Diversification of year-round activities:** Participants are interested in diversification of year-round activities, including activities for tourists. Ideas for concerts in the park on the waterfront and more outdoor activities and programming were welcomed.
- **Racetrack and ATVs:** It was reiterated that those activities are serious sources of noise.
- **Retail diversification:** Participants expressed desire to have more shops and more farmers markets in the community.
- **Cycling infrastructure and access to hiking trails:** Some participants shared lived experience of cycling to Calabogie and stressed its important besides cycling inside Calabogie. It was noted that access to hiking trails can be improved through cycling infrastructure instead of relying solely on driving there. It was reiterated that causeway is a missing link for cycling as well, forcing cyclists to bike all the way around.
- **Shoulders for cycling along the roads: Concerns with the safety of cycling were shared, identifying missing shoulders along roads to ski hill, hiking trails, hotels, and other tourist infrastructure.** In general, shoulders were described as unsafe for cyclists due to gravel being used as surface treatment.
- **Safer pedestrian crossings:** Participants discouraged installing traffic lights, but crossings were described as unsafe, particularly school intersection was identified as especially unsafe.
- **Sitting areas and improved waste disposal throughout the village:** Participants shared their dissatisfaction with absence of benches and trash cans in the Park and at the Heritage Point.



Figure 9. Farmers Market Pop-up on July 26, 2025

- **Barnet Park building functionality:** Some participants proposed a visitor centre combined with the library in the Barnet Park building; a similar example where it was done in Sweden, Fårö Island, a small community similar in size to Calabogie, was discussed.
- **Old causeway as a link:** Old causeway link to Calabogie from other communities was again identified as missing and its re-installation as beneficial for the community.
- **Short-term rentals:** Some expressed concerns with how short-term rental accommodation is managed and with Short-term Accommodation bylaw.
- **Parking for retail:** Participants noted on multiple occasions that the existing grocery store has not enough parking to accommodate the needs of the community at peak hours.
- **Affordable housing:** Affordable housing was repeatedly voiced as a need within the community.
- **Internet connection:** Cellular network connection was pointed out by a few as very poor.

Interactive exercise with visual examples.

Pop-up visitors were generally favourable towards all presented examples. Especially strongly supported and recognized are the need for affordable housing, boardwalk along the waterfront, designated shopping street, multi-use pathways, cycling infrastructure and sidewalks. Community expressed an interest in the proposals for accessible conservation areas, improvements to hiking network and cross-country skiing trails, and provision of outdoor winter recreation. Traffic calming measures, a more active waterfront, sports facilities, new

or improved community amenities, indigenous placemaking and recreation in parks were generally supported by visitors of the pop-up. There was some split in opinions with regards to public art and designated fishing areas.

6.0 Conclusion

This report intended to capture the valuable feedback and insights gathered through various engagement activities as part of the Calabogie Secondary Plan Engagement. Through the online survey, outdoor pop-ups and open house we received a range of perspectives and suggestions that shed light on the community's preferences and desires. These perspectives and suggestions will all be considered in the preparation of the Calabogie Secondary Plan together with the Part 2 engagement events and select rights holders and interested parties interviews. The Part 1 of the Engagement events has been summarized in this report to be shared with the public and stakeholders alike.

Thanks to all members of the community for participating in these engagement activities and providing their insight and expertise.

7.0 Next Steps

The next phase of engagement is intended to include a range of public and targeted activities focused on a long-term vision for Calabogie. These intend to include a youth engagement session in a local school, visioning workshops facilitated in partnership with the Township's external consultants, and a public event designed to explore scenarios and future directions for the village.

In addition to public-facing activities, interviews will be conducted with selected rights holders and interested parties to gather diverse perspectives over the coming months. Engagement with Indigenous communities will also be undertaken to ensure the planning process reflects meaningful and respectful consultation.

The draft Secondary Plan and supporting documents will eventually be released for public review and comment. The process will conclude with a statutory open house and public meeting to collect final input before Council consideration.

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