

Evaluation Form

2025

**City of North Bay,
Ontario**



2025 Evaluation Form

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Community: City of North Bay
Province: Ontario
Country: Canada
Category: National Population – Over 50,000

CiB recognizes efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change which is reflected in several criteria including:
Environmental Action; Preservation of Natural Heritage; Tree Management and Landscape

Community Appearance	123.75	/	150.00
Environmental Action	126.00	/	150.00
Heritage Conservation	132.75	/	150.00
Tree Management	143.75	/	175.00
Landscape	166.75	/	200.00
Plant and Floral Displays	149.50	/	175.00
Total	842.50	/	1000.00

Percentage: 84.25%

Bloom rating: 5 Blooms - Bronze

Bloom rating: Provincial, National and International Participants

Up to 55%: 1 bloom. 56% to 63%: 2 blooms. 64% to 72%: 3 blooms 73% to 81%: 4 blooms. >82%: 5 blooms.

Bloom Levels: National Edition and International Challenge, for evaluated communities only.

82 to 83.9%: 5 Blooms. 84 to 86.9%: 5 Blooms (Bronze). 87 to 89.9%: 5 Blooms (Silver). 90% and over: 5 Blooms Gold

Mention: Volunteerism and Community Spirits

Representative (s) of Community

Name:	<u>Maggie Horsfield</u>	Function:	<u>Deputy Mayor, CiB Committee Co-chair</u>
Name:	<u>Hariett Madigan</u>	Function:	<u>CGB Chair, CiB Committee Co-chair</u>
Name:	<u></u>	Function:	<u></u>

Judges

Name:	<u>Tina Liu</u>	Name:	<u>Karen Stephenson</u>
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Evaluation date: July 23 - 24, 2025

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IMPORTANT NOTES:

Evaluation is adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community.

Evaluation is also adjusted to match the capacity of a community population to the achievements in all criteria – i.e. evaluate what they do (achieve) with what they have (population/ resources).

Some aspects of the evaluation might not be applicable: scoring will be prorated.

The score will vary from the previous year based on the facts that the evaluation form is subject to modifications each year and that the scores are based on the perception of the current judges.

SECTORS OF EVALUATION

Municipal:

- Municipal properties, parks and green spaces, streets, streetscapes
- Properties owned and run by municipality such as museums, historical sites

Business and Institutions:

Properties owned and managed by

- **Business:** commercial sector, shopping centres, Business Improvement Areas (BIA), industrial parks, manufacturing plants
- **Institutions:** schools, universities, churches, hospitals, service and community organization buildings (such as YMCA, Legion), private museums, Government and Crown Corporations buildings (such as Canada Post, provincial and federal parks, etc.)
- **Tourism bureaus and Chamber of Commerce offices**
- **Farms:** in rural communities, farms can be considered in this section

Residential:

- Citizens and citizen groups acting within their own properties
- Residential property owners, rate payer groups including condos and co-ops

Community Involvement:

The principle of community involvement is so fundamental to the program that it is considered in each segment of the evaluation.

- Individuals, community organizations, citizen groups (includes youth programs) – all contributing to various aspects of community improvement, including municipal spaces maintained through the efforts of volunteers and community
- Organized clubs such as horticultural societies, garden clubs, community associations, school groups
- Service clubs such as Rotary, Lions, Optimist
- Participation (financial and/or in-kind or employee participation) by the municipality, businesses and institutions.

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GENERAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Welcome, City of North Bay, to your second year of participation in Communities in Bloom's National Edition!

Congratulations on your Centennial anniversary and thank you for allowing us to join in celebrating such a significant milestone. It is inspiring to see how your success is built on the dedication of a remarkable network of long-term volunteers, supported by City Council and the wider community.

The North Bay CiB Committee continues to do an outstanding job of maintaining a high profile for the program, and your achievement of a **5-Bloom** rating at the **Bronze level** is a testament to your hard work and collaboration.

We extend our sincere thanks to **Clean, Green, Beautiful North Bay** for their leadership and commitment to making the city shine. Since their establishment in 2019, they have built a strong foundation and an impressive network that unites the mayor and council, volunteer groups, heritage gardeners, service clubs, and local businesses. Their efforts have created the perfect conditions for success as North Bay enters its third year in the CiB program. Their vision and dedication continue to inspire civic pride and lay the groundwork for an even greener, more beautiful future.



We were delighted to see such strong participation in the tour from City staff, businesses, institutions, and volunteer groups. Thank you for taking the time to showcase the many initiatives that make North Bay so special. The tour was exceptionally well organized, using a mix of transportation (bus, car, walking, and biking), which kept the experience engaging and enjoyable.

Your Community Profile was well-prepared and organized according to the CiB categories, making it easy to follow and clearly highlighting your accomplishments in each evaluated area. Well done, North Bay!

We were especially pleased to see the welcoming signage displayed throughout the city, which not only promoted the CiB program but also made the judges feel warmly welcomed.

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It is clear that numerous businesses and institutions are deeply invested in supporting the Communities in Bloom program. Whether it is Northland's beautification efforts, the North Bay Community Health Centre's co-generation facility in partnership with North Bay Hydro, or North Bay Hydro's "Right Tree, Right Place" program, these initiatives contribute to making North Bay a vibrant, healthy, and resilient community. Congratulations to all the civic and business leaders whose collaboration has made this possible.

Thank you once again for your hospitality and your unwavering commitment to growing a greener, more beautiful North Bay. We look forward to many more years of working together to **Growing Great Places Together!**

Warm regards,

Tina Liu and Karen Stephenson

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COMMUNITY APPEARANCE		
Community appearance reflects an overall effort by the municipality, businesses, institutions and the residents throughout the community to create great first impressions and a sense that there is continuous attention and upkeep to critical elements of a community that benefit quality of life and economic vitality Elements for evaluation are: parks and green spaces, medians, boulevards, sidewalks, streets; municipal, commercial, institutional and residential properties; ditches, road shoulders, vacant lots, signs and buildings; weed control, litter clean-up (including cigarette butts and gum), graffiti prevention/removal and vandalism deterrent programs.		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
Gateway Impressions First impressions of the community including gateway/entrance landscape treatments	10	7
Overall Impressions Order, cleanliness, curb appeal and first impressions	10	6.5
Anti-litter/Graffiti Prevention and Removal Community anti-litter/graffiti awareness programs	10	7.5
Regulations Effective bylaws, programs and policies and enforcement; litter control, private property maintenance by-laws, vandalism, graffiti prevention and eradication, graffiti removal kits to residents	10	8
Asset Appearance Includes public green infrastructure: parks, streetscapes (sidewalks, planters, urban signage and furniture such as benches, litter and recycling containers etc.)	10	9
Municipal Properties Appearance Visual appeal and condition of municipal buildings and municipal owned properties	10	9
Business & Institutions		
Overall Impressions Curb appeal, order, and cleanliness	15	13.25
Site Conditions Condition of buildings (exterior maintenance), grounds, sidewalks and parking lots	15	13
Furniture/Amenities Appearance Condition of urban furniture: benches, litter and recycling containers	5	3.5
Residential		
Overall Impressions Curb Appeal, order and cleanliness	20	17.5
Property Conditions Condition of buildings, grounds and yards	15	12.5
Community Involvement		
Public Participation In community, neighbourhood or individual streets, clean-up programs, activities and annual maintenance (including promotion, organization, innovations involving youth and seniors, etc.)	10	8.5
Community Support Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses service groups, and institutions for community clean-up programs.	10	8.5
Community Appearance Total	150.00	123.75

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COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Observations:

Streets, parks, and the waterfront area were clean and visually appealing, clearly reflecting the pride citizens take in their city. We even observed residents picking up litter as they walked, a testament to the community's commitment to keeping North Bay beautiful. Clean, Green, Beautiful North Bay (CGB) supports these efforts by providing garbage cleanup kits to organizations and residents, and there are many examples on social media of citizens using these kits. Congratulations on fostering such a strong sense of ownership and pride throughout the community.



In 2025, the city approved additional staffing to strengthen litter and graffiti management, with a particular focus on the downtown core. Issues are tracked through a GIS application, allowing for data-driven identification of hotspots. North Bay also offers a graffiti and litter reporting system on its website, making it easy for citizens to participate. The City and CGB actively encourage community reporting and support prompt removal efforts. Public art installations by local artists are used effectively to deter vandalism and celebrate North Bay's culture — a creative and inspiring approach. Volunteer groups are also working closely with downtown businesses to enhance landscaping and encourage business owners to take pride in maintaining their storefronts. This collaboration has noticeably improved the appearance of the downtown core and fostered a shared sense of responsibility.

That spirit of pride and volunteerism is contagious and visible everywhere — from the heritage gardeners tending the display beds, to the friendly greeters at the Heritage Carousels, to the service club ambassadors welcoming visitors at the Non-Profit Fair. The same attention to detail can be seen in parks and playgrounds, which are clean, safe, and inviting, and in schoolyards and sports fields, which are well-kept and reflect student involvement. Consistent street lighting and attractive seasonal banners create a welcoming streetscape, while coordinated waste and recycling receptacles placed throughout public areas help promote tidiness and environmental responsibility. The waterfront park and historical and commemorative sites are enhanced by clear, well-maintained signage, making them accessible and informative to visitors.

The Streetscapes Program, which recognizes both residents and businesses for their exceptional gardens and greenery, is another standout initiative that celebrates community pride and beautification efforts. Well done, North Bay!

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Recommendations:

Three of the five gateway signs have been installed, and the city is continuing its work to enhance the signage with plantings. We encourage you to keep up this effort and complete the gateway signage program, as these entrances provide an important first impression for visitors.

Outside the downtown core, there are some areas that could benefit from enhanced curb appeal. Consider encouraging businesses, institutions, and residents to beautify these spaces with plantings, container gardens, public art, or other creative features that reflect community pride and make these areas more inviting.



The City's use of steam foam for weed management along sidewalks is a sustainable approach, and while weeds are being controlled, additional attention in some areas would help elevate overall appearance. City staff responsible for sidewalk maintenance, pothole repairs, street sweeping, and similar tasks could be engaged to "audit" the areas they service, noting locations in need of improvement. There is also an opportunity for Clean, Green, Beautiful North Bay (CGB) volunteers to review hardscaped areas and provide feedback to the city to help prioritize areas requiring attention.

During the tour, a few residential properties were observed that appeared unkept. With the addition of a dedicated Property Standards Officer, enforcement of the Clean Yard By-law should continue to be a priority to maintain a consistent standard across all neighbourhoods.

To further address graffiti issues, consider expanding your initiatives to include opportunities that teach young graffiti writers and street artists how to express their creativity in respectful, community-supported ways. This could involve inviting experienced muralists and graffiti artists to lead workshops, mentor youth, and demonstrate how street art can be used to tell meaningful stories. Hosting public painting sessions, providing designated spaces for artwork, and developing seasonal themes with rotating displays would give artists a platform to showcase their talents while respecting public spaces. Celebrating these works through community unveilings would help shift graffiti from an act of defiance to a source of community pride.



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ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION		
Environmental action pertains to the impact of human activities on the environment and the subsequent efforts and achievements of the community with respect to environmental stewardship, policies, by-laws, programs and best practices for waste reduction and landfill diversion, composting sites, landfill sites, hazardous waste collections, water conservation, energy conservation, and activities under the guiding principles of sustainable development pertaining to green spaces.		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
<u>Sustainable Development Strategies</u> Policies, programs, guidelines, long-term planning/vision; effective bylaws/policies and their enforcement; and public education programs and activities. This includes activities such as: the creation of Active Transportation networks, fleet management, and recognition of the importance of biodiversity to mitigate and adapt to climate change.	20	18
<u>Waste Reduction</u> Reduction of waste going to landfill and results (3-R: reduce, reuse and recycle), municipal composting programs, including activities such as composting sites, yard waste collections, plastics reduction programs, mulching of wood debris (Christmas trees, hedge trimmings, etc.) and reclamation of cut trees. Handling of hazardous waste including e-waste collection and reuse of compost material. Officially mandating the greening of public events such as on-site recycling bins, biodegradable drink containers, food service dishes, utensils, etc. to minimize the use of plastic.	20	18.25
<u>Water Conservation</u> Use reduction programs such as promotions, efficient irrigation, use of non-potable water, water restriction policies	15	12
<u>Energy Conservation</u> Programs such as alternate forms of energy (ex. geothermal, biomass, wind, solar) and initiatives such as: energy-efficient appliances, shielding for night skies, efficient street lighting	15	12.5
<u>Environmental Initiatives, Innovations and Actions</u> - Development and expansion of sustainable mobility and active transportation networks such as bike lanes, multi-use commuter pathways, and recreational trails - Horticultural practices such as planned biodiversity, green roofs, green walls, green lanes, living fences, buffer zones; re-use of sites; engineered wetlands, bioswales, permeable surfaces and rainwater management - Brownfield redevelopment, remediation, land reclamation - Air quality programs such as alternate energy sources, sustainable design of facilities, sustainable fleet management, reduction of greenhouse gas emission (carbon reduction), anti-idling by-laws.	10	8.25
Business & Institutions		
<u>Participation in The Environmental Effort</u> Waste management (reduce, reuse and recycle), water conservation, energy conservation and audits (fleet management, electric conservation), brownfield management	10	8
<u>Corporate Environmental Initiatives and Action</u> Innovation/stewardship, initiatives, activities (for example: environmental clean-up activities, plastic reduction) carbon emissions, green roofs	10	7.5
Residential		
<u>Participation in Environmental Initiatives</u> 3-R (reduce, reuse and recycle), composting	10	8
<u>Water & Energy Conservation</u> Practices such as water use reduction, rainwater collection and rain gardens, alternate forms of energy, thermostat reduction	15	12.25
Community Involvement		
<u>Public Participation – Civil Action</u> Participation in public forums and policy development on environmental issues, such as climate change adaptation and mitigation	5	4.5
<u>Public Participation in Activities</u> Community (including children/youth), neighbourhood or individual street environmental activities and programs (including promotion, organization and evidence of taking ownership, etc.)	10	8.25
<u>Community Support</u> Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions in public environmental activities and programs	10	8.5
Environmental Action Total	150.00	126.00

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ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

Observations:

North Bay has implemented an impressive range of waste reduction initiatives that reflect its strong commitment to sustainability. Programs such as Goods Exchange Day, which allows residents to place unwanted items at the curb for others to take, and textile recycling through Canadore College are helping divert materials from the landfill. The city also engages elementary students through creative public education artwork that teaches the “6 R’s” (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink, Refuse, Repair), helping instill lifelong environmental habits at an early age. The “Our Arenas Are Your Arenas” recycling campaign and the addition of numerous recycling containers in the downtown core further encourage responsible waste management. These combined efforts have resulted in a significant reduction in annual waste tonnage, an accomplishment worth celebrating.



Water conservation has also been enhanced through the implementation of water meters, which have successfully reduced consumption despite the City’s abundant water resources.

Energy innovation is another area where North Bay shines. The Merrick Landfill power generation facility and a number of alternate energy projects led by local institutions and businesses demonstrate a strong commitment to efficiency and sustainability. A standout example is North Bay Hydro’s Community Energy Park, a state-of-the-art microgrid that combines solar panels, combined heat and power generation, and battery storage. This system can operate on the main grid or independently during outages, providing uninterrupted power to key facilities such as Memorial Gardens and the YMCA, which serve as critical gathering points for residents during emergencies. This innovative project not only strengthens local energy resilience but also reduces greenhouse gas emissions, advances sustainability goals, and serves as a model for other communities seeking to enhance energy security.

Congratulations to the City of North Bay, its institutions, and businesses for their leadership in environmental stewardship and energy innovation.

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Recommendations:

We encourage the City to continue using data to measure and share its progress in waste reduction. Tracking metrics such as kilograms of waste per person and other key performance indicators, benchmarking against similar communities, and reporting results publicly will help maintain momentum and celebrate achievements with residents.

There is an opportunity to expand recycling efforts by placing recycling stations in public areas beyond the downtown core, including parks, sports fields, and other high-traffic community spaces. This would make recycling even more accessible to residents and visitors.

The North Bay Farmers' Market, a cornerstone of the community, could be a strong partner in advancing sustainability. Collaborating with market organizers to explore a reusable or returnable food packaging program would significantly reduce single-use waste and further position the market as a leader in environmental responsibility. Establishing a station where residents can donate clean, gently used shopping bags for a community bag-sharing program would make it easier for shoppers to reduce single-use plastic and support a culture of reuse.

Water conservation efforts could be strengthened by introducing residential programs that reduce potable water use, such as subsidized rain barrels, workshops on rainwater harvesting, and incentives for permeable paving or xeriscaping in private landscapes.

We also recommend prioritizing the development of a comprehensive Climate Action Plan. Such a plan could address stormwater management through green infrastructure, set targets for water, energy, and emissions reduction, and engage businesses, institutions, and residents in adopting strategies that support sustainability and climate resilience.

Finally, the city could expand public education campaigns to include backyard composting, food waste reduction, and urban gardening initiatives, which would help keep organics out of the landfill while engaging residents in hands-on sustainability efforts. Establishing a sustainability recognition program to celebrate businesses, institutions, and neighbourhoods that excel in waste diversion, water conservation, and energy reduction would further inspire participation and strengthen the culture of environmental stewardship across the community.

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION		
Heritage conservation includes efforts to preserve and protect both natural and cultural heritage within the community. Preservation of natural heritage pertains to policies, plans and actions concerning all elements of biodiversity including flora and fauna ecosystems and associated geological structures and formations. Cultural conservation represents the “persona” of a community and refers to the heritage that helps define the community including the legacy of tangible (built/hard assets) elements such as heritage buildings, monuments, memorials, cemeteries, artifacts, museums and intangible elements such as traditions, customs, festivals and celebrations. The participation of groups such as historical societies, traditional cultural groups, and conservation groups is considered.		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
<u>Natural Heritage Plans</u> Management and preservation policies, plans, programs and initiatives: including eco systems, eco parks, trail networks, grasslands, naturalization, wetlands, urban agriculture/farming, wildlife and wildlife corridors, protection of sensitive habitats, species at risk and support for at risk pollinators.	20	18
<u>Natural Heritage Promotion</u> Management and promotion of natural heritage (through communications, information and support programs, economic development/tourism) including year-around activities and programs for education and use of natural heritage sites (including trail networks) for and by the public.	15	14
<u>Cultural Heritage Plans</u> Policies, by-laws, plans, and preservation initiatives for heritage buildings, cemeteries, artifacts, museums, monuments, heritage trees and gardens, including their integration with streetscapes and landscape	15	13.5
<u>Cultural Heritage Activities</u> Initiatives throughout the year including festivals and celebrations along with preservation of traditions and customs	15	14
Business & Institutions		
<u>Natural Heritage Assets</u> Conservation, restoration and integration of natural heritage, including eco parks, conservation areas, trails, heritage gardens, trees and landscapes.	10	8.5
<u>Cultural Heritage Assets</u> Conservation, restoration and reuse of heritage buildings and artifacts including their integration with the built/hard, streetscapes and green landscapes	10	8.25
Residential		
<u>Cultural Heritage Initiatives</u> Conservation/restoration and reuse of heritage buildings and artifacts on residential lands	10	8
Community Involvement		
<u>Natural Heritage Public Participation</u> Participation in community (including children/youth), neighbourhood or individual natural heritage programs and initiatives including developing policies and plans, site improvements (including trails, eco parks, reforestation and management, maintenance, conservation and education initiatives	20	18.25
<u>Natural Heritage – Community Support</u> Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions (including environmental groups) in community-initiated natural heritage activities and programs	10	8.25
<u>Cultural Heritage - Public Participation</u> Participation in community (including children/youth), neighbourhood or individual cultural heritage programs including year-round heritage community events/activities, festivals and celebrations along with preservation of traditions and customs	15	13.75
<u>Cultural Heritage - Community Support</u> Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions (including historical societies) in community-initiated cultural heritage activities and programs	10	8.25
Heritage Conservation Total	150.00	132.75

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Observations:

North Bay's approach to heritage is rooted in community engagement and respect for its cultural and natural assets. Heritage designation is offered through an application process, with the city encouraging property owners seeking building permits to apply and providing support throughout the process. While recommendations for heritage preservation are not mandatory, the city actively promotes best practices to help maintain the character of historic properties.

The community takes great pride in its natural and cultural heritage. Laurier Woods and other significant natural areas are stewarded by dedicated volunteer organizations, reflecting strong public participation in heritage conservation. North Bay's centennial celebrations in 2025 are further amplifying this pride, with the city providing approximately \$200K in grants to volunteer organizations to enhance community-led events — a wonderful way to mark this milestone year.



A standout example of North Bay's heritage celebration is the beloved Heritage Railway and Carousel, which captures the spirit of creativity and collaboration. The original Heritage Carousel and the Winter Wonderland Carousel, featuring 16 hand-carved Northern Ontario wildlife figures by local artisans, showcase community talent and imagination. A sponsorship program helped fund their construction, connecting local families and businesses to the project. Operated and maintained entirely by volunteers, the carousels and miniature Heritage Railway have become symbols of local pride and joy, delighting residents and visitors year after year.

North Bay is also committed to inclusion, diversity, and reconciliation. The city works closely with Indigenous partners to honour the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, with initiatives such as Suswin Village — a housing program offering cultural, mental health, and addiction supports through the North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre. The waterfront reflects this spirit of respect and acknowledgement, featuring Zhaabgizhick Beach, named in honour of Chief Michel Zhaabgiizhik of the Nbisiing Nishnaabeg, Ojibway, and Algonquin peoples. The Chief Commanda II cruiser and surrounding spaces serve as welcoming gathering places, celebrating both the city's history and its present-day vibrancy.



Together with its many non-profits and service clubs, which support 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, underprivileged families, hospice care, and cultural initiatives, North Bay continues to strengthen its identity as a community where heritage, inclusion, and a sense of belonging thrive.

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Recommendations:

There is an excellent opportunity for North Bay to strengthen its Heritage Plan by more explicitly recognizing and protecting natural heritage assets such as Laurier Woods, waterfront parks, and trails. Adding educational signage, guided walks, and interpretive programming would highlight these spaces for both residents and visitors while reinforcing the value of conservation.

We recommend developing by-laws as part of the Heritage Plan that grant the city the authority to protect both natural and cultural heritage assets. This would ensure long-term stewardship of key sites, including historic buildings, landmarks, and landscapes, while giving future generations the chance to enjoy them.

Properties that have applied for heritage designation currently receive a glass plaque, but those observed were often difficult to read and not fully consistent with the heritage aesthetic. Consider exploring alternative plaque materials such as stone, brass, or even locally sourced wood — a nod to North Bay’s forestry heritage — to create a more durable, attractive, and legible marker.



The city could also celebrate its centennial legacy by expanding digital storytelling efforts, such as an online interactive map of designated heritage sites, oral history projects, or QR codes at significant locations that link to historical information, photos, and videos. This would engage younger audiences and bring history to life in a modern, accessible way.

The North Bay Sports Hall of Fame, located in the Boart Longyear Memorial Gardens, celebrates the city’s proud athletic history. Its displays honour local athletes, coaches, and builders who have made lasting contributions to sports in the community. Preserving and sharing these stories is vital to keeping North Bay’s sports heritage alive. Digitizing records and memorabilia, in partnership with schools, libraries, and local media, would make this history more accessible, inspire future generations, and ensure these achievements are never forgotten.

Finally, there is an opportunity to partner with schools, service clubs, and Indigenous partners to create youth-led heritage initiatives, such as student-curated exhibits, heritage art projects, or volunteer opportunities at cultural events. This would foster a deeper appreciation for local history while inspiring the next generation to take pride in preserving North Bay’s heritage.

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TREE MANAGEMENT		
Woodlands, Canopy Management, Urban and Rural Forestry includes the efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents with regards to written policies, by-laws, standards for tree management protection (selection, planting, and maintenance), long and short-term management plans, tree replacement policies, pollinator-friendly tree selection, tree inventory including heritage, memorial, and commemorative trees, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs.		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
Overall Impression Overall impact, benefit and first impression of the urban forest	10	8
Strategic Plans Policies, regulations and tree by-laws, tree protection and planting on public and private lands	15	13
Urban Forestry Plan Plan, design and inventory management including integration with overall green infrastructure landscape plan, and measures to preserve, protect, manage and expand overall tree inventory, including woodlots and managed forests	20	16
Plan of Action Procurement, species diversity (including native trees), selection of hardy and pollinator habitat tree species, recommended tree list and tree planting standards.	10	8
Integrated Pest Management (IPM) / Plant HealthCare (PHC): plan of action for invasive pest detection and control, information on current infestations and diseases	10	7.5
Public Information Programs Provides information on good planting techniques, best practices and maintenance programs	15	10
Maintenance Quality Best practices with demonstrated results	10	8
Qualified Resources Qualified personnel (including seasonal staff and/or qualified experienced contractors) and/or in place training programs	5	4.5
Business & Institutions		
Tree inventory Contribution to expanding overall tree inventory and canopy, management of hedgerows and forests, with consideration of design and diversity including native and hardy species of trees, on properties owned by businesses and institutions.	15	13
Maintenance Quality Programs, best practices with demonstrated results: watering, pruning, IPM	10	8
Residential		
Tree Planting Contribution to expanding overall tree inventory, with consideration of design and diversity including native and hardy species of trees on residential properties	15	13
Maintenance Quality Best practices with demonstrated results	10	8
Community Involvement		
Public Participation Participation (including children/youth) in tree planting and conservation programs such as Green Streets Canada, Arbor Day, Maple Leaf Day, and other tree planting and maintenance programs and activities on public lands (including promotion, organization etc.)	20	18.5
Community Support Financial and/or in-kind or participation or promotion by the municipality, businesses and institutions for community tree planting and conservation programs on public lands	10	8.25
Tree Management Total	175.00	143.75

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TREE MANAGEMENT

Observations:

North Bay's impressive 44% tree canopy is one of its defining features, giving the city a lush, green character and contributing to the health and well-being of residents. Congratulations on achieving and maintaining such a vibrant urban forest. To ensure this canopy is sustained for future generations, the city is developing a Tree Canopy Plan that will include recommended species lists and guidelines for both public and private properties.

The city's commitment to tree planting is strongly supported by community partners and volunteer groups. Local schools have been key participants, with 5–6 schools establishing small orchards where students are actively involved in planting, adopting, and caring for trees. These orchards have become living classrooms, integrating environmental education into the curriculum and fostering stewardship at a young age. Canadore College partners with Clean, Green, Beautiful North Bay to plant trees at schools, further strengthening this educational connection.

North Bay Hydro's Right Tree, Right Place program is an excellent example of corporate responsibility. Through this initiative, they have donated 100 trees and 2,000 saplings and helped plant trees in schoolyards across the community. 22 Wing Base also contributes by following a two-to-one replacement policy for tree planting, reinforcing the importance of maintaining and increasing the urban canopy.

The volunteer-run tree starter nursery, established in 2006, continues to be a best practice and a model of long-term sustainability. This initiative not only supplies trees for community planting efforts but also demonstrates the power of citizen involvement in shaping the local landscape.

Together, these efforts have created a thriving urban forest that contributes to climate resilience, improves air quality, reduces stormwater runoff, and enhances the beauty of streets, parks, and neighbourhoods throughout North Bay.



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Recommendations:

As North Bay advances its Tree Canopy Plan, we encourage the inclusion of a strong educational component for residents, businesses, and institutions. Providing guidance on the selection of appropriate native trees and shrubs, as well as effective planting and maintenance techniques, will help ensure long-term canopy health and survival rates. Workshops, demonstration sites, and online resources could further support this learning.

Businesses and residents can be more deeply engaged by celebrating [National Forest Week](#) with tree-themed events, guided walks, and educational activities. A tree giveaway program—where participants can choose from a variety of native species—could encourage planting on private property. Charging a nominal fee or requiring a registration process could enhance accountability for the care of the trees and promote a sense of stewardship.



There is an opportunity to protect and celebrate the giant Eastern cottonwood located at the easement by Chippewa Creek west of Duke Street East. Surveying and researching its history, installing interpretive signage, and creating a small storytelling or gathering space nearby could transform this natural asset into a celebrated landmark, connecting residents to the city's ecological and cultural heritage.

During the tour, it was noted that many shopping plazas have large, paved parking areas with little or no tree coverage. Introducing tree islands and setting green coverage requirements for new developments would help reduce heat island effects, improve stormwater management, provide shade for vehicles and pedestrians, and enhance the visual appeal of commercial areas. Similarly, while bioswales were observed at Laurentian Ski Hill's turning bay, incorporating more shade trees into the parking lot would further improve environmental performance and visitor comfort.

Finally, consider developing an urban tree inventory and canopy monitoring program to track planting efforts, identify gaps, and measure long-term progress. Publicly sharing this data can build awareness, encourage participation, and celebrate North Bay's achievements in sustaining one of its most valuable natural assets.

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LANDSCAPE		
Landscape includes planning, design, construction and maintenance of parks, green spaces and cemeteries suitable for the intended use and location on a year-round basis. Elements for evaluation include native and introduced materials; biodiversity, materials and constructed elements; appropriate integration of hard surfaces and art elements, use of turf and groundcovers. Landscape design should harmonize the interests of all sectors of the community and provide safe and secure public spaces. Standards of execution and maintenance should demonstrate best practices, including quality of naturalization, use of groundcovers and wildflowers along with turf management.		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
<u>Sustainable Designs – Soft Landscape</u> Sustainable designs: energy efficient, use of green materials, naturalization, xeriscaping, suitable plant varieties (including pollinator friendly), traffic calming, bank stabilization	15	13
<u>Sustainable Designs - Hard Landscape</u> Urban and civic design standards for streetscape and public places including considerations for public safety: flags, banners, public art, fountains, site furnishings, signage including wayfinding and directional, seasonal design and décor, walkways and paving materials including use of artificial turf and its protocols	15	13
<u>Landscape Plan</u> Integrated and implemented throughout the municipality	10	8
<u>Landscape Management Programs</u> Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Plant Health Care (PHC), alternative solutions to diseases and infestations when appropriate, Invasive Species Management, increased naturalization and adapted maintenance programs	10	8
<u>Landscape Maintenance</u> Policies, Standards, Best Practices and Programs including irrigation water management	10	9
<u>Landscape Quality</u> Landscape maintained to appropriate standards, specs and best practices, as an example as shown in the Canadian Landscape Standards	5	4.5
<u>Qualified Resources</u> Qualified personnel (including seasonal staff) and/or in place training programs and/or qualified experienced contractors	10	8.25
<u>Year-round use</u> Demonstrated year-round opportunities and programs for education and people being active and using parks and green spaces (urban agriculture, community gardens, parks and recreation programs and accessible public washrooms)	10	8
Business & Institutions		
<u>Sustainable Designs</u> Energy efficient, use of green materials, naturalization, xeriscaping, alternate groundcovers, urban agriculture	10	8.25
<u>Integrated Plan</u> Contribution to urban & civic design and public green spaces above requirements: such as public art, streetscape, site furniture, fountains & innovation in concept & design	15	13
<u>Maintenance Quality</u> Adequate ongoing life cycle management (ongoing maintenance, ground & asset management, rehabilitation & replacement) of all landscape elements	10	8
Residential		
<u>Streetscape Appeal</u> Residential yards (year-round, seasonal, themed)	15	11
<u>Maintenance Quality</u> Lawn care, trees and shrub maintenance (with demonstrated results)	15	11
<u>Plant Selection</u> Selection of plant material (native, local, innovative, edible & pollinator friendly plants)	10	7
Community Involvement		
<u>Public Participation</u> in community programs (including children/youth) such as: urban agriculture, community gardens, "yard of the week", volunteer park maintenance, holiday illumination and decoration (promotion, organization, etc.)	20	18.5
<u>Volunteer Succession Plan and Recognition</u> Succession Plan and Recognition (by municipality and/or volunteer groups) of volunteer efforts in all aspects of the Communities in Bloom program including activities in all evaluated criteria	20	18.25
Landscape Total	200.00	166.75

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LANDSCAPE

Observations:

North Bay's recent downtown revitalization has given the city centre a fresh, welcoming look. The hardscape design is modern and well executed, making the downtown core highly walkable and inviting. Congratulations on the very successful implementation of this project.

The city is blessed with numerous parks, trails, and cycling pathways, all of which were observed to be well maintained and thoughtfully designed. These green spaces encourage recreation, active transportation, and community connection, making them an integral part of daily life in North Bay.



The waterfront is the city's signature landscape feature and a true point of pride. It offers a wide variety of amenities — volleyball courts, playgrounds, docks, a marina, water sports access, a boardwalk and pier, fishing areas, and the beloved Kiwanis Bandshell performance space. The Farmers' Market adds vibrancy to the waterfront, creating a lively gathering place where residents and visitors can connect. The Skatepark and Pump Track are standout facilities, uniquely designed to be durable, manicured, and seamlessly integrated into the surrounding landscape. These spaces

offer recreational opportunities for youth and families while maintaining visual harmony with the waterfront environment. Many of these amenities have been made possible through sponsorships and community fundraising efforts, demonstrating North Bay's strong spirit of collaboration and its visionary planning approach. The result is a waterfront that is not only beautiful but also highly functional and accessible for all ages and abilities.

At Sunset Park Public School, teachers have created a truly inspiring outdoor learning space. Their book, *The Mighty Gardeners*, served as the inspiration for the garden, which features brightly painted stones designed by the students. This initiative not only develops horticultural skills but also nurtures confidence, personality development, and a sense of pride. The garden has become a meaningful part of the school's identity and an excellent example of how landscapes can educate and empower youth.



Residential landscapes across most of the areas we visited were well cared for, with many homes showcasing attractive plantings and neatly maintained yards. This attention to private property upkeep greatly enhances the overall beauty and curb appeal of the community, reflecting the shared pride that was evident throughout North Bay.

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Recommendations:

Some of the murals observed in the downtown area showed signs of wear and degradation, which affected their visual appeal. To maintain the quality and longevity of public art, the city could consider developing clear standards for mural creation, installation, and maintenance. These standards could apply to both city-commissioned works and those produced by local businesses or independent artists, ensuring that all installations are properly prepared, protected, and sustainable over time. Establishing these guidelines would help preserve the vibrancy of North Bay's public art and reinforce the city's reputation as a creative and visually engaging community.



The waterfront is a busy and vibrant site, attracting residents and visitors for a wide variety of activities. People access the area on foot, by bike, scooter, skateboard, or rollerblades, making pedestrian safety a top priority. During our visit, we observed a particularly concerning area at the turning corner of Memorial Drive, where the beach footpath opens onto a busy roadway. Pedestrians must cross traffic moving in both directions and navigate a nearby train track to reach the sidewalk by the Homewood Suites hotel.

Consider adding banners and self-watering hanging baskets on streetlights along the promenade. These would guide visitors to key focal points, enhance the pedestrian experience, and reinforce the waterfront as a vibrant hub. Seasonal floral displays or thematic banners could involve local artists and sponsors, bringing colour, movement, and a year-round sense of celebration.

These enhancements would further unify waterfront features, including the Kiwanis Bandshell, Farmers' Market, and Skatepark and Pump Track. By connecting these amenities visually and functionally through landscaping, signage, and decorative elements, the city can create a cohesive, engaging, and safe environment that encourages residents and visitors to explore, gather, and enjoy North Bay's signature waterfront.



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PLANT AND FLORAL DISPLAYS		
This category evaluates the efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents to design, plan, execute, and maintain plant and floral displays of high-quality standards. Evaluation includes the design and arrangements of flowers and plants (annuals, perennials, bulbs, ornamental grasses, edible plants, water efficient and pollinator friendly plants) in the context of originality, distribution, location, diversity and balance, colour, and harmony. It also pertains to flowerbeds, carpet bedding, containers, baskets and window boxes.		
	Max	Actual
Municipal		
Floral Display Plan of Action Integration into overall landscape plan and distribution through community. Concept and design including sustainable design	15	13
Diversity of Displays Flowerbeds, raised beds, planters, hanging baskets, window boxes, carpet bedding, mosaics	20	16
Diversity of Plants Annuals, perennials, bulbs, grasses, woody plants, natural flora, pollinator friendly plants	10	7
Maintenance Quality Maintenance to appropriate specifications and standards, best practices: watering, weeding, edging, dead heading, etc.	20	18
Qualified Resources Qualified personnel (including seasonal staff) and/or in place training programs and/or qualified experienced contractors	10	8
Business & Institutions		
Concept and Design (including arrangement, diversity, colour of display and plants) on grounds	15	13
Overall Plan Contribution to, and integration with, overall community plant and floral program	10	8
Maintenance Quality of planting and maintenance: watering, weeding, edging, dead heading, etc. with demonstrated results.	10	8
Residential		
Concept and Design (including arrangement, diversity, colour of display and plants) on residential properties including Pollinator gardens and/or inclusion of pollinator plants in gardens	20	18
Maintenance Quality of planting and maintenance with demonstrated results.	15	13
Community Involvement		
Public Participation in community projects, volunteer initiatives (including children/youth), outreach programs in plant and floral displays (including promotion, organization, etc.)	15	13.75
Community Support Financial and/or in-kind or participation by the municipality, businesses and institutions for community plant and floral displays activities	15	13.75
Plant and Floral Displays Total	175.00	149.50

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PLANT AND FLORAL DISPLAYS

Observations:

The downtown core features a diverse array of floral displays that enhance its charm and visual appeal. Raised bed planters are used creatively to beautify vacant spaces, and all displays were observed to be well maintained, contributing to a welcoming and vibrant streetscape. Many planters also feature edible plantings, including kale, herbs, and fruiting plants, demonstrating creativity in combining aesthetics with productivity.



The waterfront is a standout feature, offering a kaleidoscope of colour and variety through its floral displays. Congratulations to the North Bay Heritage Gardeners for their dedication in creating and maintaining these displays, which add significant beauty and character to the area, making it an inviting destination for residents and visitors alike.

At Suswin Village, Indigenous plantings such as sweetgrass, sage, beans, and lettuce reflect the local culture and traditional knowledge, providing both a visual and educational connection to the community's Indigenous heritage. These plantings serve as a meaningful reminder of North Bay's commitment to inclusion, diversity, and reconciliation.

The Cappadocia Residence is a remarkable example of integrating edible gardens into private property. The site features a combination of flowers and vegetables, along with a composting station that supports sustainability and resourcefulness. Such initiatives highlight how residents can blend beauty, productivity, and environmental stewardship in their landscapes.

Thank you for participating in this year's Communities in Bloom national theme, Edible Gardens. Many edible plants can be seen in downtown planters, including kale, herbs, and even fruiting plants such as bananas. Creative edible elements were also incorporated into the welcome bouquets in our hotel rooms and the floral displays at lunch at the Deacon's Residence. These thoughtful and imaginative touches demonstrate a wonderful blend of beauty and productivity—well done!



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Recommendations:

Outside the revitalized downtown area, business districts could benefit from additional plantings and floral displays to enhance their visual appeal. The Days Inn downtown serves as an excellent example of how businesses can beautify their spaces and inspire others to follow suit. The city could partner with the BIA or Clean, Green, Beautiful North Bay to create a “Best Business Floral Display” contest, providing suggested plant types or colour palettes to create a cohesive look across the community. Businesses would be responsible for maintaining their displays throughout the season and could be recognized through the Streetscapes program, reinforcing civic pride.



There is also an opportunity to diversify plant selections throughout the city to support pollinators, attract wildlife, and create visual interest across all seasons. A layered approach could combine spring bulbs, summer and fall annuals and perennials, winter-interest plants, and ornamental grasses. Beyond traditional flowering annuals, foliage plants like coleus, amaranth, and iresine, as well as edible options such as ornamental kale, Swiss chard, cabbage, potato vine, and culinary herbs like basil, oregano, chive, and sage, could be incorporated to enhance both beauty and ecological value.

When one plant underperforms, it can leave visible gaps that are labour-intensive to replace. Mixing compatible species of similar height and colour within each planting section can create natural texture and depth, reduce maintenance, and allow healthy plants to fill gaps over time. This approach also improves soil health, retains moisture, and increases the overall resiliency of displays against plant loss.



Finally, continued monitoring and management of Japanese beetle populations is recommended. Best practices include hand-picking beetles into soapy water, applying beneficial nematodes seasonally, and protecting natural predators such as the winsome fly (*Istocheta aldrichi*). Avoiding broad-spectrum insecticides is critical to prevent harm to beneficial insects and maintain ecological balance. Public education campaigns could encourage residents to take part in these efforts and discourage the use of pheromone traps, which can inadvertently draw more beetles into neighbourhoods.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT

"Within the context of climate change and environmental concerns, communities involved in the Communities in Bloom program can be proud of their efforts, which provide real and meaningful environmental solutions and benefit all of society."

COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY

The commitment of local, provincial and national volunteers

The support of elected officials and of staff in municipalities

The dedication of our judges, staff and organizations

The contributions of our sponsors and partners