

Lake of the Woods
KENORA



City of Kenora

Annual Report

2025

For the year ended December 31, 2025

www.Kenora.ca

Photo credit: Jacob Boomsma



Photo credit: Shauna Creswicke

Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, the City of Kenora acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe of Treaty #3 and the Métis people. The City of Kenora was originally the land base of one collective First Nation community, which was separated into three communities now known as Wauzhushk Onigum, Niisaachewan, and Washagamis Bay First Nations.

Kenora now sustains many others, all of whom have been welcomed to peacefully share and care for these ancestral Lands and Waters. To support stewardship of the land, the City recognizes the importance of a strong relationship with our Treaty #3 partners. The City of Kenora acknowledges that our economy greatly benefits from the Anishinaabe and Métis that live in and around the City.

City of Kenora

Annual Report 2025

For the year ended December 31, 2025



Table of Contents

Introduction	
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Introduction	5
Greetings from the Interim CAOs	6
Message from the Mayor	7
City Council	8
Strategic Plan	9
Year in Review: 2025 Accomplishments (photos)	10

Infrastructure and Operations	11
--------------------------------------	-----------

Recreation and Culture	22
-------------------------------	-----------

Recreation	23
Kenora Public Library	26
The Muse	29

Economic Development and Tourism	32
---	-----------

Economic Development	33
Northwest Business Centre	36
Tourism	37

Fire and Emergency Services	40
Planning and Building Services	44
Corporate Services	47
Clerk's Office	48
Customer Service	49
Bylaw Enforcement	50
Communications	52
Community Safety and Well-Being	56
Committees and Boards of Council	60
Kenora's On-Demand Microtransit Service	62
Human Resources	64
Finance	66
Building relationships with Treaty 3 partners	72



Introduction

Welcome to the 2025 annual review of the City of Kenora's accomplishments and outcomes as an organization.

Kenora, a small city on the shores of Lake of the Woods, near the Manitoba border, blends rich history with a vibrant present. Today, more than 15,000 residents call Kenora home, while daily commuters from surrounding rural areas rely on our services and infrastructure. In summer, the population swells to two to three times that number as seasonal residents and visitors come for Kenora's natural beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Kenora's signature appeal is its stunning natural beauty and abundance of recreational opportunities. A four-season paradise, it beckons locals and visitors alike with summer trails, beaches, and parks, and winter fishing, ice roads, and outdoor activities. Kenora's natural playground supports a high quality of life rooted in nature and community.

This enduring appeal is why residents choose to stay, raise families, and invest in Kenora's future: they value the city's recreation opportunities, parks, arts and culture, and other amenities that make Kenora feel like home.

Against this scenic backdrop, the City of Kenora's **2022-2027 Strategic Plan – Charting Our Course**, outlines our shared priorities and the path to meaningful, coordinated progress from 2022 to 2027. The plan ensures resources and energy are aligned with projects that matter to those who live, invest, visit, and play in our community.

To learn more about what's happening at City of Kenora, please visit www.Kenora.ca.



Photo credit: Amanda Kerr

Greetings from the Interim CAOs

On behalf of the City of Kenora's more than 250 hardworking and dedicated staff, we are pleased to present this 2025 Annual Report highlighting the progress and accomplishments achieved over the past year. Through the dedication of our Council, staff, community partners, and residents, we have continued to advance initiatives that strengthen our organization and enhance the quality of services we provide.

In this document, we not only recognize the work that we undertake daily in our various departments, but it is an opportunity to highlight key achievements that have taken place over the year. Despite changing economic conditions and increasing service demands, our team remained focused on operational efficiency, and delivering reliable services to our community.

Council provides Administration direction through annual operating and capital budgets which include many special projects in any given year. This Council direction aligns activities, priorities and initiatives set out in our ***2022-2027 Strategic Plan – Charting Our Course*** and our various other guiding documents while meeting service levels and legislated requirements. Several key initiatives were successfully implemented, including improvements to infrastructure, enhancements to community programs, and continued investments in organizational capacity. These accomplishments and initiatives highlighted throughout the report can only be achieved with the support of Council and actions under the direction of our Senior Leadership Team and our staff.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to responsible financial management, sustainable growth, and continuous improvement in service delivery. By building on the momentum of the past year, we will continue working together to address emerging challenges and create opportunities for long-term success.

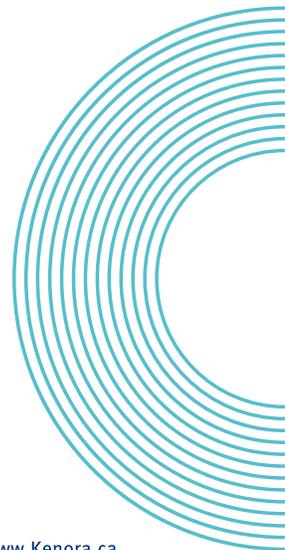
As Interim CAOs, we thank Council for its leadership and guidance, our staff for their dedication and hard work, and our community members for their ongoing support and engagement. Together, we will continue building a strong and resilient future.



Stace Gander
Interim Co-CAO



Heather Pihulak
Interim Co-CAO



Message from the Mayor

As Mayor for the City of Kenora, it is my pleasure to present the 2025 Annual Report, which highlights the progress our community has made and the work we continue to do together. Over the past year, our municipality has remained focused on building a strong, resilient, and vibrant community for everyone who lives, works, and visits Kenora.



This report reflects the dedication of our Council, municipal staff, community partners, and residents. Through collaboration and thoughtful planning, we have continued to invest in essential infrastructure, strengthen local services, and support economic and community development initiatives that improve quality of life. Adopting our new Community Safety & Well Being Plan, establishes the priorities to make Kenora what we all know it to be; a community rich in history, nature, and people — a place where everyone can live, grow, and play together in harmony. The consultation process and community engagement throughout the development of the plan demonstrated that we are a community that deeply cares about the people who live here and the community we all call home.

While we faced challenges and difficult decisions in 2025, we have also seen meaningful achievements. From investment in infrastructure and support for new initiatives our community continues to move forward with purpose and optimism and reflecting on all we have to be proud of.

I would like to thank Council members, municipal staff, volunteers, community organizations, and residents for their commitment and contributions. Your engagement and support are essential to the success of our City. As we move into our final term of this Council, we remain committed to responsible governance, transparency, and long-term planning that ensures a strong future for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Mayor Andrew Poirier
City of Kenora



Left to Right: Councillors Robert Bernie, Lisa Moncrief, Barbara Manson, Mayor Poirier, Councillors Graham Chaze, Kelsie Van Belleghem, and Lindsay Koch

City Council

As we reflect on the milestones of 2025, Kenora City Council is filled with a sense of gratitude for the collective spirit that defines our community. This year has been a testament to what we can achieve when we work together toward a shared vision for our City.

Our progress this year is rooted in the hard work of our dedicated City staff. To the individuals who maintain our roads, manage our facilities, and provide essential services: your professionalism is the backbone of Kenora's success. We also extend our sincere thanks to our residents, whose active participation in public life ensures that Council's decisions truly reflect the heart of the community. To our seasonal residents and the many tourists who visited us this past year, thank you for choosing Kenora. Your presence enriches our culture and sustains our local economy. We are proud to be your home away from home.

Throughout 2025, Council moved forward with a series of strategic initiatives designed to enhance our quality of life and prepare for the future. We oversaw critical infrastructure renewals, moved projects forward to enhance public access to our lakes, and implemented programs to support local business growth and housing diversity. These actions were taken with a focus on long-term sustainability, ensuring that the natural beauty and economic health of Kenora are preserved for generations to come.

Looking to 2026, our focus remains on the continued prosperity and well-being of everyone who calls Kenora home. We are committed to building on the momentum of this past year, guided by a shared vision of a resilient and welcoming community. By staying attentive to the needs of our neighbourhoods and the health of our natural environment, we aim to ensure that Kenora remains a source of pride for all.

Strategic Plan

The City of Kenora has developed the ***2022-2027 Strategic Plan – Charting Our Course*** to guide how Council and administration will direct their energy, resources and focus over the next five years to respond to our most important community priorities and needs. Strategic Planning empowers us to be forward thinking, coordinated and deliberate in our efforts to improve delivery and sustainability of City services, operations, and infrastructure. Our community inspires us and drives our passion in contributing to a thriving, vibrant, resilient, and active Kenora.



Our Vision

Kenora provides a high quality of life for residents and unforgettable experiences for visitors by celebrating and embracing the community's rich heritage, diversity, and natural environment.



Our Mission

To be an accountable, collaborative, and informed team that takes pride in delivering value-added municipal services.



Corporate Values

- Collaboration
- Communications
- Citizen and Customer Service
- Environmental Sustainability
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Innovation
- Readiness
- Trust and Respect

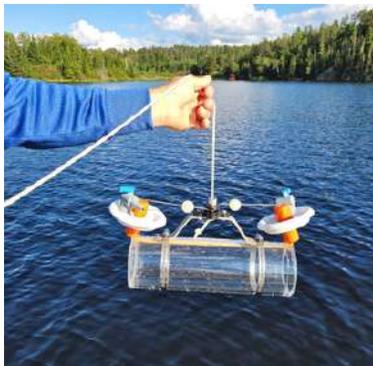


Focus Areas

Charting Our Course 2027 presents our five strategic focus areas established through engagement with City of Kenora Council and administration, partners, and the broader community.

- Infrastructure and Environment
- Tourism, Economic Growth, and Development
- Community Recreation, Well-Being, and Safety
- Service Delivery and Organizational Capacity
- Relations with Treaty 3 Partners

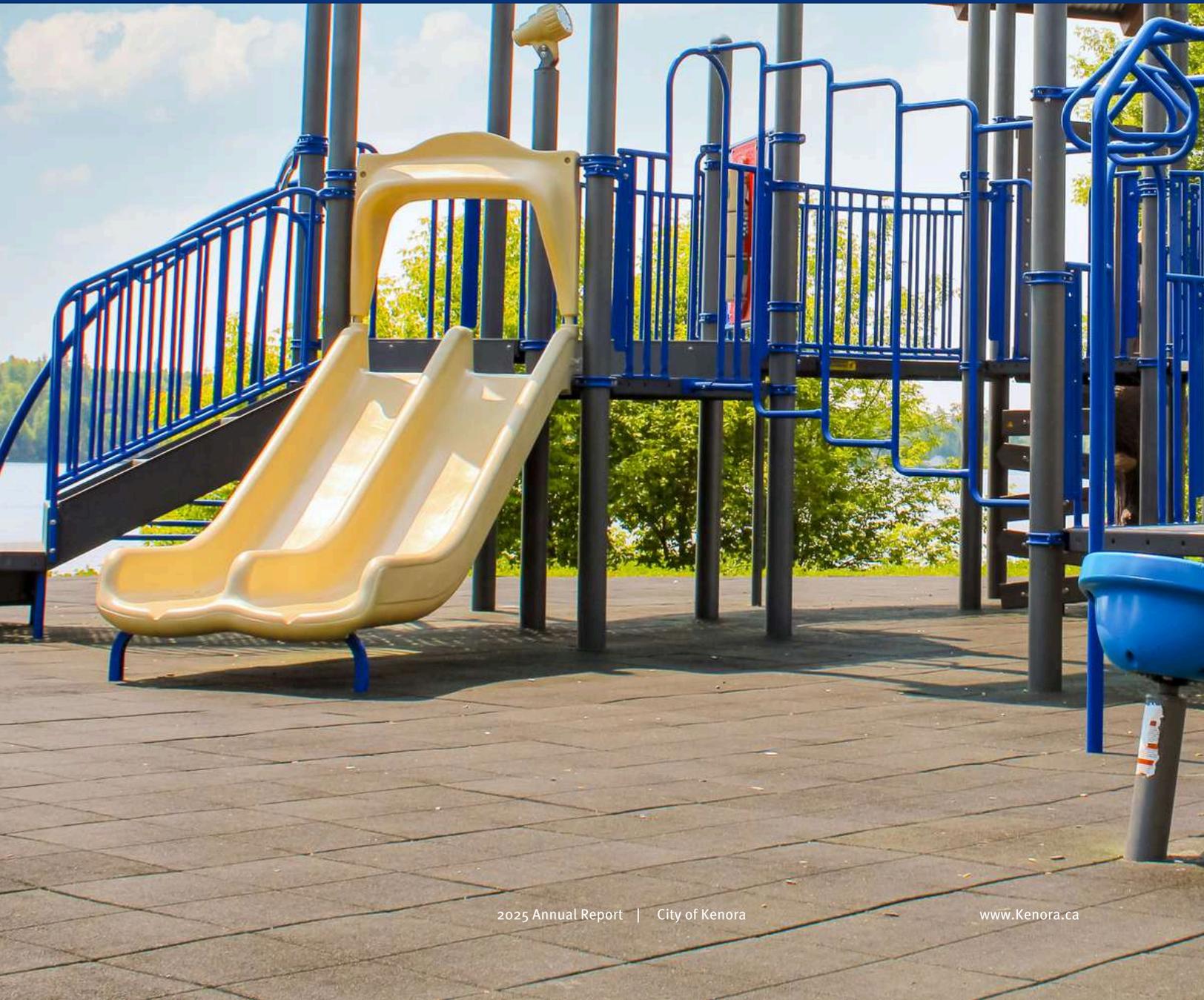
Year in Review: 2025 Accomplishments



Infrastructure and Operations

The Infrastructure and Operations team is responsible for delivering and maintaining the City's critical infrastructure and essential services that keep Kenora safe, healthy, and livable. The team consists of a range of professionals working in Roads, Underground Services, Water & Wastewater Treatment, Solid Waste & Recycling, Capital Project Delivery, Parks, Cemetery, Fleet, and Facilities.

Collectively, these teams plan and execute capital improvements, maintain transportation networks, improve and maintain roads and public spaces, manage waste, and treat and distribute clean water, while safely handling Kenora's wastewater.



Infrastructure and Operations



\$ 11.4 million
Invested in
community capital
projects



343 km
Paved streets, surface
treated roads, gravel
roads, and laneways -
single-lane distance



21
Bridges
(18 road, 3 pedestrian)



368 km
Water, wastewater
and storm mains



133
City buildings
and facilities



192
Public service
vehicles



5
Water booster
pump stations



67
Wastewater lift
stations



46
City docks and
wharfs



3
Water storage
stand pipes

INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

Roads

New school year, new road

Roads Capital Projects

Resurfacing upgrades to Ninth Street North, from Twelfth Avenue North to Thirteenth Avenue North, were completed in time for first day of school. This corner has been a long-standing challenge for drivers, families, and students due to poor drainage, recurring potholes, and significant wear and tear. Following a full reconstruction, the intersection has been fully upgraded into a smoother, safer, and more reliable route for all.

Key improvements included:

- Improved drainage and upgraded storm sewer system
- Regraded roadway for proper water runoff
- Full road structure rebuilt with stronger base materials
- A smoother, long-lasting surface for better drivability
- Reduced need for ongoing maintenance and repairs



Pothole repairs, hard surface treatment, and resurfacing

Roads Capital Projects

During the spring and summer months, the City's Roads team was hard at work repairing potholes, brushing, ditching, replacing culverts and storm piping, maintaining sightlines, repairing signage, and delivering construction projects.

The City recycles asphalt from our construction projects for patching and pothole repairs. Hot-mix asphalt is prepared at the Operations yard with the asphalt reclaimer and loaded into the City's hot box for transportation.

Crews delivered 7,822 metric tonnes of granular A and 1,101 metric tonnes of asphalt grindings to repair loose top roads. Grading is completed on a two-to-three-week rotation for all loose top roads.

In 2025, 1.2 km of Carlton Branch Road received fresh resurfacing and new gravel, restoring the road crown and promoting improved drainage for longevity and reduced maintenance.



6.1 kilometres of the City's surface-treated roads received a fresh double application of hard surface treatment after removal of pothole-causing irregularities such as clay boils, namely Gould Road, Coker Road, and Homestake Road.

On the City's paved roads, large asphalt patches were completed at over 40 locations where potholes were recurring, reducing maintenance and improving driving conditions.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

Water & Wastewater and Underground Services



725

Water deliveries



2.2 million

Cubic metres of safe drinking water distributed



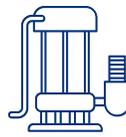
2.5 million

Cubic metres of wastewater treated



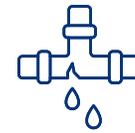
3,400+

Work orders
(e.g. station cleaning,
equipment & control system
maintenance, etc.)



41

Grinder pumps
serviced



17

Water & sewer main
breaks repaired

Sewer and water piping replacement on Ninth Street North

Underground Services Roads Capital Projects

Sewer and water reconstruction along Ninth Street North, from [Mellick Avenue](#) to [Scramble Avenue](#), was completed in mid-October. All water, sewer, and storm piping between Mellick Avenue and Scramble Avenue were fully replaced. The area received new asphalt to enhance drivability. The upgraded water system provides more reliable water and sewer service and improves fire-flow capabilities to support firefighting operations in an emergency. All upgrades were completed in accordance with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks regulations.



Monitoring, maintaining, and upgrading Kenora's water systems

Underground Services | Water & Wastewater Treatment

The Water & Wastewater and Underground Service teams treat and distribute drinking water to homes and businesses, and collect and treat wastewater before it is released. The City is committed to safeguarding drinking water quality and protecting the environment through responsible waste treatment. Our teams conduct water and environmental monitoring, maintenance, repairs, and emergency response across a vast network of pipes, pumping stations, electrical systems, and treatment facilities. This includes long-term infrastructure planning, upgrades, and public education to keep Council and residents informed.



Water main repair



Unidirectional flushing



Wastewater Treatment Plant

Wastewater treatment plant aeration tank repairs

Water & Wastewater Treatment | Underground Services | Capital Projects

Throughout 2025, major repairs to the wastewater treatment plant's aeration tanks 3 and 4 were carried out. The tanks had been out of service since August 2024 due to damaged piping and concrete erosion discovered during tank cleaning.

Repairs to the concrete tank walls, and replacement of the piping and oxygen diffusers were completed ahead of returning the tanks to service. The focused efforts ensure renewed reliability of the plant's treatment process.

While tanks 3 and 4 were back in service in January 2026, further rehabilitation work will continue in 2026 and 2027 with ongoing improvements designed to extend service life, increase capacity, and reduce lifecycle maintenance needs. The 2025 repairs represent a turning point, kicking off overall rehabilitation of the plant following recommendations received in the 2025 capital needs assessment, aligned with the City's commitment to protecting public health and the environment.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

Solid Waste & Recycling

The team oversees three remote waste depots and is committed to waste reduction and environmental preservation by diverting materials from the landfill.



56,977

Customers served



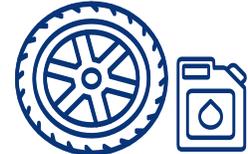
951,618

Kilograms of garbage collected by curbside



483,064

Kilograms of recyclables collected by curbside



21%

Diverted from landfill (e.g. scrap metal, tires, electronics, recyclables, household hazardous waste)

Keeping our city clean with the waste transfer facility, curbside collection and depots

Solid Waste & Recycling

The City's Solid Waste & Recycling team is committed to providing the community with the an efficient and cost effective Waste Transfer Facility and collection system for garbage and recycling. On a weekly basis, City crews collect recycle and garbage, in combined-service collection vehicles, at the curbside.

The Waste Transfer Facility, located 401 Mellick Avenue, is available if residents missed their scheduled day for curbside pick-up, or the community has large loads of acceptable items for disposal, household hazardous waste (HHW), or recycling.





Ontario rolls out new province-wide, producer-funded recycling program

Solid Waste & Recycling

In preparation of Ontario's residential recycle blue box programs shifting to a 100% producer-funded system managed by [Circular Materials](#), the City partnered with GFL Environmental Inc. (GFL) and Circular Materials to roll out an awareness campaign ahead of cart deliveries and the changes for the new year.

In 2026, recycling became more convenient with a new recycling cart and a [standardized list](#) of what can be recycled across Ontario. GFL became Circular Materials' Contractor, responsible for Kenora's curbside collection under this new provincial framework.

Acting proactively, the City engaged with GFL to explore ways the City could partner with GFL, ensuring the City of Kenora continues to perform curbside collection services. In November, Council approved an agreement which established a 7+ year partnership with GFL. This proactive approach, combined with province-wide education, prepared residents for the new standardized recycling program.

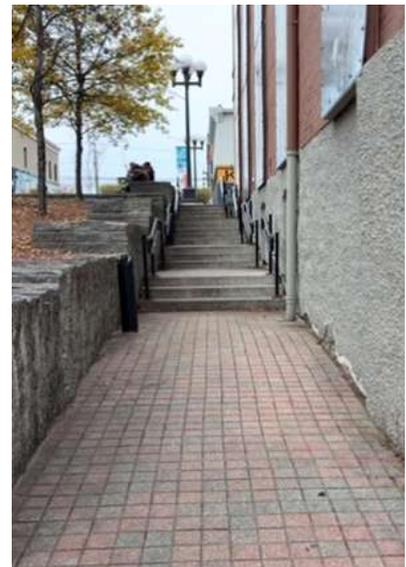
INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

Parks and Cemetery

From parks to pathways

Parks

In addition to upkeep at City owned parks, the Parks team provides citywide services including routine waste collection, cleanup operations, graffiti and vandalism repair, and seasonal leaf and snow removal across public spaces to sidewalks, pathways, and stairways. In 2025, the Parks team received over 400 requests to community public spaces.





Honouring and remembering loved ones and veterans

Cemetery

In 2025, Lake of the Woods Cemetery marked meaningful progress with the installation of two new columbariums to memorialize cremation urns, expanding its capacity for the community to honour loved ones.

Annually, the Festival of Lights, Kenora's annual celebration of life is held at the Lake of the Woods Cemetery. Thousands of ice candles are lit on Christmas Eve burning through to Boxing Day. This year's tradition continued to shine, with 2,800 ice candles being prepared, placed, and lit to honour loved ones and veterans.

Norman Park's accessible path and upgraded playground

Parks Capital Projects

In June the City held a special ribbon cutting celebration spotlighting the new accessible paved pathway and updated playground to the Norman Park Beach. The upgraded playground features modern, inclusive equipment designed to accommodate children with a wide range of abilities.

Special thanks to Hon. MP Greg Rickford, the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC), the Ontario Trillium Fund, and donations from John and David Ross, and Rotary Club of Kenora for their support, which made the accessible paved pathways and playground upgrades possible.





Coney Island



Portage Bay Bridge west docks



Garrow Park Beach



Lake of the Woods Discovery Centre

Enhancing waterfront access with docks

Parks Capital Projects Facilities

Aligned with the City's ***2022-2027 Strategic Plan – Charting Our Course***, the City improved waterfront and lake access to the following community areas:

- The Lake of the Woods Discovery Centre received six new floating docks.
- At the west end of Seventh Street, a single floating dock was replaced with a surplus dock from another location.
- Norman Park Beach now has a new shore deck and ramp, with six floating docks.
- The Garrow Beach swim dock was expanded.
- Coney Island's north docks were upgraded to an eight-foot-wide dock for better stability and now includes a handrail on the ramp. A damaged crib dock was removed to improve safety and usability for inland Coney residents.
- Added side bumpers, corner bumpers, and more cleats to all docks.
- Replaced the emergency dock and ramp at the Lake of the Woods District Hospital
- To increase capacity, several floating docks at the Bowman Electric Kewatin Memorial Arena were replaced.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

Fleet

Maintaining the City's fleet with reliability and safety in mind

Fleet

The City's Fleet Department keeps the public service vehicles you see on the roads every day in tip-top shape, ready to meet the needs of our community. The team attends to the seasonal preparation, preventative and regular maintenance, safety inspections and repairs and enhancements to units in every City department. As City equipment ages, replacement equipment is ordered, tailored to Kenora's unique and challenging work. Here's a look at the new units that joined the fleet in 2025.



Solid Waste landfill packer



Toyota Rav4 for Tourism



Engo ice re-surfacer for MCSC



2025 Ram Postmaster cargo van for Underground Services



Ford Silverado half-ton for Roads



2025 John Deere X730 mower for Cemetery

Recreation and Culture

The Recreation and Culture Department brings together a dynamic team of Recreation, Library, and Museum, and Art Centre staff to enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike. The Recreation and Culture team's mission is to foster health, learning, creativity, and connection across the community through accessible facilities, engaging programs, and welcoming services.

The [Kenora Public Library](#) serves two branches with a robust collection of books, puzzles, and digital assets, plus engaging programs for kids and a wide range of resources and rentals. Libraries function as community hubs, offering programs that support literacy, learning, exploration, and connections to information, technology, and opportunities to participate in community life.

The Muse, comprising the Lake of the Woods Museum and the Douglas Family Art Centre, celebrates Kenora's history, art, and culture by inspiring creativity, fostering lifelong learning, and enriching the community through engaging exhibits, programs, and events.

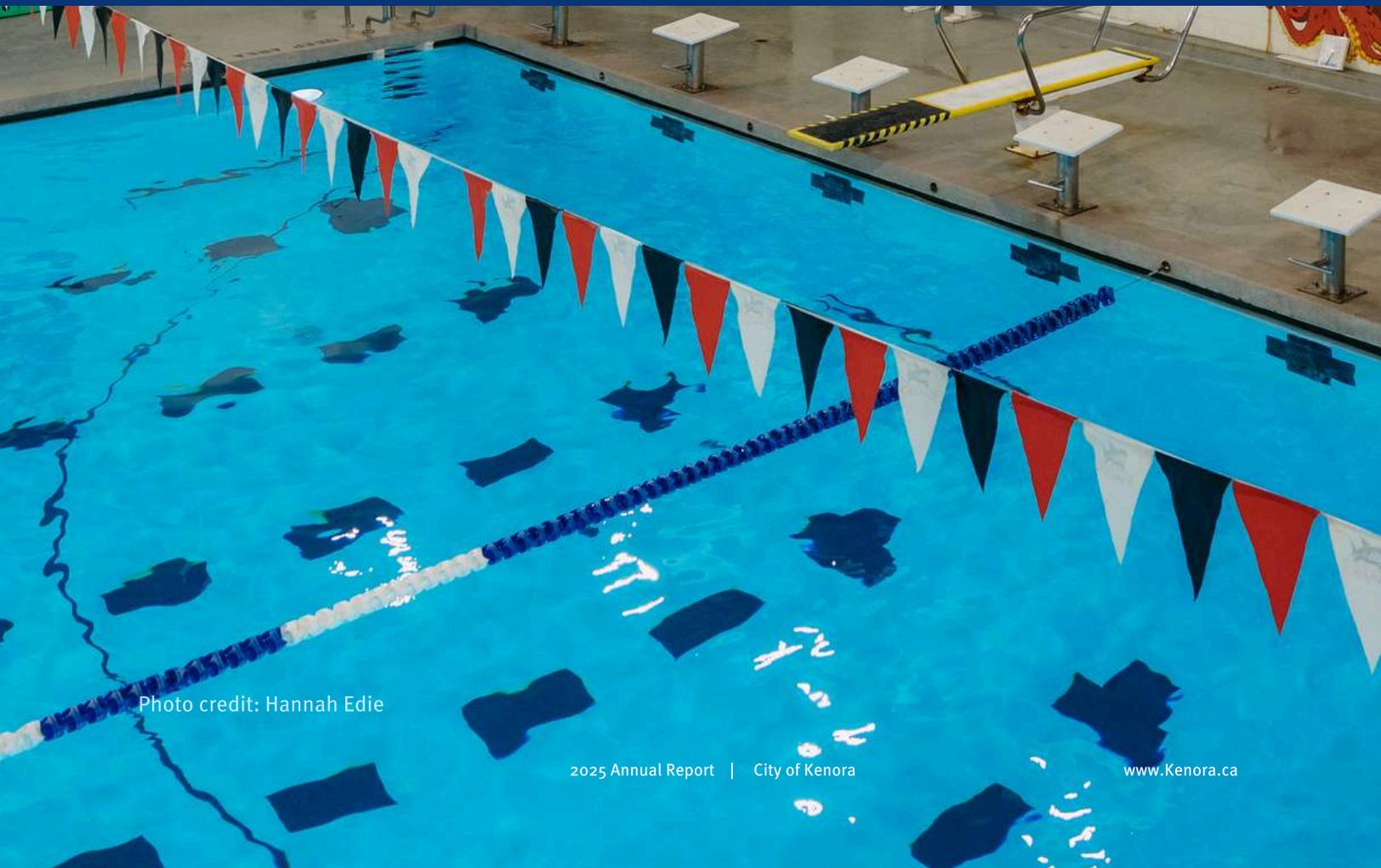


Photo credit: Hannah Edie

RECREATION AND CULTURE

Recreation

The Recreation team delivers accessible, year-round programs and community activities, including fitness classes for all levels, school-break and holiday camps, and arena-based activities and facility rentals. They support ice programs and hockey development camps through the City's arenas: Bowman Electric Keewatin Memorial Arena (BEKMA) and Kenora Thistle Arena.

The Moncrief Construction Sports Centre (MCSC) is the hub for fitness, recreation, and community connection in Kenora, offering three pools, a sauna, and an arena for a wide range of aquatic, wellness, and skating activities. The Recreation team also maintains nine local baseball fields.



26

Events hosted at
MCSC & BEKMA



88

Fitness classes
taught



142,228

Participant visits
to MCSC



3,183

Memberships &
packages sold



33,396

Visits to the Michael Smith
Fitness Centre

Located on the second floor, the fitness centre offers 30+ workout stations from Life Fitness, Hammer Strength, APEX, and Olympic Bars, including ellipticals, treadmills, bikes, and rowers, plus a full selection of free weights, dumbbells, exercise balls, TRX, steps, and BOSU.

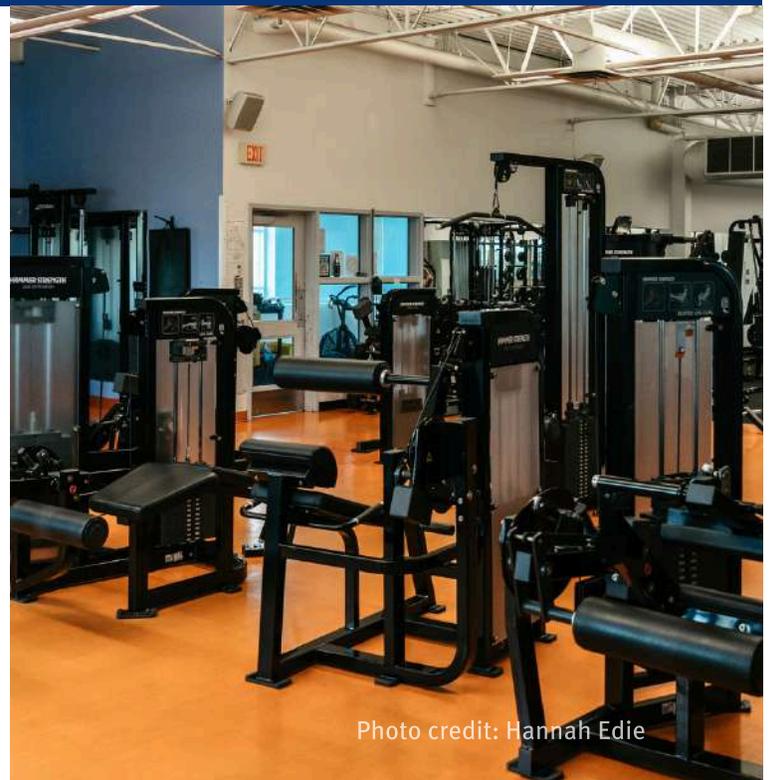


Photo credit: Hannah Edie

Growing demand for daytime swim lessons

The MCSC welcomed 142,228 visits, including 13,743 student visits with their schools. Instructors taught swimming lessons, Grades JK through 6, to students enrolled in the two school Boards, as well as local First Nations schools. Daytime swim lessons were in higher demand as more schools recognize the importance of teaching children water safety.



Baseball boom, extended play into the fall

The Recreation team maintains nine baseball fields, including five that use the same red infield mix as Blue Cross Park, home of the Winnipeg Goldeyes. About 1,500 locals play baseball or slo-pitch in the summer, that's roughly 10% of our community.

An unusually warm fall allowed for the the MCSC baseball diamonds to host two tournaments in October, extending activity on our baseball facilities. This led to roughly six months of annual usage for a City asset, a positive outcome that could signal a potential new operational norm moving forward.

Prime time ice utilization

City arenas continued to see strong community demand, with 95% of available prime time ice booked during the regular season at both arena's. Prime time hours include 6 to 8 a.m. and 4 to 10 p.m. Monday to Friday, and 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekends. This high utilization reflects the continued strength of local hockey and skating organizations and demonstrates the importance of arena facilities in supporting recreation, sport development, and community gathering.



19,654

Visits to enjoy scheduled public swims

During public swims guests can enjoy time in the lane pool, leisure pool, and tot pool, plus access to the hot tub and waterslide.



MCSC rink slab project

The Thistle Arena completed a major upgrade to its ice facility, replacing the concrete slab that dated back to 1968. The arena now benefits from a modern, heated slab and refreshed rink boards. The facility reopened in October 2025, inviting skaters and community groups to enjoy smoother, more reliable ice conditions.

This project was made possible through the Province of Ontario's Strategic Priorities Infrastructure Fund (SPIF), with additional support from the City's Recreation Centre Reserves.

U18 AAA Western Regional Championships

During April 2025, the Thistle Arena welcomed teams from across Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Northern Ontario as the Kenora U18 AAA Thistles hosted the Western Regional Championships, with the winner advancing to compete for the Telus Cup. The event brought high level hockey and strong community engagement to the facility, averaging over 1,200 spectators per game, with nearly 1,600 fans attending the Friday night matchup, where the Thistles delivered an exciting win. The tournament showcased Kenora’s ability to host major regional sporting events and highlighted the strong community support for local athletes.



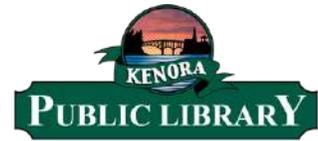
Kenora Swim Sharks made a splash

The Kenora Swim Sharks continued to grow their presence in competitive swimming by hosting both a spring and late fall swim meet. The Spring Swim Meet welcomed over 140 participants, bringing athletes and families to the community and supporting local sport development. Building on this success, the Fall Meet “Kenora Flash Freeze” was introduced this year and is expected to become a regular event moving forward as the Swim Sharks program continues its upward trajectory.

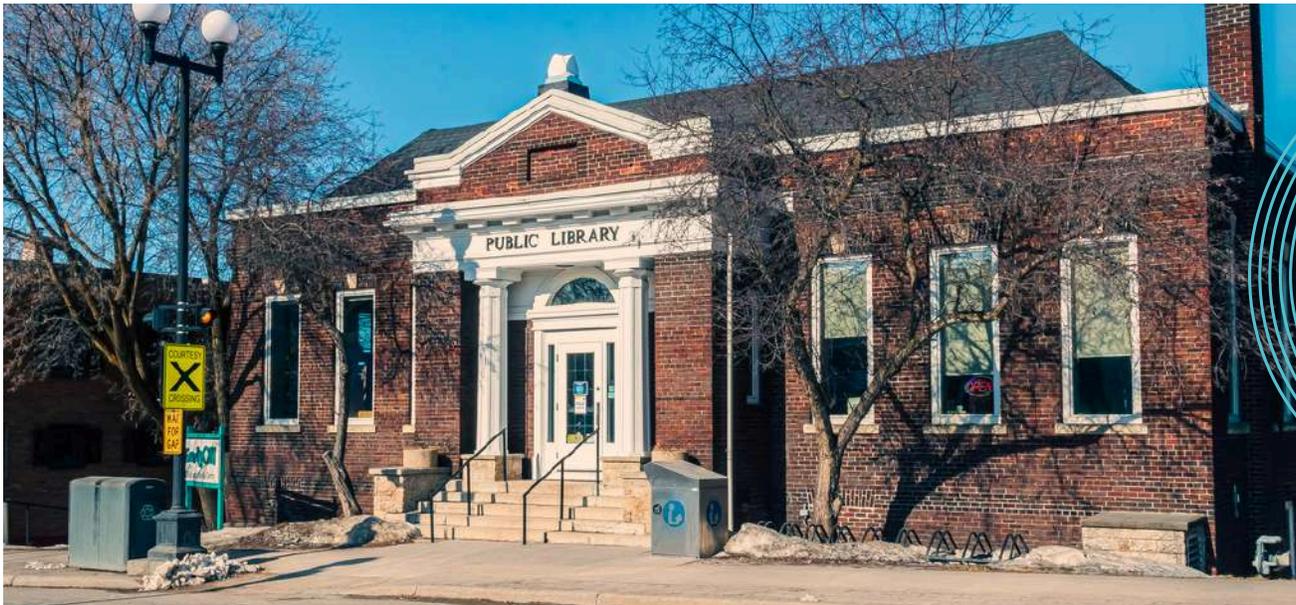


RECREATION AND CULTURE

Kenora Public Library



The City of Kenora public libraries serve residents, seasonal residents, and visitors through two branches, Kenora and Keewatin. Your Kenora Public Library card works at both locations, and staff are available to assist with finding materials. The collections, consisting of more than 67,000 books, large print books, magazines, jigsaw puzzles, e-books, audiobooks, and DVD's, which can be viewed online or at the libraries. The libraries also offer bird watching kits, e-readers, tablets, fishing rods and tackle, kids' lifejacket rentals, and LCD projector and screen rentals. The Kenora Public Library offers its patrons access to a fax, printer, scanner, photocopier, laminator, and microfilm.



68,692

Patrons visited
the library



85,083

Items checked out
(books, e-books,
audiobooks, videos
and more!)



55%

Print books
checked out



44,834

E-resources and
databases accessed



109

Service visits/
book deliveries

Learning through magic

The Library hosted two magic shows during the Winter Weekend of Wonder. The magic shows went beyond entertainment, they were an invitation into curiosity. Magic sparks imagination, encourages critical thinking, and draws families into shared experiences. Through events such as these, the Library creates welcoming spaces that make learning fun.

Reading, crafting, and caring

In the spring, the Kenora Public Library partnered with St. John Paul II School's Grade 2 class for an intergenerational storytime at Pinecrest Long Term Care Home. The visit featured Easter stories and crafts shared by students and residents, creating a meaningful exchange across generations. The Easter Bunny made a special appearance, adding delight to the occasion. This initiative reflects the library's commitment to promoting early literacy through expressive reading, strengthening community partnerships, reducing social isolation among seniors, and building empathy and civic engagement in students. By serving as a connection between schools and long-term care, the Library team extends literacy beyond its walls, fostering belonging and joy.



Building community through puzzle swaps

The Library hosted three puzzle swaps in 2025. The puzzle swap events aligns with the Library's key priorities by providing free recreational materials for all ages, boosting community engagement beyond traditional book borrowing, and supporting sustainability through reuse and waste reduction. It's a high-impact program that requires minimal staff time and no budget, reinforcing the library's role as a community commons where resources are shared and connections are built.



Parks, pages, and play

Fresh Air Fridays extended beyond the Library walls this summer, bringing early literacy and nature play to local parks and outdoor spaces. By pairing reading with time in nature, the library supports healthy development, physical activity, and strong family connections. The program encourages early literacy skills through interactive reading, supports child development through movement and sensory play, promotes outdoor wellness and mental health, and reduces barriers by meeting families where they are.

Social, cognitive, and community benefits on the Mahjong mindset

The Library's Learn to Play Mahjong event invites community members to pick up a new skill while building connections. This beginner-friendly series introduces participants to the rules, strategy, and traditions of Mahjong in a welcoming, supportive environment, and it has evolved into a weekly program. The sessions encourage social interaction and new friendships, provide cognitive stimulation and lifelong learning, and strengthen the library's role as a social hub. By offering instructional sessions, the Library supports active aging and lifelong intellectual engagement, especially valuable for adults and seniors.



Cozy Christmas community celebration

2025's Cozy Christmas was well-attended. This was a joint initiative between the Library and EarlyON that offered a free, welcoming pajama party for all families. The event ensured that everyone could participate in a festive celebration without financial barriers and provided a safe, inclusive community space. By hosting this shared holiday experience, the library reinforced its role as a place where traditions are celebrated and community spirit thrives.

Keewatin Branch ready to reopen in January 2026

The Keewatin Branch closed in June 2024 due to roof structural issues, prompting the City and Council to prioritize safety while seeking sustainable library and senior programming solutions.

While the branch was closed, The City's Library team stood by our community by offering ongoing access to library services through the Kenora branch, digital resources, and bringing the library to the people through regular book pop-ups and book deliveries.

By the end of 2025, a collaborative effort among the City's Library and Infrastructure and Operations teams, the Keewatin Senior Centre, and the Public Library Board was already underway to reopen in January 2026. This marked a new charter for the branch, with a roof replacement and new windows to restore the building's full function and vitality for the community.



RECREATION AND CULTURE

The Muse



Nestled in the heart of Kenora, The Muse features two facilities dedicated to Kenora's history, art, and culture. Together the Lake of the Woods Museum and the Douglas Family Art Centre form The Muse.

The Lake of the Woods Museum is a must-see for history enthusiasts, locals, and visitors. With exhibits designed for all ages, the Museum offers a captivating journey through the rich history of Kenora and the Lake of the Woods the region.

The Douglas Family Art Centre is a vibrant space that presents opportunities for guests of all ages to learn about art, and for the arts community to share ideas and develop their talents. The Art Centre produces art exhibitions, and hosts travelling exhibits, events, workshops, and art classes. Whether you're an art enthusiast, history buff, curious tourist, a visitor seeking to explore local culture, or someone looking to discover great art, The Muse provides an enriching and inspiring experience in the heart of Kenora.



14,054

Visitors



368

Memberships



848

Participated in
School
Programming



824

Participated in
Adult Programming



1,127

Participated in
Children & Family
Programming

2,799

Participated in programming held at The Muse

Including sessions at the Lake of the Woods Museum and the Douglas Family Art Centre. Programs featured tours, multi-week classes, workshops, speaker series, free admission days, and more.

School programming

30%

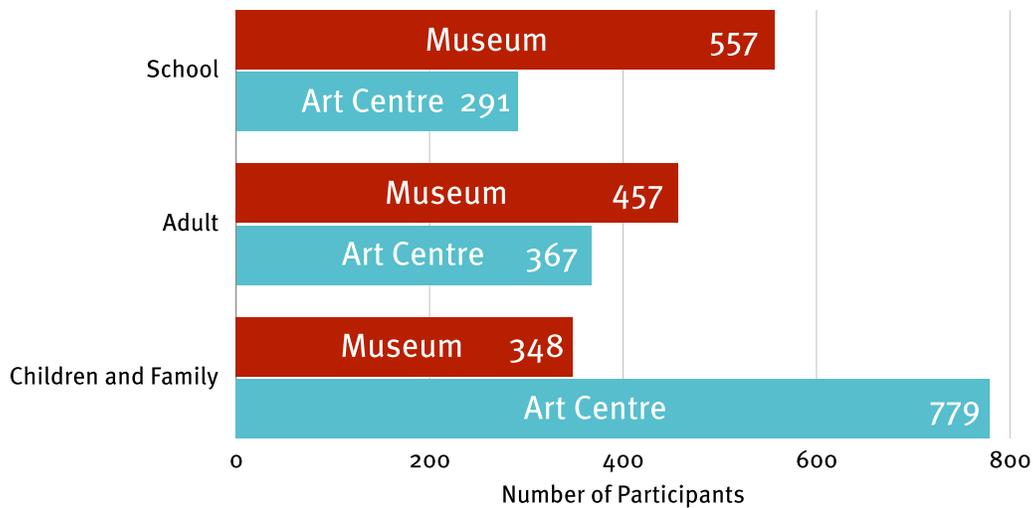
Adult programming

29%

Children and family programming

40%

2025 Program Participation



Best collaboration nomination

We loved working with Triple P.L.A.Y. to expand access to The Muse through sponsored attendance days and programming. This partnership led to a nomination for Best Collaboration from Galleries Ontario / Ontario Galleries.

Most attended Christmas Open House to date

On November 21, 2025, The Muse hosted its annual Christmas Open House, held in conjunction with the Main Street Christmas Tree Lighting. Attendees gathered before and after the tree lighting to warm up at the Open House, enjoying sweet treats, festive crafts, and a scavenger hunt. The Christmas Open House attracted nearly 1,000 visitors across both sites, marking our largest turnout ever.



History passport program

In June, the Museum launched a History Passport program. Stands containing information about important days in local history are spread throughout the building. Each stand has a stamp with the date. Patrons travel through time to each station, collecting stamps for their passport. When complete, visitors present their passport at the front desk for a prize and a final stamp that reads “Official Lake of the Woods Time Traveller.”



Gail Konantz Studio

The Gail Konantz Studio was busy most days with artists and makers. The space serves as a classroom, programming space, production studio, and art-themed clubhouse. It is named in honour of Art Educator Gail Konantz, a long-time supporter and early champion of the Art Centre project. In 2025, it hosted 131 programs, including eight multi-week classes.



“I thoroughly enjoyed this class. Uncomplicated enough just to sit relax and create.”

Customer feedback



“The Muse was recommended by many and did not disappoint. Ask for the history passport and listen to the Youtube clips!”

Customer feedback



A summer reunion, unveiling art by W.J. Phillips

In the summer of 2025, The Douglas Family Art Centre added the watercolour Summer Idyll by W.J. Phillips to its collection. This piece was previously unknown. The woodcut print based on this piece is considered to be one of W.J. Phillips' masterworks.



Photo credit: Kim Pirie Milko

Economic Development and Tourism

The Economic Development and Tourism Department is a passionate team that loves Kenora and works every day to make it better for residents, businesses, organizations, and visitors.

The Economic Development team help Kenora thrive by attracting new investment, supporting our local businesses, and helping to expand opportunities for workers. Focusing on key sectors such as tourism, small business, construction, health care and manufacturing, their work includes business retention and expansion, investment attraction, workforce development, downtown revitalization, and connecting owners with grants, tools and resources that foster entrepreneurship, growth, local employment and innovation.

Economic Development



Kenora's Economic Development team is where opportunity flows. They help to shape Kenora's bold economic future — one that uplifts every resident, sparks big ideas, and opens doors for all. Their mission is to fuel innovation, empower businesses and build big. The team is eager to help entrepreneurs start or expand their business or relocate to and develop in Kenora. The team provides business planning resources, local introductions, site-location support, data and research, due diligence assistance and connections to business leaders, funders and economic development support services.



365

Drop-in business visits



144

Scheduled business consultations



28

Events hosted
(workshops,
info sessions or
photo opportunities)



5

Giant popsicles

2025 Marketing Canada Award

The Economic Developers Association of Canada awarded Kenora's Economic Development team with a 2025 Marketing Canada Award for its 2024 Holiday Trail Campaign. The Kenora Holiday Trail won in the Promotional Event category, which recognizes efforts that promote economic development, tourism opportunities, attractions, and services in local communities. Kenora was entered into the mid-sized category for economic development budgets of \$200,000 to \$600,000.



Kool Kenora popsicle parade

In summer 2025, the City's Economic Development and Tourism Department, with Harbourtown BIZ, brought back the popular 'Glad You Are Here' summer installations. Five new popsicle-shaped displays from WKNDRS popped up throughout Kenora, adding vibrant, three-dimensional art to boost the downtown foot traffic. The displays invited residents and visitors to explore, celebrate community spirit, and enjoy fun, family-friendly photo moments. A Kool Kenora social media contest accompanied the promotion to spread the word.

Support the growth and retention of local businesses and emerging sectors

In 2025, Council approved to support eight Community Improvement Plan (CIP) project proposals, with a total municipal investment of \$125,000 back into our community. These CIPs included various grants to support development in the Harbourtown Centre, Keewatin, and the Former Mill Site, including fee rebates, tax increment grants, façade and signage improvements, accessibility upgrades, and more. A review of the CIP was completed in 2025 with the new plan anticipated to take effect in 2026.



Kenora's housing needs defined with evidence-based findings

In November the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) Summative Report was presented to Council. The report provides a precise, local view of Kenora's housing supply, affordability, and future needs. This data-rich analysis now serves as an evidence base to guide future planning decisions, strengthen funding applications, and drive growth in housing for our community.

In spring 2025, Tim Welch Consulting was hired to conduct a comprehensive HNA for Kenora. The assessment analyzed demographics, economic trends, housing stock, government policies, incentives, and data from the City's June 2025 housing need surveys.



2

**Community surveys
launched**
(full-time and seasonal residents,
business owners)



797

Survey responses



13

**Initial actions
identified**



Record-breaking Holiday Trail 2025

The City of Kenora's Economic Development and Tourism Department was thrilled to celebrate record-breaking results for the 2025 Holiday Trail. Building on the momentum from last winter's historic 2024 campaign, which earned the City a Marketing Canada Award from the Economic Developers Association of Canada, the 2025 Holiday Trail surpassed 2024's award-winning numbers.

The 2025 campaign saw:

- 143 booklets sold, a 19% increase over 2024
- 746 vouchers redeemed at participating businesses, up 16% from the previous year
- Four new participating businesses
- 20 local shops that participated



Kenora's Youth were 'Takin' Care of Business' at the Youth Enterprise Day Camp

August's Youth Enterprise Day Camp, facilitated by the City's Economic Development team, was a week-long program that brought 13 dedicated youths, ages 9 to 12, together to learn about entrepreneurship, meet local business owners, and have some fun along the way.

Fuelled by the sounds of Bachman-Turner Overdrive's "Takin' Care of Business", the camp's theme song, participants were introduced to the fundamentals of entrepreneurship through interactive activities, local business tours, and hands-on project development. Each camper worked through the elements of their own business plan including budgeting, marketing, and meeting with a Loans Officer at Northern Credit Union. The campers worked to develop and create their products and had the opportunity to showcase their businesses at a mini pop-up market under the Janel Contracting Pavilion.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Northwest Business Centre



The Northwest Business Centre (NWBC) is the most northerly of the 53 Small Business Enterprise Centre's in the Province of Ontario. Located in Kenora, this Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) offers programs and services to entrepreneurs of all ages and stages across the two districts of Kenora and Rainy River. It serves as a resource with a mandate to empower entrepreneurs. The NWBC provides high quality assistance and support and has played a key role in the creation of new businesses, expansion of existing businesses and the creation of new jobs – contributing to the economic growth of the district.

Services provided include free and confidential support in the development of business plans, business start-ups, product development, government, taxation and financial direction, seminars, resource materials, mentoring and networking.

The Northwest Business Centre is funded by the Government of Ontario and the City of Kenora.

Starter Company Plus and Summer Company are two signature programs delivered by the NWBC on behalf of the Government of Ontario. In 2025, eleven Starter Company Plus grants were awarded, six of which went to businesses in Kenora. One Summer Company grant was also issued and awarded to a Kenora-based business.



686

Inquiries



227

Events attended



140

In-depth business
consultations
(62% Kenora)



40

Business start-ups
and expansions
(75% Kenora)



51

Jobs created
(80% Kenora)

Tourism



The Tourism team showcases Kenora's rich culture, stunning nature, and warm hospitality year-round, inviting visitors and reminding residents why Kenora is so special. The team manages the Lake of the Woods Discovery Centre and coordinates a range of signature events including the popular Matiowski Farmers' Markets, Movies in the Park, Winter Weekend of Wonder. The team also helps community event organizers in facilitating various events at the Jarnel Contracting Pavilion. By working closely with Economic Development, other City departments, and local businesses and organizations, Tourism promotes and crafts unique experiences that celebrate community pride and creates unforgettable moments for residents and visitors alike.



20,390

Visits to the Lake
of the Woods
Discovery Centre



23

Markets
(17 Summer and 4 Winter
Matiowski Farmers' Markets,
and 2 Open Air Markets)



33

Events hosted under
the Jarnel
Contracting Pavilion



\$45,000

Tourism grant
funding awarded

The Globe and Mail shines a light on Kenora

In partnership with Destination Ontario, Tourism Kenora hosted Catherine Dawson, a journalist from The Globe and Mail, in July 2024. Catherine, along with her brother, explored Kenora before spending a day aboard the Grace Anne II. Kenora was one of the destinations featured in Catherine's article, *Hidden Canada 2025: Ten travel destinations around the country to explore this summer*, published May 13, 2025.



“Road trippers pushing across the country should break up the drive in Kenora.”

“Soak up the local kitsch by taking a selfie with the 12-metre tall Husky the Muskie statue and enjoy the town's excellent local cafes.”

Catherine Dawson, The Globe and Mail



Building tourism through grants

In 2025, Tourism completed two intakes of Tourism Grant Applicants in May and September. A total of 19 applications were received from 12 organizations, with funding requests totalling \$83,289. The Tourism and Economic Development Department, in conjunction with a board member of the Kenora Hospitality Association (KHA), acted as the review committee.

Applications were evaluated against an internal scoring matrix, with criteria including seasonality, proposed event attendance, sustainability plan, the impact of funding on event success, the event's potential to attract tourists, and the proposed marketing plan. 13 applicants were approved, receiving a total of \$45,000.



Parks, picnics, and popcorn

Tourism Kenora hosted two Movies in the Park events this summer, on July 13 and August 17, drawing 150 and 250 attendees respectively. Screening films at local parks and beaches allowed families to picnic, let kids play on the playground, and enjoy the outdoors while watching a free family-friendly movie.

Mosswood Adventure partnership

New and in addition to the traditional seasonal marketing campaigns, Tourism partnered with Mosswood Adventures and Rentals to create a mixture of short-form (15 second), medium-form (30 second), and long-form (60 seconds +) video content showcasing Kenora attractions, activities and local businesses.

These posts were created in collaboration with Tourism's social media team and directed viewers to [visitkenora.ca](https://www.visitkenora.ca).

In addition to the video content, a [blog series](#) was produced for the website, which included four installments, one for each season.



Kenora's market momentum, how markets connect the community throughout the year

The City is proud to be part of the Farmers' Market of Ontario. The Matiowski Farmers' Market has steadily grown in size and popularity since its inception in 2005 and is now one of the largest markets in Northwestern Ontario. Visitors flock to the Jarnel Contracting Pavilion from June to October, gathering weekly on Wednesdays to enjoy a variety of farm-fresh meats, locally grown fresh produce, baked goods, dips and spreads, local artwork, jewellery, and unique artisan creations. The summer Matiowski Farmers' Markets average around 4,000 weekly visitors at its peak times.



In addition to the popular summer series, the Tourism team hosted four additional winter markets in 2025. The winter Matiowski Farmers' Markets were held in February, March, November, and December, drawing an average of 300 to 400 attendees per market. Each market featured more than 30 participating vendors.

Kenora's Main Street comes alive in July and August with the Open Air Markets, an outdoor, family-friendly event. The markets feature more than 35 vendors, food trucks, and a variety of activities, including live music, mobile curling, and dedicated kid zones. It's a vibrant, downtown-focused gathering that connects crafters, local businesses, locals, and visitors.



These markets knit Kenora's community together by providing inviting, accessible gathering spaces that celebrate local producers, makers, and talent year round. The addition and success of the winter markets extend this connection beyond the summer months, creating a four-season destination that keeps residents and visitors engaged, supporting local businesses, and fostering a shared sense of pride in our local identity. By offering opportunities to shop local, enjoy community programming, and mingle with neighbours, the markets strengthen economic vitality, encourage collaboration among crafters and entrepreneurs, and deepen social ties across all seasons.





Fire and Emergency Services

Kenora Fire and Emergency Services provides fire protection services for the residents of the City of Kenora and neighbouring communities. Fire and Emergency Services has three fire stations and a fleet of emergency vehicles. Kenora Fire and Emergency Services wants the community to be fire safe and is proud to provide burn permits, fire safety training, inspections, and prevention education.



Fire and Emergency Services



14

Full-time Staff



44

Paid-per-Call Firefighters



531

Total calls in 2025



1,661

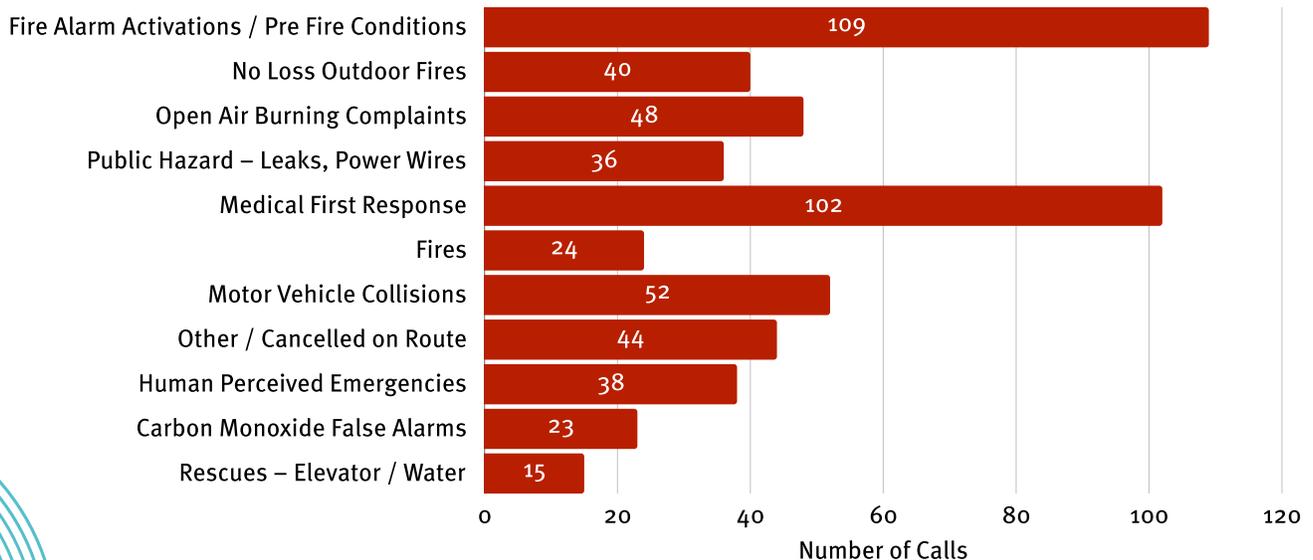
Hours of training



14

Occupancy inspections/re-inspections

2025 Call Volume by Type



Wildfire Preparedness Day and Emergency Preparedness Week

In May 2025, Kenora Fire and Emergency Services held a free community BBQ at Fire Station One for Wildfire Preparedness Day and Emergency Preparedness Week. During the event the Fire and Emergency Services team educated the public on the FireSmart™ Canada program, sharing essential tips for wildfire prevention. Fire team was glad to partner with the Kenora OPP and members of Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services, whose collaboration strengthened this impactful event.



In 2025, the Fire team was excited to introduce a new fire tanker 1, built on a Freightliner two-door chassis. It's equipped with a Waterous CLVK 500 GPM pump and a 1,700 Imperial-gallon CoPoly water tank.

This new water tanker boosts the ability to deliver water when hydrants are not available, strengthening firefighting operations across the city and surrounding areas.

Fire Prevention Week Open House

October 5 to 11, 2025, was Fire Prevention Week. Fire and Emergency Services teamed up with the Office of the Fire Marshal and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week (FPW), to promote the year's campaign, "Charge into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home." It highlighted how important it is to buy, charge, and recycle lithium-ion batteries safely. In addition to Fire Prevention Week, the public was invited to the Fire Hall Open House on October 11 to meet local firefighters or enquire about steps required to becoming a firefighter.

New five-year collective agreement

In December, the City announced that it had reached a new five-year collective agreement with the Kenora Professional Firefighters Association (KPFPA). This agreement was achieved through a collaborative and respectful negotiation process.

Commitment to training and emergency preparedness

The City's Fire and Emergency Services team is dedicated to training and emergency preparedness. In 2025, our firefighters logged 1,661 hours of training across a variety of topics, strengthening their readiness to serve. Preparedness is key. Ongoing practice and planning ensure that the team is ready to respond quickly and effectively in any situation. Safety remains the team's top priority as they train, protect, and stand ready to serve the community with professionalism and care.



Sharing knowledge with Kenora's community emergency service providers

Fire and Emergency Services partnered with the Ontario Fire College to deliver Exterior Fire Attack training locally, positioning Kenora as a regional leader. This initiative improves access, reduces barriers, and strengthens training across Northwestern Ontario while enhancing our role as a hub for high-quality fire service development.

The team also hosted a hands-on auto extrication training day. Paramedic students who participated expressed great interest and appreciation for the opportunity to work alongside City Fire and Emergency Services. This event highlighted our commitment to public education and professional development within the emergency services field, and reinforced strong collaborations across our community.



Quick action saves lives in early morning apartment fire

During the early hours of November 13, 2025, Kenora Fire and Emergency Services responded to reports of smoke in a Kenora residence. Upon arriving at the scene, crews saw visible smoke and swiftly upgraded the response to a working fire. Firefighters immediately rescued a child at the entrance and a wheelchair-bound resident who was unable to evacuate. A third occupant found in the room of origin, who sustained some burn injuries, was safely removed and transferred to an ambulance for medical attention. The fire was rapidly extinguished and contained to the room of origin. No other occupants were found at the scene.



Planning and Building Services

The Planning and Building Services Department is comprised of Planning, Building Inspection, and Development Services. The team plays an important role in shaping how our community grows. The department reviews land development applications, provides advice on land use, aids in future developments, and issues building permits for new projects across the community.

Planning and Building Services Department facilitates development by processing applications for land division (subdivision, condominiums and consents), land use consultation, and the issuing of building permits. The team also works with the Committee of Adjustment, which makes independent decisions on certain planning applications, and with City Council on applications for amendments to the City of Kenora Official Plan, the Zoning By-law and other applications under the Planning Act.

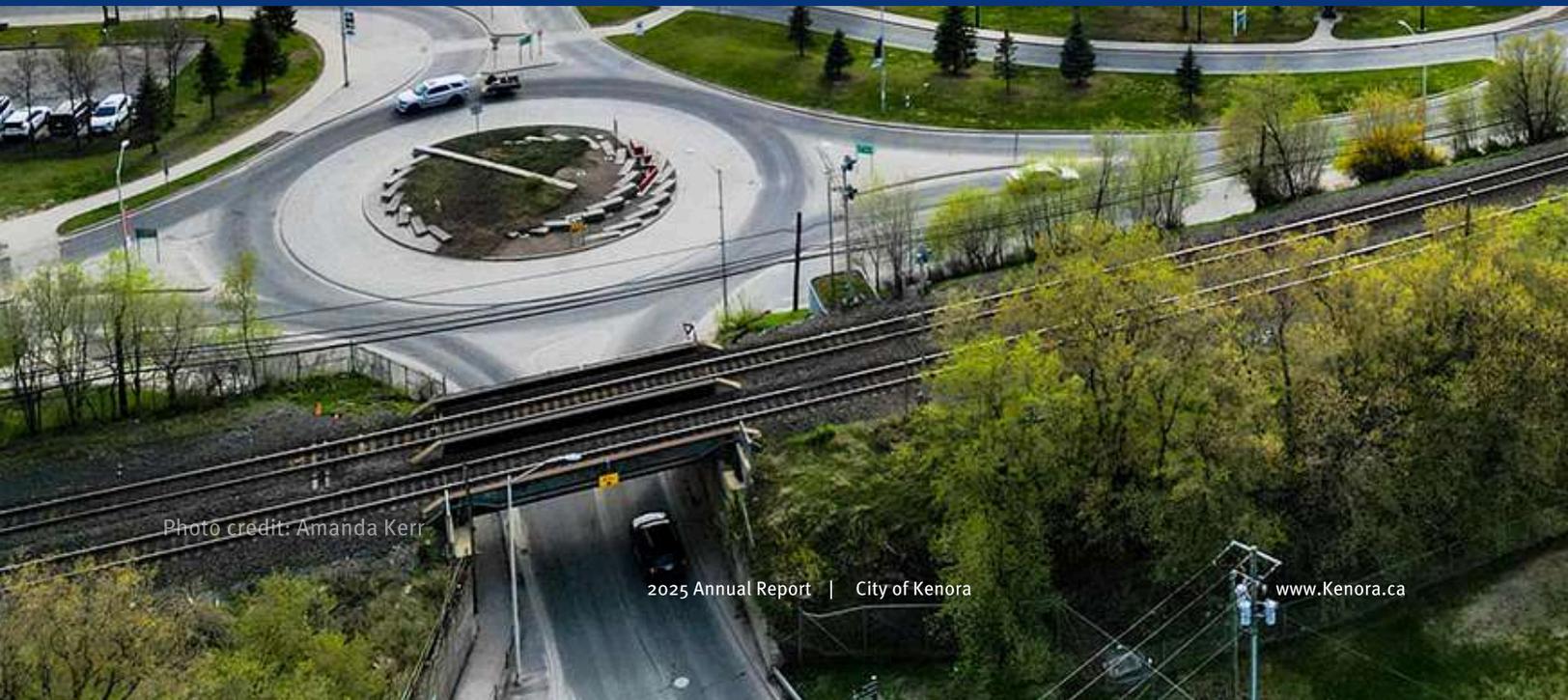


Photo credit: Amanda Kerr

Planning and Building Services



907
Building
inspections



174
Building
permits issued



17
Minor variance
applications



28
Building and zoning
compliance letters



9
Environmental
site information



5
Land division
applications

City's Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw

The City of Kenora's Official Plan provides a vision for the future growth of the Kenora and guides use of land and physical development over the long-term. A significant planning document, the Official Plan also outlines the municipality's position on:

- Where new housing, industry, offices, shops, and other land uses are to be located
- What services like roads, watermains, sewers, parks, and schools will be needed
- When, and in what order, parts of the City will grow
- Protecting agricultural land, aggregates, natural and cultural heritage resources, and ground and surface water
- Community improvement initiatives

Engagement activities carried out included Council's visioning session, a public open house, and an online community survey. Responses to the survey were strong with 545 community members participating.



40
Residential units
created
(permits issued)



124
Residential units
completed
(permits closed)

Permits issued refers to new dwelling units that were approved for construction in 2025, these do not include foundation permits. Permits closed are new dwelling units that were completed in 2025 and received an occupancy permit.

Making online planning application forms easier, faster, and more accessible

In 2025, new fillable [digital planning application forms](#) were made available online to make it easier for residents and developers to apply for planning approvals. These new forms improve accessibility, reduce errors, and help speed up the application process.



Black Sturgeon Lakes water testing

The Planning and Building Services team continues to collaborate with Grand Council Treaty #3 Territorial Planning Unit to provide water quality testing for [Black Sturgeon Lakes](#), conducting water tests in the Spring and Summer of 2025 and a report presented to Council in Fall 2025.

This continued partnership, initiated in 2024, underscores the City's shared commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable lake management.



Launch of a Secondary Dwelling Unit Guide for homeowners

This guide walks homeowners through the process of planning and building a [Secondary Dwelling Unit \(SDU\)](#) in Kenora. It explains how to determine if your lot is suitable, outlines zoning and parking requirements, and highlights important considerations such as lot coverage, setbacks, and easements. Included is step-by-step guidance on building permits, inspections, and Ontario Building Code requirements. The guide includes information from minimum room sizes and ceiling heights to fire safety, ventilation, and plumbing.

Strong year for local development

The number of building permits increased by 10% from 2024, while the total value of construction rose by 57%, reflecting a rise in large-scale projects. As a result, revenue from building permits grew by 47% and building inspections increased by 46%, keeping our team busy throughout the year.



Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Department is comprised of the City Clerk's Office, Bylaw Enforcement, Provincial Offences, Indigenous Relations, Customer Services, Communications, Community Safety and Well-Being, and IT services.

The Corporate Services Department provides our residents, businesses, and broader community with exceptional service that maximizes the resources provided to us by our ratepayers. We are a full-service delivery department and provide customer service support to all divisions within the organization. Our service delivery is the first point of contact connecting customers to other key divisions such as roads, water and wastewater, parks, and trails, planning and building. The Corporate Services team takes great pride in the services they deliver and continual improvement to modernization and streamlined service delivery is a priority.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Clerk's Office

The City Clerk's office acts as the background of local government, which is a statutory, administrative hub that ensures local government compliance with provincial laws. The Clerk's office manages council meetings and records, conducts municipal elections, ensures transparency by adhering to open meeting laws and provides key public services like issuing marriage licences and processing Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.



43

Marriage ceremonies
performed



16

Freedom of information
requests processed



67

Requests for
commissioner of oaths



178

Bylaws written



19

Committee of the Whole meetings
(including special)

A Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting is an informal, conversational-style meeting comprised of all members of Council that allows for in-depth discussion and recommendations on issues before being brought to a formal vote at a Council meeting. No decisions outside of procedural (adopting minutes and going into closed session) may be made at these meetings.



15

Council meetings
(including special)

A Council meeting is the formal session where decisions are made, bylaws are adopted, and resolutions are officially passed by Council. These are the meetings that bind the decisions of Council.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Customer Service

The Customer Service team is located at City Hall and is available to the public to aid in navigating Kenora's municipal services. From permits and payments to inquiries and concerns, the team is dedicated to delivering courteous and prompt assistance. Customer Service is open Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays. The team is able to assist people in-person or by phone at 807-467-2000. For after-hours help, call 807-467-2080.



73,964

Pieces of mail
processed in the
mail room



20,439

Water and sewer
e-bills sent



\$143,149.50

In coins sorted
and rolled



1,052

Licensing and
permits issued



86

Marriage
licences



34

Lottery
licences



269

Burial
permits



56

Business
licences



294

Dog tags



53

Taxi
licences



260

Burn
permits

3,746

Total Service Requests Logged

Service requests are customer driven through contacting the City of Kenora via phone, email, walk-in, and [online](#).

1,866 request logged by a Customer Service representative

50%

An additional 1,091 logged internally by other departments

29%

789 customers self-reported through the online Request for Service form

21%

CORPORATE SERVICES

Bylaw Enforcement

Bylaws help keep our community safe, beautiful, and a desirable place to live, work and play. The Bylaw Enforcement team addresses community enforcement issues including animal control, parking, property standards, and bylaw complaints and inquiries.



903

Total Bylaw requests logged

The most popular requests were:



32%
Parking



25%
Animal control



15%
Property standards/
tidy yard



13%
Bylaw
complaints



4,397

Parking infractions issued

Tickets are issued for violations of the Municipal Traffic and Parking Bylaw, such as parking at an expired meter, parking contrary to signs, and parking in no parking zones.



15

**Part I Provincial Offence
Notice Fines**

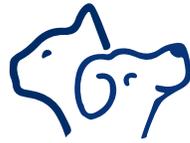
Tickets issued for non-criminal violations of provincial laws or municipal bylaws (e.g., noise/animal control). Bylaw officers issued: six animal control fines, five yard maintenance fines, three feeding of wildlife fines, and one illegal dumping fine.



8

**Part III Provincial Offence
Informations/ Summons**

Charges issued for more serious non-criminal provincial offences that initiates a formal court process requiring the defendant to appear before a justice of peace. Bylaw officers issued: seven property standards charges, two animal control charges, and one fence bylaw charge.



95

Animals impounded

In 2025, 47% of the stray_pets found were dogs, and 53% were cats. Officers may be able to connect a dog with its owner if the owner has a valid dog_licence. Officers will bring unclaimed pets to the City pound until they can be returned to their owner, or adopted by It's A Dog Life or The Kenora Cat Shelter.



12

Flag raisings

The City of Kenora supports community groups by hosting flag raising ceremonies at City Hall. Charitable and non-profit organizations can request a flag raising. By flying community flags, we celebrate Kenora's diversity, inclusivity, and what is important to the community.

Major property standards clean-up

Often large property standards files can take longer to complete and is often before the courts multiple times before compliance is reached. Once orders are issued or decisions of court are complete, the City has authority to conduct the clean-up to bring a property into compliance, and costs are applied to the property owner's tax roll.

Building pathways into policing careers

In January 2025, a co-op student joined the City and became the summer bylaw officer, assisting citywide enforcement from January to August. The summer focus was on parking and docking enforcement due to increased downtown activity and boat-launch traffic, allowing for full-time officers to concentrate on property standards and other bylaw calls. Since amalgamation, the City has hired summer students who have then pursued policing as a career pathway. Four former bylaw summer students have advanced into policing careers in recent years.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Communications

The Communications department handles a range of duties, including developing and implementing engagement and communication strategies, managing media inquiries, overseeing the City's corporate brand identity, and managing the City's corporate social media accounts. The team also coordinates traditional advertising with local newspapers and radio, engages in day-to-day communications, public notices, photography, develops and maintains the Kenora.ca website, and collaborates with departments to keep information about projects, events, and services up to date.



12

Surveys launched



46

Media releases



148

Public notices issued



142

The City Compass eNewsletters



2,437

New social media followers



43

Newspaper memos

From posts to participation, 2025 digital engagement success

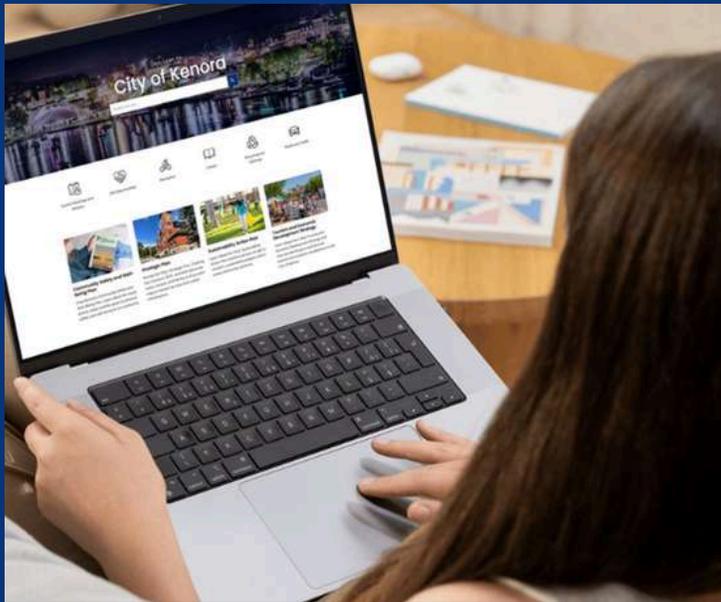
In 2025, the City's Communication team ramped up its communications efforts. The Communications Department launched 12 surveys in 2025, a 300% increase from the previous year, indicating the City's commitment to gather more formal public feedback.

There was also a rise in the number of public notices, media releases, and social media posts published, showing more frequent and proactive communication.



On the City’s corporate Facebook page, engagement grew by 55.3%, and link clicks increased by 186%, indicating residents were more interested in visiting Kenora.ca to learn more. Facebook page visits rose by 51%, and gained 2,074 new followers, an 85.3% increase compared to 2024, reflecting a larger and more engaged audience.

While Facebook remains the dominant platform, Instagram continued to see steady growth in followers, views, and engagement throughout 2025, signalling a healthy diversification of social media presence.



Website revamp with accessible design and enhanced navigation

An updated Kenora.ca launched September 2025. Communications collaborated with department leads to update content, redesign, and reconfigure more than 300 webpages.

The site is AODA compliant and upgraded to WCAG 2.0 Level AA. The homepage includes a rotating feature banner, a “What’s Happening” event calendar, news, and a Public Engagement Corner (lower right) for surveys, town halls, and open houses, helping the public find information quickly.

A prominent “I Want To” button in the top right provides quick access to common needs. The new homepage also features a “Stay in the know” section, inviting visitors to sign up for updates on topics such as media releases, public notices, road closures, holiday hours, snow removal, water advisories, Council news, and the City Compass eNewsletter.

Branding and awareness of Kenora’s Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

Communications supported the [Community Safety & Well-Being \(CSWB\) Plan](#) by formatting the 128-page document, creating a brand identity, including logo, iconography, and brand guide, and updates to the CSWB Plan webpage. This separate branding approach aimed to foster community ownership and participation.



Engaging community feedback

The Communications department increased its survey activity in 2025 by partnering with multiple City departments and committees to create, launch, and collect data efficiently. The department launched 12 surveys throughout 2025:

- Backyard Composter Program Registration Sign-up
- Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Prospective Applicant Survey
- Community Survey Official Planning, Zoning Bylaw, & CIP Survey
- Swim Lessons Feedback
- Economic Development Surveys
- Municipal Accommodation Tax Survey
- 2 Housing Needs Survey
- Backyard Composter Program Fall Evaluation
- Event Hosting Survey - Jarnel Contracting Pavilion, Thistle Pavilion
- Spring Recreation Programming Feedback
- Survey - Fall Recreation Programming Feedback

These surveys reached primary audiences through a mix of channels, including the corporate website, social media, eNewsletters, TV displays in City buildings, and media releases, with Communications amplifying the message. These surveys show how cross-department collaboration can gather timely public feedback that informs planning and helps improve our community.

Oh Christmas tree

The Communications Department launched a robust Christmas campaign to showcase Kenora's community pride, collaboration, and holiday spirit. The initiatives highlighted the City, Council, local businesses, and partners' festive engagement and togetherness.

To amplify the efforts of the City's many departments and community partners involved in the annual Main Street Christmas Tree Lighting, Communications supported the event on the Kenora.ca homepage, public notices, social media, and a special newspaper thank you message.

The department also produced an arrival video for the Main Street Christmas Tree, which became the year's top-performing Facebook post, receiving:

- 115 new followers
- 110,027 views, up 78% from last year's video.
- Reaching 80,520 unique viewers, up 434% from 2024

2025's Main Street Christmas Tree Lighting event was one of the highest attendances in recent years.



Communications' role with Committees of Council

Communications provides extensive support to Committees of Council, with two notable campaigns taking place in 2025: Sustainability Advisory Committee's Composting Campaign and Accessibility Committee's AccessAbility Week.



Working together, City Communications and the Deputy Clerk put great effort into 2025's AccessAbility Week campaign. A key component was the coordination of a National AccessAbility Week Flag Design Contest, alongside substantial social media support that highlighted the student flag contest, Easter Seals Red Shirt Day, repurposing previously produced professional video content on Kenora's accessible lake living, and accessible parking throughout Kenora with a map.

Kenora Residents!
Want to try composting?

City of Kenora
KENORA

Coming soon!
Backyard composters for purchase
\$10 per unit

- Only 100 available
- First come, first served
- Limit one per household

Online Registration Opens on March 12 at 10 a.m.
Save the link!
surveymonkey.com/r/trycomposting

Proudly Supported by the City of Kenora's Sustainability Advisory Committee

Communications helped the Sustainability Advisory Committee launch a backyard composting program. Communications supported this program by publishing a media release to build excitement and drive participation, created the signup survey, launched eNewsletters, and social media that yielded high engagement. When the compost units became available, the signup list reached capacity in minutes! Due to demand, the Committee ordered an extra 100 composters to ensure all interested and eligible could participate. Additionally, Communications created a fact sheet and display boards for the Committee's composting open house.

Communications Plan and Strategy

The Corporate Communications Plan and Strategy are designed to strengthen both internal and external communications across the City. This plan builds upon the City's current communication foundation, formalizing and expanding efforts, while also introducing new initiatives to further enhance our corporate communications. The goal of the Plan is to establish coordinated and effective communication that meets the needs of Council, City administration, and the public. The Strategy is a complementary document that outlines specific goals, objectives, and actions.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Community Safety and Well-Being



In 2025, the City completed Goal 3.2.2 of the corporation's ***Strategic Plan – Charting Our Course*** ***Strategic Plan***, which was to develop and adopt a Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan. Work on the CSWB Plan started in 2023 with the formation of the Crime Prevention and Community Well-Being (CPCWB) Advisory Committee, made up of community members and agency representatives appointed by Council, and hiring of a Community Safety and Well-Being Coordinator and Plan Consultant. Approved by Council in March 2025, the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan was created to uplift Kenora as a place where everyone can live, grow, and play in harmony.



48

Actions in the Plan



7

Priority areas in the Plan



15

Recommendations in the Plan



120+

In attendance at open house



19

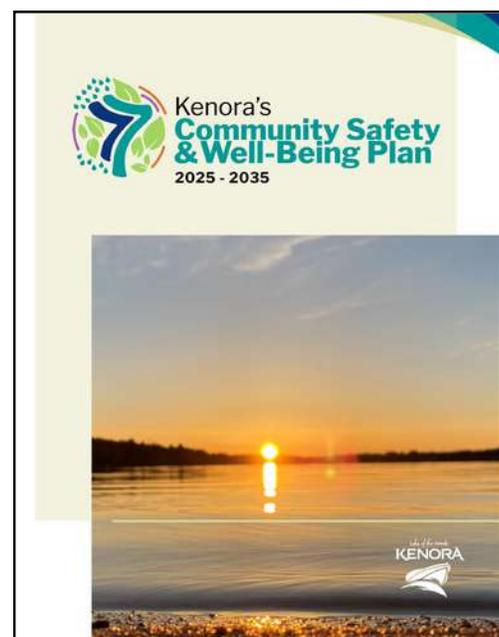
Actions started by end of 2025

Kenora's 10 Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

Strategic Plan, Goal 3.2.2

On March 18, 2025, City Council officially approved the anticipated Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (CSWB Plan). This 10-year CSWB Plan is the result of a collaborative process, where the voices of our diverse community have come together to shape a framework for action and change.

Building on the incredible work already underway in our city, the CSWB Plan embodies a shared vision for everyone to live, grow, and play in harmony. The CSWB Plan is a joint effort involving the City, community organizations, and residents. Its successful implementation depends on a continuous collective commitment, emphasizing that ensuring the safety and well-being of our community is a shared responsibility for all.





Crime Prevention and Community Well-Being (CPCWB) Advisory Committee

Transition to an Implementation Committee

While the CPCWB Advisory Committee was responsible for developing Kenora's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, Council approved its transition to the [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Implementation Committee \(CSWBP-IC\)](#), as recommended by the CSWB Plan.

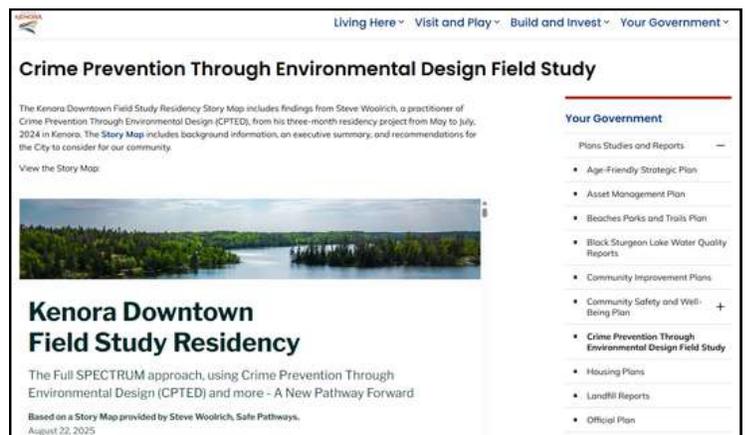
Council selected members for the Implementation Committee, consisting of a mix of new and former advisory committee members, in order to implement the Plan's recommendations and actions and to provide support for Council on community safety and well-being in Kenora. This new committee continues the efforts of the CPCWB Advisory Committee.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design field study, mapping out the future of Kenora

Action 3.5

During 2024, a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) residency was conducted by Safe Pathways, which focused on Kenora's downtown.

In June 2025 the detailed field study and story map were presented to Council and shared online for public viewing. The [story map report](#) gives a detailed account of the consultants' observations and recommendations.



In-house CSWB Plan brand development

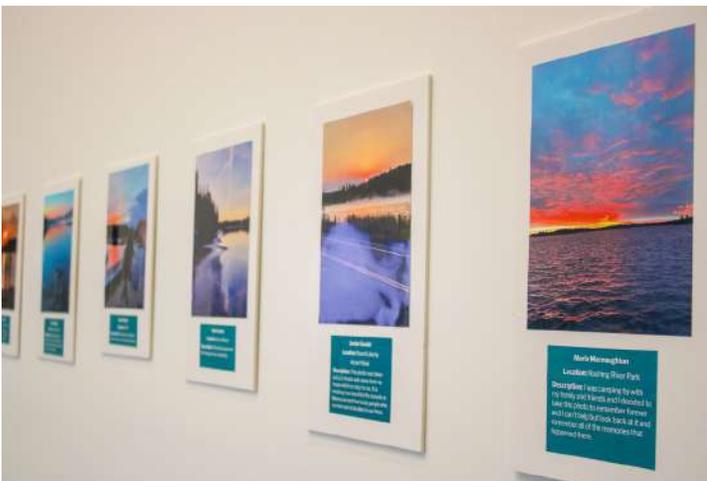
In the spring, the City's Communications Department developed unique, in-house branding for the CSWB Plan, which includes a logo, iconography, and a grand guide to standardize all CSWB Plan initiatives moving forward.

Kenora residents invited to the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Open House

Action 1.3

On June 9, the CSWBP Implementation Committee was excited to invite local residents and community service providers to an open house for an opportunity to learn, share, and connect as our community works towards a safer, more inclusive Kenora. The CSWB Open House offered locals a chance to explore the 10-year CSWB Plan's development, seven priority areas, and learn about how they could get involved in shaping the community's future.

Highlights from the evening included an overview of the CSWB Plan, engagement opportunities with the CSWB Plan Implementation Committee and community partners, free BBQ, a kids' craft table, prizes, a photo gallery exhibit featuring entries from the 2024 youth photo contest, Our Community, Our Lens', and the unveiling of the CSWB Plan logo.





Track real-time progress of the CSWB Plan

Action 1.5

In December, the CSWBP Implementation Committee was excited to announce the launch of the [CSWB Plan Progress Dashboard](#). The Progress Dashboard offers a clear, real-time snapshot of Kenora's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan in action.

The dashboard is built to be a practical tool that highlights the number of actions started, and the CSWB Plan's ongoing and upcoming tasks. By the end of 2025, 19 of the 48 action items had been started and are currently at various stages of development and progress.

See it. Report it. Kenora benefits.

The City of Kenora and its community partners are piloting a new way to safely address discarded needles in the Kenora region — one where we can all be part of the solution.

If you see discarded needles, you can report them for safe pickup and disposal at reportneedles.ca.

Found needles? Report them at ReportNeedles.ca

Find out more about this pilot project at kenora.ca/communitysafety

Needle disposal pilot project

Action 3.6

Ending the year strong, the City, in collaboration with the Northwestern Health Unit, Kenora Makwa Patrol, All-Nations Health Partners-Ontario Health Team, Lake of the Woods District Hospital - Mental Health and Addictions Program, and Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig (WNHAC), launched a needle disposal pilot project for 2026.

Community members can report discarded needles at ReportNeedles.ca. The announcement was made through a joint media release, further demonstrating the CSWB Plan's collaboration with community partners. This web-based app allows users to enter sightings of needles or related equipment and upload photos. It works on any internet browser, including smartphones.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Committees and Boards of Council

Council is required by provincial legislation to establish certain local boards and committees. Following each Municipal Election, Council appoints Members at-large to serve on a number of Boards, Committees, Groups or other bodies. Committees are established to provide informed advice and guidance and to facilitate public input to City Council on programs and ideas reflected in the specific Board / Committee terms of reference. They increase public engagement by involving citizens, provide expertise, and help to advance priorities of Council.



Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) works to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and inclusion throughout the City. Their goal is to improve the quality of life for all citizens by identifying and mitigating physical, technological, communication, and attitudinal barriers. The AAC refers accessibility standards such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), as well as the City's accessibility plans and policies to make Kenora more accessible for all.

Number of
meetings

5



Committee of Adjustment

The Committee of Adjustment (COA), formerly the Kenora Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), plays a crucial role in supporting planning and development within the City of Kenora, by ensuring proposals are in line with local planning goals and community interests. The COA has the authority to make decisions on applications made under the Planning Act for land division by consent and to grant minor variances and permission to existing zoning by-laws. The COA also sits as the Property Standards Appeal Committee.

9



Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Implementation Committee

The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Implementation Committee (CSWBP-IC) leads and provides support to implement the priorities of Kenora's Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan. This new committee continues the efforts of the Crime Prevention and Community Well-Being (CPCWB) Advisory Committee, which was responsible for developing Kenora's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

10

The CSWBP-IC will carry out and keep track of Kenora's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. Their goal is to make sure the CSWB Plan's goals and actions become real projects that improve public safety, reduce crime, and enhance the well-being of the community.



Kenora OPP Detachment Board

Council enters into the written contract with the OPP and is responsible for the financial commitment of our policing costs. The primary role of the OPP Detachment Board is to establish, after consultation with the Detachment Commander, overall objectives and priorities for the provision of police services within the City. The Detachment Commander is responsible for administering the police service and overseeing its operation in accordance with the objectives and priorities established by the Board. Operational matters fall outside the Board's jurisdiction from general management to complaints regarding policing.

5



Kenora Public Library Board

The Library Board governs the library, creates policy and ensures financial accountability. Through an understanding of the community and a strong relationship with the City Council, the Board advocates for the Library as a whole. It ensures that it has clear goals and objectives for meeting community needs.

9



Property Standards Appeal Committee

The Property Standards Appeal Committee is responsible for hearing appeals from property owners who have received an order for violating the Property Standards Bylaw. The Committee's role is to ensure that properties meet the standards outlined in the City bylaws (e.g. buildings are safe and in good condition, yards are kept free from garbage, excessive storage, overgrown grass/weeds, and standing water) and the Ontario Building Code. [Learn more](#) about the property standards and complaint process.

0



Sustainability Advisory Committee

The Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) supports the implementation the City's adopted 10 year Sustainability Action Plan for the City of Kenora. The plan identifies areas of action to improve the long-term economic, social, and / or environmental well-being of the community and its partners to address some of the local challenges related to environmental responsibilities and concern.

9



The Muse Board

The Muse Board controls and manages the Lake of the Woods Museum and the Douglas Family Art Centre for the purpose of collecting, preserving, researching, exhibiting, and interpreting the material culture of this region and the visual arts as defined by policy. View [The Muse Board's Terms of Reference](#) for more on the responsibilities of the Board.

10

CORPORATE SERVICES

Kenora's On-Demand Microtransit Service



Launched in late 2024, The Wave is the City of Kenora's on-demand public transit service, designed to replace fixed-route buses with a more flexible, reliable, and accessible system. Riders can book trips through The Wave mobile app or by phone, and the service dynamically groups passengers traveling in similar directions to keep trips efficient and affordable.



4.9 / 5

Average rating



48,654

Completed trips



26

Minutes average pickup time



12,126

Rider accounts created



3

Vehicle fleet, +1 spare

2025 marked The Wave's first full year of operation, and the results show strong growth and high rider satisfaction. Over the year, The Wave completed nearly 50,000 trips, with ridership increased through the year as several service adjustments were made. Completing almost 6 trips per hour, The Wave is among the most efficient demand-responsive transit services in Canada*. Riders consistently rated their experience highly, with an average rating of 4.9 out of 5 stars.

“

“It just gives more options for travel. The Wave is far more reliable than the old bus.”

“All of your drivers are terrific, polite, helpful, and kind.”

Rider feedback

”



2025 Quarterly Ridership



2025 The Wave Rider Experience



As demand grew, the service maintained a met demand rate (or the percentage of requests who were able to get a seat) near 90%, meaning the vast majority of ride requests were successfully fulfilled. Average pickup times in 2025 were approximately 26 minutes, balancing reliability with the flexibility of shared, on-demand service.



Accessibility continues to be a cornerstone of The Wave. Wheelchair-accessible vehicles are fully integrated into the fleet, and drivers receive specialized accessibility and safety training, including securement procedures and customer-service best practices.

For many residents, The Wave is essential - surveys show that 77% of riders do not have access to a personal vehicle, and 35% report traveling more often or spending less time traveling since the service launched.

Over 14,000 rider accounts were created since the launch of The Wave, with 12,126 user accounts made in 2025. Monthly ridership is nearly three times higher than the previous transit system. With these statistics, it is clear that The Wave has become a core part of Kenora’s transportation network.

As the City looks ahead, The Wave will continue to evolve to support safe, inclusive, and efficient mobility for residents and visitors alike.

*Based on per hour, per vehicle information from services operating on Via’s platform.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department is responsible for developing and implementing strategies, policies, programs and practices that ensure effective, empowered and supported leadership and staff. Strong labour relations that are aligned with the City's Unions respecting collective agreements and legislative requirements that support a positive, productive, physically and psychologically safe workplace culture is a top priority in this area.

The team provides services related to recruitment, onboarding, job evaluation and compensation, comprehensive benefits, occupational health & safety workplace wellbeing, employee relations, and labour relations.



Human Resources



5

Job Fairs



10

Post secondary
work placements



36

CUPE summer
students



4

Collective
bargaining
agreements

Building skills for the future, student growth and involvement in City careers

This summer, the City was pleased to hire 36 energetic students to support a wide range of operations. The roles span across various departments. Students received work experience in waste management operations, customer service, museum operations, yard and park maintenance, tourism and events, and recreation day camp counsellor positions.



Post-secondary work placement program fosters field exposure and municipal insight

The post-secondary work placement program was a new addition post-secondary pathways to gain access and exposure to not only their field of study, but also municipal operations. The program was structured to have an in-depth orientation, which provided insights into the history and different functions within the municipality and monthly check-ins to connect with their fellow post-secondary peers and share insights into their learning experience.

Enhancing safety at the City of Kenora

A Safety Intern was hired in February of 2025 and has contributed substantial process improvement, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) development, incident reporting and leading various certifications for staff such as first aid, chainsaw training, and driver training.

Photo credit: Kim Pirie-Milko



Finance

The Finance Department provides financial guidance and strategic oversight to City departments ensuring fiscal responsibility and stewardship of the City's assets and finances. Cash flow is managed to ensure funds are available to fulfill the financial plan and provide stability while ensuring that necessary financial resources are available for long-term capital infrastructure replacement.

Finance

The Finance Department is responsible for the management of the City's financial operations with main areas of responsibility as follows:

- Accounts Receivable – Billing and Collections
- Accounts Payable
- Tax Collection
- Asset Management
- Financial Planning and Budget Preparation
- Financial Forecasting
- Financial Information Return
- Investment
- Treasury – Cash and Debt Management
- Purchasing
- Financial Statement Preparation
- Provincial Financial Information Return
- Policy Development, Update and Review
- Payroll



\$1.339 billion

Value of the City's
capital assets



\$16.4 million

Received in grant funding

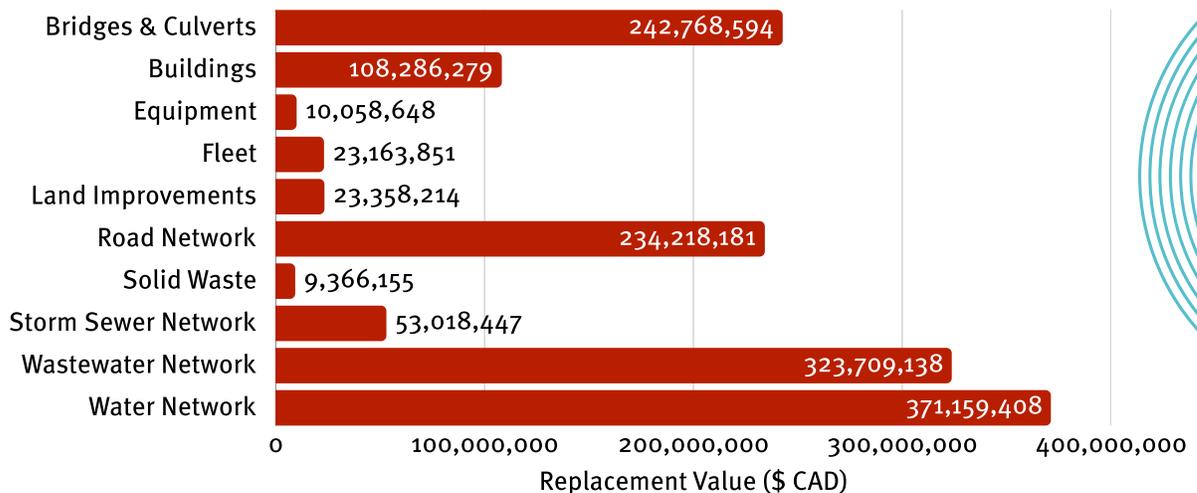


7,755

Taxable properties

Replacement Value of Capital Assets

(as of 2024)



The City's total replacement value of capital assets is \$1,399,106,915. On average the City replaces or refurbishes \$10.4 million in capital assets annually, extending useful life and improving the level of service, reliability, safety, while reducing the risk of failure.

2025 grant funding received

Grant funding in municipal government acts as a crucial supplementary revenue stream—beyond property taxes—used to finance infrastructure projects, enhance community services.

\$16.4 million

in grant funding was received in 2025

City staff invest significant time and effort in researching needs, coordinating, and preparing competitive grant applications and proposals to ensure Kenora is picked to receive funding to improve our community.

\$11,668,590
in Provincial funding

71%

\$4,638,982
in Federal funding

28%

\$55,819
in Other funding

1%



In 2025, The City of Kenora received the following funding award: in 2025:

- Housing Enabling Core Service Stream of \$5,961,588
- North Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation of \$494,000

Taxation statistics

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Property Assessment				
\$2.073B	\$2.090B	\$2.109B	\$2.129B	\$2.145B
Number of Taxable Properties				
7,740	7,754	7,781	7,756	7,755
Average Assessed Property Value				
\$267,767	\$269,575	\$270,996	\$274,522	\$276,567
Municipal Tax Levy				
\$27.736M	\$28.557M	\$29.865M	\$31.125M	\$33.835M
Residential Property Tax Increase				
3.15%	2.17%	4.88%	3.32%	8.12%
Number of Tax Bills Sent (Interim, Final, and Supplementals)				
16,127	16,183	16,257	16,251	16,254

What do property taxes pay for?

Residential tax dollars collected are shared between the City of Kenora and other external community service providers to fund services and programs. In 2025, for every \$1,105 in property tax paid, residents receive:



\$254

Transportation

Roads and bridges, maintenance and repairs, line painting, street lighting, engineering, transit including Handi-Transit Board, parking, and vehicle and equipment fleet.



\$163

Recreation and Culture

Parks, Moncrief Construction Sports Centre administration and customer service, Bowman Electric Memorial Arena, general administration, The Muse: Lake of the Woods Museum and Douglas Family Art Centre, programming, Kenora Public Libraries



\$109

Protection

Fire, police, emergency management, by-law services, building inspection, facilities operations, and 911 emergency access.



\$118

General government

Mayor and Council, organizational support including governance, human resources, and finance.



\$48

Economic Development, Tourism, and Planning & Building

Economic development, Northwest Business Centre, tourism including special events and the Lake of the Woods Discovery Centre, planning and building including support for affordable housing and land management.



\$7

Recycling *

Curbside and rural depot collection, drop-off depot, and transportation to recycling facility in Winnipeg.

*Recycling in 2026:

For 2026, under the new Blue Box Regulation, Ontario transitioned to a new model where producers, the organizations that produce the products and packaging, are 100 percent responsible for operating and funding the program.



\$1

Cemetery

Internments, customer service, ice candle campaign, and year round grounds maintenance.

Services not covered by tax dollars:

- water and wastewater services
- garbage (solid waste) collection and disposal

These services are funded by user fees (bag tags, water usage) and other sources of funding from Provincial or Federal Governments.



\$105

Education

Paid to school boards. It is a Provincial mandate that all ratepayers are charged a portion of Education Tax. Municipalities must collect and remit payments to the appropriate school boards as per the provincial tax rates. Education taxes are essential to maintaining and improving the quality of public education.

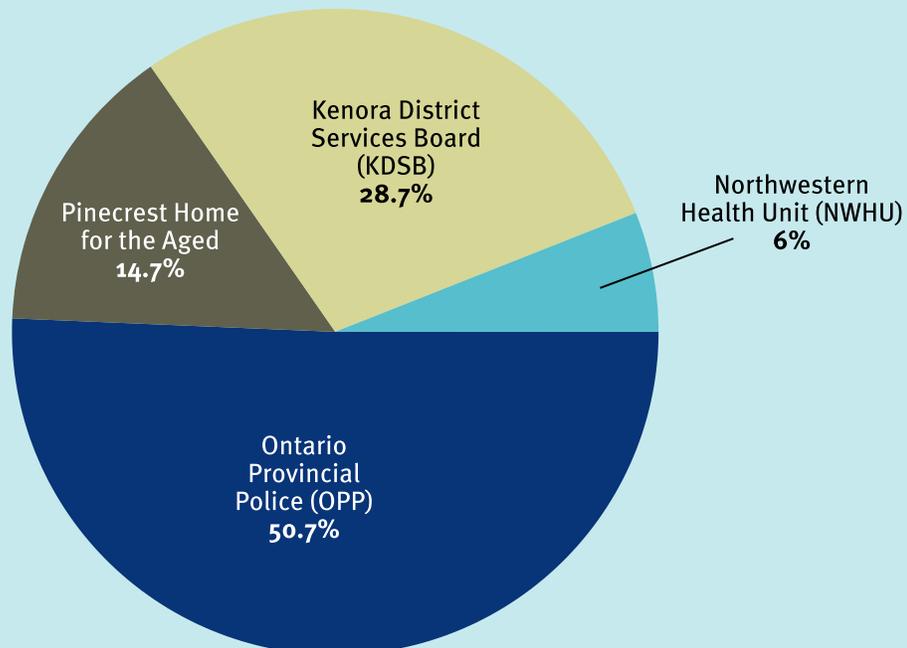


\$300

External organizations

City leadership and Council worked diligently to minimize costs and keep the budget lean while maintaining existing services and fulfilling provincially mandated external obligations.

2025 Percentage of Property Taxes Paid to External Organizations



Payroll statistics for 2025



476

T4s prepared



Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable statistics

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Accounts Receivable Invoices Processed				
4,244	3,803	4,012	3,750	3,955
Accounts Payable Invoices Processed				
15,039	15,883	18,713	18,273	18,195



Photo credit: Kim Pirie Milko

Building relationships with Treaty 3 partners

Throughout 2025, Council and City departments made meaningful strides toward fostering inclusive, durable relationships with Treaty Partners. By strengthening ties with our Anishinaabe neighbours, advancing reconciliation in Kenora, supporting cultural awareness and activities, and collaborating to address community needs and opportunities, we moved toward a more inclusive city where every voice is heard.

This section outlines the initiatives, collaborations, and outcomes across City departments in 2025, detailing how teams engaged Treaty 3 partners, amplified Indigenous voices, and built partnerships that advance inclusion, broaden access to services, deepen learning, and support shared prosperity for all residents.





All Nations Hospital Project and Wiigwas Elder and Senior Care Home Announcement

In May, City Council, along side Hon. Premier Doug Ford and Hon. MPP Greg Rickford, attended the special announcement of the All Nations Hospital Project and Wiigwas Elder and Senior Care Home. After the special announcement, a reception was held at the Lake of the Wood Discover Centre.

After the announcement, the community gathered at the Lake of the Woods Discovery Centre for a reception event. Ogimaawabiitong Kenora Chiefs Advisory (KCA), reception event organizers, received the venue complimentary from the City's Tourism Department to support their event. City Communications was honoured to collaborate on a joint media release with the Lake of the Woods District hospital, KCA, and Wiigwas Elder and Senior Care.



Partners in truth, Kaatagoging book launch

In January, Mayor Poirier and Braden Murray, Director of The Muse, gathered in Winnipeg to honour the upcoming book launch of the four volume ***Kaatagoging*** book set. This four-volume book set, chronicling the personal stories of survivors of the residential school system. It was a privilege to hear from Indigenous voices and connect with the Hon. Wab Kinew.

In September, to further support the book launch, The Muse partnered with the Kaatagoging Survivors Group to host the ***Kaatagoging*** book launch at the Janel Contracting Pavilion on September 27, 2025. After the event the ***Kaatagoging*** book set was made available at the Lake of the Woods Museum, providing a resource for those who wish to learn more and support the ongoing journey of truth and reconciliation.

Council present at Indigenous lead community events

The City's Recreation was invited and glad to participate in two events hosted by Kenora Chief Advisory's Makate Waagamichiwanang Gakinaa'amaatiwin (MWG) Youth and Family Wellness Camp:

- Movement as Medicine: Sports Symposium & Sabe Bush Crawl
- Biboon Odaminowin: Winter Celebration.

Being part of these community events helps to connect and learn about Anishinaabe culture and benefits of recreation, but also provide great opportunities for City staff and locals to join in and move towards reconciliation and listen and learn from Indigenous members of the community.

Council attends Indigenous lead community events

Council is committed to attending community events and engaging with local Indigenous communities to deepen cultural understanding, build meaningful relationships, and advance reconciliation.



Annual Moose Hide Campaign Day

In May, Councillor Van Belleghem attended Kenora's [4th Annual Moose Hide Campaign Day walk](#), hosted by Ne-Chee Friendship Centre, The Kenora Association for Community Living (KACL), and WAASEGIIZHIG NANAANDAWE'-IYEWIGAMIG (WNHAC). The Moose Hide Campaign Day advocates ending violence against women and children and elevates the voices of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit individuals (MMIWG2S).



Jays Care Field of Dreams

In June, Mayor Poirier, Councillor Koch, and Manson joined by Hon. MPP Greg Rickford, Hon. MP Eric Melillo, Chief Skead, community youth, Elders, and Jays Care Foundation representatives to officially open the new [Jays Care Field of Dreams at the Makate Waagamichiwanang Gakinaa'amaatiwin \(MWG\) Youth and Family Wellness Camp](#). The event also marked the Indigenous Rookie League's 10th anniversary, honoring Alumni and celebrating the league's spirit of partnership, resilience, and hope.



City honoured to host Spring Feast at Tunnel Island

The City was honoured to host the [2025 Spring Feast at Tunnel Island](#) in May.

The 2024 Fall Feast, hosted by Niisaachewan Anishinaabe, had feasted the spirits of the land and requested permission for the City of Kenora to host the Spring Feast in 2025. The City was honoured to have this honour in 2025.

During this second quarter, the City's Indigenous Relations Office had delivered invitations and tobacco to the First Nations leadership in Wauzhushk Onigum Nation, Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation, Washagamis Bay First Nation, and to Ojichidaa Francis Kavanaugh of Grand Council Treaty 3. Permission from First Nation leadership was granted to the City to invite Treaty 3 Elders, Drum Groups, Knowledge Keepers, Cultural Coordinators, Indigenous organizations, and community members throughout the Kenora area. Cultural protocols were followed.

Elders, community members, Council, and many staff from varying City departments were in attendance to support the event, volunteer, and learn culture protocols. The City's Indigenous Relations Office was grateful to collaborate with Treaty 3 communities to promote reconciliation and strengthen relationships rooted in respect and collaboration.



United efforts to convert arena into evacuation shelter

During May, the City's Recreation, Fire and Emergency Services, and other community organizations rallied together at the Bowman Electric Keewatin Memorial Arena to transform the space into a temporary evacuation site for members of the Wabaseemoong Independent Nations. The dry pad was set up within hours, and the arena itself was operational in under two hours, providing shelter for two days until evacuees were relocated to longer-term accommodations.

Building relationships through housing and student residence projects

The Building and Planning team continued to work with Treaty 3 partners on key community development projects in 2025 and into 2026. The Kekekoziibii Development Corporation's 24-unit affordable housing project, which will advance local housing options, and has strengthened collaboration with developers and Indigenous partners. In spring, the City performed a Site Plan Control Agreement for Lot 15 of the Former Mill Site, marking a significant step in building partnerships and supporting Indigenous-led growth.

Building and Planning also issued the building permit for the Manidoo Baawaatig Student Residence at Seven Generations Education Institute, which will enhance student housing and educational opportunities.





Staff training for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

To honour the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on Tuesday, September 30, all City facilities were closed and staff were encouraged to participate in learning and in events hosted by local Indigenous organizations.

In recognition of the day, staff training took place on Monday, September 29, with City Administration split into morning and afternoon sessions to maintain City service coverage throughout the day. Staff could be seen downtown Kenora on September 29 wearing orange City and Grand Council Treaty 3 branded t-shirts, demonstrating solidarity and support for those affected by the residential school system.

Training guided staff to five walkabout City locations, with short Indigenous teachings and mini-games at each station to learn local culture, language, and history. Council members assisted at the learning stations and staff BBQ. The event was a collaborative, respectful, interactive effort across departments, designed to introduce participants into culturally sensitive topics through positive, interactive, and educational experiences rooted in respect and understanding.



City participates in community events on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30 is Canada's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a federal statutory holiday to honor residential school survivors, their families, and communities. City representation attended two events that day: the All Children Matter Community Walk hosted by Saint Thomas Aquinas High School, and Grand Council Treaty 3's Orange Shirt Day event at the Janel Contracting Pavilion.

Winter Warmth Drive Collaboration with Kenora Makwa Patrol

The City partnered with Kenora Makwa Patrol for the Winter Warmth Drive in October to collect clean, warm clothing at Lake of the Woods Discovery Centre through November, reinforcing the City's commitment to supporting the community and fostering meaningful relationships with our Treaty partners.

City of Kenora in partnership with
Kenora Makwa Patrol hosts

Winter Warmth Drive

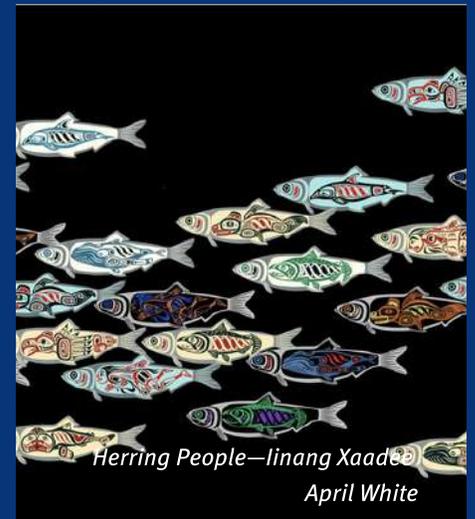
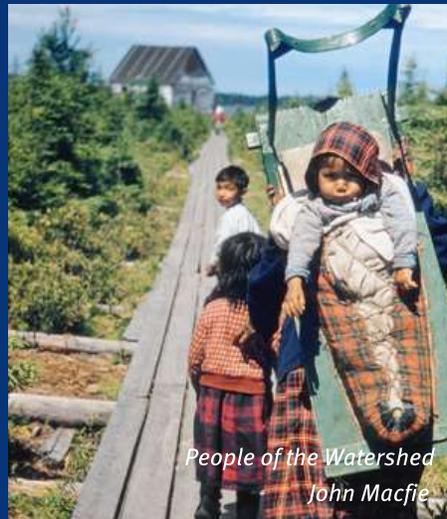
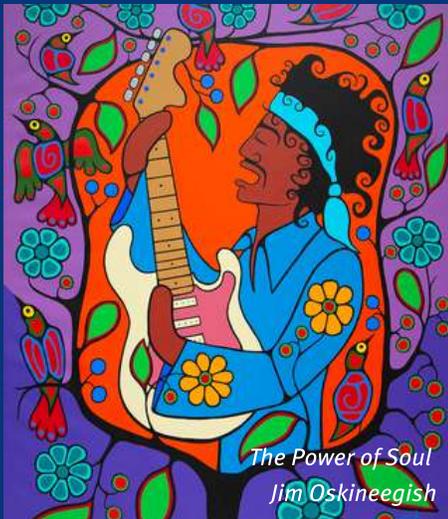
Donate your clean, gently used, warm clothing to those in need.

Items Needed	Drop Off Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sweaters • sweatshirts • winter jackets • jogging pants • hats, mitts • blankets 	<p>Lake of the Wood Discovery Centre 931 Lakeview Drive Kenora, ON</p> <p>Monday to Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Closed on November 11</p>

Items not needed

- X dress clothes
- X summer wear
- X kids clothing

Consider donating these items to another local charity.



Exhibits at The Muse

In 2025, the Douglas Family Art Centre presented Indigenous-centred exhibitions including April White's *Herring People—linang Xaadee*, Jim Oskineegish's *Keep Yourself Alive, Solastalgia*, and *People of the Watershed* (curated by Paul Seesequasis), while the Museum marked the 150th anniversary of the *Halfbreed Adhesion to Treaty #3* through a community feature developed with Métis partners and hosted the other half of *People of the Watershed* exhibition.

Extending beyond Kenora, Muse-developed touring work broadened access to Indigenous histories—*Treaty #3: Manidoo Mazina'igan – The Sacred Document*, *Miijim: Tradition Foods of the Lake of the Woods Anishinaabe*, and *We Were Taught Differently* travelled to partner venues—and *The Red Chair Sessions: Nadya Kwandibens* was circulated to institutions in Quebec and Northwestern Ontario.

Photo credit: Kim Pirie-Milko



Thank you. Merci. Miigwech. Marrsî.



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