

Sharbot Lake VIA Rail Station Committee – Submission



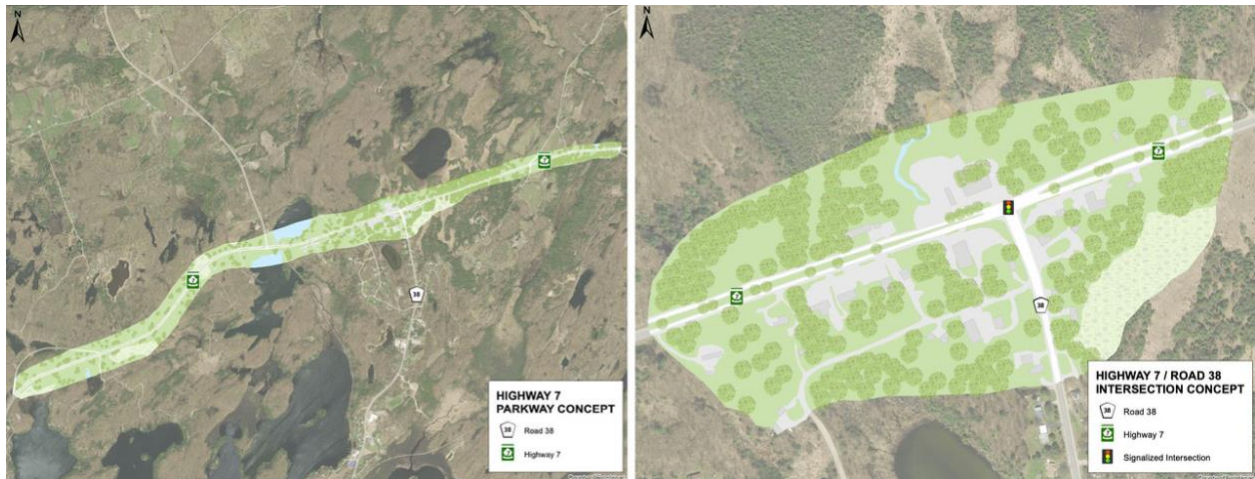
Village of Sharbot Lake as seen from the west. (Wade Leonard – Above & Beyond)

A Lively and Beautiful Rural Hub

Sharbot Lake and Rural Frontenac is in a time of change. Major businesses are renewing themselves. Under construction is a new multi-million-dollar downtown infrastructure project. Our area lies in the Frontenac Arch Biosphere of the Canadian Shield, an area of pristine lakes and vast forests. Our largest industry is tourism, which more than doubles the population of Central Frontenac Township every summer. Sharbot Lake is a hub for year-round recreational trails. We are ready to be the new frontier of tourism in Eastern Ontario.

Sharbot Lake is a three-hour drive from Toronto, 90 minutes from Ottawa and an hour from Kingston. It is the mid-point between Tweed and Smiths Falls. It is the commercial and residential centre for Frontenac County's rural area and is designated its hub. It is a full-service village, having all the services of a larger town. (See Appendix 1.) The number of building permits issued increases annually. Houses being sold in the village are being renovated or replaced. New homeowners are coming from Toronto and Ottawa.

Highway 7 Parkway Corridor



Highway 7 Sharbot Lake Parkway Concept - Central Frontenac Township Official Plan (July 2019 Draft)

Central Frontenac Township’s forthcoming Official Plan will feature an innovative “Sharbot Lake Parkway” concept for the planned four-lane Highway 7 corridor. The Parkway will emphasize landscape and create a southern Rural Frontenac gateway through a prominent entrance to County Road 38 and Sharbot Lake village. The Parkway will also encompass the nearby intersection of Highway 7 and County Road 509, the northern gateway into Rural Frontenac.

We urge VIA Rail to route the High Frequency Rail line along the Highway 7 Corridor and work in conjunction with Ontario’s Ministry of Transportation to bring multiple modes of transportation into the Parkway concept. This is an obvious fit!

A Passenger Rail Station to Serve Commuters and Tourists



Intersection of Road 38 with Highway 7 as seen from the north. (Wade Leonard – Above & Beyond)

While the population that could be served by a VIA Rail station currently numbers about 24,000, we look forward to welcoming many more from our neighbouring urban centres – Ottawa, Toronto and Kingston. Residing in the beauty of Rural Frontenac while working in an urban centre is an increasingly attractive option. Imagine living beside a lake and yet being able to get to your job in downtown Ottawa in about an hour in the comfort of a railway car. With schools, recreation and family services in Sharbot Lake, we are ready to support a bedroom community of commuters and their families. Within the Parkway Corridor, a passenger rail station and parking will easily serve passengers from all directions.

There is plenty of undeveloped land in the area and land prices are reasonable. As well, Frontenac County is on the leading edge of developing communal services technology – allowing a number of residences to share a well and septic system. Once this technology is established, rural subdivisions will be able to house more people in a smaller area.

With a shuttle bus service, incoming VIA Rail passengers could easily be taken to neighbouring Sharbot Lake and Silver Lake provincial parks, to cycling and accommodation centres or to enjoy seasonal festivals.

Recognizing their stewardship of Algonquin traditional territory, the Algonquins of Ontario, represented locally by the Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation, would also advocate for a transportation link that would enhance their economic development while protecting vulnerable ecological systems. At Crotch Lake, the AOO will soon be developing Whiteduck Provincial Park. It will be the second largest Provincial Park in Eastern Ontario after Algonquin.

A Route to Preserve Heritage and Promote Tourism

The village of Sharbot Lake is on a narrow peninsula between the east and west basins of Sharbot Lake. Its beach park on the west basin is its most prominent icon. In 1830, this shoreline was the location of the camp of our founding Indigenous family, Frank Sharbot and Mary Susie Nikik. Sharbot Lake Beach was recovered as a municipal park in 1973. Adjacent is the regional Medical Centre and helipad.



Sharbot Lake Beach

Recreational corridors – the east-west Trans-Canada Trail (formerly CPR) and the north-south K&P Trail (Kingston & Pembroke Railway) - intersect in the village. That space hosts our second icon, the Central Frontenac Railway Heritage Museum with its caboose and exhibition of railway memorabilia.

These recreational corridors are now the arteries for new life. We are visited by ATVs, snowmobilers, cyclists and hikers. The movement of tourists from the beach to the Railway Heritage Museum is enhanced by the beauty of a walkway through Thomson’s Cut, a notable feature of the K&P Trail.



Railway Heritage Park on the Trans-Canada Trail in Sharbot Lake. (Derek Redmond)

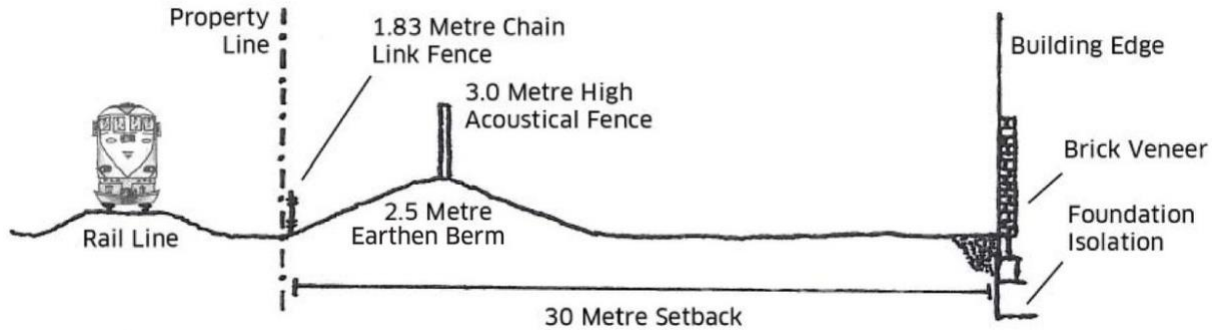
There has been a proposal to route the High Frequency Rail line along the 19th century rail trackbed which is now part of the Trans-Canada Trail. This double-tracked corridor would bisect the village as it in fact did in the 19th century, and eliminate many heritage features along with parkland and the recreational trail.



Trackbed through the village in 1883. The beach is to the left, and the site of Maples Restaurant is to the right. (CFRHS)

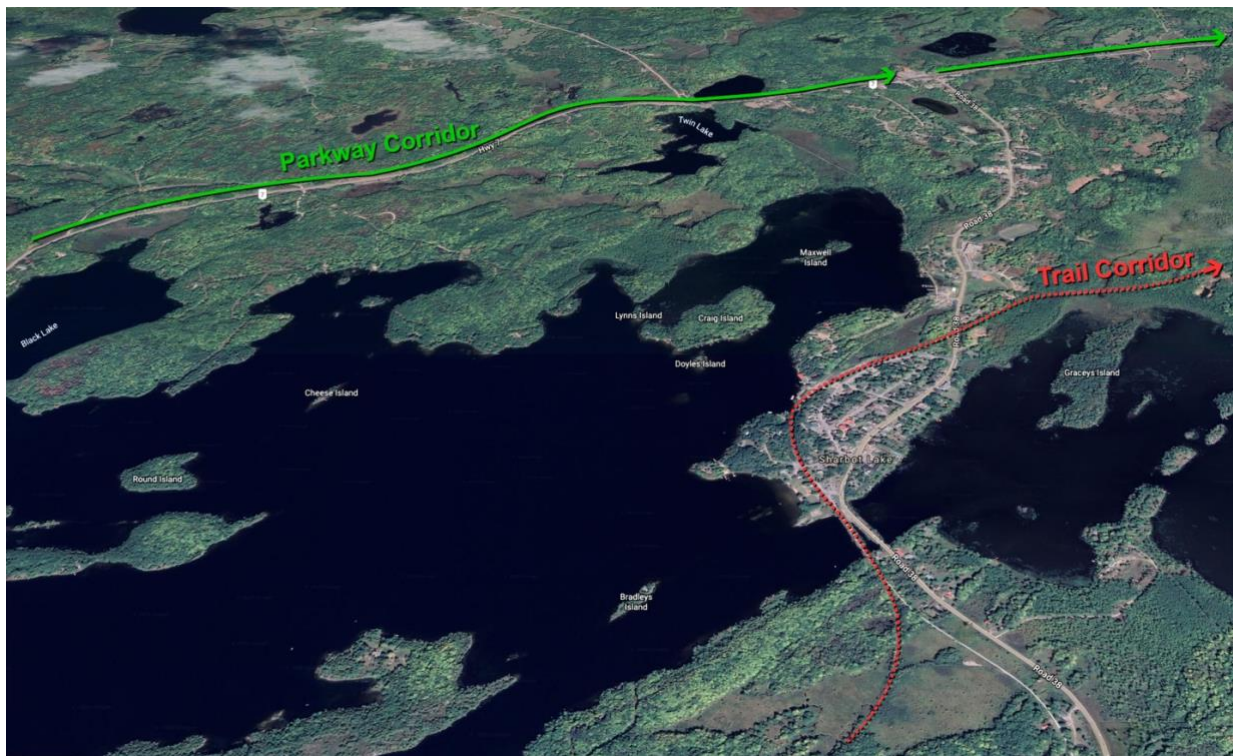
We want to preserve our village and its current potential rather than stifle it with grade crossings, issues of safety and liability, and the noise and vibration of high frequency trains passing at all hours. Imagine the previous picture with chain link fences – right beside the beach.

The diagram below shows a 2013 recommendation from the Railway Association of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, for setback from rail lines. (See Appendix 2.) It is a visual demonstration that a rail line is not compatible with a heritage village.



Setback recommendations for new residential development. (Railway Association of Canada)

We feel that utilizing the Parkway Corridor north of the village would both preserve Sharbot Lake's heritage and provide VIA Rail with a more direct line. With easy road access for the 24,000 in our area, why not have the Sharbot Lake VIA Rail Station in this expanse?



Highway 7 Parkway Corridor and Trans-Canada Trail Corridor (Google Earth base map)

Recommendations:

- 1. In conjunction with the draft Central Frontenac Township's Official Plan for a Parkway entrance, we urge VIA Rail to route the High Frequency Rail line along the Highway 7 corridor.**
- 2. Servicing a population area of 24,000, we urge VIA Rail to construct a Sharbot Lake Station.**
- 3. With tourism and economic development poised for take-off, serving Indigenous and settler populations, the village of Sharbot Lake must be enriched, not damaged.**

Public discussion is being sought widely, and from the following:

Township of Central Frontenac
Township of North Frontenac
Township of South Frontenac
Frontenac County Council
The Algonquins of Ontario
Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation
Frontenac Community Futures Development Corporation
Sharbot Lake Business Group Inc.
Rural Frontenac Tourism Group
Crow Lake & Bob's Lake Cottage Association
Sharbot Lake Property Owners Association
Rural Frontenac Community Services

Submitted by the Sharbot Lake VIA Rail Station Committee

Sara Carpenter – Rural Economic Development Advocate
Ken Fisher – Promoter, Sharbot Lake Business Group
Fred Fowler – Artist, Snow Road
Joe Gallivan – Director, Frontenac County Economic Development (Advisor)
Gary Giller – Central Frontenac Railway Heritage Society
Victor Heese – Associate Director, Sumac Centre, Mountain Grove
Dennis Larocque – Coldwell Banker Real Estate
Wade Leonard – Above & Beyond with Drones, Granite Ridge Educational Centre
Derek Redmond – Central Frontenac Railway Heritage Society
Wayne Robinson – Government Relations, Sharbot Lake Business Group
Greg Rodgers – Chair, Rural Frontenac Tourism Group

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APPENDIX 1

Sharbot Lake, the hub of Rural Frontenac, is the only town between Peterborough and Perth that has all these capacities:

- Municipal Offices
- Medical Centre with Air Ambulance
- Ontario Provincial Police
- Fire & Rescue
- North Frontenac Telephone Company
- Pharmacy
- Dental Clinic
- Chiropractors & Physical Therapists
- Grocery Stores
- LCBO
- The Beer Store
- Restaurants
- Bank
- Post Office
- County Newspaper
- Law Offices
- Real Estate Offices
- Financial Services
- Service Stations and Garage
- Hardware Stores
- Electricians, Plumbers and Builders
- Marina Sales & Service
- Small Engine Repairs
- Solar Energy
- Lawn & Garden Centres and Services
- Algonquins of Ontario Offices
- Service Clubs
- Churches
- K-12 Education Centre
- Public Library
- Community College Satellite Centre
- Child Day Care Centre
- Seniors' Residence
- Community Services
- Community Living
- Food Bank
- Business and Tourism Groups
- B&Bs and Cottage Rentals
- Camps & Provincial Camp Sites
- Recreational Trails
- Hunting & Fishing
- Maple Syrup
- Artisan Cheese
- Artisan Cured Meats
- Bakeries
- Coffee Shop
- Take-Out Pizza & Sandwiches
- Artists & Potters
- Hair Salons & Esthetics
- Florist



Village of Sharbot Lake seen from the south. (Wade Leonard – Above & Beyond)

APPENDIX 2

The following are excerpts regarding mitigation of noise and safety issues, from *Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations*, developed by the Railway Association of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2013).

“Railways have, since the early 1980s, promoted mitigation in the form of a standard setback and berm. These measures have been developed based on a detailed analysis of past incidents and derailments. Together, they contain the derailed cars and allow a derailed train enough room to come to a complete stop. In addition, setbacks and berms also allow for the dissipation of noise and vibration.

“Noise and vibration from rail operations are two of the primary sources of complaints from residents living near railway corridors. Airborne noise at low frequencies (caused by locomotives) can also induce vibration in lightweight elements of a building, which may be perceived to be ground-borne vibration.

“Transport Canada and the railways strive to reduce the number of at-grade crossings since each new crossing increases the risk exposure for potential vehicle/train and pedestrian accidents, as well as the related road traffic delays. Grade-separated crossings address both these issues but are expensive to construct.

“Trespass issues can be avoided through careful land use planning. Land uses on each side of a railway corridor or yard should be evaluated with a view to minimizing potential trespass problems. For example, schools, commercial uses, parks or plazas should not be located in proximity to railway facilities without the provision of adequate pedestrian crossings.”



Sharbot Lake Beach, adjacent to the Trans-Canada Trail Corridor. (Wade Leonard – Above & Beyond)