Minnow Lake Community Improvement Plan

October 1, 1991

Jointly Prepared by
The Regional Municipality of Sudbury
Planning and Development Department
and the City of Sudbury

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PART I INTRODUCTION

1. ABOUT THE MINNOW LAKE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1.1 Purpose of Plan

This document has been prepared to identify potential actions which would contribute to an overall improvement in the area described on Map 1 as the Minnow Lake Community Improvement Area.

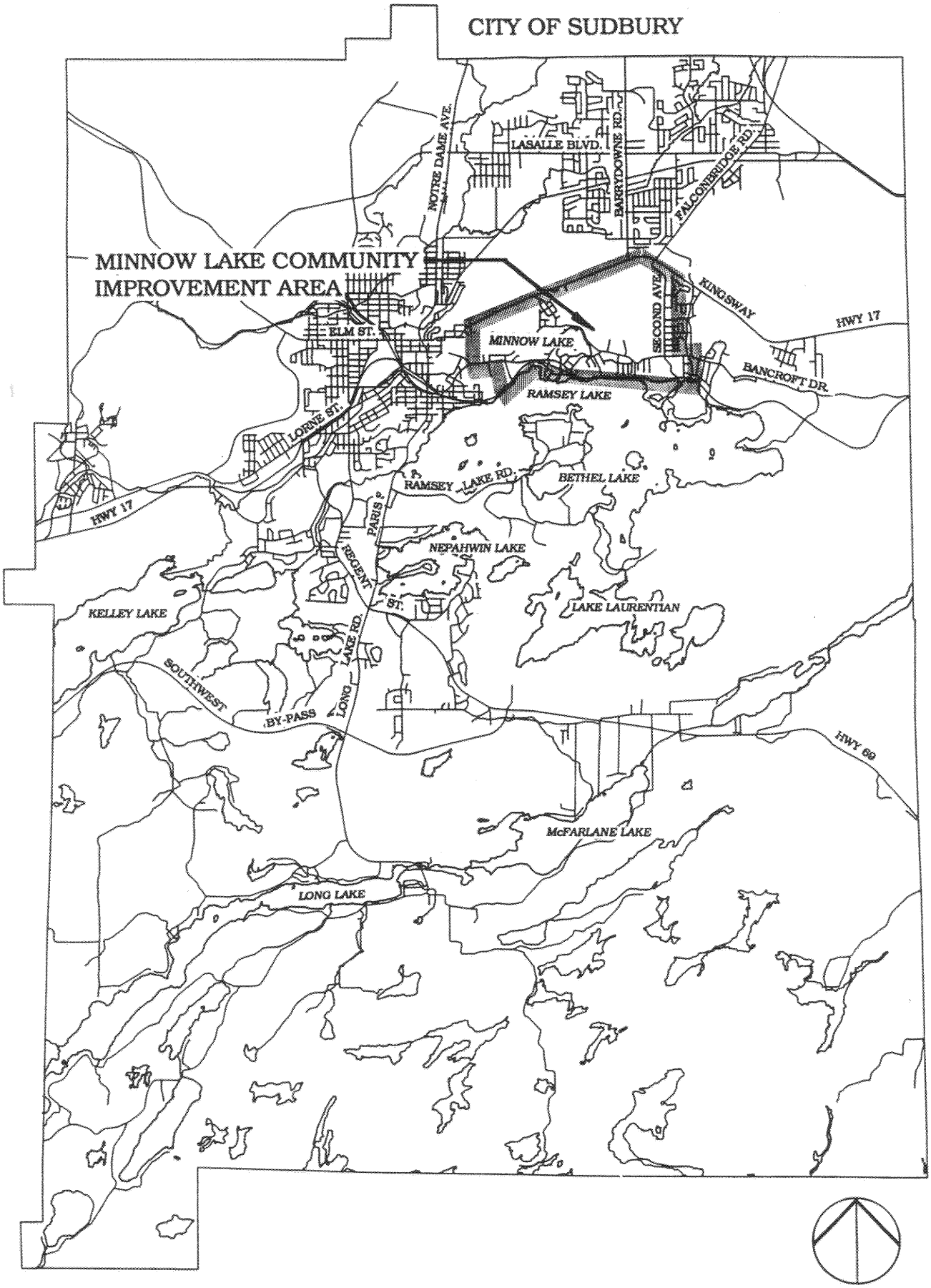
1.2 Community Improvement Plan Process

The Community Improvement Plan process started in 1987 with the adoption of the Secondary Plan for the City of Sudbury. This document designated certain areas of the City of Sudbury as community improvement areas and provided policies outlining the types of improvements which may be addressed. These are described in Chapter 2.

In 1990, City Council received a Community Planning Grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to undertake a community improvement plan for the Minnow Lake Community Improvement Area and two other community improvement areas. A Steering Committee was established for the preparation of the community improvement plan and included the Alderman for the area, two residents of the area, a representative of the Minnow Lake Restoration Group, a business person in the community improvement area and two staff

MINNOW LAKE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MAP 1



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representatives. The first meeting of the Minnow Lake Community Improvement Plan Steering Committee was held on May 1, 1990. A Technical Support Group consisting of City and Regional Staff was subsequently appointed to assist the Steering Committee.

One of the first tasks of the Steering Committee was to identify, from their knowledge of the area, issues that should be addressed in the community improvement plan. A preliminary list of issues was then brought to the public at a public drop-in centre held on June 11, 1990 and at an evening public meeting held on June 14, 1990. Input was invited with respect to the preliminary list of issues and any other concerns which were considered important by the public.

On October 15, 1990, the Steering Committee met to review a revised list of issues based on the comments received at the public input sessions. A final list of issues was derived and work on the Minnow Lake Community Improvement Plan began. The Steering Committee reviewed the first draft of this plan at a meeting on May 23, 1991 and authorized a second public information session. Prior to the public meeting on June 24, 1991, modifications were be made to the draft plan as directed by the committee.

Following the public review, a revised draft of the community improvement plan was prepared and presented to the Steering Committee on September 24, 1991. The Steering Committee directed several other revisions and recommended that the modified Community Improvement Plan be brought to City Council and ultimately to Planning Committee and Regional Council for public review and adoption. The plan, following adoption by Council, will then be forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for approval.

1.3 Implementation

This community improvement plan does not contain a formal schedule for the phasing of the various improvements contained in the plan. The majority of

improvements outlined in the plan are not inter-dependent and it is considered more important to provide as much flexibility as possible for the implementation of this plan. For example, if the opportunity arises to achieve any one of the improvements in this plan, then that opportunity should be capitalized upon rather than risking its loss in an attempt to adhere to a time schedule. It is an important underlying principle of this Plan, however, that water quality improvements to Minnow Lake are a priority.

Just as public input has been important to the creation of this Plan, the successful implementation of the Plan will hinge on public support for the initiatives contained herein. Also, since the majority of properties in the Community Imporvement Area are in private ownership, to achieve widespread improvements this support must be translated into action on private lands by land-owners. It is hoped that the projects contained in this Plan will encourage and facilitate such private sector participation.

2. ABOUT THE MINNOW LAKE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AREA

2.1 Official Plan Policies

The Minnow Lake Community Improvement Area is one of eight major community improvement areas identified in the Secondary Plan for the City of Sudbury. This community improvement area consists of 2.2 square miles of land area approximately centred on the Minnow Lake waterbody and the Minnow Lake Community Centre located on the east shore of Minnow Lake.

Section 7.7.7b of the Secondary Plan for the City of Sudbury states that:

" The Minnow Lake Community has historically developed without a strong community focal point unlike other areas of the City. As a result only small neighbourhood focal points have developed at several locations. However, because of the mix of uses currently

developed around Minnow Lake and the strong district recreational focus developed here, some potential exists to create a stronger community focus at this location. To realize this potential it is proposed that a more detailed community improvement plan be developed for this area and improvements undertaken."

Possible improvements listed in Section 7.7.7c of the Secondary Plan include:

" • streetscape improvements (Howey and Bancroft)
• rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of commercial land uses
• better integration of uses
• creation of more of a community focal point "

With respect to Minnow Lake, Section 3.2.2 (entitled "Waterbodies") of the Secondary Plan for the City of Sudbury states that:

" It shall be a target to improve the water quality of Minnow Lake to trophic level 2 and through water quality improvements and lake rehabilitation efforts, work to achieve a sport fishery on Minnow Lake."

2.2 Land Use in the Minnow Lake Community Improvement Area

The predominant land use in the Minnow Lake Community Improvement Area is low density residential development. The majority of these dwellings are located on streets extending from Bancroft Drive, Bellevue Avenue and Howey Drive. The housing stock is generally more than 50 years old. Newer housing stock can be found east of Second Avenue on more recently subdivided and developed lands. There are several multiple family dwellings interspersed throughout the area. The largest concentrations of these dwellings include an apartment complex located on a hilltop at the north end of Minnow Lake and a townhouse development on Second Avenue.

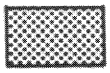
Commercial development in the community improvement area is found at three main locations. The first of these nodes extends west and south from the intersection of Bancroft Drive and Bellevue Avenue. The second node is located at the intersection of Bancroft Drive and Second Avenue. These two nodes, by virtue of their location, receive a great deal of their business from the Minnow Lake community. The other location for commercial development is at the north fringe of the community improvement area along the Kingsway and Second Avenue. Uses at this location serve the entire City and Region given their prominent location adjacent to the Kingsway, a major arterial road.

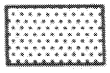
A large proportion of the community improvement area is currently in an undeveloped state. The majority of these undeveloped lands lie between Bancroft Drive and the Kingsway. The undeveloped lands have a rocky terrain and include several hilltops. Informal pedestrian paths and trails can be found throughout these areas.

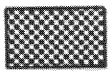
Map 2 illustrates existing land uses in the Minnow Lake Community Improvement Area.

MINNOW LAKE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AREA

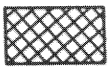
LEGEND

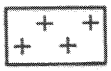
Residential Low 

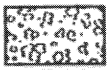
Residential Med. 

Residential High 

Commercial

Institutional 

Cemetery 

Park 

Open Space

MINNOW LAKE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

EXISTING LAND USES

Minnow Lake Community Improvement Area

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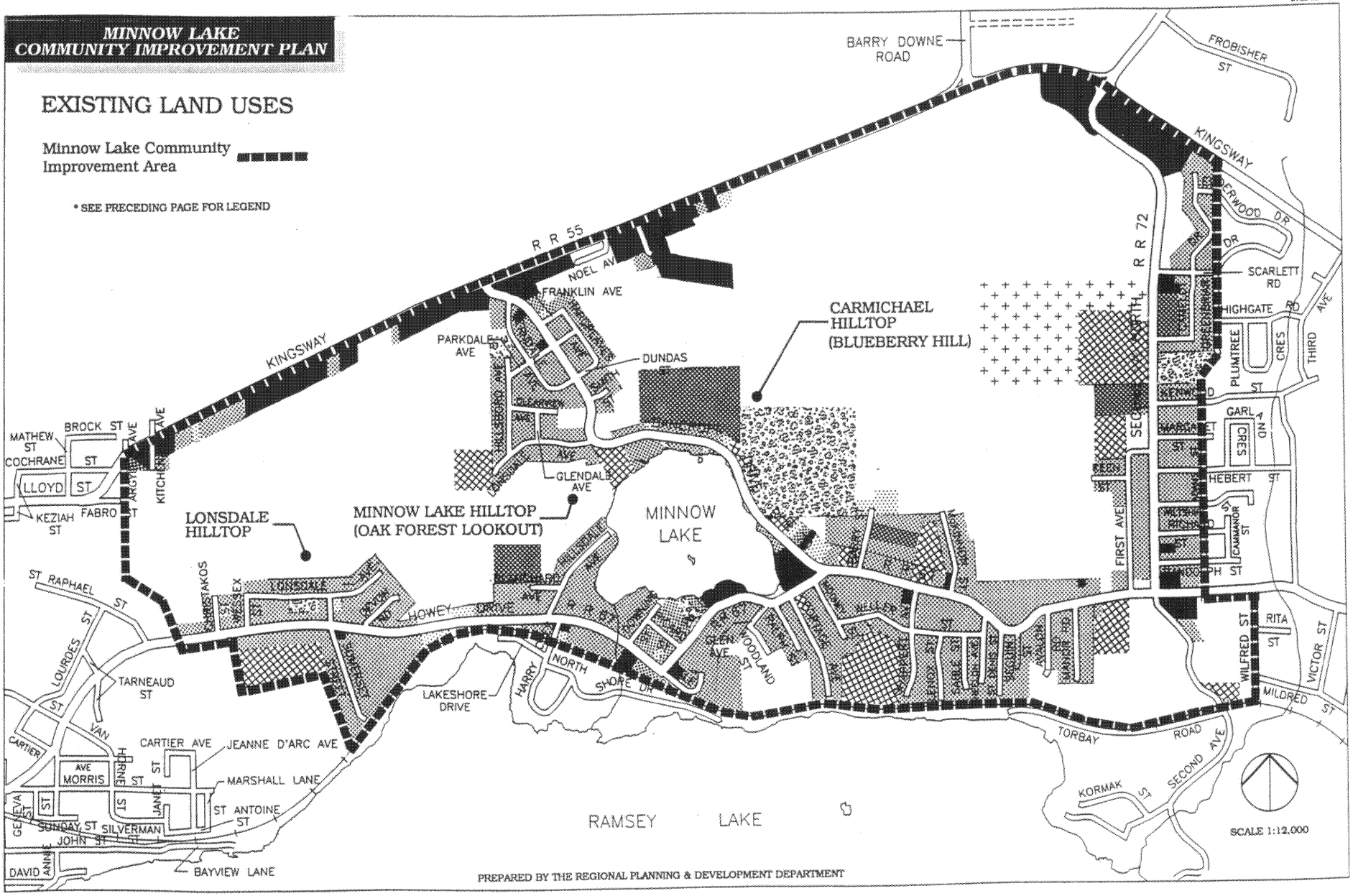

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PART II ISSUES, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

3. Minnow Lake Water Quality

At the centre of the Minnow Lake community improvement area is Minnow Lake. The Lake has a surface area of approximately 20.6 hectares (51 acres), a shoreline perimeter of approximately 1.9 km (1.2 miles) and an average depth of approximately 1.75 metres (5.8 feet). The lake serves as a focal point for the Minnow Lake community but water quality problems have resulted in limited use of the lake. The improvement of the water quality of Minnow Lake to Trophic Level 2 is considered a main priority of this plan.

Minnow Lake currently is a Trophic Level 3 lake. A Level 3 lake has higher chlorophyll a and phosphorous concentrations than a Trophic Level 2 lake. Level 3 lakes therefore have less water clarity and more aquatic vegetation. Level 2 lakes are more suited to water recreation (although bacterial levels are the major factor in determining the suitability of a lake for body contact recreation) and also will support some fisheries. Lake Ramsey is a Trophic Level 2 lake.

Water quality problems in Minnow Lake have a long history dating back to 1883 when a saw mill was established at the southwest corner of the lake. The saw mill operated until 1906 and throughout those 23 years sawdust was deposited in the lake. Residential development around the lake preceded the installation of a municipal sanitary sewer system. As a result, the water quality of the lake was further degraded by runoff from private septic systems.

Since the early 1960's when sanitary sewers were installed in the area, the main source of pollution to Minnow Lake has been runoff. Several storm sewers and drainage culverts enter the lake, the most significant of which introduces runoff from the Kingsway into Minnow Lake. The Minnow Lake Restoration Group has installed filter boxes on three drainage outflows. Also, a detention tank was constructed at the storm sewer near St. Jean School which carries runoff from the Kingsway. While these measures have had some impact on water quality, the large volume of runoff entering Minnow Lake through the St. Jean storm sewer exceeds the capacity of the detention tank. As a result, discharges from this major pollution source are entering Minnow Lake without significant treatment.

In the past decade scientific studies of Minnow Lake by the Minnow Lake Restoration Group, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Laurentian University and Cambrian College have documented Minnow Lake's water quality problems. Some findings recently reported by the Minnow Lake Restoration Group include:

- Ontario Guidelines for Aquatic Phosphorous concentrations recommend the concentration of less than 20 ug/L to prevent nuisance algae growths and less than 20 ug/L to prevent aesthetic deterioration. 27 of 32 samples taken from Minnow Lake in 1990 exhibited phosphorous concentrations equal to or exceeding 20 ug/L.
- secchi disc and chlorophyll (a) data collected from Minnow Lake in 1990 indicate that Minnow Lake is a Level III lake with fair water quality
- 19 of 27 samples of lake water from the Bancroft Drive Beach area exhibited fecal coliform bacteria counts in excess of 100 counts per 100 ml. The Ontario Ministry of the Environment recognizes a potential health hazard in body contact recreation if the count exceeds 100 counts per 100 ml. Samples taken adjacent to the St. Jean School storm sewer were particularly high in fecal coliform bacteria.
- petroleum residues have been observed in storm water entering Minnow Lake
- the lake has copper (10 ug/L) and nickel (120 ug/L) levels which exceed Provincial water quality objectives for the protection of aquatic life and for recreation

- the bed of the south-west bay of Minnow Lake is contaminated with approximately 1 - 2 metres of sawdust and wood bark
- copper and nickel concentrations in the sediment of Minnow Lake exceed the restricted disposal guidelines of the Provincial government

Minnow Lake has a pH of 7.5 according to an analysis by the Ministry of the Environment. Only when the pH drops below 6.0 does acidity pose a problem for a fishery. A fisheries assessment carried out by the Ministry of Natural Resources in 1989-1990 found yellow perch, pumpkin seeds, fathead minnows, golden shiners, Iowa darters, rock bass, northern pike, brown bullheads and white suckers in Minnow Lake. Important fish habitat include the southwest bay and various weed beds present in the lake.

Wildlife noted by the Minnow Lake Restoration Group in and around Minnow Lake include frogs, turtles, muskrat, beaver, loons, a flock of approximately 50 Canadian geese and numerous herring gulls. Various species of ducks were also observed during the fall migration.

3.1 Objectives

a. to undertake engineering measures to improve the water quality of Minnow Lake

b. to educate the public to reduce pollution at its source

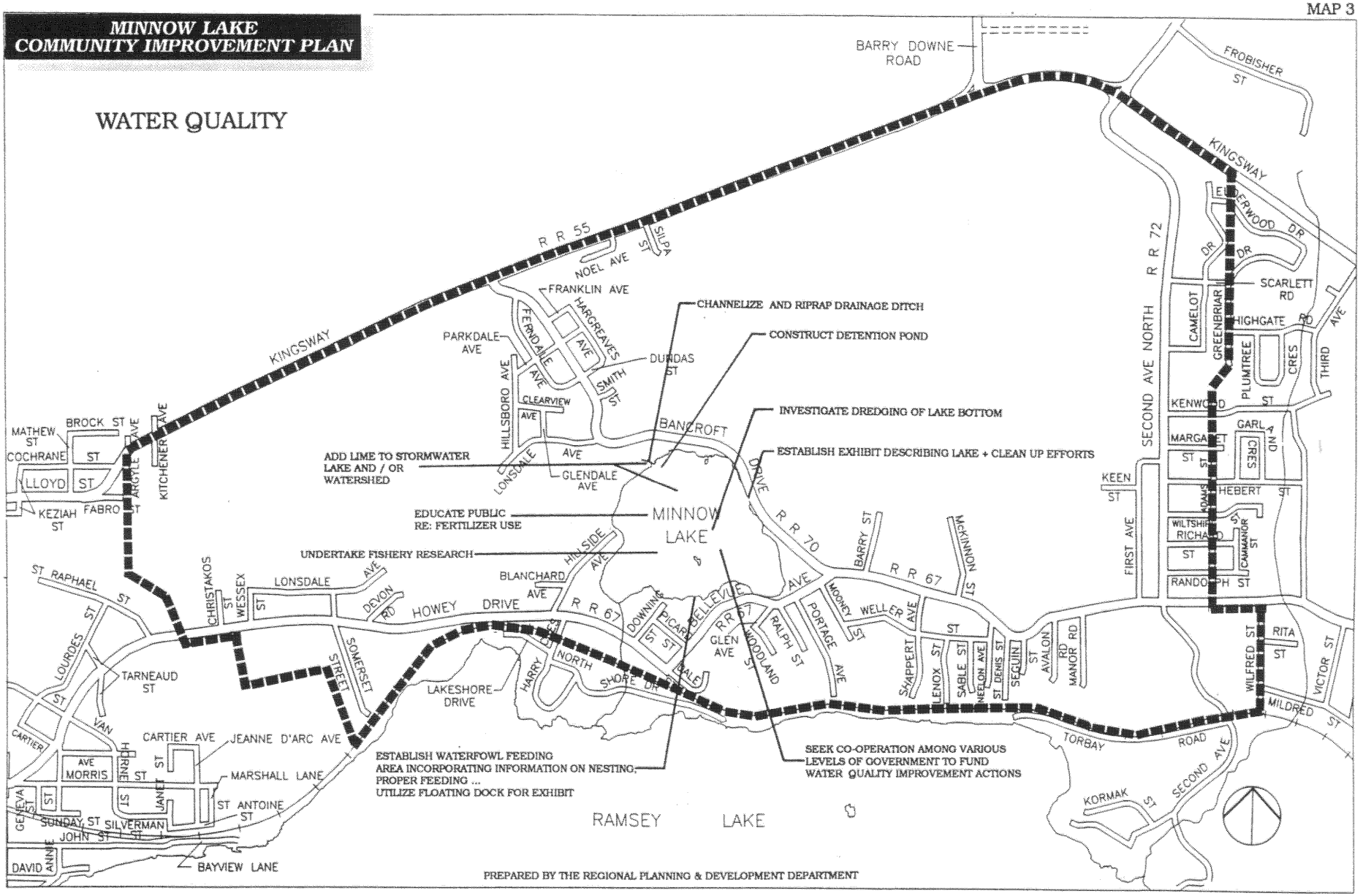
3.2 Actions

Proposed actions for the water quality improvement of Minnow Lake are listed below and shown on Map 3.

i) undertake pollution reduction modifications to St. Jean storm water outflow

MINNOW LAKE
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

WATER QUALITY



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- channelize and riprap the drainage ditch from the mouth of the culvert to the water's edge
- construct a detention pond to trap sediment prior to the introduction of storm water into Minnow Lake. This will involve sectioning off a portion of the lake bed in the vicinity of the St. Jean storm sewer outflow utilizing piles or some other impervious barrier.

ii) add lime to the storm water drainage, to the watershed area and/or the lake itself on an ongoing basis. Regular water quality testing will be required to determine the details of such a liming program.

iii) further investigate the feasibility of dredging to remove sawdust, tree bark and other sediment from the bed of Minnow Lake

iv) as part of Bancroft Drive reconstruction, consolidate stormwater outlets into Minnow Lake where feasible and provide stormwater treatment

v) determine the source of the fecal coliform contamination of the St. Jean storm sewer and eliminate it at its source

vi) educate the public to reduce nutrient loading from properties within the Minnow Lake watershed (e.g. use only fertilizers with low phosphorous)

vii) establish an interpretative exhibit in the vicinity of the beach describing the history of the area and the lake and describing ongoing clean up efforts. Progress reports could be provided at intervals to generate interest and public support.

viii) establish a water fowl feeding area and exhibit in the vicinity of the Carmichael Community Centre on Bellevue Ave. Incorporate examples of nest habitat and provide information on proper feeding, etc. A floating walkway could be included in this exhibit.

ix) establish stormwater management policies and guidelines to minimize the impact on Minnow Lake of new development and public works such as road construction within the Minnow Lake watershed

x) seek co-operation between various levels of government to fund actions to improve the water quality of Minnow Lake

xi) undertake research to improve fishery

xii) gasoline engine motorboats should not be permitted on the lake as they disturb sediment on the lake bottom which has a negative effect on water quality

4. Beautification and Creation of Focal Point for Area

The focal point of the community improvement area is Minnow Lake itself and the lands which abut the lake to the northeast and to a lesser degree to the south. Unique opportunities exist to enhance the role of this area as a focal point. A large portion of the land to the northeast is in the ownership of the Nickel District Conservation Authority and is leased by the City for the Carmichael Sports Complex. A small waterfront park on this property has been developed by the Minnow Lake Restoration Group. Bancroft Drive, which separates the waterfront park portion of the N.D.C.A. property from the Carmichael Sports Complex, is due to be reconstructed in 1992 or 1993. It is possible that improvements suggested in this plan could be incorporated with that work project.

It is considered important that a concerted effort be made to realize improvements in this section of the community improvement area since it is a focal point for activity. Also important is the fact that this specific area is identified with the Minnow Lake community throughout the City of Sudbury. Beautification efforts and improvements in this area should go a long way towards enhancing the image of the Minnow Lake community in the City and setting a new standard for development in the Minnow Lake area.

4.1 Focal Point

4.1.1 Objectives

a. to undertake aesthetic improvements to the Carmichael Sports Complex.

b. to further refine the Bancroft Waterfront Park developed by the Minnow Lake Restoration Group.

c. to make streetscape improvements along Bancroft Drive and Bellevue Avenue and adjoining streets which serve as approaches to Minnow Lake.

4.1.2 Actions

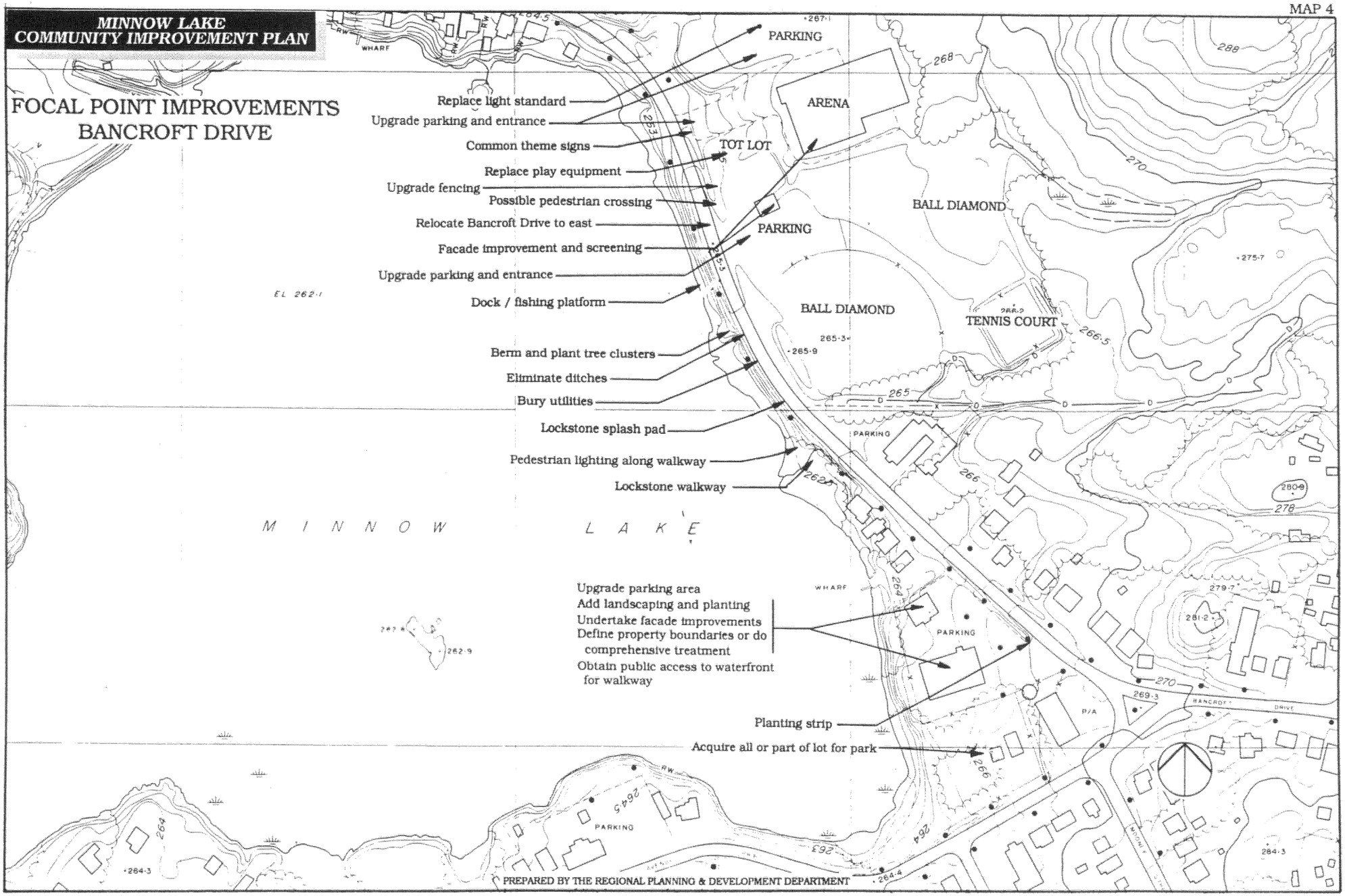
The following is a detailed list of improvements proposed for the community improvement area. Map 4 provides a summary picture of the scheme for the Bancroft Drive portion of the proposal while Map 5 illustrates the Bellevue Avenue area.

i) *Carmichael Sports Complex*

- the width of the entrances to the arena parking area and to the ballfield parking area should be restricted and framed with landscaped areas and curbing
- the appearance of the parking areas could be enhanced through resurfacing, curbs, painted lines, modern light standards and planters
- facade improvements to the arena and the Sudbury Minor Hockey Association office building should be undertaken in conjunction with the planting of evergreen trees for partial screening. If possible, the SMHA office building should be removed and the offices relocated.
- the existing tot lot should be upgraded through the replacement of the play equipment

MINNOW LAKE
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

FOCAL POINT IMPROVEMENTS
BANCROFT DRIVE



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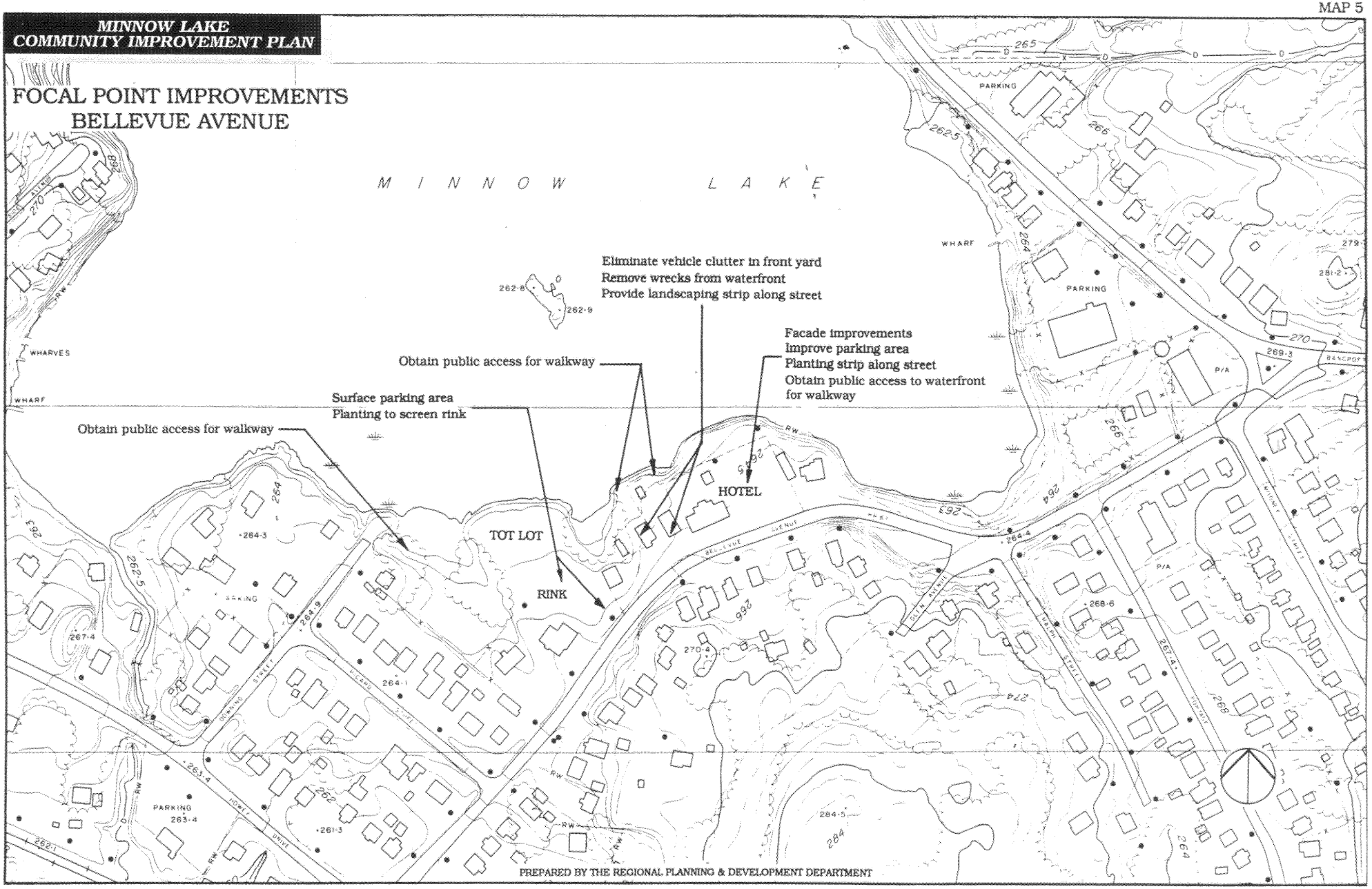
FOCAL POINT IMPROVEMENTS
BELLEVUE AVENUE



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- landscaping should be provided along the entire frontage of the Carmichael Sports Complex with the exception of the parking area entrances
- fencing should be provided along the Bancroft Drive frontage of the Carmichael Sports Complex to provide for the safety of children and to frame the site
- signage for all the public facilities should be designed along a common theme for cohesiveness and to promote the area's identity

ii) *Bancroft Waterfront Park*

- define pathways with lockstone pavers
- pedestrian light standards and coordinated benches could be added to the site
- undertake additional tree planting and landscaping
- a pedestrian crossing to the Carmichael Sports Complex may be desireable
- storm water drainage ditches should be eliminated where possible
- undertake ice testing to determine feasibility of providing ice skating oval around the lake
- add water spray fountain in Minnow Lake
- undertake research and actions necessary to improve Minnow Lake fishery
- undertake research and actions necessary to improve water quality to possibly permit body contact recreation (e.g. sailboarding)
- consideration should be given to purchasing other waterfront properties along Bancroft Drive as they become available with a view to expanding the park

iii) *Bancroft Drive Reconstruction*

- it would be desirable to realign Bancroft Drive to the north in front of the Carmichael Sports Complex in order to provide additional waterfront park area
- the appearance of the area would be improved through the replacement of overhead utility lines by underground utility lines. Alternatively,

consideration should be given to relocating the utility lines to the north side of Bancroft Drive

- additional property may be required for the road allowance
- the existing ditches will be eliminated when Bancroft Drive is reconstructed to meet full urban standards
- a landscaping strip with tree planting along Bancroft Drive and Bellevue Avenue would be desirable to provide a break from the asphalt parking lots in the commercial sections and to blend better with the adjacent residential properties. Such planting would also identify these routes as "approaches" to the focal point of the community.
- Lockstone splash pads would be preferable to asphalt splash pads.

iv) *Minnow Lake*

- undertake necessary ice testing and if feasible provide a skating oval on Minnow Lake
- provide a water spray fountain in the lake in front of the Carmichael Sports Complex

v) *Commercial Properties*

- with the reconstruction of Bancroft Drive, better defined entrances to the commercial properties should be provided. Landscaping would assist in framing the entrances
- parking areas for the commercial properties are highly visible from Bancroft Drive - landscaping including tree planting along the street frontage would improve the aesthetics of the area
- businesses should be encouraged to undertake facade improvements and to provide signage in keeping with a unified theme
- the visual aspects of proposed developments should be carefully considered when reviewing site plan agreement submissions for the community improvement area

vi) *Privately Owned Waterfront Properties*

- private property owners should be encouraged to provide public access to the waterfront to allow for a walkway system around the entire lake