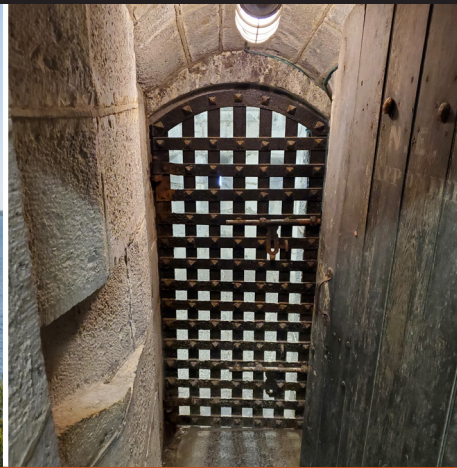




Parks
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Kingston Fortifications

National Historic Site of Canada

Management Plan

2023



Part of the
Rideau Canal UNESCO
World Heritage Site



2023

Kingston Fortifications

National Historic Site of Canada
and part of the Rideau Canal UNESCO
World Heritage Site

Draft Management Plan

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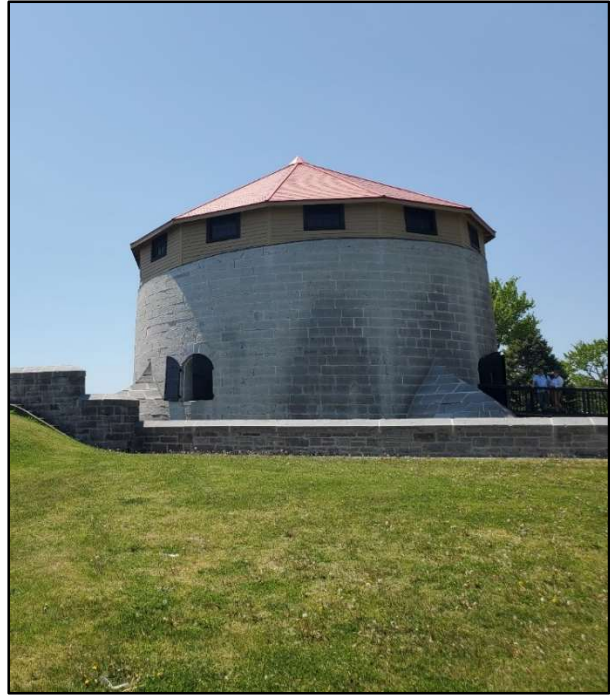
1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada administers one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. Parks Canada's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national historic site, national park, national marine conservation area and heritage canal administered by Parks Canada supports its vision:

Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for national historic sites administered by Parks Canada. The *Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*, once approved by the President & Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada, ensures Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians, outlining how historic site management will achieve measurable results in support of its mandate.

Indigenous peoples are important partners in the stewardship of heritage places, with connections to the lands and waters since time immemorial. The draft plan sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site by articulating a vision, key strategies, and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years or sooner if required.



Murney Tower National Historic Site

This plan is not an end in and of itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of the management plan, to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement and, where appropriate, consultation, on the management of Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site in years to come.

2.0 Significance of Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site, part of the Rideau Canal UNESCO World Heritage Site

The Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site of Canada is located in Kingston, Ontario, the first capital of the Province of Canada. Situated at the mouth of the Cataraqui River and at the eastern end of Lake Ontario where the St. Lawrence River begins, together they form an extensive 19th century defence system. Individual elements of the fortifications have been commemorated as historic sites since the 1920s. However, the fortifications as a collective were designated in 1989 because of the combined role of all elements in their defence of Kingston harbour, the southern part of the Rideau Canal, the Naval Dockyards, and the eastern access to Lake Ontario.



View of Point Frederick from Fort Henry National Historic Site


In 2007, the Rideau Canal and Kingston Fortifications were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The UNESCO designation includes the Rideau Canal (lock stations and waterway), and the fortification sites in Kingston which encompass five different structures: Fort Henry, Fort Frederick, Cathcart, Shoal, and Murney towers. Distinct among those, Fort Frederick is owned and managed by National Defence, therefore is not included in this management plan.

Long recognized as a strategic site, the construction of the fortifications began at the outbreak of the War of 1812 and continued through the 1830s and 1840s, as Kingston evolved into a major commercial, political, naval, and military centre in the colony of Upper Canada. Although the fortifications were never tested in war, the imposing system they collectively create points to the historic and strategic importance of this place that called for such defences.

Several buildings and engineering works that form Kingston Fortifications are designated as Federal Heritage Buildings. In addition to the different layers of designations, the UNESCO World Heritage statement of Outstanding Universal Values recognizes the military purpose of the construction of the Rideau Canal, and the Kingston Fortifications (including Fort Henry), and their link to a significant stage in history, when Britain and the United States were fighting for control of the northern part of North America. The military fortifications built in Kingston also represent the transfer of European military technology to North America:

- Fort Henry:** Located on Point Henry, a promontory approximately 30 metres above lake level, the fort has a commanding view of the north channel of the St. Lawrence River, the mouth of the Cataraqui River (and south entrance of the Rideau Canal), the Naval Dockyards, and Kingston Harbour. This massive 19th-century British fortification was designated as a national historic site in 1923. Fort Henry was considerably more advanced than other major fortifications built in British North America. Citadels built in the 1820s at Halifax and Québec City conformed to the traditional Vauban design of fortification. At Fort Henry, engineers abandoned this approach, adapting newer Prussian thinking to create a fortification that was unique in British North America. The result was a powerful and compact fort, well suited to the topography of Point

Henry. The heritage character of the fort resides in features expressing its status as a specialized military structure:

- Closed defensive works with flanking defence ditches (each with their own Martello-like tower), the mounting of artillery in open battery for lakeward defence, the musketry and artillery defence of the dry ditches for overland defence, and the accommodation of officers and enlisted men in casemated barracks.
 - **Murney Tower:** Located west of the harbour on the shoreline in Macdonald Park, Murney Tower is the westernmost element of the Kingston Fortifications. Built in 1846 and commemorated as a national historic site in 1930, distinct from the Kingston Fortifications designation, it is a remarkable example of a Martello tower. Like the other Martello towers, it had been adapted by the British from round tower fortifications found on the European continent. The use of this design was extended to British North America, eventually resulting in the building of fourteen towers in total, five in Halifax, one in Saint John, four in Québec City, and the last being the four in Kingston. This last group of towers all incorporated significant innovative structural and external features to address defensive weaknesses previously associated with this type of fortification. Of the four in Kingston, Murney is the best example of the final phase in this process of evolution. Like traditional Martello towers, it consisted of two floors with a gun platform protected by a high parapet. Surrounded by a deep ditch with dry masonry counterscarp, earth, and rubble glacis, and protected by four caponiers, Murney Tower is regarded as the most sophisticated Martello tower built in British North America.
 - **Shoal Tower:** Built in 1847, and designated a historic site in 1924, Shoal Tower is surrounded by water, adjacent to Confederation Park, the Confederation Basin Marina, and Kingston City Hall. Shoal tower is also a prominent Martello tower in the city's landscape and adorns the municipal flag and coat of arms. Not open to the public, it can only be appreciated from a distance. Built such that it is surrounded by water some 100 metres offshore, Shoal Tower combined with Market Battery, which once stood in Confederation Park, controlled access to Kingston's commercial harbour and the Rideau Canal.
- 
- Shoal Tower National Historic Site
- **Cathcart Tower:** Cathcart Tower was the last of the Martello towers completed in British North America. Finished in 1848 at the summit of Cedar Island, a small, but elevated island just east of Fort Henry, Cathcart Tower formed the easternmost part of the Kingston Fortifications and combined with the batteries of Fort Henry, controlled access to the north channel of the St. Lawrence. Cathcart Tower, like Murney Tower, has prominent caponiers to provide flanking fire to defend the tower. Due to the narrow rise of land on which it sits, only a shallow dry ditch is carved out of the bedrock as the steep natural slope of the island provides a formidable obstacle. Cedar Island is part of Thousand Islands National Park and access to the site is by boat only.

The Kingston Fortifications are in the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee, Wendat, and Anishinaabe peoples, and are located approximately halfway between Akwesasne and Tyendinaga Mohawk First Nations.

3.0 Planning Context

With a population of approximately 144,000, Kingston is a major heritage tourism attraction, with an extensive collection of historic structures of which Fort Henry is a principal heritage attraction. Its popularity is due to its outstanding location as well as many large-scale events hosted annually.

Located at Confederation Park, adjacent to Shoal Tower, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaques provide information on the Kingston Fortifications along with UNESCO designation signage which visibly links the different sites together, conveying the broader World Heritage designation of the fortifications as a whole. Interpretive content is a key element of the UNESCO designation and should be enhanced to fulfill the mandate related to the interpretation of this World Heritage Site.

Parks Canada does not actively operate any of the Kingston Fortifications. Visitors are welcomed to Fort Henry National Historic Site, and Murney Tower National Historic Site through partners. These partners are responsible for all facets of visitor experience, access, and interpretation, with Parks Canada supporting initiatives from a cultural resource management perspective and in a tenant / landlord style relationship.

Fort Henry National Historic Site is managed through a Memorandum of Agreement between Parks Canada and the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, an agency of the Government of Ontario. Since 1999, when the property was transferred to Parks Canada from National Defence, more than \$40M has been invested in conservation work at the fort. Under this management plan, Fort Henry National Historic Site is the subject of an area management approach.



Murney Tower National Historic Site

Having had significant investment and conservation work undertaken since the previous management plans, Murney, Shoal and Cathcart towers remain in good condition. Recent projects saw additional improvements to the three towers in the areas of masonry, metal shutters, painting of exterior woodwork, interior finish repairs, assessment of windows and doors, and the introduction of winterizing covers for these openings. An ongoing capital maintenance program is in place to support the preservation of the towers.

Murney Tower has operated under a Licence of Occupation by the Kingston Historical Society as a museum since 1925. The society opens Murney Tower to the public daily from Victoria Day weekend until Labour Day, offering interpretive programming, and providing visitors with an opportunity to experience and appreciate the role of the Martello towers as part of the fortifications system. The Kingston Historical Society has recently developed after-hours programming with partners and has established a presence on social media in addition to creating interpretive content that introduces Indigenous perspectives to the story of the region.

Shoal and Cathcart towers are non-operational structures, but their exteriors can be viewed and appreciated. Shoal and Cathcart towers will continue to be operated as sites with non-personal interpretation.

A state of the site assessment conducted in 2018 reports the condition of the towers as good due to the significant conservation work and ongoing capital investments. Fort Henry was also considered to be in good condition with a number of rehabilitation projects having recently been completed (investments

totalling over \$20M in the last 10 years). This work was essential for asset preservation and promotes its integrity and longevity. Still, water infiltration, weather, and current climate conditions continue to damage historic masonry and threaten its condition. The ongoing effects of climate change locally include increased freeze/thaw cycles, increased severe storm activity (wind shear and rain volume) which may pose and increase risk to asset condition and sustainability in the future.

Also noted as a challenge is the extensive artefacts collection in storage (approximately 100 000 artefacts) which have yet to be inventoried and evaluated. The collection needs to be evaluated to determine the heritage value of the items and then determine how to appropriately protect them. Through this work, the identification of objects would aid in the development of opportunities for visitor experience, public appreciation, and understanding. Cultural resource evaluation is an important and valuable undertaking for conservation and furthering understanding of the fortifications.

The waterbodies surrounding the Kingston Fortifications; the Cataraqui River, the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, and Kingston Harbour, are the most significant ecosystem features present. These bodies provide riparian habitat whereas the majority of other landscapes are largely manicured lawns and shrubland.

Finally, the fort's landscapes were rated in fair condition. A 2011 landscape conservation plan recommended the restoration of the landscape to condition of the 19th century fortification period, that is, pastoral land with limited trees. Restoring the landscape to the fortification period condition would help protect views to and from the fortifications and would preserve archaeological resources.

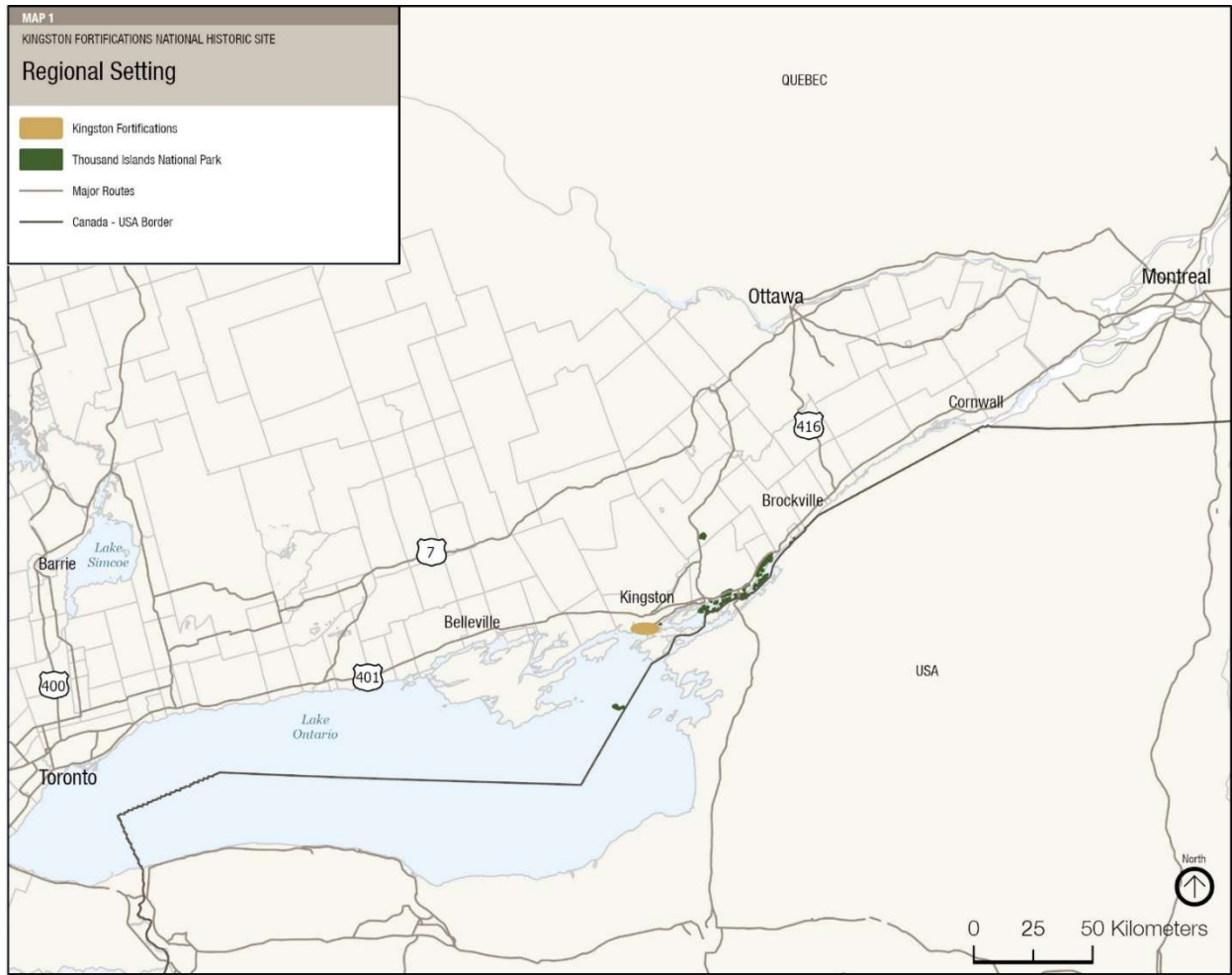


Fort Henry National Historic Site

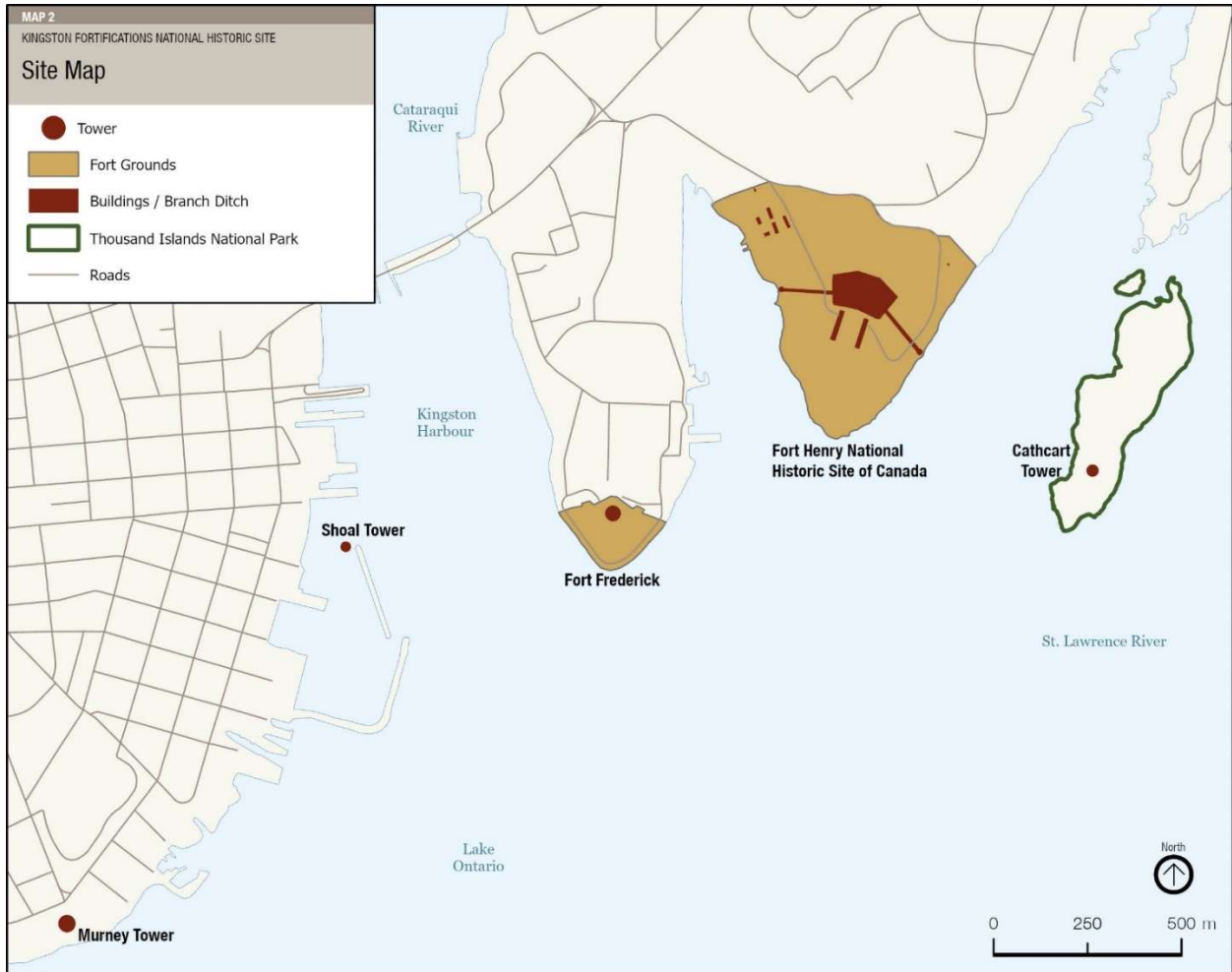
As the Kingston Fortifications are located in an urban environment, development on adjacent properties continue to impact the views. Parks Canada will work with adjacent owners and the City of Kingston on topics of mutual interest (e.g. zoning, climate change adaptation-related measures, highlighting cultural values, etc.) and continue to encourage and showcase all the cultural values the Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site has to offer in the region.

Parks Canada continues to work and develop relationships with both the formal councils of Akwesasne and Tyendinaga First Nations, as well as the population of Indigenous peoples living in and around Kingston, to better ensure that Indigenous voices are included in commemoration of these historic places. Work at heritage places administered by Parks Canada in the community continues to inspire and encourage ongoing participation, cooperation, and understanding of Indigenous perspectives on the significant landmarks.

Map 1: Regional Setting



Map 2: Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site



4.0 Vision

The vision presented below expresses the future desired state of the Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site in 15-20 years:

As part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Kingston Fortifications and Fort Henry are vital to Kingston's landscape and identity. Their collective presence around Kingston Harbour, creating an imposing defence complex, speaks to the importance of these historic structures in the first capital of the united provinces of Canada. Recognized as a major landmark in Ontario, and the largest tourism attraction in the Kingston region, the fortifications offer Canadians and visitors enriching and meaningful personal and non-personal heritage experiences, that enable them to appreciate the linkage between each element of the Kingston Fortifications and their role in Canada's history. They are also places where all Canadians and visitors can connect and learn about rich Indigenous history and perspectives.

Along with other heritage places administered by Parks Canada in and around Kingston, including historic sites, a national park and an historic canal, the fortifications showcase Parks Canada's expertise and work in restoration, rehabilitation, conservation, and commemoration.

Presenting incredible viewsapes and open spaces from the promontory on which it was erected, Fort Henry is protected through sound conservation programs and a sustainable maintenance plan based on an inter-agency partnership with the St. Lawrence Parks Commission.



View of Cedar Island and Cathcart Tower from Fort Henry National Historic Site

With improved accessibility and enhanced interpretation, the Martello Towers are preserved and protected by federal and municipal land-use planning tools, heritage conservation guidelines and practices. New inclusive programming expands on key themes of pre and post-contact history in the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario region, treaties, and Indigenous involvement in Kingston and Upper Canada.

The Kingston Fortifications benefit from strong community support, including that of the Kingston Historical Society, and the Fort Henry Guard (alumni and current members), creating a sense of belonging that contributes to their commemoration and long-term conservation. The fortifications are also supported by Indigenous partners in presenting heritage perspectives related to the relationship with the land before and during colonization.

5.0 Key Strategies

As a long-term strategic plan, aligned with the Government of Canada’s approach for results-based planning, the Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site management plan focuses on the results that Parks Canada plans to achieve at the sites within the next ten years. The intent of the management plan is to provide decision makers, Indigenous and other partners, stakeholders, and the public with the priorities that will guide actions and decision-making at the site.

The components of results-based planning work together as follows:

- Key Strategies – present major themes, and introduce broad management approaches working toward achieving the vision as presented;
- Objectives – present management priorities and identify desired results;
- Targets – measure success in achieving objectives over the implementation period.

The management directions identified in this section take into account available resources and existing capacity for the Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site. Some undertakings may require additional support/resources and rely on opportunities to partner with external collaborators. Where no specific timelines are given, all targets are meant to be achieved within the ten-year life of this plan.

The objectives and results presented below are consistent with the current responsibilities of Parks Canada at the sites: capital investments and cultural resource management. The delivery of visitor experience including programming, public safety, special events, and operational maintenance, is under the responsibility of partners such as the St. Lawrence Parks Commission and the Kingston Historical Society. As no change is expected to the role of Parks Canada at the fortifications during the next 10 years, no specific expected results refer to these activities.

The following two key strategies frame the management direction for Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site.



View of Cedar Island and Cathcart Tower from Fort Henry National Historic Site

Key Strategy 1: Outstanding value on a universal scale

Since UNESCO declared the Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site as part of the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site in 2007, the profile of these historic places has increased, along with public and community partner expectations. Protecting a massive asset such as Fort Henry and maintaining uniquely sophisticated Martello towers constitutes an important responsibility that requires expertise and funding. This strategy aims to address the conservation challenges of these historic structures so that they are protected and Canadians can continue to enjoy memorable and authentic experiences at these sites. Parks Canada seeks opportunities to meet universal access standards¹ in conjunction with partners (e.g. development of virtual experiences). The fortifications form a unique and memorable ensemble of a defence complex, each site has unique characteristics, and the landscapes are part of the broader identity of the Kingston Fortifications. Preservation of the visual integrity as individual elements, but also as a collective group of fortifications, is important in an urban environment.

¹ Universal accessibility is defined as the character of a product, process, service, information or environment that, with equity and inclusiveness in mind, enables any person to perform activities independently and achieve equivalent results.



Entrance level of Murney Tower National Historic Site

Objective 1.1: Long-term sustainability of the built heritage assets is prioritized through a sound conservation plan.

Targets

- By 2027, built assets are assessed to be in fair to good condition.
- Artefact conditions remain stable in the next state of site assessment.
- By 2032, more archeological resources are identified and evaluated compared to 2018.

Objective 1.2: The fortifications' landscapes are preserved.

Targets

- Landscape and landscape features are managed with partners prioritizing improvements.
- Species at risk continue to be monitored and identified at the site through project-level impact assessment.
- Annual meetings occur with municipal partners in consultation related to planning and surrounding development.

Key Strategy 2: An active community member bringing partners together

Parks Canada is privileged to work with several partners to protect and enhance the national historic sites it administers in Kingston. Presenting Indigenous connections to the sites, including their pre-colonial and post-colonial presence in the Kingston area is an important element of this strategy. Multiple jurisdictions sharing responsibilities over heritage structures require a global long-term approach for operational and site sustainability. Therefore, this strategy focuses on fostering a regular dialogue to set a framework for clear expectations between the parties on items such as maintenance requirements, commercial/retail opportunities at the sites, directional signage and site safety, visitor experience offers, resources protection, branding, and promotions.

This strategy also pursues ways for Parks Canada to fulfill its mandate related to raising awareness and presenting these sites' universal values so more Canadians and visitors can appreciate the strategic importance and interconnectivity of each element of the fortifications. Connecting the experiences at each site together will contribute to telling the story of this defence complex.

Objective 2.1: Indigenous connections to the sites are supported in collaboration with partners.

Target

- By 2026, a dialogue is initiated with local Indigenous partners through respectful, mutually beneficial engagement efforts.

Objective 2.2: Parks Canada and partners work collaboratively on initiatives towards engaging visitors in experiences designed to highlight the importance of the fortifications as a whole.

Targets

- The UNESCO designation is incorporated into branding for activities specific to the Kingston Fortifications whether delivered by Parks Canada, the municipality, the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, or the Kingston Historical Society.
- Through partnering, Murney Tower continues to function as a museum and facilitates public access.
- New initiatives are explored to enhance experiences such as non-personal connection (virtual initiatives) at Murney and Shoal towers.

Objective 2.3: Partners have a shared understanding of the priorities and responsibilities for the sites' operation and maintenance.

Targets

- By 2028, agreement(s) for how to work together on common initiatives in the community is(are) established.
- Opportunities to, and feasibility of, better connecting the Kingston Fortifications as a whole (e.g. lighting, interactive maps, etc.) are explored.
- Collaboration with the City of Kingston continues to engage the municipality on issues directly related to the heritage value of the Kingston Fortifications and preservation efforts.

6.0 Management Area - Fort Henry National Historic Site

In support of the management plan's two key strategies, this section presents detailed objectives that are specific to Fort Henry National Historic Site.

The St. Lawrence Parks Commission is responsible for the delivery of the visitor experience including programming, promotion, public safety, special events, and operational maintenance of the fort, while Parks Canada, as the administrator, is responsible for capital investments and cultural resource management. Operation of the fort by the St. Lawrence Parks Commission is provided through a Memorandum of Agreement, last updated in 2010. This agreement defines requirements for regular maintenance by the St. Lawrence Parks Commission and for Parks Canada-led capital projects but specifics regarding financial commitments by either party are outdated. Capital investments and regular maintenance are both essential responsibilities and crucial to ensure long-term conservation of the cultural resources.

The St. Lawrence Parks Commission welcomes approximately 100 000 visitors to the fort annually. From Victoria Day weekend to Labour Day, the Commission offers daily programming that may include guided tours, cannon firing, garrison parade, children's military muster parades Victorian school lessons, weapons and military training demonstrations, as well as other special events. Overall, visitation to the fort's core daily offer has increased by 19% since 2016. In addition, the St. Lawrence Parks Commission also hosts annual large-scale events and programs such as Cannonball Crush, Sunset Ceremonies, Fort Henry Tattoo, Pumpkinferno, and Fort Fright which attract visitors from across Canada and around the world.



Fort Henry Guard band
Photo: St. Lawrence Parks Commission

Objective: Fort Henry National Historic Site continues to welcome visitors in an authentic setting.

Targets:

- Parks Canada and the St. Lawrence Parks Commission continue to work together and identify common priorities to guide programming initiatives annually.
- Regular maintenance of cultural resources continues to be undertaken cooperatively at the fort as identified in agreements.

7.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment



Fort Henry Guard in square formation
Photo: St. Lawrence Parks Commission

The purpose of a strategic environmental assessment is to incorporate environmental considerations into the development of public policies, plans, and program proposals, to support environmentally sound decision-making. In accordance with The Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals (2010), a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) was conducted on the Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site of Canada (NHSC) Management Plan.

Many positive effects are expected to occur resulting from the implementation of the management plan, including presenting Indigenous connections to the sites, improving visitor access to and interpretation of the site, identifying and evaluating additional archeological resources at the site, and the restoration and preservation of the fortifications' landscapes. The most significant positive effect will be to ensure the protection of these historic structures, so that Canadians can continue to enjoy memorable and authentic experiences at these sites. A potential negative effect is the loss of natural habitat on site and any corresponding concern from visitors, residents and stakeholders. Any potential negative environmental effects from increased visitation can be mitigated through the use of existing policies and instruments. Project-level impact assessment will be able to mitigate any potential adverse impacts from individual projects resulting from this plan. Operations at the site are required to mitigate impacts on climate according to Greening Government requirements in support of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy.

Indigenous partners, stakeholders and the public will be consulted on the draft management plan, including a summary of the draft strategic environmental assessment. Feedback will be considered and incorporated into the strategic environmental assessment and management plan as appropriate.

If the appropriate mitigation measures are applied, there are no important adverse environmental effects anticipated from the implementation of the management plan. The overall environmental effect of the objectives and targets of the plan are expected to be positive.