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Community Profile

TOWN OF BLIND RIVER, ONTARIO



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H A R D Y
S T E V E N S O N
A N D A S S O C I A T E S

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Blind River, ON


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Acronyms

APM	Adaptive Phased Management
AWIC	Algoma Workforce Investment Committee
BRCC	Blind River Chamber of Commerce
BRDC	Blind River Development Corporation
BR+E	Business Retention and Expansion
BRDHC	Blind River District Health Centre
CFDC	East Algoma Community Future Development Corporation
CPR	Canadian Pacific Railroad
EA	Environmental Assessment
EACFDC	East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
FIR	Financial Information Return
MASL	Metres Above Sea Level
MNO	Métis Nation of Ontario
MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources
MPAC	Municipal Property Assessment Corporation
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWMO	Nuclear Waste Management Organization
OPP	Ontario Provincial Police
PPS	Provincial Policy Statement
RFP	Request for Proposal
ToR	Terms of Reference
WWIS	Water Well Information System

1.0 CONTEXT

This community profile has been prepared as part of the Town of Blind River's participation in the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's (NWMO) *Learn More* program. This program is offered to communities interested in exploring and potentially hosting the Adaptive Phased Management project, the deep geological repository and centre of expertise which is required as part of Canada's plan for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel.

The profile brings together information about the community, their history, their aspirations, and current conditions. The information contained in the profile is not an assessment of any kind; instead it is intended to paint a picture of the community as it stands today. Such a picture can be a helpful starting point for community discussions about how future projects might be implemented in the community, and the extent to which a project might contribute to the well-being of the community over the long term, including the Adaptive Phased Management project. The Adaptive Phased Management project will only be implemented in a community that has reflected upon whether the project will contribute to community well-being and, after a series of detailed studies have been completed to confirm the safety and appropriateness of a site, has expressed an informed willingness to host the project. Over time, communities in the surrounding area will also need to become involved in the learning process.

This profile is organized to describe the characteristics of the community through five different perspectives or 'lenses':

- Human: Skills, knowledge and essential services supporting the well-being of the community;
- Economic: Monetary or financial resources supporting the well-being of the community;
- Infrastructure: Basic physical infrastructure supporting the well-being of the community;
- Social: Social and community activities in which people participate and the resources drawn upon to support well-being; and
- Natural environment: Nature and the natural environment important to well-being.

The characteristics of the community are referred to as 'assets' throughout the report. This is intended to highlight their importance and pave the way for a broad and holistic discussion of how the community may be affected by the Adaptive Phased Management project, or other large project which the community may consider. This discussion of the characteristics of the community which support community life may also help the community identify other important aspects which should also be considered.

The information and data used to compile this profile was derived from a combination of sources, including:

- Publicly available documents and statistics;

- Data and information provided by the community; and,
- Insights derived from discussion with the Community Liaison Committees and through interviews with community leaders.

Although this profile contains references to other communities within the region, these references are intended only as a means to round out the community profile and provide some context for discussion.

The NWMO *Learn More* program encourages collaboration and shared learning involving the NWMO and the community throughout all stages of reflection and decision-making. NWMO efforts to learn about and understand the community, their aspirations and current conditions will continue throughout the duration of the Town of Blind River's involvement in the *Learn More* program.

1.1 Report Format

Please note that for the Statistics Canada data presented in this profile, the most recent census and National Household Survey data used are for 2011 (where available). In some instances, due to recent changes in how Statistics Canada conducts their data collection, 2006 data may also be used where necessary. In addition, some data has been derived from interviews in the community.

2.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE – TOWN OF BLIND RIVER

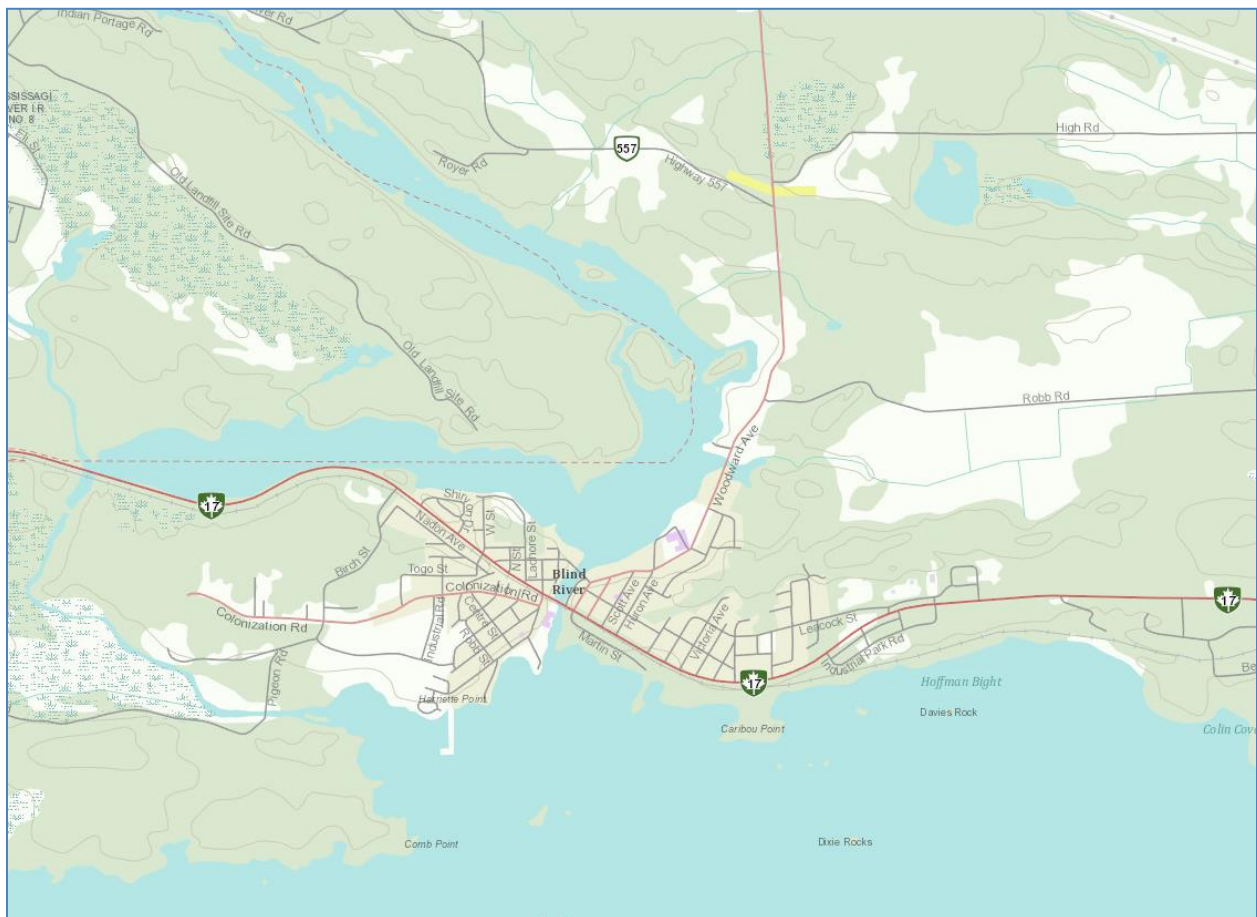
2.1 Overview

This section of the community profile depicts the characteristics of the Town of Blind River.

2.1.1 Location

The Town of Blind River is located in Algoma District on the North Channel of Lake Huron along Trans-Canada Highway 17, approximately 140 km east of Sault Ste. Marie and approximately 165 km west of Sudbury. It is also located in proximity to the Mississauga First Nation.

Figure 1 - Map of the Town of Blind River



2.1.2 Land Size

The Town of Blind River covers 526.46 km² of land¹.

¹ Statistics Canada, 2011. Census Community Profile. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Online, August, 2013.

2.1.3 Vision and Strategic Plan

The Blind River Development Corporation Community Economic Development Strategy – Strategy for a Sustainable Economy (prepared by DPRA in 2013) states that the community vision is:

“Blind River is a well-managed and resilient community with a rich heritage and robust economic base. It is a desirable community in which to live, work, grow and invest. The Town has vibrant artistic and cultural resources, thriving community celebration and exceptional visitor services and infrastructure providing the necessary support for a thriving tourism and hospitality industry.”²

The Town of Blind River Official Plan was approved in 2006³. An updated Official Plan is approved in Draft format pending revisions. The community vision was developed for the 1992 Strategic Plan entitled ‘Our Town: Our Future’⁴. This Strategic Plan was updated in 1996 at which time it confirmed its Vision Statement as⁵:

“Blind River is a uniquely located, friendly, multicultural community, committed to developing its regional role through progressive and responsible management. The community vision is to:

- *Pursue well planned, moderate growth in cooperation with neighbouring municipalities and other governments;*
- *Create a climate which promotes investment and provide local employment opportunities;*
- *Promote its natural beauty and clean environment while ensuring their protection;*
- *Responsibly manage its municipal infrastructure;*
- *Foster a welcoming sense of community; and*
- *Manage its resources in a fiscally responsible and effective manner.”*

This Vision Statement was incorporated into the 2006 Official Plan. However, the Official Plan expands upon the Town of Blind River’s vision by stating that:

“Blind River sees a unique community located midway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie which capitalizes on its geographic location on the north shore of Lake Huron and its pristine natural areas. The Town is proud of its small Town atmosphere and the ability of its French, English, and Native peoples to live and work together. This Plan intends to protect these strengths and also build on the Town’s role as a regional centre for shopping, educational, health, social, and recreational activities. In addition, the Town sees itself as the centre for arts and cultural development, services and facilities in the area. The Town will build on its partnerships with local arts and cultural organizations and individuals and the Mississauga First

² DPRA, 2013. Blind River Development Corporation Community Economic Development Strategy – Strategy for a Sustainable Economy.

³ Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

⁴ Town of Blind River, 1995. (Strategic Plan) Our Town: Our Future.

⁵ Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

Nation to become the artistic and cultural destination for the north shore of Lake Huron and beyond.

The waterfront on Lake Huron and the Blind River, and the many smaller lakes and Provincial Parks within the new Town, are amenities to be enjoyed by residents and visitors to the municipality. Trail systems within the Town and connecting to the Town provide major recreational opportunities for Blind River. This Official Plan will ensure that Blind River's waterfront and open spaces are maintained and developed as important and strategic community assets"⁶.

The Official Plan also states:

"Policies related to design are an important component to the Plan. Blind River has been interested in developing and maintaining a consistent theme to the entrances to the Town, its parks and trail systems, and its commercial areas for some time. The Plan recognizes the importance of design issues and design control.

The [2006] Official Plan assumes that the high quality of life now enjoyed by the Town's residents can be maintained and enhanced if Blind River's existing strengths and attributes can be promoted and developed. It is the intent of this Plan to provide Council with a set of policies to manage future growth and change while protecting Blind River's unique character, natural heritage features and ensuring its continued economic vitality"⁷.

The longevity of its Vision Statement, based upon its reaffirmation and use as a guiding vision in its 2006 Official Plan, indicates that the Town of Blind River has a very strong and proud sense of self.

2.2 Human Assets

2.2.1 Human Asset Indicators

This section discusses human assets in the Town of Blind River. Human assets include the skills and knowledge inherent in a community and the ability of a community to provide its residents with access to other skills, knowledge, and essential services that are fundamental to maintaining community well-being, or a desired standard of living. Human assets indicators include population size and demographics, skills and labour, education, and health and safety facilities and services.

2.2.1.1 Population Size and Demographics *Population Changes*

The population of the Town of Blind River declined by 18.9 percent over the past 15 years (see Table 1). In most cases, the population loss is the result of out-migration of skilled and young residents who typically are the most mobile. Because of its location on the north shore and the presence of cottages and a trailer park, the population tends to increase significantly in the summer⁸.

⁶ Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

⁷ Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

⁸ Based on interview data.

Table 1 - Population Change in the Town of Blind River⁹

Year	Blind River
1996	4,374 (-6.1%)
2001	3,969 (-9.3%)
2006	3,780 (-4.8%)
2011	3,549 (-6.1%)

Age of Population

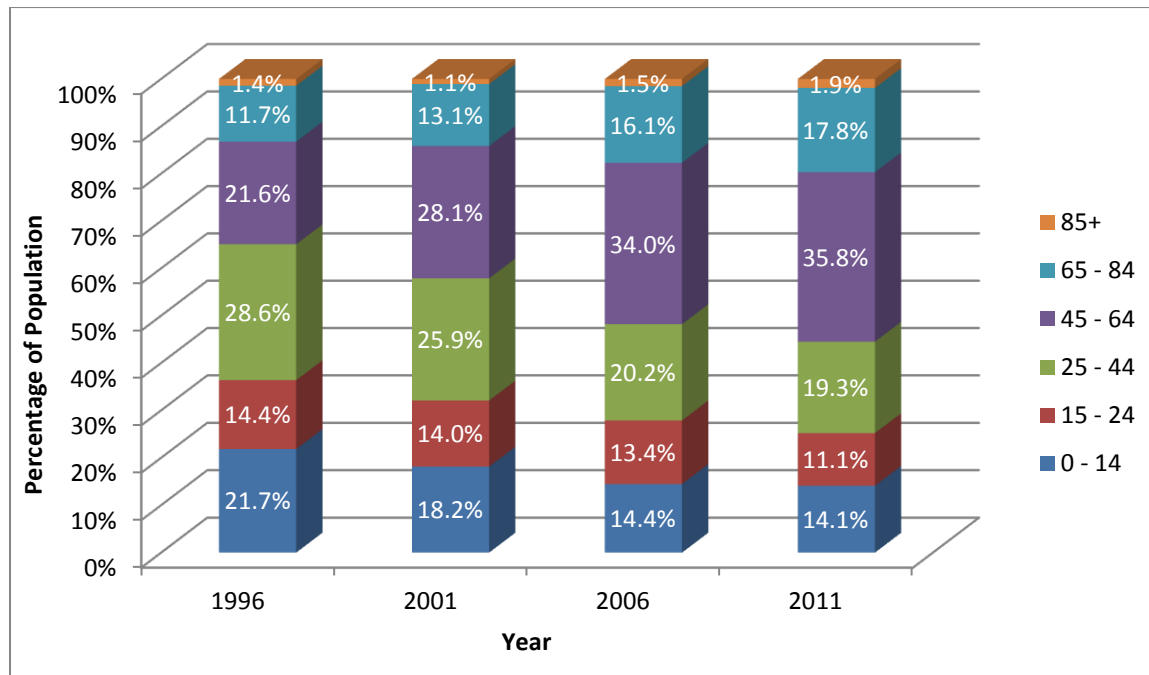
Figure 2 provides the age distribution from 1996 to 2011 in the Town of Blind River. The median age of the population of Blind River in 2011 was 48.7 which is older than the Ontario median age of 40.4¹⁰. Since 1996, the population has been aging in the Town of Blind River. This is also a general characteristic of the north shore area. 19.7 percent of residents are over the age of 65. The number of seniors in the Town of Blind River above 85 years old has moderately increased from 1.4 percent in 1996 to 1.9 percent in 2011. The greatest shift occurred in the 65 to 84 age range and the 45 to 64 age range. In 1996, 11.7 percent of the population was between the ages of 65 to 84, this increased to 17.8 percent in 2011. In 1996, 21.6 percent of the population was between the ages of 45 to 64, this increased to 35.8 percent in 2011.

While there is a cross section of age groups, it is evident that the Town of Blind River is not maintaining its younger population; a challenge facing many rural centres in Canada. In 1996, 28.6 percent of the population was between the ages of 25 to 44, this has decreased to 19.3 percent in 2011. This decreasing trend also occurred for the population between the ages of 15 to 24, declining from 14.4 percent in 1996 to 11.1 percent in 2011, and 0 to 14 declining from 21.7 percent in 1996 to 14.1 percent in 2011.

⁹ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2011. Census – Community Profiles. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2012.

¹⁰ Statistics Canada, 2011. Census – Community Profiles. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2013.

Figure 2 - Total Population by Age of the Town of Blind River¹¹



Mobility Status

In general, the Town of Blind River is relatively stable. There are few people moving in or out of the area. The presence of public and high schools, and the presence of Cameco as a major employer in Blind River, both attracts and maintains young families. Population stability indicates that the community has not undergone large changes in the economy. Residents are staying in the community for the long-term and are making The Town of Blind River their permanent home. Some second generation young adults have returned to Blind River to work and reside¹². Stability in a community is important as it indicates that people have a stake in their community, serve as volunteers and help develop community quality of life.

As of 2011, most people lived at the same address as the previous year (Non-movers = 87.2 percent). Few people moved in the same census subdivision within that time period in The Town of Blind River (Non-migrants 5.1 percent). Moreover, few people in the Town of Blind River moved to a different

¹¹ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2011. Census Community Profiles (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca. Accessed July 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

¹² Based on interview data.

census subdivision (Intraprovincial migrants = 7.7 percent). Also, during this period there were no migrants to Blind River from other areas of Canada nor were there any international immigrants¹³.

As of 2011, most people lived at the same address as five years previously (Non-movers = 66.7 percent). A small percentage of people moved in the same census subdivision within that time period in Blind River (Non-migrants = 17.2 percent). Few people moved from a different census subdivision to Blind River (Intraprovincial migrants = 15.0 percent). Also, few people from the Town of Blind River (External migrants = 1.1 percent) lived out of Province five years prior¹⁴.

For complete data tables regarding mobility status (see Table A1 a) and b) in **Appendix A**).

2.2.1.2 Skills and Labour Population by Occupation

Figure 3 illustrates the percentage distribution of the labor force by sector of occupation in Blind River (labour force by occupation). . The 2011 top occupations in Blind River are sales and service (25.2 percent); business, finance and administration (15.4 percent); trade transport and equipment (13.6 percent); and education, law and social, community and government services (11.9 percent)¹⁵.

Sales and service occupations include tourism and retail related activities. Blind River has many motels, a museum and tourist attractions, therefore tourism occupations and businesses are strong. The presence of trades and transport occupations are strengths for the Town of Blind River. Some of these residents are employed in the forestry sector and are supplying pulp or sawn logs to Domtar in Espanola. The Town is also home to some miners and people with skilled occupations who travel to work in the Musselwhite Mine north of Wawa and Northwestern Ontario¹⁶. Cameco Corporation is a local employer and employs local residents with skills as millwrights, welders, electricians and heavy equipment operators. It is often hard for smaller rural centres to source this sort of labour and it is readily available in Blind River and the surrounding area. There are instances, however where jobs are available but Blind River residents do not have the requisite education or skills¹⁷.

Business activity indicates that management and capacity building experience is present in the Town of Blind River. Occupations in social sciences, education and government indicate that there are people employed in leadership roles in the community. This would include jobs with Provincial agencies, the OPP detachment, the municipality and local schools. The Town of Blind River also has a small population with skills specific to primary industry activities, such as chemical engineers at the Cameco Refinery.

¹³ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2011. Census Community Profiles and NHS National Household Survey (2011). (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed July 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

¹⁴ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2011. Census Community Profiles and NHS National Household Survey (2011) (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed July 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada, 2011. NHS National Household Survey (2011)(Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca. Accessed July 2013.

¹⁶ Based on interview data.

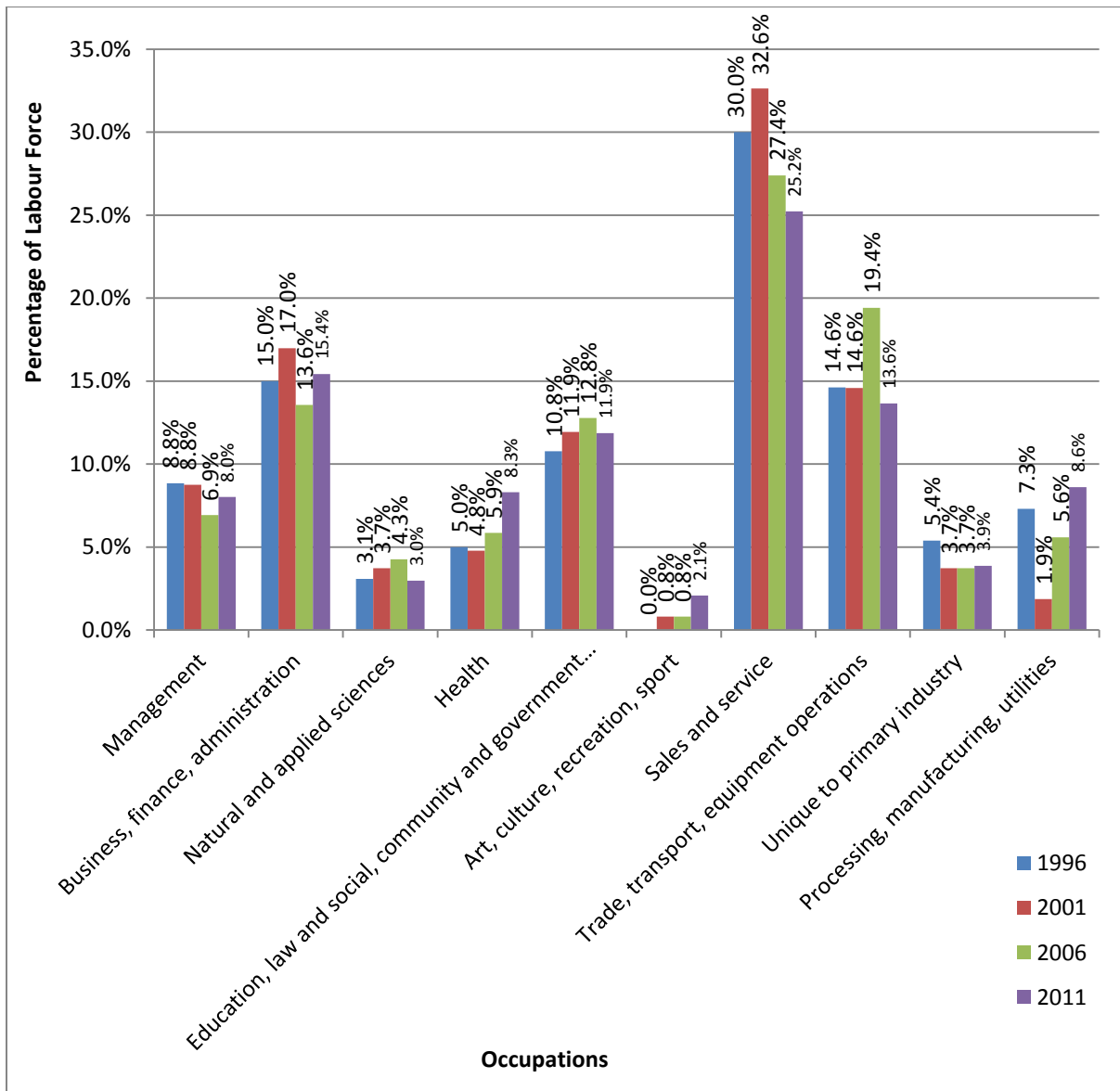
¹⁷ Based on interview data.

Finance and administration opportunities indicate that there are capital and financial advice opportunities as well as accountants. Their new solar energy park, for example, has required advanced skill and knowledge in terms of accessing and managing large amounts of capital.

In the early 1990s, many Elliot Lake uranium mine workers lived in Blind River and as a result, the community was also affected by the closure of the mines¹⁸. Since 1996, there has been little fluctuation in most occupation categories with a few exceptions. Sales and service positions increased in 2001 followed by a decrease in 2006 and a further decrease in 2011. Trade, transport and equipment positions increased in 2006 but decreased in 2011. Health related occupations (Blind River District Health Centre) continued to increase in 2011. Processing (Cameco Refinery), manufacturing and utilities positions rebounded from their lows in 2001 and as of 2011 have surpassed the 1996 levels. There was also an increase in art, culture, recreation and sport.

¹⁸ Based on interview data.

Figure 3 – Labour Force by Occupation in the Town of Blind River¹⁹



¹⁹ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2011. Census Community Profiles and NHS National Household Survey (2011)(Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed July 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

2.2.1.3 Education

Education and Training

The following tables illustrate the level of education and training in the Town of Blind River²⁰. While many residents were without a high school diploma or degree, this number has steadily declined over the years, dropping from 43.3 percent in 1996 to 28.7 percent in 2006 to 23.2 percent in 2011²¹. The number of residents without a high school diploma is likely influenced by the nature of the major occupations in the area that do not necessarily require certification (e.g. skilled training related primary industry and construction). There are fewer people with advanced degrees²².

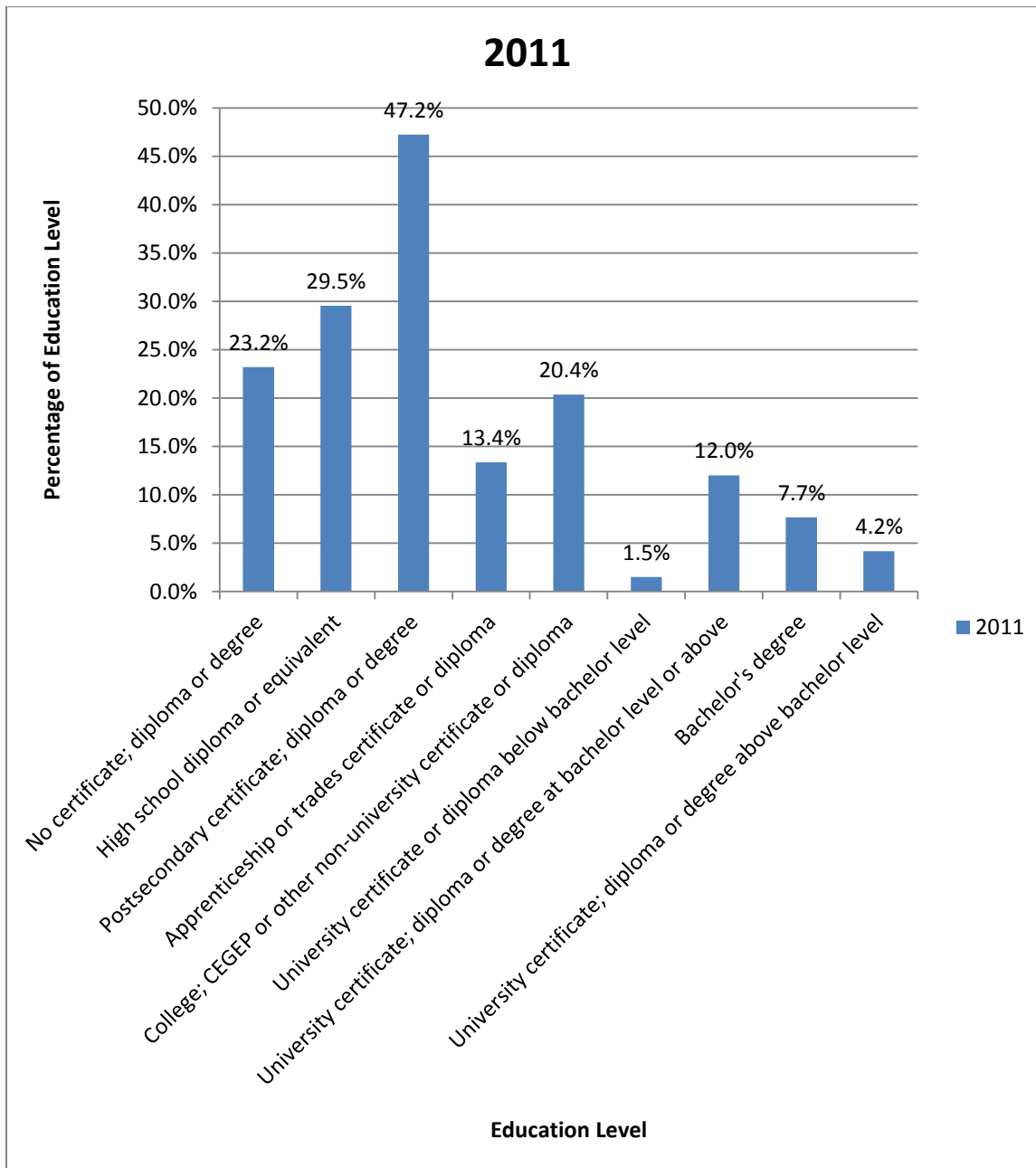
There is a slight rise in residents with high school certificates, increasing from 29.0 percent in 2006 to 29.5 percent in 2011. There has also been a modest rise in the number of people who possessed a university certificate, degree or diploma between 2006 (11.3 percent) and 2011 (12.0 percent for those with a certificate, degree or diploma bachelor's degree or above) which is a positive indication and may be attributed to the need for high-skilled and well educated employees at the Cameco Refinery and the Blind River District Health Centre.

²⁰ Please note that data categories in each census year are depicted in a different manner except for 1996 and 2006.

²¹ Statistics Canada, 2006. Census – Community Profile. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2013.

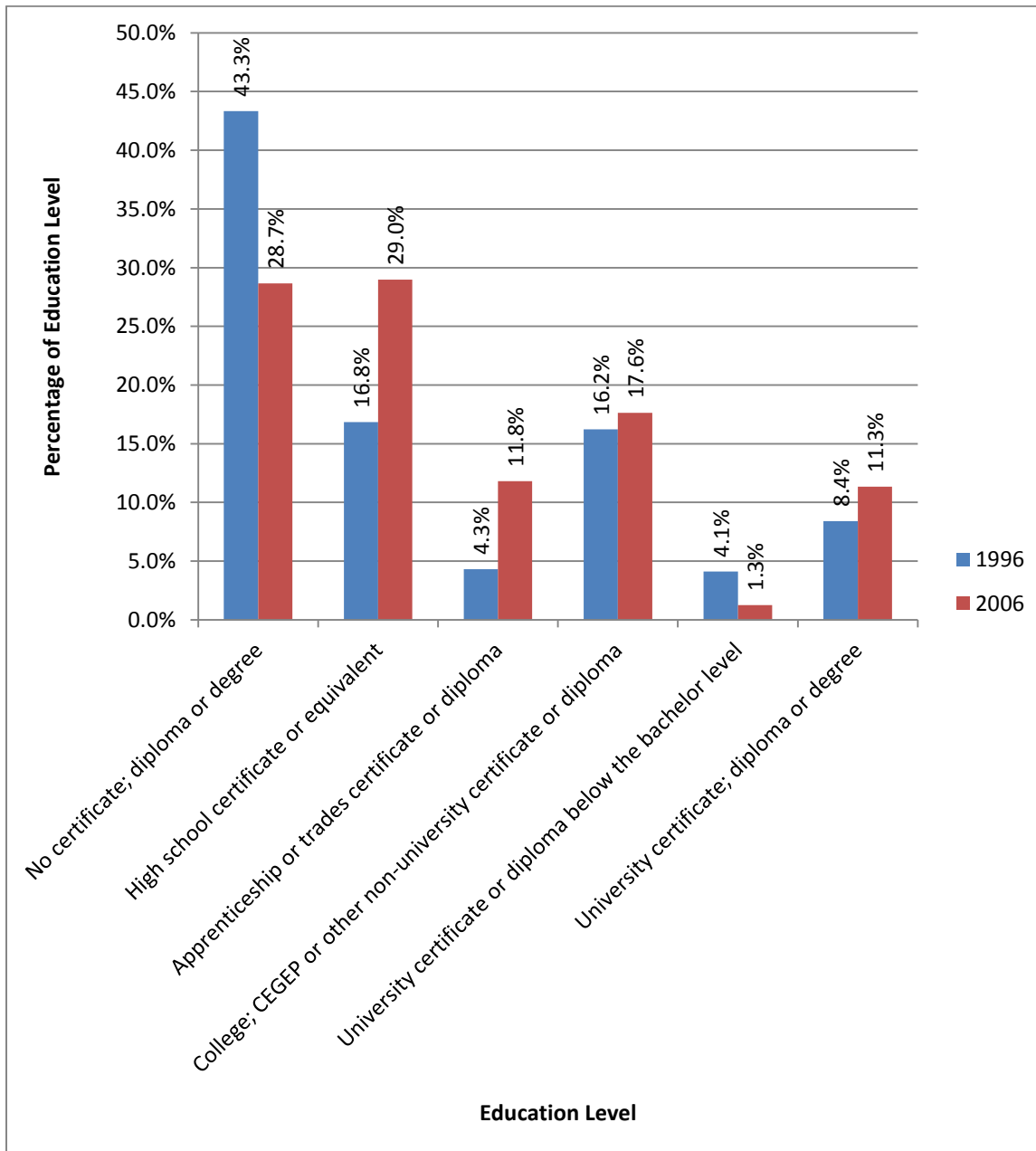
²² Based on interview data.

Figure 4 - Education and Attainment in the Town of Blind River (15+) in 2011²³



²³ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada, and reporting of overlapping categories in the figure. Postsecondary certificate; diploma or degree has the subcategories of: 1) Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma, 2) College; CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma, 3) University certificate or diploma below bachelor level and 4) University certificate; diploma or degree at bachelor level or above (which has its own subcategories of i) Bachelor's degree, and ii) University certificate; diploma or degree above bachelor level).

Figure 5 - Education and Training Attainment in the Town of Blind River (15+) in 1996 and 2006)²⁴



²⁴ Statistics Canada, 1996 and 2006. Census – Community Profile. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

Table 2 - Education and Training Attainment in the Town of Blind River (2001)²⁵

Level of Education	Age 20 – 34 (n= 505)	Age 35 – 44 (n= 690)	Age 45 – 64 (n= 1,105)
Less than a high school certificate	24.8%	30.4%	29.4%
High school certificate and/or some post-secondary	42.6%	24.6%	19.9%
Trades certificate or diploma	10.9%	12.3%	17.2%
College certificate or diploma	12.9%	20.3%	15.8%
University certificate, diploma or degree	8.9%	10.9%	19.0%

Local Schools

Schools in Blind River draw students from across the north shore area including students living on reserves. The schools within the Town of Blind River are part of the Algoma District School Board, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board and Le Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique du Nouvel-Ontario. The Town of Blind River has one English public elementary school (Blind River Public School), one French catholic elementary school (École Catholique St-Joseph), one English catholic elementary school (St. Mary's Catholic School) with total enrollment of between 160 to 200 students²⁶. There is one English public secondary school (W.C. Eaket Secondary), and one French catholic secondary school (École Catholique Jeunesse-Nord). Blind River Public School has a variety of extracurricular activities and in addition to student use, the facility hosts a variety of community groups including Bible Club, Martial Arts, Mississauga First Nation, university exams and adult volleyball. Blind River student graduates have typically done well and go on to complete college diplomas and university degrees²⁷.

Students are bused from other communities in the north shore area to schools in the Town of Blind River²⁸.

²⁵ Statistics Canada, 2001. Census – Community Profile. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2014. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

²⁶ Based on interview data.

²⁷ Based on interview data.

²⁸ Based on interview data.

Table 3 - Schools in the Town of Blind River

	English				French			
	Public		Catholic		Public		Catholic	
	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary
Blind River Public School	X							
Ecole Catholique St. Joseph							X	
St. Mary's Catholic School			X					
W.C. Eaket Secondary		X						
Ecole Catholique Jenunesse-Nord								X

Post-Secondary Education

The Town of Blind River has the following post-secondary institutions available: Contact North - Laurentian University distance education centre and Villa Française des Jeunes Éducation des Adultes. Contact North/Contact Nord is Ontario's Distance Education and Training Network and works in partnership with Ontario's public colleges, universities and public essential skills and training providers to increase and improve online and distance learning opportunities for Ontarians²⁹. There are no training facilities (e.g. colleges and vocational institutes) located within Blind River and students have to go to surrounding regional hubs (e.g. Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie).

Universities and colleges in the wider Algoma region are located in Sudbury (e.g. Laurentian University, Cambrian College, CTS Canadian Career College, Everest College, Boreal College) and Sault Ste. Marie (e.g. Algoma University, Sault College and Willis College).

Other Educational Opportunities

For adult residents looking to take educational courses, the Town of Blind River has a number of Adult Learning Centres offering general interest and adult learning programs. Most of the schools in the Algoma District School Board offer after school and extra-curricular programs that include sporting activities and arts programs³⁰.

²⁹ Contact North. About Us. Accessed Online, June 2012. [<http://studyonline.ca/about-us>].

³⁰ Algoma District School Board. Accessed Online, June 2013. [<http://www.adsb.on.ca/content/adult/>].

English and French language upgrading programs are also available through the North Channel Literacy Council in the Town of Blind River³¹. As well, the Enjikendaasang Learning Centre in the Town of Blind River operates a learning centre that is focused on upgrading language skills of the Aboriginal population³².

The Town of Blind River has high speed internet available for residents and one public library³³. The Blind River Public Library provides residents of all ages with free access to information and educational resources in digital or print form. Occasionally, the library hosts speakers and events of local or general interest. Moreover, the library is a meeting place for the community and has a number of meeting rooms.

2.2.1.4 Health and Safety Facilities and Services

Overall, the Town of Blind River residents are well aware of their health needs and opportunities. Residents have access to local health and safety facilities and services.

Number of Clinics

In addition to the hospital, there are three clinics in the Town of Blind River. These facilities are well equipped and are able to assist with most medical matters. In the event of more complex procedures, there is one Hospital (St. Joseph's General Hospital) in Elliot Lake, and several hospitals in Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. The following medical clinics are available in the Town of Blind River:

- Blind River Family Health Clinic;
- Blind River Family Medical Clinic; and
- Anishnabie Naadmaagi Gamig Substance Abuse Treatment Centre.

Access to Health Care Services and Clinics

The Blind River District Health Centre (BRDHC) operates a hospital that offers clinical services in the Town of Blind River and for people living in the vicinity. The facility was built in 1992. There is an acute care unit, diabetes centre, diagnostic imaging centre, dietitian services, emergency department, infection control, oncology service, rehabilitation, and out-patient and social services³⁴. The BRDHC also provides preventative care programming through the public health team. The BRDHC conducts x-rays, however, residents need to travel to Sudbury or Sault St. Marie to get CTs or MRIs. The BRDHC also

³¹ North Channel Literacy Council. Accessed Online, July,2014
[http://www.northernliteracy.ca/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=227&Itemid=538&lang=en].

³² Mississauga First Nation. Education and Literacy. Accessed Online, July 2012.
[<http://mississauga.com/literacyedu.html>] and [<http://www.mississauga.com/pdf/Pamphlet.pdf>].

³³ Blind River Public Library. Services. Accessed Online, Aug 2013.
[<http://www.olsn.ca/blindrivervlibrary/Services.html>].

³⁴Blind River District Health Centre. Accessed Online, July 2013.[<http://www.brdhc.on.ca/>].

operates a health care centre in Thessalon with four acute care beds, a health care centre on St. Joseph's island and a Long Term Care Facility in Blind River which provides assisted living for seniors³⁵.

In addition, Blind River has the Algoma Best Start Hub which provides early childhood support programs and the Christian Horizons is a non-profit charitable organization which provides a variety of programs and services, including Special Olympics program.

Hospital Bed Capacities and Usage

The BRDHC hospital offers 16 acute care beds, 42 long term care beds, two critical care rooms and two pediatric beds³⁶. There are also beds at the Golden Birches Terrace Nursing home.

Health Care Professionals

Between the three clinics and the BRDHC, residents have access to physicians, nurses, and nurse practitioners. The BRDHC has five physicians. Specialists come to visit when needed. The BRDHC has no surgeons and patients are referred to hospitals in Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie or Elliot Lake.

Overall, the community has a good roster of doctors and dentists³⁷.

Emergency Services and Plans

The Town of Blind River has emergency services in place and is able to handle emergency situations and is policed by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) East Algoma Detachment which is stationed in Blind River, at 241 Causley Street. The Town of Blind River's Fire Hall is also located at 241 Causley Street. In addition, the Town of Blind River has ambulance services through an agreement with the Algoma District Services Administration Board.

The community has a volunteer fire Department comprised of 20 – 25 individuals. The Town of Blind River partners with the Towns of Spanish and Algoma Mills (Township of The North Shore) through mutual aid agreements for emergency and fire services³⁸. The Mississauga First Nation also has a volunteer fire department.

2.2.2 Summary of Human Assets

The following summarizes our findings for human assets in the Town of Blind River.

2.2.2.1 Priorities and Key Issues

At one time, the Town of Blind River was host to the largest lumber mill in the British Commonwealth and until the last generation, the largest in North America. There is still a dock in place, including remnant infrastructure.

³⁵ Based on interview data.

³⁶ Blind River District Health Centre. Auxiliary. Accessed Online, July 2014. [<http://www.brdhc.on.ca/acute-care/>].

³⁷ Based on interview data.

³⁸ Based on interview data.

Before the Elliot Lake find, uranium was first discovered and mined in Pronto which is close to Blind River. The Town of Blind River also has been influenced by mining in the area for many years, specifically uranium processing (Cameco Refinery). The Town of Blind River is relatively prosperous and has a skilled local workforce. Key issues facing the Town of Blind River include the need to grow and diversify the local economy, as well as to retain and attract younger workers and families. In terms of mobility status, few people are moving in or out of the community. People are content with their current residences and there is a sense of permanence in the community. Expanding local educational and professional development opportunities is a priority.

2.2.2.2 Community Aspirations

In terms of education levels, many residents are capable of applying their skills and training to the resource processing activities and other sectors of the economy in the area. The majority of Cameco Refinery employees have university degrees and/or skilled trades³⁹. There are also many residents who have college diplomas.

Educational facilities in the Town of Blind River are capable of providing special education and French immersion schooling. There are online training programs available, however, there are no colleges in the Town of Blind River and students have to go to larger regional centres. A desire has been expressed by residents to attract post-secondary programs to the area, including both universities and college trade schools⁴⁰. The goal is to ensure that a variety of local opportunities exist for residents in all stages of life: from youth to working adults to retirees. The Town of Blind River aspires to be a complete community with economic stability and solid prospects for future growth.

2.2.2.3 Capabilities and Capacities within the Community

The Town of Blind River has an up to date community plan and vision. The overall level of education among residents of the Town of Blind River is in keeping with the region as a whole and towns of a similar size. Schools and programs for youth are adequate for current populations. There is local community leadership with occupations in finance and management.

The retail sector in the Town of Blind River is currently facing challenges as a result of demographic and economic pressures in the region and the location of business just off the Trans-Canada Highway, but remains strong. As well, the quality and variety of outdoor nature based activities, the presence of the shoreline of Lake Huron, water access and cottage properties make a strong contribution to attracting skilled labour.

The health services in the Town of Blind River include access to the Blind River District Health Centre and for more complex treatment, the St. Joseph General Hospital in Elliot Lake or hospitals in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie.

³⁹ Based on interview data.

⁴⁰ Based on interview data.

2.3 Economic Assets

2.3.1. Economic Asset Indicators

The following section depicts the Town of Blind River's economic assets. Economic assets include the monetary or financial related resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives. It includes that availability of cash or equivalents to individuals and the community as a whole gained from private or public sector sources, and the availability of financial related services that allow individuals and communities to manage their finances and wealth. Economic assets indicators include employment, business activity, income, tourism, economic development services, and governance and municipal finances.

2.3.1.1 Employment

Labour Force Activity

When the uranium mines were operating in Elliot Lake, some suggest that approximately 40 percent of the employees lived in Blind River. Some Blind River workers now commute to Red Lake and Northwestern Ontario and other mining operations for employment⁴¹. Table 4 shows the recent labour force activity in the Town of Blind River. The Town experienced an increase in labour force and participation rate between 1996 and 2006, with a slight decrease by 2011. The Town of Blind River experienced an increase in the employment rate from 51.4 percent in 2001 to 54.4 percent in 2006, but has seen a slight decrease to 53.1 percent in 2011. While the overall number of employed individuals has declined, the number of full time employment positions continues to rise. There was also a substantial drop in the unemployment rate from 18.7 percent in 1996 to 8.9 percent in 2006. In 1996, Blind River residents experienced unemployment effects due to the closure of the Elliot Lake uranium mines. In 2011 the rate climbed to 11.0 percent. The Town of Blind River unemployment rate was higher than the 2011 provincial average of 8.3 percent⁴².

Table 4 - Labour Force Activity in the Town of Blind River⁴³

Parameters	1996	2001	2006	2011
Total Population 15 years and over	2,435	3,250	3,170	2,995
Employed	1,125	1,670	1,725	1,590
Participation rate (%)	57.1	59.5	59.9	59.4
Employment rate (%)	n/a	51.4	54.4	53.1
Unemployment rate (%)	18.7	13.7	8.9	11.0
Full time employment	510	820	865	1,280
Part time employment	815	n/a	n/a	345

⁴¹ Based on interview data.

⁴² Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2011. Census Community Profiles and NHS National Household Survey (2011)(Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed July 2013.

⁴³ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2011. Census Community Profiles and NHS National Household Survey (2011)(Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed July 2013.

Employment Industry Sector

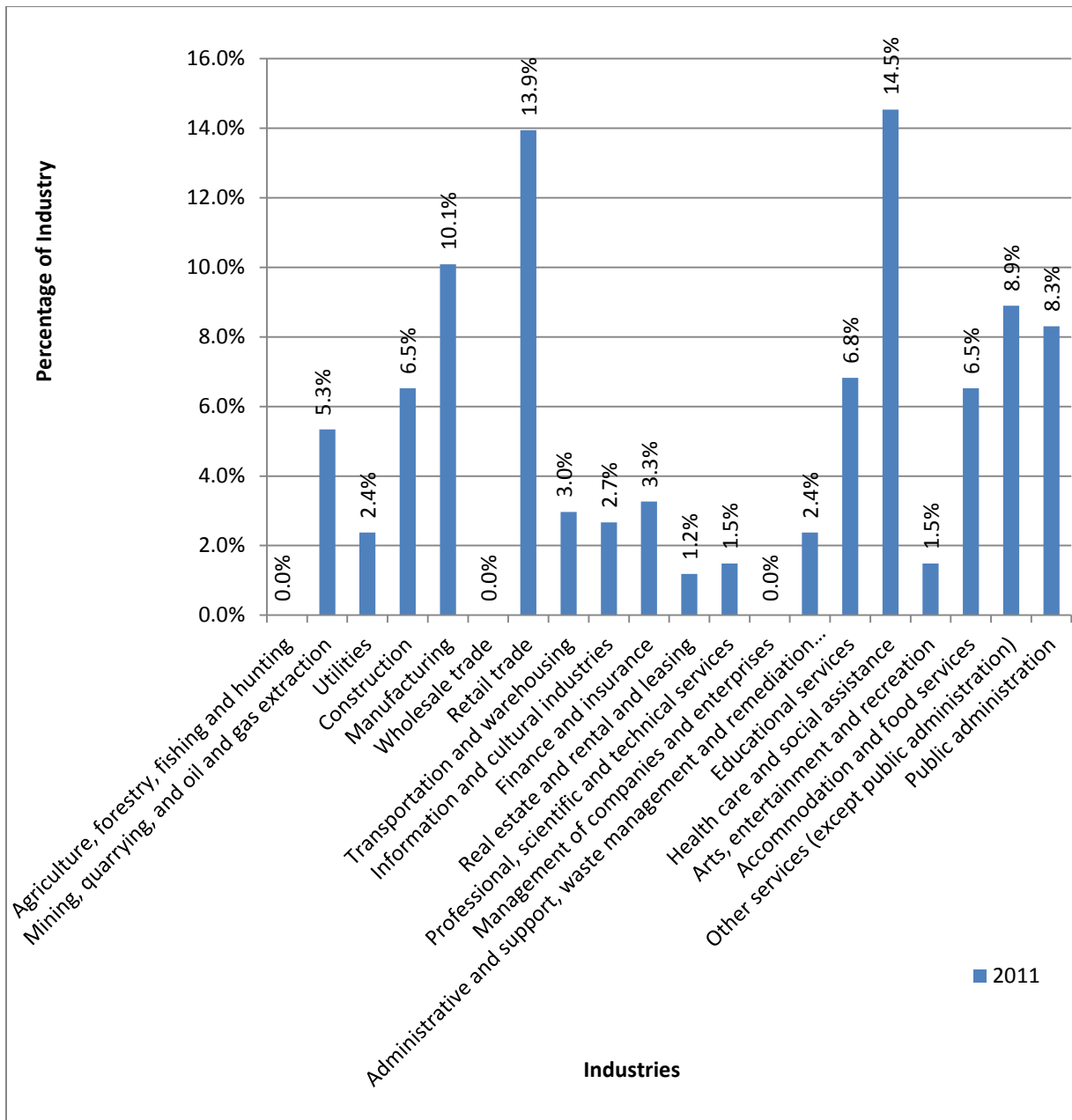
Figure 6 depicts the percentage distribution of labour force by industry in Blind River according to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). As of 2011, the greatest proportion of employees in the Town of Blind River were employed in industries within the following sectors: health care and social assistance (14.5 percent); retail trade (13.9 percent); manufacturing (10.1); other services (except public administration) (8.9 percent); and public administration (8.3 percent)⁴⁴.

The presence of public administration, and to a lesser extent, finance/insurance and real estate industries indicate that the Town of Blind River has some capacity to deal with capital investments and management opportunities.

While the construction, agriculture and resource, as well as the healthcare and social services sectors experienced a decrease from 1996 to 2006, the manufacturing, wholesale trade, retail trade, educational services, experienced increases in activity from 1996 to 2006.

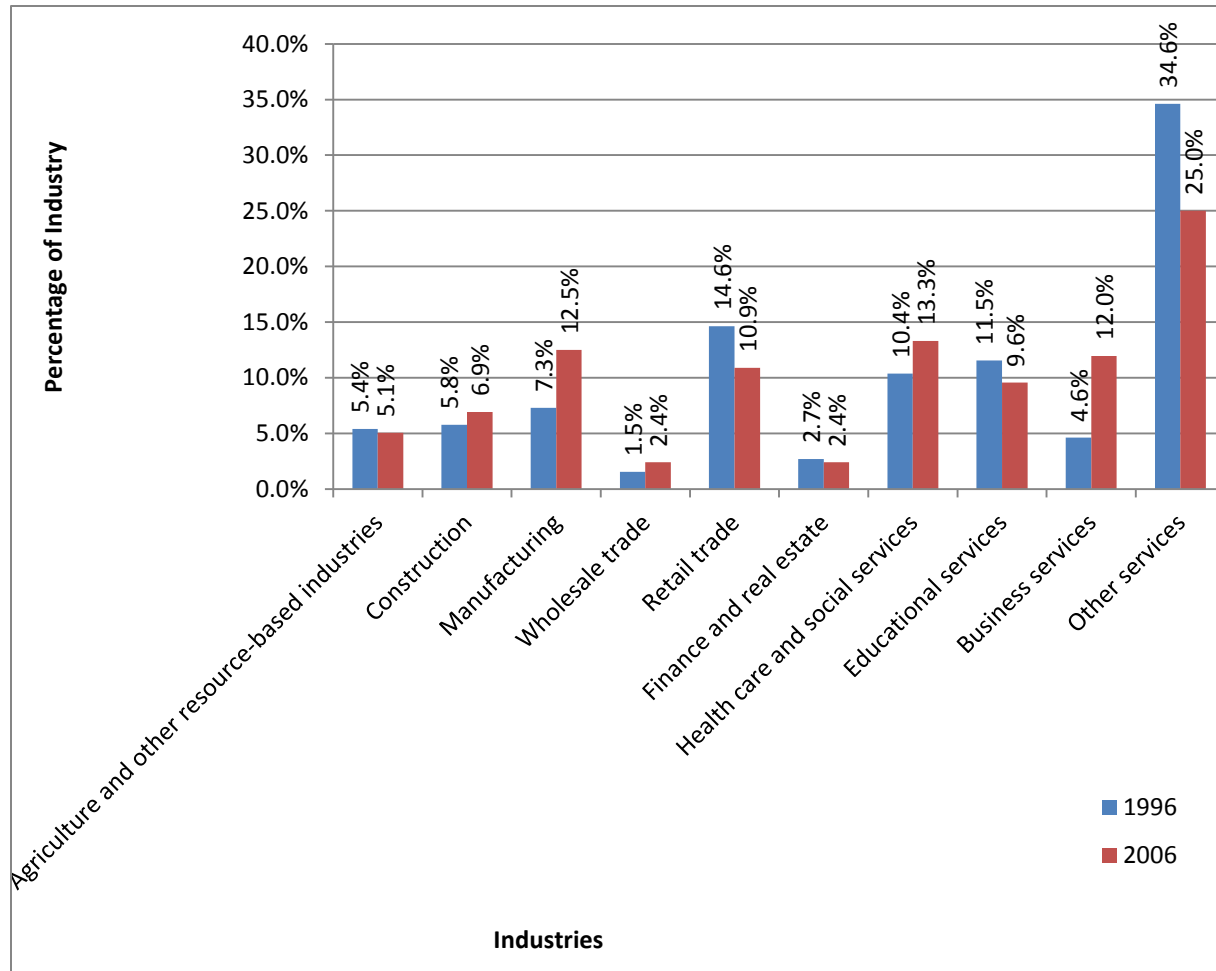
⁴⁴ Please note that 2001 Statistics Canada data is incomplete.

Figure 6 – Labour Force by Industry (NAICS) in the Town of Blind River (2011)⁴⁵



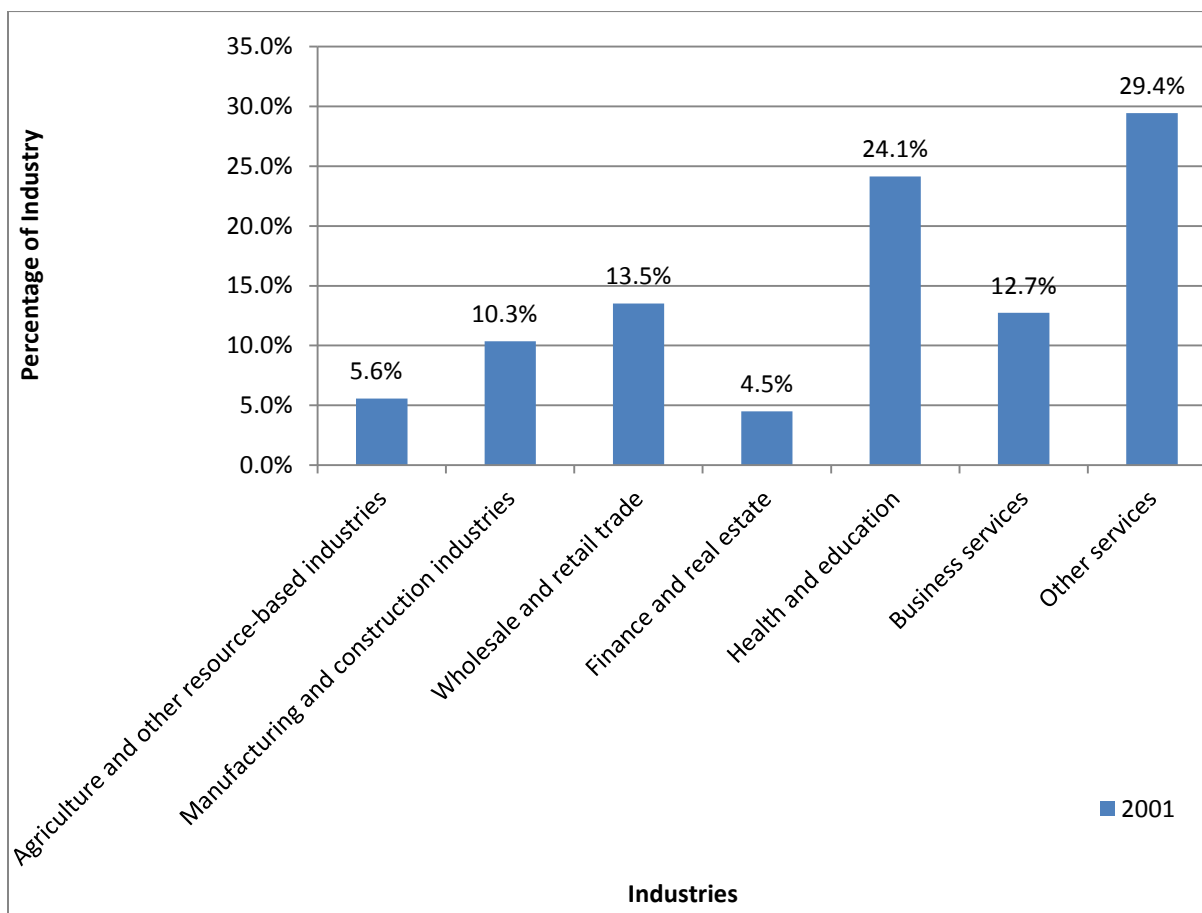
⁴⁵ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca. Accessed July 2013. Please note that the list of industry categories was expanded in the 2011 NHS survey beyond the categories that were used in the previous censuses. Therefore, a direct comparison between 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011 data is not possible. Different categories were also used in the 2001 Census. Please note that instances of 0% relate to no data reported in this category from Statistics Canada.

Figure 7 – Labour Force by Industry (NAICS) in the Town of Blind River (1996 to 2006)⁴⁶



⁴⁶ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2006. Census Community Profiles. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2012. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

Figure 8 – Labour Force by Industry (NAICS) in the Town of Blind River (2001)⁴⁷



2.3.1.2 Business Activity

Business activity in the Town of Blind River is centred on uranium refining tourism, fishing, and logging.

Major Employers

A significant portion of the private sector employers service the uranium refining industry. The largest private sector employer in the Town of Blind River is the Cameco Refinery and the secondary economic effects for supporting the workers and their families are significant economic drivers. The North Shore Power Group, J.I. Enterprises, K.J. Beamish and Leroy Construction are also local industry employers. The largest public sector employer in the Town of Blind River is the Blind River District Health Centre which employs 180 people⁴⁸. Various other government employers (school boards, Town of Blind River, and emergency services) are also major employers.

⁴⁷ Statistics Canada, 2001. Census Community Profiles. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2012. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

⁴⁸ Based on interview data.

Tourism traffic passing through the region on the Trans-Canada Highway provides significant incremental support for the retail sector in the Town of Blind River, particularly in the summer⁴⁹. It brings a continuing flow of travellers year-round who make service or business stops in the region. It also provides access to or is destined for specific tourism attractions and facilities, such as marinas along the North Channel and hotels and lodges that are scattered throughout the region. The Town of Blind River Marina is also a strong tourist draw to the area.

Table 5 and Table 6 identify the top private and public sector employers in the Town of Blind River respectively. The key private employers in the Town of Blind River represent the manufacturing sector (refinery), as well as the retail sector (grocer), the transportation sector (charter bus lines) and the utility sector (hydro). The key public sector employers include the health sector, education sector, local Town government and education.

Table 5- Major Private Sector Employers in the Town of Blind River⁵⁰

Name	Sector
Cameco Refinery	Manufacturing
Hutton's Valuemark	Retail/Grocery
A.J. Bus Lines	Transportation
Hydro One	Electric/Utility
K.J.. Beamish Construction	Construction
J. I. Enterprises	Construction
Leroy Construction Ltd	Construction

Table 6 - Major Public Sector Employers in the Town of Blind River⁵¹

Name	Sector
Blind River District Health Centre	Health Services
Algoma District School Board	Education
Catholic School Board	Education
Conseil Scholaire de Nouvel Ontario	Education
Ontario Provincial Police	Emergency Services
Corporation of the Town of Blind River	Local Government
Huron Superior Separate School Board	Education
East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation	Services

⁴⁹ Tourism Elliot Lake. Accessed Online, June 2012. [<http://www.tourismelliottlake.com/en/>].

⁵⁰ Ontario Investment and Trade Centre. Major Employers by Community. Accessed Online, Aug 2013. [http://www.sse.gov.on.ca/medt/investinontario/en/Pages/communities_majoremployers.aspx?mun_name=3557038&topic=1].

⁵¹ Ontario Investment and Trade Centre. Major Employers by Community. Accessed Online, Aug 2013. [http://www.sse.gov.on.ca/medt/investinontario/en/Pages/communities_majoremployers.aspx?mun_name=3557038&topic=2].

Small, Medium and Large Businesses

The Town of Blind River has some amenities and businesses to support a tourist, administration and resource-based industry community. The uranium industry operations are supported by institutions, support organizations and supply chain operations (e.g. equipment repair and rental, fuel, tires suppliers). Secondary businesses supporting logging, and supplying pulp and sawn logs are based in Blind River.

There are many other businesses in the Town of Blind River, including grocery stores, financial institutions/planning, insurance, convenience stores, various retail and service stores, automotive, sales and repair, contractors/electrical, good restaurants, bars and cafes, motels, as well as a theater.

Table 7 provides an overview of other businesses in the Town of Blind River. Please note that this list is not meant to be exhaustive.

Table 7 - Additional Businesses in the Town of Blind River^{52 53}

Name	Sector
Ernie's Plumbing & Heating	Contractor
Haggers Footwear & Clothing	Retail
North Shore Power Group	Energy
Mics Kwik Way	Retail
Milltown Motors Ltd	Automotive
Napa Power Sports	Retail
Royal Bank of Canada	Financial
Scotiabank	Financial
Peterson's Welding	Construction
Four Seasons Septic Service	Services
Alex Berthelot Insurance Brokers	Insurance
All Star Children's Services Inc.	Children's Services
Lawson's Motors	Automotive
Employment Solutions	Services
Vegas Fabrics and Gifts	Retail
Home Hardware	Retail

2.3.1.3 Income

Median household/Family Income

The Town of Blind River is a fairly affluent community. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, Town of Blind River residents 15 years and over had a median income of \$29,017 which is up from \$23,949 in 2006. Median household income before tax was \$53,432 in 2011, up from \$46,713 in

⁵² Invest East Algoma. Accessed Online, July 2014.

[<http://www.investeastalgoma.com/eastalgoma/home/index.php>].

⁵³ Based on Interview data.

2006. In 2011, families had a median income of \$64,117, up from \$58,451 in 2006. For the employed population who worked full year, full time jobs the median employment income was \$47,583 in 2011 and \$44,140 in 2006. As well, 16.5 percent of individuals were identified as low income in 2011 (LIM-AT)⁵⁴. Please refer to Tables A2 to A4 in **Appendix A** for more information.

2.3.1.4 Tourism

Tourist Attractions

The Town of Blind River is on the shore of Lake Huron and other developed lakefronts including Lake Lauzon, Lake Matinenda and other lakes, which offer year round amenities. The Town of Blind River is also located in proximity to the Canadian wilderness, and caters to residents and tourists who enjoy outdoor recreational activities, such as canoeing, kayaking, yachting, hunting and angling, hiking, biking and cross-country skiing, curling and scuba diving, as well as the Lake Lauzon cottaging area⁵⁵. The Town of Blind River markets its tourist activities.

The Town of Blind River has a marina directly on the North Channel as well as a golf course and a Cross Country Ski Club. The North Channel is recognized by some as one of the finest boating areas in the world. The Lake Huron North Channel Historic Trails project is a 12 km trail through the Town of Blind River, Spanish and Huron Shores. Along this route, visitors can hike, bike or cross-country ski through three distinct ecological zones (coastal headlands to provincially significant wetlands).

The Deer Trail (120 km) is a scenic driving route through the region providing views of and access to the rugged northern Ontario wilderness⁵⁶.

The Town of Blind River receives ample numbers of tourists and travelers due to its scenic setting, natural beauty and location along the Trans-Canada Highway. The Town of Blind River has several beaches. The Boom Camp Trail is ranked as Canada's fifth best trail. In addition, the Town of Blind River has the following attractions⁵⁷:

- Blind River Summer Festival;
- Winter Carnival;
- Beach Bash and Kite Festival;
- Community Days Festival;
- Timber Village Museum;
- Colour dash; and
- The Alain Bray Auditorium.

⁵⁴ Statistics Canada, 2006. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June, 2012.

⁵⁵ Blind River Community Economic Development Strategy, 2013.

⁵⁶ Blind River Community Economic Development Strategy, 2013.

⁵⁷ Blind River Community Economic Development Strategy, 2013.

Tourist Accommodation

There is a variety of accommodations in the community, as well as a range of different types of lodgings. These lodgings can accommodate business travellers, as well as tourists. The Town of Blind River has several motels (e.g. Pier 17, Auberge Eldo Inn and others), seven camps and lodges, and one bed and breakfast. There are also campground facilities available and a large RV park to the east of the community. There are a large enough number of accommodation facilities that the community is able to accommodate a convention (Trapper's convention in August 2014).

Tourism Plans

Over the years, particularly in the 1990s, a number of economic development and tourism strategies were prepared for the Town of Blind River when more funding was available for these initiatives⁵⁸. Even with this financial support, tourism has declined somewhat. However, Blind River is actively engaged in tourism marketing and provides visitor information services.

The Town of Blind River is within the Ontario travel region known as Algoma Country which markets the broader region through its website and various other marketing and promotional activities, all based on an annual Marketing Plan⁵⁹.

In addition, the Town of Blind River recently completed a Community Economic Development Strategy (March 27, 2013) that includes an action plan to stimulate growth and diversify the local economy with the overall outcome of increasing economic sustainability⁶⁰. The Plan has four goals: 1) creating a sustainable and enabling environment; 2) supporting existing businesses for growth and community revitalization; 3) encouraging new economic development activity; and 4) fostering a healthy, effective and well-functioning corporation. The Plan includes specific actions related to five proposed growth areas: 1) marine tourism; 2) destination tourism; 3) filling the industrial park; 4) Retirement Living; and 5) supporting existing businesses⁶¹.

2.3.1.5 Economic Development Services

In general, it is difficult to locate major businesses in communities along the north shore. Some businesses located in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie are able to compete with new start-ups. On the other hand, the area is distant from the larger markets of Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Southern Ontario and the United States. However, the community has a strong economic development focus and provides leadership for other communities along the north shore.

⁵⁸ OMAFRA. Strengthening The Economy In Blind River - McGuinty Government Boosting Local Economic Development. Accessed Online, July 2012.

[<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/infores/releases/2011/082511.htm>].

⁵⁹ Algoma Algoma-Kinniwabi Travel Association (Algoma Country). Accessed Online, July 2012.

[<http://www.algomacountry.com/61/about-us>].

⁶⁰ Town of Blind River, 2013. Community Economic Development Strategy.

⁶¹ Town of Blind River, 2013. Community Economic Development Strategy.

The community has weathered several of its own challenges and was affected by challenges experienced by Elliot Lake. The loss of the McFadden white pine lumber mill in 1987 resulted in significant economic decline. Earlier, the community had chosen not to be the Town centre and location of housing that eventually located in Elliot Lake.

From the 1930s to 1990s, Blind River had a strong economy. The mining boom created economic benefits for all communities from Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie. Workers were attracted from Val d'Or, Quebec and many of the French families on the north shore today immigrated at that time. An acid plant and lime plant were also in full operation to the east of Blind River. As Blind River also housed Elliot Lake workers and their families, it experienced further economic decline when the mines closed. The loss of the government dock and decreases in Lake Huron water levels are also cited as reasons for economic decline. The location of the Cameco Refinery is a major economic asset for the community⁶².

East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation

An overall regional economic development strategy entitled, 'A Regional Economic Development Strategy for East Algoma' was prepared for the East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation in 2007⁶³. It summarizes opportunities and makes a significant number of recommendations for enhancing the region's economy. These recommendations, to a large extent, document the Town of Blind River's aspirations related to the economic asset area.

Blind River Development Corporation

The Town of Blind River Development Corporation (BRDC) is a legally formed corporation organized for the purpose of assisting in business development in the Town of Blind River. The BRDC provides a variety of services to assist local businesses improve operations or to assist new businesses in getting established in the region. The BRDC is also committed to developing partnerships with other local and regional organizations to enhance business development in the area⁶⁴.

The BRDC provides services such as: 1) an up-to-date database of community data including local information on demographics, economic make-up, labour profile, educational resources, listings of available commercial and industrial land, infrastructure, financial resources, cost of living, and all numerous advantages of doing business in Blind River; 2) business/financial/marketing plan assistance; and 3) a business resource library with publications on various business related topics including tourism, marketing, agriculture, and manufacturing⁶⁵.

⁶² Based on interview data.

⁶³ East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation, 2007. A Regional Economic Development Strategy for East Algoma, May 2007.

⁶⁴ Town of Blind River. Blind River Development Corporation. Accessed Online. March 2014. [http://www.investeastalgoma.com/eastalgoma/blind_river/portfolio/index.php].

⁶⁵ Town of Blind River. Blind River Development Corporation. Accessed Online. March 2014. [http://www.investeastalgoma.com/eastalgoma/blind_river/portfolio/index.php].

The BRDC's mission statement is:

"To promote and maintain quality of life in Blind River, through sustainable economic and social development and to ensure employment and development opportunities for those who live and wish to live in Blind River by:

- *Providing strategic leadership for sustainable economic development;*
- *Developing markets and encouraging investment;*
- *Assisting in community and social development; and*
- *Gathering and maintaining publicly accessible and relevant community data"*⁶⁶.

BRDC-Led Initiatives

In 2006, the BRDC commissioned Urbanmetrics to create the Blind River/Mississauga First Nation Investment and Attraction Program. The report provided an investment attraction program and conducted a community based SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) to address the local capacity for business and investment attraction. It also completed a competitive analysis of Blind River against a select number of other northern Ontario communities to provide an assessment of the marketability of the Town for business investment. Finally, it developed a marketing plan to recruit new business investment⁶⁷.

The BRDC in association with the Province of Ontario, The Blind River Chamber of Commerce, the ELNOS Corporation and other local organizations, commissioned the Blind River and Area Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Study in 2006. The BR+E is an economic development tool used to survey local businesses, identify business concerns, and develop an action plan to address those concerns to retain and expand business in the community. The BR+E provided an understanding of how business operate in the region, gave input and direction from businesses on how to proceed further with business and economic development and provided an understanding of business needs for training, communications, and support from local business organizations⁶⁸.

The BRDC led the preparation of a Community Economic Development Strategy for the Town of Blind River that was completed in 2013. The BRDC also led the development of a Pre-Feasibility Study for a recreational vehicle park at a sand beach. The Study was completed in 2013.

In August and July 2013, the BRDC led a consumer market survey to define the performance and competitiveness of the local economy as well as to identify gaps and opportunities. The survey provided information for the Downtown Revitalization Program and Community Improvement Program. The Survey functioned to determine the spending and shopping habits of Blind River residents. The survey indicated that 93 percent of consumers shop out of town and most respondents (80 percent) indicated

⁶⁶ Blind River Development Corporation. Accessed Online, July 2013.

[http://www.siteselector.ca/eastalgoma/blind_river/portfolio/index.php].

⁶⁷ Urbanmetrics, 2006. The Blind River/Mississauga First Nation Investment and Attraction Program

⁶⁸ Province of Ontario, 2006. Blind River and Area Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Study.

that they engaged in out of town shopping trips to purchase groceries and clothing (69 percent). The survey indicated that the most prevalently purchased items within Blind River stores were groceries (91 percent). The survey provided some ideas for required improvements within Blind River that included better marketing for local businesses and longer shopping hours⁶⁹.

Blind River Chamber of Commerce

The Blind River Chamber of Commerce (BRCC) serves the communities of Blind River, Spanish, Serpent River, Spragge, Algoma Mills and Huron Shores. The BRCC is dedicated to helping business succeed by providing assistance with business growth. The BRCC provides networking opportunities, discounted programs, and public policy representation⁷⁰.

The BRCC is comprised of a group of volunteers representing the business community in the Blind River District. It is a not-for-profit organization and the voice of business in the area. The BRCC's mandate is:

- *“To promote business excellence in and through private enterprise;*
- *To strengthen our organization through increasing membership and our resource base;*
- *To strengthen the local economy through business and economic development projects;*
- *To provide leadership to our members through actions on their behalf and through seeking their feedback;*
- *To promote business locally, fight for fair taxation, and keep members informed of important business affairs; and*
- *To lobby on behalf of small business through membership in the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Northeastern Chambers of Commerce, and through regional partnerships”⁷¹.*

Elliot Lake and North Shore Corporation for Business Development (ELNOS)

The ELNOS Corporation is a full-service business development corporation that was established to stimulate economic growth in the ELNOS Region through new business development and investment.

The ELNOS Corporation is comprised of: The City of Elliot Lake, The Town of Blind River, The Town of Spanish, The Township of the North Shore, and the Serpent River First Nation⁷².

ELNOS provides creative and flexible solutions to advance the development and growth of businesses in the region⁷³. It favours growing businesses that will provide long-term income and employment opportunities in the region. ELNOS' mandate is to improve the long-term economic prosperity of the

⁶⁹ Blind River Development Corporation., 2013. Consumer Market Survey Presentation.

⁷⁰ Blind River Chamber of Commerce. Accessed Online, July 2013. [<http://www.brchamber.ca/pages/index.php>].

⁷¹ Blind River Chamber of Commerce. Accessed Online, July 2013. [<http://www.brchamber.ca/pages/index.php>].

⁷² Elliot Lake and North Shore Corporation for Business Development – About Us. Accessed Online, July 2013. [<http://www.elnos.com/index.php/aboutus>].

⁷³ Elliot Lake and North Shore Corporation for Business Development. About Us. Accessed Online, July 2012. [<http://www.elnos.com/about.htm>].

region by assisting businesses which in turn creates wealth and jobs. The organization concentrates its resources on wealth generating businesses⁷⁴.

The ELNOS Corporation is particularly interested in the development of small, manufacturing and technology-related businesses; experienced management; and solid earnings performance and growth. Their objective is to share and reduce the investment and development risks of new business ventures established in the region and to work with partners to develop and implement solutions for common problems that growing businesses experience⁷⁵. ELNOS works with its partners to:

- Address planning and management issues;
- Effectively employ local labour services;
- Address real estate issues and needs;
- Procure local public services and utilities;
- Develop sound financing strategies; and
- Identify and secure suitable financing⁷⁶.

2.3.1.6 Governance and Municipal Finances

The Town of Blind River has a range of municipal services and programs. Growth would bring demand for enhanced municipal service such as parks and recreation, human resources, and engineering.

Governance Structure of Blind River

The Town of Blind River was incorporated in 1906. On January 1, 1992, the former Town of Blind River and the former Unorganized Township of Striker were amalgamated to form the Town of Blind River. Town council consists of a Mayor and six Councillors. Council meetings occur twice a month. Staff work closely with staff of other municipalities along the north shore. The clerks are members of the North Shore Clerks Association⁷⁷. Municipal departments include the Building Department and Festivals Office.

A high level of community engagement can be seen in the large number of committees that exist, including:

- Budget
- Cemetery Board
- Ecological Resource, Recycling and Energy Efficiency
- Festivals

⁷⁴ Elliot Lake and North Shore Corporation for Business Development. About Us. Accessed Online, July 2013. [<http://www.elnos.com/about.htm>].

⁷⁵ Elliot Lake and North Shore Corporation for Business Development. Accessed Online. July, 2012. [<http://www.elnos.com/services.htm>].

⁷⁶ Elliot Lake and North Shore Corporation for Business Development. Accessed Online. July, 2012. [<http://www.elnos.com/services.htm>].

⁷⁷ Based on interview data.

- Finance and Property
- Golf Course
- Health and Safety
- Library Board
- Marine Park
- Planning Advisory Board
- Public Works
- Recreation and Parks
- Senior Cultural Centre
- Traffic, Licence, Handi-travel, Planning and Bylaw
- Timber Village
- Youth Council⁷⁸

Municipal Revenue and Expenditures

The Town of Blind River has the financial resources to manage economic expansion opportunities and is able to address challenges as they arise. However, revenue needs for funding municipal services are seen to be high and property taxes are high. The Town has a municipal asset management plan and has identified capital requirements⁷⁹.

The following discussion on municipal revenue and expenditures is based on financial statistics from provincially available data (see **Appendix B** for financial data tables).

Based on its 2012 Financial Information Return (FIR) filed with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, The Town of Blind River's total revenue for the year ending December 31, 2012 was \$14,004,596 and its total expenses were \$ 13,994,641⁸⁰. Accordingly, the Town of Blind River had a surplus of \$9,955. The Town of Blind River also had a reserve of \$548,538.

Despite the deficit, the Town of Blind River's strong accumulated surplus⁸¹ at the end of the 2012 year was \$ 43,287,845 which includes both cash and non-cash (capital assets) components.

2.3.2 Summary of Economic Assets

The following summarizes our findings for economic assets in the Town of Blind River.

⁷⁸ Town of Blind River. Accessed Online July, 2013. [<http://www.blindriver.com/site/committees/>].

⁷⁹ Based on interview data.

⁸⁰ Province of Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Accessed Online, Feb 2014. [<http://csconramp.mah.gov.on.ca/fir/View/FI125738%20Copy.pdf>]

⁸¹ Accumulated surplus consists of both cash and non-cash components, including: (1) unrestricted (including cash, accounts receivable and other non-cash financial assets); (2) restricted (cash that can only be used for a pre-determined purpose); and (3) equity in tangible capital assets.

2.3.2.1 Priorities and Key Issues

The key priorities for the Town of Blind River are economic diversification, achieving economic growth and leveraging its natural setting to attract visitors and tourists interested in outdoor recreation. Priorities and issues in relation to economic assets in particular relate to strengthening its labour force, employment opportunities, retaining existing business and attracting new businesses.

The Town of Blind River's labour force is strong and its participation and employment rates are increasing while unemployment is decreasing. This suggests that there is confidence in the local economy. However one of the central challenges is ensuring that there is a diversity of well-paying jobs. Another challenge is out-migration of youth directly connected to the availability of quality, local employment opportunities, arising in a need for Blind River to attract new businesses to the area.

The Town of Blind River residents had median earnings, and personal income and household income just below, but close to the national average.

The Town of Blind River places a high priority on tourism promotion. With an abundance of natural leisure opportunities such as boating, hiking, hunting, fishing and snowmobiling, the ability to attract visitors from both Ontario and the United States presents a significant economic opportunity.

The Town of Blind River is well served by a number of economic development agencies that seek to improve and expand business in the area and enable residents to find quality employment and services within their community. This economic leadership places the Town of Blind River in a good position to anticipate and prepare for future development and provides invaluable direction for local businesses and employers.

2.3.2.2 Community Aspirations

The Town of Blind River aspires to increase the diversity of local employment opportunities. While support for large scale economic growth exists, there is also a strong desire to ensure that the Town of Blind River's natural heritage and beauty are preserved in order to maintain its status as a tourist and outdoor recreation destination. Residents see the potential for further economic development and growth in the area and aspire to balance the needs of the various industries that they are trying to attract.

There is a desire to attract employers and innovative businesses that can provide well-paying, secure employment for young people and families. In order to remain economically viable for the long-term, the Town of Blind River aspires to expand the number of local opportunities for work and find ways to retain local residents, rather than have them migrate to larger cities such as Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, and southern Ontario. As the support for the North Shore Power Group demonstrates, the community is also supportive of local entrepreneurs who take initiative.

2.3.2.3 Capabilities and Capacities within the Community

In relation to capabilities and capacities, the Town of Blind River has the ability to take on new enterprises. It is an entrepreneurial community with strong leadership. The Town of Blind River is

receptive to economic development and supported by a number of economic development organizations.

The Town of Blind River's governance structure is strong with a Mayor and Council, supported by staff in a number of service areas. The Town of Blind River also has a good foundation for resource based industries, having all the amenities and secondary businesses required to maintain both local workers and the overall supply chain.

2.4 Infrastructure

2.4.1 Physical Asset Indicators

This section provides a description of The Town of Blind River's physical assets. Physical assets include the basic infrastructure needed to support livelihoods and the tools or equipment that people use to function more productively. Infrastructure is a public good that is used without payment or some other infrastructure for a fee related to usage. Increased access to such infrastructure improves community well-being, human health and quality of life. The opportunity costs associated with poor quality infrastructure can preclude education, access to health services and income generation. Physical assets indicators include land use, housing, municipal infrastructure and services and transportation infrastructure.

2.4.1.1 Land Use

Commercial

The Town of Blind River Official Plan (2006) identifies employment areas that include industrial, commercial and business uses⁸². This designation is intended to include lands where people presently work and lands where employment opportunities will be provided in the future. Vacant employment lands have been included within this designation to provide growth areas for future industrial and commercial development. Employment areas in the Town of Blind River are currently grouped into new and older industrial areas, retail strips and the downtown district. Many commercial uses are appropriate on the edges of industrial areas and many under-used commercial areas could support some forms of light manufacturing or warehousing. Commercial areas are located along Woodward Avenue and Trans-Canada Highway 17⁸³. There is some desire for enhanced retail services such as a mall.

Industrial

Industrial areas are designated as employment lands as identified in the Town of Blind River Official Plan (2006). Industrial uses are located at the waterfront on the north shore at Industrial Road near the Marina, as well as on Industrial Park Road and the Trans-Canada Highway 17⁸⁴. Industrial land also exists

⁸² Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

⁸³ Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

⁸⁴ Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

on Eldorado Road where the Cameco uranium refinery is located. Some land available for development is privately owned⁸⁵.

Development Constraints

Development constraints in the Town of Blind River relate to Crown lands. According to the Town of Blind River Official Plan (2006), the total area of all Crown lands, including Matinenda, North Shore Channel Inshore Waterway, the Blind River, and Little White River Provincial Parks and the Mississagi Delta Provincial Reserve, represent almost 70 percent of the entire municipal land area. The Crown lands are located throughout the Town, although principally in the six northern geographic Townships. The future use and development of these Crown lands will therefore have a major impact on the character of the Town and the ability of the town to achieve its vision and goals for the municipality⁸⁶. Some residents want to see much of the Crown land in the municipality retained in a natural state⁸⁷.

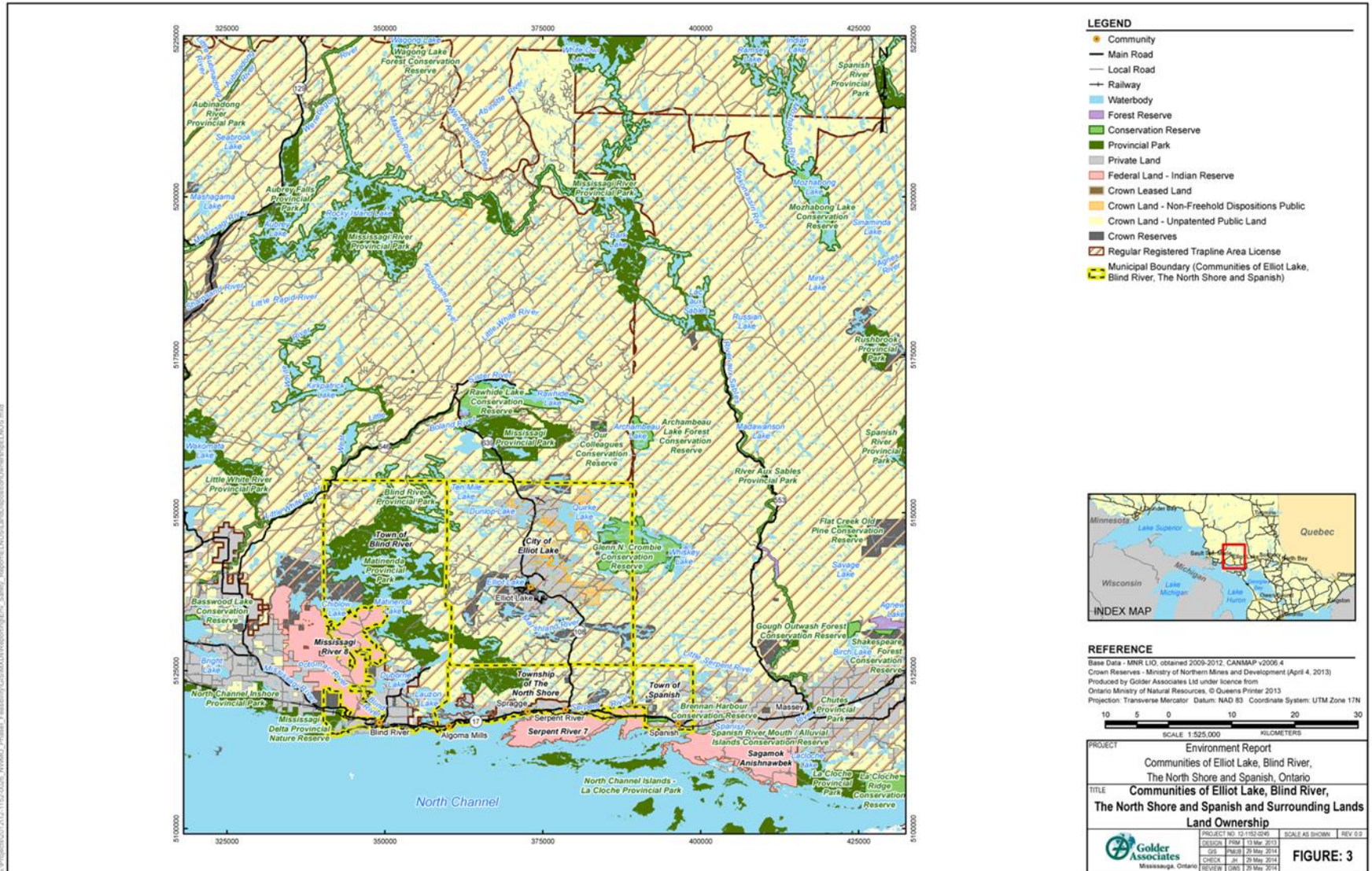
Please see Figure 9 for a map of land ownership in the Blind River area.

⁸⁵ Based on interview data.

⁸⁶ Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

⁸⁷ Based on interview data.

Figure 9 - Map of Land Ownership



Amount of Land in Planning Pipeline

The Town of Blind River's 'Future Growth Policy Area' contained in the Town of Blind River Official Plan (2006) identifies lands within this designation that are to be reserved for future urban development. Uses that are permitted within the 'Future Growth Policy Area' include all existing uses as well as passive rural uses such as forestry, outdoor recreation and conservation.

Presence of Official Plan and Land Designations

The Town of Blind River created a Draft Official Plan in 2013⁸⁸. The Official Plan includes policies depicting a 'Future Growth Policy Area'.

The Draft Official Plan has seven land use designations:

- *“Employment Areas;*
- *Living Area;*
- *Waterfront Community;*
- *Open Space;*
- *Environmental Protection;*
- *Rural and Resource Area; and*
- *Mineral Aggregate Resource Extraction Area”⁸⁹.*

2.4.1.2 Housing Type of Dwellings

As of 2011, the dominant housing style in the Town of Blind River was the single detached home which accounted for 76.6 percent of all dwellings, followed by apartments with fewer than five stories at 15.5 percent, and semi-detached homes at 5.4 percent⁹⁰. The remaining housing consisted of apartment/duplex, row houses and other. From 2006 to 2011 the proportion of single detached homes dropped, with an increase in semi-detached and apartment housing.

There is a good mix of housing options in the Town of Blind River. Particularly, there is decent amount of apartment housing options, as well as seniors housing available. However, the need for upgraded seniors housing (with elevators) has been identified. Residents looking to move to Blind River may seek apartments as a housing option. Increased apartment development would not require as much space as single and semi-detached home development. There are infill home sites available in the community⁹¹.

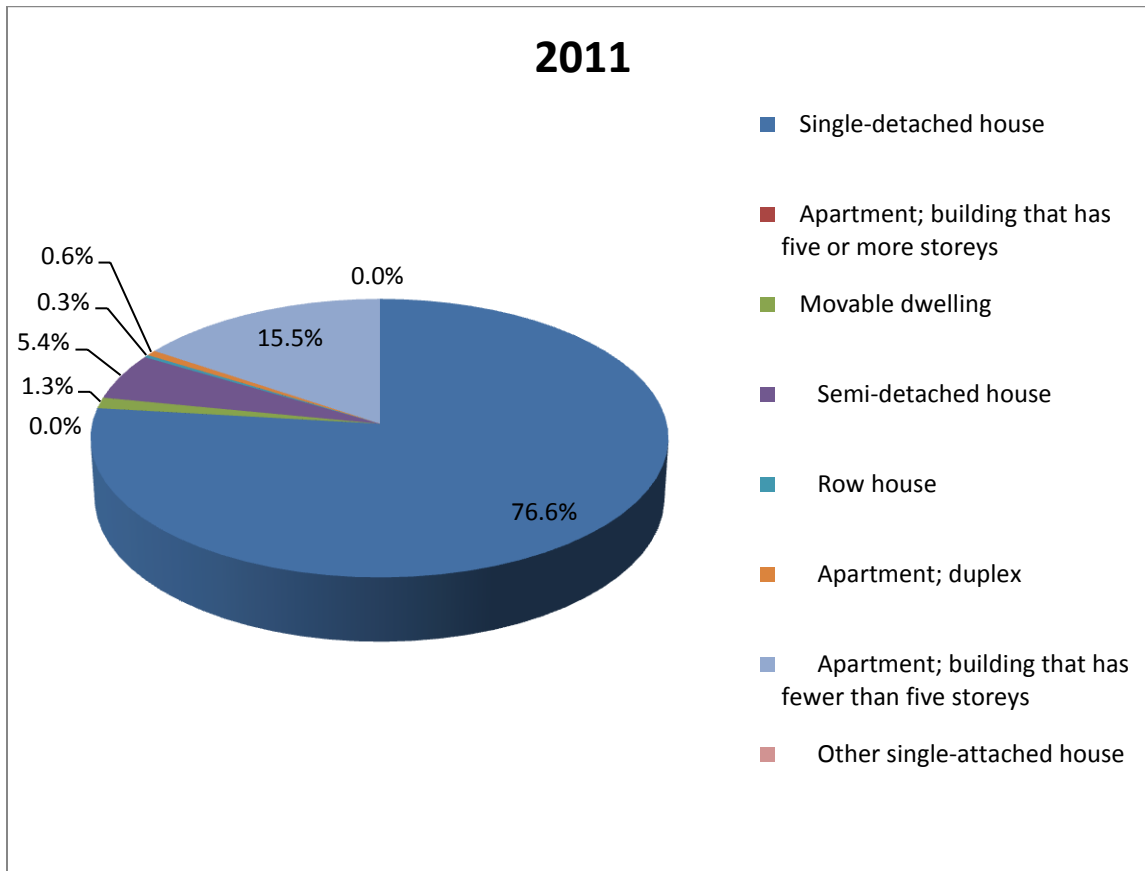
⁸⁸ Town of Blind River. Accessed Online July, 2013. [http://www.blindriver.com/site/welcome/index.php?pid=315].

⁸⁹ Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

⁹⁰ Statistics Canada, 2011. Census – Community Profiles (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed December 2013.

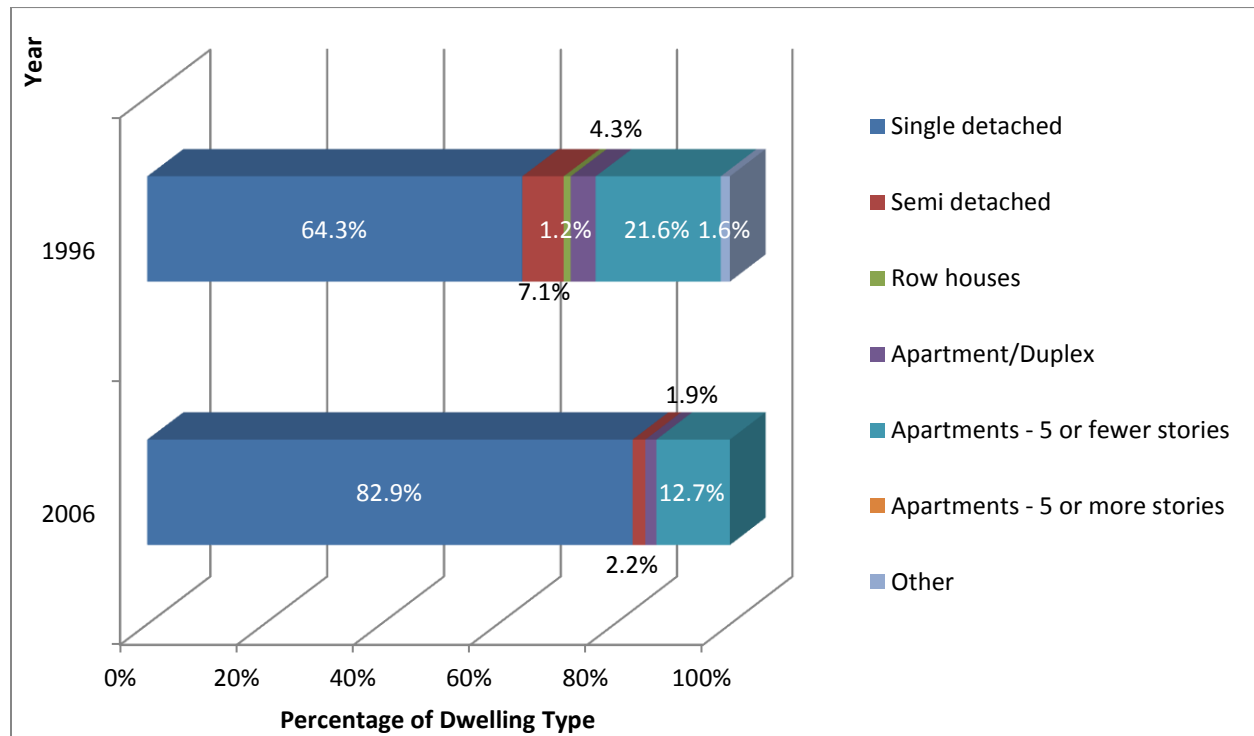
⁹¹ Based on interview data.

Figure 10 - Types of Private Dwellings in the Town of Blind River (2011)⁹²



⁹² Statistics Canada, 2011. Census Community Profiles. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed December 2013. Please note that data was not collected in 2001 for this statistic. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

Figure 11 - Types of Private Dwellings in the Town of Blind River (1996 and 2006)⁹³



Dwelling Characteristics and Tenure

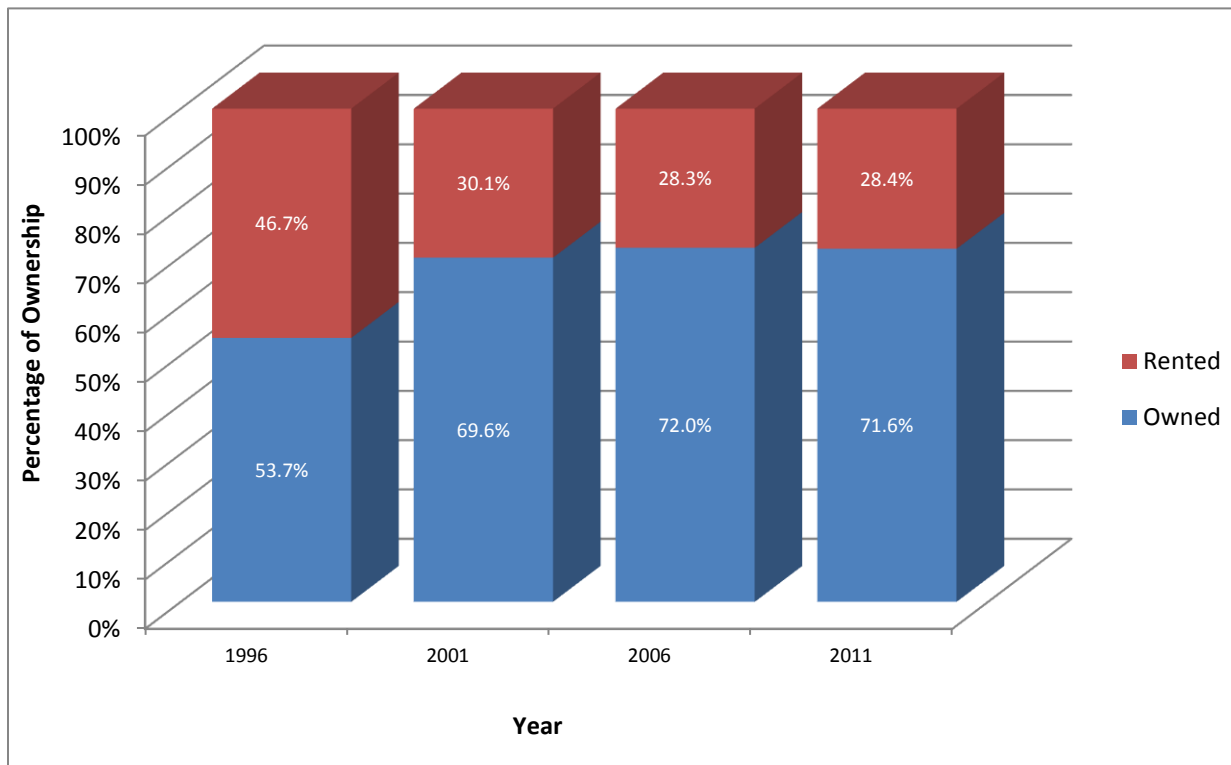
As of 2011, the majority of residents (71.6 percent) in the Town of Blind River owned their homes. Rental housing in the Town of Blind River as of 2011 accounted for 28.4 percent⁹⁴. The high percentage of home ownership in Blind River is indicative of a commitment to remain in the community. There is some indication that Blind River is seen to be influenced by Elliot Lake’s Retirement Living initiative as seniors find that the cost of housing may be lower in Blind River than in other parts of Ontario or quality of housing higher for the same cost⁹⁵.

⁹³ Statistics Canada, 1996 and 2006. Census – Community Profiles. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2012. Please note that data was not collected in 2001 for this statistic. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

⁹⁴ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2011. Census – Community Profiles and NHS – National Household Survey (2011). (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2012. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

⁹⁵ Based on interview data.

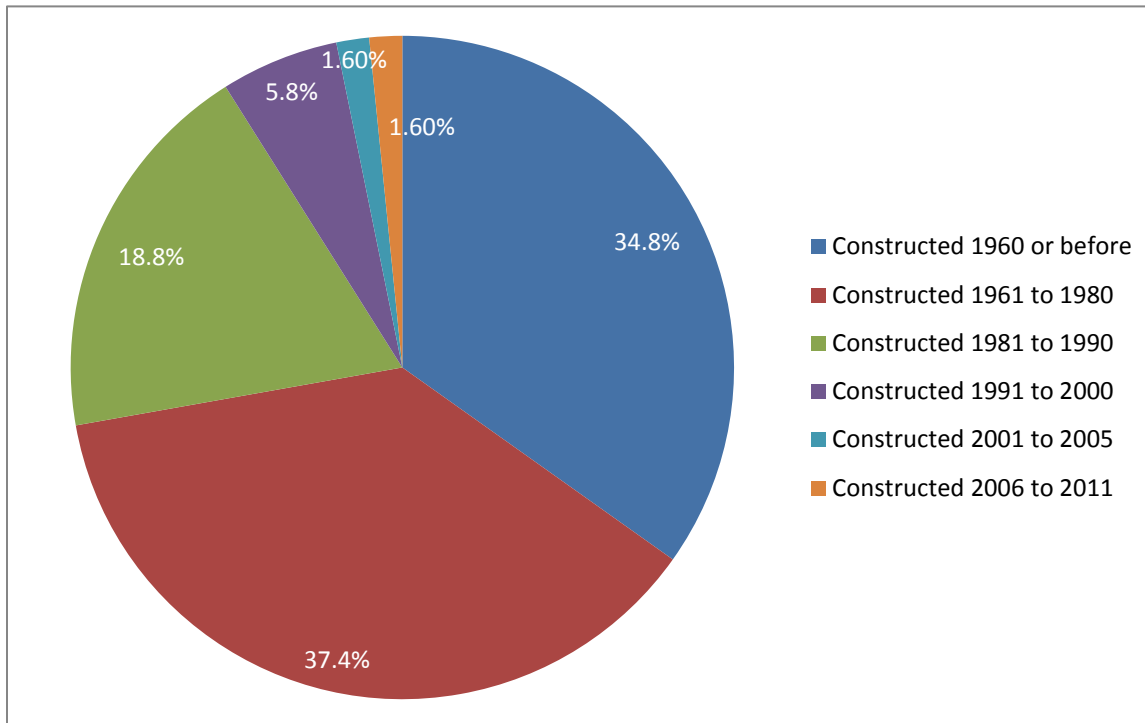
Figure 12 - Dwelling Characteristics the Town of Blind River⁹⁶



With respect to the age of housing in the Town of Blind River, Figure 13 shows that a significant majority of buildings (72.7 percent) were constructed before 1981. This indicates that relatively little new housing has been constructed in recent years.

⁹⁶ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2011. Census – Community Profiles and NHS – National Household Survey (2011). (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2012. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

Figure 13 - Age of Dwellings in the Town of Blind River (2011)⁹⁷



Residential Property Value

Since 1996, the average values of homes in the Town of Blind River have been increasing. In 2011, Statistics Canada indicated that the average home value in the Town of Blind River was \$157,262⁹⁸. Due to the variety in housing availability, Blind River has affordable homes available for incoming populations.

Table 8 - Average Home Value in the Town of Blind River (Statistics Canada)⁹⁹

Home Value	1996	2001	2006	2011
Blind River	\$73, 911	\$89,283	\$122, 854	\$157,262

⁹⁷ Statistics Canada, 2011. NHS – National Household Survey (2011). (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed December 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

⁹⁸ Statistics Canada, 2011. NHS – National Household Survey (2011). (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2013.

⁹⁹ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2006. Census – Community Profiles and NHS – National Household Survey (2011). (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2013.

Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) data provides the home assessment value while the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) data provides sales prices. The 2012 MPAC data indicates that the average home value (time adjusted) was \$132,684 in 2012. Residential property values are also increasing in the Town of Blind River since 2008 by an average of 24.3 percent and by 2013, property taxpayers are expected to see an average assessment increase of 5.0 percent in 2013. Conversely, the MLS sales data indicates that the 2012 home sale price in 2012 was \$120,310 and as of October 2013, the home sale price was \$141,933¹⁰⁰.

2.4.1.3 Municipal Infrastructure and Services

The Town of Blind River's municipal infrastructure and services serve the needs of the current population. However, the water supply system and waste water system could benefit from improvements. While the existing landfill is capable of servicing the existing population, it will reach capacity in 2014. The Town of Blind River has commissioned the preparation of a Waste Management Plan for which a Terms of Reference was approved in July, 2008. The Waste Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) commenced in February, 2009 and is ongoing.

Water Supply Systems

The Town of Blind River obtains water from six wells from an unconfined sand aquifer¹⁰¹. Water wells in the Town of Blind River come from overburden or shallow bedrock aquifers at depths of 166 m or less¹⁰². At one time, the Town of Blind River well field had nine wells. However, due to the nature of the aquifer and the quality of groundwater, well yields decreased and were no longer viable¹⁰³.

The water treatment plant is new with improvements occurring from 2002 to 2003. It is sized for the current population. The Town of Blind River's water distribution system is comprised of watermains ranging in diameter from 100mm to 400mm. While aged, an elevated tank inspected in 2012 was deemed to be in good condition and required a few safety adjustments. The distribution was deemed to be in satisfactory condition and several improvements were recommended in the 2006 Municipal Infrastructure Overview Summary Report¹⁰⁴. In general the older parts of the community tend to have older water and waste water infrastructure. The lumber mill, at one point provided district heating to these homes. Parts are serviced by clay pipe. The middle part of the community is newer and is serviced via PVC pipe¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁰ MLS Statistic Report, 2013. Board Reports Property Statistic Report Database. Available Online [http://www.mresdms.com/smon/board_reports/mls_res_activity.html?tm=1384891055633]. Accessed October 2013.

¹⁰¹ Geofirma Engineering Ltd., 2012. Initial Screening for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel, Town of Blind River, Ontario.

¹⁰² Geofirma Engineering Ltd., 2012. Initial Screening for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel, Town of Blind River, Ontario.

¹⁰³ Town of Blind River Official Plan, 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Town of Blind River Official Plan, 2006.

¹⁰⁵ Based on interview data.

Waste Water System

The Town of Blind River's Waste Water Pollution Control Plant was commissioned in 1980. It treats all sewage generated in the Town of Blind River's urban service area. The final clarifier is ringed by two aeration tanks and a sludge holding tank. The plant uses the extended aeration process that is well-suited for a smaller community such as the Town of Blind River. The plant is operating within its design capacity of 7,689 m³ /day with an average daily flow of 3,512 m³ /day. The plant is in good condition. However, a 2006 Municipal Infrastructure Overview Summary Report indicated that the plant is in need of improvement and repair and that with a 20 year design life, the Blind River plant was past-due for upgrading¹⁰⁶. The water system updates have been started and the aeration lines will be replaced.

The Town of Blind River's sanitary system comprises of sewers ranging in diameter from 150mm to 600mm. The 2006 Municipal Infrastructure Overview Summary Report recommended a number of sanitary sewage system upgrades to improve its operation and reduce maintenance requirements¹⁰⁷.

The Town of Blind River's storm sewer system is comprised of catch basins and sewer pipe ranging in diameter from 200mm to 900mm limited to the downtown strip and surrounding streets. The rest of Town of Blind River is serviced by open ditches.

Landfill Sites

The existing municipal landfill is located two km east of the Town on Trans-Canada Highway 17. It has been in operation since the 1970s. The landfill accepts disposable domestic, commercial and non-hazardous solid industrial wastes, scrap wood and brush, and iron sludge. The most recent estimate conducted in 2009 indicated the life of the facility to be six years meaning that capacity would be reached by 2015¹⁰⁸.

A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) Terms of Reference (ToR) was prepared and approved in July, 2008 and the Town of Blind River is currently preparing a Waste Management Plan EA for the renewal of the Certificate of Approval which will identify a preferred long-term solid waste management strategy¹⁰⁹. The undertaking will address non-hazardous residential, industrial, commercial and institutional, construction and demolition, bio-solid and iron sludge wastes (produced by the Cameco water treatment plant)¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁶ Kresin Engineering Corporation, 2006. Municipal Infrastructure Overview: Summary Report. Town of Blind River.

¹⁰⁷ Kresin Engineering Corporation, 2006. Municipal Infrastructure Overview: Summary Report. Town of Blind River.

¹⁰⁸ Kresin Engineering Corporation, 2009. Municipal Waste Management Plan Environmental Assessment: Task 1 Report – Description of the Problem/Opportunity. Town of Blind River.

¹⁰⁹ Kresin Engineering Corporation, 2009. Municipal Waste Management Plan Environmental Assessment : Task 1 Report – Description of the Problem/Opportunity Town of Blind River.

¹¹⁰ Kresin Engineering Corporation, 2009. Municipal Waste Management Plan Environmental Assessment: Task 1 Report – Description of the Problem/Opportunity. Town of Blind River.

The ToR provides an outline of how the alternative methods for waste management will be considered, the process to be used to assess any potential environmental effects, criteria for the selection of a preferred alternative as well as commitments for future monitoring and mitigation plans. The preferred undertaking will be determined during the EA process and in consultation with the public, First Nations, interested stakeholders and government agencies.

Electricity and Gas Supply

Power is supplied to the Town of Blind River by Hydro One. The North Shore Power Group is in the process of developing a \$40 million solar field in the community that will produce local electricity and power to the grid¹¹¹. Natural gas is provided by Union Gas.

2.4.1.4 Transportation Infrastructure

Presence of Transportation Infrastructure

The Town of Blind River is accessible via Trans-Canada Highway 17 which extends through the town. The Town of Blind River is also accessible from Elliot Lake via Highway 108. Greyhound and the A.J. Bus Lines Charter also operate through Blind River. The Huron Central Railway operates a commercial rail line between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury; however, there is no passenger service available. The Town of Blind River is also accessible via water through the Blind River Marine Park. The Town of Blind River also has a dock at the old lumber mill which could be used for future transportation of goods and/or people. Local roads are surface treated once a year and have a 3 to 4 inch gravel base.

The Sault Ste. Marie Airport is located approximately 140 km west of the Town of Blind River. The Airport has two 6,000 ft runways, one of which is equipped with an instrument landing system and taxiways. Sault Ste. Marie is also the terminus of the I75 Highway in the United States.

Air Canada Jazz, Bearskin Airlines, and Porter Airlines operate daily services to and from the Sault Ste. Marie Airport. Major destinations worldwide are reachable with one stop. In addition, the Sault Ste. Marie Airport provides air cargo and air freight services. Weekly winter vacation flights are also available through Sunwing Vacations and Transat Tours Canada. The seasonal airlines operate on a weekly basis. In addition, the airport welcomes all charter operators and is willing to assist with arrangements for such flights¹¹². Blind River also has access to the airport at the City of Elliot Lake as well as local float plane facilities.

2.4.2 Summary of Physical Assets

The following summarizes our findings for physical assets in Blind River.

2.4.2.1 Priorities and Key Issues

The Town of Blind River envisions commercial, industrial and residential land expansion and is prepared for growth. The priorities include maintaining and upgrading existing infrastructure to ensure infrastructure life is extended and that services are efficient and safe.

¹¹¹ Based on interview data.

¹¹² Sault Ste. Marie Airport. Accessed Online July, 2013. [<http://www.saultairport.com/flights.php>].

There is a mandatory land use legislative and regulatory system in place (e.g. Official Plan) with the required resources for administration. Water, waste water and waste management services are in place. Other community assets include: a museum, marina building, fire hall, town hall, library, community centre, seniors building and public works building¹¹³. Compared to other rural centres, the Town of Blind River has a range of housing types and both ownership and rental accommodations.

2.4.2.2 Community Aspirations

The Town of Blind River aspires to have adequate services to support growth and development. They want to provide direction, but also adequate controls on new industrial, commercial and residential development. The Town of Blind River recognizes that growth needs to occur responsibly, particularly as it pertains to financing new infrastructure.

2.4.2.3 Capabilities and Capacities within the Community

The Town of Blind River has adequate municipal services to absorb new growth based on current growth projections and is proactively assessing its infrastructure requirements to ensure the community is serviced adequately into the future. While the housing stock in the Town of Blind River is aging, there is a good mix of housing choices and tenures relative to other rural centres.

The current commercial land use capabilities in the area are adequate for the level of economic development. However, there is leakage of economic opportunity as residents tend to shop out of town. The presence of a new large scale industry would require a significant increase in the quantity of commercial and serviced industrial lands, which the Town of Blind River has the capacity to provide.

The Town of Blind River is easily accessible via the Sault Ste. Marie Airport, Trans-Canada Highway 17, and Greyhound and A.J. bus services.

2.5 Social Assets

This section identifies the social assets of the Town of Blind River. Social assets include the social and community activities in which people participate and the resources they draw upon in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. These activities and resources create networks within the community and between communities; increase connectivity and cohesion, and generate trusting relationships and community pride. It also allows people to better cope with change, provides an informal safety net, and may compensate for a lack of other types of capital within the community. Social asset indicators include diversity of population composition, cultural heritage resources, community facilities and programs, and social services and organizations.

2.5.1 Social Assets Indicators

2.5.1.1 Diversity of Population Composition *Aboriginal Identity*

There is a varied mix of Aboriginal Identity and non-Aboriginal population in the Town of Blind River which adds to community vibrancy. The Town of Blind River and Mississauga First Nation residents are

¹¹³ Based on interview data.

well integrated and share recreation facilities. Aboriginal and non-aboriginal people have a good relationship. Aboriginal students attend schools in Blind River. Blind River residents visit the Mississauga Fitness facility and gym for fitness workouts, sports and recreational activities. All residents participate jointly on softball teams and attend dances together. The new Potomac Bridge is a joint project between the Mississauga First Nation and the municipality. The Municipality of Blind River circulates development applications to the First Nation. The Municipality and Band Council share policing and also cooperate¹¹⁴. Since 1996, there has been an increase of residents who identify themselves as Aboriginal¹¹⁵. As of 2011, 11.0 percent of residents identified as Aboriginal in Blind River¹¹⁶ (see Table A5 in **Appendix A** for detailed statistics).

Languages

As of 2011, the majority of people in the Town of Blind River spoke English as their primary language at home (90.8 percent), which was higher than the Ontario average (79.0 percent)¹¹⁷. French was spoken in more homes in Blind River (8.5 percent) than in the rest of Ontario (2.2 percent), indicating the Francophone and Métis population and many residents are bilingual. Residents of Blind River operate freely in English and French and while the primary language is English, the French culture is strong. The use of non-official languages in the Town of Blind River (0.6 percent) was significantly below the Ontario average (14.4 percent), indicating that there is a less diverse population than much of the rest of the province (see Table A6 in **Appendix A** for detailed statistics).

Immigrant Population

Since 1996, the percent of residents in the Town of Blind River who immigrated to Canada have remained relatively stable. As of 2011, 5.2 percent of Blind River's population were immigrants (see Table A7 **Appendix A** for detailed statistics)¹¹⁸.

Seasonal Residents

The population increases in the summer due to the presence of seasonal residents. The Town of Blind River has the Matinenda Cottage Association that advocates for seasonal residents in the area. In addition to Lake Lauzon cottaging, there are seasonal homes located on Lauzon Lake and Lake Duborne.

¹¹⁴ Based on interview data.

¹¹⁵ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2011. Census – Community Profiles and NHS – National Household Survey (2011). (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2013.

¹¹⁶ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2006. Census – Community Profiles and NHS – National Household Survey (2011). (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2013.

¹¹⁷ Statistics Canada, 2011. Census – Community Profiles). (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2013.

¹¹⁸ Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2006. Census – Community Profiles and NHS – National Household Survey (2011). (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed June 2013.

2.5.1.2 Cultural Heritage Resources

Archaeological Sites

There are 85 registered archaeological sites in the area of the four communities. Of these 85 archaeological sites, three are located within the municipal boundary for the City of Elliot Lake; four are within the municipal boundary of the Town of Blind River, and five within the Township of the North Shore¹¹⁹.

The potential for archaeological and historical sites in the Town of Blind River and surrounding area is considered to be high given the sites are already documented, and due to the long history of First Nations communities inhabiting the north shore of Lake Huron¹²⁰.

Euro-Canadian Heritage Resources and Cultural Landscapes

In an area that had originally been an important route for early Voyageurs and fur traders, the Town of Blind River was formed in the late 1800s as an important area for logging activity. The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad in 1884 resulted in a population surge. The Town of Blind River also has the Timber Village Museum showcasing the history and heritage of the people of the Town of Blind River and local North Channel communities.

Arts and Multicultural Groups

A community with engaging cultural and entertainment opportunities and amenities will be successful in attracting and retaining families, workers and tourists. Furthermore, the vitality of a community's cultural participation and engagement relates directly to its overall quality of life. The community has 10 places of worship, a golf course, good access to Lake Huron, nice beaches and cross-country skiing¹²¹.

The Town of Blind River has a variety of arts groups including the Blind River Arts and Crafts Club, Blind River Horticultural Society, and the Blind River Entertainment Series. The Town of Blind River also has a theater and a cinema. Blind River has a Festival Committee and the community is on the list of the top 50 communities in terms of the success of its festivals. From time to time there are concerts and local bars will feature out of town performers¹²². In addition, the community hosts a visiting comedy club, various bands and weekend theatre. The community also has sports and hockey teams. Service clubs and churches also host entertainment activities and fundraisers. However, the community is seen to need a swimming pool. There are few active volunteers and many volunteers are older and often called upon¹²³.

¹¹⁹ von Bitter, R., 2013. Personal Communication on April 26, 2013 re: Archaeological Sites Database. Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport.

¹²⁰ Geofirma Engineering Ltd., 2012. Initial Screening for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel, Town of Blind River, Ontario.

¹²¹ Based on interview data.

¹²² Based on interview data.

¹²³ Based on interview data.

Media plays an important part of the day to day news and cultural life in the Town of Blind River. The main newspaper is the Elliot Lake Standard which is owned by Osprey Media. It is published weekly and is the largest circulation newspaper in Blind River. Residents also read the Sault Star and Sudbury Star.

2.5.1.3 Community Facilities and Programs Service and Social Clubs

The Town of Blind River has a variety of service and social clubs that perform a valuable function in the local community¹²⁴. These groups include, but are not limited to:

- Algoma Paddlers Canoe & Kayak Club
- Army Cadets
- Blind River Curling Club
- Blind River Lions Club
- Richelieu Club
- Junior A Beavers
- Girl Guides
- 696 Golden Wing Air Cadets
- Blind River Sno-Riders
- Knights of Columbus
- Blind River Masons
- Catholic Women's League
- Blind River Minor Hockey
- Blind River Rotary Club
- Algoma Youth Action Alliance
- Legion Ladies Auxiliary
- Voyageur Trails Association
- United Church Women's Association
- Blind River Figure Skating

Recreational Facilities

There are a number of recreational facilities in the Town of Blind River. Such facilities are a community asset, encourage local residents to stay in the community, and serve as an attraction for potential new residents. Residents of other communities in the north shore also come to enjoy the Town of Blind River's recreational facilities. The Mississauga First Nation also has a number of recreation facilities, such as a baseball diamond which is shared with the Town of Blind River residents.

In the Town of Blind River, major recreational facilities include the Huron Pines Golf and Country Club, the Blind River Marina, the Alain Bray Auditorium Theatre, skiing, biking and snow-mobile trails, tennis courts, and the Blind River Memorial Arena and Curling Rink. The Town of Blind River also has a recreational park including tennis courts, soccer fields, football fields, and more¹²⁵.

¹²⁴ Based on Interview data.

¹²⁵ Town of Blind River. Visitors. Accessed Online, July 2013. [<http://www.blindriver.com/site/visitors/index.php?pid=7>].

Park Areas

The Town of Blind River has a variety of parkland and green space within the town boundaries and the surrounding area. There are three provincial parks within Town limits, including the majority of the Blind River, the Matinenda, and the Mississagi Delta Provincial Parks¹²⁶. In combination the parks account for approximately 62 percent of the area in the Town of Blind River. In addition, there are 27 protected areas surrounding Blind River, including 12 provincial parks, four forest reserves, and 12 conservation reserves¹²⁷.

2.5.1.4 Social Services and Organizations

Social and Affordable Housing

There are organizations in the Town of Blind River that coordinate social housing programs. Like most communities, there is an opportunity for more social and affordable housing. Community Living Algoma and the Algoma District Services Administration Board provide social services. There is a Non-Profit Housing Corporation as well.

The Town of Blind River has seniors housing including the Riverview Seniors Apartments, the Blind River District Health Centre Apartments, and the Golden Birches Terrace. The Town of Blind River also has a number of rent supplement apartment buildings.

Child Care Services

The Town of Blind River and area has four daycare facilities: Blind River Early Learning Centre, All Star Children's Services Inc., Iron Bridge Early learning Centre¹²⁸.

Social Assistance and Support Programs

There are a variety of social assistance and support programs offered in Blind River, including the Arthritis Society, Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Diabetes Association, the Canadian Red Cross, Al-Anon and Community Living Algoma. Blind River also has a food bank that serves the local and surrounding area.

The Blind River District Health Centre offers a variety of services to eligible seniors, including: Meals on Wheels; HandiTransit (transportation to challenged adults and seniors), and adult day service for cognitively impaired or frail seniors.

The Algoma Community Care Centre offers services including personal support/homemaking; medical supplies; specified goods, services and equipment; access to adult day programs; meal services; transportation; friendly visiting and security checks.

¹²⁶ Geofirma Engineering Ltd., 2012. Initial Screening for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel, Town of Blind River, Ontario.

¹²⁷ Geofirma Engineering Ltd., 2012. Initial Screening for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel, Town of Blind River, Ontario.

¹²⁸ Town of Blind River. Residents. Accessed Online, June 2012. [<http://www.blindriver.com/site/residents/index.php?pid=255>].

2.5.2 Summary of Social Assets

The following summarizes our findings for social assets in the Town of Blind River.

2.5.2.1 Priorities and Key Issues

Blind River has a mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents, as well as a strong Francophone community. The Town of Blind River has good social and seniors programs in place, but if the population increases, day care, social, and seniors housing will need to expand. Services for mental health are also a priority for Blind River. Youth crisis services are needed in the Town of Blind River.

2.5.2.2 Community Aspirations

The Town of Blind River aspires to have a high standard of living supported by arts, sports, outdoor activities, tourism and a culture scene. Blind River values volunteerism and encourages all members of their community to become involved to support the quality of life that all residents enjoy.

2.5.2.3 Capabilities and Capacities within the Community

There is a high level of social support institutions and programs in the Town of Blind River, as well as ample indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities. While the Town of Blind River has several day care facilities and private day cares. Due to the aging population and more services available to cater to older residents, there are opportunities for improvement, particularly if there is an influx of younger people. In addition, the Town Blind River has an array of service and social clubs from outdoor enthusiasts and a variety of places of worship.

2.6 Natural Environment

2.6.1. Natural Asset Indicators

This section provides data on the Town of Blind River's natural assets. This includes a wide range of resources from intangible goods (e.g. air quality and biodiversity) that are used directly by people (e.g. water, trees, land, and wildlife) to natural assets indicators including parks and protected areas, natural areas and areas of significance.

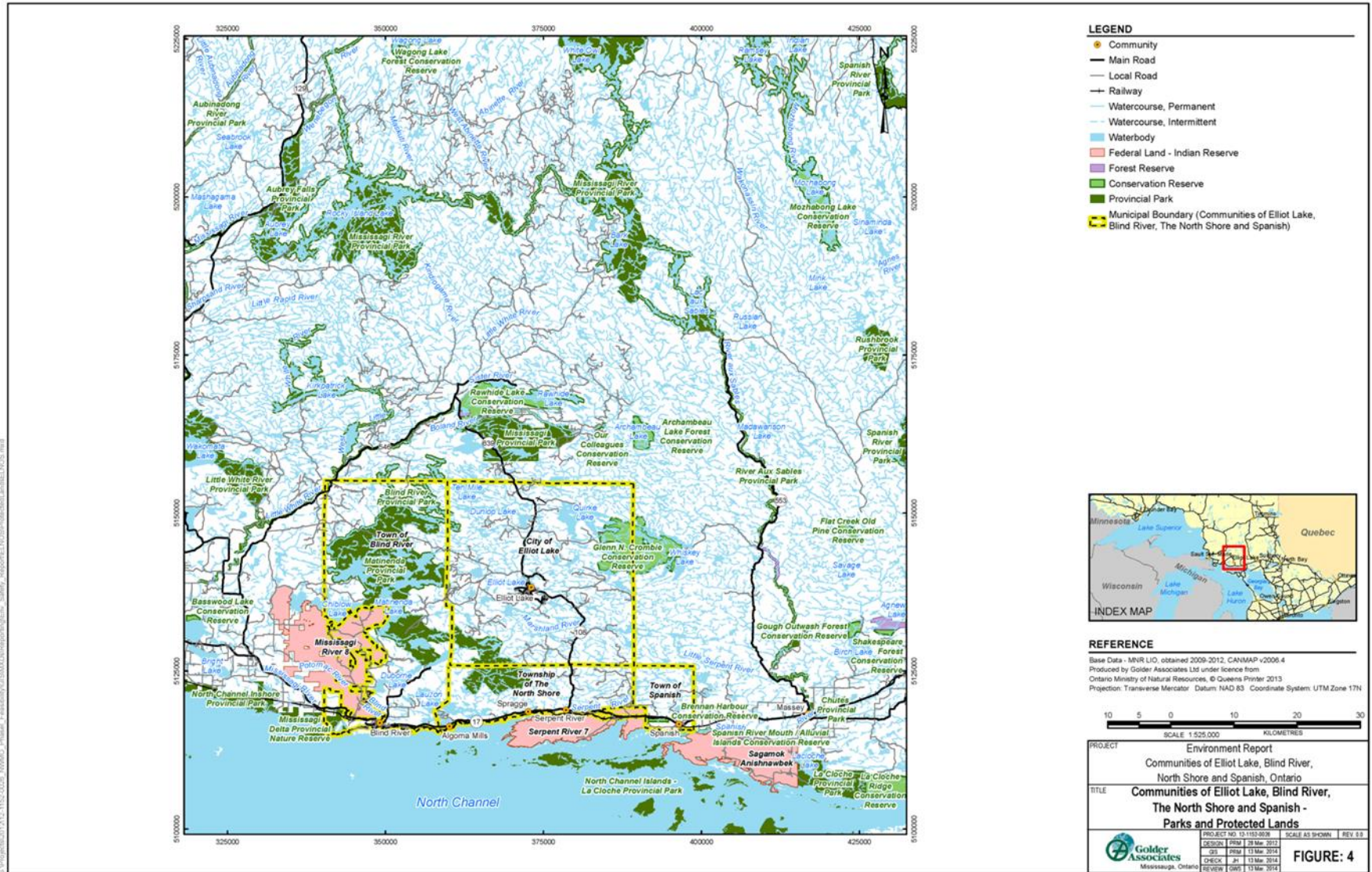
2.6.1.1 Parks and Protected Areas

There are three provincial parks within the Town of Blind River limits, including the majority of the Blind River, the Matinenda, and the Mississagi Delta Provincial Parks¹²⁹. Together, these parks account for approximately 62 percent of the Town of Blind River's land area. In addition, there are 28 protected areas surrounding the Town of Blind River, including 12 provincial parks, four forest reserves, and 12 conservation reserves¹³⁰. Please see Figure 14 that illustrates the locations of surrounding parks and protected areas.

¹²⁹Geofirma Engineering Ltd., 2012. Initial Screening for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel, Town of Blind River, Ontario.

¹³⁰Geofirma Engineering Ltd., 2012. Initial Screening for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel, Town of Blind River, Ontario.

Figure 14 – Map of Parks and Protected Areas



2.6.1.2 Natural Areas and Features of Significance

Biophysical Features

The Town of Blind River is located in the Canadian Shield region, a low-relief, dome-like, gently rolling land surface¹³¹. The Town of Blind River is located in the Penokean Hills, south of the Abitibi Uplands bordered to the west by the Cobalt Plain and the Laurentian Highlands¹³².

The Town of Blind River and the surrounding area are located in the St. Lawrence Drainage Area. Drainage in the Town of Blind River is generally from the area north of Blind River, in the Abitibi Uplands, towards the Penokean Hills terminating in Lake Huron. Drainage in the Town occurs mainly by the Blind River and its tributaries into Lake Huron¹³³.

Climate

Temperature in the area of the four communities can reach highs of 37°C in summer months and lows of -39°C in winter months. The annual average temperature is 4°C, with an average summer temperature of 16°C and an average winter temperature of -8°C¹³⁴.

Mineral Resources

There are currently no active mines in the area of the four communities, but the region has a long history of mining and mineral exploration and development continues there today. In the area of the four communities, there are several areas of active exploration and of metallic mineral production. There is a historic and ongoing interest in the Huronian Supergroup, Whiskey Lake and Benny Lake greenstone belts and the East Bull Lake intrusive suite. Within the area of the four communities, there are 21 past producing mines with no reserves and six past producing mines with reserves¹³⁵.

There are numerous sand and gravel pits within the area of the four communities. There are two discretionary occurrences for building stone (granite) reported within the Ramsey-Algoma granitoid complex, near the mouth of the Blind River¹³⁶.

2.6.2 Summary of Natural Assets

The following summarizes our findings for natural assets in the Town of Blind River.

¹³¹Geofirma Engineering Ltd., 2012. Initial Screening for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel, Town of Blind River, Ontario.

¹³²Geofirma Engineering Ltd., 2012. Initial Screening for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel, Town of Blind River, Ontario.

¹³³Geofirma Engineering Ltd., 2012. Initial Screening for Siting a Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel, Town of Blind River, Ontario.

¹³⁴ Environment Canada (EC), 2013c. National Climate Data and Information Archive.

(Retrieved from http://climate.weatheroffice.gc.ca/climateData/canada_e.html). Accessed April 2013.

¹³⁵ OGS (Ontario Geological Survey), 2011c. Mineral Deposit Inventory-2011. Ontario Geological Survey.

¹³⁶ OGS (Ontario Geological Survey), 2011c. Mineral Deposit Inventory-2011. Ontario Geological Survey.

2.6.2.1 Priorities and Key Issues

In regards to natural assets, the central priority of residents is to preserve and protect their local environment. With a significant portion of the Town of Blind River's economy based on wilderness recreation and tourism, ensuring the continued viability of local forests and watersheds is an important concern.

2.6.2.2 Community Aspirations

The Town of Blind River values the intrinsic nature of their setting within northern Ontario. The Town of Blind River has rich natural heritage resources and aspires to strike a balance between preservation and development that will support the viability of the Town while ensuring that the natural character of the area remains unchanged.

2.6.2.3 Capabilities and Capacities within the Community

In addition to natural resource extraction, the Town of Blind River offers an abundance of opportunities for tourists and residents to participate in outdoor activities. In fact, nature tourism is a major draw for visitors to the area.

2.7 Unique Characteristics

This section profiles the unique characteristics of the Town of Blind River.

2.7.1 Community Character

Attitudes About the Community and Community Character

The Town Blind River is eager for development; it encourages local investment and welcomes external investment and opportunities. The Town of Blind River also values its natural assets and prides itself on its outdoor recreational attractions, such as the Boom Camp Interpretive Park, its nature and bike and snowmobile trails, boating, hunting and fishing. The vision for the Town of Blind River is to be a unique community located midway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie which capitalizes on its geographic location on the north shore of Lake Huron and its pristine natural areas. The Town of Blind River is proud of its small town atmosphere and the ability of its French, English, and Aboriginal peoples to live and work together¹³⁷.

Cameco Refinery employees are familiar with uranium processing and radiation-related matters more generally¹³⁸.

2.7.2 Environmental Values

There is awareness in the community about the importance of the Town of Blind River's natural assets. Residents have strong values about protecting and preserving the environment.

¹³⁷ Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

¹³⁸ Based on interview data.

Municipal Committees

The Town of Blind River has a Planning Advisory Board and an Ecological Resource (Recycling and Energy Efficiency Committee) which serve to promote, preserve and protect, the Town of Blind River's natural environment and resources positioning the community to be more sustainable.

2.7.3 Community Goals

The Town of Blind River's Strategic Plan describes a desired future as a uniquely located, friendly, multicultural place, committed to responsible economic growth¹³⁹. There is emphasis on cooperative planning and moderate growth; promoting investment and providing local employment opportunities; promoting and protecting the natural beauty and environment; fostering a sense of community; and providing fiscal responsibility.

The Town of Blind River also desires to stimulate growth and diversify the local economy, by leveraging marine tourism and destination tourism and attracting and retaining a younger demographic¹⁴⁰. The provision of excellent health care and social services, including affordable housing is also an important aspiration for the Town of Blind River.

¹³⁹ Town of Blind River, 2006. Blind River Official Plan.

¹⁴⁰ Blind River Community Economic Development Strategy, 2013.

3.0 REGIONAL PROFILE

3.1 Overview

This section provides an overview of the regional profile for the City of Elliot Lake, the Town of Blind River, the Town of Spanish and the Township of The North Shore. The definition of the regional context of a community is subjective. The regional boundaries of a community are defined differently by various entities. For the specific purpose of this Community Profile, the geographic boundaries of the region have not been defined, as further dialogue with community members and members of surrounding communities is required. Established regional areas that have been used in this report for comparative purposes include the Algoma District Census Division.

3.1.1 Location

The largest nearby Algoma District communities of Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie act as the major centres for higher order shopping and services such as specialized health care. The local centres for shopping and services are Elliot Lake, Blind River and Espanola.

3.1.2 Maps

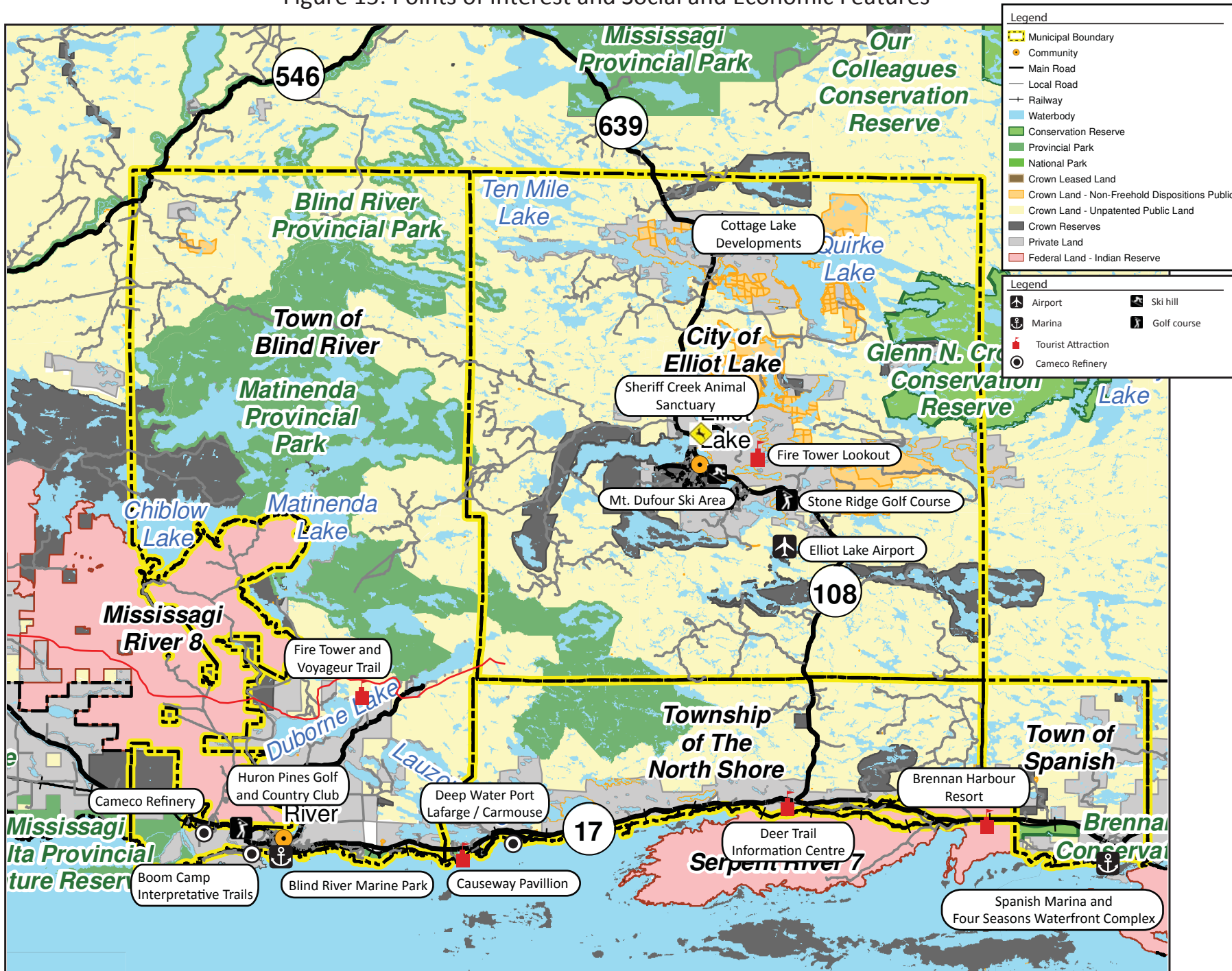
3.1.2.1 Points of Interest and Social Economic Features

The following map presents points of interest as well as social and economic features in the surrounding area.

3.1.2.2 Natural Resources (Current and Former Mine Sites)

The following map presents current and former mine sites in the surrounding area.

Figure 15: Points of Interest and Social and Economic Features



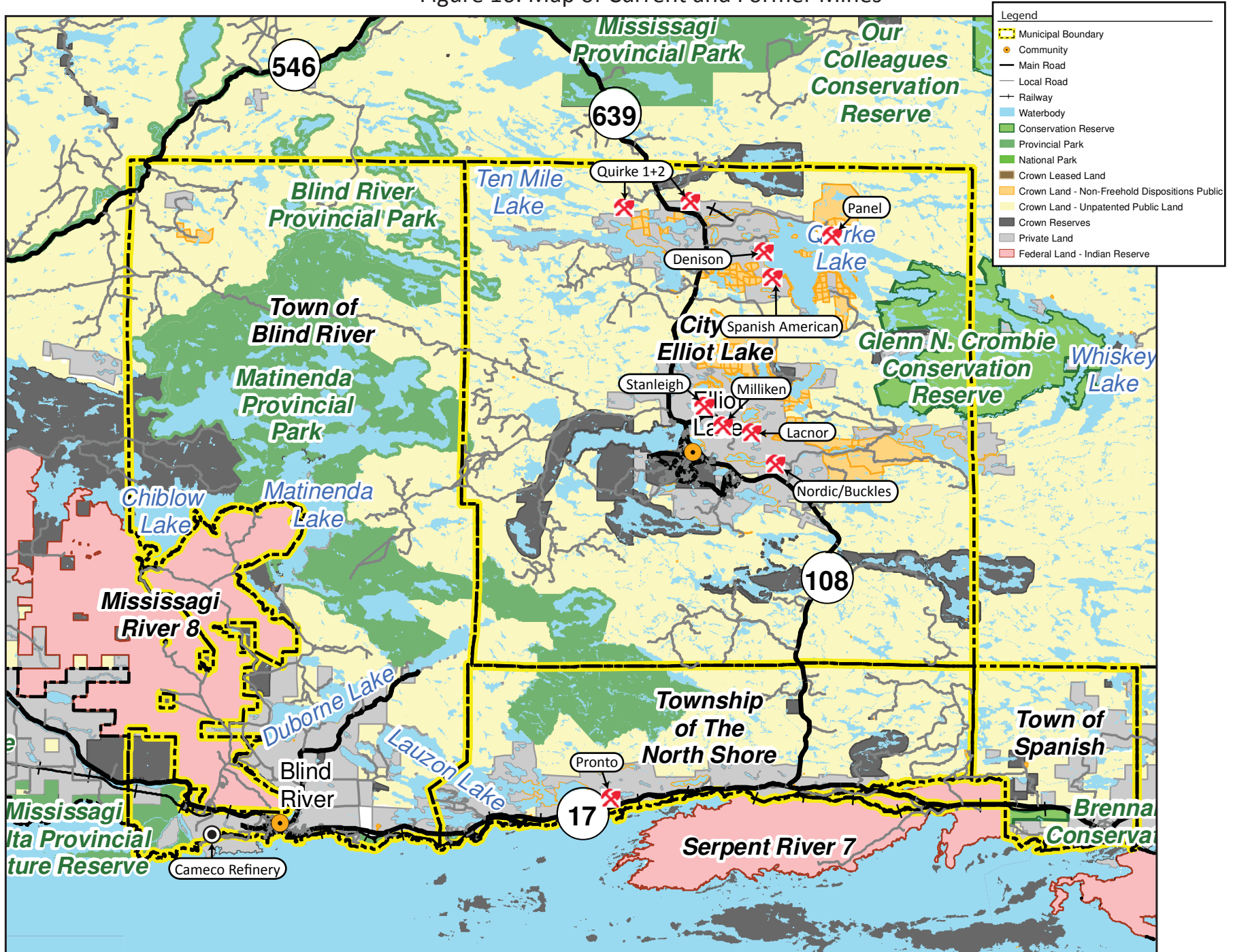
Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Community
- Main Road
- Local Road
- Railway
- Waterbody
- Conservation Reserve
- Provincial Park
- National Park
- Crown Leased Land
- Crown Land - Non-Freehold Dispositions Public
- Crown Land - Unpatented Public Land
- Crown Reserves
- Private Land
- Federal Land - Indian Reserve

Legend

- Airport
- Marina
- Tourist Attraction
- Cameco Refinery
- Ski hill
- Golf course

Figure 16: Map of Current and Former Mines



3.2 Communities

3.2.1 Non-Aboriginal Historical Context

European explorers arrived in the 1600s, followed by French fur traders who used the North Channel between Manitoulin Island and the mainland as part of its voyageur canoe route¹⁴¹. The French as well as missionaries and traders from Montreal used the 'Great Trail' which was later called the voyageur canoe route¹⁴². Fur trading was the initial industry of the region. By 1672, an estimated 400 traders were operating in the area¹⁴³. A post was established in 1789 to receive pelts from the Aboriginal people of the area. The logging industry grew in the 19th century to satisfy the building demands in the United States and the British colonies. Mining began in the region when copper was discovered at Bruce Mines during the mid-1800s. The Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) arrived in the region in 1884, which facilitated economic and social development in the area through easier transportation of materials. By 1887, the CPR was completed to Sault St. Marie and linked to Michigan¹⁴⁴.

Elliot Lake

In 2011, the population of Elliot Lake was 11,348. The name 'Elliot Lake' first appeared on a map in 1910 in reference to a logging camp cook who drowned in the lake¹⁴⁵. Fur trading and logging operations lasted in the City of Elliot Lake area until 1950. "Tourist outfitters have been active in the immediate vicinity as remote wilderness locations since the turn of the century"¹⁴⁶.

Uranium was discovered in the area in the early 1950s. The City of Elliot Lake began to develop to meet the growing demand for housing near the new uranium mines. There were uranium mines established in the region and the mining sector expanded in the region over the next 40 years. Elliot Lake area mines included:

- Pronto Mine (1957 – 1970)
- Buckles Mine (1956-1958)
- Lacnor Mine (1956-1960)
- Nordic Mine (1956-1970)
- Spanish-American Mine (1957-1959)
- Quirke 1and II Mine (1957-1960 and 1967-1990)
- Stanleigh Mine (1957-1960 and 1983-1996)

¹⁴¹ Town of Blind River. The History of Blind River. Accessed Online, Aug 2013. [<http://www.blindriver.com/site/visitors/index.php?pid=14>].

¹⁴² Daschul, J. 2013. Clearing the Plains! Disease, Politics of Starvation and the Loss of Aboriginal Life. University of Regina Press.

¹⁴³ Daschul, J. 2013. Clearing the Plains! Disease, Politics of Starvation and the Loss of Aboriginal Life. University of Regina Press.

¹⁴⁴ Arbic, B. 2003. City of the Rapids. Sault Ste. Marie's Heritage.

¹⁴⁵ City of Elliot Lake. History of Elliot Lake. Accessed Online, Aug 2013. [<http://www.cityofelliottlake.com/en/cityhall/history.asp>]

¹⁴⁶ City of Elliot Lake. History of Elliot Lake. Accessed Online, Aug 2013. [<http://www.cityofelliottlake.com/en/cityhall/history.asp>]

- Panel Mine (1957-1961 and 1979-1990)
- Can Met Mine (1957-1960)
- Denison 1 and 11 Mines (1957-1992)
- Stanrock Mine (1958-1964 and 1964-1970)
- Milliken 1 and 11 Mine (1958-1965)
- Pater Mine (1961-1970)¹⁴⁷

Uranium from the City of Elliot Lake became an important strategic resource for the nuclear industry including nuclear reactors. At its peak, it has been estimated that the City of Elliot Lake may have had a population of up to 25,000.

With the discovery of uranium in the City of Elliot Lake, the Provincial Government created a special agency to ensure the viable development of Elliot Lake as a community. The ‘Planning and Development Department of the Ontario Ministry of Housing’ formed in October of 1955 to address this task¹⁴⁸.

“Elliot Lake produced most of the world’s uranium and in doing so spearheaded mine development in safety - ventilation and environmental concerns that have made Elliot Lake an industry leader”¹⁴⁹. Currently, local businesses continue to consult on how to decommission mines and tailing ponds. Mining production waned in the region after Canada decided to export uranium only for peaceful purposes in 1965. Uranium was stockpiled until 1974 to support the industry, and later recovered due to increasing demand for nuclear electricity reactors. A second decline in the early 1990s led many of the Elliot Lake mines to become decommissioned. The 1996 closure of the Stanleigh Mine marked the end of the Elliot Lake uranium mining operations. Saskatchewan was able to produce cheaper uranium and it became the major supplier of uranium to the world.

The City of Elliot Lake Nuclear and Mining Museum remains in the City as a reminder of its past place in Canadian mining history. The Canadian Mining Hall of Fame is housed there and has portraits and biographies of those individuals who made major contributions to the industry. In January of 1991, the Provincial Government officially proclaimed the City of Elliot Lake as Ontario's 15th city.

Blind River

In 2011, the population of Blind River was 3,549. The name ‘Blind River’ was given by voyageurs because the mouth of the river was not visible as they followed along the canoe route¹⁵⁰. The Town of Blind River was incorporated in 1906, and developed into a forestry town. The logging industry developed in the Blind River and Mississagi watersheds. “The first sawmill was built beside the mouth of the Blind River at

¹⁴⁷ Newman. Elliot Lake Commemorative Mining Year Book 1956-1996 A Tribute to All Elliot Lake Miners.

¹⁴⁸ City of Elliot Lake. History of Elliot Lake. Accessed Online, Aug 2013.
[<http://www.cityofelliottlake.com/en/cityhall/history.asp>]

¹⁴⁹ City of Elliot Lake. History of Elliot Lake. Accessed Online, Aug 2013.
[<http://www.cityofelliottlake.com/en/cityhall/history.asp>]

¹⁵⁰ Town of Blind River. The History of Blind River. Accessed Online, Aug 2013.
[<http://www.blindriver.com/site/visitors/index.php?pid=14>].

the current site of the Old Mill Motel. By 1906 when the Town of Blind River had been incorporated as a Town, a second larger sawmill had been erected on the west arm of the Blind River¹⁵¹. A major saw mill, the McFadden Lumber Company, was built in 1929 and survived for forty years. The mill closed in 1969 due to difficult economic conditions¹⁵². At one time, the McFadden Mill was the largest in the British Commonwealth.

The first major mining activities included a copper discovery in the mid-1800s in Bruce Mines. In 1955, uranium was discovered near the Town of Blind River. In 1983, a uranium refinery area was built in the Town of Blind River by Crown-owned Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. "Cameco became the operator of the Blind River refinery in 1988, when the assets of Eldorado Nuclear and Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation were merged to form a new company"¹⁵³. The uranium refinery processes uranium concentrates from all over the world into uranium trioxide¹⁵⁴. During the beginnings of the uranium mining boom in the early 1950's, the population of Blind River doubled to 5,000¹⁵⁵.

Spanish

In 2011, the population of the Town of Spanish was 696. The name of the Town of Spanish came from First Nations Chief, Chief Louis Le Espaniel, who was nicknamed 'the Spaniard'. The British Naval Survey named the Spanish River after the Chief¹⁵⁶. The name Spanish River was then used to describe the post office and CPR station and was later used to identify the community of 'Spanish'. The Town of Spanish's economic base historically was based on the area's natural resources that included agriculture, mining, logging and commercial fishing¹⁵⁷. Early settlement of the Town of Spanish began in the late 1800s with the completion of the CPR in February 1884, between Lake Nipissing and Algoma, now known as Algoma Mills. In 1888, flour trains started to move from Minneapolis to Montreal and then Atlantic Canada¹⁵⁸.

By 1903 to 1904, the Spanish River Station had a population of approximately 200 with two timber companies operating in the area: the Sable and Spanish River Boom and Dam Co. and the Spanish River Lumber Company¹⁵⁹. The Spanish River was a natural transportation system that was used by the Spanish River Lumber Company. The community of Spanish Mills, located on Aird Island in the North

¹⁵¹ Town of Blind River. The History of Blind River. Accessed Online, Aug 2013. [http://www.blindriver.com/site/visitors/index.php?pid=14].

¹⁵² Town of Blind River. The History of Blind River. Accessed Online, Aug, 2013. [http://www.blindriver.com/site/visitors/index.php?pid=14].

¹⁵³ Cameco Corporation. History. Accessed Online, Aug 2013. [http://www.cameco.com/fuel_services/blind_river_refinery/history/]

¹⁵⁴ Town of Blind Rive. The History of Blind River. Accessed Online, Aug 2013. [http://www.blindriver.com/site/visitors/index.php?pid=14].

¹⁵⁵ Gutsche, A. 1997. The North Channel and St. Mary's River: A Guide to the History.

¹⁵⁶ Morrison, J. 2003. Lake Superior to Rainey Lake. Three Centuries of Fur Trade History. Thunder Bay Historical Society.

¹⁵⁷ Town of Spanish. History of Spanish. Accessed Online, Aug. 2013. [http://www.townofspanish.com/pages/history.php].

¹⁵⁸ Arbic, B. 2003. City of the Rapids. Sault Ste. Marie's Heritage.

¹⁵⁹ Town of Spanish. History of Spanish. Accessed Online, Aug, 2013. [http://www.townofspanish.com/pages/history.php].

Channel just south of the Town of Spanish, also had a thriving timber industry complete with a sawmill, schoolhouse, and general store¹⁶⁰. In the 1950s, the Town of Spanish experienced ‘boom’ conditions due to the mining activity in the City of Elliot Lake.

There were two residential schools in the Spanish area; one for boys and one for girls, and Spanish hosts a reunion event. Jesuits opened the first Aboriginal High School, Garnier College in 1946, but it was closed by 1958¹⁶¹. The Town library is the archive for the school and also has an extensive picture collection^{162 163}.

The Township of The North Shore

In 2011, the population of the Township of the North Shore was 509. Employment in the Township of The North Shore used to be centered around natural resource based industries such as logging, sawmills, and some commercial fishing. In the late 1800s sawmills were built in the area¹⁶⁴. Many more lumber mills operated in the subsequent years. The CPR was pivotal in the development of the lumber industry in the Township of The North Shore. The CPR acquired land in Algoma Mills to develop a 300 room hotel for travellers¹⁶⁵. Work later ceased on the rail line and the hotel plans were abandoned. Funds for the hotel were then transferred to Alberta for the development of the Banff Springs Hotel. In the early 1900s, Algoma Mills became a major coal delivery port for the CPR. At this time “Algoma Mills had an immigration and customs office, a post office, three general stores, a bakery and two hotels”¹⁶⁶.

Losses from the eventual closure of the lumber industry in Spragge were recovered with the discovery of uranium in Long Township in 1953. In the 1950s, uranium mining became a major employer with the first mine located within the Township of The North Shore¹⁶⁷. The Pronto Mine was opened in 1955. Service stations, motels, car dealerships, trucking firms and heavy equipment service depots opened along Trans-Canada Highway 17 to service the expanding population in Spragge. “The first major copper discovery in Algoma, after Bruce Mines, was at Spragge in 1953 resulting in the development of Pater Mine by Rio Algom Limited”¹⁶⁸. The Township of The North Shore website notes that:

¹⁶⁰ Town of Spanish. History of Spanish. Accessed Online, Aug 2013.

[<http://www.townofspanish.com/pages/history.php>].

¹⁶¹ Shanahan, D. 2004. The Jesuit Residential School of Spanish – More than Mere Talent. Canadian Institute of Jesuit Studies.

¹⁶² Based on interview data.

¹⁶³ Shanahan, D. 2004. The Jesuit Residential School of Spanish – More than Mere Talent. Canadian Institute of Jesuit Studies.

¹⁶⁴ Township of the North Shore. History. Accessed Online, July 2013.

[<http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/aboutus/history.html>].

¹⁶⁵ Township of the North Shore. History. Accessed Online, July 2013. [<http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/aboutus/history.html>].

¹⁶⁶ Township of the North Shore. History. Accessed Online, July 2013.

[<http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/aboutus/history.html>].

¹⁶⁷ Township of the North Shore. Community Business Profile. Accessed Online, July 2013.

[<http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/resources/businessprof.html>].

¹⁶⁸ Township of the North Shore. History. Accessed Online, July 2013.

[<http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/aboutus/history.html>].

“Carmeuse Lime & Stone and Lafarge Canada Inc., formerly Reiss Lime Co. of Canada Ltd., was established in Long Township during the 1970s to serve the uranium industry. With a dock accessible by Great Lake freighters, Carmeuse receives shipments of limestone, coal, and coke to make lime for the mining industry. The company has expanded to include storage for sulphuric acid for redistribution and is a major trans-shipment point for road salt that is distributed throughout Northern Ontario. Lafarge Canada Inc. produces a slag cement product used for backfilling in area mines”¹⁶⁹.

The Township of The North Shore was created as an Improvement District in 1973, after the amalgamation of the Townships of Shedden (which later became the Town of Spanish), Lewis (historically Lewis-Spragge-Long Striker), Spragge, Long and the eastern portion of Striker. It was later enlarged in 1974 to include some North Channel islands. In 1985, the Township of The North Shore and the Township of Shedden separated¹⁷⁰.

During the 1980s, the population and the service industries waned due to the declining uranium industry. With depleting ore reserves, the uranium mines closed and in the early 1990s, the local economy was negatively affected.¹⁷¹

3.3 Aboriginal Communities

The information in this section reflects readily available information from publicly available sources and does not reflect conversations or dialogue with Aboriginal communities or organizations unless otherwise noted.

The Aboriginal communities included here are those nearby to the north shore communities.

- First Nations: The following First Nations are all part of the Robinson Huron Treaty area:
 - Whitefish Lake First Nation
 - Wikwemikong Unceded
 - Serpent River First Nation
 - Mississauga #8 First Nation
 - Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation
- First Nations: The following First Nation is part of the Manitoulin Island Treaty area:
 - Whitefish River (Wauwauskinga) First Nation
- Métis: The area borders the Métis Nation Ontario Regions 4 and 5 including:
 - Region 4: Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council, North Channel Métis Council
 - Region 5: Sudbury Métis Council, North Bay Métis Council

The text which follows provides a brief introduction to these governments and organizations.

¹⁶⁹ Township of the North Shore. History. Accessed Online, Aug 2013.
[<http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/aboutus/history.html>].

¹⁷⁰ Township of the North Shore. About Us. Accessed Online, Aug 2013.
[<http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/aboutus/about.html>].

¹⁷¹ Township of the North Shore. History. Accessed Online, Aug 2013.
[<http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/aboutus/history.html>].

3.3.1 First Nations and Aboriginal Organizations

The following provides a brief introduction to the First Nations communities and organizations in the area.

3.3.1.1 Whitefish Lake First Nation (*Atikameksheng Anishnawbek*)

Whitefish Lake First Nation is a community of 1,200 members of Ojibway ancestry with approximately 440 living on the First Nation. This First Nation is located approximately 19 km west of the Greater City of Sudbury¹⁷². “Atikameksheng Anishnawbek are descendants of the Ojibway, Algonquin and Odawa Nations.

3.3.1.2 *Wikwemikong Unceded*

Wikwemikong Reserve is one of the ten largest First Nation communities in Canada and is situated on the eastern end of Manitoulin Island and shores of Georgian Bay¹⁷³. The reserve is approximately 171 kilometres from Sudbury. “Access to the Wikwemikong main village is a paved road that eventually connects with Highway 6. The main village is the central focus of the reserve and is the location of the administrative buildings, nursing home, health centre and schools”¹⁷⁴. The administration buildings include council chambers, Ontario Works, library, lands estates and membership, housing, Child and Welfare, and land claims¹⁷⁵.

3.3.1.3 *Serpent River First Nation*

Serpent River First Nation is located south of the City of Elliot Lake. The community has occupied the Serpent River Watershed since ‘time immemorial’¹⁷⁶. Serpent River First Nation is within the Robinson-Huron Treaty area of 1850¹⁷⁷. The community has focused on resource development projects in the mining, forestry and fisheries sectors, and recently energy. The reserve includes the villages of Cutler and Kenabutch, and includes a peninsula along Lake Huron to the southwest. The community is located between the major regional centres of Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury¹⁷⁸.

¹⁷² Whitefish River First Nation. (*Atikameksheng Anishnawbek*). Community Accessed Online January 29, 2014. [http://www.atikamekshenganishnawbek.ca/site/community/]

¹⁷³ Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve. Welcome. Accessed Online January 29, 2014.

[http://www.wikwemikong.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=54]

¹⁷⁴ Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve. Location Area and Status. Accessed Online January 29, 2014.

[http://www.wikwemikong.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=65&Itemid=93]

¹⁷⁵ Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve. Location Area and Status. Accessed Online January 29, 2014.

[http://www.wikwemikong.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=65&Itemid=93]

¹⁷⁶ Assembly of First Nations. Resolution No. 17. Accessed Online, July 2014.

[http://64.26.129.156/article.asp?id=4280]

¹⁷⁷ Serpent River First Nation. Community Profile. Accessed Online, July 2014.

[http://serpentriverfn.ca/community-profile]

¹⁷⁸ Serpent River First Nation. Community Profile. Accessed Online, July 2014.

[http://serpentriverfn.ca/community-profile]

3.3.1.4 Mississauga #8 First Nation (Mississagi River)

Mississauga First Nations (MFN) also known as Mississauga River #8 is located along Hwy 17, 348 km west of the city of Sudbury and 278 km east of the city of Sault Ste. Marie. It is adjacent to the Town of Blind River situated along the North Shore of Lake Huron¹⁷⁹.

3.3.1.5 Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation

Sagamok Anishnawbek has been home to the Anishnawbek since ‘time immemorial’¹⁸⁰. Sagamok is located at the mouth of the Spanish River. It is one of six Aboriginal communities located within the Spanish River Watershed, including villages at Beaverstone, Birch Lake, Pogmasing, Duke Lake and Biscotasi Lake. Sagamok includes a traditional territory that is generally defined by the Spanish River Watershed.

3.3.1.6 Whitefish River (Wauswauskinga) First Nation

The Whitefish River First Nation is located on the shores of Georgian Bay, the North Shore Channel, and Manitoulin Island and is accessible by Highway 6 and 17.

3.3.2 Métis Organizations

Métis citizens are represented at the local level through the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Charter Community Councils. The local Councils are a communication hub for MNO and play a role in fostering community empowerment and development for Métis citizens living within the geographic region of that Council. Community Councils operate in accordance with MNO Charter Agreements, which give Councils the mandate to govern, while ensuring accountability, transparency, and consistency.

Protocol Agreements are set up between the MNO and each of its regions. The MNO Lands, Resources and Consultation Committee is the initial contact in each Region and is the group with which discussion and involvement of local Councils begins.

The area borders Regions 4 and 5 of the MNO classification. There are two Métis Councils within Region 4, namely:

- Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council
- North Channel Métis Council

There are two Métis Councils within Region 5, namely:

- Sudbury Métis Council
- North Bay Métis Council

¹⁷⁹ First Nation Market Housing Fund. “Mississauga First Nation.” Accessed Online June 2014 [http://www.fnmhf.ca/english/participating_fn/participating_fn_027.html]

¹⁸⁰ Sagamok Ashwinabek, 2013, History. Accessed Online. [http://www.sagamok.ca/about/history]

3.4 Population Dynamics

3.4.1 Trend Over Time

The population was declining in most of the Algoma District communities (including the Township of The North Shore, the Town of Blind River, the Town of Spanish and the City of Elliot Lake) between 2006 and 2011. The decline in population of the other communities is not atypical of the general population trends of resource based regions. Growth in communities across the area is a positive sign for future population trends.

3.4.2 Age Profile

In 2011, Algoma District communities had a similar and older median age (47.2). The national median age was 40.6 and the Provincial median age was 40.4¹⁸¹. The population aged for all of the area communities in the area since 2006.

Normally, there would be cause for concern with an aging population in relation to support services, but since the City of Elliot Lake has strategically pursued development as a retirement community, there are many health care facilities, seniors' homes, amenities and services that cater to the older population. Conversely, there is a need to ensure that the younger population has training opportunities and jobs available upon graduation to live and work in the area. This is especially important in light of the out-migration of younger residents to Southern Ontario and other parts of Canada.

3.5 Labour Force (Algoma District)

The Algoma District Census Division data is used to discuss the regional labour force in this profile. The population of Algoma District is 115,870 and covers 48,810.68 km² in land area¹⁸².

3.5.1 Population By Education/Training

Figure 17 depicts the regional education and training for Algoma District in 2011. There were a relatively high number of high school graduates and number of residents who have some form of training, apprenticeship or certification. However, there were many residents without a high school diploma. This is due in part to the out migration of youth and other residents with higher education. The national average of people with university certificates, degrees or diplomas was 20.9 percent¹⁸³. The percentage of residents in Algoma District was lower (13.9 percent)¹⁸⁴.

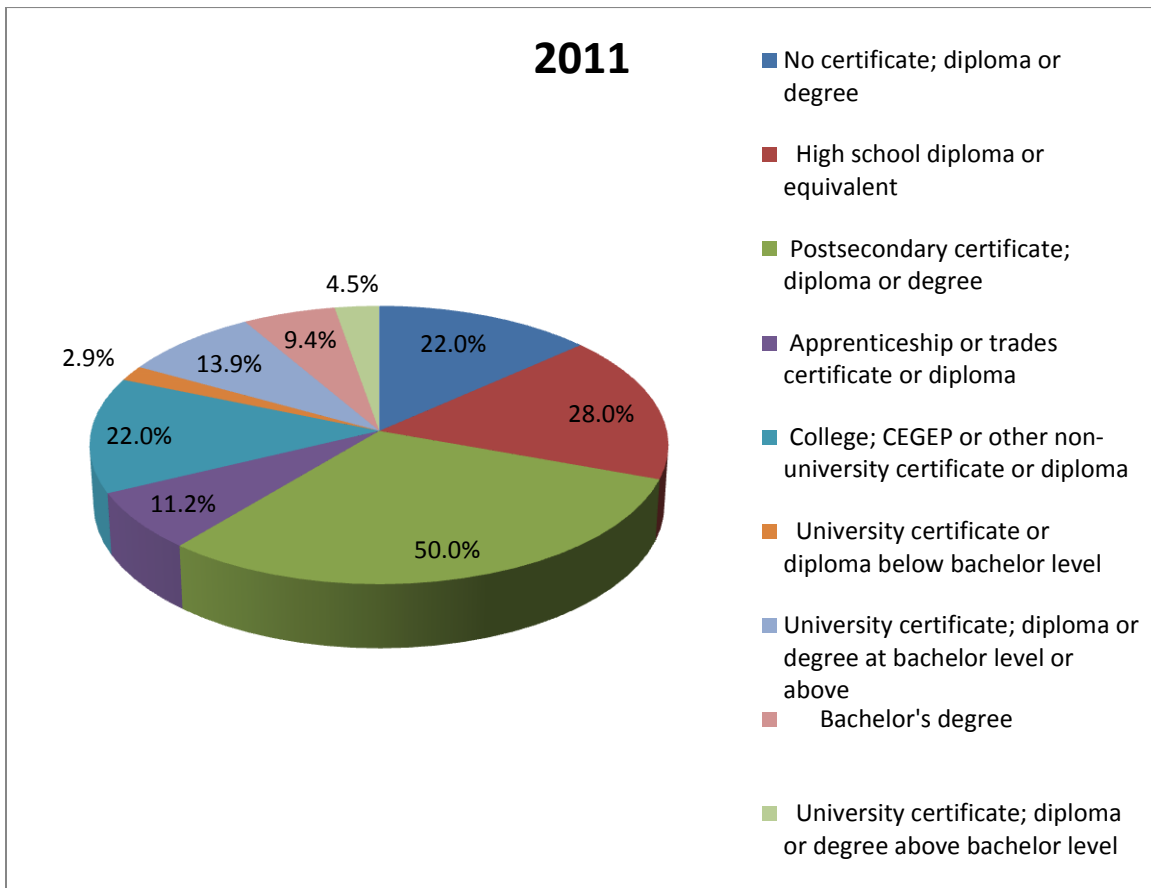
¹⁸¹ Statistics Canada, 2011. Census - Community Profiles. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed July 2013.

¹⁸² Statistics Canada, 2011. Census - Community Profiles. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed July 2013.

¹⁸³ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013.

¹⁸⁴ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013.

Figure 17 - Education and Training in Algoma District (2011)¹⁸⁵



3.5.2 Employment By Activity and Sector

In 2011, the employment rate in the Algoma District was 50.6 percent and the unemployment rate was 11.0 percent¹⁸⁶.

Figure 18 depicts the top occupations in the region in 2011. The top occupations were:

- Sales and service (includes tourism and hospitality);
- Trades, transport and equipment operation;
- Business, finance and administration;

¹⁸⁵ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada, and reporting of overlapping categories in the figure. Postsecondary certificate; diploma or degree has the subcategories of: 1) Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma, 2) College; CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma, 3) University certificate or diploma below bachelor level and 4) University certificate; diploma or degree at bachelor level or above (which has its own subcategories of i) Bachelor's degree, and ii) University certificate; diploma or degree above bachelor level).

¹⁸⁶ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013.

- Education, law and social, community and government; and
- Management occupations.

Sales and service occupations include retail as well as tourism related activities. Tourism is strong in Algoma District and there are many opportunities for outdoor recreational activities. The presence of trades and transport occupations are a strength. Business and management occupations indicate that capacity building experience is present in the region. Finance and administration opportunities indicate that there is capital, financial advice opportunities and accountants. Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services indicate that there are many people employed as civil servants, consultants and educators.

Figure 18 – Labour Force by Occupation in Algoma District (2011)¹⁸⁷

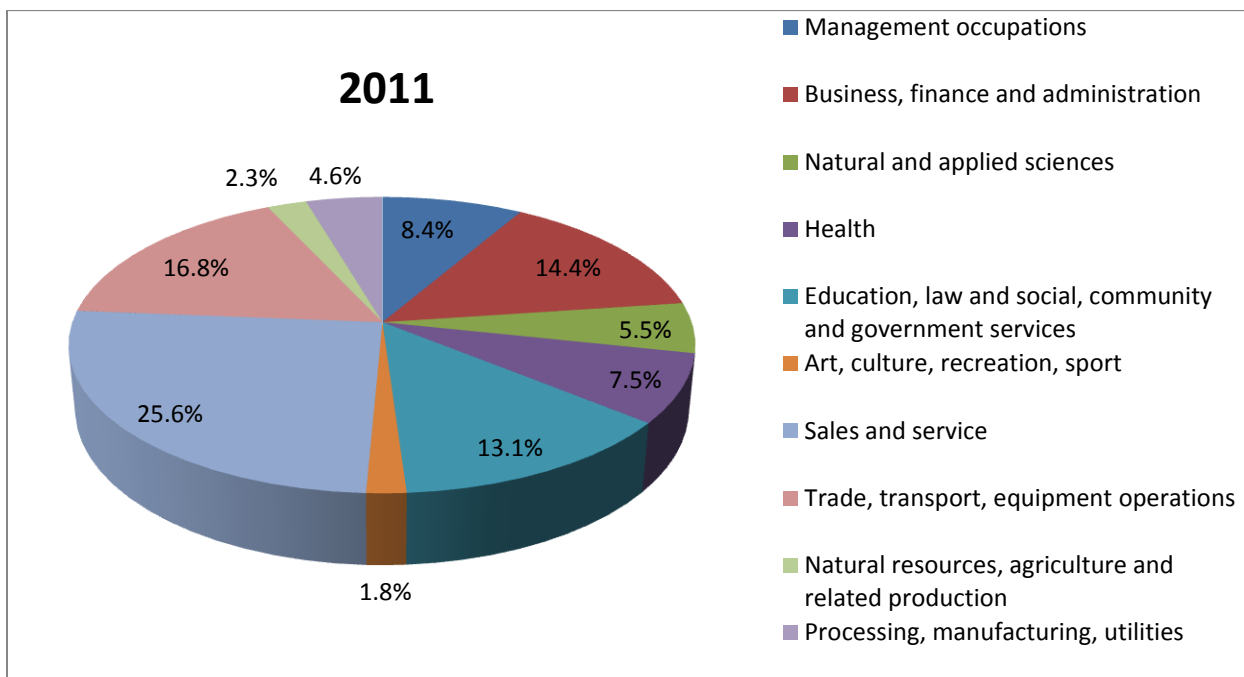


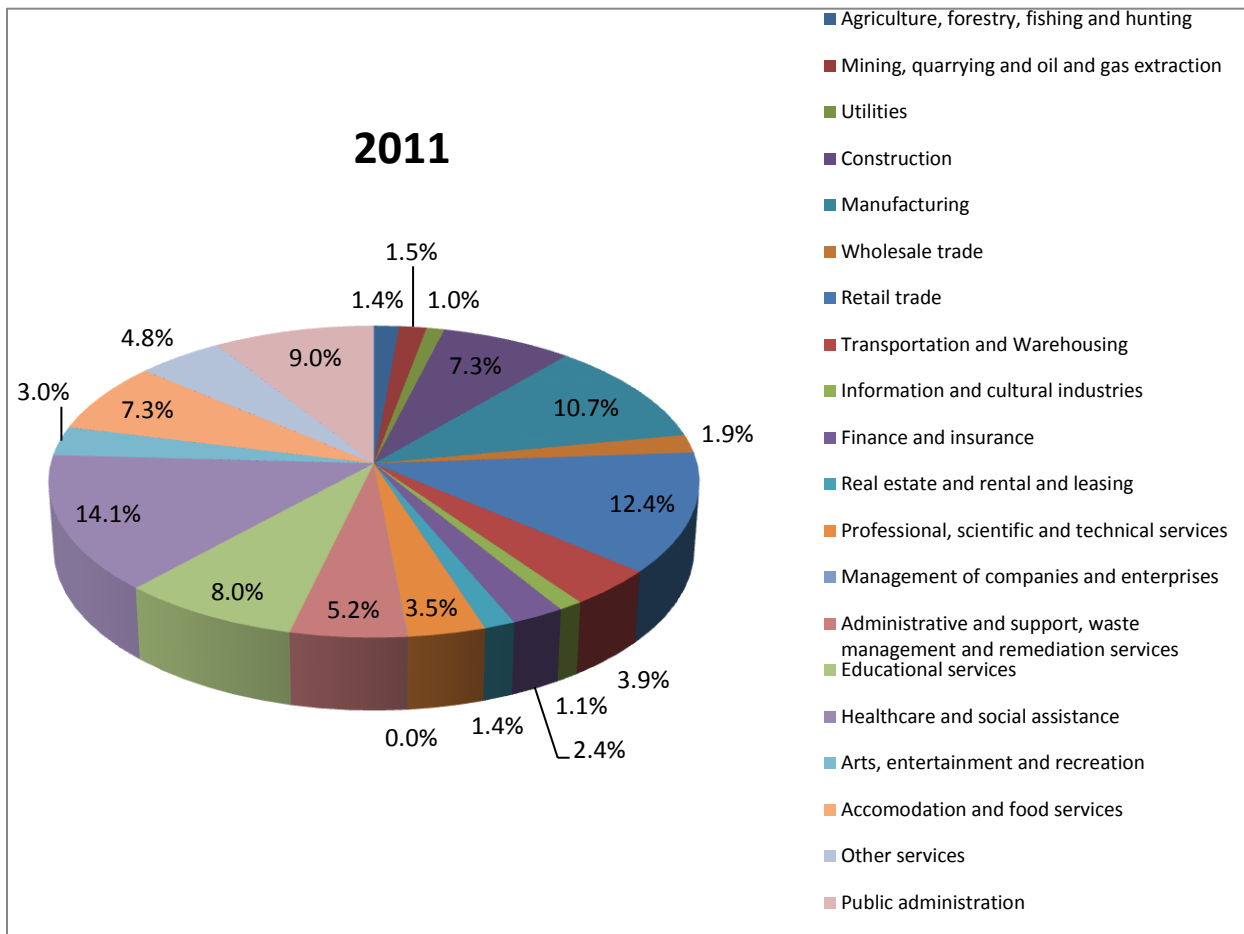
Figure 19 identifies the 2011 top industries by employment in the District which were:

- Healthcare and social services;
- Retail trade;
- Manufacturing;
- Public administration;
- Education services; and
- Accommodation and food services.

¹⁸⁷ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

With an aging population across Algoma District, many jobs are linked to health care and social assistance with a focus on elder care management and associated activities. Retail trade is another important economic driver for the area, being the second largest employment sector. Manufacturing is also strong with various mining activities in the region having associated manufacturing operations (e.g. Cameco). Public administration indicates that many people are employed at municipal government and provincial agencies as well as First Nations Band Councils. The prevalence of the educational sector indicates that there is a strong education system in the area with opportunities for training for regional youth. Due to the strength of the tourist industry in the area, accommodation and food services also employs a large number of residents.

Figure 19 – Labour Force by Industry (NAICS) in Algoma District (2011)¹⁸⁸



¹⁸⁸ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

3.6 Business Activity

3.6.1 Main Businesses

Businesses in Algoma District are in the healthcare sector, retail trade, tourism and the resource extraction sector. They include:

- *“Retail service;*
- *Healthcare provider- Doctor, Nurse, Hospital employee;*
- *Construction labourer, welder, carpentry, contracting;*
- *Resource industry positions, engineer, heavy equipment operator;*
- *Clerical;*
- *Transportation equipment operators;*
- *Business services;*
- *Tourism and recreation services;*
- *Food services; and*
- *Manufacturing occupations and businesses”¹⁸⁹.*

3.6.2 Public and Private Sector

In Algoma District, the key private and public sector industries are health care and social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food services, educational services, construction and mining¹⁹⁰.

Private Sector

At a regional and local level, Cameco’s uranium refinery near the Town of Blind River is the largest private corporation in the area. As one of the largest uranium producers in the world with operations in Canada, the United States and Australia, Cameco is an important economic driver. Other large private companies include Lafarge Canada Ltd. and Carmeuse Lime & Stone which are in the Township of The North Shore.

Another large business is Domtar paper products. Domtar has a pulp and paper mill located in Espanola that operates as part of Domtar’s Pulp and Paper Division. Domtar is a Canadian company that specialises in pulp and paper production with several mills across Canada and the United States¹⁹¹. They are also a manufacturer of personal care products. Their business activities at the Espanola Mill are prominent in the area.

The major industry in Sault Ste. Marie is steel manufacturing. Essar Steel Algoma is the largest employer in the City and surrounding area. Due the City’s location in close proximity to Lakes Superior, Michigan

¹⁸⁹ The Ontario Trillium Foundation, 2008. *Your Community in Profile: Algoma, Cochrane, Manitoulin, Sudbury. Building Healthy Communities.* and Employment Ontario and Algoma Workforce Investment Committee, 2011. *Local Labour market Plan for 2012: Trends, Opportunities and Priorities.*

¹⁹⁰ Employment Ontario and Algoma Workforce Investment Committee, 2011. *Local Labour market Plan for 2012: Trends, Opportunities and Priorities.*

¹⁹¹ Domtar, 2013. Espanola Mill. Accessed Online, December 2013. [http://www.domtar.com/en/paper-locations/paper-mills_espanola.asp].

and Huron and connections to the United States, Sault Ste. Marie is a transportation and natural resource centre¹⁹². Sault Ste. Marie is also home to several large scale wind farms and solar parks and has been called the alternative energy capital of North America¹⁹³.

The City of Sudbury's major industry is mining. Vale mining is a large employer in the city¹⁹⁴. Sudbury is also a centre for mining innovation with the presence of organizations such as the Centre of Excellence in Mining Innovation, Northern Centre for Advanced Technology, Mineral Exploration Research Centre (MERC), etc.

Public Sector

In Algoma District, public sector positions represent a significant segment of the labour market. The public sector and Aboriginal public sector are major employers. This is not expected to change.

In the City of Elliot Lake and the Town of Blind River, the largest employers are health care providers (e.g. hospital and clinics). With an increasing proportion of elderly residents, health care and social service positions are expected to be an area of economic growth for the area. Other large employers are the Municipalities that employ administrators, managers, maintenance workers and social program coordinators. Other major public sector employers include the school boards: Algoma District School Board, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board, Conseil Scolaire Public du Grand Nord De l'Ontario and Le Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique du Nouvel-Ontario.

Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie are major providers of higher order education, health care and other services (e.g. retail, hospitality, airports). Sudbury's Laurentian University research and curriculum focuses on improving the health of water bodies at the Living with Lakes Freshwater Ecology Centre as well as mining innovation at the Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation (CEMI), among others¹⁹⁵. In addition, "Greater Sudbury is the regional referral health centre for northeastern Ontario. A hub of health care excellence has been created in Greater Sudbury that includes Health Sciences North, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Laurentian University, the Sudbury District Health Unit, Cambrian College, and College Boréal"¹⁹⁶. Sault Ste. Marie is also home to a university, Algoma University. Moreover, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation have a corporate location in Sault Ste. Marie.

¹⁹² City of Sault Ste. Marie, 2006. Official Plan.

¹⁹³ Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation. Key Alternative Energy Companies. Accessed Online [http://www.sault-canada.com/en/ouruniqueadvantage/AlternativeEnergy.asp] Feb. 2014.

¹⁹⁴ Invest Sudbury. Mining Supply and Services. Accessed Online [http://www.investsudbury.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=238&Itemid=224&lang=en]. Feb. 2014.

¹⁹⁵ Invest Sudbury. Advanced Education and Innovation. Accessed Online [http://www.investsudbury.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=239&Itemid=225&lang=en]. Feb. 2014.

¹⁹⁶ Invest Sudbury. Health Sciences. Accessed Online [http://www.investsudbury.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=241&Itemid=227&lang=en]. Feb. 2014.

Forestry Activities

Forestry is a major business activity in the area communities and forest management plans have been created by industry leaders in the areas such as Domtar Inc. The region has more than 60 percent productive forest and a number of private timber companies are currently managing forestry operations. The North Huron area contains portions of two Forestry Management Units (FMUs): the Northshore Forest (FMU 680), and the Spanish Forest (FMU 210). The Northshore Forest FMU, managed by Northshore Forest Inc., is located in the western part of the area of the four communities. The Spanish Forest FMU, managed by Domtar Inc., covers the northeastern region of the North Huron area¹⁹⁷. Of the forest's total area, approximately 86 percent is Crown land, with the remaining 14 percent being either privately or federally owned¹⁹⁸.

A Sustainable Forest Licence was issued for the NF for Northshore Forest Inc. The company is managed by a Board of Directors consisting of four shareholders: Domtar Inc.; Eacom Timber Corporation; Midway Lumber Mills Ltd.; and North Shore Independent Forestry Association Inc. Eacom Timber Corporation acts as the management contractor to oversee the management program for the NF. There are currently 25 independent licensees that carry out harvesting operations on the unit through overlapping Forest Resource Licenses granted by the Crown¹⁹⁹.

Currently, around 45 percent of the NF is staked or held as mining leases or patents with active exploration ongoing. The southern parts of the NF have the most prospecting occurring, primarily in areas that have been historically productive. The possible mineral resources in the NF are valued at approximately \$US 337 trillion²⁰⁰.

There are 18 provincial parks, nine forest reserves, and 15 conservation reserves found wholly or in part in the NF. Protected areas lying within the boundaries of the NF encompass a total of 151,904 hectares, of which 116,556 is forested. This represents about 14 percent of the Crown land area of the Forest, and 12 percent of the forest as a whole²⁰¹.

¹⁹⁷ Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), 2013a. Forest Management Plans. Accessed Online, March 2013. [<http://www.efmp.lrc.gov.on.ca/eFMP/home.do?currentFmu=&language=en>].

¹⁹⁸ Northshore Forest Inc. (prepared by Domtar Inc.) *Northshore Forest 2010-2020 Forest Management Plan*. 2009. Accessed Online, March 2014.

[<http://www.efmp.lrc.gov.on.ca/eFMP/viewFmuPlan.do?fmu=680&fid=100054&type=CURRENT&pid=100054&sid=5921&pn=FP&ppyf=2010&ppyt=2020&ptyf=2010&ptyt=2015&phase=P1>].

¹⁹⁹ Northshore Forest Inc. (prepared by Domtar Inc.) *Northshore Forest 2010-2020 Forest Management Plan*. 2009. Accessed Online, March 2014.

[<http://www.efmp.lrc.gov.on.ca/eFMP/viewFmuPlan.do?fmu=680&fid=100054&type=CURRENT&pid=100054&sid=5921&pn=FP&ppyf=2010&ppyt=2020&ptyf=2010&ptyt=2015&phase=P1>].

²⁰⁰ Northshore Forest Inc. (prepared by Domtar Inc.) *Northshore Forest 2010-2020 Forest Management Plan*. 2009. Accessed Online, March 2014.

[<http://www.efmp.lrc.gov.on.ca/eFMP/viewFmuPlan.do?fmu=680&fid=100054&type=CURRENT&pid=100054&sid=5921&pn=FP&ppyf=2010&ppyt=2020&ptyf=2010&ptyt=2015&phase=P1>].

²⁰¹ Northshore Forest Inc. (prepared by Domtar Inc.) *Northshore Forest 2010-2020 Forest Management Plan*. 2009. [<http://www.efmp.lrc.gov.on.ca/eFMP/viewFmuPlan.do?fmu=680&fid=100054&type=CURRENT&pid=100054&sid=5921&pn=FP&ppyf=2010&ppyt=2020&ptyf=2010&ptyt=2015&phase=P1>]. Accessed Online, March 2014. And [http://cpaws.org/uploads/pubs/report_fsc-performance.pdf]

There are a number of communities in the north shore area (including Elliot Lake, Blind River, Spanish, The Township of The North Shore as well as surrounding Aboriginal communities) that are involved in forestry activities. Activities include the supply of wood fibre, wood chips or to support a labour force that is employed either in wood processing operations or in woodlands operations such as harvesting, hauling and silvicultural activities or support industry functions²⁰².

3.6.3 Investment Trends and Projections

The City of Elliot Lake, Town of Blind River, Town of Spanish and the Township of The North Shore have many attributes that contribute to economic development. They are on the Trans-Canada Highway 17 (except for Elliot Lake), have access to deep water ports, have a CPR rail line, and have available skilled tradespeople and labourers. The resource economy has been in decline with several exceptions. Lumber companies operate and deliver wood and pulp to the Domtar Mill in Espanola. The Cameco Refinery, Lafarge Canada Ltd. and Carmeuse Lime & Stone are operating with success in the area. There are large bus transportation companies that operate throughout the communities. In addition, Elliot Lake's 'Retirement Living' has been successful and continues to attract seniors.

Amenities and activities (e.g. North Channel marinas, outdoor activities, festivals and events) as well as the natural setting of the north shore offer a good quality of life for workers and investors. The area is between two large cities (Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie) and people tend to shop in the larger centres or the Town of Espanola. The tourism economy is relatively healthy with some new investment and jobs opening up in the hospitality sector. The Town of Blind River is reasonably close to the border and American tourists see the area as a destination by road or water.

A new mall is under development in the City of Elliot Lake which should help alleviate increased unemployment resulting from the Algo Mall collapse. Some residents are looking for economic diversification in order to provide jobs for young people and broaden economic activity beyond the retirement community focus. Youth employment is available in the retail and hospitality sectors. However, there is a need to have more local employment opportunities for young professionals and young skilled workers.

Local municipalities and First Nations in the area have recently collaborated on several economic development projects such as the Elliot Lake cottage lots, the opening of Mississagi Provincial Park and joint construction of a new bridge.

Regional Economic Development Organizations

Throughout Algoma District, there are regional economic development organizations and committees. These organizations and committees have provided an analysis of trends and projections across the area in terms of investment and employment patterns.

²⁰² Northshore Forest Inc. (prepared by Domtar Inc.) Northshore Forest 2010-2020 Forest Management Plan. 2009. Accessed Online March 2014.

[<http://www.efmp.lrc.gov.on.ca/eFMP/viewFmuPlan.do?fmu=680&fid=100054&type=CURRENT&pid=100054&sid=5921&pn=FP&ppyf=2010&pyt=2020&ptyf=2010&ptyt=2015&phase=P1>].

The East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation (EACFDC) is a non-profit corporation governed by local volunteers in association with FedNor/Industry Canada²⁰³. The group brings together regional economic stakeholders in industry, local businesses, post-secondary and training institutions, municipalities, First Nations, Métis, and other economic development agencies. The objective is to support the local economy through strategic community planning and socio-economic development, provide support for community based projects, provide business services and assist with providing access to capital through a direct loan program²⁰⁴.

“The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWIC) is a community-based organization funded by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities consisting of members who are knowledgeable about the labour force development issues in the District of Algoma”²⁰⁵. The AWIC provides coordination and leadership regarding workforce development and planning to Algoma District stakeholders²⁰⁶. The organization acts as a catalyst to facilitate economic growth as well as sustainable and responsible economic development throughout the region.

Trends and Projections

The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee, Trends Opportunities and Priorities Report (2012) states that the District of Algoma’s resource based economy is recovering from a protracted recession. The recession began in 2009, has lasted longer than previous recessions and recovery has been slow.

The District of Algoma has experienced the closure of several major manufacturing and resource industries that have left skilled and older workers without jobs²⁰⁷. Because of the lack of opportunities for high-paying, stable jobs, young people in the region have been leaving for other jurisdictions to pursue careers that are capable of paying higher wages and offering greater security. This exodus has contributed to the competition for human resources and has made retraining and upgrading options even more important for local employers²⁰⁸.

Throughout the District there is a sense that Algoma has a lot to offer as a place to work and live. The natural environment coupled with the low cost of living has made the area attractive. The employment infrastructure (including training options) has successfully attracted new businesses to the area and efforts to recruit for specific vacancies (such as family doctors) have also met with success. Moreover,

²⁰³ East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation, 2013. Background. Accessed Online. July 2013. [<http://www.eastalgomacfdc.ca/English/index.php?content=home.html>].

²⁰⁴ East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation, 2013. Background. Accessed Online. July 2013. [<http://www.eastalgomacfdc.ca/English/index.php?content=home.html>].

²⁰⁵ Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation. About Us. Accessed Online, July 2014. [http://www.awic.ca/en/about_us/].

²⁰⁶ Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation. About Us. Accessed Online, July 2014. [http://www.awic.ca/en/about_us/].

²⁰⁷ Employment Ontario and Algoma Workforce Investment Committee, 2011. Local Labour Market Plan for 2012: Trends, Opportunities and Priorities.

²⁰⁸ Employment Ontario and Algoma Workforce Investment Committee, 2011. Local Labour Market Plan for 2012: Trends, Opportunities and Priorities.

the District has found that general and specific needs can be addressed through collaborative efforts between government, education and industry stakeholders²⁰⁹.

East Algoma Community Futures, A Regional Economic Development Strategy for East Algoma (2007) was commissioned by the federal government. The report states that area residents have expressed the understanding that economic development should be undertaken as a joint effort at the regional level and not as individual municipalities, especially if they tend to compete with one another²¹⁰.

While many residents are in favour of growth, some want to ensure that there are controls so that any growth is sustainable and has an acceptable impact on the environment and local way of life. There is a need to identify and create manufacturing opportunities that are realistic given the barriers and constraints of the location²¹¹.

²⁰⁹ Employment Ontario and Algoma Workforce Investment Committee, 2011. Local Labour Market Plan for 2012: Trends, Opportunities and Priorities.

²¹⁰ East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation, 2007. A Regional Economic Development Strategy for East Algoma, May 2007.

²¹¹ East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation, 2007. A Regional Economic Development Strategy for East Algoma, May 2007.

4.0 COMPARISON OF COMMUNITY PATTERNS WITH ALGOMA DISTRICT AND THE PROVINCE

This section provides a comparison of Algoma District's trends and patterns to those of the Province of Ontario.

4.1 Population Dynamics

4.1.1 Trends Over Time

Table 9 - Population Trends at the Algoma District and the Province²¹²

Location	% change from 2006 to 2011	2011 Population	% change from 2001 to 2006	2006 Population	% change from 1996 to 2001	2001 Population	1996 Population
Algoma District	-1.4	115,870	-0.9	117,461	-5.5	118,567	125,455
Ontario	5.7	12,851,821	6.6	12,160,282	6.1	11,410,046	10,753,573

The population of Ontario is growing; however, the population of Algoma District is declining. In 2011, the Province grew by 5.7 percent. In contrast, the population of Algoma District declined by 1.4 percent.

4.1.2 Age Profile

Table 10 provides the median ages in the Province of Ontario and Algoma District.

Table 10 - Median Ages in Algoma District and the Province²¹³

Location	2001	2006	2011
Algoma District	41.4	45.0	47.2
Ontario	37.2	39.0	40.4

In 2011, Algoma District had an older population with a median age (47.2), which was above the Provincial average of 40.4. As mentioned previously, there is an aging population in Algoma District and an out migration of the younger population.

²¹² Statistics Canada, 2001 to 2011. Census – Community Profiles. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed May 2012.

²¹³ Statistics Canada, 2001 to 2011. Census Community Profiles. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed May 2012.

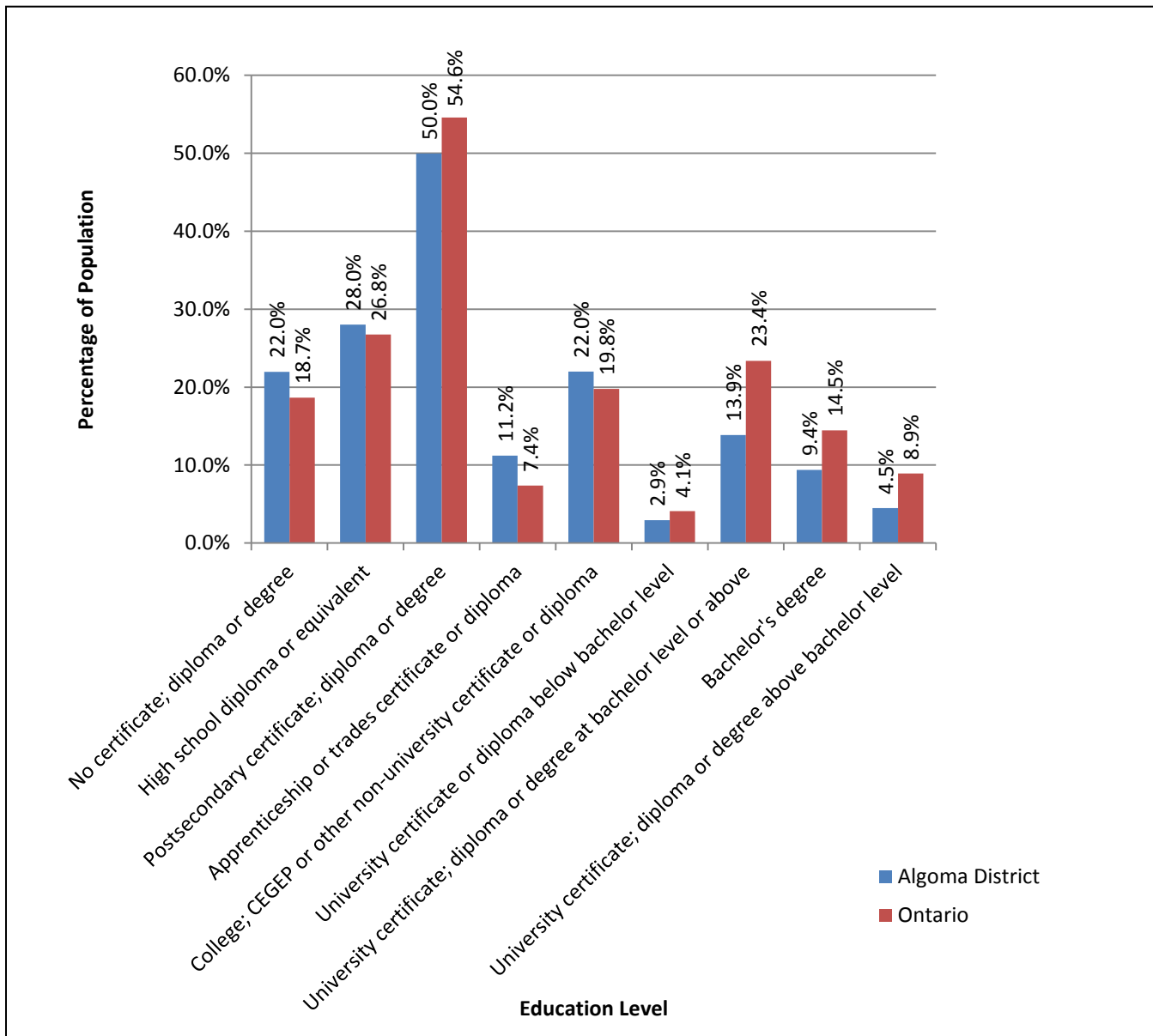
4.2 Labour Force

4.2.1 Population By Education/Training

Figure 20 illustrates the educational and training characteristics of Algoma District and the Province of Ontario. In 2011, Algoma District had a high number of high school graduates (28.0 percent), which was above the Provincial average (26.8 percent). They also had relatively high number of residents who had a post-secondary degree or diploma (50.0 percent) which was slightly below the Provincial statistic of 54.6 percent. A number of residents in Algoma District had Bachelor's degrees (9.4 percent), but this was below the Provincial statistic (14.5 percent)²¹⁴.

²¹⁴ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013.

Figure 20 - Education and Training in Algoma District and the Province (2011) ²¹⁵



²¹⁵ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada, and reporting of overlapping categories in the figure. Postsecondary certificate; diploma or degree has the subcategories of: 1) Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma, 2) College; CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma, 3) University certificate or diploma below bachelor level and 4) University certificate; diploma or degree at bachelor level or above (which has its own subcategories of i) Bachelor's degree, and ii) University certificate; diploma or degree above bachelor level).

4.2.2 Employment By Activity and Sector

In 2011, the Provincial employment rate was 60.1 percent and the unemployment rate was 8.3 percent. As mentioned previously, the employment rate in the Algoma District in 2011 was 50.6 percent and the unemployment rate was 11.0 percent²¹⁶.

Figure 21 indicates the top occupations in the region and at a Provincial level. The top occupations in both the region and at a Provincial level in 2011 were:

- Sales and service (includes tourism and hospitality);
- Business, finance and administration;
- Trades, transport and equipment operation;
- Education, law and social, community and government; and
- Management

²¹⁶ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013.

Figure 21 - Labour Force by Occupation in Algoma District and the Province (2011)²¹⁷

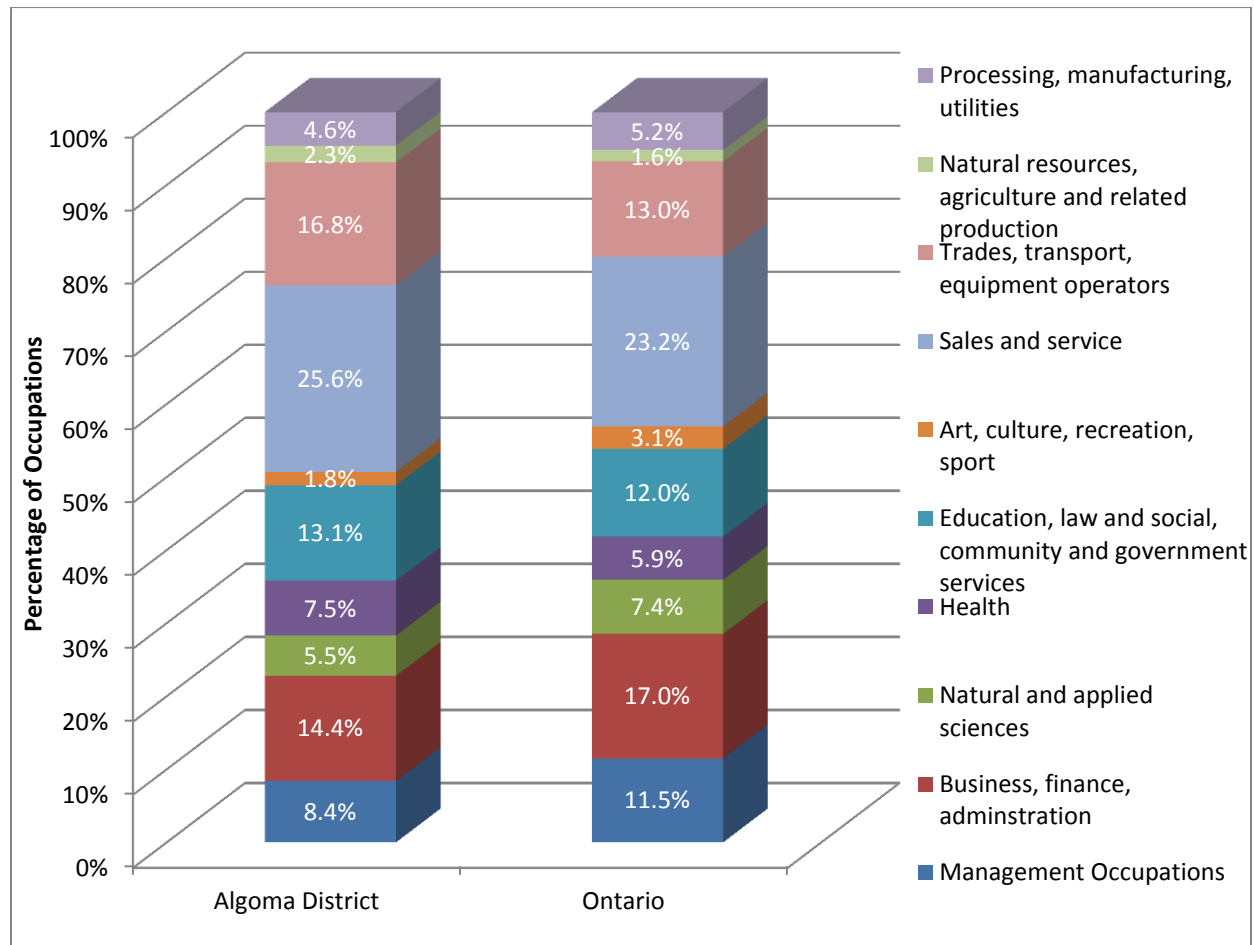


Table 11 identifies the top industries in the region and at a Provincial level in 2011 which were:

- Health care and social services,
- Retail and trade;
- Manufacturing;
- Public administration; and
- Educational services.

²¹⁷ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

Table 11 – Labour Force by Industry (NAICS) in Algoma District and the Province (2011)²¹⁸

Industry	Algoma (%)	Ontario (%)
Health care and social assistance	14.1	10.4
Retail trade	12.4	11.2
Manufacturing	10.7	10.4
Public administration	9.0	6.9
Educational services	8.0	7.5
Construction	7.3	6.3
Accommodation and food services	7.3	6.3
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	5.2	4.6
Other services (except public administration)	4.8	4.4
Transportation and warehousing	3.9	4.6
Professional, scientific and technical services	3.5	7.6
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3.0	2.2
Finance and insurance	2.4	5.5
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	1.5	0.4
Wholesale trade	1.9	4.6
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.4	2.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1.4	1.5
Information and cultural industries	1.1	2.7
Utilities	1.0	0.9
Management of companies and enterprises	0.0	0.1

²¹⁸ Statistics Canada, 2011. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. (Adapted from) Statistics Canada, www.statca.gc.ca Accessed Aug 2013. Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to random rounding of the original data by Statistics Canada.

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APPENDIX A: Data Tables

Blind River Data Tables²¹⁹:

Table A1a: Mobility Status in Blind River (Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2006 Census Community Profiles and NHS Profile)²²⁰

Parameters	1996	2001	2006
1 year ago			
Total Population	3,090	3,935	3,680
Lived at the same address 1 year ago	2,520 (81.6%)	3,470 (88.2%)	3,210 (87.2%)
Changed addresses within the same census subdivision	410 (13.3%)	n/a	270 (7.3%)
Changed addresses from another census subdivision within the same province or territory	145 (4.7%)	455 (11.6%)	185 (5.0%)
Lived in a different province or territory	15 (0.5%)	20 (0.5%)	15 (0.4%)
Lived in a different country	0	n/a	0
5 years ago			
Total Population	2,945	3,815	3,540
Lived at the same address 5 years ago	1,760 (59.7%)	2,535 (66.4%)	2,350 (66.4%)
Changed addresses within the same census subdivision	765 (26.0%)	n/a	695 (19.6%)
Changed addresses from another census subdivision within the same province or territory	385 (13.1%)	1,240 (32.5%)	405 (11.4%)
Lived in a different province or territory	35 (1.2%)	45 (1.2%)	75 (2.1%)
Lived in a different country	0 (0%)	n/a	10 (0.3%)

²¹⁹ Please note that for all Statistics Canada data presented in Appendix A, random rounding completed by Statistics Canada affects totals adding up to 100%.

²²⁰ Please note that the 2011 NHS categories differ from those in previous censuses. There are overlapping categories and new titles for the same categories as depicted from 2006 and previously.

APPENDIX A: Data Tables

Table A1b: Mobility Status in the Town of Blind River (Statistics Canada, 2011–NHS Profile)²²¹

Parameters	2011
1 year ago	
Total Population	3,450
Non-Movers	3,010 (87.2%)
Movers	435
Non-Migrants	175 (5.1%)
Migrants	265
Internal Migrants	265
Intraprovincial Migrants	265 (7.7%)
Interprovincial Migrants	0
External Migrants	0
5 years ago	
Total Population	3,305
Non-Movers	2,205 (66.7%)
Movers	1,095
Non-Migrants	570 (17.2%)
Migrants	525
Internal Migrants	520
Intraprovincial Migrants	495 (15.0%)
Interprovincial Migrants	35 (1.1%)
External Migrants	0

Table A2: Median Personal Earnings in Blind River (Statistics Canada, 2001 to 2006 Census Community Profiles and 2011 NHS Profile)

Parameters	1996	2001	2006	2011
Persons 15 years and over with earnings	n/a	1,980	1,995	2,995
Median earnings - Persons 15 years and over (\$)	n/a	25,695	25,210	29,017
Persons 15 years and over with earnings who worked full year, full time	n/a	820	865	900
Median earnings (employment income) - Persons 15 years and over who worked full year, full time (\$) ²²²	n/a	39,529	44,140	47,583

²²¹ Please note that the 2011 NHS categories differ from those in previous censuses. There are overlapping categories and new titles for the same categories as depicted from 2006 and previously.

²²² The 2011 category refers to full year, full time 'employment income' as opposed to 'earnings'.

APPENDIX A: Data Tables

Table A3: Median Personal Income in Blind River (Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2006 Census Community Profiles and 2011 NHS Profile)

Parameters	1996	2001	2006	2011
Persons 15 years and over with income	2,220	3,020	2,980	2,995
Median income before tax - Persons 15 years and over (\$)	13,628	16,641	23,949	29,017
Median income after tax - Persons 15 years and over (\$)	n/a	n/a	21,954	25,850
Earnings as a percent of total income	66.9	71.3	68.6	n/a
Government transfers - As a percent of total income	22.5	18.6	17.3	19.5
Other money - As a percent of total income	10.7	10.1	14.1	n/a

Table A4: Median Household and Family Income in Blind River (Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2006 Census Community Profiles and 2011 NHS Profile)

Parameters	1996	2001	2006	2011
Total private households	1,280	1,605	1,615	1,565
Average household size	2.4	n/a	2.3	2.0
Median income before tax - All private households (\$)	27,077	35,915	46,713	53,432
Median income after tax - All private households (\$)	n/a	n/a	40,944	48,547
Total number of census families	875	1,185	1,105	1,110
Average number of persons in all census families	3	n/a	2.8	2.7
Median income before tax - All census families (\$)	34,900	45,031	58,451	64,117
Median income after tax - All census families (\$)	n/a	n/a	49,743	58,416
Income status of all persons in private households	n/a	n/a	3,695	n/a
% in low income before tax - All persons (LICO)	n/a	n/a	12.6	n/a
% in low income after tax - All persons (LIM-AT)	n/a	n/a	7.6	16.5

APPENDIX A: Data Tables

Table A5: Aboriginal Identity Population in Blind River (Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2006 Census Community Profiles and 2011 NHS Profile)

Population Characteristic	1996	2001	2006	2011
Total population in private households by Aboriginal identity	N/A	3970	3720	3490
Aboriginal Identity	335 (10.7%)	455 (11.5%)	375 (10.1%)	385 (11.0%)
Non-Aboriginal Identity	2,790 (89.3%)	3,515 (88.5%)	3,345 (89.9%)	3,105 (89.0%)

Table A6: Detailed Language Spoken Most Often at Home in Blind River (Statistics Canada, 2006 to 2011 Census Community Profile)²²³

Language	1996	2001	2006	2011
Total Population/ Single responses – detailed language most spoken at home	n/a	n/a	3,715	3,465
English	n/a	n/a	3,350 (90.2%)	3,145 (90.8%)
French	n/a	n/a	290 (7.8%)	295 (8.5%)
Non-official languages	n/a	n/a	25 (0.7%)	20 (0.6%)

Table A7: Immigrant Population in Blind River (Statistics Canada, 1996 to 2006 Census Community Profiles and 2011 NHS Profile)

Population Characteristic	1996	2001	2006	2011
Total Population in private households by immigrant status	N/A	3970	3720	3490
Immigrant	85 (2.7%)	185 (4.7%)	190 (5.1%)	180 (5.2%)
Non-immigrant	3,035 (97.3%)	3,780 (95.2%)	3,525 (94.8%)	3,310 (94.8%)

²²³ Please note that the languages most spoken at home category did not exist prior to the 2006 census.

APPENDIX B: Financial Data

FIR Data Tables²²⁴

Sources of Revenue	Blind River
Property taxation	\$4,632,896
Ontario unconditional grants	\$,695,400
Conditional grants	\$2,498,971
Revenue from other municipalities	\$28,686
Total user fees and service charges	\$1,339,610
Licences, permits, rents, etc.	\$222,967
Fines and penalties	\$129,679
Other revenue	\$2,456,387
Total Revenue	\$14,004,596

Expenses (Total Expenses after Adjustments)	Blind River
General government	\$2,995,981
Protection services	\$ 1,805,058
Transportation services	\$ 2,441,684
Environmental services	2,768,210
Health services	\$ 185,118
Social and family services	\$ 0
Social housing	\$1,073,174
Recreation and culture services	\$ 2,014,049
Planning and development	\$ 711,367
Total Expenditures	\$ 13,994,641

Surplus and Reserves	Blind River
Annual surplus/(deficit)	\$ 9,955
Reserve (balance end of year)	\$ 548,538
Accumulated surplus/(deficit) at the end of the 2012 year	\$ 43,287,845

²²⁴ Province of Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. 2012 Financial Information Return. Accessed Online, July 2013. [<http://cscconramp.mah.gov.on.ca/fir/ViewFIR2012.htm#5700>]. Accessed Online, Feb 2014. [<http://cscconramp.mah.gov.on.ca/fir/ViewFIR2011.htm#5700>]