

2025

# Ontario Asset Strategy Stakeholder Feedback

SUMMARY FROM ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS  
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## Summary from Stakeholder Engagement Sessions

As part of Phase 2 of the approved Decision-Making Framework, Scouts Canada conducted a comprehensive series of stakeholder engagement sessions to gather feedback on the future asset strategy for Ontario properties. These sessions were designed to better understand the needs, priorities, and concerns of a wide range of stakeholders—including youth, parents, volunteers, and community partners—and to help shape a sustainable and strategic approach to property management for both Scouts Canada and the Ontario Incorporated Body.

Stakeholders across Ontario expressed appreciation for the transparency of the process and the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to this important and complex issue. One participant, reflecting on their experience as a Guider, remarked, *“We didn’t do this kind of engagement with Girl Guides of Canada.”* Another shared, *“We would like to thank you and the Board of Governors for the process and opportunity created to learn about and be consulted on the plans for Scouts Canada’s new asset strategy,”* underscoring how valued this approach to consultation was.

Many participants recognized both the seriousness of the challenges and the integrity of the process itself. As one Scouter put it:

*“This is the work of serious Scouters who, like good Cubs, are doing their best. It addresses a serious problem. Some of the solutions will disappoint many, myself included. It still needs work. Keep up the engagement and keep asking for feedback.”*

Such comments reaffirm that honest dialogue and continued engagement are essential to building trust, fostering consensus, and ensuring that final recommendations are both sound and inclusive.

### Format and Focus

To support informed dialogue, we started each session by highlighting:

- The strategic goal of increasing nights away for youth members.
- Problems facing the portfolio, including:
  1. Risks related to unconsolidated properties.
  2. An unsustainable annual property operating deficit.
  3. Significant deferred maintenance affecting repeat usage and member retention.
  4. Remediation risks related to leased properties.
  5. Regional oversupply of camps; and
- The preliminary recommendations from Colliers to divest or terminate leases on over 20 properties, as shared on a province-wide coverage map from Phase 1 analysis.

To help prioritize discussion topics, participants were asked to complete a pre-session survey. Some of the questions raised through this process were addressed in an FAQ document shared in advance (Appendix

1), while others were incorporated into the live dialogue during the sessions. Some of the questions explored included:

- What actions can Scouts Canada take to earn your trust throughout this decision-making process?
- What role should volunteers play in maintaining and revitalizing properties?
- How can we ensure decisions serve the greater good of all members, beyond historical divisions (e.g., Councils, Areas, Cities, Groups, Camp Committee or Neckers)?
- What might the data not be telling us that we need to consider?
- What criteria should persuade the Board of Governors to retain or divest a property?
- Should third parties or sister organizations be allowed to book during peak periods, and if so, under what terms and price?

Following the sessions, a copy of the presentation was shared with all participants, with encouragement to reflect, discuss within their Scouting networks, and submit additional feedback through an online form at [www.scouts.ca/strategic-plan/properties-portfolio/](http://www.scouts.ca/strategic-plan/properties-portfolio/).

The following summary represents an initial synthesis of all the feedback received through in-person and virtual sessions and the online platform. This summary is being transparently shared with all stakeholders to validate what we heard.

To ensure accuracy and completeness, we invite all participants to provide comments or corrections by June 2nd using the feedback form at the bottom of this page: [www.scouts.ca/strategic-plan/properties-portfolio/](http://www.scouts.ca/strategic-plan/properties-portfolio/). This final round of input will help verify whether we have captured stakeholder perspectives appropriately and will inform the development of final recommendations to be presented to the Board of Governors of Scouts Canada and the Board of Directors of the Ontario Incorporated Body.

## Decision-making process

### Debate Over “Mission Over Ownership”:

Many stakeholders have questioned the principle of "mission over ownership," arguing that owning scout camps is vital to fulfilling the organization's mission. Without dedicated properties, it would be more difficult to provide safe and affordable nights away.

National and provincial parks are imposing more restrictions on group camping and many provincial parks book up quickly.

### Impact of Consolidation on Local Fundraising

Some camps previously maintained individual savings accounts dedicated to capital expenditures; however, these funds were consolidated into a national pool. While camp committees recognize the advantages of a centralized fund—particularly its ability to address unexpected major expenses—they also report unintended consequences. Local fundraising efforts have declined, driven by a lack of trust and limited transparency around how to designate gifts to specific camps. Despite the option to direct donations locally, both donors and volunteers are uncertain about the process, leading to diminished confidence and engagement. The consolidation has also eroded a sense of ownership and autonomy at

the local level, as camp committees are no longer able to earmark funds for capital projects. In addition, volunteers have raised concerns about the lack of clarity in monthly financial statements, specifically regarding when gifts are received and who made them. Many committees have expressed strong interest in re-establishing camp-specific restricted funds for capital projects. At the same time, there is broad support for contributing equitably to a central capital fund.

## Establish Clear and Transparent Criteria for Property Decisions

Stakeholders strongly emphasized the need for transparent, criteria-based decision-making when determining which properties are retained or divested. They want to understand both the rationale ("why") and process ("how") behind each decision. Scouts Canada should assess properties using a comprehensive and consistent evaluation framework that goes beyond financials to include mission alignment, program potential, infrastructure, ecological value, and youth accessibility. A standardized evaluation grid will help ensure decisions are fair, transparent, and defensible.

### *Proposed Property Evaluation Criteria*

Category	Criteria
Ownership & Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Owned vs. Leased</li> <li>- Reversionary Clauses (e.g., donor agreements)</li> </ul>
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Net Operating Income, Total Expenses, Total Revenue, etc.</li> <li>- Opinion of Value</li> <li>- Deferred Maintenance Estimate</li> <li>- Associated Restricted Funds (OIB-specific)</li> </ul>
Utilization & Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual Camp Vacancy (by bed/tent pad)</li> <li>- Event Capacity (# beds, # tent pads)</li> <li>- Summer Bookings and/or Summer camp</li> </ul>
Mission Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drive time accessibility (pop. &amp; membership under age 15 within 30/60/90 minutes) and any waitlists in same drive-time</li> <li>- Program Suitability (e.g., junior section/frontcountry)</li> </ul>
Environmental & Ecological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Remediation Requirements</li> <li>- Ecological Value</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heating/Cooling</li> <li>- Electricity, Cell &amp; Internet Service</li> <li>- Waste Disposal (septic, municipal, kybos)</li> <li>- Water Source (municipal, potable well, cistern, etc.)</li> </ul>
Physical Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural Features (e.g., forest, waterfront access)</li> <li>- Total Site Size (acres)</li> </ul>
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # Campsites</li> <li>- # Beds/Cabins</li> <li>- Facility Condition &amp; Capital Needs</li> <li>- OAS features (high ropes, canoes, snowshoes)</li> </ul>

<b>Administrative</b>	- Consolidated vs. Unconsolidated - Use of Doubleknot Booking Software
<b>Community Engagement</b>	- # of Camp Committee Members - Succession plan
<b>Municipal Considerations</b>	- Zoning & Land Use Restrictions - Proximity to Services (water, sewer, emergency access)
<b>Lease-Specific</b>	- Lease Term conditions/length/cost - Remediation Clauses - Booking Rights & Third-Party Access

## Concerns Over Accessibility and Volunteer Engagement

Many volunteers expressed concern that divesting rural Scout camps could trigger group closures, especially in rural areas, by reducing access to outdoor experiences and driving away volunteers. A shared map (<https://scoutdocs.ca/Camps/gmaps.php>) of former Scout camps revealed a pattern: camp closures often coincided with local group shutdowns. Stakeholders fear repeating this history if current properties are sold.

The experience of the Girl Guides of Canada—who faced significant backlash, including alleged lawsuits and a sharp decline in volunteer participation after divesting camps—was repeatedly cited as a cautionary example. Stakeholders worry Scouts Canada could face similar consequences, particularly a loss of morale and long-term volunteer support, if the value of dedicated camp properties is not preserved.

## Strengthen Governance and Ethical Oversight

To reinforce transparency and sound decision-making, the Asset Advisory Committee should be expanded to include expertise in risk and change management, urban planning, construction, and youth representation. Risk and change management experts can help anticipate and navigate the implications of major property decisions. Urban planners and builders will ensure any capital reinvestments are strategically designed to support future-ready camps. Including a youth representative (recently added) ensures that the end-user—the young people we serve—has a voice in shaping the spaces that impact their experience.

This strengthened committee also serves as an ethical safeguard. Given that our consultant, Colliers, both advised divestment and directly benefits through sales commissions, independent oversight is essential to preserve credibility and prevent conflicts of interest from shaping strategic property decisions.

## Reassess Drive-Time Assumptions and Transportation Solutions

The Vision for Camps survey, conducted pre-pandemic, may no longer reflect current transportation behaviors. Stakeholders note that while past surveys suggested families were willing to drive 60–90 minutes, current preferences skew closer—especially for junior sections, where 30–45 minutes is often the practical limit. Senior youth are generally more flexible, with some able to drive themselves.

Volunteers recommend shifting away from fixed 90-minute drive-time metrics and focusing on access to closer properties for younger members. Solutions like glamping or camping sites for parents (allowing them to stay nearby while their kids are at camp), group transportation (e.g., subsidized buses), and carpooling tools should be explored. Additionally, sites with public transit access are increasingly valued.

## Clarify Financial Allocation of Proceeds

Stakeholders seek transparency on how funds from property sales are used. While it's been stated that proceeds are directed to the Ontario Incorporated Body, concerns persist about whether those funds stay within local councils or are redistributed nationally including toward non-property initiatives, administrative costs, or to offset Scouts Canada's operating deficits. These concerns have intensified in light of recent forecasts of staff reductions.

## Recommendations for a sustainable portfolio

### Identifying Strategies Beyond Divestment

Divestment must not become Scouts Canada's default response to financial pressures. Some stakeholders view the sale of camps as a reactive, receivership-style approach that risks eroding the long-term value of our property portfolio. However, others noted that by acting now—strategically and on our own terms—we retain agency. Waiting until we are in crisis may force the organization into indiscriminate asset sales, sacrificing key sites without alignment to our mission. This can our opportunity to proactively shape a financially and programmatically sustainable property strategy—before those choices are made for us.

Divestment should not be Scouts Canada's default solution. Selling camps is increasingly viewed by stakeholders as a short-term, receivership-style response that risks undermining the long-term value of our properties. However, By acting now, we retain agency. If we wait until we're in a financial crisis, we risk losing control and being forced to sell off key assets without discretion. This is our opportunity to proactively build a financially and programmatically sustainable property portfolio—before the choice is taken from us.

While some properties may be beyond recovery—due to sustained losses, lack of interest, or poor alignment with program needs—others may still hold untapped potential. We must distinguish between these cases through a structured Property Sustainability Assessment that examines program alignment, usage, revenue potential, and mission impact.

The focus should be on revitalizing underperforming camps by investing in improvements that boost program quality and drive repeat bookings. Properties should be positioned as strategic assets that generate value—not just financial, but experiential—by enabling high-quality, mission-aligned overnight experiences.

Despite Scouts Canada's categorical commitment that divestment revenue will not be used to offset operating deficits, stakeholders continue to question whether this principle will be upheld in practice. Selling property to cover short-term financial gaps is not a sound or sustainable approach. Instead, proceeds from divestments must be strategically reinvested into infrastructure and properties that directly enhance program delivery, increase capacity, and secure long-term sustainability.

## Exploring Partial Land Sales and Conservation Easements

Scouts Canada should not default to full divestment of properties. Instead, we must explore alternative approaches such as partial land sales, conservation easements, and life lease agreements that generate revenue while preserving long-term access and program viability. Stakeholders have consistently emphasized that *who* we sell to and *how* the land will be used are critical considerations.

Strategic options include severing and selling non-core or underutilized land to conservation authorities or land trusts, under agreements that preserve Scouts Canada's rights to maintain, improve, and expand camp infrastructure. In some cases, life lease arrangements with conservation partners may be appropriate, allowing Scouts Canada to retain long-term operational control in exchange for land stewardship responsibilities. However, any such agreements must account for remediation requirements and ensure that future infrastructure investments are low-impact or relocatable. It is essential that these arrangements provide clear terms regarding zoning, permitted uses, commercial activity rights, insurance, taxation, and ongoing cost obligations like property taxes and insurance.

Conservation easements offer a mechanism to unlock immediate value—often yielding 20–50% of market value while protecting ecological features—but they impose permanent restrictions on development and can significantly limit future land appreciation, as the property's use and potential improvements are legally constrained in perpetuity.

We must also assess opportunities where severing or subdividing land for residential or commercial use offers a significantly higher return. Where differences are too significant to ignore, partial divestment of non-core lands may be a prudent course to avoid divestment of other camps, which would limit nights away.

Scouts Canada should remain open to a range of models—full or partial divestment, renewable life leases, or hybrid conservation-development agreements. However, long-term control is essential, particularly for supporting:

- Infrastructure upgrades (e.g., potable water, septic systems, cabins)
- Revenue-generating activities (e.g., nature-based programming)

Partnerships with land trusts or conservation agencies could also unlock new educational opportunities. Programs such as SCENES (Scout Centres of Excellence for Nature and Environment) could be strengthened through local expertise and nature interpretation programming.

Finally, we must recognize that while Scouts Canada holds thousands of acres, not all of it is essential to our mission. Strategic land use planning—not just divestment—is vital to creating a sustainable, mission-aligned property portfolio. Our focus should remain on developing strong, multi-functional basecamps that support broad program delivery and long-term viability.

## Diversifying Revenue Streams for Capital Investment

To address urgent capital expenditures and deferred maintenance across our camps, Scouts Canada must diversify and expand its revenue sources. This includes increasing applications to grants, launching targeted capital campaigns, and pursuing sponsorships—coordinated between local committees and the national office to avoid duplication and maximize impact.

We must also engage sister organizations (e.g., Cadets, Girl Guides, 4-H), service clubs (e.g., Rotary, Lions, Knights of Columbus), and regular third-party users to transparently communicate the challenges we face. Rising costs, aging infrastructure, and limited capital reserves demand collaborative solutions. These partners—many of whom rely on our camps for their own programs—may be open to supporting maintenance efforts, fundraising, or contributing skilled volunteers if they understand the urgency.

Local service clubs have historically funded infrastructure projects—often sponsoring cabins, shelters, or Adirondacks in exchange for naming recognition. These valuable partnerships should be proactively renewed.

Additionally, alumni with strong personal ties to specific camps represent a promising source of support. Many would likely contribute generously to preserve and revitalize the places that shaped their youth.

Scouts Canada should also explore non-traditional revenue opportunities, including:

- Carbon offset programs, leveraging our extensive forested land;
- Leasing space for cell towers or wind turbines;
- Installing EV charging stations, supporting both operational revenue and environmental sustainability goals.

## Improve Financial Transparency and Operational Consistency Across Camps

Camp volunteers and staff need clear, timely financial information to operate effectively. This includes regular financial reports detailing performance metrics, monthly income and expense statements, current capital reserve balances, and any restricted funds held by the Ontario Incorporated Body (OIB), GTSF, or Scouts Canada's capital expenditures fund. Without this transparency, it is difficult for local teams to make informed decisions, plan programming, or manage repairs and maintenance proactively.

We continue to hear consistent feedback that volunteers do not know what money they have or can access, creating frustration and unnecessary delays. Empowering local leaders with the financial tools and data they need will improve both accountability and outcomes at the camp level.

There is also concern about how depreciation is currently calculated and presented. Our depreciation methodology is seen by some as misaligned, particularly regarding the useful life assigned to buildings and capital assets. This can obscure the true operational health of a property. While depreciation is necessary for accurate long-term asset planning, it can distort financial performance when used as a key health indicator—especially for properties with aging infrastructure but strong revenue potential.

To address this, Scouts Canada should consider adopting more operationally focused financial indicators, such as EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization), which better reflect cash flow and the real cost of running a camp.

## Improving Property Utilization and Data Accuracy

A recurring concern among stakeholders is the perceived high vacancy rate across Scouts Canada properties. However, current booking data can be misleading. For instance, a facility such as Ridley Lodge at Blue Springs (capacity 120) may be booked by a group of 100. While the remaining 20 beds appear

vacant in the system, they are not available for separate booking. This creates the illusion of underutilization, despite strong actual occupancy. This is no different than a couple renting a 4-bedroom AIRBNB and paying more per person than 4 couples sharing the same AIRBNB. The price to book a facility or having exclusivity of a field needs to be the same regardless of the number of users. We also need to help groups link with other groups for camp bookings to share in costs of large buildings.

Camps located in regions with larger member populations should be prioritized for space expansion or redevelopment to ensure local demand is met. We have readily available data on demographics and membership and should ensure our facilities are built to meet the demand.

Additionally, seasonality must be factored into utilization analysis. A significant proportion of members—according to one volunteer, as high as 66%—do not use tent sites from mid-October through mid-May. This underscores the need for more flexible, all-season accommodation options that allow multiple groups to share buildings, reducing the cost per youth and maximizing usage during colder months.

## Pricing and Booking Optimization

Scouts Canada must modernize and standardize its pricing and booking approach to improve user experience, increase property utilization, and ensure financial sustainability without compromising affordability. Improvements should include

### *Improved Camp Visibility and Promotion*

Many Scouters are unaware of available camps and their offerings. Camp marketing is often left to overburdened volunteers. Scouters recommend:

- Enhancing websites with clear photos, maps, facility details and available equipment onsite, available program resources, costs, and downloadable resources.
- Integrating promotion into WB1 and Group Commissioner onboarding.
- Encouraging weekly meetings and local usage where proximity allows.
- Show the required gear, and whether it's available onsite or must be brought in.

### *Tiered and Cost-Reflective Pricing*

Pricing must reflect true operating costs, account for rising building and maintenance costs, and be informed by a national model. Key elements to consider:

- Aim for member discounts to keep it affordable and provide consistent early booking windows to help Group Commissioners and Contact Scouters secure prime booking dates before sister and third-party organizations.
- Apply higher rates—and potential maintenance surcharges—to third-party and sister organizations that do not contribute through volunteer service, fundraising, and/or membership-based subsidies. Pricing should reflect their limited operational support while ensuring fairness to Scouts Canada members.
- Ensure that any expansion of third-party bookings fully considers the implications for property tax exemptions and Scouts Canada's charitable status.
- Fundraise for "No One Left Behind" subsidies for families in financial need to help send kids to camp.

### *Dynamic and Strategic Pricing*

Implement seasonal and demand-based pricing:

- Higher fees during peak weekends.
- Incentives for underutilized times (weekdays, summer).

### *Enhanced User Experience & Integration*

Booking systems must:

- Show program availability (e.g., archery, canoeing).
- Allow searching and filtering properties by activity type, facility features, and Outdoor Adventure Skill (OAS), STEM, and Scouts for Sustainability skills achievable onsite as well as Program Areas naturally supported by the terrain or facilities

### *Transparent Communication*

Pricing updates should include:

- Clear rationale and operational costs.
- Financial assistance options.
- Consistent messaging to build trust among Scouters and parents.

### *Benchmarking*

Conduct regular comparisons to national parks, YMCAs, and similar providers to ensure Scouts Canada remains competitive and mission aligned.

## Expanding Off-Peak and Weekday Usage

Camps could be rented for corporate retreats, sports teams, schools, wellness retreats, film industry uses, summer camps or other thematic experiences. However, volunteers expressed concerns that increased utilization could exacerbate campground and trail erosion as well as increase maintenance expenses. A careful cost-benefit analysis is required to determine if venturing into commercial opportunities is viable and whether the loss of tax exemptions is advantageous. In addition, volunteers suggested that camp properties could be better utilized for training purposes, such as holding volunteer training events like Group Commissioner Orientation to increase year-round utilization.

We should consider AIRBNBs, RV and Glamping businesses on our owned properties to increase third party revenue, especially in quiet seasons. These could be options for parents to book accommodations on our land while their kids are staying with their sections to address long drive-times for parents.

## Unlocking Grants for Camp Improvements

Several stakeholders expressed disappointment that recent efforts to secure external funding for camps—such as through the Ontario Trillium Foundation—were unsuccessful. In one noted example, a grant application was declined, with the feedback citing Scouts Canada's overall financial position as a barrier, specifically pointing to the substantial holdings within the Ontario Incorporated Body (OIB).

This raised significant concern among participants who felt that, despite real and urgent capital needs at the property level, the way organizational assets are currently structured and reported may be working against local efforts to bring in much-needed external funds.

Participants emphasized the importance of revisiting how OIB-managed funds are managed to ensure that they do not inadvertently disqualify Scouts Canada from grant eligibility.

Beyond structure, there was strong demand for greater transparency and accessibility around the OIB itself. Stakeholders raised the need for a standardized, well-communicated process to access available funds for capital expenditures. Specifically, members want clarity on:

- What OIB funds exist, their current balances, and any restrictions
- How to apply for capital project funding, including timelines and documentation
- The criteria used to assess applications
- Who makes funding decisions and how those are communicated

## Unlocking Capacity, Enhancing Revenue, and Strengthening Membership Value

Members shared growing concern that limited volunteer capacity is directly contributing to long waitlists—particularly in urban areas—preventing eager youth from joining the program. Many indicated that these waitlists only scratch the surface of true demand, as numerous families are discouraged from even signing up to a waitlist due to a perceived lack of availability.

Several stakeholders emphasized that Scouts Canada is leaving significant value—and potential future members- “on the table” by not fully utilizing its own assets to create additional on-ramps into the program. Urban-adjacent Scout camps, often underused during weeknights, were flagged as a missed opportunity: members suggested these sites could host structured evening programs for waitlisted youth, expanding capacity without increasing pressure on already-stretched local groups.

Feedback highlighted that these programs could be delivered by paid senior youth members (e.g., Venturers and Rovers), creating meaningful leadership roles while expanding capacity. Offered on weeknights—when camps are typically underutilized—these structured, fee-based programs would provide a scalable way to address waitlists without overburdening volunteers. Costs would be recovered through participant fees, and youth could earn Outdoor Adventure Skills (OAS) badges in a format similar to swimming or martial arts classes. While designed as a low-commitment entry point for families, the goal would be to funnel participants into full annual membership by showcasing the added value of year-round Scouting—including leadership development, outdoor adventure, and access to the broader Scouting experience. Importantly, this model would not interfere with traditional weekend bookings, which remain the core revenue driver for most properties. Instead, it would generate incremental revenue during off-peak times, helping camps become more financially sustainable while delivering value to families and strengthening the membership pipeline.

## Property Operations Optimization

### Risk Management for Leased and Unconsolidated Camp Properties

Many participants emphasized that leased camp properties often carry minimal operational costs and pose little to no financial risk. Some questioned why Scouts Canada would consider terminating these leases, especially when properties are well-used, community-supported, and not running deficits.

However, perspectives shifted when staff shared examples of significant environmental remediation liabilities incurred after camp committees disbanded—leaving Scouts Canada fully responsible for cleanup and remediation expenses. One case in particular, where remediation costs reached hundreds of thousands of dollars, prompted greater recognition of the long-term risks associated with leases that lack stewardship continuity and low-impact construction on leased land.

As a result, there was strong support from stakeholders to proactively address these risks—not by ending leases unnecessarily, but through better planning and cooperation. Participants supported:

- Joint long-term stewardship strategies between staff and camp committees
- Clear succession planning to avoid gaps in volunteer leadership
- Minimizing environmental footprints (e.g., fewer permanent structures)
- Reviewing and renegotiating lease agreements to reduce or clarify remediation obligations
- Establishing reserve funds for potential future liabilities

In addition, many stakeholders indicated that non-consolidated camps should be prioritized for divestment before those that have already aligned with national policies. They expressed that camps unwilling to consolidate should face consequences—such as closure or lease termination—to ensure fairness and operational consistency across the property network.

The overall tone was one of partnership: committees expressed willingness to work with Scouts Canada on sustainable lease models that protect both the land and the organization's financial future, ensuring camps can continue delivering value to youth for years to come.

### Volunteer Recruitment and Family Engagement

Scouts Canada's current onboarding and training requirements for camp volunteers—while necessary for safety and consistency—can unintentionally deter individuals who are willing to contribute in limited but valuable ways, such as maintaining infrastructure, assisting with camp bookings, or providing groundskeeping support. To overcome these barriers, we should develop more flexible volunteer pathways that match the scope of involvement with appropriate screening and training.

Existing roles like “Parent Helper” and “Adult Overnight Helper” demonstrate that it is possible to maintain safety standards while creating lighter-touch roles. These positions allow adults to participate in specific activities with reduced onboarding, enabling meaningful contribution without requiring full leadership commitment. A similar approach tailored for camp-specific roles could help attract skilled volunteers from the broader community—tradespeople, retirees, or seasonal helpers—who are willing to pitch in but cannot commit to a full leadership journey.

One particularly promising strategy shared by stakeholders was to reinstate annual Family Camps as both a community-building experience and a recruitment pipeline. Volunteers noted that Family Camps, especially those introduced during COVID-19, were highly successful in engaging families, showcasing camp life, and building positive emotional connections to Scouting. These events allow parents and guardians to experience camp firsthand, see the value of the program, and gain comfort with contributing in a supportive environment. By offering clear, low-barrier opportunities to help during Family Camp—whether through cooking, setup, or running activities—we can organically recruit future volunteers who are already familiar with our values and eager to stay involved.

Re-establishing Family Camps as an annual offering, integrated with targeted volunteer recruitment efforts, could become a cornerstone of our strategy to sustain and grow the volunteer base required to keep camps thriving.

Skills camps for new volunteers should include supervised youth activities, allowing Scouters to develop outdoor skills without adding extra time commitments. Many Scouters, particularly in younger Sections, lack camping confidence and OAS competency. Volunteer support is fragmented, onboarding is insufficient, and essential resources are difficult to access.

## Camp Committee Leadership

Recruitment and succession planning continue to be persistent challenges for camp committees across Ontario. Stakeholder feedback suggests a more collaborative model, encouraging the merging or coordination of committees within close geographic proximity. This would allow volunteers with specialized skills—such as tradespeople or professionals—to support multiple camps, thereby maximizing impact and reducing operational gaps (e.g., a plumber from one camp supporting a nearby camp that has an engineer available in return).

Camp committees are critical to the operation, safety, and sustainability of our properties, yet they currently receive little formal training or support. While Commissioners are flown to training and have staff relationship managers, Camp Chairs—often managing large sites, compliance, budgets, and volunteer crews—are left to self-navigate.

## Third-Party Operated Camping: Revenue-Sharing Models for Parents

Throughout the engagement sessions, stakeholders shared enthusiastic support for expanding summer programming and exploring third-party operated group camping models, particularly during peak summer months when Provincial Parks are often at capacity. There is a clear demand for accessible group camping options for both youth programming and family-style experiences, which was popular during COVID.

### *Third-Party Operated Camping: Revenue-Sharing Model*

Stakeholders recommended exploring revenue-sharing agreements with private operators like KOA. This approach would allow non-Scouting groups (e.g., schools, community organizations, or family groups) to book during periods when Scout youth use is low. Key benefits include:

- Revenue generation without operational burden for Scouts Canada
- Increased visibility and public use of Scouting properties
- Potential for cost-sharing infrastructure improvements

Stakeholders suggested that such models be piloted with clear site management protocols, insurance requirements, and brand protections to ensure alignment with Scouts Canada's mission and safety standards.

### *Glamping for Parents During Youth Summer Programs*

Another idea that emerged was offering on-site glamping accommodations for parents during their child's participation in summer programming. In this model:

- Parents could stay in comfort-focused accommodations (e.g., yurts, A-frames) run by a third party
- They might participate in one or two activities, or simply relax nearby, reducing travel and offering a more inclusive experience

Several stakeholders saw this as a soft-entry pathway for volunteer engagement, noting that parents who stay on-site often become more inclined to support or join the program after witnessing its positive impact. Concerns were raised about potential risks like youth distraction from having parents nearby during programming, screening and safety protocols if parents are staying on property and site planning to avoid overlap between glamping zones and youth activity areas.

## Enhancing camp experience

### Diverse and Age-Appropriate Camping Experiences

Parents and youth value variety in camp experiences and do not want to attend the same camp repeatedly. Different age groups require different types of camping: Beavers and Cubs need a softer introduction like lodges and cabins, while Scouts, Venturers, and Rovers prefer more backcountry adventures and may tolerate more rustic experiences. It's critical for new campers to enjoy their firsts to ensure stronger retention and willingness to go back to camp and refer Scouting to friends. They want a variety of accommodations as they progress (Beaver lodges, cub cabins, Tabins, Adirondaks, Yurts or backcountry tents), variety of program and variety of destinations (Different towns, waterfront, mountain, forests, large events). This was a common theme at all engagement sessions, especially once they saw the proposed coverage map from the Colliers proposal.

### Program Support for Scouters at Camp

Scouters consistently express a need for better support when delivering camp-based programs. Unlike weekly meetings, camp programming often lacks centralized tools, guidance, and resources—placing the burden on individual volunteers. To reduce barriers and enhance the quality of outdoor adventures, Scouts Canada must take a more proactive role in supporting the camp experience. Key recommendations include:

- **Welcome Binders & Digital Notifications**  
Provide each group with a physical and digital welcome package—similar to Airbnb hospitality—that includes maps, emergency protocols, check-in/out procedures, and site-specific rules. Automated confirmation emails should reinforce this information and set expectations.
- **“Program-in-a-Box” Kits**  
Offer activity kits aligned to the Canadian Path and OAS, including instructions, materials, and optional facilitator add-ons or equipment rentals.

- **Camp Gear Library**  
Create a lending system for tents, backpacks, sleeping bags and other essentials—reducing cost and logistical barriers for families, especially new ones.
- **Onsite Program Facilitators**  
Provide groups with the option to book trained facilitators (e.g., for canoeing, climbing, STEM), reducing pressure on less experienced Scouters and improving safety and quality.
- **Local Partnerships**  
Strengthen relationships with nearby activity providers (e.g., rafting companies, climbing gyms) to offer structured experiences without Scouters managing logistics.
- **Program Feedback Loop**  
Launch post-camp surveys focused on program quality, gear access, and participant satisfaction. Use this data to update program kits and inform infrastructure improvements.
- **Balanced Investment in Program and Accommodation**  
Feedback shows that accommodations and programming must be equally prioritized for investment to ensure a high-quality, well-rounded camp experience.

## Recognition for Camp Excellence

While Scouts Canada celebrates outstanding youth programming and weeknight Scouters, there is currently no formal system for recognizing the exceptional work of camp committees, or the camps themselves. Yet our properties are central to delivering outdoor adventure and overnight experiences, and many are sustained by passionate, long-serving volunteers who receive little to no public acknowledgment.

To foster a culture of pride, performance, and continuous improvement, Scouters recommend the creation of a Camp Excellence Recognition Program. This initiative would celebrate top-performing camps annually through awards and visibility within the Scouting community.

Example Categories:

- Camp of the Year – For overall excellence in bookings, maintenance, program offerings, and user feedback from NPS
- Cleanest Camp – Based on camper evaluations and inspection criteria
- Most Improved Camp – For demonstrating growth in usage, program alignment, or volunteer engagement
- Top Rated by Scouters and by Youth – Based on user surveys, testimonials, and referrals
- Sustainability Leader – For innovation in eco-friendly practices or conservation education
- Volunteer Excellence – To honour outstanding contributions from individuals or entire committees
- Best Wilderness camp, Best Front Country camp, best by Section type

Benefits of the program

- Drives higher standards of care and innovation
- Encourages friendly competition and collaboration among camps
- Provides motivational recognition for volunteers who often work behind the scenes
- Generates positive stories and media content that can be shared across Scouts Canada's platforms

Recognition can include official certificates, digital badges for camp pages, feature stories in newsletters, and small grants for infrastructure or program investments.

## Gaps in Scouts Canada’s Water Safety and Equipment Standards

Stakeholders have raised concerns about Scouts Canada’s lack of clear, consistent standards for water safety—particularly for wilderness and backcountry camping. While fixed-site camps follow provincial regulations, policies do not adequately address the realities of field-based water treatment and risk mitigation in remote environments. Gaps Identified include:

1. Inadequate Policy Coverage
  - a. The *Property Standards Policy* provides only vague direction (e.g., water testing logs, capping abandoned wells), but does not address standards for cisterns, or other water storage and dispensing devices.
  - b. There is no national guidance on treatment in backcountry or Scouts Canada wilderness camps
2. Missing Equipment Standards
  - a. *Safety Equipment* and *Camping Tools Standards* omit any mention of water filtration or purification equipment. Stakeholders flagged this as a serious oversight, given common pathogens like giardia and cryptosporidium in untreated water.
3. Outdated Culinary Safety Materials
  - a. The *Safe Culinary Adventures* sheet focuses on food safety but offers no water treatment guidance (e.g., boiling times, filter use, chemical disinfection).
4. Weak Risk Management Integration
  - a. The *Risk Management Guideline* fails to address waterborne hazards, treatment protocols, or group gear sanitation—issues raised repeatedly by field volunteers.

Recommendations include:

1. Create a National Water Safety & Treatment Policy: Define minimum standards for sourcing, boiling, filtering, and disinfecting water across all outdoor programs—whether on Scouts Canada camps, Parks, Crown land, or third-party sites.
2. Standardize Equipment Guidelines: Approve and list acceptable water treatment methods (e.g., gravity filters, UV purifiers, chlorine dioxide tablets) and clarify their appropriate use.

## Assessing Facility Needs, maintenance and site plans

Volunteers, parents, youth, and third-party users have provided extensive feedback on what makes a functional, safe, and welcoming camp environment. The current state of many properties—marked by aging infrastructure, unclear layouts, and poor sanitation—limits both program quality and member retention or referrals. The following outlines needs for revitalized camp facilities, and Scouters were clear they want to be engaged in identifying needs for new facilities in a functional program study.

1. Build Multi-Use, Modular Cabins or create a design competition via RFP that include:
  - a. Multi-functional space for sleeping, cooking, dining, drying winter/wet gear, and indoor activities.

- b. Flexible layouts: Accommodate groups of different sizes and genders; either with dividers to split space (e.g., one 24-bed cabin into separate sections) or have smaller, enclosed rooms of 4-6 beds that can separate boys, girls and Scouters.
  - c. Comfortable and Inviting: Design for warmth and a “cozy” feel to attract new members and make them want to come back.
- 2. Build transitional camping experiences (i.e. Adirondaks, Cub Cabins or Tabins)
  - a. Allows youth to progress from Lodges to backcountry camping and are designed to be more durable than large canvas tents.
  - b. Transitional accommodation and backcountry, group sites should be built in proximity to:
    - i. Bathrooms and wash houses with showers and outdoor kitchens with grey water dump zones for cleaning dishes
    - ii. Large (events/Multi-Group) and Small (sections) campfires with seating
    - iii. Cisterns, Potable water taps, or potable water facilities to refill jugs and water bottles
    - iv. Food lockers
    - v. Landscaped land for private group sites
    - vi. Picnic tables with shelter and BBQs
    - vii. Parking in some cases
    - viii. Woodsheds
    - ix. Clear marking for tent pads and hammock camping
- 3. Kitchen and Food Prep Enhancements
  - a. Kitchens must be simple, practical, and accessible to volunteers without professional cooking backgrounds.
  - b. Invest in basic camp culinary training focused on nutrition and safe food handling.
  - c. Healthy, good food is as important as quality sleep in creating a positive camp experience.
  - d. Provide basic kitchen supplies like plates, utensils, pots, pans etc.
- 4. Sleeping Quarters and Equipment Standards
  - a. Provide sanitizable mattresses in various sizes (youth and adult) to ensure youth, Scouters and third-party users have a good night sleep and enjoy the rest of their experience.
  - b. Ensure storage for personal items (shelving) and drying racks are available with lots of hooks on walls for random needs, especially close to heat sources for drying clothing. A mudroom for rain/winter boots and coats near heat sources for drying is strongly encouraged.
- 5. Sanitation and Hygiene Upgrades
  - a. Members prefer bathrooms with flush toilets, urinals, and sanitary bins in women’s washrooms. Incinerating toilets are too complicated for the average user and should be avoided. Outhouses, with concrete pads and clean facilities, could work if they are maintained and cleaned regularly.
  - b. Universal bathrooms are preferred with shared handwashing stations
  - c. Add cisterns or potable water taps, and enforce hygiene protocols via a basic camp standard policy in BP&P.
- 6. Improve Curb Appeal and First Impressions
  - a. Declutter Entrances: Remove abandoned or unsightly items near gate areas. Relocate all maintenance, construction materials, and equipment to enclosed storage areas out of public view.

- b. Maintain Grounds and Signage: Ensure entrances, pathways, and signage are well-maintained, clearly marked, and visually welcoming creating a strong first impression for youth, parents, volunteers, and external partner
  - c. Provide sleds and wheeled carts to help bring gear from the parking area to the sleeping facility or tent area.
- 7. Sustainability and Infrastructure Sharing
  - a. Install EV charging stations to support green goals and attract new users.
  - b. Share essential tools and equipment (e.g., wheelbarrows, heavy machinery, event gear) among camps to reduce duplication and improve operational efficiency.

## Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What aspects of the Asset Strategy have been “approved” by the Scouts Canada Board of Governors?**

A: The Board of Governors has approved the strategic framework, decision-making model, goals, guiding principles, approach, and the terms of reference for our Asset Advisory Committee. Recommendations following stage 3 incorporating stakeholder feedback, will be presented to the Board for the Ontario Asset Strategy starting in July 2025.

**Q: What consultation has been conducted, and what feedback has been provided from the other Property Societies?**

A: Consultation has involved most property societies, foundations, council Key 3s, and staff, with guidance from Colliers Canada and our Asset Advisory Committee, on the National Asset Strategy. Camp committees and members will be consulted in spring 2025 in Ontario. All feedback collected was shared transparently with the Board of Governors in January 2025, with additional feedback to be included in the final recommendations of Phase 3 starting in July 2025.

**Q: Has there been a shift in Scouts Canada's policy regarding camps generating net positive revenue? Has the Board approved this? How does this align with the principle "ownership is not integral to achieving Scouts Canada's mission"?**

A: The Board of Governors approved a minor adjustment to the guiding principles, stating: “*Mission over Ownership.*” This change emphasizes that property ownership is not essential to achieving Scouts Canada’s mission. While properties help fulfill our mission, success depends on delivering quality opportunities to youth, regardless of ownership. While ownership can offer benefits such as tailored facilities and dedicated spaces, focusing too much on ownership can strain resources and limit flexibility. The Board of Governors further clarified that some loss-making camps can be part of the portfolio if they support the mission, and the overall portfolio remains balanced and sustainable.

**Q: What is the status of the sale of the Scout offices on Baseline Road in Ottawa and Tamaracouta Scout Reserve (TSR) in Quebec? Could these proceeds help Scouts Canada operate until a more thorough review is conducted in other provinces?**

A: The sale of these properties is not a quick solution to the organization’s financial challenges. The Board of Governors recognizes the need for transparency in how divestment proceeds are used and has committed to ensuring that revenue generated from property sales benefits local councils and properties. Currently, both Scouts Canada (Baseline) and Quebec Inc. (Quebec property society- TSR) have signed conditional purchase agreements for both properties, but the final closing and proceeds may take years to materialize.

Scouts Canada faces several property-related challenges, including high deferred maintenance costs, market cannibalization, liabilities with non-consolidated properties, poor lease agreements, an unsustainable burn rate with annual net operating income losses over \$1M per year, and the need for asset sales to fund upgrades to current properties. These issues are not easily solved by a windfall from property sales. While the sales will eventually benefit the organization, they will not address all our portfolio challenges. The Board acknowledges the need for urgent action to address these long-term financial and operational risks.

A transparent approach to asset divestments will ensure that proceeds are reinvested appropriately. Property divestments must generate funds for urgent improvements, while maintaining the integrity of our portfolio and mission.

**Q: What is the consultation schedule beyond Property Societies?**

A: We will continue to engage members, Scouters, camp committees, community stakeholders, youth, and foundations. Once all consultation sessions are completed, a detailed summary will be published online and shared with the Board of Governors along with a recommendation from Phase 3 of the decision-making framework.

Consultation dates include:

- March 18 – Bryson Centre at 7:00 PM
- March 19 – Nemo at 7:00 PM
- March 20 – Blue Springs at 7:00 PM
- April 14 – Woodland Trails at 7:00 PM
- April 15 – Camp Samac at 7:00 PM
- April 17 – Ottawa headquarters
- April 30 (6:30 PM- 9:00 PM, virtual) – Stakeholders Between North Bay, Cochrane, and Sudbury
- May 1 (6:30 PM- 9:00 PM, virtual) – Stakeholders near Thunder Bay

Additionally, a video, along with this FAQ and a set of guiding questions, will be shared online to help stakeholders draft thorough feedback in an online form.

**Q: What are the expected next steps for the Ontario Incorporated Body (OIB)?**

A: Scouts Canada believes that provincial property societies hold title on behalf of the organization and that the Board of Governors of Scouts Canada has authority over sales decisions. However, some property societies contest this. Given their deep knowledge of local properties, property societies' full involvement in decision-making is vital. Scouts Canada will collaborate with these societies to ensure effective decisions are made, and, where necessary, compromises will be sought in good faith.

**Q: Why divest of properties when Scouts Canada's strategic goals include more nights away for youth?**

A: Divesting properties aligns with our goal of increasing nights away by focusing on camps that best serve our members. By right sizing our portfolio, we can invest in modernizing accessible, well-equipped camps, ensuring they provide high-quality experiences, sustainably. Many properties are underutilized, often full for only eight weeks a year, making their upkeep unsustainable. Redirecting resources to key properties will enhance their facilities, improve long-term viability, and offer more consistent, high-quality outdoor experiences for youth.

**Q: Why are we spending significant money deciding to divest properties instead of improving them?**

A: A thorough evaluation was necessary to ensure we focus resources on properties that will serve our mission in the long term. Six years ago, Scouts Canada lacked a clear understanding of its owned and leased properties due to decentralization, multiple property societies, and non-consolidated operations. By working with a professional real estate consultant firm, Colliers Canada, we developed a decision-making framework to address key issues, including property cannibalization, deferred maintenance,

unsustainable leases, remediation risks, and financial liabilities. Unlike other organizations that chose to divest of all properties, we sought a balanced approach that acknowledged the value properties can provide in helping us achieve our mission. This strategic investment allows us to retain and enhance the most viable properties, ensuring they remain sustainable, modern, and better aligned with Scouts Canada's mission.

**Q: Why not use longer financial and booking data periods for the analysis?**

While longer financial and booking data periods could provide additional insights, the urgency of addressing safety and infrastructure concerns requires us to act now. Pre-COVID financial data from 2016-2019 is either unavailable or inconsistent due to account consolidations, making it difficult to integrate with post-COVID data. Our analysis focuses on the most recent available data (2022-2024), recognizing that the pandemic significantly altered membership patterns, property usage, and operational costs. Relying on outdated data could misrepresent current realities and delay necessary improvements. Moving forward, ongoing analysis will refine our understanding of long-term trends while ensuring that decisions are based on the most relevant and actionable information available today.

**Q: How will restricted funds (i.e., bequest funds) and designated funds be managed equitably across councils?**

A: First, restricted funds resulting from bequests will be managed in accordance with donor requirements. Second, some property societies mandate through their policies, bylaws, or articles of incorporation, that property sale proceeds remain within their province or certain councils. This can create equity challenges, limiting the ability to provide equal access to quality properties for all members. Scouts Canada will work closely with councils and property societies to ensure that funds are used effectively and fairly while respecting any legal or donor-imposed restrictions.

**Q: Are there other funding options (such as fundraising, grants, or access to investments) that could reduce the need for selling camps?**

A: While fundraising, grants, and investment revenue are valuable funding sources, they are not always dependable or sufficient to cover the significant infrastructure investments required. Furthermore, money will not solve all our current challenges. However, Scouts Canada is actively exploring alternative funding options—including grants, fundraising, partnerships, and investment revenue—to support capital expenditures at retained properties. This effort will be guided by comprehensive contractor assessments to develop a 15-year asset management plan, prioritizing deferred maintenance obligations. Additionally, a functional program study will ensure that new property facilities align with the needs and expectations of our members.

A sustainable asset portfolio requires diversified revenue streams, with capital expenditures ideally funded through grants and fundraising. However, day-to-day operations cannot rely on unpredictable or one-time funding sources. Third-party bookings will play a role in sustaining operations, but Scouts Canada must carefully balance external revenue generation with maintaining priority access for members. The goal is to create a financially viable property network that provides high-quality outdoor experiences for youth while ensuring long-term stability and responsible resource management.

**Q: Why are we investing in camps we intend on selling?**

A: Aside from TSR, Woods, and Baseline, no properties have been approved for divestment at this time. Until the Board of Governors and OIB finalize decisions on which properties to retain or divest, property operations cannot restrict necessary operating or capital expenditures. However, we are seeking approval to confirm the full portfolio of retained and divested properties in Ontario, which will allow our operations team to strategically limit expenditures on properties slated for divestment, even though the phased divestment process may take years.

**Q: Why are camps listed for divestment, despite meeting drive-time and natural characteristic criteria?**

A: While drive-time and natural characteristics are important considerations, they are just two factors in a broader evaluation process. In assessing the Ontario portfolio, several other critical factors influence divestment decisions, including:

- Significant deferred maintenance and capital expenditure requirements
- Poor lease terms or legal liabilities associated with non-consolidated properties.
- Market cannibalization, where multiple camps compete for the same user base.
- Persistent financial deficits, with annual net operating revenue in the negative
- Insufficient local membership to support the property's long-term viability.
- High land value, where selling the property could generate substantial funds to reinvest in improving other camps.

A camp that meets drive-time and natural characteristic criteria may still be unsuitable for long-term retention if it does not align with Scouts Canada's strategic objectives, financial sustainability, and program quality standards.

**Q: If a property is making money and consolidated, why would it be on the divestment list, and doesn't that make the problem of breaking even by 2027 more challenging?**

A: While some properties may currently generate positive net revenue, long-term sustainability requires evaluating the total cost of ownership, including maintenance, capital expenditures, and all operating costs. A property that appears financially viable today may still present challenges when considering factors such as:

- High deferred maintenance and capital investment needs
- Poor lease terms or legal liabilities
- Market cannibalization, where multiple camps compete for the same users.
- Historical financial deficits, even if recent performance has improved.
- Insufficient local membership to justify long-term retention.
- High land value, where selling the property could generate significant revenue to improve retained camps.
- Location outside the preferred drive-time radius identified by members.
- Lack of meaningful natural characteristics like forests, lakes, or mountains to support high-quality outdoor experiences

The goal is not just to break even by 2027 but to ensure a sustainable, high-quality property portfolio for the long term. Selling certain properties allows Scouts Canada to reinvest in camps that best align with the organization's mission and member needs while ensuring financial stability.

**Q: What is the appropriate process and timing for a property slated for divestment in the phased strategy?**

A: The divestment process requires careful planning, stakeholder engagement, and comprehensive financial assessments. The timing of each divestment will be guided by these evaluations and the strategic objectives of Scouts Canada. Efforts will be made to ensure smooth transitions through active member engagement.

The phased divestment strategy will include the following key steps:

- **Retaining properties with unique amenities:** Camps with essential features for certain sections will be retained until comparable facilities are developed at nearby properties.
- **Upgrading retained properties:** We will upgrade retained properties to address deferred maintenance identified from contractor assessments and upgrade or build new facilities following a functional program study, which will ensure retained assets help increase quality nights away for our members.
- **Stakeholder consultation:** Local Scouters, camp committees, parents, and youth will be engaged to gather feedback on investment needs and address potential challenges related to the divestment process, including timing and concerns about facilities.

A phased divestment approach will be followed, ensuring careful market analysis, targeted marketing, professional valuations, and transparent communication with stakeholders. This strategy will help preserve property values, maintain buyer interest, and support the long-term financial and operational sustainability of Scouts Canada.

**Q: Is it preferable to sell a camp outright or lease it to another entity to retain land?**

A: The decision to sell or lease a camp will depend on a range of factors, such as the property's long-term viability, Scouts Canada's needs, and interest from other parties. Leasing may be an option if it aligns with Scouts Canada's goals. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with all options, including joint ventures, leases, or even subdividing a property, being considered. However, there is an urgent need for capital investments in our properties to enhance client experiences, upgrade facilities, and improve program features. Given current funding constraints, selling properties may be necessary to generate the capital required for these improvements.

**Q: Given the historical underinvestment, how do we ensure divestment proceeds will be used effectively this time?**

A: Scouts Canada is committed to ensuring that divestment proceeds are used strategically and effectively, with a focus on long-term impact and sustainability including modernizing our assets to meet the needs of current and future generations of Scouts. The divestment process will be rigorously managed, ensuring

full accountability and transparency. Many property Societies contend that sale proceeds, minus divestment related expenses, must be held by the property society and reinvested within the same province and in some cases, the same council. However, this presents an equity challenge, as approximately 65% of our assets are concentrated in just two provinces and only in certain councils, limiting our ability to distribute resources equitably across all properties. Nonetheless, key steps in managing divestment proceeds effectively include:

- Deferred Maintenance and Asset Management:
  - Conduct thorough assessments of deferred maintenance for camps earmarked for retention after Phase 3.
  - Use contractor estimates to project future maintenance costs and develop a comprehensive 15-year asset management plan for each property.
- Needs Assessment and Prioritization:
  - Undertake a Functional Program Study to identify specific facility and programmatic needs, providing a clear roadmap for investment prioritization. Align investments with key objectives related to property-based program delivery, such as facility upgrades and program expansion.
  - Involve local Scouters, Camp Committees, parents, and youth to ensure the investment priorities align with the needs of the Scouting community.
- Financial Planning and Monitoring:
  - Develop a distinct financial plan to track capital repair and improvement costs separately from operating budgets, ensuring clear financial oversight.

By ensuring a clear, data-driven approach to the allocation of divestment proceeds, Scouts Canada will enhance the sustainability of the retained properties, prioritize key investments, and continue to deliver high-quality programs for future generations.

**Q: Loss or closure of a camp may lead to volunteer burnout and withdrawal of support from long-term stakeholders. Is Scouts Canada concerned about volunteer retention?**

A: Scouts Canada deeply values the role of volunteers, who are the backbone of the organization, contributing over two million hours to support youth development. We understand the potential risk of volunteer burnout, particularly in the context of camp closures or reorganization. Recognizing this, Scouts Canada is committed to ensuring the long-term retention and well-being of our volunteers.

To address concerns and foster engagement, Scouts Canada is hosting consultation sessions across six major markets in Ontario, along with two virtual sessions, to gather input from volunteers and stakeholders. These sessions will help identify gaps and provide a platform for open dialogue to ensure volunteer voices are heard and considered.

In addition, Scouts Canada is implementing a strategy of "right-sizing" its portfolio. This means optimizing camp operations to enhance the volunteer, program, and customer experience, ensuring we maintain a meaningful and supportive environment for all volunteers. Our goal is to improve retention by making volunteers feel more valued, supported, and engaged in their roles.

With over 13,000 volunteers, Scouts Canada is dedicated to fostering strong connections within the organization. Volunteers shape life-changing experiences for youth, guiding them through challenges and helping them reach milestones. We are also encouraging volunteers to take on a variety of roles, ranging from section leaders to supporting administrative and property management tasks.

By investing in volunteer experiences and ensuring camps evolve to meet modern needs, Scouts Canada aims to create an environment that supports both volunteer satisfaction and organizational growth.

**Q: What strategies will Scouts Canada implement to ensure equitable access to high-quality outdoor experiences for youth across Ontario?**

A: Scouts Canada is fully committed to ensuring equitable access to high-quality outdoor experiences for youth across Ontario. One key element of this strategy is ensuring that camp locations are accessible. Recognizing that travel can be a significant barrier for many families, Scouts Canada will prioritize drive-time considerations when evaluating properties for potential divestment.

To ensure retained camps can meet the diverse needs of youth, Scouts Canada will conduct thorough contractor assessments and functional program studies. These evaluations will identify gaps in camp facilities and programming, helping to determine what improvements are needed to provide the best possible experiences for all participants. The goal is to ensure that no child is left behind, regardless of their location, and every youth in Ontario can access high-quality, immersive outdoor adventures.

Volunteer and youth feedback will play a vital role in shaping these assessments. By listening to those who are directly involved in the programs, Scouts Canada will ensure that its camps and outdoor activities align with the needs and expectations of the communities they serve. This comprehensive approach will enable Scouts Canada to provide equitable access to enriching outdoor experiences, fostering personal growth and development for youth across Ontario.

**Q: What do youth members and their families value most in a camp experience today?**

A: Youth members and their families have diverse preferences when it comes to camp experiences, shaped by the unique needs at various stages of a child's development. However, several common themes emerge across all Sections:

- **Facilities:** While the specific needs of different Sections, such as Colony & Pack versus Company & Crew, vary, the preference for natural features like forests and lakes is universally shared across all groups.
- **Program:** There is a high demand for traditional Scouting activities, including canoeing, archery, and hiking. Additionally, offsite activities facilitated by camp partners are also popular.
- **Transportation:** Families with younger children, particularly in Colony & Pack, generally prefer camps within a 60-minute drive. However, facilitated transportation options can expand the geographic reach of camp attendance.
- **Support:** There is a clear desire for improved online support for selecting, booking, and planning camp trips, helping members navigate the process more easily.
- **Accommodations:** Younger Sections favor structured accommodations like cabins, while older Sections (Troop, Company, Crew) prefer more traditional campsites. Seasonal preferences also influence these choices.

- **Technology and Connectivity:** Cell service is a key priority for all demographics, followed by electricity, flush toilets, and bunk beds. The importance of these features tends to decrease as the youth get older and become more independent.
- **Social and Dedicated Space:** Sections want dedicated spaces for their activities, while still having the option to socialize with other Sections. Older youth especially value this autonomy, reflecting their growing independence.
- **Traditional Scouting Activities:** There is a strong interest in traditional Scouting activities, such as canoeing, archery, rock climbing, and hiking, all of which align with the natural features of the camp.
- **Additional Experiences:** Older Sections show interest in offsite adventures, including programs like summer camps or jamborees, often requiring Scouters to take vacation time to attend.

In response to these insights, Scouts Canada is adapting its camp offerings to create flexible environments that blend traditional Scouting activities with modern needs. This will ensure that youth of all ages have a well-rounded, fun, and safe experience throughout their Scouting journey.