



Waterfront Regeneration Trust 2005 Accomplishments

Stretching 650 kilometres from Niagara-on-the-Lake to the Quebec border along the Canadian Shores of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, the Waterfront Trail and Greenway is the collective accomplishment of over 50 partners. Over the years Trail/Greenway has proved to be a powerful catalyst to and an integral part of broader natural and urban revitalization.

The role of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust is to articulate the vision of a regenerated waterfront and to coordinate activities of over 50 local partners who own the Trail to attract public and private investment to the ambitious work of regenerating the waterfront.

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust has three goals: extend and complete the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail and Greenway; promote the Trail and Greenway and foster public commitment to waterfront regeneration. To achieve these goals the Trust has developed two major programs: the Collaborative Communications and Promotions Program and the Lake Ontario Waterfront Investment Program. In 2005 the Trust and its many partners made excellent progress toward these goals.

COMMUNICATIONS & PROMOTIONS PROGRAM

In 2002 the Waterfront Regeneration Trust invited its 45 community partners to participate in the Collaborative Communications and Promotion Program to build public awareness of, and support for the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail and Greenway. A second objective was to attract public and private investment for the expansion, enhancement and promotion of the Trail.

This year the Trust launched a second phase for the program -- the Collaborative Communications Promotions Program 2005-2007. During this phase the Trust will concentrate on completing signage and launching the new, expanded and enhanced Waterfront Trail from Niagara-on-the-Lake

to Quebec. The response from our partners is very supportive.

WATERFRONT TRAIL SIGNAGE

Signing the Waterfront Trail is a priority—for reasons of safety and clarity and for an effective marketing and promotions program. The Trust and its partners pledged to have a signed route in place by 2006.

Directional Signage

The Trust has conducted five directional signage audits for our partners. In order to perform a thorough assessment of signage deficiencies, the Trust cycles the trail in both directions. The findings and recommendations are provided to the community partners in a written report, which addresses both directional signage markings and text alerts (noting gaps etc.)

In this first round, we have paid particular attention to sections where users have indicated improvements were needed. Next year, the Trust will launch a complete signage audit using volunteers.

Communities east of Brockville have received directional signs from the Trust and will begin installation in the new year.

Trailhead Signage

Major strides have been accomplished in the trailhead signage program. Together with the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation and the City of Toronto, the Trust installed 21 trailhead signs along the Toronto waterfront, from Marie Curtis Park (border with Mississauga) to Balmy Beach Park -- at every major access point to the waterfront. The Trust provided the design and artwork, and the Revitalization Corporation funded the fabrication and installation.

The installed signs have made an excellent impression on people visiting the waterfront. The detailed depiction of the route, surrounding attractions and trail connections has delivered the message. The Waterfront Trail is a great way to explore all the communities on Lake Ontario.

In addition to the installed trailhead signs, the City has added the Waterfront Trail to the attractions sign on the Bay Street Teamway. The Trust will explore how we can develop this kind of signage for the entire Trail.

Outside of Toronto, tenders for the fabrication and installation of trailhead signs in 23 waterfront communities have been received. Fantasy has been awarded the contract for this work. The majority of these

signs will be funded through the COIP program.

The strategy to install signs at major staging areas and to present the broadest regional scope possible by using both sides of the signboard has been very effective. This has created opportunities for communities to cross-promote each other.

Our partners have brought a fresh, bold perspective to the signage strategy that will result in a major increase to the number of signs installed. By the conclusion of the program we expect to have installed over 60 signs from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Brockville with our partners.

Exciting opportunities such as the Toronto example are occurring along the entire trail. In Niagara Region seven signs will be installed, one of which will be in the Paradise Grove where the Waterfront Trail meets the Niagara River Recreation Trail. The great visibility, availability of parking and regional trail connection makes this an ideal staging area for the Trail.

www.waterfronttrail.org

The Province's Tourism Strategy identifies the absence of web-based as a strategic weakness for the sector. "In a business climate that is increasingly dependent on information technology, less than two-thirds of Ontario tourist establishments had a

website." Through the Trail website hundreds of small tourism related businesses have either established or strengthened their presence on the web.

The Trail's website hits have sharply increased since 2004. Since 2002, the Trail's website has steadily served more and more people with its 31 community profiles, detailed maps, and trip planning information. The web address is promoted

2005 Web Site Hits (2004 comparisons)	
April	– 213,660 (192,453)
May	– 264,320 (215,037)
June	– 310,835 (261,954)
July	– 331,736 (329,418)
August	– 326,027 (305,401)
September	– 243,929 (216,168)
October	– 195,982 (146,893)

in all the Trust's display and advertising materials including the trailhead signs, which prominently display www.waterfronttrail.org.

Next year the Trust will work with partners to update the mapping information posted on the website.

The Trust's selective library of excellent resource materials is available on the web. Navigation through this section of the website has been greatly improved with the implementation of a better organizing structure, comprehensive descriptions of the texts, and photos of original report covers.

Future improvements to the site will include:

- Addition of more publications such as the guidebook;
- Introduce themed itineraries for walkers, families etc.
- Develop a french translation of the website;
- A search function; and
- An interactive feature that permits Trail users to communicate with each other about their trips.

ANNUAL BIKE TRIP AND TORONTO STAR ARTICLE

The Trust's annual cycling tour serves a number of objectives. It promotes the Waterfront Trail and the emerging regional trail connections to it. It increases the public profile of the Trail and our local partners through excellent media coverage. And, it provides the Trust with first-hand knowledge of the quality and readiness of the Trail for people who want to enjoy its shores either by walking or cycling.

This year's trip from June 13 to 17 went from Brockville east to Montreal. In addition to accomplishing the objectives noted above, this route allowed staff the opportunity to meet with all of the potential municipal and conservation authority partners on the stretch between Brockville and the Quebec border as well as to cycle

the potential route. Another unique objective was to make the connection of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail with Route Verte's 4300 kms of bikeways in Quebec. Connecting to the major cycling culture in the Quebec market is a key target for the Waterfront Trail.

Media coverage of the Bike Trip included:

- 2 page article in the Ottawa Citizen
- ¾ page article in the Toronto Star
- coverage in most of the community newspapers from Brockville to the Quebec border
- interview on French CBC radio (Toronto)

TORONTO BIKE SHOW

The Trust staffed a booth at this 3-day event. In addition to introducing the trail to new users we were also able to provide updated information to current users. The feedback that we received on the Trail was very positive. 20,000 cycling and outdoor enthusiasts visited the Show. We used this opportunity to launch our new web maps and trailhead signs.

The Bike Show also provided an excellent opportunity to poll one of our target markets—cyclists. In particular we wanted to learn how cyclists incorporate cycling on their vacations. The results from the poll corroborate findings from the 2002 User Survey and provide interesting insights:

- 91% had cycled on the Trail
- 72% had visited other communities using the Trail
- 18% regularly commute using the Trail
- The cyclists were most likely to have found out about the Trail from signage (33%) and word of mouth (31%)
- 24% had visited the Trust's website in the past year – of those who had visited, 88% found the site helpful
- While on vacation—
 - 77% bring their bikes;
 - 15% rent bikes;
 - 45% explore the area by bike;
 - 49% cycle on local trails,

- 38% research bike opportunities ahead of time
- 76% would be interested in going on a cycling vacation on the Trail.

The results from the sample confirm the majority of cyclists partake in cycling activities while on vacation and there is interest in cycling vacations on the Waterfront Trail.

CYCLING TOURISM

Many of our local partners are researching the potential economic benefits of cycling tourism. Niagara Region issued a study as part of its ***Bikeways Master Plan*** in August 2003 in partnership with Marshall Macklin Monaghan and ESG International. In March 2005, South Grenville published ***Economic impacts due to bicycle tourists in South Grenville*** (Townships of Augusta and Edwardsburg/Cardinal and the Town of Prescott.) Marshall Macklin Monaghan co-authored the report with Touristix and Stantec. Findings include:

In 2005 South Grenville hosted 115,200 bicycle tourists representing 12% of all tourism visits. Bicycle tourists are classified as recreational cyclists (76,300), mountain bikers (29,400) and overnight touring trips (9,500). These tourists spent \$7.2 million in South Grenville. This represents about 7% of all tourism spending.

According to the study, bicycling tourism in South Grenville will maintain its contribution to the local economy with modest increases in the coming years. By 2020, it will reach 161,100 bicycling tourist (14% of all tourism) who will spend \$10 million (8% of all tourism expenditures).

PROMOTING THE TRAIL LOCALLY

Local partners are doing a great job of incorporating Waterfront Trail ads in their recreation/community and tourism publications. In addition our partners have incorporated the Trail in other promotional activities. Some highlights include:

Northumberland County ran radio ads on Classical 96.3/103 FM that noted the Waterfront Trail. The reach for the ads is the Golden Horseshoe and northern New York state areas. They have also worked with US and Montreal travel media, hosting Northumberland media tours. One of the publications, Coastal Living is interested in our section of the Waterfront Trail. As a member of the Green Tourism Association, the Waterfront Trail is featured on the Association's internationally acclaimed Green Map and website. In addition, we have enjoyed some excellent profile in the Toronto area as a result of our partnership. For example, the Waterfront Trail was featured on the front page of the GTA section of the Toronto Star on the occasion of the release of the Association's new Green Map. According to the Star's circulation count, an estimated 1.2 million readers were reached. The Trail was also featured in the Spring 2005 Tour Green Times.

The Green Map is available at over 100 locations across the Toronto region, including at participating sponsor locations – free of charge.

The Trust advertised the Waterfront Trail in the popular ***Journeys*** magazine and guide to the Seaway Trail. This publication is has a circulation of 200,000 in Southern Ontario and New York State. It is widely available, free of charge at tourist information centres.

EZINES

We have been creating and publishing our monthly electronic magazine, which highlights Greenway initiatives and activities. The Ezine provides an efficient and effective way to communicate success stories on the waterfront to both our partners and other interested parties. Our subscriber base is approximately 900. Back issues of the Ezine are available on the Trust's website.

This year we introduced a new series in the Ezine, profiling not-for-profit organizations and charities that are engaged in waterfront regeneration activities.

WATERFRONT PARTNERS MEETING

Bikeway Training Workshop

With 70% of the Waterfront Trail being road-based (30% along residential streets and quiet rural roads; another 40% on scenic highways such as HWY 2 and the Loyalist Parkway), the Trust recognizes the need to understand how excellent design can improve safety and quality of experience for cyclists.

To that end, the Trust partnered with Velo Quebec to offer a Bikeway Planning and Development Workshop on October 20, 2005 at Ontario Place. Using international examples and drawing on Velo Québec's 20-years of experience in creating Québec's 4300 km cycling network, the workshop examined the best practices used to develop cycling infrastructure.

This is the first time that the Workshop has been offered in Ontario. The Workshop was 'hands on' with a registration limited to 25 participants. The need and interest in training on this topic was evident through the quick turnaround on registrations – within two weeks the course was full. In planning the workshop, the Trust has expanded its partnership network to include the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association as well as the Ontario Parks Association. These two Associations represent the municipal recreation sector, which is key to our work given that the majority of the Trail is or is planned to be off road in municipal waterfront parks/parkways.

We were also able to secure three sponsors for the Workshop: Ontario Place provided the venue, and Marshall Macklin Monaghan and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

Kevin McGran, transportation reporter for the Toronto Star attended the Workshop,

and wrote an article about the Workshop proceedings, which was published in The Star on October 21, 2005.

EXTENSION OF THE TRAIL TO QUÉBEC BORDER

As noted above under the Bike Tour update, we met all of the municipal partners for the proposed extension of the Trail from Brockville to the Quebec border during our Bike Tour. We also biked the proposed route, which is approximately 140 kms; and there is an existing trail on 75 km of this total distance.

The affected municipalities are now in the process of formally approving the extension of the Trail through their area of jurisdiction.

The target for the formal extension of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail to the Quebec border would be 2006.

Velo Quebec is working on their side of the border to complete the connection through their Route Verte project.

POLITICAL PROFILE

Ontario Trails Advisory Committee

The Trust was a member of the Advisory Committee that is working with the Province in the development of an Ontario Trails Strategy, which will provide a framework for decision-making and help guide the orderly and sustainable development and management of Ontario Trails.

Just prior to the completion of the strategy, the responsibility for Trails was transferred to the new Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion.

The Strategy was released October 6th at which time Minister Jim Watson also announced the creation of a coordinating committee to work with the Ministry on the implementation of the Strategy. Key among

the deliverables will be a provincial map of all the Trails, a trails website and an examination of legal issues e.g. liability facing the Trails community. The focus of the Strategy is on wellness and the promotion of active lifestyles as one way to curb escalating health care costs.

The Ontario Trails Advisory Committee, along with the Ontario Tourism Strategy and Active 2010 are all recent initiatives announced by the Provincial government and demonstrate the growing importance of trail infrastructure.

The Waterfront Trail and Greenway serve the goals of these programs. A letter has been sent to the new Minister of Health Promotion, Jim Watson as well as the Parliamentary Assistant, Peter Fonseca.

Ontario Ministry of Transportation

Trust staff met with the ADM, Policy & Planning, MTO to explore MTO's policies with regard to bikeways; and then from the discussion determine if there were any opportunities for partnerships in the areas of closing critical on-road gaps; encouraging north/south trail links; support for cycling and pedestrian links on the International bridge crossings with the USA; and signage.

The meeting was successful in that we opened a line of communication within MTO at the policy level.

As a first step in broadening the scope of sustainable transportation to include bikeways, MTO agreed to be a sponsor for the Bikeway Training Workshop and sent two representatives to participate in the workshop.

PRESENTATIONS & SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

The Waterfront Trail/Greenway has earned an excellent reputation as a successful example of partnership and design. As a result the Trust is requested to participate in

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a number of events and conferences to highlight our partners' achievements and leadership.

Trust staff have presented or staffed displays at the following events:

- CIBC Earth Day display at Commerce Court
- City of Toronto Earth Day Celebrations
- Environment Day at Colonel Sam Smith Park
- Toronto Bike Week Events and Tour
- Official Opening of the Parrott Waterfront Trail in Belleville
- 2005 Cycle Ontario Conference in Hamilton

LAKE ONTARIO WATERFRONT INVESTMENT PROGRAM

The Trust's application to the Canada-Ontario Infrastructure Program (COIP) for the Lake Ontario Waterfront Investment Program was approved in 2003. This program triggered a \$32 million investment in the waterfront with the provincial and federal governments contribution of \$9.2 million leveraging an additional \$23 million from local municipalities, conservation authorities and community groups. The program comprises 50 projects. By March 2006 all but 12 projects will be completed.

In September, COIP announced that it would extend the construction deadline and reporting deadlines for the program to March 2008. The Trust has informed its partners of the extension and requested that partners submit all eligible expenses by March 2007. The Trust will use the following year to compile and file all reports to COIP.

The Lake Ontario Waterfront Investment Program will achieve many regeneration goals. The breath and scope of the projects included in this program underscore that the Waterfront Trail is much more than a

hike/bike path. By the conclusion of the program we will see 125kms of new trail and trail connections; six major waterfront promenades; two bridges; improvements to over 20 waterfront parks; five new cultural heritage facilities; interpretation of over 20 waterfront habitats; three major brownfield rehabilitation projects; six significant waterfront habitat restoration projects; and two harbour/marina revitalization projects.

In addition to the Lake Ontario Waterfront Investment program, local leaders, political, community and corporate have undertaken projects both large and small to bring us closer to a regenerated waterfront.

FOSTERING COMMITMENT TO REGENERATION

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

The Trust is participating in a collaboration of environmental non-government organizations that have come together to provide input into and review of the draft source water protection legislation.

Although this legislation will focus on the protection of water resources for drinking water purposes, it is a critical component of watershed planning. Protecting the tributaries of Lake Ontario is key to the regeneration of the waterfront.

PROVINCIAL NATURAL SPACES ALLIANCE

The Trust is participating in this provincial initiative, which is focusing on increasing the amount of and regenerating existing natural spaces in Southern Ontario, through voluntary stewardship initiatives.

CITY OF TORONTO WATERFRONT

The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC) is leading work on Toronto's waterfront redevelopment. The Trust has participated in a number of consultations and workgroups to define project priorities. Through this process, we

identified the need for continuous signage, which has since been installed, and stressed the need to make improvements to the trail alignment through Ontario Place.

Next year is a milestone year for the organization as it expands its mandate from planning to include implementation and development.

ROUGE PARK

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust administers and manages a fund donated to the Trust by Heritage Canada for the purpose of protecting this beautiful natural resource. The Toronto Region and Conservation Authority working with community stakeholders, is leading the important work underway to create Canada's largest urban park.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

A great deal has been accomplished in the past three years by our partnership.

Together we have:

- secured major infrastructure funding from senior levels of government;
- completed significant enhancements to the Trail;
- expanded our partnership;
- raised the political and media profile of the Trail;
- developed a sound marketing strategy;
- created an exciting new website featuring the Trail; and
- created a signature signage program.

To build on this success, the Trust is confirming support for the 2005-2007 Communications and Promotions Program from its local partners, and other corporate leaders, and foundations.

CIBC as the founding corporate partner has renewed its three-year commitment to the project. By 2007 CIBC will have contributed \$1.55 million to the Waterfront Regeneration Trust for its work on the Waterfront Trail.

We are extremely thankful and grateful to CIBC both for their financial support to the Trust and the Trail but also for their enthusiasm and commitment to the regeneration of the Lake Ontario Waterfront.

When the 740 kilometre, Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail and Greenway is complete, it will be because governments, business, community groups and the public acted as partners to create a waterfront legacy and bring people to the water's edge. This unique and expanding partnership is the strength behind the vision.

From our end to enders

....total mileage 587 miles, total enjoyment, best vacation ever!

J. Parker

It was truly a memorable and exciting journey, and I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all those who worked behind the scenes to make the trail as successful, fun, scenic and adventurous as it is.

R. Sammut

The Trail, as we had hoped, took us into communities and parks that we would never have discovered any other way.

P. Elliott-Moyer