

Waterfront Partnership 2008 Accomplishments

December 2008



The Great Waterfront Trail Adventure—Pilot public engagement program celebrates Waterfront Trail and Greenway and healthy lifestyles

One of the best opportunities to strengthen the economic base of the waterfront, both on the central waterfront and outside major urban centres, is the tourism and recreation sector. Some 7.3 million people live within a two-hour drive of the waterfront, and changing trends in social values and recreational use suggest that the waterfront is well-positioned to attract greater visitation.

Lake Ontario Greenway Strategy, 1992

After 15 years of waterfront investment that have resulted in a signed route from Niagara to Quebec, the Waterfront Trail is ready to serve community economic development and tourism goals. The Trail is a highly-rated and popular recreational and fitness amenity for communities. However, the full potential as a green transportation alternative, and as a tourism attraction have yet to be fully harnessed.

Highlights from 2008 Accomplishments

- 170 people join the first Great Waterfront Trail Adventure (GWTA)
- Major media coverage for the Waterfront Trail thanks to GWTA
- Survey shows GWTA leads to return visits to the community
- Major funding from 3 new partners
- Toronto's Scarborough gap shrinks
- Web site visits hits 5m in August
- Ministry of Tourism funds signage and welcome kiosk at Quebec-Ontario boundary

In September 2007, at the annual partners meeting, representatives gave the Trust a mandate to develop an annual, trail-wide event to:

- Promote waterfront communities' unique cultural and natural heritage;
- Promote the Waterfront Trail and Greenway as a great fitness, recreation, commuter and holidaying amenity rich in history, nature and culture
- Inspire people to pursue healthy, active lifestyles;
- Foster the public's commitment to regenerating the waterfront and investing in green infrastructure; and
- Attract further capital investment to expand and enhance the Waterfront Trail.



Promotional flyers (150,000) distributed through select school boards attracted families and recreational cyclists to the Adventure. 56% of registrants had never been on a cycling tour before the Adventure.

With support from the waterfront communities, and funding from the **Ontario Trillium Foundation, CIBC, Ministry of Health Promotion** and the **Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario**, the Trust launched The Great Waterfront Trail Adventure--a 3-year pilot

program to get people onto the Waterfront Trail and Greenway. Uniquely designed for families and recreational cyclists, the Adventure offers participants an 8-day, fully-supported cycling tour of the waterfront.

The appeal of exploring the provincial coast from Niagara to Quebec and the challenge of cycling 8 days and 680 km drew **170 participants aged 9 to 76** from all parts of the country and the United States. Participants either camped at provincial parks or stayed in local hotels. Meals and other services were provided by over 30 local charities, service clubs and BIAs that participated in the inaugural year.

Participants responded very favourably to the experience on the Adventure. Through a post event survey, we learned that:

- 92% of respondents said they had either an “Amazing” or “Great Time.”
- 100% of respondents indicated that the Adventure exceeded or met their expectations
- 94% of respondents indicated that they would recommend the GWTA to their family and friends

Extensive media coverage of the Adventure gave the Waterfront Trail more profile this summer than it has received since the 1995 opening. Four journalists, two of which rode end to end, joined the ride for one or more days.

The Toronto Star ran a pre-event piece and a feature in its Saturday edition. Articles on the Adventure were published in the following major newspapers:

- Toronto Star
- National Post
- St Catharines Standard
- Hamilton Spectator
- Windsor Star
- The Kingston Whig Standard
- Standard-Freeholder (Cornwall)
- Ottawa Citizen
- Montreal Gazette
- The Belleville Intelligencer
- Northumberland Today
- Spacing Toronto
- L’Etoile (Quebec)



Harmail Basi, Member of the Board of Directors, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ontario Minister for Health Promotion Margaret Best and Brian Hutchings, Ontario Trillium Foundation Board Member announced Ontario Trillium’s funding for the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure.

Radio stations in Niagara, Hamilton, Toronto’s CFRB with Bob Trafford, Pickering, Belleville and Cornwall and local television coverage in Niagara, Mississauga, Toronto (Global TV), Durham Daytime and in the US through PBS. Humber College campus also promoted the event over its radio station. During the course of the tour,

freelance journalist Kate Harries, kept an online blog of her trip. A link to her blog as well as some of the articles listed above can be found on our website at http://www.waterfronttrail.org/gwta_web/.

The Adventure coverage and promotion has led to a sharp increase in the Trail’s web visits. **In 2008, we had 5 million visits breaking last year’s record of 4.1 million!**

Regional, municipal and provincial political leaders joined the Adventure to celebrate the Trail’s contribution to environmental regeneration, active living, green transportation, and to reinforce their commitment to the

Waterfront. Ajax Mayor Parish and Kingston Councillor Vicki Schmolka cycled the full length of the Tour.

The Trust organized five media launches held in Niagara, Toronto, Kingston, Cornwall and Rivière Beaudette. At the launch in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario Health Promotion Minister Margaret Best and the Ontario Trillium Foundation announced funding to support the Adventure. Dr. Andrea Feller, Associate Medical Officer of Health Niagara Region spoke of the urgent need to promote healthy lifestyles.

In Toronto, Ontario Tourism Minister Peter Fonseca announced funding for an international cycling-tourism conference scheduled for January 2009. Jim Brownell, MPP for Cornwall, announced funding from the Ministry of Tourism to construct a Waterfront Trail welcome kiosk at the Ontario-Quebec boundary on July 11th.

Great Waterfront Trail Adventure Participant Survey

The Great Waterfront Trail Adventure (GWTA) provided the Trust with a valuable opportunity, thanks to funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, to survey participants to identify whether or not changes in fitness behaviour occurred over time as a result of their participation, as well as to gather perceptions about the Waterfront Trail and GWTA. Participants were asked to complete 3 surveys: one before the event, the second immediately following the ride and the third at the end of November.

The GWTA succeeded in appealing to a broad base of people beyond cycling enthusiasts. We had 30 kids (aged 17 and under). Over half of the riders came with families and friends, 56% had never ridden in a multi-day cycling tour and 40% rated themselves as only “somewhat” fit in the pre-trip survey. 75% said they felt “fitter” after the ride.

- In terms of trail use, the GWTA led people to use the Trail more often and 54% said they were more likely to use the Trail to commute having been on the GWTA.
- 83% said they’d visit the communities again and we’ve heard from at two groups who did.

Highlights from the survey include:

- First cycling tour for 56%
- 40% rated themselves as somewhat fit
- 53% increased exercising activity to prepare
- 48% surprised at far they could ride in 1 day
- 77% will use Waterfront Trail more often
- 92% will take cycling holidays in the future
- 83% were likely or very likely to return to the communities on the waterfront.
- In addition to approximately \$50 per day spent on community meals, 50% of people spent over \$300 during Adventure. 42% spent between \$300 and \$750.
- 86% more aware of waterfront issues than they were prior to the Adventure.
- 81% said they are likely to take a more active interest in waterfront issues
- 60% rated trail as excellent or very good for cycling
- 80% signed up because it was a great way to explore the Waterfront Trail and waterfront

The tour was one of the most memorable vacations I have ever taken.... It was such a pleasure traveling through small communities that I would otherwise not have seen from the 401 corridors. The community members went out of their way to welcome us to their neighborhoods.... We are so lucky to live in a province with such a remarkable waterfront trail stretching some 680 KM across Ontario. Thank you for a great week of fun activity, new friendships and adventure.

...the Waterfront Trail is brilliant. I'm from Alberta and only wish we had such as thing. I can hardly wait to return next year.

2008 GWTA participants



Day One: Grimsby Heritage Community

Great Waterfront Trail Adventure part of Trails Open Ontario

Trails Open Ontario celebrates the remarkable trail systems that exist across the province by providing an opportunity for the public to experience trails through local events. This year, the Trust organized a 6 km walking tour led by David Crombie and Friends of Fort York. Approximately 50 people enjoyed learning about Toronto's historic waterfront and about the exciting changes that are reshaping the downtown Toronto waterfront.

Next Wave of Investment: Closing the Gaps

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust and its community partners are committed to the continued improvement and enhancement of the Waterfront Trail. Of a potential 900 km of Waterfront Trail and Greenway, there remain a

number of critical breaks in the Trail's 680 km route from Niagara to Quebec: presenting a safety hazard and undermining the Trail's functionality as a green transportation alternative and tourist amenity.

The Trust has assembled the next round of potential infrastructure projects to deal with gaps, capitalize on moving the Trail off-road and closer to the water's edge, create new waterfront parks, install washrooms, interpretative signage and improve directional signage.

The proposed program involves 30 projects and 16 partners and represents a \$17 million waterfront investment. It will deliver:

- Closure of 2 major gaps in the Waterfront Trail including the most contentious and dangerous one between Whitby and Ajax;
- 14 projects move the Trail closer to the water's edge;
- Over 15 km of new Waterfront Trail and trail linkages;
- 4 new waterfront parks ;
- 2 bridges ;
- Improvements to 18 parks;
- Interpretation of 8 waterfront habitats; and
- 3 habitat restoration projects.

Signing Scarborough—Gap reduced by 10 km

For years, the number one complaint received by the Trust from the public was the frustrating Scarborough gap. With no route in place, the Trail was cut in two, coming to an abrupt halt at the Beach in Toronto and only resuming 26 km east in Pickering.

In July 2008, the City of Toronto working with the Trust has created a street-based route and installed Waterfront Trail signage from Bellamy to the Rouge Park. In doing so, the 26 km Scarborough gap was reduced by over 50%. The route offers cyclists a scenic, safe alternative to Kingston Road.

Work continues with the City and Toronto Region Conservation Authority to sign the remaining stretch in Scarborough from the Beach to Bellamy. We are very optimistic that a **completed street-based route will be in place for the 2009 Adventure.**

As for the water's edge trail, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority is developing a comprehensive waterfront strategy that will deal with complicated and sensitive environmental considerations presented by the Scarborough Bluffs.



Cornwall Mayor Bob Kilger, Louis Carpentier of Velo Quebec, Estella Rose, Warden of the United Counties of SD&G and Jim Brownell, MPP (Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry) unveil new trail signage installed in Ontario and Quebec.

Construction of Welcome Kiosk at the Quebec-Ontario boundary

Our work to create a seamless connection between two provincial trails systems, La Route verte and Ontario's Waterfront Trail received a boost from the Ministry of Tourism this year.

On July 11th, Jim Brownell, MPP for Cornwall announced that the Ministry of Tourism would provide funding to construct a welcome kiosk at the border on a site provided by the County of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. As their contribution to the project, Velo Quebec created

and installed welcome and directional signs on both sides of the border. Now, people leaving either province will know that the trail route continues. Maps installed in the welcome kiosk will promote landmarks, and attractions along the eastern portion of the Waterfront Trail.

Construction of kiosk was completed in November 2009.

2008 Revision to the Mapbook

Dun-Map has issued a revised Waterfront Trail and Greenway Mapbook, complete with the most recent trail improvements. A portion of every mapbook sale through DunMap supports the Waterfront Regeneration Trust's work to provide clear, up-to-date maps to trail users.

Facilitating Greenway Projects

In 2008, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust is supporting two innovative projects that promote green transportation and the Waterfront Trail and Greenway:

- **Niagara Bike Train**—a project that installs bike racks on select VIA trains from Toronto to Niagara. This project offers people an easy, green way to experience the Toronto-Niagara section of the Waterfront Trail made possible with funding from the **Greenbelt Foundation.**
- **GO-By-Bike**—promotes green transportation using the Waterfront Trail, public transit and the GO rail system. The GO-by-Bike pilot project's objective is to introduce to Ontario commuters the cycling and transit practices common in other parts of the world. The project will highlight the cycling trails easily accessible through train and subway stations across the GTA

In addition we are strengthening our relationship with Metrolinx (the organization responsible for developing a coordinated Transportation Plan for the Greater Toronto region and Hamilton). The Waterfront Trail will play an integral part of the

green transportation infrastructure for this system.

CIBC Renews Partnership

The Trust's work is supported by a stellar group of organizations and corporations. In 2008, we gratefully renewed our relationship for another 5 years with our founding corporate partner CIBC. Since 1996, CIBC has provided \$1.8 million towards waterfront regeneration.

"We are pleased to announce this new commitment during the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure," said Robert Hughes, CIBC's Vice President, Corporate Risk and Insurance Services. "The Waterfront Trail and Greenway is a great example of how government, business and the non-profit sector can come together to restore and conserve the environment, benefiting individuals and communities. Under David Crombie's leadership, the Trust has accomplished something truly remarkable and we are proud to be renewing our commitment to the Trust's continued success."

Ontario Trillium Foundation and The Heart and Stroke Foundation Support GWTA

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is contributing \$210,000 over three years to help the Trust develop the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario is supporting research conducted as part of the Adventure.

The Trust received support from the following companies and organizations:

MMM Group, Racer Sportif, Inno Advanced Car Racks, Steve Bauer Tours, Lowepro, Dun-Map, MapArt, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Starbucks, Ontario Power Generation and XTL and St. Mary's Cement.

Greg Sorbara's Tourism Competitiveness Study

In its presentation at the Toronto consultations the Trust stressed the tourism potential of the Waterfront Trail as a unique experience that celebrates our Great Lake, communities, natural and cultural heritage. The GWTA demonstrated its strength to draw a broad range of people from all parts of Canada and the US. On the domestic front, the Trail serves 59% of Ontarians. To fully realize the tourism benefits of the Trail, rail policies should be changed to encourage travel with bikes; and continued infrastructure investment in the Waterfront Trail to close gaps is critical.

Regeneration in Action

Every year, our partners make significant improvements to the waterfront and to the Waterfront Trail and Greenway. A selected list of these projects is listed below.

- New website in Region of Niagara for cycling—Region of Niagara
- Pedestrian Bridge over the QEW, Hamilton—City of Hamilton
- Completion of Hamilton Beach Waterfront Trail to Grimsby—City of Hamilton
- Mimico Waterfront Park, Toronto —Toronto Region Conservation
- Central Waterfront Plan and Ontario Place Trail--Waterfront Toronto
- Establishment of Toronto Cyclists Union
- David Crombie's report on the future of the Oshawa Harbour released
- Whitney Place Waterfront Trail extension, Belleville—City of Belleville
- Installation of bike lanes along HWY 2, Iroquois—United Counties of SDG
- Greenbelt Foundation's "Tour de Greenbelt" to feature several family rides including a very successful day on the Waterfront Trail from St. Catharines to Burlington.
- Walk and Bike for Life is leading community-based workshops to facilitate the creation of more walkable and cycling-friendly neighbourhoods.

Looking Ahead - Highlights 2009 Work Program

The date for 2009 Great Waterfront Trail Adventure is set for **July 4 to 11**. Registration is open and registrants from as far away as British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick, Quebec and California have already signed on. At the September **25th, 2009 Partners meeting**, Ducks Unlimited announced they would work with the Trust to incorporate a wetland-theme in to 2009 Adventure.

In year two, we will **expand our promotion** of the event **into Quebec**, a province with a well-developed cycling-tourism market; enrich the itinerary with themed interpretation of waterfront's natural and cultural assets; and optimize the event's ability to showcase the partnership Waterfront Investment Infrastructure program.

2009 Great Waterfront Trail Adventure Itinerary July 4-11

- Day 1 NOTL to Confederation Park,
Hamilton
- Day 2 Hamilton to Fort York, Toronto
- Day 3 Toronto to Port Hope
- Day 4 Port Hope to Centennial Park,
Trenton
- Day 5 Trenton to Lake Ontario Park,
Kingston
- Day 6 Kingston to Grenville Park,
Johnstown
- Day 7 Johnstown to Cornwall
- Day 8 Cornwall to Rivière Beaudette

International Tourism Cycling conference

*Fairmont Royal York, Toronto
January 22-23 2009*

The Trust is one of several partners working with Transportation Options, and the Ontario Cycle Tourism Forum to convene feature presentations from world-leading cycle tourism organizations, such as Switzerland Mobility, North Sea Cycle Route, German National Tourist Board and Velo Quebec. The forum will increase awareness of the importance of province-wide infrastructure and signage for cycle tourism development, and establish Ontario as an emerging cycle tourism destination in North America.



The Waterfront Regeneration Trust produces Accomplishments annually as a report to its partnership of municipalities, conservation authorities, regional governments, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada as well as corporate and community partners. The Trust's 2008-2010 work program focuses on three main areas: securing public and private infrastructure investment for the waterfront; bringing people back to the waterfront; supporting projects that support greenway objectives.

Thanks to the Community partners for the 2008 GWTA

- Friends of Fort George
- Rotary Club of Lincoln
- Liberty Bicycles, St. Catharines
- Niagara Freewheelers
- Tourism Hamilton
- Strabane Optimist Club
- Starbucks-Burlington
- Burlington Tourism
- Cycle Path, Oakville
- Port Credit Business Improvement Association
- Gears Bike Shop
- Toronto Cycling Union
- Friends of Fort York
- Starbucks-Toronto
- Toronto Cycling Union
- Whitby Heritage Community Association
- Thicksen Woods Heritage Land Trust
- Friends of Second Marsh
- Ganaraska Freewheelers
- Brighton Lions Club
- Brighton Rotary Club
- Kingston Cycling Club
- Wellington Wonder Bras
- Wellington & District Business Association
- Bloomfield Cycle
- Bloomfield BIA
- Bath and District Lions Club
- 1000 Islands Kayaking Company
- Iroquois and District Lions Club
- Frontenac Arc Biosphere
- Fort Wellington National Heritage Site
- Royal Canadian Air Force, Cornwall
- Sam's Place/Martin Village/Chez Bob's
- Kingston's Tea for the Voyage (Kingston rock band)
- Niagara-Toronto Bike Train: the Greenbelt Express
- GO-by-Bike

community as in the communities that the waterfront trail is in. And a sense of ownership into that community so that if everybody has those kinds of ideas and if they come together with those goals in mind it will have support, it will have momentum."

"I signed up for a bike ride and found myself in the middle of an event. I enjoyed the riding, the people and above all the communities along the way, which until then were just points on a map. What a wonderful part of our country."

"In the car, you don't see it the way you do on a bike. It's beautiful. There's so much character in these small towns that you don't see in cookie-cutter towns. We've done all-inclusive group trips in Mexico and Puerto Rico and this blows them out of the water. After four days there I'm bored stiff and want to go home, but this is our fifth day and I'm still raring to go."

"My son and I were part of the Great Adventure and really enjoyed it. I'm prepared to lobby politicians and send money. Others will too, I'm sure. Use us."



Satisfied Customer!

Thank you to our major funders:



Quotes from 2008 GWTA Participants

"...I think the common goal was to really promote community - community as in our cycling community,