



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipality of North Grenville (NG) is committed to developing and implementing an integrated network of trails - *for community use and enjoyment*. Health and fitness benefits of trails are cornerstone to North Grenville becoming a healthy community in which to *live, work, play, and visit*.

This *Integrated Community Trails Strategy*, generously supported by the Ministry of Health Promotion, proposes policies and a network that:

1. Promotes trail use and the **health and fitness** benefits of trails;
2. Leverages North Grenville's **tourism** potential as a cycling and trail destination;
3. Increases trail **connectivity** and key destinations in a coordinated manner with existing, current and future developments;
4. Facilitates recreational and utilitarian **transportation choices**, and;
5. Provides an **enhanced quality of life** for North Grenville's residents.

Definition of 'Trail'

Trails for the purposes of the Strategy are defined as: *Multi-purpose municipal infrastructure that promotes **health benefits**, and **safe and comfortable use**, of human-powered modes of transportation (active transportation) by linking communities, businesses, and recreation.*

Engaged Consultation

An integrated and successful *Consultation Strategy* was conducted for the development of this Strategy. Overwhelming response to the public online questionnaire of more than 485 respondents was hugely beneficial to the development of the Strategy in addition to input by the Steering Committee and Stakeholders. Good attendance and interaction at multiple Public Information Centres, in addition to the online questionnaire, is indicative of a public that wants to be engaged in the development of trails in North Grenville.



Strategy Objectives:

- Develop a set of policies for trail development, uses, location, and implementation that will guide future development of a trails system for the next 10 plus years (phased over 3 periods: 0-5years, 6-10 years, 10 years +);
- Build upon the existing North Grenville trail system which links together, enhances, and modifies where appropriate the existing '150 Kilometres of Trails', urban streets, rural roads and waterways by developing a user-friendly trail network;
- Consult with the public on trail development, particularly during implementation; and
- Assist with and help guide the development of promotional and educational materials and programs to attract residents and visitors to the trails of North Grenville.

Highlights of Assessment & Opportunity for Trails in NG:

1. **FACILITY INFRASTRUCTURE - The existing '150 Kms of Trail'** is a relevant initiative, but work is required to enhance trail use and cycling along its rural roads. Consultation and field reconnaissance revealed that perceived safety, comfort, roadway geometry and materials, and overall connectivity are issues that need to be addressed to bring this network 'to the next level' – to making North Grenville 'bike-friendly'. The proposed network, as part of this strategy, does *not* include all of the existing '150 Kms of Trail', notably along South Gower Road south of Kennedy Road (refer to the *Facility Types Map*). In general, the below considerations are recommended for the existing designated '150 Kms of Trail':
 - Widening the paved sections of the route, with **paved shoulders and 'Share the Road' signage** (in addition to the existing NG Trails signage markers). Add 'Sharrow' markings on paved roads where expanding or paving the shoulder is infeasible (most commonly in more urban areas);
 - **Harden the surface of existing unpaved** sections of the 'Trail' with an expanded shoulder, with 'Share the Road' signage;



- **Consideration of re-routing the ‘150 kms’ of Trail** per the enclosed Network Concept Map (pending review and coordination of a true 150 kilometres of route).
2. **CONNECTIVITY - Pedestrian crossing over County Road 44.** Road 44 is a busy road - currently acting as a barrier to pedestrian movement, north-to-south between Ferguson Forest and Old Town Kemptville. As expressed throughout consultation, a strong desire exists to connect pedestrian access between these two community amenities.

Logical locations exist for the consideration of pedestrian crossing enhancements between the creek and intersection with County Road 44. Per the recommendations of this strategy, a pedestrian crossing is proposed in the vicinity of Grenville Street and County Road 44. Outlined in Chapter 5 – Designer’s Toolkit – multiple options exist for a crossing here, including an at-grade crossing or grade-separated. An at-grade crossing is more likely in this area and is generally less expensive than a grade-separated crossing.

These recommended enhancements ought to be considered along with prospective future widening of 43 – to consider/review a pedestrian refuge island with signalization. Further feasibility, analysis and design is required. This connection is a ‘missing link’ and would tie Ferguson Forest (one of North Grenville’s most significant recreational amenities) with Old Town Kemptville.

3. **CONNECTIVITY AND PERCEIVED SAFETY - Pedestrian and Cycling access along County Road 43.** As per the recommendations of the 2001 Urban Design Workshop and resultant of site reconnaissance and consultation, pedestrian connection along County Road 43 represents a great potential for the municipality and pedestrian comfort with access to Kemptville Creek, Ferguson Forest, Old Town, the Municipal Centre, retail shops in the vicinity, and beyond. In conjunction with a potential pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of Grenville Street at 43, a multi-use pathway along the north edge of 43 between the Creek and County Road 44 could serve a wide range of cyclists and pedestrian –an off-road alternative. The pathway could be built along a retrofitted existing farm access road along 43 in Ferguson Forest.
4. **CONNECTIVITY & UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY - The abandoned rail corridor** (running north-south) transects the municipality in such a way that presents immense opportunity to link certain Hamlets, Old Town, new



and existing retail development, current and future residential areas, and to create an expansive and continuous recreational amenity throughout the municipality. Development of this corridor into a multi-use corridor would function as a main spine to the Network Concept.

This would provide connections both within the community and to trails outside of North Grenville, including the Osgoode Trail and the Prescott and Waterfront Trails. The corridor consists of 4 segments:

- Segment south of the active rail line within North Grenville is abandoned but requires the removal of the existing ties.
- The segment from the active rail line to the Bedell Road is on a 3 year abandonment list.
- North of Bedell Road is privately owned and opportunity is available to acquire this portion.
- The abandoned corridor is intersected by Hwy 416 and building a grade-separated overpass is highly unlikely due to the cost, however bringing the trail along Flynn Road/Rideau River Road to take advantage of the existing grade-separated structure is more feasible and would allow for a link to the rail corridor and into Ottawa.

5. **CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY - Sidewalks** serve mainly the Old Town core and new development and were mentioned notably throughout public consultation, and through the online questionnaire. In coordination with the municipality's planning department, a recommended prioritization of sidewalk improvements is proposed in the Strategy. Although Old Town is served by sidewalks in select areas, opportunity for new sidewalks, with improved accessibility will extend the connectivity, perceived safety, and comfort for pedestrians.

6. **CONNECTIVITY - Pedestrian Linkages over the Kemptville Creek.** The main public pedestrian access points across Kemptville Creek exist at Bridge Street, Prescott Street and Somerville/Hurd Street. An additional, solely pedestrian, bridge across Kemptville Creek would allow for increased linkage between Kemptville's greenspaces. A pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of Riverside Park and the water facility on the north bank of the creek would create a valuable community link.



- 7. CONNECTIVITY AND NETWORK EXTENSION - Unopened Road Allowances.** North Grenville has a unique variety of unopened road allowances. As a secondary support to the Spine Network, these areas should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for feasibility of development construction. The arrangement of unopened road allowances along Pratt Road and within the area of the currently under development ‘Northwest Quadrant’ have high potential for trail use and consideration – providing direct access to Old Town from eQuinnelle, Settler’s Grant, River Road environs, and beyond.
- 8. CREATING A SENSE OF ARRIVAL AND ORIENTATION - Trailheads -** Creation of a trailheads, most notably at the North Grenville Municipal Centre and the northern section of the U of Guelph campus in vicinity of the schools and hospital enhance accessibility and orientation of trails and also offer the potential for public use of building facilities such as bathrooms and shower facilities - particularly for out-of-town travellers and tourists. The Municipality is currently under works with the Rideau Heritage Route designing and implementing a Trail Kiosk at the Municipal Centre – an excellent initiative. In addition to the above, trailheads provide parking and enhanced exposure of trails as a healthy life choice – linking key community destinations and communities.
- 9. CONNECTIVITY, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION - Curry Park Waterfront Trail.** Currently underway, the waterfront trail, extending along the north back of Kemptville Creek from the park to the vicinity of Cty Rd. 43 will serve a critical recreational off-road link. Prospective pedestrian crossings over at-grade (*blue in above figure*) and/or under (*red*) Cty Rd. 43 should link to this pathway.
- 10. CONNECTIVITY – Pathway along County Road 44.** The Network Concept Map identifies pathway routing from the intersection of County Road 43/44 north to Beckett’s Landing, passing eQuinnelle and the currently planned Northwest Quadrant. A dedicated path along County Road 44 within the current Right-of-Way along the west edge of the road, in a path-ditch-road type configuration would create a comfortable pedestrian and cycling linkage to these communities and Old Town Kemptville, the Municipal Centre, Ferguson Forest Centre, neighbouring community facilities and the school.



11. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS TO ENHANCING TRAILS

- Providing multi-purpose off-road trail opportunities (including biking, hiking, equestrian, and areas for appropriate motorized uses) enhances community linkages and recreational opportunity to enjoy the Great Outdoors;
- Enhancing sidewalk connections in the town core is well-voiced in the public questionnaire;
- Providing potential enhancement of the Rideau Heritage Trail, along the waterfront in Ferguson Forest (including the municipality's kiosk currently in progress at the Municipal Centre) and connections to a potential trail head and boat-top launch for canoes/kayaks in Ferguson Forest has the potential to extend the 'trail network' off land and into the water – 'trails in their broadest sense'.
- Developments such as the Northwest Quadrant Plan, Colonnade Development shall be reviewed thoroughly for their potential contribution to trail linkages, feasibility and construction. Trails shall be integrated into their planning and design.
- Enhancing connections between the Hamlets of Bishop's Mills, Oxford Mills, Oxford Station and Heckston and Kemptville, for cyclists in particular, by undertaking the proposed facility-type improvements will contribute to North Grenville's unique opportunity to promote and develop cycling tourism in the area and link residents to key destinations by bike rather than automobile.

More than fifty (50) specific recommendations are resultant of this Strategy - with supportive mapping to assist the municipality and guiding future development, design, education, promotion, and marketing of trails in North Grenville. A complete listing and table of the recommendations of the Strategy is included in **Chapter 7 – Summary of Recommendations** and Next Steps.



Next Steps

This strategy is a dynamic document. Commencement of recommendations should be carried out within a year of the report receiving final approval from Municipal Council.

Establish a Trails Advisory Committee

The steering committee that has led the development of the trails strategy has played an important role in North Grenville in advancing trails initiatives. This role should continue and be expanded. In addition to areas where the steering committee has been involved, promoting cycling, equestrian, snow shoeing and other non-motorised options should be added to the traditional roles each member has played. This will also result in an expanded committee that could include members of the general public and some of the larger user groups. Sub-committees could be created to deal with specific topics such as on-road cycling, promotion and education, and motorised uses.

The establishment of the trails advisory committee will send a clear message to the public and stakeholders that the municipality is eager to implement the strategy and that the needs of the many user groups and the public will be taken into consideration. This committee will be key to creating the trail network.

Municipal Roles in the Implementation of the Strategy

An efficient reporting and implementation structure is vital to ensure that the decision-making process associated with the implementation of the Trails Strategy is managed and all relevant municipal departments are engaged. As per *Section 6.3.2: Who Does What*, an implementation system should be established in which municipal staff will have defined roles.

Signage Strategy

Since the municipality already has a brand established, it is important that it continue and be used in a broader manner. Therefore, a strategy that will widen the use of the brand is required, particularly as North Grenville wants to encourage the use of the trail network amongst its residents and develop its tourism potential.



Communications, Marketing, and Education

The municipality should develop an outline as to how to proceed with the marketing of the trail network and how this should be communicated. Refer also to **Section 4.2.4:**

Signage

One of the most effective marketing tools for any trail system is its signage, both on the trails and within the community. People regularly report that they do not use trails because: they did not know they existed, they did not know where to find them, and they became lost once they started. Effective signage can correct all these issues:

- I. Extend the design and use of the current **'NGTrails' distinct logo** for the trails and use it consistently..
- II. **Use frequent directional signage and Interpretative Signage**
- III. **Trailhead signage:** When new trail users find a pathway, they can have no idea what type of experience they will face without an effective trailhead. This should include such information as: where you are in the network, the path of the trail, important landmarks, distances to key features, and other directional and interpretive information. Several visible trailheads should be created, at prominent locations, both to inform the public and to create routes (i.e. trailhead to trailhead).
- IV. **Road signage:** Despite all other marketing efforts, the majority of the public will probably learn about the trails either by word-of-mouth or through noticing the trails as they drive. Furthering the undertaking of 'NGTrails' road signage can facilitate knowledge of the trails existence and location. There are three primary types of road signage that should be used:
 - a. *When the trail is on-road,*
 - b. *When an off-road trail crosses a highway,*
 - c. *To mark an upcoming trailhead.*



Trails Activities For Residents & Visitors

A wide variety of programs and events can be used to educate residents and visitors about the trail network and to encourage use of the pathways. The below events and programs and list of recommended 'musts' in terms of trails promotion, marketing, and education:

Events: International Trails Day, Bike to Work, Walk to School, Jane's Walks, Terry Fox Run:

Programs: Women's Walks and Bikes, Trail-Runners Club, Mall-walking, Naturalist Walks, Safe Hiker Program, CanBike Safety Program, The Yellow Bike Program, Self-guided routes, Geo-caches, Go For Green, The Welcome Cyclists Network, Incentive Programs.

Clubs: Volksmarch Clubs, Ottawa Bicycle Club, Trails Association

Events: Hiking Festival, The Hamlets of North Grenville, MS Bike Tour.

Funding Strategy

The Strategy is a 20+ year investment and can only be successful if funding and staff resources are committed by Council on an annual basis. The annual implementation budget for implementing the Integrated Community Trail Strategy should be identified in an annual report prepared by Municipal staff and based on implementation objectives and opportunities for the coming year. This report could also comment on projects and trail related initiatives completed from the following year.

What is the Investment?

The Strategy is both an infrastructure and operations plan. Therefore, it requires infrastructure, program development and operations (maintenance) funding to ensure successful implementation and monitoring. These types of improvements should be included in the Municipality's capital budget and forecasts.

Unit prices are summarized in **Appendix B Cost Schedule** for the subject facility types specific to North Grenville Trails Strategy. Unit prices will assist the *municipality, public, and community organizations* in planning for, and budgeting specific facility improvements for trails.