



Waterfront Regeneration Trust

2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It's been 7 years since the Waterfront Regeneration Trust transformed from a provincial agency to a not-for-profit organization committed to the same ambitious goal of regenerating the waterfront. Our success is directly attributable to the rich legacy we inherited from the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront: a compelling vision and an exciting signature project the Waterfront Trail and Greenway; and a strong, united partnership in vision and deed with the municipalities, conservation authorities and community groups working to create a healthy, sustainable waterfront.

We also celebrated the 10th anniversary of our relationship with CIBC. As our founding corporate partner CIBC has provided \$1.25 million towards waterfront projects since 1996. We have successfully collaborated on a wide range of initiatives to complete, enhance and promote our signature project—the Waterfront Trail and Greenway.

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust is leading a number of projects to achieve our collective mission. Every year we report progress on these projects to our partners and supporters. The accomplishments have been dramatic, for example, the Waterfront Trail and Greenway has doubled in size. When it opened in 1995 it started in Hamilton and stretched to Trenton. Today it spans the Canadian shores of Lake Ontario and the provincial shores of the St. Lawrence River—650 km tip to tip. This means the Trail now connects Niagara to Quebec where it links with that province's emerging trail network—La Route verte. As our neighbours to the south take decisions that will likely discourage cross-border movement, this link to Quebec becomes even more significant to our partnership.

The Trust's work is organized into three areas of focus:

- Collaborative Communications and Promotion program, which pools promotional resources for activities such as the trail website, the development of brochures, signage, partner meetings and attracting new partners.
- The Lake Ontario Waterfront Investment Program—which involves 50 waterfront projects totally \$30 million and 27 principal funding partners. The Trust's management role relates to the \$9.2 million contribution from Canada-Ontario Infrastructure program.
- Greenway projects—facilitating and/or participating in initiatives aimed at achieving a sustainable and healthy waterfront, for example the Trust manages funds used to protect and enhance the Rouge Park.

In all three areas, we have made excellent progress in 2006.

Collaborative Communications and Promotion program

EASTERN ONTARIO EXTENSION

On March 28, 2006 the Trust hosted a meeting with municipalities, the

conservation authority, regions and economic development organizations east of Brockville to the Quebec border to discuss the terms of a potential partnership and work out a possible alignment for the Trail.

Eugene Todd and Peter Huffman of Port Hope made an excellent presentation at the

meeting providing valuable background information on how the waterfront partnership and Waterfront Trail began. They also brought encouraging advice about what small communities with limited resources can achieve through community support.

Among the terms of the partnership agreement, all communities and organizations were asked to commit to the nine waterfront principles and to a trail alignment along the water's edge where environmentally feasible over the long term. With exception of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, ten new partners have signed on to the partnership including; eight lower tier municipalities, the County of Stormont Dundas Glengarry, the Raisin Region Conservation Authority and the Cornwall and Seaway Valley Tourism Board. A route has been established for the Trail and maps have been finalized. Thanks to Michel Lalonde of the Cornwall and Seaway Tourism Board for his tremendous support and assistance in securing this new extension of the Waterfront Trail. As a result, the Trail has doubled in size and encompasses two major bodies of water-- the Canadian shores of Lake Ontario and the Ontario shores of the St. Lawrence River.

SIGNAGE PROGRAM

The Trust took major strides in achieving a signed route from Niagara-on-the-Lake to the Quebec border this year. A total of 83 trailhead signs have been installed from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Quebec. Our new partners in the east wasted no time in catching up with program and their section will be fully signed by spring next year. The Cornwall and Seaway Valley Tourism Board coordinated the signage program for its members (Iroquois to Quebec) securing support and funding for 16 trailhead signs along that section.

To deal with directional signage, the Trust started a new program – the Waterfront Trail Signage Audit. Under this program, volunteers who were experienced cyclists,

rode the trail in both directions checking for and reporting signage deficiencies. In addition to receiving very detailed analyses of the Waterfront Trail's signage, we gain a number of excellent recommendations and insightful observations about the Trail. The reports have been forwarded to the municipalities. Local communities have been receptive and many have already ordered the recommended signage.

The Trust extends its appreciation to the audit volunteers for the time and diligence they contributed to the program.

The Ministry of Transportation is working with Prince Edward County and the Loyalist Parkway Association to mark the route along HWY 33 in Prince Edward County.

TASTE OF THE TRAIL-A STARTER'S KIT

At 650 km from Niagara to Quebec, the scope of the Trail impresses people; but it also can overwhelm them. Throughout the spring and fall and at events such as the Toronto Bike Show, we are inundated with questions about where to begin on the Trail. To respond to this growing demand for short, family weekend trips, the Trust collaborated with Ministry of Health Promotion to create **Taste of the Trail—a starter's kit for the Waterfront Trail**. In the pilot version of the kit, we present 5 pre-planned trips. Itineraries include maps, list staging areas, and suggested rest stops, and have an 'event' or major attraction close to its destination. The routes are located along off-road, residential streets or quiet country roads -- ideal for trail users of all ages and abilities.

So far 900 kits have been distributed to people with families and to youths directly through schools and cadet programs. The kits were also distributed to GTA school boards to gauge interest in a follow up school distribution program. Distribution has also been made possible directly through the Trust's website where the kits are available for download.

At the 2006 Toronto Bike Show and the 2006 CIBC Earth Day Event the kits were sold for \$2 each. The success of the sales has inspired other themes (such as disabled accessibility) to be used through this mechanism to help encourage other users to the Waterfront Trail.

The public response to the kits has been very positive. For instance, a poll at the Toronto Bike Show indicated that 84% of people felt the Starter's Kit provided the kind of information they need to encourage them to get out on the Trail more often. In addition, the Trust was recently contacted by the Windsor Essex County Health Unit who is interested in developing a similar tool to help their constituency get more active.

The Trust participated in guided poster tour at the Healthy Eating and Active Living Conference (November 2007). At this event, we introduced the Trail and Kit to health care and active living advocates and policy makers. Their comments were very positive and many saw the Kit as an excellent model of the kind of resource needed to help clients become active. Several requested information about the Kits for distribution to their network.

TORONTO BIKE SHOW (March 3-5/06)

Trust staff and volunteers talked to hundreds of people at the Toronto Bike Show, which draws approximately 20,000 people from across the GTA. Against a backdrop of sixteen detailed colour maps showing the route of the Waterfront Trail from Niagara to Brockville we launched the Taste of the Trail, described above. Over 300 Kits and mapbooks were sold during the 2 and half day exhibition.

Among the many compliments and supportive remarks from people, we heard that signage and closing gaps in the Trail alignment remain important issues. Updates on the many plans and projects that are underway, for example the 50 projects funded by COIP; news that the Clarington

gap through Wilmot Creek would be closed by the Fall of 2006; that Durham Region was examining improvements to the trail along Victoria Rd.; and that Toronto Region Conservation would connect Port Union to Highland Creek in Scarborough by the Fall 2006 were enthusiastically received.

2006 Bike Show Poll Selected Results

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Reasons for using the Trail | |
| 69% | waterfront |
| 59% | fitness |
| 22% | visit a destination |
| 15% | vacation |
| 15% | commute |
| 13% | attend an event |
| Group Size | |
| 57% | with friends |
| 44% | alone |
| 32% | with family |
| Awareness | |
| 5% | did not know about the Trail |
| Website | |
| 69% | never visited the website |
| 22% | website is helpful |
| 14% | website is easy to use |
| Use and Duration | |
| 88% | plan to check out new sections |
| 44% | stay 1 to 2 hours |
| 36% | spend half the day |
| Families | |
| 22% | had youth aged 15 and under at home |
| | -80% of youth liked cycling; |
| | -57% of youth enjoy walking |
| 26% | had youth aged over 15 at home |
| | -56% of youth enjoy cycling; |
| | -56% of youth enjoy walking |

The Trust conducts a poll every year at the Bike Show. The 2006 poll consisted of seven questions exploring who, how and why people use the Waterfront Trail. The results showed that profile of the Trail is very high—only 5% of respondents indicated that the bike show was the first time they heard about the Trail. Top reasons cited for using the Trail are fitness (56%) and the waterfront (69%). People travel with friends (58%), alone (44%), and with family (32%). We also learned that while bike show attendees love cycling (97%), 80% of respondents enjoy walking as well. 88% of respondents planned to check new sections

of Trail in 2006. 84% of respondents stated the Starter's Kit provided the information needed to get them on the Trail more often.

Given the Trust's excellent website visitation and hit statistics, it was surprising to see that there is ample opportunity to build on this success--69% of the people polled hadn't checked out the Trail's website. However 36% answered that the website was helpful (22%) and easy (14%).

CENTRAL TORONTO WATERFRONT DESIGN COMPETITION – A PROJECT OF THE TORONTO WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION CORPORATION

Some of the plans set for the Toronto waterfront are beginning to take shape and the Trust has been pleased to be part of the work. This year Vicki Barron chaired the stakeholders group for the Central Toronto Waterfront Design Competition, participated in the design workshop for Marilyn Bell Park trail improvements and in closing of Queen's Quay event. Once completed the central Toronto waterfront will become a signature gateway to the City and to the Waterfront Trail.

PORT UNION WATERFRONT TRAIL

Toronto Region Conservation, in partnership with the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation, completed Phase I of this much-anticipated project. The first phase involved extensive shoreline remediation and habitat restoration work along a 1.6 km stretch of Scarborough waterfront, creating the first piece of Waterfront Trail in this community. The Trust worked with the Conservation Authority on the trailhead signs.

The official opening of Port Union node was held on September 24th and hundreds of people joined the celebrations. For Larry Field of the TRCA, the launch of the Port Union Waterfront Trail represents the successful conclusion of over 15 years work by the authority supported by a community that would not abandon the goal of a water's edge trail in Scarborough. The trail

connects Port Union to Highland Creek where it meets the Highland Creek Trail. The second phase of the project will extend the Port Union Waterfront Trail east to the Rouge River.

TRAIL MANAGER'S END TO END TOUR

In 2007 the Trust and its partners will celebrate the completion of 50 waterfront projects and the Trail's 15th anniversary by re-launching the Trail to the public. In preparation, the Trust invited Trail Managers, community leaders and political representatives to join the third End to End Tour of the Waterfront Trail. (The first tour occurred in 1995, the second in 2002 with a Toronto Star reporter.) The purpose of the Tour was to give the Trust and its waterfront partners a pilot run of the newly expanded and enhanced Waterfront Trail and Greenway, to inspect the projects completed under the Lake Ontario Waterfront Investment Program

The quality run focused on the trail-users experience, reviewing and assessing, signage; design; connections between communities and other trails; facilities and amenities. The Tour was organized into five segments and partner participation –even during inclement weather, was excellent. Over 65 people either rode or met the Tour to discuss their section of Trail.

- April 24 (NOTL) to April 27 (Eastern Beaches)
- May 17-18 Pickering to Port Hope
- June 1-2 Presqu'ile to Glenora Ferry
- June 26-28 Brockville to Quebec Border
- Sept 7-9 Adolphustown to Brockville

Joining the tour were Kate Harries, a freelance journalist, and Simon Wilson a professional photographer. Kate volunteered her time and used the Tour as a way to gather research for a number of articles that would recount the progress made in regenerating the waterfront and identify the outstanding issues and barriers. Simon has created a comprehensive photographic

library of the waterfront. This outstanding new resource is available to the Trust and our partners.

Observations and conclusions from the Tour will be incorporated in the Trust's update of the Waterfront Trail Design, Signage and Maintenance Guidelines expected by March 2007. Marshall Macklin Monaghan has been retained to undertake this work.

WEB SITE

The Trust's trail-user focussed web site continues to attract a growing number of visitors to the site. Site visitations increased from 1,476,575 total hits in 2005 to **2,135,855 total hits in 2006.**

New additions to the web content include:

- Detailed colour maps from Brockville to the Quebec border
- 7 new community profiles
- updated listing of projects on the waterfront and greenway.
- Taste of Trail—a series of eight “bite-sized” family trips on the Trail.
- New logo with tag line: Do more on the Shore.
- 2006 Ezines—describing projects and events important to the waterfront.

PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to expanding the waterfront partnership to include the 10 communities and organizations east of Brockville, the Trust has secured or is in discussion with four new partners.

The **Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion** teamed up with the Waterfront Regeneration Trust to support two projects (described earlier):

- Revision of the Design, Signage and Maintenance Guidelines; and
- Taste of the Trail: Starters Kit.

As early as 2002, the Trust learned from its User Survey that 76% of people were interested in using the Trail as part of their vacation plans. Among cyclists surveyed,

the number increased to 86%. Recent studies completed by our partners reinforce the idea that trails and cycling will contribute significantly to local tourism.

With the major improvements made to the directional and trailhead signage, the Waterfront Trail offers tour operators excellent opportunities to capitalize on this trend of active-holidays.

Steve Bauer Tours, a prestigious and successful cycling touring company is working with the Trust to pioneer a series of cycling tours on the Waterfront Trail. Each 2-night package will offer a supported day tour and a shorter second day ride, and a portion of the package price will be donated to the Trust to support trail projects. The tours will be launched at the 2007 Toronto Bike Show.

DunMap, the company that designed and created the maps for the website is publishing a new map book that will be available for sale by Christmas 2006. The attractive book contains a full set of the web maps in colour and includes eight trip suggestions from Taste of the Trail to get people started. The suggested retail price is \$30. A discounted price is available to our partners through the Trust.

PRESS

Attracting media attention to the Trail and Greenway has been an important part of the Collaborative Communications and Promotion Program. This year the Trust was successful in obtaining the following:

- article in LaPresse (Montreal)
- feature article in the international Ekistics Journal
- appearance on CITY'S Breakfast TV to feature the Starters Kit
- Ontario Association of Landscape Architect Magazine article (Dec. 2006)
- Radio interview on Kitchener station
- WHERE magazine feature on Starter's Kits (Feb. 2007)

Coverage of the 2006 Trail Managers end to end tour included:

- The Standard (St. Catharines)
- Niagara This Week
- Northumberland News
- Colborne Chronicle
- This Week (Durham)
- Ajax Snap
- Belleville Intelligencer
- Kingston Whig-Standard
- Gananoque Reporter

Lake Ontario Waterfront Investment Program

In 2003, the Trust and its partners succeeded in securing a \$9.2 million contribution from the Canada-Ontario Infrastructure Program towards 50 projects. In total the projects would bring \$30 million of investment to the Lake Ontario waterfront. The Trust manages the project which involves 27 principal funding partners and many more community partners. As of 2006, eight partners have completed their projects and submitted final reports. Six official project openings were held:

- May 25 – West Harbour Walkway, Cobourg
- May 27 – Pier 4 to 8 Trail Extension, Hamilton
- June 12 – Wainfleet Rail Trail Opening
- June 22 – Lakeland Centre and Community Pool, Hamilton
- August 26 – Ajax Celebrates the Completion of the Waterfront Trail
- September 16 – Rededication of Memorial Park, Port Credit

Opening ceremonies were well attended by the public and received excellent media coverage.

By March 2007 the partners that are part of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Investment program will complete their projects. As a result of this work, the Trail and Greenway will be expanded and enhanced in significant ways:

- brownfields will be transformed into parks;

- long stretches of trail in Niagara will be created;
- trail connections from the Waterfront Trail to regional trails will be established;
- new cultural facilities will be constructed; and
- natural habitats will be protected and restored.

An update on these and other projects is attached as a separate report and available from the Trust website.

WATERFRONT INVESTMENT PROGRAM --PHASE II

During the course of the Trail Manager's end to end tour it became evident that the success of the past was inspiring a new set of projects for the future. These new projects ranged from improving existing trail alignment to constructing signature pedestrian bridges; from creating parks to re-visioning the purpose and design of existing parkland. The Trust is recording these initiatives and plans in a document with the working title—Closing the Gaps. The Board of Directors and staff are in the process of gauging political interest in supporting this next phase of investment. Investigations are in the early stages and include:

- introducing the Trail to Federal Minister Cannon
- Letters and follow up to two Federal Ministers (Cannon and Chong) and verbal update with Senator
- Meeting with MTO regarding their potential involvement
- Discussions with Trans Canada Trail regarding Trust leadership on the Scarborough gap
- August 15 – drive/ride Scarborough section to determine interim route

Participation In Other Greenway Initiatives

- The Trust successfully manages and administers the fund the supports work to protect and regenerate the Rouge

Park—Canada’s largest urban park. For more information on this project visit www.rougepark.com.

- Participated in CELA lead network for the review and comment on the Provincial Clean Water Act.
- Member of the newly established Water Guardians Network.

2007 Work Program

In 2007 the Waterfront Trail and Greenway celebrates its 15th Anniversary with the completion of 50 waterfront projects. Our work program for this year includes several new initiatives:

- A Waterfront Conference will be held in September 2007 to:
 - celebrate progress achieved;
 - identify and discuss issues that will dominate waterfront regeneration in the coming years; and
 - learn and share news about upcoming plans and projects.

- The Trust is working with Canadian Urban Institute to organize this event.
- Publish a series of articles in leading professional journals and magazines showcasing successful projects and identifying future challenges.
- Do more on the Shore—a promotional campaign to get the public on to the Trail involving:
 - new brochure listing things to do and see on the waterfront. This piece will be distributed broadly throughout the GTA and St. Lawrence River areas.
 - series of trail cycling tours offered by Steve Bauer Tours
 - collaboration with waterfront festivals
 - media coverage