



**Farther,
Greener,
Greater:**

A Plan for the Next Decade

**for the Waterfront Regeneration Trust
and Partnership**

Waterfront Regeneration Trust

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Waterfront Regeneration Trust

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust has undertaken an 18-month strategic planning process. What emerged from the planning process was an expanded vision for a province-wide Great Lakes Waterfront Trail extending from the eastern border of Ontario to the northwest, and an ambitious framework of strategic directions and action priorities corresponding to that expanded vision.



95%

*of Great Waterfront Trail
Adventure participants
agree that the Trail is
an important part of
regenerating our Waterfronts*



Farther, Greener, Greater

This strategic plan builds on the tremendous successes of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust over the past two decades, including the recent and dramatic extension of the Trail along the shores of Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River to encompass over 1400 kilometers connecting 68 St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes communities. It builds on the enthusiasm, optimism and ambitious vision generated through the consultation process, the wide range of new opportunities for development and expansion of the Waterfront Trail that have emerged in recent years, and an increasingly positive policy context at both the municipal and provincial levels of government.

The strategic plan for the Waterfront Regeneration Trust reaffirms the core values and standards for Trail development which have guided the Trust from its inception, while setting out plans for partnership and network development, promotion, communications and fund developed that will make it possible to fully realize the original vision of a Waterfront Trail that is 'complete, continuous and connected,' across the entire St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes waterfront in Ontario.

A Vision for the Future

Our vision is a continuous Great Lakes Waterfront Trail stretching from the eastern border of Ontario to the northwest, incorporating all of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River waterfront in Ontario.

Rooted in the principles that have guided the development of the Waterfront Trail from its beginnings in 1992 we envision a Great Lakes Waterfront Trail that is 'complete and connected,' an integral part of each ecosystem it passes through, enhancing the environment, economy, society and history of every community that participates in the development and use of the Trail.

A Mission for the Present

Working with all levels of government, municipal partners, the private sector, communities and individuals, the WRT brings people, ideas and resources together to regenerate waterfront and complete the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.

In supporting the continuous enhancement of the existing Trail and the development of new parts of the Trail, the work of WRT is guided by the nine principles that frame our commitment to building a healthy waterfront along the entire shoreline of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River in Ontario. In all aspects of our work we strive for a Great Lakes waterfront that is clean, green, connected, accessible, affordable, open, useable, diverse and attractive.

Strategic Directions

» **Completing, Enhancing, Expanding and Connecting the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail**

» **Renewing and Expanding Partnerships and Networks**

» **Promoting the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail**

» **Developing and Implementing a Communications Plan**

» **Establishing a Sustainable Funding Base**

» Completing, Enhancing, Expanding and Connecting the Trail

The WRT's historical role of working with partners to envision, plan, build and improve the Waterfront Trail continues to be its core mission and strategic focus.

Along the existing Great Lakes Waterfront Trail the WRT will strive to complete and enhance the Trail: to meet the standards and fulfill the vision of waterfront regeneration, always striving to satisfy the needs and expectations of community partners and diverse Trail users. This means continuously working to close gaps, upgrade existing parts of the Trail, improving access and availability of information, and improving the quality and consistency of the Trail experience.

The WRT will work with new community partners to plan trail development, and mobilise expertise and resources, with the goal

of extending the Trail across the whole of the St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes waterfront in Ontario. Where the Trail currently exists and as it expands, the WRT will work to connect the Trail to community trail and transportation networks, regional trail systems within the Great Lakes watershed and throughout Ontario, and national and international trail networks.

- Participate in design and implementation of the Trail through the Lynde Shores section in Ajax, for completion in 2015, as promised by the provincial government in 2013.
- Build a 460 kilometer Greenbelt Bike Route in partnership with the Greenbelt Foundation, a major project that will contribute to unifying the whole Greenbelt region, establishing north/south connections from the headwaters through communities to the Waterfront Trail.
- Extend the Trail in Lambton County by about 170 kilometers to Grand Bend. The project, driven by municipal stakeholders, includes the Walpole Island First Nations community.
- As the first step toward a major expansion on the north shore of Lake Huron, the WRT is participating in the Trail development of a route from Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie in collaboration with RTO13 and Trans Canada Trail.
- The State of the Trail Report develops an inventory of Trail attributes (off road trail, on road – rural, on road residential, etc.), deficiencies, gaps, connecting trails, and proposed, planned or completed regeneration projects. The report communicates the Trail's role in revitalizing communities and regenerating waterfronts, and acknowledges progress made by our partners on these goals.
- Re-design of the WRT website and ongoing map updates will enhance the availability of information, access to the Trail across its full length as well as co-promote community and tourism partners. Use the website to connect partners and the public to the regeneration projects occurring along the Trail.





» Renewing and Expanding Partnerships and Networks

Working in partnership and networks is central to WRT mission. Fulfilling an expanded vision for the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, will require renewing existing partnerships, expanding the scope and diversity of new partnership arrangements, and expanding networks and contacts with like-minded organizations

Successfully pursuing the expanded vision of the Trail and implementing the mission of the WRT rests on developing dynamic, innovative and financially viable partnerships with diverse partners and allied organizations, including all levels of government.

» Promoting the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail

Reflecting its role as the organization leading the movement to build a province wide Great Lakes Waterfront Trail the WRT will promote regional, national and international tourism related to the Trail.

The WRT will promote the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail as a world-renowned walking and cycling trail offering users diverse opportunities to access and celebrate the Great Lakes, which are the largest group of freshwater lakes on earth, containing 21% of the world's surface freshwater. In partnerships with businesses and non-profit organizations the WRT will sponsor and promote events which encourage participation and engagement with all the Trail has to offer.

Through special events and tourism promotion the WRT aims to build the profile (brand) and contribute to the economy of Great Lakes communities and regions.

» Developing and Implementing a Collaborative and Co-ordinated Communications Plan

Developing a comprehensive communications plan will be essential to support the expanded vision and mission, renew and expand diverse partnerships, and promote the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.

The communications plan will be a Trail-wide, collaborative program in which partners participate to extend the reach of the message and attract new partners—both corporate and individual.

» Establishing a Sustainable Funding Base

Building a diverse and sustainable revenue base will be essential to building the organizational capacity to effectively implement the strategic plan.

Especially important will be establishing reliable revenue sources to support core funding requirements, including staff salaries, office and related overhead costs. Municipal partners will need to be one of the sources for this funding, though not the largest. In addition, the WRT will continue to solicit support from Foundations, Corporations and senior levels of government for project-based funding.

Waterfront Regeneration Trust



Photos: Cover and inside left - **Goh Iromoto**
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