



Great Lakes
Waterfront Trail

2017
State of the Trail

Leading the Movement for
**Waterfront
Regeneration**
on Ontario's Great Lakes



Waterfront Regeneration Trust

Protect, Connect and Celebrate

The Great Lakes form the largest group of freshwater lakes on earth, containing 21% of the world's surface freshwater. They are unique to Ontario and one of Canada's most precious resources. Our partnership is helping to share that resource with the world.

Driven by a commitment to making our Great Lakes' waterfronts healthy and vibrant places to live, work and visit, we are working together with municipalities, agencies, conservation authorities, senior governments and our funders to create The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.

In 2017 we will celebrate Canada's 150th Birthday by launching the first northern leg of the Trail between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury along the Lake Huron North Channel, commencing work to close the gap between Espanola and Grand Bend, and expanding around Georgian Bay.

During the 2016 consultations hosted by the International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes, the Trail was recognized as a success for its role as both a catalyst for waterfront regeneration and the way the public sees first-hand the progress and challenges facing the Great Lakes.

Over time, we will have a Trail that guides people across all of Ontario's Great Lakes and gives residents and visitors alike, an opportunity to reconnect with one of the most distinguishing features of Canada and the world.

– **David Crombie**, Founder and Board Member, Waterfront Regeneration Trust





Waterfront Regeneration Trust

Inspiration Lakeview, City of Mississauga

Building Partnerships and Vision for a Great Lakes Waterfront Trail

Established in 1988, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust (WRT) is the non-profit organization leading the movement to build a province-wide Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Waterfront Trail, working together with waterfront communities, agencies, conservation authorities, senior governments, corporations, NGOs and foundations.

Recognizing the tremendous value and multiple benefits of the waterfront to the people of Ontario, the WRT is focused on reconnecting people and communities to the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes – the largest group of freshwater lakes on earth.

Today the WRT works with 100 communities and First Nations from the eastern border of Ontario to Grand Bend and along the Lake Huron North Channel to create the Trail, now more than 2,100 kilometers long. Together, we are building, completing and enhancing the Trail; as well as raising its profile by establishing connections with provincial, national and international trail networks. In addition to waterfront communities, we rely on a diverse group of partners and networks that share a commitment to making

the waterfront accessible, clean, green, connected, vibrant, affordable, open, useable, diverse and attractive.

At the provincial level, the Ontario Trails Strategy, the Great Lakes Strategy and now Ontario's #CycleON Strategy have established a policy framework which adds momentum to the continued development of the Trail and its expansion to new parts of the Great Lakes.

In 2017, the Trail expands to the Lake Huron North Channel with a 380km route between Lake Superior and Sudbury in partnership with Trans Canada Trail, Ontario Trillium Foundation and Tourism Northern Ontario. Upcoming expansions include a connection between Grand Bend and Espanola through Tobermory and Manitoulin Island, and beginning the expansion along Georgian Bay with funding from the Province of Ontario. In the Greater Golden Horseshoe, work with Metrolinx and 8 municipalities will identify, sign and map eleven active transportation connections between the Trail and GO stations. The initiative will make it easy for people to use the GO to extend their explorations of the Trail and/or commute.

In a historic partnership, MTO is improving and/or signing sections of the Trail as part of its #CycleOn strategy. This includes improving almost 80km of Highway 17 in Northern Ontario, and together with the City of Kingston, shouldering 16km of Highway 33 between Bath and Kingston, closing a critical gap in cycling infrastructure. Additional improvements are coming to the Trail near the western terminus the Thousand Islands Parkway by Gananoque,

HWY 21 in Lambton County and HWY 6 in Tobermory and on Manitoulin Island.

The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail is recognized as one of Canada's greatest cycling trips in a number of publications and by participants on the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure (GWTA). The GWTA is an annual 5 to 8-day recreational cycling holiday organized by the WRT to showcase the Trail and its communities. In 2017 the GWTA will celebrate its 10th anniversary and the Nation's 150th by leading the tour from Point Pelee National Park to the Rouge National Urban Park in partnership with Parks Canada.

In 2012 CAA joined the WRT partnership by providing support to the GWTA through the innovative Mobile Bike Assist program and app. Their travel services division has introduced the Trail to hundreds of thousands of CAA members through their website and publications.

93%

*agree that the
Waterfront Trail is a
tourist attraction*

2,100 km of W.O.W. (Wonderful Ontario Waterfront)

Major Expansions Over the Years

Each community defines the character of its part of the waterfront and trail by drawing from its landscape and history. Ownership and maintenance is the responsibility of the local authority. The legacy goal for the Trail is to become a dedicated path as close to the water's edge as environmentally feasible.

YEAR EXPANSION

1995	Hamilton to Trenton
1996	Niagara Region
2002	Trenton to South Glengarry
2013	Niagara River, Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair (south)
2015	Greenbelt Route-Northumberland to Niagara with connections to the GLWT
2015	Pelee Island
2016	Chatham-Kent (Lake St. Clair), Lambton County & Kettle and Stony Point First Nation
2017	Lake Huron North Channel & St. Joseph's Island
2018	Huron County to Espanola and Tobermory to Collingwood

Decades of Trail Extension

The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail has undergone significant change over the past two decades, increasing by 723 km since 2013 alone. It now links 100 communities and First Nations for 2,161 km along three Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River and includes two islands—Pelee Island and St. Joseph Island.

In July 2017, the WRT, together with Trans Canada Trail, Tourism Northern Ontario, 26 municipalities and First Nations will celebrate the completion of the extension along the **Lake Huron North Channel**. In 2014, a volunteer working group established by **Tourism Sault Ste. Marie and Tourism Northern Ontario** published a feasibility study confirming strong community support for a cycling route between Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury. The group invited the WRT to lead the implementation of the route as part of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. Trans Canada Trail approved the WRT's application to designate the route as part of the National trail system. A continuous route was only possible when the **Ontario Ministry of Transportation** made shoulder improvements to six sections of HWY 17 as part of its commitment to CycleON, the province's historic cycling strategy.

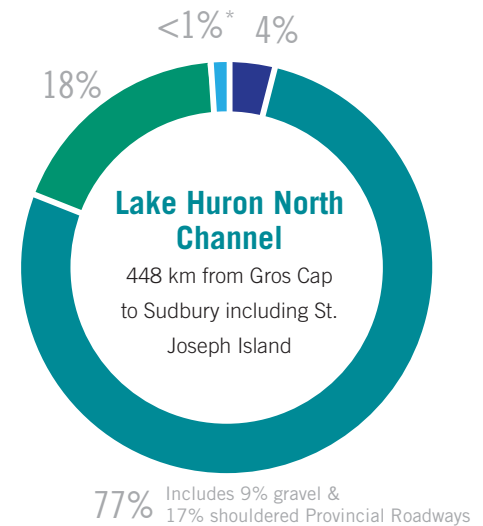
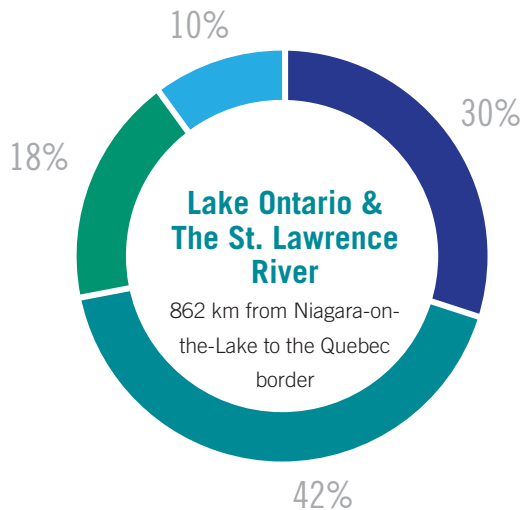
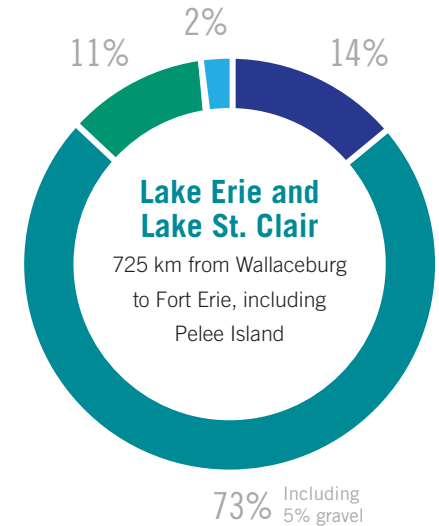
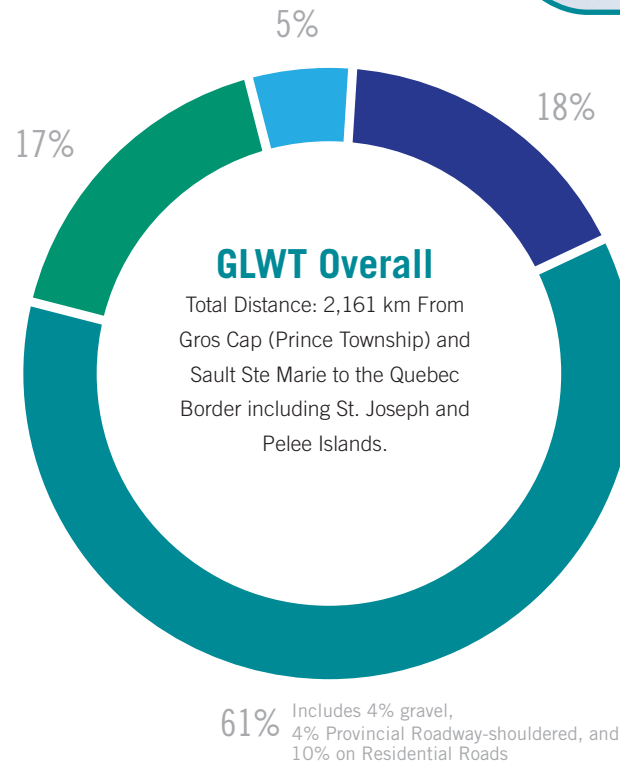
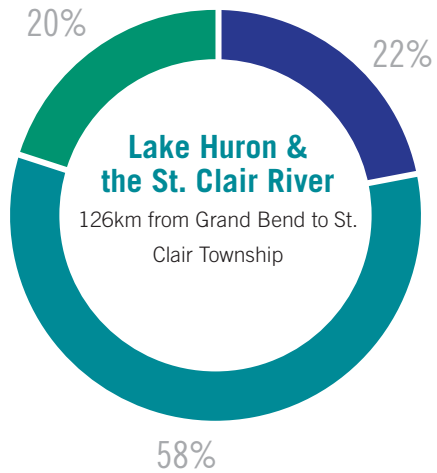


Great Lakes, Great Rivers, Great Trail!

The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail connects Canadians and visitors alike to natural areas, parks, cultural sites, small town main streets and attractions including:

3 Great Lakes	65 conservation areas
4 bi-national rivers	45+ major connecting trails
3 UNESCO Biospheres	3 major wine regions
100 Communities and First Nations	44 historical village main streets
23 Provincial Parks	15 Bike Friendly Cities
415 municipal parks	16 Ontario By Bike Regions.
18 National Historic Sites	12 international border crossings
3 National Parks, including Canada's first National Urban Park	125 beaches, including 13 Blue Flag-designated beaches

Great Lakes Waterfront Trail Inventory (2017)



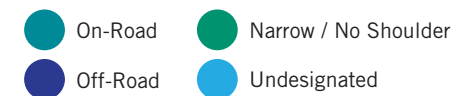
Designated Trail Sections (signed, officially recognized)

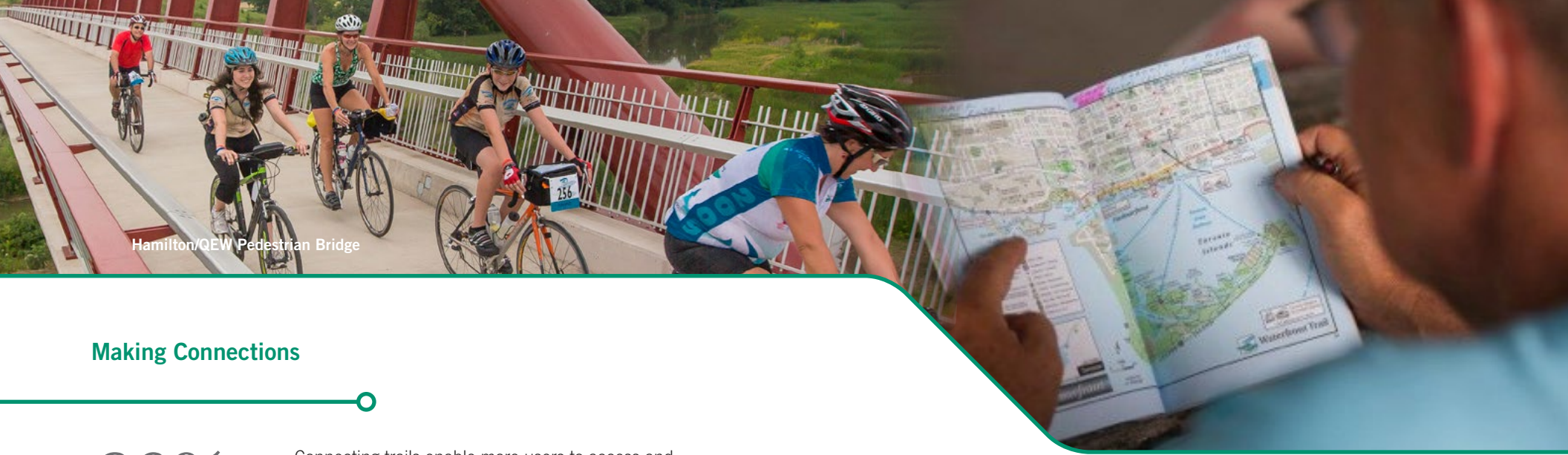
Off-Road	Trail	Paved or unpaved
On-Road	Residential	50km/h speed limit or less on urban residential roads
On-Road	Rural	70km/h speed limit or less on rural roads, paved or unpaved
On-Road	Shoulder	1.2m+ wide paved shoulder or municipal bike lane designation
On-Road	Narrow / No Shoulder	Less than 1.2m wide shoulder and more than 70 km/h speed limit

Undesignated Trail Sections (unsigned, unrecognized sections)

Off-Road	Trail	Paved or unpaved
On-Road / Alerts		All road types, no shoulders and 80km/hr speed limit

* <1% In Need of Improvement (incl. 0.2% undesignated) Northshore Trail and River Road, Serpent River FN, Blueberry Hill, Sudbury





Hamilton/QEW Pedestrian Bridge

Making Connections

80%

Felt safe cycling the GLWT from Pelee to Grand Bend

Connecting trails enable more users to access and experience the Great Lakes waterfront, and create a network of routes throughout Ontario to build support and participate in active transportation and tourism. There are more than 45 major trails that currently connect with the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, with 14 new connections being proposed or built.

Greenbelt Route



The WRT partnered with the Greenbelt Foundation to create a new cycling route connecting communities throughout the greenbelt from Northumberland to Niagara. The Greenbelt Route opened in 2015, a signature provincial cycling route that connects to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail to form regional loops that encompass the watershed.

70%

Felt the GLWT from Pelee to Grand Bend was well-marked

Signage and Maps

Consistent and comprehensive wayfinding signage is an essential component of Great Lakes Waterfront trail branding, awareness and usability.

Annual polling of GWTA participants consistently shows that signage is a priority for trail users.

Ongoing sign replacement programs are undertaken by the WRT and municipal partners.

To complement wayfinding on route, the WRT has released 2 new mapbooks and an enhanced interactive webmap. The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail Map Book: Lake Ontario and Ontario Southwest Editions include detailed maps spanning from the Quebec border to Grand Bend. Similarly the interactive webmap is a Google-based smartphone-friendly tool that can be used for wayfinding in the field, with upcoming enhancements that include GPS positioning for the user and a distance-finding tool.

With the expansion along Lake Huron, and the Lake Huron North Shore, the Waterfront Trail now travels three Great Lakes and touches upon Lake Superior. Recognizing the broadened scope of the Trail, the WRT and its partners are in the process of rebranding the Trail the “Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.”

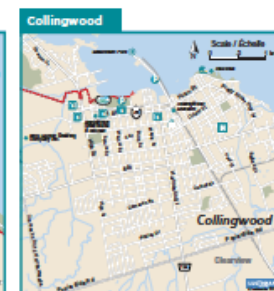
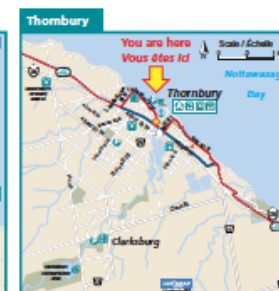
Trailhead signs are being redeveloped to meet current accessibility standards. Sign backgrounds will now be white with a selection of insets including local mapping and an overview of the GLWT.

Almost 140 trailhead signs have been installed along the Trail since 2005. In 2017, more than 1250 directional signs will be installed to launch the Lake Huron North Channel Trail expansion.



Great Lakes Waterfront Trail

Thornbury



Ontario



Bruce Grey Simcoe



Grey County



Welcome to your Great Lakes Waterfront Trail - over 2,600 kms of signed paths and roads, connecting 140+ communities and First Nations along the largest group of freshwater lakes on earth. The Trail is part of a strategy to regenerate, protect and celebrate our Great Lakes, and reconnect people to this National treasure.

Bienvenue à votre Great Lakes Waterfront Trail : plus de 2600 kilomètres de sentiers et routes signalisés reliant plus de 140 municipalités, ainsi qu'aux Premières Nations, le long du plus vaste groupe de lacs d'eau douce sur terre. Le Great Lakes Waterfront Trail fait partie d'une stratégie pour régénérer, protéger et célébrer nos Grands Lacs, et pour inciter les gens à reprendre contact avec ce trésor national.

WaterfrontTrail.org



Partners & Supporters

The WRT is fortunate to have partners who contribute not only funding but also time, knowledge and ideas. We are grateful to all our donors, volunteers and sponsors for their active support.

Waterfront Communities and Agencies

County of Essex	Port Burwell	Mississauga	Greater Napanee	St. Clair Township	Plummer Additional
Lakeshore	Norfolk County	Toronto	Loyalist	Sarnia and Point Edward	Township of Johnson
Tecumseh	Port Rowan	Durham	Prince Edward County	Plympton-Wyoming	Tarbutt and Tarbutt Additional
Windsor	Port Dover	Pickering	Kingston	Kettle and Stony	St. Joseph
Amherstburg	Haldimand County	Ajax	Leeds and Grenville	Point First Nation	Hilton
LaSalle	Niagara Region	Whitby	Gananoque	Lambton Shores	Hilton Beach
Essex	Wainfleet	Oshawa	Leeds and Thousand Islands	Greater Sudbury	Jocelyn
Kingsville	Port Colborne	Clarington	Front of Yonge	Nairn and Hyman	Laird Township
Leamington	Niagara Parks Commission	Northumberland	Brockville	Baldwin	MacDonald, Meredith and
Chatham-Kent	Fort Erie	Port Hope	Elizabethtown-Kitely	Espanola	Aberdeen Additional
Elgin	Niagara Falls	Hamilton Township	Augusta	Sables-Spanish Rivers	Garden River First Nation
West Elgin	Niagara-on-the-Lake	Cobourg	Prescott	Spanish	Sault Ste Marie
Port Glasgow	St. Catharines	Alnwick/Haldimand	Edwardsburgh/Cardinal	Serpent River First Nation	Prince Township
Dutton/Dunwich	Lincoln	Crahome/Colborne	Cornwall	The North Shore	Ministry of Transportation
Southwold	Grimsby	Brighton	United Counties of SDG	Blind River	
Central Elgin	Hamilton	Quinte West	South Dundas	Mississauga First Nation	
Port Stanley	Halton	Belleville	South Stormont	Huron Shores	
Malahide	Burlington	Hastings	South Glengarry	Thessalon First Nation	
Port Bruce	Oakville	Deseronto	St. Lawrence Parks Commission	Town of Thessalon	
Bayham	Peel	Lennox Addington	Parks Canada	Bruce Mines	

Conservation Authorities

Conservation Authorities are supporting partners leading watershed environmental protection.

Ausable Bayfield	Ganaraska Region	Lower Thames Valley	St. Clair Region
Cataraqui Region	Grand River	Lower Trent	Sudbury
Catfish Creek	Halton	Niagara Peninsula	Toronto and Region
Central Lake Ontario	Hamilton	Quinte	Conservation Ontario
Credit Valley	Kettle Creek	Raisin Region	
Essex Region	Long Point Region	Sault Ste Marie	

Source of statistics: 2014-2016 Great Waterfront Trail Adventure participant survey results.