



Overview

On May 10, nearly 50 trails stakeholders met in Mono to discuss trail management, the Dufferin County Active Transportation and Trails Masterplan and other significant trails best practices.

The morning portion of the day consisted of three presentations.

The participants heard from Chris Lee a director of the Guelph to Goderich Trail, and he provided a wide ranging overview on the functioning of the G2G and its project management group, the G2G Rails Trail Committee. Issues such as funding, audits, fundraising, community relations and project advocacy were presented. [Link to G2G Media](#)

The group then heard from Jay Cranstone of Marshal Macklin Monaghan (MMM) Group on the design and strategic elements of the Dufferin County Active Transportation Masterplan. This session provided direct relevance to the region, the attendees, and the CHATT/Trails Team who were better versed for the overview of the plan.

The DCATT highlights for the community, roads to be refurbished for cycling, County wide trail networks and connectivity, suggested budgets for trail refurbishment and improvement, as well as guidelines for land and activity management practices the County could implement for a world class trails network.

There was some discussion with County Staff regarding anticipated functioning, progress and implementation to date of the various roads, trails and rail trail environments contained in the plan. [Link to presentation](#)

The audience then heard from Alex Brodka from the Hamilton Burlington Trails Council on practices and processes detailing the effective functioning of trail committees, Specific highlights from her presentation included trail etiquette documentation produced in conjunction with the Hamilton Health Unit, as well as a direct discussion on managing partners and knowing use-patterns of the trails your committee are charged with managing. [Link to presentation.](#)

After lunch participants heard three presentations.

The first two had to do with the economic benefits of trails. Kirsten Spence, from Quercwood Consulting provided an overview of a trails economy detailing the nature of trail benefits, health, infrastructure investments, return on investment potentials, and the need to implement trail auditing and use metric processes. [Link to presentation.](#)

Jane Murphy from Terminus Consulting provided real world examples of successful trails that utilized specific methodology of surfacing, signs, integrated community amenities and off trail activity as known inducements to provide a trails tourism experience. [Link to presentation.](#)

The final speaker was Jay Cranstone who provided specific engineering measures that detailed the height, width, slope and other characteristics that make trails more readily accessible to the physically or otherwise challenged members of the Headwaters Community. [Link to Presentation.](#)



Benefits

The advantage to this presentation structure is evident in the recommendations suggested by the 5 tables of stakeholders convened to talk to next steps for a Regional Trails Committee.

- The understanding of Committee operation as trail success was provide by G2G
- An understanding of the DCATT enabled participants to have a framework for envisioned, actual and potential outcomes crafted by the County.
- The overview of the HBTC experience showcased elements necessary for effective management of a trails committee.
- The understanding of the trails economy and trails tourism models illuminated the known benefits of used, maintained and sustained trails and trail committees.
- The review of AODA trail measures allowed the group to keep the inclusivity principle top of mind as part of a go forward component of future trail development.

As part of the focus group process all groups were asked to answer one question – “If we had a regional trails committee in the area we would task it to....”

Recommendations

The multiple lists gathered from the group work discussions have been reviewed to present similar recommendations on only one occasion in this section.

The question asked to and then by the participants was - If you had a regional trails committee in the area what would you task it to do?

Core idea in **BOLD**

Suggestions:

It could process a **Sustainable funding model** for trails,

RTC a vehicle to engage with business and sponsorships

(Secure) a Paid coordinator to get everything set up and started

Identify projects, determining funding needs against funding benefits

Diversify funds to multiple projects, equipment (gravel grinders)

Funding for trail networks, incl. mountain biking and running



It could rationalize the local sector by **Identify(ing) all user groups in the region** by being the process that,

Have the right people sitting around the (RTC) table

- Bruce Trail
- Town of Orangeville
- Town of Shelburne
- Ontario Parks
- Town of Mono
- Credit Valley Conservation
- Public Health
- County of Dufferin
- (Other Uses – mtmbiking, running)

Conflict resolution facilitating cohesion amongst groups + stakeholders

Define priorities amongst groups: landowners/user groups; user groups/user groups; locals/tourism limiting or capping use, diverting users

Classify the trails based on use, using standardized trail classifications

Identify key concerns and issues, parking

Signage, consistency based on standards

Who are the user groups?

The RTC could ensure community connectivity by **Defining the membership of an RTC** such that it;

Support network with a shared vision

Arbitrary borders need to be erased

Find opportunities to collaborate

Bring together multiple user groups

Coordinate all players towards a common regional goal, align this regional goal with cross regional groups other rtc's

Trailhead Headwaters- Overview and Outcomes



A lead group such as CHATT as the lead could enact the **RTC as a resource centre**, where the RTC is the;

- Curator of stories, history, experiences,
- RTC as a hub of trail information – Headwaters one stop shopping
- Be a hub of trail resources in the region

The RTC could **identify the value of trails**, and then provide

- Visitor information, promote local trails and local use
- Comprehensive mapping – universal formatting
- Collect data on use
- Identify and share existing data, a shared database
- Conduct a trail audit (inventory)
- Connecting communities with safe routes (identified as such)
- Are trails needs being met? Gap analysis

The RTC could **have a tourism sub-committee** that would,

- Articulate and communicate the economic benefits of trails + links to tourism

We could work on policy and practices such as a **Land acknowledgement statement**, providing clarity as to;

- Who are the landowners?
- Create trails opportunities on public lands, crown forests mountain biking

Within allowable limits the RTC could pursue **Advocacy – local provincial federal levels**, such that

- Provide representation to the province for \$



Next Steps

- 1) Consolidate feedback from the groups
- 2) Produce an outcomes report
- 3) Recommend follow-up meetings
 - a) circulate the report, meeting with CHATT and other new stakeholders from the list invited and able to attend a report review
 - b) Meeting 1 - identify DCRTC members
 - c) Meeting 1 - Identify key priorities from desired outcomes
 - d) Meeting 1 - Establish a Governance model, Chair, Executive
 - e) Meeting 2 - identify facilitation opportunities for the DCATT, with Dufferin County and from within RTC
 - f) Meeting 2 - make recommendations to trails and cycling strategy masterplan
 - g) Meeting 2 - Develop a scope of work from these proposed deliverables for the DCRTC
 - h) Meeting 2 - Identify a trail project
 - i) Post 1 and 2 - pursue a Rural Economic Development Grant to facilitate planning and preliminary operation of a DCRTC (Dufferin County Regional Trails Council).

Into the Future

Through this day the CHATT was able to network with other local and regional supporters, who if canvassed should be able to provide new volunteers with knowledge and expertise to the CHATT through the DCRTC.

Also of great significance was a formal working partnership declared between the County, the County Active Transportation Master plan and series of identified outcomes a DCRTC can focus on achieving.

I believe the DCRTC through working with Dufferin County, can explore the parameters of a Project(s) securing a role and responsibility of the DCRTC in:

- a) trail management
- b) network development
- c) trail marketing
- d) trail information
- e) community outreach and communication
- f) networking
- g) wardening
- h) other plans and objectives as determined with the County.

Congratulations to all. Patrick Connor.