

# **THE COUNTY OF LANARK**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

October 28, 2020

Report # CAO-19-2020 of the  
Chief Administrative Officer

### **Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail - Two Year Review**

#### **1. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**"THAT**, Lanark County Council accept the report CAO-19-2020 Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail Two Year Review for Information."

#### **2. PURPOSE**

To provide council with an update on the status of the OVRT at the two-year anniversary of the trail opening, October 5, 2018.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

County Council approved motion #ED-2018-18, March 14, 2018,

**"That, County Council review the approved uses for the trail in 2021 (after two years of operation)."**

For Lanark County motorized users require license, insurance and permit from OVATV or OFSC.

Trail uses are outlined in the Management Plan:

5.2 Authorized Trail Users Given the municipalities have distinct responsibility for managing their specific sections of the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail, and while they come together through the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail Advisory Committee, the Committee as a whole will review what is permitted if and when needed, and each may recommend specific uses for their specific section, both locally and to the OVRTAC.

**5.2.1 Hiking/Walking** The Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail will permit hiking along all sections. Hiking will be promoted and encouraged. Hikers will share the trail with other all-season users.

**5.2.2 Cycling and Alternative Biking** The Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail will permit cycling along all sections. Cycling will

be promoted and encouraged. It is recommended the trail surface be upgraded where appropriate and as resources are available with aggregate that accommodates hybrid bikes for three seasons and permits fat biking in the winter months. Other cycling determinations will be made in accordance with other Ontario Ministry of Transportation Guidelines for other products, such as E-Bikes.

**5.2.3 Cross Country Skiing** The Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail will permit cross country skiing, dog-sledding and snowshoeing along all sections during the winter months. Skiers will share the trail with snowmobiles and other users. These activities will be promoted and encouraged.

**5.2.4 ATV/ORV/Side-by-Sides** The Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail will permit licensed and insured off-road vehicles along all sections unless indicated by signage with a clearly marked by-pass in place. For the purposes of the definition of "off-road vehicle", the Ontario Ministry of Transportation definition is as follows: Off-road vehicles (sometimes called ORVs) are any two- or three-wheeled motorized vehicles, as well as specific vehicles with four or more wheels as prescribed by regulation, intended for recreational use. Examples of off-road vehicles include all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), two-up ATVs, side-by-side ATVs, utility terrain vehicles (UTVs), amphibious ATVs, off-road motorcycles and dune buggies. Note: Electric and motorized scooters (commonly known as go-peds) and pocket bikes (which are miniature motorcycles about two feet in height and with a speed of 70-80 kph) are not offroad vehicles and, as such, cannot be registered as off-road vehicles. These vehicles also do not comply with motorcycle standards and cannot be registered as motorcycles. The trail may be closed at certain times of the year to preserve the trail bed due to wet conditions (See Section 5.3). ATVing will be promoted and encouraged through organized ATV clubs and associations, such as Renfrew County All-Terrain Vehicle Club (RCATV) or Ottawa Valley ATV Club. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed with ATV groups in the area for social events and club use of the trail.

**5.2.5 Snowmobiling** The Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail will permit snowmobiles on all sections of trail identified as OFSC prescribed trails, December 1st to March 1st. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed with the Snowmobile District and the owners for use of the trail. All sections that allow snowmobile passage will have a corresponding Land Use Agreement between the

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<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/driver/handbook//section7.3.0.shtml> Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail Management Plan 7 Club/OFSC and Land Owner on file and shared with the OVRT owners. Snowmobiles, may have exclusive motorized use of the trail,

on sections that are OFSC prescribed trail. Snowmobile users will respect and share the trail with other winter users during this time. Snowmobiling will be promoted and encouraged in conjunction with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs. Snowmobiles and snowmobiling will not take place on non-groomed, non-OFSC signed areas.

**5.2.6 Equestrians** Equestrian riding is permitted on all sections of the trail. Equestrian riding will be promoted and encouraged in conjunction with the provincial equestrian federations. Riders are required to remove all manure from the trail surface.

**5.2.7 Other Users, Emergency Response** As new modes of travel are developed, the municipalities may review the new use based on its fit with existing uses. **Currently dirt bikes are not a permitted use on the trail.** The review would be based on request: a) access by new user groups; b) received conflict reports from other authorized users; or c) upon anticipated demand for a new potential market/experience. Emergency Services (Police, Fire and Ambulance) will be allowed to access the trail ROW as required.

### **Description**

The Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail is approximately 296 km in length running from outside Sturgess Road in Montague to the outskirts of Mattawa. The former rail bed was part of a longer line from Ottawa to Sudbury. The corridor is 990.3 hectares, the width of the corridor varies from 27.4 m (90+/-feet) and has 37 bridges and underpasses. The Lanark County section is 61km in length with 6 bridges and the highway 7 underpass.

The natural features found along the trail vary from traversing through vast wetlands to following the beautiful Ottawa River.

### **Historical Setting**

In 1853, caught up in the excitement and foreseeing the benefits of a railway, the municipalities in the United Counties of Lanark and Renfrew secured land and agreed to underwrite the Brockville and Ottawa Railway Company (B&O) to the tune of 200,000 pounds sterling. The first phase of the railway started at Brockville and ran to Smiths Falls. It was to be continued to Arnprior and Pembroke, with several branch lines to Westport, Newboro, and Merrickville. Only a line to Perth was realized. The inaugural run from Brockville to Smiths Falls began on a sub-zero February morning in 1859. Travelling at 15 mph, the wood-burning locomotive carrying two coaches filled with passengers took 2 ½ hours to reach Smiths Falls. The trip to Perth took another 7 hours because of a broken coupling and lack of water. Five years of construction took a heavy toll on the B&O and interest payments could not be met and refinancing had to

be arranged. The line was extended to Carleton Place in 1859 and reached the Ottawa River through Almonte, Arnprior, and Sand Point in 1864. B&O turned over the right to build from Arnprior to Pembroke to Canada Central Railway and the line was extended through Renfrew County in the 1870s. Both companies were united under Canadian Pacific Railway Company and linked with a transcontinental network in 1881.

### **Recent History**

The Counties were notified about Canadian Pacific's intent to discontinue and sell the Ottawa Valley Railway between Smiths Falls and Sudbury in January 2010. After CP diverted traffic off the line, short-line operator Rail America terminated its lease with CP. This launched a process under the Canada Transportation Act that provides stipulated time periods for various stakeholders to express interest in purchasing it. The Counties then lobbied MP's to keep the rail line as an operational line for economic development in the future. When an active rail line wasn't feasible the Counties began conversations to keep the corridor intact and use as a full multi-use recreational trail. In 2011 the County of Renfrew, County of Lanark and the Township of Papineau-Cameron engaged in discussions to acquire the discontinued rail corridor. The goal of the three municipalities was to acquire the corridor in one contiguous piece and to maintain and operate as a contiguous whole.

Antec Appraisal Group appraised the discontinued rail corridor at \$77,692,039 using an 'across the fence' method. The Partners paid (will pay) \$500,000 cash plus a tax receipt to the appraised value to acquire the corridor. The Lanark County portion was appraised at \$14.6 million with a cash price of \$120,000 and the balance as a charitable tax receipt.

The corridor is being purchased in three parcels starting with the most southernly section with the remainder leased until transfers are completed. Each of the municipalities will acquire title to that part of the trail within their respective boundaries and be responsible for the construction, operation, use and management of that part acquired.

Lanark County purchased the majority of the property from CP Rail on February 8, 2017 and November 30, 2017. There remains to date one outstanding property in Lanark County to be transferred that CP is working on establishing clear title.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

The Lanark County portion of the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail was officially opened October 5, 2018 with a ribbon cutting ceremony

at the Highway 7 underpass. Politicians, staff and the public attended with bicycles, horses, dogs and ATVs all in attendance.

Well prior to the opening, County Council asked for a two-year review to assess the uses of the trail.

The Trail has been acquired and operated with the assistance of various key partners:

**Renfrew County and the Township of Papineau-Cameron.**

Lanark County has worked closely with these municipalities for the last 10 years. Renfrew County has been the lead on negotiations with CP, website, survey and legal. The municipalities work closely with a working group that meets a minimum of twice annually. The group developed a joint management plan, share best practices and keep everyone updated on trail development and all issues trail related.

**Public Works Staff.** The addition of the OVRT the build and maintenance has been managed by the Lanark County Public Works Department. Their expertise in bridge and road design has created a safe corridor that is lauded by all users.

**OPP** Lanark County Detachment and OPP S.A.V.E. Team; patrol the trail, responded to complaints, shared best practices. See Appendix A.

**Local Snowmobile Clubs** – B.E.A.S.T. and West Carleton have signed user agreements since 2016 and provide annual insurance certificates. Volunteers brushing, warden patrols, \$120,000 contribution to the Carleton Place bridge upgrades.

**Local ATV Club** – Ottawa Valley ATV signed a user agreement in 2018 and provides an annual insurance certificate. Volunteer wardens patrol the trail on a regular basis. Membership has grown from 136 members to 572 memberships since partnering with Lanark County Trails. They have contributed \$46,000 towards Lanark County Trails in the last year.

**Local Municipalities** – Cooperation with all four local municipalities. Mississippi Mills contributed to enhancements to the bridge railing in Almonte. They are tying in their Mill Workers Staircase to the OVRT. Carleton Place has leased the siding historically and now again known as Carleton Junction, developed a secondary paved section of the trail, paid for bridge enhancements including a viewing platform on the bridge. The CP total investment of \$1million dollars in the trail and park has made the OVRT an outdoor, downtown destination for everyone. Beckwith has added multi trail access points to their trails

feeding users for both recreation and commuting. Montague has been a strong supporter of the trail encouraging increased access to the trailhead and links to Smiths Falls.

**Alameda Project** – Grass roots community group has raised over \$45,000 to enhance the trail in Almonte including planting and maintaining one hundred plus sugar maples, benches, picnic tables and landscaping.

**Federal & Provincial Funding** – The Provincial Program Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program provided \$548,000 from the Ontario Cap & Trade Program. Federal funding \$74,237 from the Provincial Transit Infrastructure Fund and \$75,000 from the Canada 150 Fund.

**Voyageur Cycling Route** – The OVRT is part of this Ottawa to North Bay cycling route.

### Usage

Very difficult to get accurate numbers on usage when you have a 61km trail that can be accessed at unlimited locations. We have done some counts over the past year that provide a general idea of non-winter usage.

Periodic Counts at various locations from August 2019 to September 2020:

Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail						
Urban		Walk	Bike	ATV	Total Users	
	Users	2835	1073	316	4224	30 days
		67%	25%	7%		
Average per day		95	36	11	142 average	
Rural		Walk	Bike	ATV		
	Users	395	281	258	934	45 days
		42%	30%	28%		
Average per day		9	6	6	21 average	
Total		Walk	Bike	ATV		
	Users	3230	1354	574	5158	75 days
		63%	26%	11%		
Counts between August 2019 and September 2020						

The Town of Carleton Place supplied trail count information:

May 2019 – 56 users (9 hours)

May 2020 – 167 users (1 day) 75 walk or jog; 72 cyclists; 20 ATVs.

The usage of the trail appears to be steadily growing. This will present increased tourism and economic development spinoffs. It is providing an outdoor space for people to get outdoors and see the best Lanark County has to offer.

## **Complaints, Concerns & Observations**

The development of the OVRT as a multi-use trail has not been without concerns and objections being raised by adjacent property owners and others.

The management philosophy of our trails is that we take at Lanark County is **We want to be good neighbours**. We endeavor to respond to all complaints and try to come with solutions.

As the OPP observes in Appendix A the amount of complaints has gone down over time. Lanark County has an email [trails@lanarkcounty.ca](mailto:trails@lanarkcounty.ca) and a phone number 613-267-1353

Calls and emails to Public Works at Lanark County re trail:

April 14, 2020 to August 27, 2020:

- 1 drainage issue
- 3 observations (e.g., missing signs)
- 2 complaints (i.e., dirt bikes / motor bikes on the trail)
- 3 concerns (e.g., poison ivy, fishing from the bridge)

Common concerns over the past two years and County response:

- Dirt Bikes - Not allowed and signage has been expanded.
- Speed of snowmobiles – Work with OPP and snowmobile clubs, expanded signage.
- After Hour Motorized Use – Not allowed and signage has been expanded.

## **Next Steps**

### Committees

Lanark County Council has two committees that deal with trails. The Trails committee is made up of representatives from council (2), local municipalities (2) the public (5), the Health Unit (1) and County staff (1). The OVRT Promotion Committee that is made up of one council representative from each municipality. The terms of reference for these committees are attached as Appendix B.

### Capital Improvements

Capital improvements are still being made to improve parking, signage and safety. These will continue in the years ahead as we work with our existing partners and form new partnerships

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The conversion of the rail bed to a multi-use trail was approximately a \$3 million dollar project that included upgrading bridges and adding stone dust to the entire trail. Three different capital grants were received worth \$800,000 with the balance of the trail paid for by Lanark County taxpayers. The annual operating cost is budgeted at \$60,000 a year (~1,000km).

## **6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

The local municipalities have been valuable partners in the trail development.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

The acquisition, development and operation of a multi-use rural/urban trail has been an eleven-year journey. Lanark County Council has built something that will continue to grow and serve the community for future generations. We will continue to work with all our partners, committees and public to improve the trails experience for all users.

## **9. ATTACHMENTS**

**Appendix A:** OPP Update and February Snowmobile Report

**Appendix B:** Lanark County Trails Sub Committee - Terms of Reference & OVRT Promotion Working Group - Terms of Reference

### **Recommended By:**

Kurt Greaves  
Chief Administrative  
Officer

### **Manager Approval By:**

Kurt Greaves  
Chief Administrative  
Officer



## Kurt Greaves

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**From:** Nicholas, Lisa (OPP) <Lisa.Nicholas@opp.ca>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 3, 2020 2:51 PM  
**To:** Kurt Greaves  
**Cc:** McConnell, Marty (OPP); Padiachi, Karuna (OPP); Dupuis, Joshua (OPP)  
**Subject:** RE: Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail  
**Attachments:** MSV Feb 2020 For Council.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello again Kurt,

I have spoken with our detachment Analysts. When the trail was first opened there was substantial amount of push back from the residents in Mississippi Mills who were living adjacent to the trail. As of recent, the amount of noise/speeding complaints has significantly decreased. I have attached a report we did in February that outlines our Motorized Snow Vehicle Project with our results. We continue to do Snowmobile, ATV, Bicycle and foot patrol on the trail. In the last year OPP have laid a total of 59 charges, 50 percent speeding with other 50 percent being equipment related. The major user groups from the Snowmobile and ATV clubs have been engaged in holding each other accountable on the trail.

Sincerely

Thanks

A/S/Sgt Lisa Nicholas

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**From:** Kurt Greaves [<mailto:kgreaves@lanarkcounty.ca>]  
**Sent:** 14-Aug-20 2:46 PM  
**To:** Padiachi, Karuna (OPP) <[Karuna.Padiachi@opp.ca](mailto:Karuna.Padiachi@opp.ca)>  
**Subject:** Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail

CAUTION -- EXTERNAL E-MAIL - Do not click links or open attachments in unexpected emails.

Hi Karuna,

This October marks two years of having the OVRT open in Lanark County.

I am doing a review for councils consideration.

Part of that review I was hoping to include some comments, observations and suggestions from the OPP.

If you could pull something together for us that would be very helpful.

Enjoy your weekend.

Kurt

## Lanark County OPP

### Motorized Snow Vehicle Patrol



During the month of February 2020 the Lanark County OPP, and the OPP SAVE unit have dedicated a total of 171.5 officer hours to MSV Patrol in Beckwith Carleton Place and Mississippi Mills. All of these hours were dedicated to the OVRT\*

60% of ALL MSV Patrol during the month of February was conducted in Mississippi Mills on the OVRT

Given that each patrol is two officers this equates to:

- Mississippi Mills 51 Hours of Dedicated Patrol \*

During the month police received 8 "Traffic Complaints" regarding speeding Snow Machines on the OVRT. They also received 1 "Noise Complaint" regarding snow machines intentionally revving their engines near the complainants' residence. These were all in Almonte.

During this time Officers have conducted in excess of 30 R.I.D.Es. They have issued 32 Provincial Offence Notices, more than 20 Warnings under Provincial Acts and issued 1 three day warning for an operator registering a WARN on a roadside Breath test. They have conducted multiple radar enforcements

\*Officers have completed their Daily Activity Reports (DARS) for the Month of February resulting in an additional 17.5 hours being reported in Mississippi Mills since the initial information was provided.



## **LANARK COUNTY TRAILS SUB-COMMITTEE**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Approved: September 25, 2019  
Amended: December 11, 2019**

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## **2. MANDATE**

Trails are a vital component of transportation and recreation within Lanark County, in addition to building a sense of community. Trails benefit residents and visitors alike by fostering economic development and local tourism; encouraging healthy lifestyles, appreciation of the natural features of the County and helping us connect with our environment, our heritage and each other.

The purpose of the Lanark County Trails Sub-Committee is to manage, plan, educate and partner in developing a well- coordinated, sustainable and environmentally responsive trail network within the County of Lanark that balances environmental protection and recreational activity, health and prosperity of a diverse range of users.

The Lanark County Trails Sub-Committee will undertake the following:

- i. To promote the development of ecologically, socially and economically sustainable trails within Lanark County;
- ii. To promote responsible, and accessible use;
- iii. To advocate and promote a healthy active transportation system on both land and water;
- iv. To advocate on behalf of an interconnecting trail system at local, provincial and national levels as appropriate;
- v. To promote and market the economic and tourism benefits of a recreational trail system in Lanark County;
- vi. To foster a policy that supports public consultation and communication between all land users and land owners;
- vii. To encourage and support an education plan on the benefits of a healthy, active and safe lifestyle;
- viii. To create a sustainable cooperative partnership between various trail organizations and users;
- ix. Provide a point of contact between citizens, County Staff and Council in soliciting and assessing community feedback with respect to the maintenance, issues and concerns pertaining to all trails within the County.

### **3. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

Comprised of the following:

- Two (2) members of County Council
- Warden
- Two representatives from local municipalities within the County of Lanark
- Five (5) public representatives from the County of Lanark (including one from a local Snowmobile Club and one from a local ATV Club)
- The Chief Administrative Officer or his or her designate (ex-officio)
- One representative from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit.

The Chair shall be elected amongst the members. The Committee shall report, through the Economic Development Committee, to Lanark County Council.

### **4. MEETINGS & QUORUM**

The Sub-Committee shall meet on a quarterly basis (minimum four times per year) or at the call of the Chair. A quorum shall be deemed as 50% plus one voting members of the Trails Sub-Committee. The Meetings will be held in a Meeting Room at the County of Lanark Administration Building, 99 Christie Lake Road Perth, unless otherwise determined. The Term of the Trails Sub-Committee shall be reviewed on an annual basis by Council.

### **5. REPORTING PROCESS**

The Trails Sub-Committee will provide quarterly updates (at a minimum) to the Economic Development Committee, through a report from the Chair.

### **6. STAFF AND SUPPORT SERVICE**

The Trails Sub-Committee will be coordinated by the Research Assistant and led by the Chair, who shall be selected by the Striking Committee and shall be limited to a member of Council only.

The County Clerk will provide additional staff resources that may be required as deemed necessary, by the Committee.

**7. BUDGET**

Council remuneration will be paid in accordance with the Elected Official – Meeting and Professional Development Remuneration Policy. Travel reimbursement shall be paid in accordance with Travel Management and General Expenses Policy. All amounts will be expended to the Governance Budget for salaries and wages and travel expense. This only applies to County Council representatives.

The annual budget allocation of the Trails Sub-Committee shall be requested on an annual basis during the budget process, based on the goals and objectives of the work plan and subject to budget adoption by Council.

**8. TERM**

The Term of the Trails Advisory Committee and its appointed Members shall be renewed every two years.

**AUTHORIZATION**

Recommended by the Striking Committee:

Dated:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair,

\_\_\_\_\_

Adopted by Council:

Dated:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Warden, Brian Campbell

\_\_\_\_\_



**OTTAWA VALLEY RECREATION  
TRAIL (OVRT) PROMOTION  
WORKING GROUP**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Approved: September 25, 2019**



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## **2. MANDATE**

The purpose of the OVRT Promotion Working Group is to identify and provide recommendations on opportunities to promote and enhance development of the Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail, and the future 'Ring Trail', by collaborating with local municipalities, community partners and recreation groups, etc.

## **3. WORKING GROUP STRUCTURE**

Comprised of the following:

- One representative from each local municipality (being a member of County Council)
- Warden (ex-officio)

## **4. MEETINGS & QUORUM**

The OVRT Promotion Working Group shall meet at the call of the Chair, to a maximum of four to six meetings per year.

Quorum shall be deemed as 50% plus one voting members of the Working Group.

The meetings will be held in a Meeting Room at the County of Lanark Administration Building, 99 Christie Lake Road Perth, unless otherwise determined.

## **5. REPORTING PROCESS**

The OVRT Promotion Working Group will provide regular updates to the the Lanark County Trails Sub-Committee, through a report from the Chair, and will make final recommendations to the Economic Development Committee, through a Staff Report, which will reflect the direction of the working group.

## **6. STAFF AND SUPPORT SERVICE**

The OVRT Promotion Working Group will be led by a Chair, elected amongst the working group.

The Tourism Manager and Chief Administrative Officer or his/her designate shall participate in the Working Group.

In addition, the County Clerk will provide additional staff resources that may be required as deemed necessary, by the Working Group.

**7. BUDGET**

Council remuneration will be paid in accordance with the Elected Official – Meeting and Professional Development Remuneration Policy. Travel reimbursement shall be paid in accordance with Travel Management and General Expenses Policy. All amounts will be expended to the Governance Budget for salaries and wages and travel expense. This only applies to County Council representatives.

The OVRT Promotion annual budget allocation shall be requested on an annual basis during the budget process, based on the goals and objectives of the working group and subject to the adoption of the budget by Council.

**8. TERM**

The term of the OVRT Promotion Working Group will continue for the term of this Council (2018 – 2022), to a maximum of four - six meetings per year.

## **AUTHORIZATION**

Recommended by the Striking Committee:

Dated:

Original signed by B. Campbell  
Chair, Brian Campbell

September 25, 2019

Adopted by Council:

Dated:

Original signed by R. Kidd  
Warden, Richard Kidd

September 25, 2019