



Lanark County

Recreational Trails Business Plan

September 2005

Prepared by

Gordon Harrison

Lanark County Recreational Trails Business Plan

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Background	2
Terms of Reference	3
Planning Milestones	4
Trails	5
Trail Users & Uses	8
Public Values	16
Partners	17
Opportunities	20
Trails—What Do They Cost?	23
Trails—Sources of Revenue & Funding	27
Economic Benefits of Trails	32
Issues	33
Marketing a Trails Network	36
Selecting an Administrative Option	39
The Preferred Administrative Option	44
The Alternate Administrative Option	49
 <i>APPENDICES</i> (to be completed)	
County-EOTA Agreements	A
Members of the Trails Working Group	B
Trail-Use & Compatibility Matrix	C

Introduction

Trails—An Exciting Adventure

Trails are for residents. Trails are for tourists. Trails are for hikers, walkers, snowmobilers, horseback riders, cross-country skiers, off-road motorcyclists, ATV users, joggers, and cyclists. Trails are for bird-watching, enjoying nature, getting from a to b, photography, checking out historical sites, commuting, outdoor learning, and taking a quiet moment out of life's hustle-and-bustle.

Participation in trail-based recreational activities is rapidly growing, and all indicators are that growth will continue in the coming years. Cycling, jogging and birdwatching are some of the fastest growing trail-based activities. When asked their favourite outdoor activity, 84% of Canadians report walking. ("The Economic Benefits of Trails," *Trail Monitor Newsletter*, published by Go for Green, 1999).

Recreational trails are a valuable and desirable community asset. Trail use promotes healthy active lifestyles and environmental awareness. Trails are accessible to all income levels, and can be accessible for people with physical challenges. Trails can be a tool for building community spirit and cooperation. Municipal economic development departments and community businesses recognize that well planned and well managed trail systems can generate significant economic benefits.

Background

County Trails

The County of Lanark owns the portion of the Havelock-Glen Tay Trail located in the County. This Trail runs from just east of Havelock to Glen Tay, with the County's portion running along the abandoned rail bed parallel to and south of Highway #7.

On April 3, 2000, the County of Lanark signed an Agreement with the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance (EOTA) to manage this trail. Under the terms of the Agreement, the County retains ownership of the corridor. The EOTA is responsible for the development and maintenance of the trail and trail corridor, paying taxes on the corridor lands, and obtaining and keeping in force \$10 million of liability insurance. The County pays \$3,000 annually toward EOTA's liability insurance costs. Access to the trail and trail corridor is at the discretion of the EOTA. On April 13, 2005, the County renewed its Agreement with EOTA. *Appendix A* contains both the original and the renewed Agreements.

The County of Lanark owns over 4,638 hectares of Community Forests. The *Business Plan for Community Forests of Lanark County* (2002) noted that many people now use trails that run through Community Forest properties, and the *Plan* identified the potential to develop and promote Community Forest trails.

Other Trails

The Trans-Canada Trail comes into the County in two places. The Ottawa-Carleton Railway runs from Ottawa to Carleton Place, while the Cataraqui Trail runs from just north of Napanee to Smiths Falls. The County is criss-crossed by many public and private trails, from the K & P Snow Trails to the ski trail at Murphy's Point Provincial Park.

Opportunities & Challenges

There is a very real opportunity to create *a network of recreational trails that supports a wide variety of recreational uses, promotes environmental appreciation and healthy lifestyles, and supports local businesses and economic development.*

Many trails groups, local businesses, health organizations and others have indicated their readiness to actively participate in the development, maintenance and promotion of trails. This is a significant opportunity.

The County of Lanark recently completed its community vision and corporate strategic planning process. The values and priorities laid out in this landmark document are similar to those found in the *Business Plan for Recreational Trails*. This confluence strengthens a commitment to develop trails, and is an opportunity.

The mandate of the County of Lanark is broad, often stretching the tax dollar thin. The challenge is to seize the opportunities afforded by trails in a responsible and cost-effective manner.

Terms of Reference

Developing a Trails Business Plan—Terms of Reference

In March of 2003, the County of Lanark issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of a *Business Plan for Recreational Trails*. The Terms of Reference listed in the RFP are:

1. Develop an inventory of existing trails and uses.
2. Identify stakeholders and groups that have an interest in the Lanark County Recreational Trails.
3. Develop a profile of existing and potential trail users.
4. Identify the public values and opportunities of the Lanark County Recreational Trails.
5. Review relevant, successful business plans and master plans for trails in other communities.
6. Identify potential partnerships.
7. Develop (administrative) options for the development and management of trails in Lanark County.
8. For each option, outline revenues and costs.
9. Ensure there is public consultation throughout the planning process.

Planning Milestones

The planning process is directed and managed by the County's Trails Sub-Committee. From the outset and under the direction of the Committee, the County of Lanark has and continues to actively involve the community in all stages of developing a *Recreational Trails Business Plan*. The following lays out the milestones of the planning process to date:

June, 2003 The planning process is launched by informing the public of the process and of their opportunities to help shape the *Plan*.

June 23, 2003 A Public Meeting is held, where the public provided input on the process, values, existing trails, and uses of trails.

Summer of 2003 The Trails Working Group met to develop a Vision, Principles and Objectives, and to provide input on key issues. Please see *Appendix B* for a list of the members of the Trails Working Group.

October, 2003 The *Draft Plan Recreational Trails Business Plan* was released.
On **October 30, 2003**, a Public Meeting was held, where the public provided comment and input on the *Draft Plan*.

May to October, 2004 Consulting with the Working Group and stakeholders, the Trails Sub-Committee developed and tested administrative options to select a Preferred and an Alternate Option.

June, 2004 The Trails Sub-Committee met with staff of area municipalities to learn about municipal trails & activities.
Public delegations presented submissions to the Trails Sub-Committee on the *Plan* and on the Administrative Options.

November 30, 2004 The Trails Sub-Committee met with Working Group to review the Preferred & Alternate Administrative Options.

February 10, 2005 The Trails Sub-Committee met with the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance to receive an update on EOTA activities.

April 6, 2005 The Preferred and Alternate Administrative Options were presented to the Community Development Committee (a committee of the whole). The Committee passed a motion to further analyze the County's preferred option, a municipal trails corporation.

Trails

The following briefly describes the public and private trails of Lanark County and area.

Havelock to Glen-Tay Trail

A user-pay, multi-use trail that runs from Havelock to Glen-Tay. Some users report some sections of the trail are unsuitable for hiking, cycling and horseback riding.

The County of Lanark owns the portion of the trail located within County boundaries—a section of trail approximately 8.3 km long, running parallel to and south of Highway #7 on abandoned rail line. This portion is currently managed by the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance, under a Letter of Agreement with the County (please see *Appendix A*).

Ottawa-Carleton Trailway

The Trailway is part of the Trans-Canada Trail system, and runs from Ottawa to Carleton Place.

Permitted uses include walking, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

Cataraqui Trail

The Cataraqui runs from Napanee to Smiths Falls, and is owned by the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority.

Permitted uses include walking, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

Developing the Trans Canada Trail in the County

The potential is to create a east-west section of the Trans Canada Trail (linking the Trailway to the Havelock-Glen Tay Trail) and a north-south section (linking the Cataraqui to the Trailway). The permitted uses on the Trans Canada Trail are generally snowmobiling, horseback riding, walking, skiing and snowshoeing. The only way to create these links would be to use municipal road allowances, where there would be concerns about the use of ATVs and perhaps even snowmobiles.

Community Forests

The County of Lanark owns 42 community forest properties, totalling 4,638 hectares.

The *Community Forest Business Plan* (2002) identifies the potential to develop recreational trails on many of these properties.

The Baird Community Forest property has an interpretive trail.

Trails

K & P Snow Trails

The K & P Snow Trails consist of approximately 850 km of auditted, groomed and patrolled snowmobile trails in Lanark County and area.

The Snow Trails are maintained by a number of local clubs (clubs affiliated with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Club). The trail is part of an Ontario-wide network of snowmobile trails, totalling approximately 46,000 km.

[Insert map here]

Trails

MVC Trails

Mississippi Valley Conservation offers a number of recreational trails, including the K & P Trail, trails at its conservation areas, as well as its well-known Mississippi Canoe Route with portages.

Ski Trails

25 km of groomed ski trail runs through Murhpy's Point Provincial Park and some adjacent private lands, and is maintained by the Tay Valley Ski Club. The Timber Run Golf Course has 5 km of ski trail.

Rideau Trail

The Rideau Trail is a cleared and marked footpath, stretching 300 km from Kingston to Ottawa, with side trails. Hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are permitted uses.

ATV trails

All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) users use trails on public and private lands.

The provincial Off Road Vehicles Act regulates the use of ATVs on provincial highways, and enables municipalities to pass bylaws permitting ATV use on municipal roads. Local ATV clubs want to use municipal roads to link trails, and are petitioning the County and area municipalities to permit the controlled use of ATVs on these roads. On April 6, 2005, the Ottawa Valley All Terrain Vehicle Club outlined to County Council its interests in creating an ATV trail network, connected, as needed, by the use of municipal roads.

Other Trails

There are many, many other trails, with apologies to anyone whose favourite trail is not on this list:

- the Springback trail, running along the Mississippi, in Almonte,
- Beckwith's Community Trail for walkers and skiers,
- the Arklan-Stone Water Gate trail and the O-Kee-Lee Park trail in Carleton Place,
- trails criss-cross the Alba Wilderness School,
- the trail at the Perth Wildlife Reserve,
- Perth's Towpath and "urban" Rideau Trail,
- the Appleton to Carleton Place trail,
- and the recreational use of hydro transmission corridors, unopened municipal road allowances, and Community Forest properties.

Trail Users & Uses

The following briefly describes the people and groups—both residents and non-residents—who use the public and private trails of Lanark County and area. Different types of users are described, and organized alphabetically. Much of the information found in this section was provided by user-groups and user organizations.

A matrix illustrating the compatibility of various common trail uses, developed by Philip Thompson, a member of Friends of Recreational Trails, can be found in *Appendix C*.

Participation in Trail Activities

A study by the Ontario Ministries of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, Natural Resources, and Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, and Statistics Canada examined the participation and growth rates for a number of trail-based activities. Note, trail-activity types are organized from the highest level of participation to the lowest.

Activity	Participation Rate (%)	Annual Growth Rate (%) 1998 – 2011
Recreational Walking	30	4.9
Recreational Cycling	20	2.3
Hiking	16	2.9
Snowmobiling	14	5.0
Bird Watching	13	5.8
Cross Country Skiing	13	2.9
Horseback Riding	9	1.5
ATV/Dirt Bike Users	8	2.2
Snowshoeing	3	1.7
Nature Appreciation	2	4.5

Tourists & Trails

The following chart shows the number of visitors to Lanark County who participated in trail-related activities in the year 2002 (from Statistics Canada). (No data for ATV use were reported, and no further breakdown of “Sports and Outdoor Activities” was given.):

Activity	Number Who Participated
Walking or Hiking	125,000
Bird or Wildlife Viewing	52,000
Cycling	17,000
Snowmobiling	5,000
Sports & Outdoor Activities	309,000

Trail Users & Uses

ATV'ers

The use of All Terrain Vehicles, or ATVs, is a rapidly growing and popular recreational activity—"the only 4-season power sport." Consumer reports note that ATVs now outsell snowmobiles, 4 to 1.

Dealers report that ATV users are split about 50:50, men to women, and from ages 16 to 65 and up (from the ATV Ontario website).

ATV users use trails on public and private lands. The provincial Off Road Vehicles Act regulates the use of ATVs on provincial highways, and enables municipalities to pass bylaws permitting ATV use on municipal roads. Local ATV clubs want to use municipal roads to link trails, and are petitioning the County and area municipalities to permit the controlled use of ATVs on these roads.

The Ottawa Valley All Terrain Vehicle Club (OVATVC) has 85 members, and is growing.

Federations of ATV clubs and organizations that represent ATV users include ATV Ontario, the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance (EOTA), and the Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicles.

Some have criticized ATV use for its environmental impacts (e.g., impacts on wildlife, and impacts by irresponsible users on natural areas, such as streams). In recent months and in an effort to address this issue and others, distributors, organizations and local clubs have implemented ATV rider education programs, such as *ATV Safety Watch*.

Some trail users in the County, such as equestrians, hikers and birdwatchers have stated that ATV use is not always compatible with their activities. The Havelock-Glen Tay Trail is billed as "multi-use," but cyclists and hikers report that while suitable for ATVs, some sections are unsuitable for their activities.

Cross-Country Skiers

The *Discovery Routes Business Plan* reports that at one time, 22% of the population of Ontario participated in cross-country skiing, but that the participation rate has fallen to 16%. "It is not clear whether the cause of this decline is the recent poor winter conditions or a simple change in interests."

The Tay Valley Cross-Country Ski Club has 150 members, who pay an annual membership fee. The Club grooms and uses 25 to 30 km of trails in and around Murphy's Point Provincial Park.

Trail Users & Uses

Cross-Country Skiers, *cont'd*

There are ski trails at the Timber Run Golf Course that are maintained by a few individuals, and enjoyed by more.

Some individuals and neighbours gather together to create cross-country ski trails across their adjoining properties. Others use abandoned rail lines, closed roadways, and other areas.

There are several provincial organizations: Cross-Country Ontario serves competitive skiers, the Canadian Association of Nordic Ski Instructors is for volunteer ski instructors, and the Ontario Ski Council provides a wide variety of information for skiers.

The *Discovery Routes Business Plan* states, “The likely tourism role for cross-country skiing is a specialty market for enthusiasts: people who are committed to the sport and who are seeking out new places to practice it in attractive terrain. They will place less emphasis on the man-made comforts than on the trails they ski, the country they see, and the people they meet doing it.”

Cyclists

Recreational cycling includes cycling and cycle touring (both road and trail), and mountain biking. Cycling refers to users who cycle community roads and trails for pleasure and/or fitness. Cycle touring is planned, long-distance trips over varying terrain, and generally along less-travelled roads. Mountain biking is off-road, generally over more rugged, challenging trails and terrain.

Cycling is a rapidly growing activity with demand for recreational trails. In particular, the growth of mountain biking is said to be “explosive.” The Ontario Mountain Bike Committee reports that participation in this activity is growing at an annual rate of 20 to 30%.

Cycle touring packages are becoming increasingly popular, where the operator offers a package of support vehicle, food and accommodation.

Provincial organizations include the Ontario Cycling Association, Velo-Ontario, and Ontario Recreational Mountain Bicycling Alliance. Provincial organizations are developing a provincial cycling route.

Three area cycling clubs were identified, one based in each of Almonte, Perth and Ottawa.

Trail Users & Uses

Cyclists, cont'd

Local cyclists use the Ottawa-Carleton Trailway, the K & P, and township roads. Most touring is done along area roads. Cyclists who provided input into the development of the *Plan* noted that there are not enough recreational trails in the area suitable for cycling, and that cycle touring on municipal roads and area highways was not always ideal. For example, County Road 16 is a scenic, cross-County route, but with very busy traffic and no paved shoulders.

Ecotourists

Sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, and ecotourism have slightly different meanings but all represent the concept of travellers with overall concern for the environmental, economic and social features of travelling.

In February of 2005, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada and Parks Canada issued *Canada's Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism*. They define sustainable tourism as “tourism [that] actively fosters appreciation and stewardship of the natural, cultural and historic resources and special places by local residents, the tourism industry, governments and visitors. It is tourism which is viable over the long term because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, natural and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place.” (from the *Gallon Environmental Newsletter*)

The ecotourist is interested in discovering natural areas, while preserving their integrity and understanding the natural and cultural sense of place through interpretation and education . . . “in a manner that creates socio-economic benefits for communities/regions, and recognizes and respects local and indigenous cultures, traditions, and values.” (from the Tourism Association of Canada).

The *Discovery Routes Business Plan, 1999* describes the typical ecotourist as:

- coming from all age groups, with ages 25 to 55 predominating,
- fairly well educated,
- primarily couples, with a third of these having children,
- with 38% ready to spend over \$1,500/person on their vacation.

With its lakes, rivers, forests, wetlands and varied natural beauty—coupled with many other attractions—Lanark County is an ideal place for residents and tourists who seek ecotourist type activities.

Trail Users & Uses

Ecotourists, cont'd

The *Discovery Routes Business Plan, 1999* reports that while “overall tourism [is] growing by 4% per year, nature travel [is] increasing by between 10% and 30% annually.”

Equestrians

Most equestrian trail riders are also active in other equestrian activities such as dressage, eventing, and English and/or western equitation, using their own horses for trail rides. Some purchase horses specifically for competitive and/or non-competitive trail riding. Others hire horses for trail rides.

There are several provincial equestrian organizations with an interest in trail riding: the Ontario Trail Riders Association focusses on recreational trail riding, and the Ontario Competitive Trail Riders Association focusses more on long distance competitive rides. The Ontario Equestrian Federation recently recognized non-competitive trail riding as an integral component of their membership.

The majority of horseback riders do not belong to clubs. In Lanark County, the number of riders is estimated at 350. Area trail riding clubs and other clubs with an interest in trail riding include:

- the Madawaska Pleasure Riders, with approximately 40 to 60 members,
- the Therapeutic Riding Association,
- pony clubs, with 150 members,
- 4-H Clubs, with 50 “equestrian” members,
- the Ottawa Valley Hunt Club, with 50 members.

It is estimated that the annual economic impact of all equestrian activities in Lanark County is \$7.4 million.

In this area, equestrians trail ride on Community Forest properties and Crown Lands, on the K & P Trail, on lands under power lines, on old logging roads, on Trans Canada trails, on township roads, and on the private properties of fellow equestrians and neighbours.

Trail riders often prefer undeveloped trails in woodlands, where a track wide enough for the horses hooves is quite adequate and probably more interesting. A rudimentary, level, drive-through parking area at trailheads is needed for horse trailer and van parking.

Trail Users & Uses

Hikers

Hiking and walking are the most popular outdoor activities—84% of Canadians walk for leisure and recreation. (“The Economic Benefits of Trails,” *Trail Monitor Newsletter*, published by Go for Green) 82% of Canadians confirmed they would ideally like to walk more than they do at present. (from Hike Ontario)

In a survey of hikers, 48% were male, 52% female. Approximately 35% were 29 years of age or younger, 44% were between the ages of 30 and 49, and 20% between 50 and 69. (from Hike Ontario)

The most popular type of trails were: 38.4% preferred long distance trails (such as the Rideau or Bruce trails); 28%, local / municipal trails; 18.1% preferred hiking in provincial / national parks; and 7.7%, conservation areas. (from Hike Ontario)

Hike Ontario provides a profile of hikers: They are generally well-educated, and of middle to upper levels of income. They prefer fall for hiking, followed by spring, summer and winter. Most hike with family and friends. On a typical day outing, most hike within 50 km of their home. Almost 65% of hikers do not belong to a club or association. About 18% belong to a hiking club, with 17% belonging to some other kind of outing, sport or outdoor association. (from Hike Ontario)

Hike Ontario is a non-profit umbrella organization for hikers in Ontario.

The Rideau Trail Association has 1,000 members in three different clubs, with 70 in the Central Club (Lanark County area). Members pay a membership fee. The Association organizes outings every second weekend year-round, with about one-third of these on the Rideau Trail. Other hike-outings are on the Cataraqui Trail, Havelock-Glen Tay Trail, K & P Trail, Bruce Trail, in Frontenac or Murphy’s Point Provincial Parks, on forest roads on Crown Lands or Community Forest properties, and others. The Association also organizes canoe and cross-country ski outings.

Off-Road Motorcyclists

Off-road motorcyclists fall into two categories: trail riders and track riders.

The Ontario Federation of Trail Riders (OFTR) suggests that the “majority of genuine trail-riders are 35 years of age and older” while “the majority of young riders prefer riding on tracks . . . [and] prefer speed, jumps, etc..”

Trail Users & Uses

Off-Road Motorcyclists, *cont'd*

Off-road motorcyclists are mostly male and “the future in trail riding is 70% men, and 30% women and children.” (from OFTR)

Most trail riders prefer a day-long or weekend ride, where 150 km would be a “good ride.” “The majority prefer a somewhat challenging trail system, some single track and a variety of terrain.” (from OFTR)

The Ontario Federation of Trail Riders is a non-profit provincial federation of off-road motorcycling clubs.

The Bytown Motorcycle Association (BMA) is an area off-road motorcycle club. The BMA combines trail rides with work bees to carry out maintenance on the trails it uses.

BMA members use Crown Lands and Community Forest properties in the Lanark Highlands and Madawaska Highlands areas. Their outings include a few members getting together for the day to club-organized outings.

Snowmobilers

The typical Ontario snowmobiler is male, and of middle to upper income. While the age of snowmobilers is mixed, the snowmobiler population is aging, with the greatest number currently older than 45 years of age.

The typical Ontario snowmobiler does one day excursions covering distances of 200-300 km, and a growing segment of touring riders plan one or two outings per winter lasting between three to seven days covering 1000+ km. The majority of use is on groomed trails.

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) is the provincial organization.

The 46,000 km of snowmobile trails in the province, operated by OFSC clubs, are groomed, audited, signed and covered under OFSC’s liability insurance policy.

OFSC has made a concerted effort to educate its members on responsible trail use and etiquette—and with some success.

Snowmobilers are open to others using their trails in the winter. Many sections of the OFSC trails network are on private lands; the agreements between a snowmobile club and these landowners are for the winter months only, and as a consequence, these trails are not generally available for other uses during the snowmobile off-season.

Trail Users & Uses

Snowmobilers, *cont'd*

In the 2002/2003 snowmobiling season, OFSC issued 121,439 permits, at an approximate total value of \$12,500,000. The number of permits issued each year has been declining and the OFSC expects the decline will level out and stabilize at around 100,000 permits. OFSC states that the biggest reason for the decline is the exponential increase in personal insurance rates on snowmobiles.

There are five area clubs. They issued 926 permits in the 2002-2003 season.

The K & P Snow Trails run through private and public lands (under agreement with the landowners), covering approximately 850 km.

Local snowmobile clubs have expressed an interest in moving snowmobile trails to public lands, creating a more stable network.

Other Trail Users & Uses

Other current and potential uses of recreational trails include:

- jogging,
- bird watching and nature viewing,
- dog sledding,
- environmental monitoring, such as *Frog Watch*,
- orienteering,
- outdoor education,
- canoe portages and links to canoe routes,
- llama trekking and driving (for backpacking activities) (one of the listed uses of Alberta Trailnet),
- commuting and doing errands.

Activities related to / making use of recreational trails include:

- fishing,
- photography
- geo-caching (locating hidden “treasures” using GPS systems)
- adventure racing (a race that combines activities such as canoeing/kayaking, mountain biking, rock climbing, and hiking),
- visiting archeological and historical sites.

Public Values

This section outlines why trails are important to the people of Lanark County. The information below was gleaned from an analysis of the 40 questionnaires completed by participants at the public meeting held June 23, 2003.

The primary values identified by the respondents were health, the natural environment, tourism and the economy, and building community. These values are consistent with the values identified in the County's recent community visioning and corporate strategic planning process, and echoed in the *Ontario Trails Strategy* being developed by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation in consultations across the province.

The quotes shown below are taken from the questionnaires.

Health	Approximately one-third of those who completed the questionnaire stated that recreational trails were important for health and well being. "Trails provide a get-away from the "busyness" of everyday life—a place to unwind, relax and rejuvenate." The link between regular physical activity and good health—both physical and mental—is well recognized and well documented.
The Natural Environment	Slightly less than one-quarter of the respondents who completed the questionnaire said that trails are an important part of fostering an appreciation and understanding of nature. "[Trails] stimulate appreciation of and respect for nature" and "encourage us to set aside and preserve what otherwise may soon be lost to future generations."
Tourism & Economy	One in five of the respondents said that one of the values of trails was to promote tourism and economic development. "Trails would encourage sustainable, local economic development" and "could be a huge tourism draw."
Community	One in ten of the respondents stated that trails are important in building a sense of community. "Trails are an affordable way to bring together people of all age groups, abilities, and incomes."

Partners

Partners and stakeholders are an essential building block in developing a successful trails network. Community groups and individuals are already contributing to developing and maintaining trails in the County.

This Section lists partner and stakeholder organizations interested in the operation, maintenance and development of trails and a trails network. They bring experience, community support and/or funding. Including an organization on this list does not necessarily imply its commitment to contribute to the development of trails and/or a trails network in Lanark County. Every attempt was made to ensure the following list is complete (with apologies to any who were overlooked) and the information current.

Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance

The mandate of the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance (EOTA) is to “develop, manage, maintain and market a network of year-round, shared-use trails for the economic, tourism and job creation they bring.”

By agreement with the County of Lanark, EOTA currently manages the 8 km portion of the Havelock-Glen Tay Trail situated in the County. EOTA has indicated that it is ready to continue providing trail management services to the County, and/or advise the County or others in the County on the development and maintenance of trails.

Please see *Appendix A* for a copy of the current Agreement between the County and EOTA. *Appendix D* includes EOTA’s current Business Plan.

Ontario Trails Council

The Ontario Trails Council (OTC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the development and management of an integrated trail network throughout Ontario. It provides an information clearinghouse for its members, and member groups have access to the OTC’s insurance program. Lanark County is a member of OTC.

Trans-Canada Trail Foundation

The Trans Canada Trail is “a confederation of existing trails linked together to form one contiguous trail.” The Foundation does not own or operate any trails. The Foundation provides assistance to Trail Builders, including guidelines on trail development, signage and insurance, as well as funding for qualifying Trail Builders.

Partners

Municipalities

Local municipalities own trails, have economic development offices, and some have expressed an interest in working with the County to develop a trails network.

MVC

Mississippi Valley Conservation (MVC) manages portions of the K & P Trail, and has trails on many of its conservation properties. MVC works with the County in a number of areas of shared interest.

Tri-Health Unit

The Leeds, Lanark and Grenville Health Unit established a trails committee made up of health groups (e.g., the Cancer Society and community health centres) and trails groups (e.g., the Rideau Trail Association). The committee published an area trails map. The committee is now focussing more on promoting physical activity in general.

Community Groups

Community groups are potential partners in developing, maintaining and marketing trails. Some of the area community groups include:

- Bytown Motorcycle Association (off-road motorcycles),
- chambers of commerce,
- Eco-Perth,
- Friends of Eastern Ontario Recreational Trails,
- Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs,
- Madawaska Trail Riders Club,
- Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists,
- Ompah Snowmobile Club,
- Rideau Trail Association,
- Roberston Lake Snowmobile Club,
- Rotary Clubs,
- Sharbot Lake Snowmobile Club,
- Silver Lake Snowmobile Club,
- Snow Road Snowmobile Club,
- Tay Valley Cross Country Ski Club.

OFSC

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC), local District, has expressed its interest in providing funds, in-kind contributions, and expertise to develop trails in the County. OFSC has extensive experience in working with private landowners to establish trails, on insurance and liability concerns, on risk management, and on signage. OFSC has partnered with other groups to map out routes for new trails, secure landowners agreement, and construct trails.

Partners

Provincial Associations

There are provincial associations for most of the primary users of recreational trails, including:

- Hike Ontario,
- Ontario Competitive Trail Riders Association (equestrian),
- Ontario Cycling Association,
- Ontario Equestrian Federation,
- Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicles,
- Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs,
- Ontario Federation of Trail Riders (dirt bikes),
- Ontario Recreational Mountain Bicycling Alliance,
- Ontario Trail Riders Association (equestrian),
- Velo-Ontario.

Opportunities

Opportunities to develop new trails . . . opportunities to capture the growing recreation and ecotourism markets . . . opportunities to promote health and environmental awareness . . . opportunities for tourism . . . opportunities for economic development . . . and opportunities afforded by community readiness to participate in developing and promoting trails and by the partnerships and funding needed to develop trails.

Public Interest & Readiness

The County specified that the public should be involved in all aspects of developing the *Recreational Trails Business Plan*. The process *has* cultivated community interest, support, involvement and commitment. The process *has* generated public goodwill and enhanced the County’s positive image with the community. There is broad community support for the process to date and for its findings. The net result—and a key opportunity in moving forward—is community readiness to roll up its sleeves to participate in a trails venture.

A Network...

There is an opportunity to develop a trails network that meets the diverse recreational needs of the people of Lanark, and serves as a tourist destination. The Lanark County trails network, in 2010, *might* look like this:

- trunk trails that link the Havelock-Glen Tay, the Cataraqui, and the Ottawa Carleton Trailway—enhancing the Trans Canada Trail network,
- links to the Mississippi Canoe Routes,
- wheelchair-accessible, interpretive trails at the Baird Forest,
- connected and integrated town trails—part of “urban” commuting (this has been done successfully in the Town of Collingwood and others),
- the Rideau Trail linked into the trails network,
- the K & P trail, linked to the trails network and extended possibly from Sharbot Lake to Kingston,
- designated loop trails for birdwatching and hiking,
- and many more.

Opportunities

Community Development

Trails can contribute to the development of a healthy, sustainable and prosperous community:

- Trails serve as an opportunity for community development. They are a community asset. Trails can help to unite a community, and when they pass through a number of neighbourhoods, can help unite neighbourhoods. They act as a meeting place and provide for informal interaction among people from a variety of backgrounds.
- Trails provide an excellent opportunity for regular physical activity and encourage healthy lifestyles.
- Trails that pass through natural areas are an opportunity to increase appreciation, knowledge and understanding of nature and the environment. Trails can link and protect habitat. Trails are an ideal “classroom” for outdoor and environmental education for all. Trails can provide a “green” alternative to using personal vehicles.
- Trails provide tourism and economic opportunities. Trails provide an opportunity for local economic development. Special trails events provide opportunities for business and corporate sponsors to gain profile. Trails use by residents and as a tourist destination are opportunities to develop local businesses and community enterprises. For more on the economic spin-offs of trails, please see the *Economic Benefits of Trails*, starting on page 32.

Local Partnerships

Possible partners are profiled in *Partners* on pages 17 to 19 above; some of the potential opportunities are:

- Partner with area municipalities to develop and promote trails.
- Partner with provincial and national trails organizations to obtain advice, funding, and a means for broader promotion and marketing of Lanark’s trails network.
- Partner with provincial trail-user associations for advice and support. In particular, work with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) to develop trails in the County.
- Link with the Lanark, Leeds, Grenville Health Unit to promote healthy lifestyles through trails.
- Partner with the Lanark County Tourism Association to market a trails destination.

Opportunities

Supporting Community

There is a real opportunity for the County to assume an enabling role, at no to low cost to the County, in assisting community groups to use volunteer labour and donated materials to develop trails. This was recently demonstrated when the Rotary Club of Carleton Place requested the County's assistance in developing the Appleton to Carleton Place Trail. The County developed and provided "Trail Development Guidelines" and "take steps to manage the risks associated with the construction and maintenance of a trail [along a County road allowance) by volunteers."

A Trails "Climate"

There is growing and strong interest in recreational trails, locally, across the province and beyond. This positive "climate" has resulted in a number of broader initiatives that promise to complement and encourage the development of trails across the province—an opportunity. For example:

- **The Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation—*Ontario Trails Strategy***: This multi-stakeholder process will address issues and barriers to the development of trails and create a broad strategy that will enable and support the development of trails. Specifically, the process will provide advice on "key trail issues such as economic sustainability, landowner concerns, safety, road rights-of-way, active living, environmental and cultural heritage impacts, and opportunities and tourism development potential." The process is also looking at "innovative funding models," landowner concerns, and insurance and liability.
- **The Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation—*Active 2010***: *Active 2010* is a "new comprehensive strategy to increase participation in sport and physical activity throughout Ontario." Recreational trails are an important "venue" for *Active 2010*.
- **The Ontario Trails Council** is developing the **Trillium Trails Network**.

Resources

There is a range of resources available for the development, maintenance and marketing of recreational trails, from information (such as the Ministry of Agriculture providing information on the development of trails in farmland) to funding (the Government of Ontario's *Communities in Action* fund, e.g., *Communities in Action* recently funded the development of trails in Simcoe County). Funding sources are described in greater detail, starting on page 27.

Trails—What Do They Cost?

This section provides information on the costs of trails, specifically:

- the costs of constructing and maintaining trails,
- the costs of administering a trails network,
- recent trends and considerations with regards to insurance costs.

Costs to Construct & Maintain Trails

Costs to develop and operate trails will vary greatly from trail to trail. The cost of developing a trail varies depending on the use or uses for which it is intended, the terrain through which it will pass, and whether it is a new trail or the improvement of an old one. Costs may include land acquisition costs; construction and development costs, including bridges and fencing; information costs such as trail maps (both print and web-based) and guides; promotional costs such as a website, and advertising; construction of trail facilities (such as picnic tables, washrooms, parking, and shelters); funds to support local groups to develop and promote trails; and administrative and management costs.

County of Lanark Public Works staff indicated that it would be impossible to estimate the costs of developing a trail along municipal road allowances until the proposed route was sited, surveyed and studied.

While it is impossible to estimate the costs of developing and maintaining trails, a few examples do provide a range of costs:

- The Prescott Russell Recreational Trail (developed by the municipal trails corporation established by the United Counties of Prescott and Russell, or UCPR) is a 72 km trail constructed on a rail corridor running through the two counties. The trail is for hikers, cyclists and snowmobilers. Construction is almost complete and by project's end, the total construction costs is expected to be approximately \$516,000, or approximately \$7,200 per kilometre.
- The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs has calculated that it costs \$2,000 to construct 1 km of snowmobile trail and \$412 to maintain 1 km of trail. The local OFSC District recently constructed 27 km of trail from North Augusta to Merrickville. About half of this trail crossed farmers' fields at no cost, while the other half was through forests and wetlands at a total cost of \$12,000 and "lots" of volunteer labour.

Trails—What Do They Cost?

Costs to Construct & Maintain Trails, cont'd

- In a study done for the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance in 2002, maintenance and operations costs were calculated at \$513/km for maintenance (summer grading, grass cutting & brushing, bridge cleaning, and winter grooming), patrolling, repair, and signage.
- The total length of the Bay of Quite County Trails is 320 km, constructed at a total cost of \$5,431,275, or approximately \$17,000/km.

A number of trail-building manuals and documents are available that provide a detailed breakdown of costs by terrain (e.g., building on slopes), by trail surfacing for different uses, and by element (e.g., a bridge). These have been provided to the County.

Costs to Administer a Trails Network

The County of Lanark is examining a number of Options for administering trails. The following provides some insight into possible administrative costs:

- The United Counties of Prescott and Russell (UCPR) established a municipal trails corporation to manage the development, maintenance and marketing of its trail. The following provides a breakdown of their administrative costs:

Administrative Budget Item	Amount
Coordinator's Salary & Benefits	\$ 43,000
Office Space, Equipment and Supplies	11,600
Professional Development	3,000
Professional Services (accounting, translation, etc.)	5,000
Web hosting	1,500
Total Administrative Costs	\$ 64,100

- The County of Lanark provided the following information on the costs of a County staff position to administer trails: \$32,000 plus benefits of approximately \$5,760 (assuming the position would be contract, union, and 35 hrs per week).

It could be assumed that administrative costs would be similar regardless of the Option chosen.

Insurance Costs

Over recent years, the costs to insure recreational trails against liability for bodily injury and property damage have escalated. The Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) stated in 2004 that "The insurance crisis facing Canada's tourism industry is the single most pressing and tenuous business issue currently confronting the outdoor and adventure sectors of tourism."

Trails—What Do They Cost?

Insurance Costs, *cont'd*

The reasons are complex but TIAC describes the problems as an “insurance industry in the middle of a “hard market cycle” characterized by more stringent underwriting practices, rising premiums and more restrictive coverage. These factors were compounded by the historically high claims paid out after 9/11, negative underwriting results, plummeting stock markets, record low interest rates, skyrocketing claims costs and record low profits.” Michael King of Intercity Insurance Services, the company that provides insurance for the Trans Canada Trail, added that lawsuits against trail owners/operators for ATV accidents caused underwriters to insist on rates based on type of use and that these lawsuits resulted in increased insurance costs.

An example illustrates the last point. Intercity Insurance Services provided a quote for a hypothetical trail running through Lanark County. The costs for \$2,000,000 general liability insurance for this hypothetical trail would be “\$1,910.00” per year if ATV and/or dirt bike use” was not permitted, and “\$4,910.00” per year if ATV and/or dirt bike use” was permitted.

What is the impact of escalating insurance costs and insurance uncertainty on recreational trails? Hike Ontario states, “The result has been an escalation of cost to the point where some trail organizations and user groups can't afford it. Also [trails organizations] applying for grants from organizations such as government and charitable foundations have been put on hold pending either resolution of the overall issue or proof of insurance.” The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation’s advisory group on an *Ontario Trails Strategy* notes these possible long term impacts:

- “decreased availability and denial of insurance,
- inadequate coverage (higher exposure),
- more restrictions on trails,
- reduced economic and tourism potential of trails,
- less *Active Living!*”

The Ontario Trails Council stated, “Municipal and public trail operators are also facing the same economic funding and liability concerns that [not-for-profit organizations] face. The ability of all trail management organizations to transfer or self manage their liability issues is very difficult. The ability to offset costs by raising the deductible or reducing insurance costs by improving trails safety practices is not offsetting the total cash flow required to manage the insurance bill.”

Trails—What Do They Cost?

Insurance Costs, *cont'd*

The Ontario Trails Council (OTC) and the Ministry are consulting with stakeholders and the insurance industry to develop a coherent province-wide approach that would use education, legislation and policy to ease the crisis. Actions taken include:

- OTC is recommending that “in the event that a not-for-profit or trails agency has suffered a three times or greater insurance cost increase in a period of 18-24 months the government would provide a yearly cost recovery of 75% of the total cost of the new premium.”
- OTC and the Trillium Trails Network are compiling trail management best practices from across the country to develop Ontario guidelines and best practices. The Trillium Trails network would provide a registration and audit process to distinguish those trails that are managed in a safe and effective way. This should have the effect of lowering insurance rates overall as well as making preferential rates available to those with established guidelines in place.

Trails—Sources of Revenue & Funding

This section provides information on sources of revenue and funding for the development and maintenance of trails, specifically:

- possible sources of funding and revenue (a generic list),
- some actual sources of funding,
- some considerations on the stability of funding for trails,
- in-kind contributions,
- user-fees.

Possible Sources of Revenue

An examination of other trails and trails organizations yields a variety of experience and methods of generating revenues to pay for trail development and maintenance. Long-term viability probably requires a suite of options. Revenue options are summarized:

- membership fees,
- user fees,
- adopt-a-trail,
- in-kind contributions of labour, materials, etc. (can be significant),
- donations from members and the public (research indicates that personal donations are the largest single source of revenue for not-for-profit organizations),
- sale of advertising,
- corporate sponsorships,
- merchandising programs and the sale of promotional materials,
- funding from federal, provincial and municipal governments,
- foundations.

Sources of Funding

This section lists a variety of sources of funding and assistance, each source with a one-line description.

Funding from municipal governments:

- The public who attended the Lanark County Trails Meeting (June 23/03) suggested that trail-user groups and municipal governments should share in the costs to develop and maintain trails.

Funding and assistance from the provincial government:

- The OSTAR Red Program of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is designed to address barriers to economic development and ensure small town and rural communities remain vital.

Trails—Sources of Revenue & Funding

Sources of Funding, cont'd

Funding and assistance from the provincial government, cont'd:

- Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation provides marketing support to tourism operators and industry sectors.
- *Ontario Works* provides resources to hire personnel for a variety of projects.
- *Active 2010* is a “new comprehensive strategy to increase participation in sport and physical activity throughout Ontario.”
- *Communities in Action* provides community funding related to active living. For example, they recently funded the development of trails in Simcoe County.
- The Canada-Ontario Municipal-Rural Infrastructure Fund provides funding for the development of recreational trails.

Funding from the federal government:

- Human Resources Development Canada: Through job-creation partnerships, employers and partners can create meaningful work opportunities for clients with activities that help develop the community and the local economy.
- The Katimavik program provides volunteer youth to work on community projects. Many communities have used these volunteers to develop trails.
- *Superbuild*, Government of Canada, provides funding for infrastructure projects, including trails.

Funding from other sources:

- The Ontario Trillium Foundation provides funding for community projects.

Trends & Issues around Funding

The following comments are taken from *Economic Issues Affecting Ontario's Trails Networks*, the Ontario Trails Council brief to the Ontario Ministry of Finance's Pre-Budget Consultation, January 2003.

Trails—Sources of Revenue & Funding

Trends & Issues around Funding, *cont'd*

- Larger organizations such as the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs derive some operational revenue from permit sales.
- The OTC has discussed implementing a user fee system for trails as a revenue-generating source. However in the 1999 OTC *User Pay Study Group Report*, which examined user pay as a method of trail stabilization, the group concluded that, “user pay alone is not likely sufficient to sustain trails because the costs of maintaining trails may exceed the ability or willingness or both of users alone to fund them.”
- The *User Pay Study Group Report* outlines 24 different funding sources. “Seventeen fund capital efforts to create and develop trails. The other seven share a dual creation and sustaining role. The limited number of sustaining fund organizations only worsens [the] vulnerability of [trails organizations]. This point was reiterated in the Haliburton Highlands Stewardship Council unpublished report commissioned in part by the OTC.” Ian Attridge author wrote, “...sustaining trails will usually mean sustaining trail organizations.”
- “Can [not-for-profit trail] organizations afford to operate trails? Not long term with their current proportion of funding responsibility. Unfortunately with funding responsibility there is not a corresponding capability to influence cost and operating conditions, nor the ability to absorb sudden negative cost burdens.”

In addition, the competition for funding is increasing, while the funding available is stable or shrinking.

The OTC is working with provincial government ministries and stakeholders to address this issue.

Trails—Sources of Revenue & Funding

In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions are a key element in the development and maintenance of trails. The OFSC, for example, provided and continues to provide in-kind contributions toward the development of the Cataraqui Trail. OFSC has indicated that it would consider an in-kind contribution to the development of certain recreational trails in Lanark County.

Many of the local trails groups and others listed in the Chapter *Profile of Trail Users and Uses* have indicated a willingness to make in-kind contributions to the development and maintenance of trails. Similarly, many individuals have contributed to existing trails and/or to creating new trails and will continue to do so.

High school students are required to do 40 hours of volunteer work during their high school career. The Canadian Armed Forces provide trail construction labour (used by Renfrew County).

User-fees versus Memberships?

Some trail organizations charge user fees, others charge memberships. The EOTA has a user-pay system, and argues that user-pay is necessary to fund and sustain their trails network. The Cataraqui Trails charges memberships, saying this has worked well for them, and avoids the need to police users and the associated costs. Some argue that user fees should not be charged on publicly funded trails, citing that these trails were built with public money to provide a broad range of benefits to all, and in particular, should be accessible to all regardless of income. An insurance agency (one that specializes in liability insurance on recreational trails) states that insurance rates are not a function of whether user-fees are charged or not, but a function of the types of permitted use.

The public who attended the Lanark County Trails meeting (June 23/03) were roughly split for and against user fees.

The following provides the details on actual user fee and membership fee structures:

- The Cataraqui Trail Management Board charges annual membership fees.
- The Bruce Trail Association charges annual membership fees of \$35 for an individual, \$100 for a community membership, and \$700 for a lifetime.

Trails—Sources of Revenue & Funding

User-fees versus Memberships?, *cont'd*

- EOTA charges user fees on a sliding scale depending on use, from an annual fee of \$100 for ATVs, to \$35 for skiing, and free for hiking and walking.
- The Ontario Trails Council is establishing a voluntary trails passport for trails that are registered as part of the Trillium network. Part of the revenue from the sale of passports would be returned to the “owners” of the trails.

The Economic Benefits of Trails

Economic Benefits

Trail users generate economic benefits—people who use trails buy equipment, buy supplies and services, eat in local restaurants and cafes, stay in B&Bs and motels, purchase the works of local artisans, and take in local community, arts and cultural events. Economic benefits of trails are a function of the amount of use of trails and the amount spent on an outing. Realizing these benefits starts with understanding the needs of trail users and providing a trail system that responds to these needs.

It is difficult to accurately calculate the current economic benefits of a trails network to the people and business of the County, and even more difficult to predict the economic benefits five or ten years into the future. A few examples do, however, illustrate the potential benefits:

- The Prescott Russell Recreational Trail is expected to generate economic spin-offs of “nearly \$5 million annually.”
- Seventy percent of the users of the Bruce Trail cite the Trail as the main reason for their visit to that area. Each Bruce Trail user spends approximately \$20 per visit, and this expenditure is made within a 10 km corridor on either side of the Trail. This amounts to an estimated, annual direct and indirect benefit to the communities through which the Bruce Trail passes of \$60 million.
- Estimates of the 10 year economic impact of the construction and operation of the Bay of Quinte Country Trails (including direct, indirect and induced expenditures by trail users) are over \$300 million (where the investment to develop the trail was only \$5.5 million) (from the *Master Plan Brief: Bay of Quinte Country Trail Network*, 1999).
- Trail user associations provide data on the economic spin-offs of their particular activity:
 - ATV users estimate they generate \$1 billion of economic activity annually across the province.
 - The annual economic impact of all equestrian activities in Lanark County is estimated at \$7.4 million.
 - Snowmobilers estimate that their winter sport generates approximately \$1 billion of economic activity in the province each year.
 - Specific data on the economic spin-offs of the other types of trail use were not found.

Issues

The public consultation process into the development of a *Business Plan* identified a number of issues. This section outlines approaches for managing issues, as well as approaches for dealing with specific issues.

Managing Issues

Some of the issues that arise from the development and use of trails are conflicts between users (e.g., motorized and non-motorized), and concerns of landowners adjacent to trails who feel negatively impacted by the trail and its users.

The most effective approach to managing issues is to work with and involve the public—particularly representatives of all trail users and adjacent landowners—in planning and managing trails and a trails network. The Working Group struck to provide input to the Consultants in developing the *Plan* demonstrated the efficacy of this approach. The Group consisted of all user types and was able to develop consensus on a number of (sometimes contentious) aspects of recreational trails. Participants commented on how “sitting around the same table” helped them to understand other types of trail users, and in particular, bridge motorized versus non-motorized misunderstandings and misconceptions. Therefore, it is recommended that a community body be established to play a role in determining trail-use, in working with landowners, and in resolving issues if and when they arise.

Use-Conflicts

User conflicts on public recreational trails are a common issue. It is recommended that a community body (including all user types and adjacent landowners) play a central role in specifying use on new and existing public trails.

The Working Group preferred the term “specific use or uses” over “multi-use,” and agreed that all public trails should have clearly specified use or uses. The Working Group favoured many trails, each for a specific use/uses and that together meet a wide variety of needs across the County, rather than a few trails that try to be “all things to all people.”

The Working Group also noted some other considerations in managing user-conflicts. On each trail, permitted uses should be well signed at all access points, and trail etiquette should be posted. One member noted that in the U.K., trail-use signs carry a simple message that reads something like “wheels give way to four legs, and four legs give way to two.”

Issues

Use-Conflicts, *cont'd*

A variety of organizations offer advice and “tools” for reducing user conflict. For example, the Cataraqui Trail Association provides good general guidelines. The Ontario Trails Council provides an “etiquette” for ATVs.

Fencing & Adjacent Landowners

The purpose of the *Line Fences Act*, with regards to recreational trails (especially for trails along abandoned railway right-of-ways) is to protect the landowner from risks of property abuse (fence damage, escaping livestock, litter, trespassing, and the invasion of privacy) and to protect the trail user from harm.

Recent court rulings have upheld the *Line Fences Act*, saying that in the case of recreational trails, the “owners” of the trail must pay the full cost of fencing if a landowner adjacent to the trail request that a fence be erected. The cost implications for municipalities are significant. At present, there is frustration on both sides of this issue: landowners feel that they are losing the ability to protect their property while trail organizations believe these rulings will only add to the economic difficulties (unsustainability) of owning trails.

The Bruce Trail Association serves as a model for addressing this potentially expensive issue. Its success lies in its commitment to work with landowners adjacent to the trail. Landowners were consulted in the development of the trail, and Association volunteers meet with each landowner along the Trail at least once a year to address any issues, and to cultivate the ongoing support of landowners.

The *Ontario Trails Strategy*, being developed by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation through a stakeholder consultation process, is expected to address a number of issues, including this one.

The Line Fences Act and Abandoned Rail Right of Ways provides a thorough examination of this issue with comprehensive recommendations (prepared for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, by Dr. Wayne Caldwell, March 2005)—“ . . . [maintaining] the current intent of the *Line Fences Act* by requiring the continued provision of fences by the owner of the abandoned rail right of way, but at the same time, it addresses many of the concerns expressed by municipalities.” (The County has a copy of this report and it is available through EOTA.)

Issues

Liability & Risk Management

Those who own and manage recreational trails are potentially liable for injuries sustained by users. In Ontario, the legislation concerning liability on recreational trails is the *Occupiers' Liability Act* (1990). Subsection 3.1 of the *Act* reads that the owners or occupiers of a property owe a common law duty to take reasonable care to ensure that all those who enter the premises "are reasonable safe while on the premises."

The *Occupiers' Liability Act* was amended by Subsection 4.1, adding the phrase "risks willingly assumed." This implies that non-paying recreational users on marked, recreational trails assume a degree of risk for their own actions. While there appears to be a wide range of interpretation of the *Act* by the courts, it is obvious that trail organizations can be proactive by managing their risk.

Trail organizations minimize their exposure to risk through proven trail management practices. These are management actions that minimize the possibility of damage or injury (e.g. signs, barricades, supervision [and controlled access]), minimize the impact of an accident (e.g. first aid posts, rescue equipment) and the transfer the liability to the trail user (e.g. disclaimers, user education). (from the Hike Ontario Web site)

Trail organizations pay for general liability insurance. This defends the trail organization in the event they are sued. If blame is assigned to the trail organization, the insurance pays the damages. (from the Hike Ontario Web site)

Over the past few years, for a variety of reasons, rates for general liability insurance for trail owners have escalated. This has created a real problem for many trail organizations and owners, and threatens some trails. For more on the problem and the solutions, please see pages 24 through 26 of this document.

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, as well as provincial trails organizations, have excellent experience in the areas of liability and risk management. The Ontario Trails Council, the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation (through its multi-stakeholder process to develop a provincial trails strategy) and others are working to address this issue.

Marketing a Trails Network

Successful marketing requires a understanding of the nature and needs of the many target audiences, with a variety of marketing approaches tailored to each. Marketing runs the gamut from brochures and maps targetting specific audiences, to mobilizing the community to promote trails, to catchy and targetted ads, to sophisticated websites, to satisfied trail users telling others.

Why Market & Promote?

The goals of marketing and promoting a trails network in Lanark County are:

- Increased use of recreational trails by residents of all ages and abilities for a variety of recreational activities, thereby achieving a number of benefits including health, environmental, community and local economic benefits.
- Community involvement in developing, promoting, and maintaining trails
- An exciting tourist destination that directly and indirectly benefits local communities and businesses.
- Sponsors ready to support the network.

Marketing a Trails Network

Marketing and promoting a *network* of trails rather than a *trail* will:

- appeal to a broader base of community, encouraging them to get involved in “building” the network,”
- provide a more attractive product for sponsors, donors and funders,
- encourage trail users of all types, ages and abilities to get out and be active,
- create an exciting and appealing tourist destination—one that responds to a wide spectrum of recreational and tourist wants.

Local Residents

A primary reason for developing recreational trails is to meet the needs of local residents. Although not as dramatic, or as “studied” as the economic spin-offs associated with attracting out-of-county tourists, “selling” a trails network to residents has real economic benefits to local businesses (residents buy equipment and supplies, support local recreation businesses, etc.), while ensuring that recreational, health, environment and community needs are met.

Marketing a Trails Network

Community Involvement

Experience in other places shows that a trails network is as good as the level of community involvement and commitment:

- Market and promote trails to the community to increase the volunteer base that will play a key role in all elements of developing, promoting and maintaining trails.
- Promote trails to the community and businesses to cultivate sponsors and donors.
- Promote the trails network to encourage community involvement in local trails groups.
- Provide seed funding to support the creation of trails outing clubs for specific use/uses of trails, so that these clubs can identify, explore and promote existing trails.

Tourists

Targetted marketing is the most effective. Comprehensive market information needs to be gathered to better understand current and potential trail users, what they look for in an outdoor (trails) experience, what they need to support that experience, and the media that will most effectively reach these people, as well as the trends and areas of growth.

With this information, and working with local businesses, partners, user-groups and others, a coherent and comprehensive marketing campaign can be developed to promote and market the trails network (and individual trails) to key audiences.

One trend is the marketing of tour packages. For example, a cycling tour operator might offer a package of van support, food and accommodations.

Sponsors & Donors

Attracting sponsors and donors requires a well-defined and needs-based “product” and an effective way of delivering it so that funders, sponsors and donors will be excited, confident in its success, and ready to support it.

Studies show that individual donors far outrank large corporations and foundations in supporting community events and programs.

Marketing a Trails Network

Key Players in Marketing & Promotion

It is recommended that the County of Lanark play a lead role in marketing and promoting a trails network.

Key partners in marketing and promoting a trails network are:

- the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit,
- the Lanark County Tourism Association,
- the economic development departments of area municipalities,
- businesses and their associations such as chambers of commerce,
- community arts, heritage, environmental, recreation, and health and fitness groups,
- user-groups.

In addition, there are a number of other organizations with experience in marketing and promotion and ready to assist, such as the Trans Canada Trails Foundation, the Ontario Trails Council, and the provincial federations of trail-user groups.

Themes

Marketing and promotion can be built around current themes, initiatives and priorities, both local and beyond:

- healthy active living and healthy communities,
- environment,
- linked to and building on community interests and features—its stories and unique features, its arts, community events, its natural and cultural heritage, and more.

Tools

Marketing tools include brochures, advertisements, and “lure” brochures and packages (for attracting funders and sponsors)—targetted to meet the specific marketing and promotion goals, and the intended audiences.

Print maps are information and promotional tools. An interactive web-based map is an essential marketing and promotional tool. As well, a web-based map is a trip planning tool for users, promotes the trails and trail-support services, and hooks the user / potential user.

Providing support to local groups to promote trails is an effective tool.

Tour packages are an effective and proven tool.

Special events are a tool for marketing and promoting a trails network. One person suggested that a triathlon be established—a combination of cycling, canoeing, and hiking along a future Lanark County trails network, coupled with arts and cultural events.

Selecting an Administrative Option

The Terms of Reference for the development of a *Business Plan for Recreational Trails* in the County state: *Develop (administrative) options for the development and management of trails in Lanark County.* The sound administration and management of a trail and/or a trails network are central to success and long-term sustainability.

This section:

- describes each of six possible administrative options, and where available, provides examples of municipalities or areas where the particular option is in use,
- describes the process used to identify a Preferred and an Alternate Option for Lanark County.

A detailed description of the Preferred Option begins on page 44, and a detailed description for the Alternate Option on page 49.

Six Options...

Six possible options for administering and managing trails in the County were identified and examined:

1. a community trails organization,
2. a trails committee (a sub-committee of Lanark County Council),
3. a joint trails-community forests committee (a sub-committee of Lanark County Council),
4. a municipal corporation,
5. a management group,
6. no role for the County.

While the primary mandate of the chosen administrative option will be to administer and manage the trails owned by the County, it was also recognized that the chosen administrative structure could provide services to the owners of other public and private trails in the area, for example, by marketing and promoting a trails network.

A Community Trails Organization

This Option is a community organization dedicated to the development, maintenance and promotion of a particular trail and/or system of trails. In this Option, there is limited or no role for the area municipality(s). Some examples of this Option are:

- the Bruce Trail Association, responsible for the popular Bruce Trail,
- the Voyageur Trail Association, responsible for the public hiking trail that stretches across Northern Ontario,
- the Cataraqui Trail Management Board, an arms-length board, created by the Cataraqui Conservation Authority to manage the Cataraqui Trail.

Selecting an Administrative Option

A Committee of Council

A Committee of Council is created by a municipality to assist in the administration, development, maintenance and promotion of trails. Note that the responsibilities assumed by the committees of council, described below, vary greatly from an advisory function only to responsibility for all functions. Note too, that in reviewing committees of council responsible for trails, no examples were found where a committee was responsible for trails other than the municipality's.

- In Tiny Township, the Trails Committee is a Committee of Council with six community representatives and one member of Council. The Committee serves as an advisory group to Council, making recommendations to Council on bylaws and budgets.
- In the Town of Collingwood, the Leisure Services Committee, a Committee of Council, created a Trails Committee to develop and maintain trails. The Trails Committee is made up of one representative from the Town, with the remainder community representatives. It is responsible for the development and maintenance of trails, and gets some funding from the Town.
- In Barrie, the City has established a Trails Advisory Committee to provide advice and assistance to the City in the development and management of urban trails and the Trans Canada Trail.

A Municipal Corporation for Trails

A Municipal Trails Corporation is understood as an independent, arms-length corporation established by a municipality for the sole purpose of developing and managing its recreational trail or trails. It could be a not-for-profit corporation. This option was first suggested by a participant at the October 30, 2003 public meeting on Lanark County's Trails Business Plan.

In 2001, the Prescott Russell Recreational Trail Corporation was established by the United Counties of Prescott Russell as a not-for-profit, independent corporation with a single mandate, trails. Its mandate is to "develop and manage an accessible, shared-use recreational trail in Prescott and Russell designed to encourage the safe use of a variety of passive recreational activities and provide linkages within our community to ensure the protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the region and its communities for future generations."

Selecting an Administrative Option

A Municipal Corporation for Trails, *cont'd*

The Prescott Russell Recreational Trail Corporation is governed by a Board of Directors, 18 Directors from member municipalities, stakeholders (such as the Federation of Agriculture and the Tourism Association), trail-user groups, and adjacent landowners.

The Prescott Russell Recreational Trail Corporation is constructing a 72 km trail on an abandoned rail corridor running through the two counties. The trail is for hikers, cyclists and snowmobilers. Construction is almost complete and by project's end, the total construction costs is expected to be approximately \$516,000, or approximately \$7,200 per kilometre. It is projected that the economic spin-offs of the trail will be \$5 million annually.

The public were involved in all stages of the planning process (including the development of a Master Plan) and are active in the development of the trail.

Staff of the UCPR stated that the “build it and they will come” principle has worked—member municipalities are constructing loop trails in their own municipalities to link with the main trail.

The United Counties of Prescott Russell chose a municipal corporation to manage its trail because they wanted a structure that would be independent, “arms-length,” and (eventually) self-supporting. In the United Counties budget for 2005, \$178,000 is allocated for trails: administration, maintenance and trail patrols. Of this, the United Counties' allocation is \$85,000, while provincial funding and corporate and individual donations make up the balance.

The County maintains general liability insurance on the trail, but wants to divest this responsibility to the trail corporation.

The staff person at the United Counties responsible for the trail corporation extended an invitation to Lanark County Council to visit Prescott Russell to learn more about their experience with this administrative model.

Selecting an Administrative Option

A Trails Management Group

An owner of a trail (like a municipality) negotiates an agreement with another organization to develop and maintain its trail or trails network, often in the form of leasing the trail or trails to a management group.

The County of Lanark, on April 3, 2000, signed an Agreement with the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance (EOTA) to manage the portion of the Havelock-Glen Tay Trail located in the County. Under the terms of the Agreement, the County retains ownership of the corridor. The EOTA is responsible for the development and maintenance of the trail and trail corridor, paying taxes on the corridor lands, and obtaining and keeping in force \$10 million of liability insurance. Access to the land by users, and the quality of that access, is the responsibility of EOTA. The Agreement was renewed in April, 2005. The Lanark-EOTA Agreement can be found in *Appendix A*.

Selecting the Most Suitable Option for Lanark County

The *Draft Business Plan*, dated November 2003, described the six Options for administering recreational trails.

Over the period of May to October 2004, the County's Trails Sub-Committee met regularly to select a Preferred and Alternate Administrative Option, a process that included:

- the development of criteria against which to assess all options,
- applying the criteria to take a first cut at selecting preferred and alternate options,
- reviewing a first draft describing the Preferred and Alternate Options,
- testing the Preferred and Alternate Options,
- further evaluation, revising the description, further review, and finalizing the description,
- input from the public and stakeholders throughout the process.

In November of 2004, the Trails Sub-Committee recommended a Preferred Option, a *Municipal Corporation* (Option #4), and an Alternate Option, a *Committee of Council* (Option #s 2).

Selecting an Administrative Option

Selecting the Most Suitable Option for Lanark County, *cont'd*

A few important points on the decisions of the Trails Sub-Committee:

- After careful consideration, the Sub-Committee rejected Option #6, “no role for the County,” stating that the County needs to play an active role in managing trails. The Sub-Committee noted the unique role the County can play in the development and marketing of a trails network, specifically:
 - the County has a broad mandate for health and health promotion that encompasses active living and is served by a network of recreational trails;
 - the County has a broad mandate for tourism, providing County-wide services and supported by its Tourism Department;
 - the County holds considerable public lands including more than 4,000 hectares of Community Forests;
 - the County can promote all its trails with local municipalities, and can coordinate the development of trail linkages across boundaries where County property is involved.
- The Trails Sub-Committee rejected Option #3, a joint trails-community forests committee. This Option called for the Sub-Committee to develop, administer and market trails and to manage the Community Forests. The Sub-Committee concluded that while combining forest management with trails administration was unworkable, the selected trails administrative option could assume responsibility for trails on Community Forest properties.
- The Sub-Committee agreed that the chosen administrative structure would take the lead in decisions regarding the development, maintenance and promotion of County trails. Having said that, the Sub-Committee recognized that the chosen administrative body could decide to contract out work, engaging the services of a trail management group (Option #5) or other service provider.

On November 30, 2004, the Trails Sub-Committee met with the Trails Working Group to review and discuss the Preferred and Alternate Options. Those in attendance (representing many of the trail user groups in the County) supported Option #4 as the preferred administrative option.

The Preferred Administrative Option

The Trails Sub-Committee identified a **municipal trails corporation as its preferred administrative option.**

Overview

A Municipal Trails Corporation would be an arms-length corporation of the County with the mandate to administer, develop, maintain and market recreational trails in the County.

Models

Models of arms-length municipal corporations delivering municipal services include:

- the Prescott-Russell Recreational Trail Corporation, an incorporated organization created by the United Counties of Prescott-Russell, that has developed a 72 km recreational trail through the Counties,
- the Lanark County Housing Corporation.

Recreational trails developed, maintained and marketed by third-party corporations include:

- the Grand Concourse Trail, St. John's Newfoundland,
- Toronto's Waterfront Trail,
- the Bruce Trail.

Structure of a Municipal Trails Corporation

A Municipal Trails Corporation would be wholly owned by the County.

The Corporation would be incorporated under the laws of Ontario. The County of Lanark, consulting with community stakeholders and others, would write the Articles of Incorporation.

The Articles of Incorporation would stipulate that the Municipal Trails Corporation would provide the County with audited financial statements, and could specify other reporting requirements.

The Municipal Trails Corporation would seek registered charitable status to enable it to pursue certain sources of funding.

The Corporation would be governed by a Board of Directors. The make up of the Board would be described in the Articles of Incorporation. The County, in consultation with community stakeholders and others, would be solely responsible for appointing Board members according to the terms, conditions and make up specified in the Articles of Incorporation.

The Preferred Administrative Option

Structure of a Municipal Trails Corporation, *cont'd*

By way of example, one possible slate of Directors is shown:

- two County Councillors,
- two representatives of local municipalities (could be a municipal councillor other than the County representative, or municipal staff; could rotate among municipalities),
- the Manager of Tourism Department, County of Lanark,
- the County CAO, or appointee,
- four community representatives (including representatives of user-groups, businesses, and tourism)
- one representative of adjacent landowners (particularly farmers),
- one youth representative,
- one representative from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit,
- (with advisors from the Ontario Provincial Police, Conservation Authorities, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and others).

The Primary Role of a Municipal Trails Corporation

The Corporation would ensure that the broad needs and priorities of the public and the County with regards to trails are met.

- County Trails: The Corporation would manage all aspects of the development, maintenance, promotion and marketing of all trails owned by the County. For example, the Corporation, with input from the County's Public Works Department, would select the route, design the trail, and construct any new sections of the Trans Canada Trail through the County (where some or all of the actual work may be contracted out to an organization such as the EOTA). The Corporation would have general liability insurance and therefore, share liability with the County.
- Other Trails: The Corporation could play a role in trails owned by other organizations and agencies. It could support local trails organizations, community groups and others to develop, promote and maintain their own trails. It could manage trails on behalf of other organizations and agencies. It could assist in developing an interactive web-based map of the network of area trails, print maps and other materials.
- The Corporation could secure funding and generate revenue through a variety of means. The County's Tourism Department would take the lead role in working with the Corporation to promote and market the network of trails.

The Corporation could choose to work with the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance (EOTA).

The Preferred Administrative Option

Establishing a Municipal Trails Corporation

If the County decides to create a Municipal Corporation to administer recreational trails, the following steps are recommended:

1. The County drafts Articles of Incorporation, in consultation with the community and using legal advice as required.
2. Once the Articles of Incorporation are approved by County Council and Incorporation is granted by the Province, the County would appoint a first Board of Directors according to the make-up and conditions specified in the Articles.
3. The Board of Directors would develop an operational plan for the first year of operations.
4. The Board of Directors, using community volunteer labour and donations and the in-kind services of the County (see below), would carry out the work plan.

Operations

An operational plan for the Municipal Trails Corporation, for its first few years of operation, could contain the following elements:

- The volunteer Board of the Corporation and its volunteers would secure funding required to conduct initial trail development activities (this could include new sections of the Trans Canada Trail, community trails, trails in the County Forests, etc.). Sources of funding and in-kind contributions are listed on pages 27 through 31 of the Business Plan.
- The volunteer Board of the Corporation would request the services of the County's Public Works Department (with costs being borne by the Department) to a) provide trail development guidelines (these have already been developed by the County for the organization developing the Carleton Place-Appleton Trail), b) survey and advise on routes for new trails, and c) negotiate access to county and municipal right-of-ways for the development of new trails, where required.
- The volunteer Board of the Corporation would coordinate the work of community organizations and volunteers to develop community trails.

The Preferred Administrative Option

Operations, cont'd

- The volunteer Board of the Corporation would manage the development of new sections of the Trans Canada Trail, where work would be done by a contractor and by community organizations and volunteers. Work could be contracted to the County's Public Works Department, EOTA or other contractors, and would be paid for from funds raised by the Board.
- The volunteer Board of the Corporation would identify marketing tools and develop a marketing plan (with County input and coordinated with the County's other marketing initiatives). The Board would request staff of the County's Tourism Department to assist it in carrying out this work.
- The County would provide in-kind administrative and financial reporting services to the Corporation, including services to assist the Corporation in preparing regular reports to County Council and annual audited financial statements to County Council.

In the longer-term, the volunteer Board of the Corporation would develop long-term work plans and budgets for all aspects of developing, maintaining and marketing trails and a trails network. It would determine staffing requirements. It would secure the funding required to carry out this work.

Financial Considerations

The following are the financial considerations associated with the first few years of operations of the Municipal Trails Corporation:

- The costs of incorporation are approximately \$600 plus legal fees (cost for a name search, incorporation and registration as a charitable organization).
- The volunteer Board of the Corporation, its members, and community organizations and volunteers would do much of the work to raise funds, develop and maintain trails, and market trails and a trails network.
- The County of Lanark would provide services to the Municipal Corporation at relatively low cost, such as engineering and trail development guidelines and advice for developing new trails, administrative and accounting services, and marketing services (marketing trails as part of the Tourism Department's overall marketing activities).

The Preferred Administrative Option

Financial Considerations, cont'd

- For trail construction, particularly new sections of the Trans Canada Trail, the Board of the Corporation and its members would raise the required funds and contract out the work to the County's Works Department, EOTA or another contractor.
- The Corporation would carry trail liability insurance as would the County, and the Corporation would carry directors' liability insurance.

Financial considerations in the longer term include:

- The Board of the Corporation, its members and staff would assume full responsibility for securing the funding required to support all functions of the Corporation. This could include an annual contribution from the County of Lanark.

Financial considerations with regards to the costs of constructing trails include:

- The following apply regardless of the Administrative Option.
- The *Business Plan* lists a number of examples of trails in other areas and provides construction costs for these. Costs vary greatly depending on the intended use of the trail (where a hiking path is probably the cheapest to develop, while a cycling trail, the most expensive), the site, and on a number of other factors.

With regards to constructing the Trans Canada Trail through the County, the County Engineer indicated that until a route is identified and surveyed, it is impossible to determine the costs of construction.

The Alternate Administrative Option

The Trails Sub-Committee identified a **Committee of Council for Trails as its alternate option.**

Overview

A Committee of Council—a Trails Sub-Committee—would have a mandate to administer, develop, maintain and market the County’s recreational trails and other trails in the County.

Models

There are many examples of committees of municipal council responsible for trails, including:

- in Tiny Township, the Trails Committee is a Committee of Council, serving as an advisory group to Council on the management of its trails;
- in the Town of Collingwood, the Leisure Services Committee is a Committee of Council, responsible for the development and maintenance of trails in the Town;
- in Barrie, the City’s Trails Advisory Committee provides advice and assistance to the City in the development and management of urban trails and the Trans Canada Trail.

Structure of a Trails Sub-Committee

The make-up of Lanark County’s Trails Sub-Committee would include County Councillors and could include community representatives (for example, representatives from local trail-user groups, the Lanark County Tourism Association, trails sponsors and partners, municipal economic development agencies and adjacent landowners). The *Final Draft Business Plan* examined a number of municipalities that used this administrative model, and while the make-up of their committees varied, all had strong community representation. The make-up of Lanark County’s Trails Sub-Committee could be similar to the make-up of the Board of Directors of a Municipal Trails Corporation (please see page 45 of this document).

County staff and the services of County departments would be assigned to the Sub-Committee as required.

As with all committees of Council, a Trails Sub-Committee would be responsible to County Council and would report to Council on a regular basis.

The Alternate Administrative Option

The Primary Functions of a Trails Sub-Committee

A Trails Sub-Committee of Council would assume the responsibilities of the County with regards to trails, with primary responsibility for the administration, development, maintenance, promotion and marketing of recreational trails.

Through its Trails Sub-Committee, the County would be responsible for the development and maintenance of County trails such as new sections of the Trans Canada Trail. The County would assume liability for County trails.

The construction and maintenance of trails would be coordinated by the County's Public Works Department and conducted by the Department and/or contracted out to a trails management group (such as EOTA) or other contractors.

Through its Trails Sub-Committee, the County could support local trails organizations, community groups and others to develop, promote and maintain trails. It could provide coordination of all trails in the County, ensuring a wide variety of needs are met across the County.

Through its Trails Sub-Committee, the County would secure funding from a variety of government, foundation and other sources to support trail development, maintenance and marketing.

Through its Trails Sub-Committee, the County's Tourism Department would promote and market County trails and the network of trails.

Operations

The Trails Sub-Committee would require staffing to carry out the above functions, where the staff would support the work of Sub-Committee and would report to Council. The possible role of staff includes:

- preparing initiatives, work plans, and recommendations for the Sub-Committee's consideration, and for subsequent submission to County Council;
- providing administrative support services to the Trails Sub-Committee, including the preparation of reports to Council;
- with the County's Public Works Department, administering the construction and maintenance of County trails, including the work of contractors, where the work would be conducted by the Department and/or contractors;

. . . continued, next page/

The Alternate Administrative Option

Operations, cont'd

role of staff, continued:

- providing advice, support and coordination to community groups and others wanting to develop, promote and maintain community trails;
- coordinating fundraising efforts;
- coordinating with the County's Tourism Department to develop marketing tools and a Web-based map of the trails network and to promote and market trails and the trails network.

It is estimated that staff requirements for the above could be one full-time person.

Financial Considerations

Expenses associated with the engineering, technical, construction, maintenance, financial, administrative and marketing support and services related to the County's responsibilities for recreational trails would become cost centres for the respective County department.

Regardless of the Administrative Option chosen, the following financial considerations apply to the costs of constructing trails:

- The *Business Plan* lists a number of examples of trails in other areas and provides construction costs for these. Costs vary greatly depending on the intended use of the trail (where a hiking path is probably the cheapest to develop, while a cycling trail, the most expensive), the site, and on a number of other factors.
- With regards to constructing the Trans Canada Trail through the County, the County Engineer indicated that until a route is identified and surveyed, it is impossible to determine the costs of construction.