

A Strategy for the

# Credit Valley Trail

2017



**Credit Valley  
Conservation**  
inspired by nature

The Credit Valley Trail Strategy establishes the collaborative vision, mission and values of the Credit Valley Trail. It defines our shared goals and priorities and provides a framework for measuring our progress and shared success.

Thank you to the lead partners for developing the Credit Valley Trail Strategy:



Funding and expertise generously provided by:



Possibility grows here.



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# Message from the Greenbelt Foundation

## A Bold Vision for Protecting Water and Connecting Communities Along the Credit

River valleys weave through our landscape providing the spine our natural systems rely on and the spark communities evolve from. Abundant in our region, these rivers provide a clean source of water for our daily lives, habitat for wildlife, flood protection, and a place of respite in urban settings. Growing the Greenbelt into cities with the protection of 21 urban river valleys, puts us at the forefront of a renewed investment in the health and stability of these vital waterways.

The Credit Valley Trail will follow the Credit River for more than 100 kilometres from Dufferin County to Mississauga. It will draw residents and visitors back to the river bank to explore nature and strengthen their connection with water, the Credit River, and the Greenbelt.

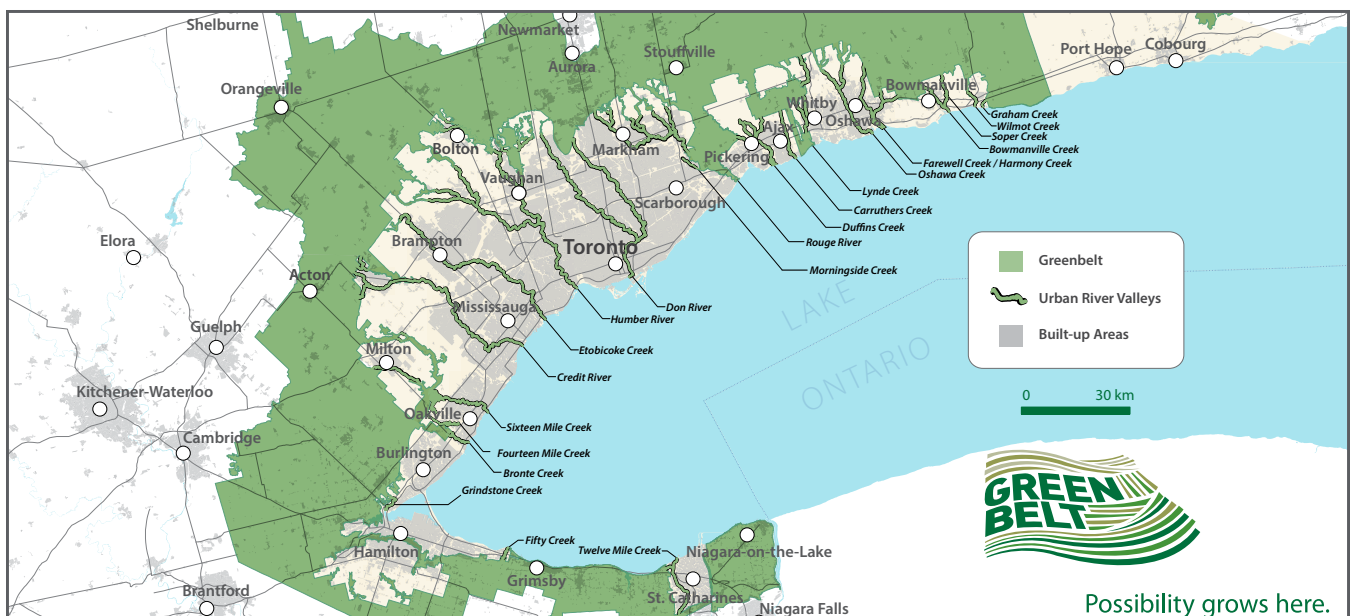
The Credit Valley Trail Strategy is a vision, created collaboratively by communities and stakeholders along the Credit, that inspires the public and political leaders to reach for the sustainable future we all aspire towards.

We want to thank Credit

As an Anishinaabe Ojibway Grandmother I believe that water is a living being whose life force sustains all life on this planet. To protect water is equivalent to protecting life for generations to come, just as it has done for generations before our arrival. It is not a commodity. It is a human right and we all need to honour this truth.

**- Shkoden Neegaan Waawaaskonen (Kim Wheatley) Ojibway Shawanaga First Nation**

Valley Conservation, Credit-Valley Heritage Society, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nations, and local leaders and volunteers for seizing the opportunity to realize this vision. The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation is proud to collaborate on building healthy and inviting spaces for a sustainable future.



# Message from the CAO

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Through our work at Credit Valley Conservation we create connections between people and nature. We nurture the energies of our communities and partners to deliver action on the ground. This is the essence and spirit of the Credit Valley Trail.

The Credit Valley Trail is more than just limestone screening and wayfinding signs. It is a green gym, a connection to nature, a tourist destination, a history lesson, an active transportation corridor, and perhaps most importantly – a constituency builder for the Credit River. It is a legacy for our children and the future of our communities.

At the heart of the Credit Valley Trail Strategy is a bold vision, principles that will steer us through the project's lifespan and a set of carefully crafted strategic directions that will guide the creation of the trail over the next 25 years. Achieving the strategy's vision requires a commitment from all partners for integrated, collaborative action.

After 60 years of exploring the concept of a fully connected trail in the Credit River Valley, the time has come. I invite you to join us. Together, we will make the Credit Valley Trail a memorable journey and an unforgettable experience.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Martin-Downs".

**Deborah Martin-Downs**  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Credit Valley Conservation

# The Credit River Watershed

Situated within one of the most-densely populated regions of Canada, the Credit River Watershed contains some of the most diverse landscapes in southern Ontario. In this area, the Carolinian Forest zone meets the Deciduous Forest zone, both of which contain unique species not found in other zones.



The Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine also run through the watershed, further increasing the number and diversity of plants, animals and communities. The Credit River is almost 90 kilometres long and meanders south-east from its headwaters in Orangeville, Erin and Mono, through nine municipalities, eventually draining into Lake Ontario at Port Credit, Mississauga.

The Credit River is home to a wide range of wildlife including **244 bird species, 64 fish species, 41 species of mammals, five species of turtles, eight kinds of snakes, 17 amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders and newts) and 1,330 plant species.** The Credit River is the most diverse cold-water fishery in Ontario, if not eastern North America.



# Introducing the Credit Valley Trail

The Credit River is a natural wonder. Nestled within the Greenbelt in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Credit River Valley offers an experience for everyone. From its bustling urban centres to its lush rural landscapes, the diversity of the Credit River Watershed abounds. The watershed is known for its scenic vistas, deep valleys, abundant fisheries, rare plants, animals and beautiful natural spaces.

Following the banks of the main Credit River from the headwaters in Orangeville to the mouth at Lake Ontario in Port Credit, the Credit Valley Trail (CVT) will bring the natural and cultural heritage of the river to life. The CVT will weave through the protected countryside and urban river valley of Ontario's Greenbelt in the heart of the Great Lakes region. It will traverse the rocky ridge of the Niagara Escarpment (a UNESCO World Biosphere), and highlight the Greenbelt's dramatic landforms, waterfalls and exceptionally biodiverse natural spaces.

The CVT is a legacy project for present and future generations. It will provide an

opportunity for people to see and experience the Credit River from vantage points previously reserved for those who dared to venture into the wilds of the valley. Immersed in this new experience, people will be inspired by natural wonders, feel connected to our shared history and will grow more aware of the life-sustaining Credit River Watershed.

## **As a legacy project, the CVT will:**

- Knit together two regional municipalities (Peel and Halton), one County (Dufferin) and five local municipalities (Mississauga, Brampton, Halton Hills, Caledon and Orangeville).
- Build a continuous inter-regional spine to connect the bioregions of the Lake Ontario waterfront to the Niagara Escarpment and Greenbelt.
- Promote the Urban River Valley and Ontario's Greenbelt.
- Link the Waterfront Trail to the Trans Canada Trail.
- Empower Indigenous Peoples to share their stories, values and knowledge.

- Support hiking, cycling, recreation and sustainable tourism.
- Promote natural and cultural heritage features as destinations along the trail.
- Generate significant promotional opportunities for the province and Credit River Watershed communities, by developing a tourism product that is truly unique to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.
- Provide an economic growth opportunity for communities along the Credit River Valley.
- Contribute to the quality and diversity of life for watershed residents and tourists.
- Build a constituency of caregivers for the Credit River and the Greenbelt.





# Creating the Credit Valley Trail Strategy

The CVT Strategy process was led by Credit Valley Conservation (CVC). Using a collaborative planning model, CVC garnered widespread public participation, support and endorsement.

## **CVT Strategy Leadership**

Development of the strategy was led by CVC in partnership with the Credit Valley Conservation Foundation and the Credit Valley Heritage Society. Funding for the CVT Strategy was provided by the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation.

## **CVT Steering Committee**

Created to advise, inform and guide the CVT Strategy throughout its two-year lifespan, the CVT Steering Committee formally met four times between April 2015 and June 2017, and numerous times through smaller working groups.

## **CVT Indigenous Round Table**

Representatives from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Six Nations of the Grand River, the Huron-Wendat First Nation, the Credit River Métis Council and the Sacred Water Circle in Peterborough provided leadership and guidance on how they want to share their heritage and culture along the CVT.

## **CVT Cultural Heritage Round Table**

Heritage groups, academics and tourism professionals came together to identify destinations of significant cultural interest along the CVT route.

## **CVT Steering Committee Engagement and Outreach Highlights:**

- 2 regional municipalities
- 1 county
- 5 municipalities
- 5 Indigenous partners
- 10 environmental organizations
- 10 heritage associations
- 8 community organizations
- 5 trail organizations
- 3 tourism organizations
- 2 universities / colleges
- 6 municipal and First Nations council delegations
- 12 public presentations
- 5 community information booths
- 2 public surveys

# Our Journey

## Yesterday

The CVT was conceptually explored in 1956 in CVC's inaugural watershed report. The CVT was envisioned as a scenic driving route. It was to combine both a recreational and educational experience for weekend and holiday motorists visiting the watershed. The primary objective was to showcase the scenic beauty of the Credit River Valley.

## Today

Many decades later, in February 2015, a new approach to this old idea emerged. The seed was officially planted at a public "Call for Action" at Caledon's scenic Alton Mill. More than 50 organizations attended as the preliminary vision for the CVT was introduced and affirmed.

The concept supports implementation of the Greenbelt Plan and the vision of a broad band of permanently protected land that provides for a diverse range of economic and social activities associated with rural communities, agriculture, tourism, recreation and resource uses.

Today, 32 kilometres of the optimum CVT route exists on public trails such as the David Culham Trail in Mississauga, the Bruce Trail through Halton Hills, through the Forks of the Credit Provincial Park and through CVC conservation areas. While not yet fully connected or accessible to the public, these 32 kilometres provide tremendous opportunity for CVT partners to immediately work together to brand and promote existing sections of trail under the CVT identity.

## Tomorrow

CVT partners will, over time, build and connect the final 68 kilometres, creating a legacy for present and future generations. Support for conserving and protecting the Greenbelt and the Credit River Watershed will grow in ways we have yet to discover.

Walkers, cyclists, runners, active transportation commuters, snowshoers, cross-country skiers, birdwatchers and paddlers will journey together, harmoniously, through charming villages, thriving cities, public parks, conservation areas and natural spaces.

The CVT will enrich the lives of watershed residents and visitors. It will be a pathway to significant Indigenous experiences, culinary delights, cultural heritage sites, fishing spots and swimming holes, visual art museums and natural wonders.

The trail will be a cherished community resource and a source of profound pride for residents of the Credit River Watershed. It will be recognized and showcased by the province as an Ontario Trail of Distinction.





# Our Vision and Mission

**The Credit Valley Trail will be a continuous 100-kilometre pathway through the Credit River Valley – from the Hills of the Headwaters in Orangeville to Lake Ontario in Port Credit. It will connect people to the beauty of nature, rich cultural experiences, Indigenous heritage and values, and the sacred, sustaining waters of the Credit River.**

## VISION

A journey along the banks of the Credit River that inspires, connects and empowers infinite generations of river guardians who will value and protect the watershed.

## MISSION

For the benefit of present and future generations, Credit Valley Conservation, working with our municipal, Indigenous and community partners, will create a 100-kilometre continuous, connected river valley trail from the headwaters in Orangeville through Caledon, Halton Hills, Brampton to the shore of Lake Ontario in Mississauga.



# Our Guiding Principles

**Our principles will guide the development of the CVT throughout its lifespan and in all circumstances, irrespective of changes in goals, strategies and actions.**

1

Implementing best practices of safe, sustainable trail infrastructure and amenity design, construction and management that contributes to the responsible use and appreciation of the natural environment.

2

Engaging in respectful and meaningful relationships with Indigenous partners.

3

Fostering a sense of place, deep connection to the Credit River and appreciation for its significant natural and cultural heritage.

4

Inspiring, respecting and working with landowners to encourage participation in a once-in-a-lifetime legacy project.

5

Encouraging a stewardship ethic in trail users and residents to care for and manage the trail.

6

Creating connections to local parks, existing trails and communities that encourage active lifestyles, resident and visitor trail use, and supports the economic prosperity of communities.

DUFFERIN  
COUNTY

ORANGEVILLE

MELVILLE

TOWN OF  
CALEDON

ALTON

CREDIT RIVER

CATARACT

BELFOUNTAIN

INGLEWOOD

BOSTON MILLS

CHELTENHAM

TOWN OF  
ERIN

TERRA COTTA

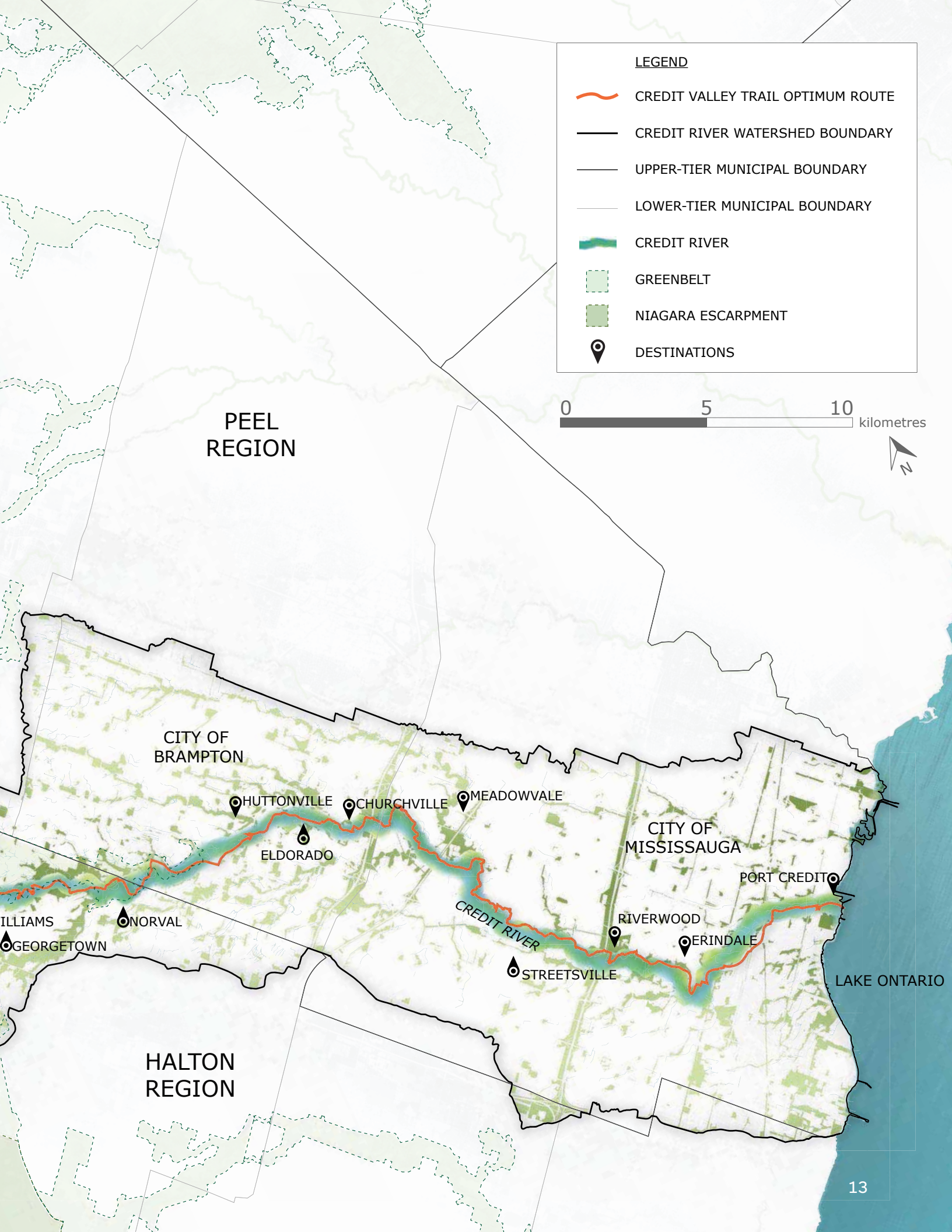
WELLINGTON  
COUNTY

TOWN OF  
HALTON HILLS

GLEN W

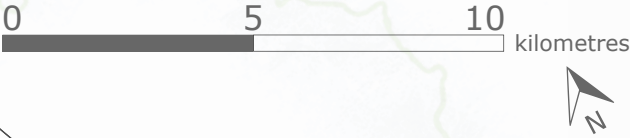
# The Credit Valley Trail Optimum Route

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LEGEND

- CREDIT VALLEY TRAIL OPTIMUM ROUTE
- CREDIT RIVER WATERSHED BOUNDARY
- UPPER-TIER MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
- LOWER-TIER MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
- CREDIT RIVER
- GREENBELT
- NIAGARA ESCARPMENT
- DESTINATIONS



PEEL  
REGION

CITY OF  
BRAMPTON

HUTTONVILLE  
ELDORADO

CHURCHVILLE

MEADOWVALE

CITY OF  
MISSISSAUGA

PORT CREDIT

WILLIAMS  
GEORGETOWN

NORVAL

CREDIT RIVER  
STREETSVILLE

RIVERWOOD

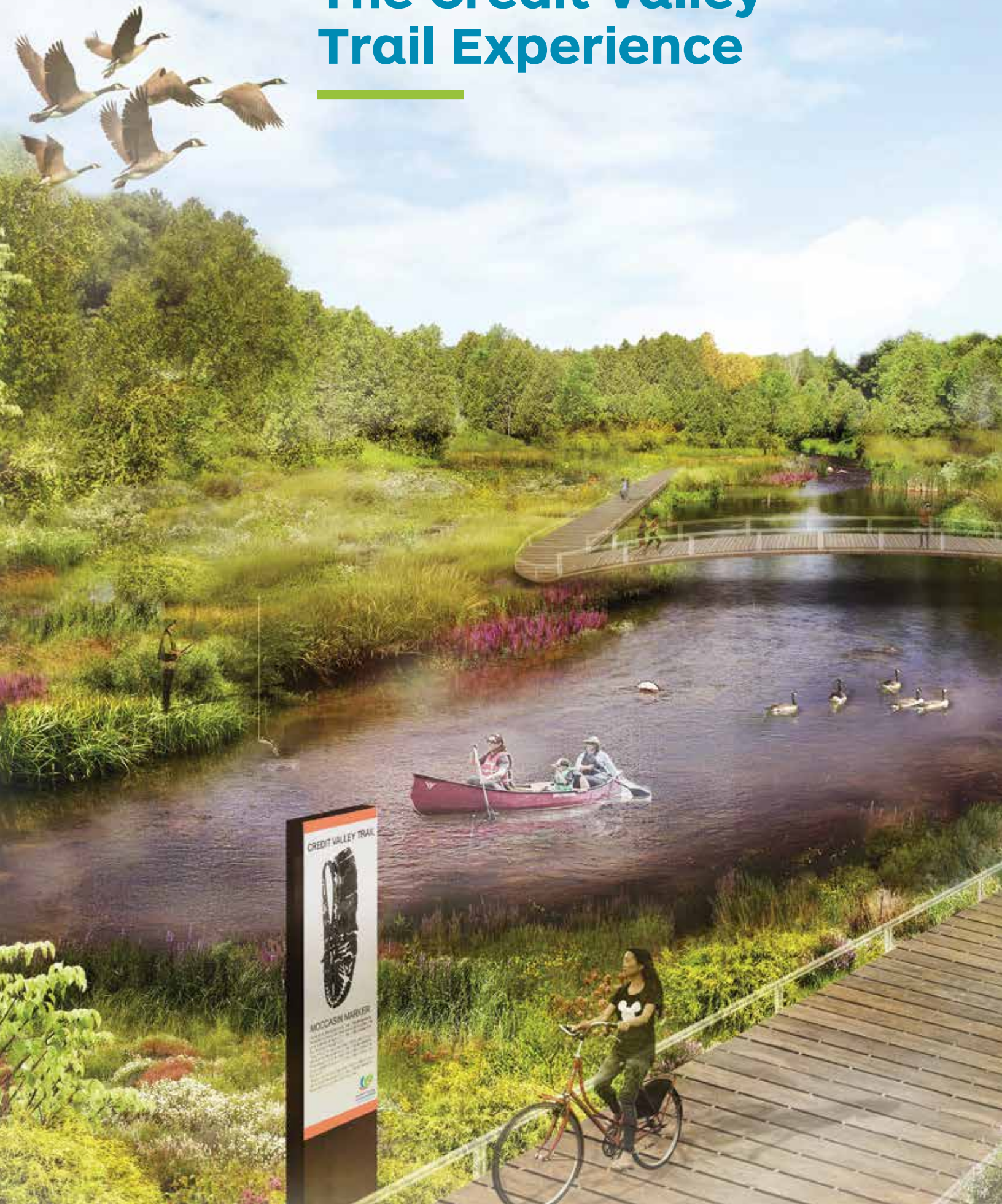
ERIN

LAKE ONTARIO

HALTON  
REGION

# The Credit Valley Trail Experience

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# The Credit Valley Trail Experience

The CVT is more than a trail. It's an experience that will take you places, both physically and emotionally, that you have never been before.

A series of six experiential themes provide abundant opportunity to bring the trail to life. They empower trail users to become a part of the history and future of the Credit River.



**Arts,  
Culture and  
Tourism**



**Environmental  
Education**



**Indigenous  
Heritage  
and Values**



**Heritage  
Destinations**



**Recreation  
and Active  
Transportation**



**Social  
Connectivity  
and Cohesion**



## **Arts, Culture and Tourism**

The CVT has the potential to generate significant exposure for the province and Credit River Watershed communities, by developing a tourism product that is truly unique to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. The CVT Arts, Culture and Tourism Plan will position the CVT as a valuable tourism asset that supports local economic growth for communities along the valley and raises Ontario's profile as a tourist destination by facilitating and promoting access to agri-culinary sensations, art galleries, outdoor theatre, restaurants, festivals, events, special programs and more.



## **Environmental Education**

At the heart of the CVT Strategy is the desire to connect people to the Credit River and the Greenbelt, and empower them to become a part of solutions that will protect our natural environment. The CVT Environmental Education Plan will leverage the value of the CVT as an outdoor living classroom to increase public awareness and knowledge of local environmental issues. The CVT offers an opportunity to inspire and cultivate an ethic of care by bringing people to the river in an ecologically responsible manner, to help them appreciate, understand and develop a relationship with the local natural environment.



## **Indigenous Heritage and Values**

Found hidden along the banks of the Credit are some of Canada's earliest stories and the CVT will be built on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. A CVT Indigenous Roundtable has been formed and will provide ongoing leadership on promoting Indigenous culture, sharing traditional knowledge and connecting trail users to Indigenous history, values and experience, within parks and public spaces along the CVT. The CVT Indigenous Experience Plan will honour and share Indigenous knowledge, traditions and culture.



### Heritage Destinations

The CVT will introduce trail users to the natural and cultural heritage of the Credit River Valley in new ways. As a place of passage, trade, settlement and industry, the Credit River Valley holds cultural memory old enough to illuminate the origins of our national identity yet contemporary enough to shape our understanding of what it means to be Canadian today. The urban river valley, wetlands, woodlands, valleylands, scenic vistas, conservation areas, escarpment and Great Lakes shoreline present opportunities for unforgettable natural heritage experiences. A series of destinations will form the basis of the CVT Heritage Destination Plan: Port Credit, Erindale, Riverwood, Streetsville, Meadowvale, Churchville, Eldorado, Huttonville, Halton Hills, Norval, Georgetown, Glen Williams, Terra Cotta, Cheltenham, Boston Mills, Inglewood, Belfountain, Cataract, Alton, Melville and Orangeville.



### Recreation and Active Transportation

The recreational value of trails is often their foremost attraction. In addition to entertainment value, trails offer significant health, well-being and fitness benefits. The CVT offers an abundance of recreation and active transportation experiences, such as walking, cycling, running, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, birdwatching, fishing and paddling. The CVT Recreation and Active Transportation Plan will promote, market and support the trail as a recreational asset and active transportation option.



### Social Connectivity and Cohesion

The CVT holds tremendous potential to contribute to the quality and diversity of life for watershed residents. Community and individual engagement through resident leadership and meaningful volunteer opportunities will cultivate a connected, cohesive community. The trail will provide increased opportunities for social interactions, facilitating better connection to other trail users, neighbours, community spaces and the local natural environment. These opportunities foster social relationships, deepen community and cultivate shared responsibility.



# The Need For Action: Benefits of the Credit Valley Trail

The Ontario Trails Strategy and research compiled by the Ontario Trails Council make an important conclusion – trails are good for us. The social, environmental and economic benefits of creating a 100-kilometre trail from the Hills of the Headwaters in Orangeville to Lake Ontario in Port Credit are tremendous.

## THE CVT WILL:

|  |
|--|
| Connect trail users to the significance of the Credit River Valley                   |
| Help conserve green space for present and future generations                         |
| Provide a platform for sharing Indigenous heritage, values and traditional knowledge |
| Promote active healthy lifestyles and well-being                                     |
| Create social connectivity and cohesion for individuals and communities              |
| Provide vast recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities                   |
| Provide active transportation opportunities for residents                            |
| Support local economic growth through tourism  |
| Increase local property values   |
| Provide an outdoor classroom for environmental education                             |
| Promote understanding and appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage sites    |
| Create opportunities for community-based volunteering and leadership                 |

## Development and implementation of the CVT Strategy is linked to several local, regional and provincial initiatives including:

### **Active Living Strategy**

(Town of Halton Hills 2016)

### **Active Transportation Master Plan**

(Halton Region 2015)

### **Active Transportation Plan**

(Region of Peel 2011)

### **Caledon Tourism Strategy**

(Town of Caledon 2014)

### **Climate Ready: Ontario's Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan**

(Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change 2011)

### **Credit River Parks Strategy**

(City of Mississauga 2013)

### **CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy**

(Ontario Ministry of Transportation 2013)

### **Cycling Master Plan**

(City of Mississauga 2010)

### **Greenbelt Plan**

(Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs 2017)

### **Halton Region Greenlands Securement Program**

### **No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy**

(Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care 2013)

### **Ontario's Culture Strategy**

(Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport 2016)

### **Ontario's Tourism Action Plan**

(Ontario Ministry Tourism Culture and Sport 2016)

### **Ontario's Tourism Investment Strategy and Implementation Plan**

(Ontario Ministry Tourism Culture and Sport 2011)

### **Ontario's Trails Strategy**

(Ontario Ministry Tourism Culture and Sport 2005)

### **Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

(City of Brampton 2017)

### **Parks Master Plan**

(Town of Orangeville 2015)

### **Our Future to Shape: Strategic Plan 2015-2019**

(Credit Valley Conservation 2014)

### **Planning for Health Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: 2015 - 2041**

(Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs 2016)

### **Region of Peel Greenlands Securement Program**

### **The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples**

(Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation 2016)

### **Tour by Bike: Ontario's Cycling Tourism Plan**

(Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport 2017)

### **Tourism Master Plan**

(City of Mississauga 2017)

### **Waterfront Parks Strategy**

(City of Mississauga 2008)

### **2041 Regional Transportation Plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area**

(Metrolinx draft 2018)

**“When one tugs at a single thing in nature  
he finds it attached to the rest of the  
world.”**

*- John Muir*



# Strategic Directions Overview

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The CVT Strategy has five strategic directions that will allow us to fulfill our mission and realize our vision.

1

**Complete and connect the Credit Valley Trail within 25 years.**

2

**Continue to build and expand partnerships, networks and support.**

3

**Create a trail user experience that is unique, user focused and community based.**

4

**Share the cultures, traditions, history and aspirations of Indigenous partners.**

5

**Connect people to the natural and cultural heritage of the Credit River Valley.**

# STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1



# Complete and connect the Credit Valley Trail within 25 years

The CVT will be a complete, connected and continuous path from Orangeville to Port Credit by 2042.

## ACTIONS

1

Confirm the optimum route and phasing, determining key implementation components.

2

Increase dedicated staff resources for the purpose of planning, public consultation, design, construction, data collection and management, partnership building, coordinating stewardship and public outreach, communications, educational and interpretive materials.

3

Engage trail users, the general public, Indigenous communities and stakeholders in trail planning, design, construction and maintenance processes/requirements.

4

Initiate land access and acquisition activities to identify and prioritize key lands along the optimal route and the most cost-effective means of achieving land access.

5

Plan, design and build the trail and its associated infrastructure, launching new sections of the trail as they are completed.

6

Connect the CVT to existing and new trails, parklands and greenspace.

7

Report on the progress of implementation in a biennial State of the Trail Report.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2



# Continue to build and expand partnerships, networks and support.

The CVT is a catalyst for deepening existing partnerships, building new relationships and expanding networks with partners, landowners, diverse stakeholders, allied organizations and all levels of government.

## ACTIONS

1

Establish the CVT Leadership Council and implement a governance structure, led by CVC with participating municipalities, Indigenous communities and other key partners that transforms the role of the current CVT Steering Committee into key implementation committees.

2

Continue to seek out and leverage new partnership opportunities to support the ongoing work of the CVT Leadership Council.

3

Create and launch the CVT brand identity to increase public understanding, use of and support for the trail.

4

Implement a multi-faceted fundraising campaign, including establishing a Friends of the Credit Valley Trail committee, to seek out and cultivate key major fundraising partners, including corporations, individuals and all levels of government.

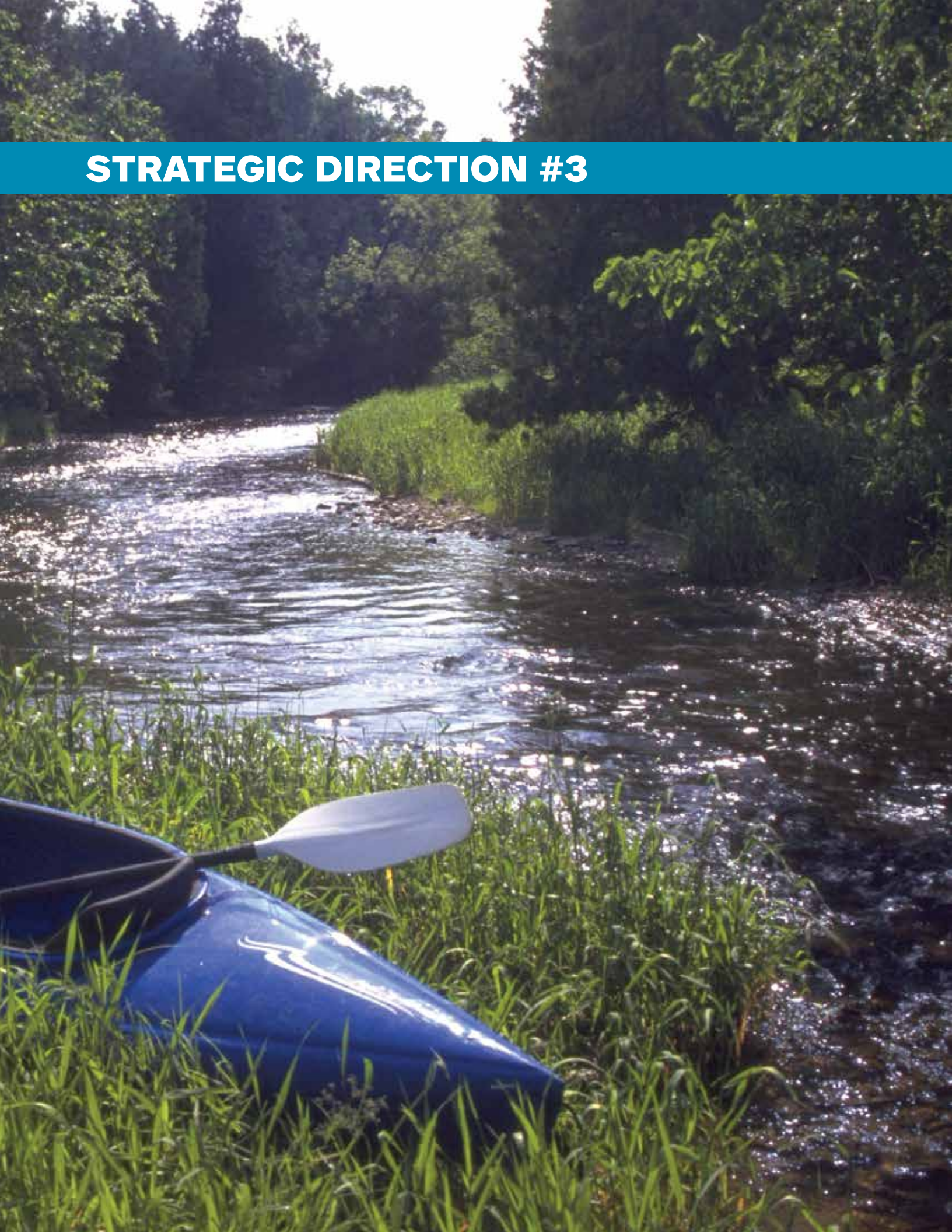
5

Implement a Landowner Engagement Strategy that fosters healthy landowner relationships on private and public lands, along the optimal trail route.

6

Initiate a public relations campaign and communications strategy to maintain and grow commitment, engagement and support for the trail.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3



# Create a trail user experience that is unique, user-focused, and community based.

The CVT will connect the vibrant communities of the Credit River Valley, bringing residents and visitors to the river valley to appreciate, recreate and explore.

## ACTIONS

1

Promote existing sections of the trail and trail access points to encourage and facilitate use of the trail and Credit River by local residents and visitors.

2

Launch a targeted trail user awareness campaign to promote responsible and sustainable trail use and trail etiquette.

3

Work with municipal partners, watershed communities and other stakeholders to install trail amenities and signage that provide a safe, comfortable and engaging user experience.

4

Create innovative and user-friendly wayfinding tools, print and electronic content to enhance the trail user experience.

5

Develop and implement a Recreation and Active Transportation Plan in partnership with municipalities, trail organizations and health agencies that promotes healthy, active living and positions the trail as a pedestrian commuter route.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION #4



Chief R. Stacey LaForme

# Share the cultures, traditions, history and aspirations of Indigenous partners.

The CVT will connect residents and visitors to Indigenous Peoples, their presence and contributions, past and present, throughout the Credit River Valley.

## ACTIONS

1

Work with the CVT Indigenous Roundtable to identify areas of Indigenous significance in the main valley of the Credit River through traditional knowledge and archaeological evidence.

2

Support the CVT Indigenous Roundtable in creating and implementing a CVT Indigenous Experience Plan that includes animating the CVT optimum route through interactive storytelling experiences, interpretive signage, public art installations, trail markers and other culturally appropriate amenities.

3

Work with the CVT Indigenous Roundtable and watershed Indigenous communities to plan the trail in a manner that values and honours the sacred, sustaining waters of the Credit River.

4

Engage and nurture the energies of strong collaborative relationships with Indigenous partners throughout the project's lifespan.

"As the ancestral nation, treaty holders and guardians of the Credit River lands, we offer our official support of the Credit Valley Trail and the Indigenous Experience Plan.

We offer our support of this project and its goals to: promote and share in our heritage of the Credit; ground our history of the land of the

Credit River through interpretive concepts that will benefit public education awareness; and engage our elders in a leadership role to promote our history.

Further to our official support of the Credit Valley Trail and Indigenous Experience Plan, we formally extend an offer of partnership.

On behalf of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, I thank you for your leadership on the Credit River. We look forward to growing this project together."

**Miigwetch,**  
**Chief R. Stacey LaForme**  
**Mississaugas of the Credit**  
**First Nation**

# STRATEGIC DIRECTION #5



Photo Credit: Richard Seck Photography

# Connect people to the natural and cultural heritage of the Credit River Valley.

The CVT will provide unparalleled opportunities and experiences for residents and visitors to foster a sense of place and a deep connection to the land, water and history of the Credit River.

## ACTIONS

1

Conduct a CVT Tourism Development Study to assess the marketplace, identify the ideal CVT user and inform the development of CVT experience plans.

2

Develop and implement an Arts, Culture and Tourism Plan in partnership with local businesses, municipalities and regional tourism organizations to encourage trail use and visitation in the Credit River Watershed.

3

Develop and implement a Heritage Destination Plan in partnership with local municipalities and heritage organizations to promote the cultural and natural history and attractions of the Credit River Valley, while ensuring their restoration and preservation.

4

Develop and implement an Environmental Education Plan, in partnership with local schools, educational institutions and environmental organizations that cultivates support for the conservation of the natural heritage of the Greenbelt and Credit River Watershed.

5

Develop opportunities for watershed residents that create social connectivity and cohesion through CVT resident leadership, volunteering and community engagement.

# Credit Valley Trail Governance Framework

The CVT Strategy will underpin all future planning, design and management decisions for the trail. Strategy implementation will be the primary responsibility of the **CVT Leadership Council**, which will be coordinated and chaired by CVC.

The CVT Leadership Council membership will include representatives from Credit River Watershed municipalities (Mississauga, Brampton, Halton Hills, Caledon and Orangeville, Peel, Halton and Dufferin); the ancestral nation, treaty holders and guardians of the Credit River lands, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation; and a representative from each of the Implementation Committees.



Implementation Committees will be accountable to the Leadership Council and will support the achievement of strategic directions by focus area through established working groups. Membership of the Implementation Committees and working groups will be wholly representative of the partners, stakeholders and community members that have a role in advancing the CVT values and mission.

| IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEES                   | WORKING GROUPS  |
|---|---|
| <b>Trail Planning and Management</b>        | Route Planning<br>Land Access and Acquisition<br>Infrastructure Planning and Construction                             |
| <b>Fundraising and Community Engagement</b> | Friends of the Credit Valley Trail<br>CVC Foundation Land Securement Cabinet  |
| <b>Marketing and Communications</b>         | CVT Brand<br>Website and Social Media<br>Trail User Tools   |
| <b>Indigenous Roundtable</b>                | Indigenous Heritage and Values<br>Indigenous Experience Plan  |
| <b>Experience Planning</b>                  | Arts, Culture and Tourism<br>Environmental Education<br>Heritage Destinations<br>Recreation and Active Transportation |

The Leadership Council and Implementation Committees will be supported by the CVT Senior Coordinator, an employee of CVC.

The Terms of Reference for the CVT Leadership Council and Implementation Committees will be developed and implemented by CVC and project partners in 2018.

# Our Path Ahead

Successfully implementing the strategy, building the CVT and creating a best-in-class trail user experience are dependent on several critical success factors.

Government and communities must work together and share responsibility to build a successful trail that we are all proud of.



## SUCCESS FACTORS ESSENTIAL TO ACCOMPLISHING OUR MISSION

**Political Leadership:** Representation on the CVT Leadership Council by each watershed municipality is critical. Municipal champions will influence our ability to implement the strategic directions. They will help address and overcome barriers to success.

**Strategic Partnerships:** The CVT Strategy encourages active participation through partnership. The synergy created from working collaboratively will result in greater and more accelerated accomplishments, including increased community awareness of the CVT and opportunities for sharing resources and expertise.

**Community Engagement:** Connections to community groups and local residents must be further cultivated to ensure the CVT becomes a part of the fabric of communities along the route. Impact is best achieved through membership on the CVT Leadership Council and Implementation Committees.

**Sustainable Funding:** Innovative and sustainable funding partnerships and programs are essential to ensure the vision of the CVT is achieved. Federal, provincial and municipal investment will help leverage private sector and individual donor support.

**Land Access:** The creation, cultivation and maintenance of healthy working relationships with landowners, both public and private, will help resolve concerns as they arise. They will facilitate participation in the legacy of the CVT.

**Marketing and Branding:** Co-branding of existing trail sections with the CVT brand identity will significantly and immediately raise the profile of the CVT to accelerate achievement of our vision.

**Volunteer Stewardship:** The CVT will need “boots on the ground”. Volunteer stewards will help maintain the trail, promote responsible trail use etiquette and will help implement conservation management initiatives such as ecosystem restoration projects, invasive plant control measures and programs to support biodiversity.

# Our First Steps Along the Path (2018 - 2019)

Our journey of 100 kilometres begins with a single step. The CVT Strategy serves as our guide, roadmap and compass.

CVC, in collaboration with CVT partners and watershed municipalities, will achieve the following in the first two years of strategy implementation:



## THE TRAIL

Establish the CVT Leadership Council and implement a governance structure that transforms the role of the current CVT Steering Committee into key Implementation Committees and working groups

Present the CVT Strategy to watershed municipal councils and pertinent municipal staff for endorsement and support

Confirm the optimum route, cost projections and project phasing

Create a CVT Coordinator position

Create and launch the CVT brand identity

Develop and implement a multi-faceted fundraising campaign and establish the 'Friends of the Credit Valley Trail'

Initiate a landowner outreach strategy that fosters healthy relationships, on private and public lands, along the optimal trail route

## THE EXPERIENCE

Complete and begin implementing the CVT Tourism Development Study

Complete and begin implementing the CVT Indigenous Experience Plan

Develop and implement the CVT Heritage Destination Plan

Initiate the CVT Environmental Education Plan

Initiate the CVT Recreation and Active Transportation Plan

Promote and market existing sections of the trail to encourage use by residents and visitors



## In Closing

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The CVT will take us on a journey through the natural, cultural and historical features of the Credit River Valley. The CVT will have experiences for everyone, whether sharing Indigenous culture, charming villages, thriving cities, parks, outdoor activities, culinary sensations, cultural sites or natural wonders.

Along the way, the trail will tell a story, one that unites us through our deep connection to nature, instills a sense of place and connectedness to land, empowers generations of river guardians and fosters an ethic of care for what sustains us: our Credit River.

The legacy of the CVT will exist in the hearts, minds and souls of the communities and individuals that embrace the adventure and take the journey.

**As we move forward in pursuit of our vision, a number of issues and challenges lay in front of us. These include but are not limited to:**

- Private landowner concerns
- Managing the environmental impacts of trail development and use
- Growing community support
- Establishing a reliable and diverse funding model

The challenge is exciting, our vision is achievable and the future of the CVT is ours to shape, together.

# Acknowledgements

**We would like to acknowledge the support, enthusiasm, expertise and participation of all the parties who provided valuable input into the development of the CVT Strategy.**



Alton Grange Association  
Alton Mill Arts Centre  
Archaeological Services Inc.  
Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Halton Hills  
Brampton Heritage Board  
Bruce Trail, Caledon Chapter  
Bruce Trail, Toronto Chapter  
Caledon Heritage  
Central Counties Tourism  
City of Brampton  
City of Mississauga  
Coalition for the Niagara Escarpment  
Credit River Alliance  
Credit River Métis Council  
Credit Valley Conservation  
Credit Valley Conservation Foundation  
Credit Valley Heritage Society  
Esqueping Historical Society  
Friends of Island Lake

Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation  
Halton Hills Cultural Roundtable  
Headwaters Tourism  
Heritage Mississauga  
Hike Ontario  
Humber College of Applied Arts & Technology  
Huron-Wendat First Nation  
Métis Council of Ontario  
Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation  
Niagara Escarpment Commission  
Norval Community Association  
Ontario Headwaters Institute  
Ontario Heritage Trust  
Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport  
Ontario Parks  
Ontario Trails Council  
Peel Art Gallery Museum + Archives  
Peterborough Sacred Water Circle  
Protect our Water and Environmental Resources Region of Peel  
Riverwood Conservancy  
Sierra Club of Canada, Peel Region Group  
Six Nations of the Grand River  
Town of Caledon

Town of Erin  
Town of Halton Hills  
Town of Halton Hills Cultural Roundtable  
Town of Orangeville  
Waterfront Regeneration Trust  
Whole Village Farm Co-op  
Willow Park Ecology Centre  
York University

## **Project Leads, Credit Valley Conservation**

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Terri LeRoux

## **Project Consultants**

Bradley Fauteux  
Brook McIlroy  
Richard Innes, BrainTrust  
Ronald Williamson and Andrea Carnevale, Archaeological Services Inc.  
Susan Robertson, People Plan Community

## **Special Thanks to:**

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Dave Beaton  
Kim Wheatley, Anishinaabe Cultural Consultant  
Mike Puddister

# Credit Valley Trail Strategy Roadmap

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Download a copy of the Credit Valley Trail Strategy Roadmap at **[creditvalleytrail.ca](http://creditvalleytrail.ca)**.

# Chart foldout

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# CVC Board of Directors CVT Strategy Approval

## Resolution 94/17

Moved By Don MacIver

Seconded By Karen Ras

**WHEREAS** the Credit Valley Trail concept was originally conceived in the 1956 Watershed Report; and,

**WHEREAS** the 2014 CVC Strategic Plan directed staff to develop a Credit Valley Trail that connects the waterfront to the headwaters, celebrates our shared local history and creates a strong sense of place and emotional connection to the Credit River and its valley

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the report entitled "Credit Valley Trail Strategy" be received and appended to the minutes of this meeting as Schedule 'B'; and

**THAT** the CVC Board of Directors approve the Credit Valley Trail Strategy as presented; and

**THAT** staff be directed to seek endorsement of the Strategy from local and regional municipal councils; and further

**THAT** copies of this report and final Strategy be provided to watershed municipalities, CVT Steering Committee members, Credit Valley Heritage Society, CVT Indigenous Roundtable members, the Greenbelt Foundation, the Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport, the Ontario Trails Council, watershed MPs and MPPs, along with CVC and CVCF Board Members

**CARRIED**

**December 8, 2017**

The Credit Valley Trail will bring the significance of the Credit's heritage to life and is a legacy project that can only be achieved through sustained political leadership.

Together, for the benefit of present and future generations, we will create a 100 kilometre continuous, connected river valley trail through Orangeville, Caledon, Halton Hills, Brampton and Mississauga.

A collection of handwritten signatures of municipal leaders, arranged in three rows. The signatures are in black ink on a light-colored background. Some names are partially legible, such as "Don MacIver", "Karen Ras", and "Bob Hughes".

Municipal Leaders' Pledge

Keep up to date on CVT Strategy implementation by visiting  
[creditvalleytrail.ca](http://creditvalleytrail.ca)

**Please direct comments and inquiries to:**

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**Credit Valley  
Conservation**  
inspired by nature