

# RECREATIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY

Town of Berwick

**2020**





# Table of Contents

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	4
PURPOSE.....	4
TRAILS VISION.....	4
GUIDING PRINCIPLES .....	5
BENEFITS OF TRAILS.....	6
BERWICK TRAILS .....	7
TRAIL DEVELOPMENT .....	9
STRATEGY and CRITERIA.....	9
PLANNING.....	10
BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION:.....	11
MAINTENANCE and MONITORING: .....	11
PROMOTION.....	12
TOWN OF BERWICK TRAILS COMMITTEE GOALS AND ACTION.....	14
2020-2025.....	14
CONCLUSION .....	14
Appendices .....	15



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Trails are instrumental to the well being and health of our community, and the individuals that make up the Town of Berwick. As the multi-faceted benefits of trails become more apparent, there is an increasing emphasis on their place within communities. This Recreational Trails Strategy was reviewed and updated based on the 2004 Recreational Trails Strategy (Trinacty,2017) originally developed through the past Recreation Advisory Committee, Council, and focus groups.

The 2020 Recreational Trails Strategy (RTS) has been prepared to advise planning, development, management and promotion of trails moving forward to guide the long term visions within the Town of Berwick. This document will be overseen by the Active Living Coordinator/ MPAL and priorities revisited every 5 years.



## INTRODUCTION

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### PURPOSE

The role and importance of recreational trails has changed dramatically in the last 10 to 15 years. Trails are no longer just for adventurous and seasoned participants. Trails have become a part of the lives of a significant and growing proportion of our community. Trails are a method of recreation and leisure activities as well as a means for active transportation and accessibility.

There is increased demand for trail use and trail opportunities around communities. With this shift, there are standards for trail development and use such as trail etiquette. These opportunities provide the ability for consistency and uniform strategies between towns and within Nova Scotia in regard to trail planning, and maintaining multi-use trails. This also allows the opportunity to promote the access of trails for all to get users out and on the trails encouraging activity in the outdoor environment.

Planning for trails demands a strategic and coordinated approach to ensure a high-quality recreation trail system through both Berwick, Kings County and the Province of Nova Scotia that are both sustainable and attractive to the community. This area encompasses approximately 2500 residents (2016) and 6.80km<sup>2</sup>. This document will focus on the history of the trails, multi-use pathways and water ways as well. The Berwick Trails Committee and Town of Berwick Active Living Coordinator have been working hard to create usable spaces and recreation areas for four seasons of use. This Trails Strategy aims to provide a framework for the development of trail, identification of priorities and frameworks for consistent and timely resource allocation. It will help guide decision making, marketing, monitoring, maintenance, signage and management as well.

### TRAILS VISION

*"To provide a sustainable and diverse network of quality trails that enhances the lifestyle, health, environment and opportunities for the citizens of Berwick and visitors to our town."*

#### **What is a trail?**

Trails come in many different forms and can provide equally diverse experiences. Trail can refer to a simple neighborhood footpath, multi-use rail trail, canoe route, winding OHV track to a favorite hunting or fishing spot, a challenging long distance hiking opportunity or any number of other forms of travel ways. Water trails illustrate how our definition of what is a trail evolves and changes with time. The way trails are valued also shapes how they are defined.



Trails are primarily used for recreational purposes; however they are also increasingly valued for their role in the promotion of health and wellness, active transportation, environmental and cultural education, economic development, and strengthening community. For the purpose of the strategy, trails can include all of the above but the focus is on managed trails available for public use. (NS, 2019)

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Berwick Recreational Trails Strategy is founded upon the following guiding principles that reflect the policies and priorities for trail development and management in the Town of Berwick. These have been adapted to align with the seven guiding principles from the NS Shared Trails Strategy (NS, 2019)

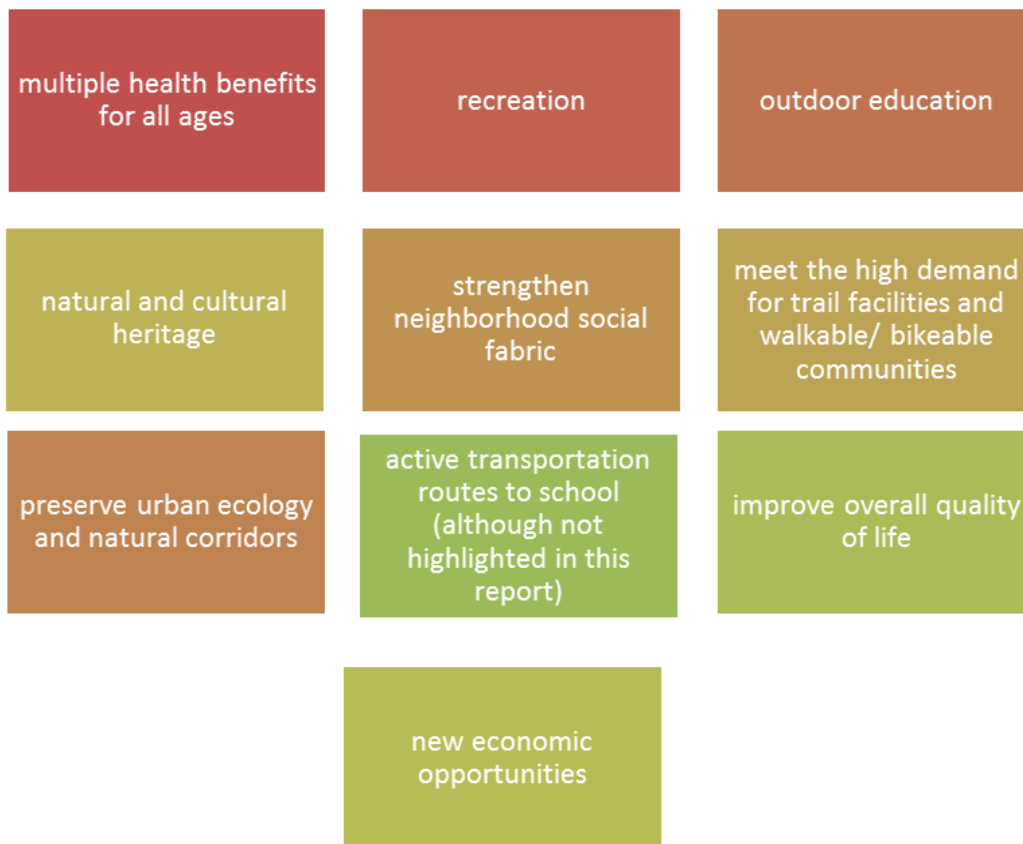
- **Maximize use** -Creating a broad spectrum of high quality and safe trail opportunities relevant to the needs of users and communities.
- **Benefits oriented** -Optimizing benefits for individuals, communities and the province, including economic benefits.
- **Accessibility** -All Nova Scotian's are able to participate in trail experiences.
- **Quality** -Trails are developed and managed to appropriate and consistent standards.
- **Sustainability** -Developing and managing trails so they are sustainable for the long term.
- **Partnership** -Working collaboratively to find and realize a shared vision that reflects the aspirations and the broader potential for trails in the province.
- **Community Development** -Communities and groups are empowered and enabled to set direction and take the action needed to be successful in their trail work.



## BENEFITS OF TRAILS

The Berwick Trails Committee and Town of Berwick Active Living Coordinator have been working hard to create usable spaces and recreation areas for four seasons of use. Berwick is a 'Hub' well known throughout all season for multiple types of trail users.

Trails are important in the Berwick Trails study area for the following reasons:



The benefits of trails are diverse and multi faceted. Trails are important to individuals, communities and the environment. Social health, physical fitness, environmental protection, cultural preservation and the economy can benefit from the effects and experiences offered by recreational trails.

The following summarizes the main benefits in 3 sections of benefit; Social and Physical Health, Environmental and Cultural, Economic.



SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL BENEFITS:	ECONOMIC BENEFITS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation can improve physical and mental health.</li> <li>• Participation and interaction between a wide range of community members, age groups, individuals and families and facilitate social interaction.</li> <li>• Trails can offer a wide range of opportunities to a wide range of people at a relatively low cost.</li> <li>• Trails can introduce participants to other recreational and participation offerings in the community.</li> <li>• Trails help to connect people and places, to develop and grow community pride.</li> <li>• Trails provide entrance into volunteer and joint projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trails provide opportunities for the community to experience and preserve natural and cultural values.</li> <li>• Trails help to protect the adjacent environments by localizing impacts and facilitating management of visitation effects.</li> <li>• Trails provide for educational and interpretive opportunities and increase environmental and cultural awareness and appreciation.</li> <li>• Well connected trail networks can decrease the use of motorized vehicles for transportation and recreation therefore reducing the production of emissions.</li> <li>• Trails provide opportunities for community participation in conservation and re-vegetation work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trails support and enhance local business opportunities on a year round basis.</li> <li>• Trail visitors generate economic revenue in communities along trails.</li> <li>• Trail users spend money preparing for their trail journeys or recreation activities.</li> <li>• Trail construction and maintenance can generate employment opportunities as well as volunteer opportunities.</li> <li>• Participation in trail activities improves community health and reduces health expenditure.</li> </ul>

## BERWICK TRAILS

### Existing Trails

**Apple Capital Heritage Trail** - The Annapolis Valley Trails System 'Harvest Moon Trail' runs right through the Town of Berwick. Our beautiful section, called the "Apple Capital Heritage Trail" is a 2.2 km section shared-use trail which provides great access to the community. At any given time you will find a variety of modes of transportation, including walkers, joggers, cyclists, cross-country skiers, equestrians, ATV's and snowmobiles on the trail. The trail is



managed by the Town of Berwick's Recreation and Community Development Department through a Land use agreement with the Province (Lands and Forestry) in partnership with the Annapolis Valley Trails Coalition.

**KMCC Connector-** A newly built connecting trail at the perimeter of the west side of town. This connects the Apple Capital Heritage Trail to the main part of town at the KMCC center and Berwick and District School. This trail is maintained by the Town of Berwick Public Works.

**Chute Park Walking Track-** Chute Park is home to a small year round walking track at the outskirts of the Bike Skills Park. This less than a kilometre walking track is perfect for a few laps at lunch time or a family snowshoe in the winter.

**Brown Street Connector-** From the Apple Capital Heritage Trail connect to the south end of town through the back of the Peter Connell Memorial Park. This connector is a great route for active transportation in and out of town to the south.

**Daniel Drive to Town Hall –** a quick connector from residential sections to Town Hall field

**Foster Street to Berwick School-** A route used by many school going residents

**Cottage Street to Spicer Park –** Walking entrance to Spicer Park is a great addition to this hidden gem within the Town.

**Sidewalks & Park Trails –** Throughout the Town of Berwick sidewalks and parks are utilized often by many residents. These are regularly maintained by the Town of Berwick Public Works.





## TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

### STRATEGY and CRITERIA

The Recreational Trails Strategy for the Town of Berwick focuses on providing for both non-motorized recreational activities such as walking, running, cycling, horseback riding, skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and other recreational uses and motorized activities. Berwick Trails aim to meet the standard recommendations for trail requirements from the NS Trails Federation (wayfinding, construction and accessibility etc) and provide vital resources for residents and visitors.

Section	KEY STRATEGIES	Effort
<b>Policy</b>	Develop consistent trail policy (including trail management, access agreements, trail sharing, risk management, volunteering, etc.) for all trail participants.	Trail Committee Trail Strategy AVTC Membership
<b>Relationships</b>	Deliver leadership in, and facilitation of, coordinated trail policy, planning, development, management, promotion and review of trail initiatives within the Town of Berwick walking trail site.	Trail Strategy
	Increase opportunities by engaging and enhancing land-owner participation in the provision of trails and linkages to the trail site.	Trail Committee Trail Strategy
<b>Facilities</b>	Identify factors that prevent participation in the utilization of recreational trails and developing solutions and actions to facilitate participation.	Trail Committee Trail Strategy AVTC Membership
	Build upon, develop and enhance the existing trail site.	Maintenance and partnerships for future developments



## PLANNING

Quality planning is a key component to a successful trail system. The level of trail difficulty requires different levels of planning but in each case, this trail strategy guides the implementing of the trail.

A Developed trail plan for each proposed new trail will be completed. The trail plan can be carried out internally or utilize supports from external organizations such as the AVTC for uniformity.

The plan should have the following components:

Plan + Scope:	Plan name and proposed scope is important to gauge resources needed and guide the following elements.
Management:	Indicate who is the contact and project leader for the trail development and maintenance for the long term.
Context:	The plan should clearly show how the trail links into a larger system and how the trail links to needed facilities such as a trailhead.
Vision:	The plan should clearly state a vision for the trail in the future and state what will be achieved by implementing the plan.
Inventory:	The plan should define existing conditions along the trail including such elements as land uses, facilities, environmental conditions, historical and cultural resources, users, use patterns, and trail conditions. Individuals using the plan should be able to clearly understand where sensitive resources are, what and where trail problems exist, and how the trail is being used.
Need:	The plan should define problems that need to be addressed in order to make the trail system successful and it should also define desired goals.
Plan Development and Implementation Strategies:	The plan should provide a clear picture of what is being proposed for the trail system and how the plan will be implemented and maintained. The plan should include sufficient implementation strategies that generally include design, construction, fundraising, promotion, education and interpretation, partnerships, priorities, and maintenance strategies. Phasing plans are often needed since many plans are implemented in progressive phases over time.
Consultation:	When planning for new trail development in Town, the Community Development and Recreation Department and Trails Committee will ensure that appreciate consultations for adjacent landowners is carried out and recorded for reporting. A Minimum of 2 consultation efforts to residents or council are recommended



## BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION:

Construction of trails within the Town of Berwick will be completed to reflect those of the guiding principles. The trails will be intended to be high quality trails, and accessible based on the intended purpose.

For general construction, the standards of the Nova Scotia Trails Building recommendations will be followed. Support from experts like the Annapolis Valley Trails Coalition will also be used to help with building consultation and work efforts.

## MAINTENANCE and MONITORING:

Maintenance, monitoring and management should be addressed at the outset of a project to ensure all aspects are considered. These are included the Trail Plan as outlined above, touching on the following:

- Long-term success of the trail
- A safe environment for trail users is provided for and exposure to liability is reduced
- Planning, design and construction focuses on long-term maintenance issues
- A trail monitoring system is established so impacts are understood
- Appropriate funding for long-term maintenance is considered

These are essential factors in the long term success of the trail. Trails will be maintained by Town of Berwick. The opportunity for support in maintenance is available through partnership agreements if outlined by the trail plan and proposal.

While partnerships are crucial to creating a community-based resource that contributes to long-term success of a project, typically one organization becomes the “enduring” management/maintenance entity. Therefore, it is essential that responsibilities for maintenance – both human and financial resources be outlined during the planning stage.

### **Personal Considerations**

Partners and volunteers who are constructing, maintaining or monitoring trails are essential. Positive relationships must be established and nurtured. Continuing to reference the Nova Scotia Trails standards documents will help volunteers and partners in trail maintenance and monitoring.



## **Financial considerations**

Long term maintenance and monitoring will be supported by the Community Development and Recreation budget annually. This support will help meet the goals and vision of this strategy for the long term.

Donations will also be accepted. Conditions to each request will be granted. Funds will be added to general trails account for continuing maintenance and monitoring, unless otherwise specified.

Grants will be continued to be accessed for maintenance and building as they become available.

## **Legal Considerations**

The Town of Berwick should create a policy to address Accident Assessment Procedure. Currently there is support provided on this topic as part of the Membership agreement with the Annapolis Valley Trails Coalition.

Further assistance could be provided Berwick was to enroll as a member of the NS trails Federation. This recommendation was taken to council Sept 2020.

Legal paperwork and Reports will be kept filed in house with the ALC for any future need.

## **PROMOTION**

Promotion is one of the most important components when it comes to Berwick's effort on trails. We have a strong desire to share these spaces with residents, visitors and all who might benefit from accessing them. There is a great emphasis placed on trail promotion as outlined below

- 1) Year round access – Accessibility of Berwick Trails is a huge draw. For year round access to trails and facilities Berwick is a well- known hub (gas, food, and other utilities) providing assets to many user groups throughout the 4 seasons, as well as economic stimulus.

To take full advantage of this 'Hub' status, engaging with many user groups is critical. Sharing, supporting and connecting with user groups is a simple way to do this. A sample list to connect with each year would be



## Berwick \_ Trail Strategy

- NS Trails
- TCT
- SANS +ATVANS
- Harvest Moon Trail
- Bicycle NS
- Hike NS
- Western Loop Trail
- Bike NS
- Equestrian Nova Scotia

- 2) Maps and interpretive panels – Set throughout the town trails and available on the town website for easy download and access for those planning trips to Berwick and utilizing the spaces. Highlighting the Destination Trails Website is a great resource to utilize for this effort.
- 3) Leisure and recreation programming – Promoting the facilities and trails can be done by hosting programs utilizing them. The recreation team is working hard to provide programming with a focus on our trails and spaces.
- 4) Connection to Nature – Promoting trails is vital in helping to reduce nature deficiency disorder. Our trails offer connection to forests, birds, wildlife, and flora and much more. Allowing the opportunity to learn and explore as people utilize them.
- 5) Social Media efforts –Continuous promotion of the Berwick Trails are being made via social media, capturing the above efforts. A social media plan for the whole recreation department is in the works, to help create consistent messaging and to encourage people to continue to utilize the trails in their everyday lives.



## TOWN OF BERWICK TRAILS COMMITTEE GOALS AND ACTION

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### 2020-2025

Leisure and recreation programming	Promoting the facilities and trails all year round. Emphasis will be placed on using trails for various programs
Wayfinding	Efforts to streamline the way finding with Community Development and the AVTC to better connect Maps and interpretive panels, and signage along the trails and parks facilities (connect to website also )
Update infrastructure	Install proper rest stops, waste receptacles and dog stations on the trails for user experience enhancement and trail upkeep efforts.
Perimeter Trail	Continue efforts to complete the Berwick Perimeter Trail. Following updated 2020 Perimeter Trail Plan
Reporting	A brief Annual Report (fiscal year) will be completed by the ALC and Trails Committee. This will highlight the efforts, events, development, promotions and partnerships (guiding principles and actions) of the year. To be complied to help refresh the trails strategy every 5 years.

## CONCLUSION

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The development of this strategy will be used to provide direction for trail development in the Town of Berwick and as a guide for the Community Development and Recreation Department and the Community Development Committee. As the trail attempts to wind its way around the Town through different landscapes, the strategy plays a big part in the planning and implementation of desired trails. Remembering, that whatever trails are being developed, will have the best interests of the community included.



## Appendices

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### Appendix 1- Glossary of Terms

**Active Transportation:** any form of human-powered transportation. It is any trip made for the purposes of getting yourself, or others, to a particular destination such as to work, to school, to the store or to visit friends. It can take place on land or water.

**Community Development:** Community development seeks to remove barriers and empower individuals and groups with the skills they need to set direction and effect change within their communities. It serves to build stronger and more vibrant communities at the grass roots level. This development often takes place when community members come together to take collective action and/or generate solutions to common problems.

**Community Trail Groups/Managers:** not-for-profit organizations that are formed to build and manage sections of trail near the community where their members live. **Designated Trails:** trails that have been designated for use by a particular type of trail user.

**Established Trails:** taken from the Nova Scotia Trails Act: trails that are located and operate on Crown lands and over watercourses for recreational use and enjoyment or privately owned lands, with the prior consent of the owners or occupiers.

**Managed Trails:** recreational trails that are managed or operated by a government department, a registered not-for-profit trails organization or an incorporated trail user group. In order to qualify as a managed trail, there must be an agreement between the manager / operator and the landowner that establishes the terms of use of the trail.

**Motorized Trails:** trails that permit snowmobiles and/or ATVs and/or off-road motorcycles.

**Non-Motorized Trails:** trails that do not permit snowmobiles, ATVs or off-road motorcycles.

**OHV:** an abbreviation for an off highway vehicle. Any motorized mode of transportation built for cross-country travel on land, water, snow, ice or marsh or swamp land or on other natural terrain.

**Recreation:** the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

**Shared Use Trails:** trails that permit more than one type of trail user either at the same time or during different seasons.

**Single Use Trails:** trails that are designed for use by a single trail user group.

**Trans Canada Trail:** a national registered charity whose purpose is to promote the completion and use of the Trans Canada Trail, a shared use trail that will run 22,000 kilometres from coast to coast to coast.

**Trails Community:** all those who have a stake in the development of trails in the province and can include individuals, community groups, provincial organizations, Mi'kmaq communities, businesses, landowners and the various levels of government.



Berwick \_ Trail Strategy

**Trails Movement:** the results of efforts made by the trails community.

**Trail User:** anyone who uses a trail in some way.

**Trail User Group:** a group of trail users who join an organization that is dedicated to pursuing their preferred activity on trails.

## **Appendix 2- Works Cited**

Government of Nova Scotia. (2019). Nova Scotia Shared Trails Strategy.

[https://novascotia.ca/trailstrategy/docs/18-47600\\_SharedStrat\\_TrailsNS\\_Report\\_ENG\\_LoRes.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/trailstrategy/docs/18-47600_SharedStrat_TrailsNS_Report_ENG_LoRes.pdf)

Government of Nova Scotia. (2018). Lets Get Moving Strategy.

<https://novascotia.ca/letsgetmoving/docs/letsgetmoving-en.pdf>

Trinacty, M (2017) Berwick Trails Final Assessment. Berwick Trails Report. Unpublished Document. Town of Berwick.

## **Appendix 3 –Other Supporting Documents used**

Priority Planning for New Trail Development over next 5 years (2020-2025)

Berwick Perimeter Trail Plan 2020