

The background image shows a scenic riverwalk trail. In the foreground, a woman in a green shirt and black pants stands on a wooden boardwalk, looking up at a bird. A man in a red shirt is running away from the camera on the same path. To the left, there is an informational sign with a map. The trail is surrounded by tall reeds and a body of water. In the background, there are trees and a small building with a red roof. The sky is blue with a few birds flying.

The Town of Erin Rotary Riverwalk Trail Feasibility Study

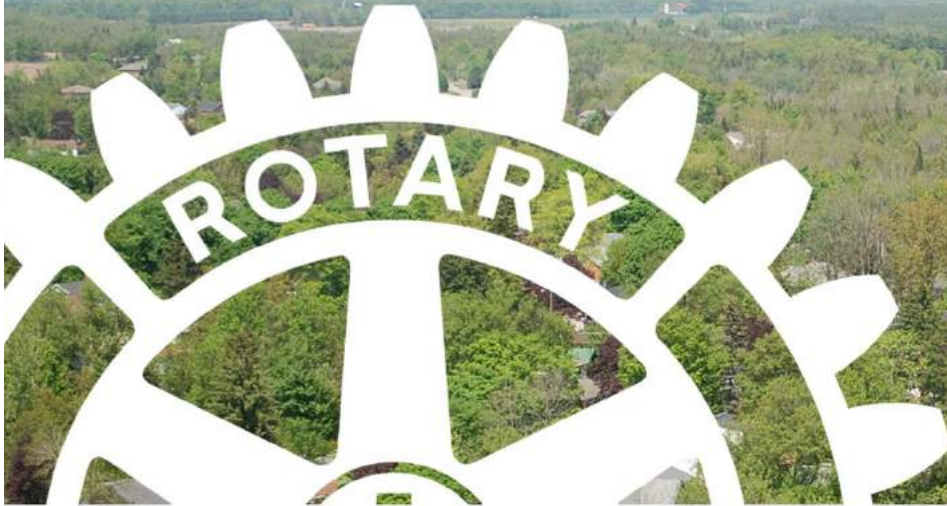
Report Overview

September 2016

Stempski Kelly Associates Inc.

This document is set in a “user-friendly” format summarizing the Feasibility Study contents. To see the report in its entirety, contact Robyn Mulder (EDO, Town of Erin) at Robyn.Mulder@erin.ca

‘Creating a Legacy Project’ – Rotary Involvement



*As the local Rotary Club was looking for a “**Legacy Project**” within the Town of Erin, discussions with **Economic Development** and the Mayor determined a “**riverwalk**” **trailway** project may be worth investigating. Unanimously voted in by the Rotarians as something they could “fundraise” given their desire for a **phased “outdoor activities” project**.*

The “Riverwalk Trail” idea was considered as an ideal project that could use the services of the Rotary, be enjoyed by the community, and also, inadvertently help the local business environment given recent trends for trail desirability and the opportune connections to other regional trail networks that exist within the Town of Erin.

Purpose of the Project . . .



*The aim of this project was to determine the feasibility of implementing a Riverwalk Trail for the Town of Erin; with **specific focus on capturing the Lower West Credit River experience in Downtown Erin and the Mill Pond located in Hillsburgh** – both with connections to the Elora-Cataract Trail and the Town’s retail areas.*

Stempski Kelly Associates Inc. (SKA), a design, landscape architecture, and planning firm located in central Wellington County was retained for this project.

Driving Economic Benefits through Trail Development



As 'trail use' grows in popularity, communities realize the economic potentials trails can bring to an area since they can act, when positioned well, as tourist attractions/destinations. Trails provide opportunities for all businesses, from commercial recreation and restaurants, to shops and places of lodging, all of which contributes to the local economy.

The economic benefits can continue to increase when trails are properly designed and as active transportation infrastructure when they form a network of connections between communities and a variety of attractions. When analyzing the positive impacts trails can bring to a community, they begin to be recognized as drivers of economic development.

POSSIBLE ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Attracting trail enthusiasts to the area who would ultimately have a physical connection to the downtowns



The quantifiable benefits – that is, dollars for the municipality and local businesses are inherent with increased visitation



Assets – like trails – provide partnership opportunities for municipalities, residents, community groups, prospective developers, etc.



ADDED, INTANGIBLES SUCH AS SOCIAL, HEALTH AND ECOSYSTEM VALUES OF SUCH A TRAIL SYSTEM PROVIDE TREMENDOUS BENEFIT TO COMMUNITIES

These intangibles match-up very well with current policies most municipalities are embracing today – *healthy communities, active play, active transportation, etc.*

The study included . . .

- 5 month community process
- 4 Section Report
- 139 Pages
- + 25 Maps
- 16 Illustratives
- 13 Stakeholder Consultations
- 3 Public Sessions
- 4 Steering Committee Meetings



Erin Main Street at Stanley Park – Looking east (SKA artist rendition)

1

Foundations

2

Identifying Preliminary Directions

3

Recommended Trail Alignment

4

Making the Case

The following represents an overview of a **FOUR-PART STUDY DOCUMENT**

It encompasses railway feasibility related content complemented with 'demonstration sketches' suggesting what the trail could be like.

WANT TO SEE THE FULL REPORT?

The report is set in a “user-friendly” format to aid in informing the Erin community in understanding trail development and implementation. To see the report in its entirety, contact Robyn Mulder (EDO, Town of Erin) at Robyn.Mulder@erin.ca

Report Section 1.0 Foundations

Provides an introduction to the feasibility study process for the Rotary Riverwalk Trail that deals with Erin's history, context, trends and assessment of related systems in the Erin and Hillsburgh Study Areas.



Hillsburgh Bullrush Lookout – (SKA artist rendition)

The Role and Scope. . .



The Town of Erin Rotary Riverwalk Trail Feasibility Study is the vehicle for assessing the implementation of a potential riverwalk trail development and for considering, maintaining and preserving existing facilities, infrastructure and environments. It also provides a means for articulating a common purpose within the Town addressing the possibility of a 'river walk' trail, and for communicating this to its stakeholders, regulatory agencies and the community at large. While this study addresses many aspects of the Town, it has specific focus on the environment in which the riverwalk trail may be situated.

LIFESTYLE TRENDS

In recent years, Canadians have continually become less and less physically active. Combined with rises in obesity rates, a major public health concern has arisen due to increases in heart disease, stroke and other chronic conditions. Physical activity not only helps combat these issues, but it also creates further positive health outcomes such as improved physical, mental and social health

All statistics from Planning Healthy Communities Fact Sheet Series 2012.

69% of adults and 91% of children/youth are not getting the daily recommended levels of physical activity



1 in 4 adults are considered obese, along with about 1 in 10 children/youth between the ages of 6 and 17



Path connections, quality and scenery are all aspects identified as having a positive relationship with people's decisions to walk or bike



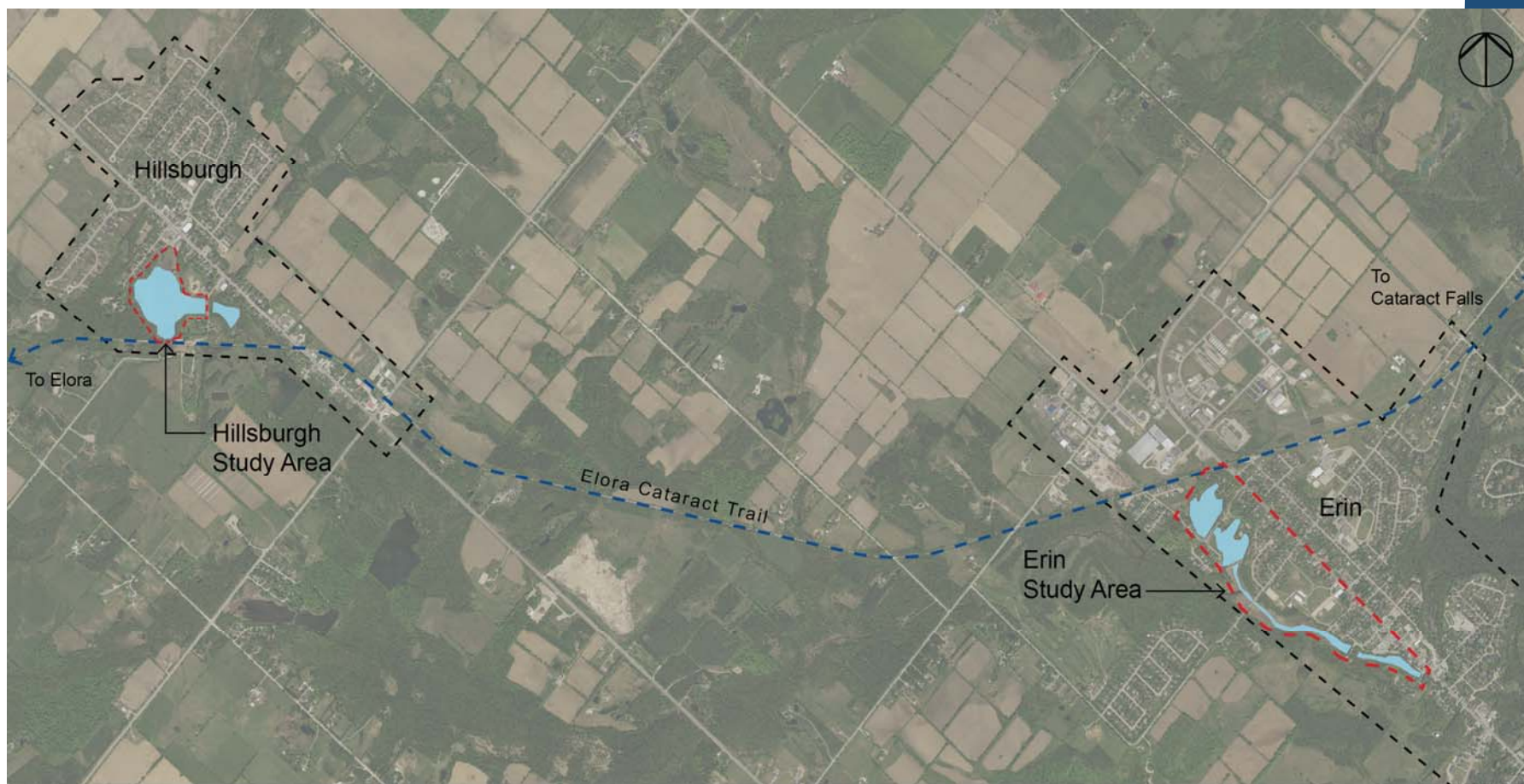
For many cyclists, the characteristics of the route were more important than those of the origin or the destination of travel



IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THE COMMUNITY TRAIL DESIGN THAT SUPPORTS ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION HAS RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF BENEFITS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH, THE ENVIRONMENT AND CAN INCREASE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION.

These include, promoting physical activity, improving air quality, reducing contributions to climate change and even improving community livability.

Study Site Context



Aerial Image Provided By Wellington County GIS (2015 Aerial)

Erin Context



Hillsburgh Context



Stakeholder Consultation. . .



The consultation team met with representatives from 13 stakeholder groups. These groups represented the Town, trail and business associations and local community groups. Discussions about the Erin Riverwalk Trail Feasibility study were formulated on a standard set of questions asked to each stakeholder representative.


All groups expressed a keen interest in the development of the project and thought that the Riverwalk Trail would be a positive feature for the Town. The trail itself would facilitate many of the group's various activities. It would be an additional recreational activity for local residents, offer alternative pedestrian and cycling routes, and would be a natural attraction for both the local community and visitors. Whether it was the trail itself, or the possible alignment of the trail in terms of location, the trail would effect most of the stakeholder groups in some way.



What we heard . . .

Community Concerns:

- Property Ownership
 - *Private Property, Relationship with CVC . . .*
- Infrastructure, related supportive facilities
 - *Accessibility, Parking, Connections to Surrounding Opportunities . . .*
- Maintenance & Care
 - *Sustainability, Staffing, Longevity of Trail . . .*
- Safety/Security
 - *For Users/Trails/Neighbours, Vandalism, Liability . . .*
- Expense



What we heard . . .

General Comments (from session participants):

- Very supportive of trail development – “not to be missed” opportunity for Erin
- Community is technically “under serviced” in Trails (Wellington County)
- Economic benefits / encourages repeat visitors to Town
- Active Transportation is trending
- Community pride / brings Community together
- Extension of Natural & Cultural Heritage / Green Sustainable Community
- Somewhere else to “go”

Report Section 2.0

Identifying Preliminary Directions

Provides an understanding of the analysis of the site conditions available to a potential Rotary Riverwalk Trail and deals with opportunities and constraints, user groups, amenities, and the identification and evaluation of existing conditions



- Support
- Proximity to Existing Trails
- Natural Features
- Existing Desire Lines
- Proximity to Desired Destinations
- Heritage Features
- Open Spaces Conducive to Parking
- View Ports
- Existing Road Bridges and Dams



- Private Property / Public Use
- Wetlands, Associated Wildlife and Fauna
- River Flood Lines and Water Levels
- State of Existing Dams and Bridges
- Existing Infrastructure Limitations
- Lack of Visual Appeal
- Main Street Erin



OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Each and every site presents a unique set of opportunities and constraints influencing design considerations.

To be the most successful at understanding site feasibility, it is important to have a thorough grasp of all factors and their associated benefits or implications.

What most see...

Erin

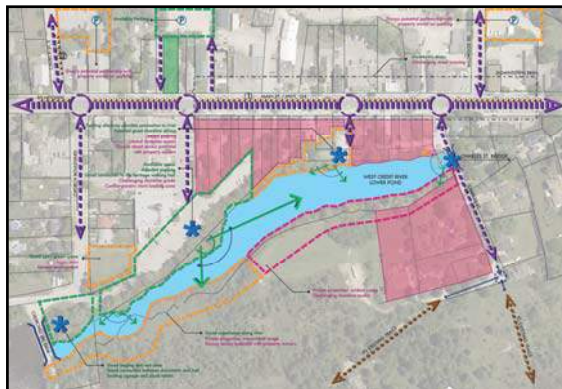
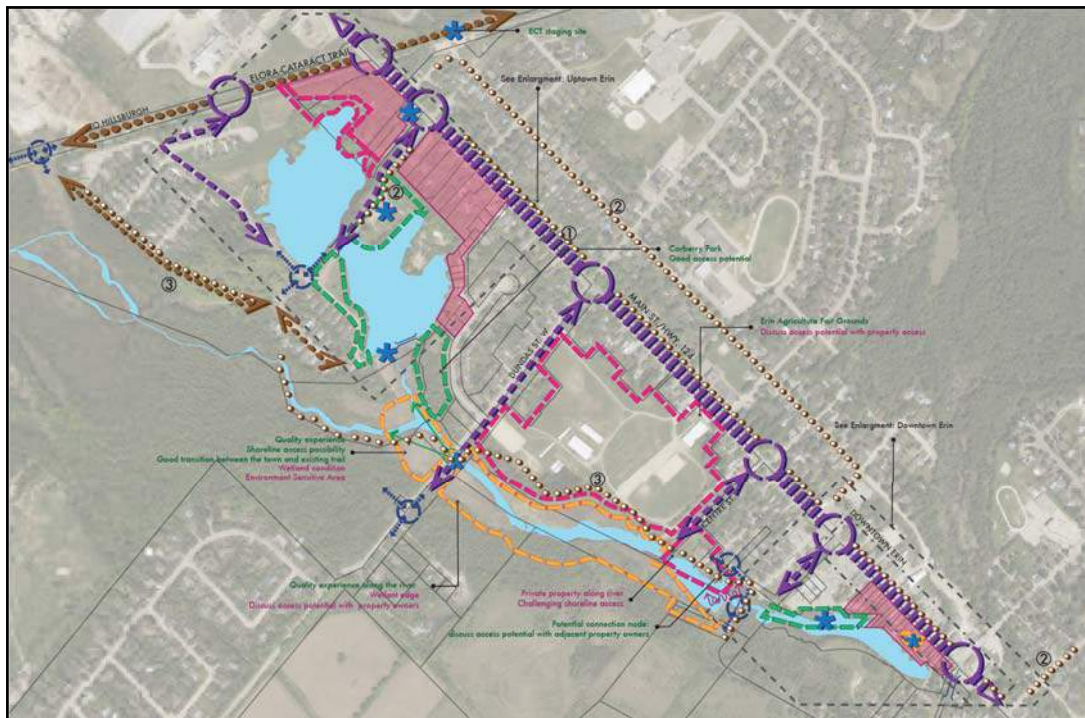


Hillsburgh

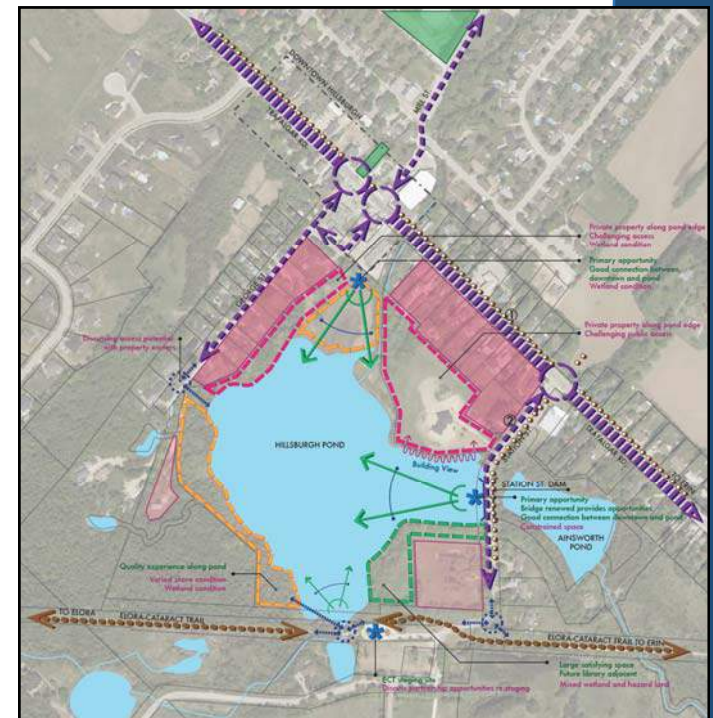


An Analytical View – Opportunities and Constraints

Erin



Hillsburgh



- Potential Trailway Portal
- Potential Connection Node
- Point of Interests
- Existing Road
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Wellington County Active Transportation Route
- Downtown Erin Heritage Walking Trail
- Dam/Bridge
- High Constraints Zone
- Medium Constraints Zone
- Low Constraints Zone
- Private Properties
- Existing Parks
- Natural Views
- Cultural Views
- Back of Buildings Views



Consideration must be taken when attempting to accommodate various user groups such as walkers, hikers, runners and joggers, cyclists, skateboarders, and equine



Every opportunity should be made to provide accessible trails for people with disabilities wherever practical and to the greatest extent possible given the context of each trail's location, the surrounding environment and the trail type experience desired



Safety and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) must be taken into consideration for trail design, and is often a concern for users especially in natural areas.

Trail Users

It is important to identify various user groups, their associated needs, and other considerations when it comes to trail use and design

THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF USERS IS IMPERITIVE IN ADDRESSING FEASIBILITY AND DESIGNING A MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM

TRAIL TYPES

In analyzing existing conditions in regards to possible trail routes a clear set of trail types (5) became apparent.

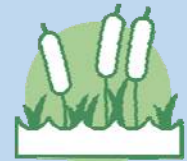
Main and/or Side Streets



Greenspace Trails



Wetland Trails



Bridges and/or Dams



Alleys and/or Laneways



WE ENDEAVORED TO HEIGHTEN USER EXPERIENCE THROUGH A VARIETY OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPERIENCES EVOCATIVE OF THE TOWN OF ERIN.

Each trail type has a set of existing characteristics as well as ways they can be integrated to fit the character of the Rotary Riverwalk Trail.

Erin Possibilities...

Bridge and/or Dam

View East of Stanley Park Dam



As part of the Erin Rotary Riverwalk Trail:

- Trail opportunities to be integrated with future bridge or dam improvements.
- Designated lookout (platforms, 'belvedere' or sidewalk widening will offer safe passage for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
- Opportunity for interpretive panels.
- Trails proposed on privately owned properties will require partnering.

Interpretive Opportunity



Multi-use Bridge




Suggested Trail



Hillsburgh Possibilities...

Wetland Trails


View South From Existing Library





As part of the Erin Rotary Riverwalk Trail:

- As per CVC regulations, all trails located in wetland zones will be boardwalk trails.
- Boardwalk design shall follow guidelines for accessibility.
- Include interpretive panels for information on various ecological systems of the wetland area.
- Ensure safe and well marked access points from adjoining trail routes.
- Offer appropriate lookout vantage points to accommodate larger groups.
- Trails proposed on privately owned properties will require partnering.

Boardwalk Trail with Interpretive Opportunity



Boardwalk Trail with Seating Opportunity

Erin Possibilities...

Greenspace Trails

Overland Drive Connection to Elora-Catawag Trail



As part of the Erin Rotary Riverwalk Trail:

- Include trail markers to identify the route as part of the Riverwalk Trail.
- Heighten riverwalk experience by opening up choice views to the river.
- Maintain a clean rivers edge free of debris, discarded materials etc.
- Park trails should include rest opportunities with a higher frequency in high-use areas.
- Maintain trail guidelines and design standards re: surface conditions, widths, and slopes, to support accessible and multi-use trail opportunities.
- Maintain a safe and comfortable experience by adopting CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) guidelines.
- Trails proposed on privately owned properties will require partnering.

Gravel Trail Outcropping




Low Impact Boardwalk Trail




Erin Possibilities...

Alleys & Laneways


Lookout over West Credit River from Vau-Mart





As part of the Erin Rotary Riverwalk Trail:

- Access from downtown's alleys/laneways.
- Narrow vehicular lanes, one or two way traffic, either between buildings or in residential neighbourhoods.
- Shared space for all modes of traffic requires safety controls.
- Privately owned space between building spaces requires partnership.

Parking and Trail Separation




Parking and Trail Separation

Hillsburgh Possibilities...

Main & Side Street


Street Looking Southeast





As part of the Erin Rotary Riverwalk Trail:

- Include trail markers to identify the route as part of the Riverwalk Trail.
- Include road markings to identify bicycle routes.
- Transition zones between other trail types and main/side streets should include staging area amenities such as trail identification markers, information kiosks with maps, seating opportunities, bike racks and waste receptacles.
- Trails proposed on privately owned properties will require partnering.

Trail Signs

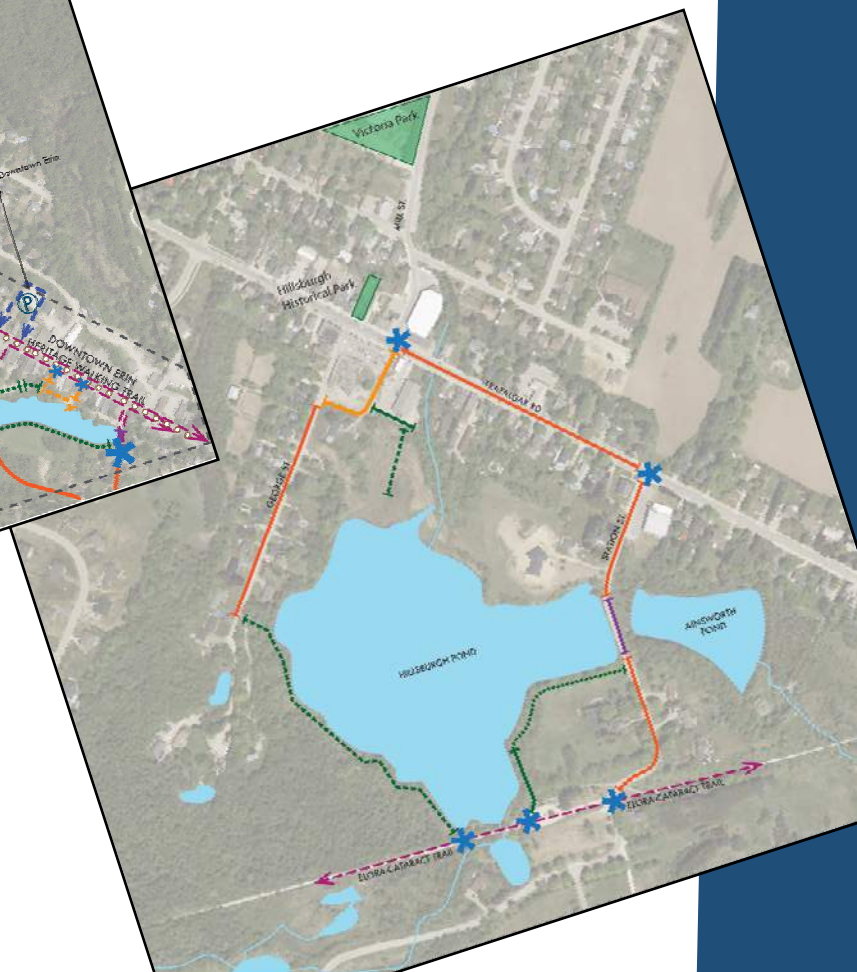
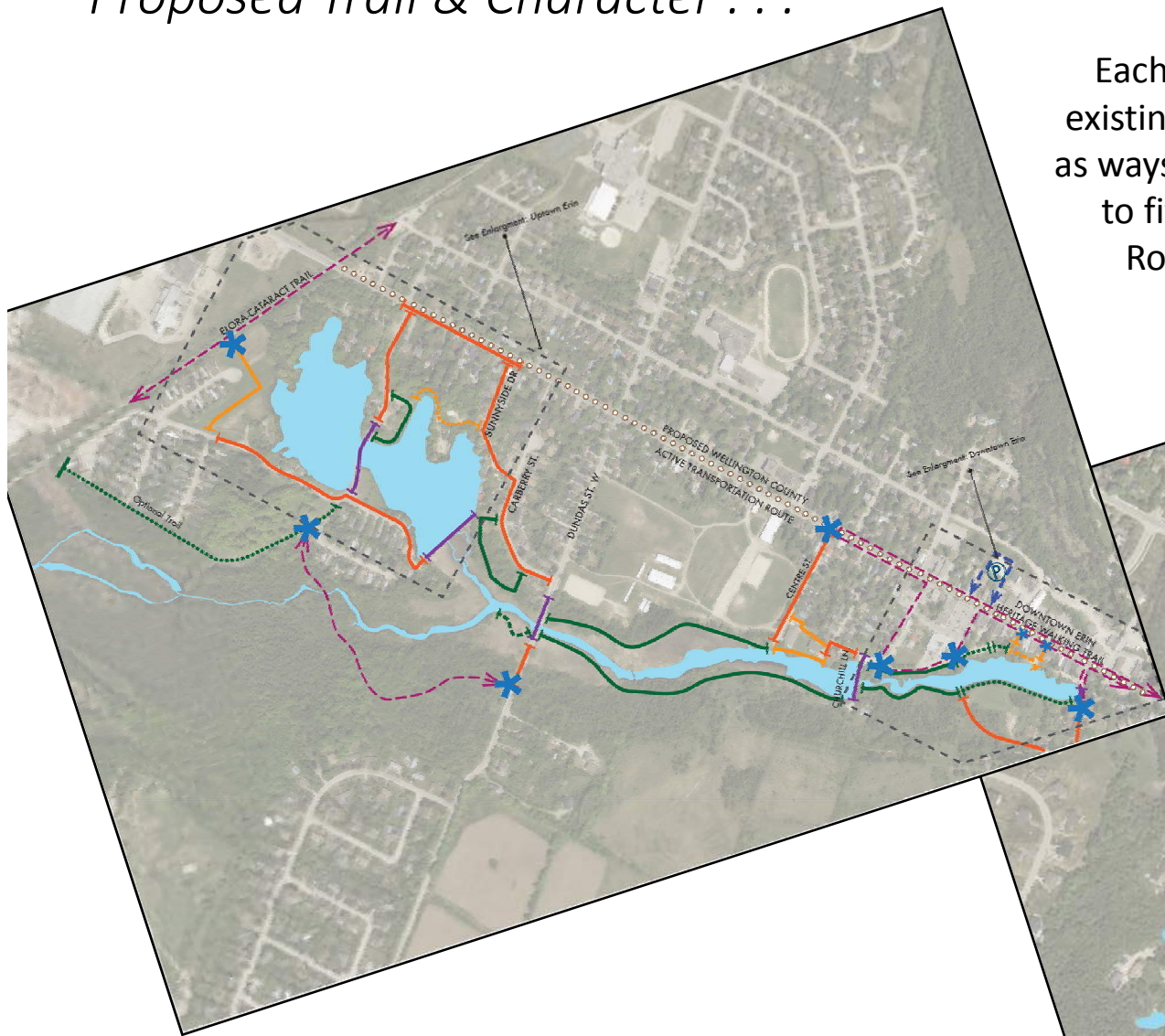


Boardwalk (Refracting Glass)

Proposed Trail & Character . . .

Each trail type has a set of existing characteristics as well as ways they can be integrated to fit the character of the Rotary Riverwalk Trail.





Accessibility



Experience of Place



Connectedness



Benefits/Impacts

TRAIL SEGMENT EVALUATION

When determining the most feasible and preferred potential trail segments, it is important to consider the challenges that may arise at various stages of the project including but not limited to construction, use and impacts.

Each proposed segment was evaluated against four sets of attributes that were identified as important considerations to stakeholder groups and members of the community during the public engagement sessions.

Trail Segment Evaluation Example...

Erin [A] Evaluation		Proposed Trail Segments										
Attribute:		Segment:	1 - Elora Cataract Trail Connection	2 - Overland Drive	3 - Stanley Park Entrance*	4 - Stanley Bridge*	5 - Historical Loop	6 - Carolyn Crescent	7 - Main Street*	8 - Sunnyside Drive	9 - Stanley Dam Boardwalk	10 - Carberry Park Loop
Feasibility / Evaluation Criteria	Accessibility											
	Potential for AODA Compliance											
	Potential for Multi-Use ¹											
	Potential for 'Specialized' Seasonal Use ²											
	Experience of Place											
	Physical Adjacency to Water											
	Visual Connection to Water											
	Natural or Cultural Interpretive Value											
	Positive Aesthetic Quality											
	Apparent Ecological Value											
	Connectedness											
	Connection to Surrounding Network											
	Physical Adjacency to Private Land											
	Existing Infrastructure ³											
Benefits/Impacts												
Environmental												
Capital Costs												
Apparentness												

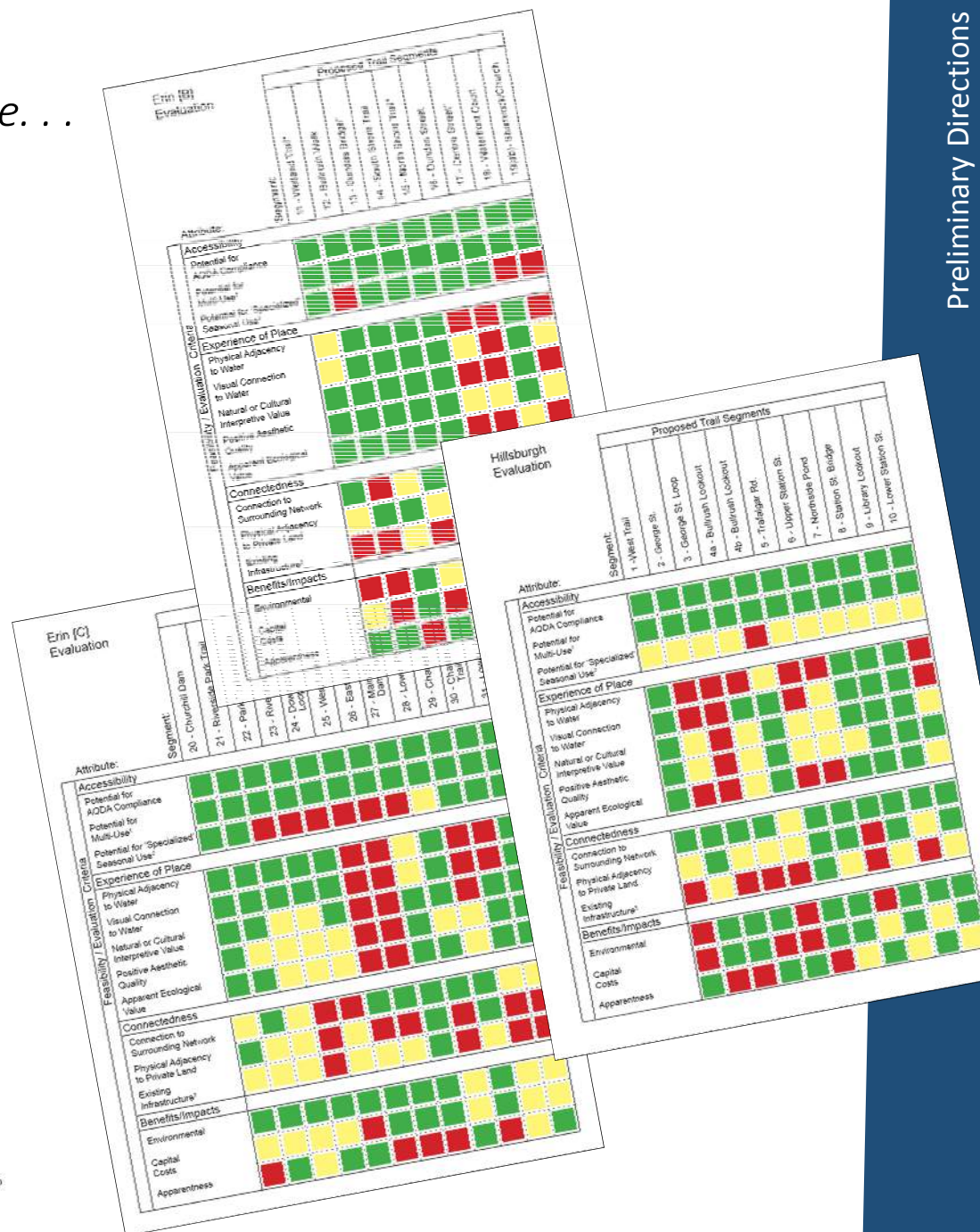
Least Challenging Challenging Most Challenging

*Proposed Wellington County Active Transportation route.

¹ Multi-Use includes pedestrian & cycle;

² Seasonal Use - typically 'restricted' use and may include equestrian / snowmobile use, etc.;

³ Includes adjacency to infrastructure such as roadways, sidewalks, gravel shoulders, etc.; most challenging (red) has no infrastructure to use for trail development.



Report Section 3.0

Recommended Trail Alignment

Describes the characteristics, challenges and considerations of each segment within the trail circuits that may potentially comprise the Rotary Riverwalk Trail.



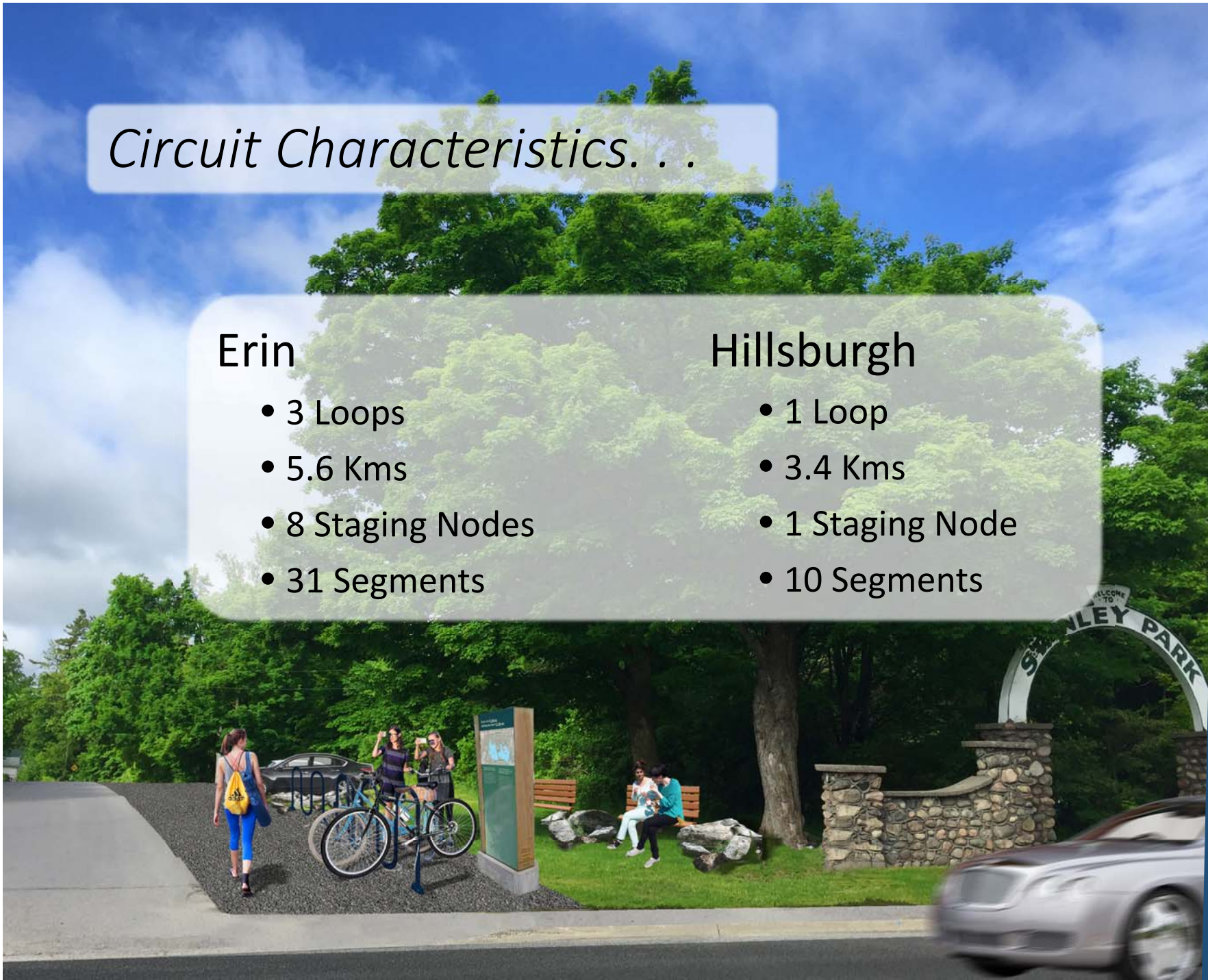
Circuit Characteristics. . .

Erin

- 3 Loops
- 5.6 Kms
- 8 Staging Nodes
- 31 Segments

Hillsburgh

- 1 Loop
- 3.4 Kms
- 1 Staging Node
- 10 Segments



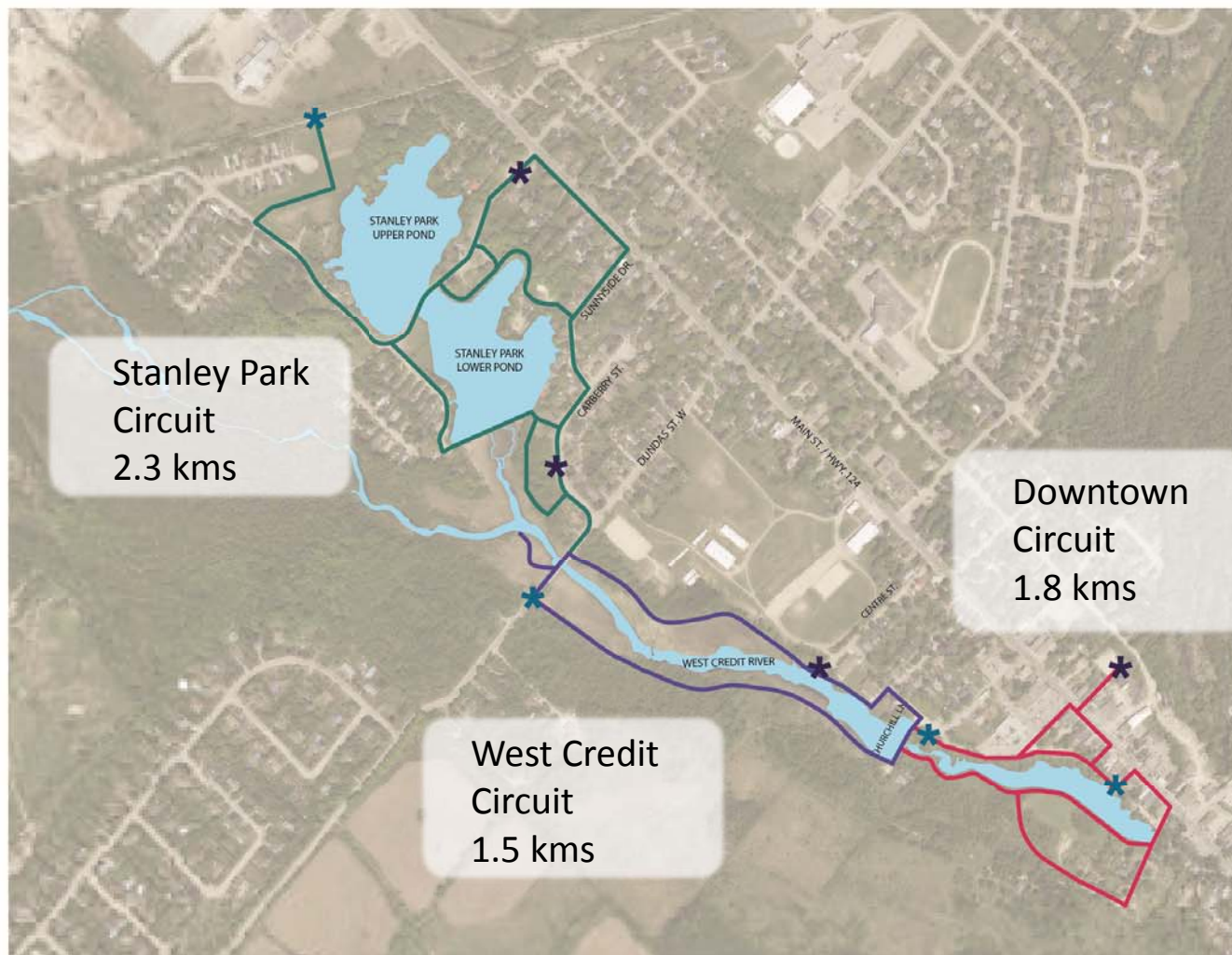
A Trail Alignment for Erin

Recommended Route / Loops

This proposal will offer over 5kms of new trails through five character areas providing a variety of experiences to residents and guests of the Erin community.



Proposed Erin Circuits . . .



Town of Erin Rotary Riverwalk Trail
Proposed Erin Circuit

- Stanley Park Loop
- Credit River Loop
- Downtown Erin Loop
- Primary Staging Area
- Secondary Staging Area

0 50 100 200m



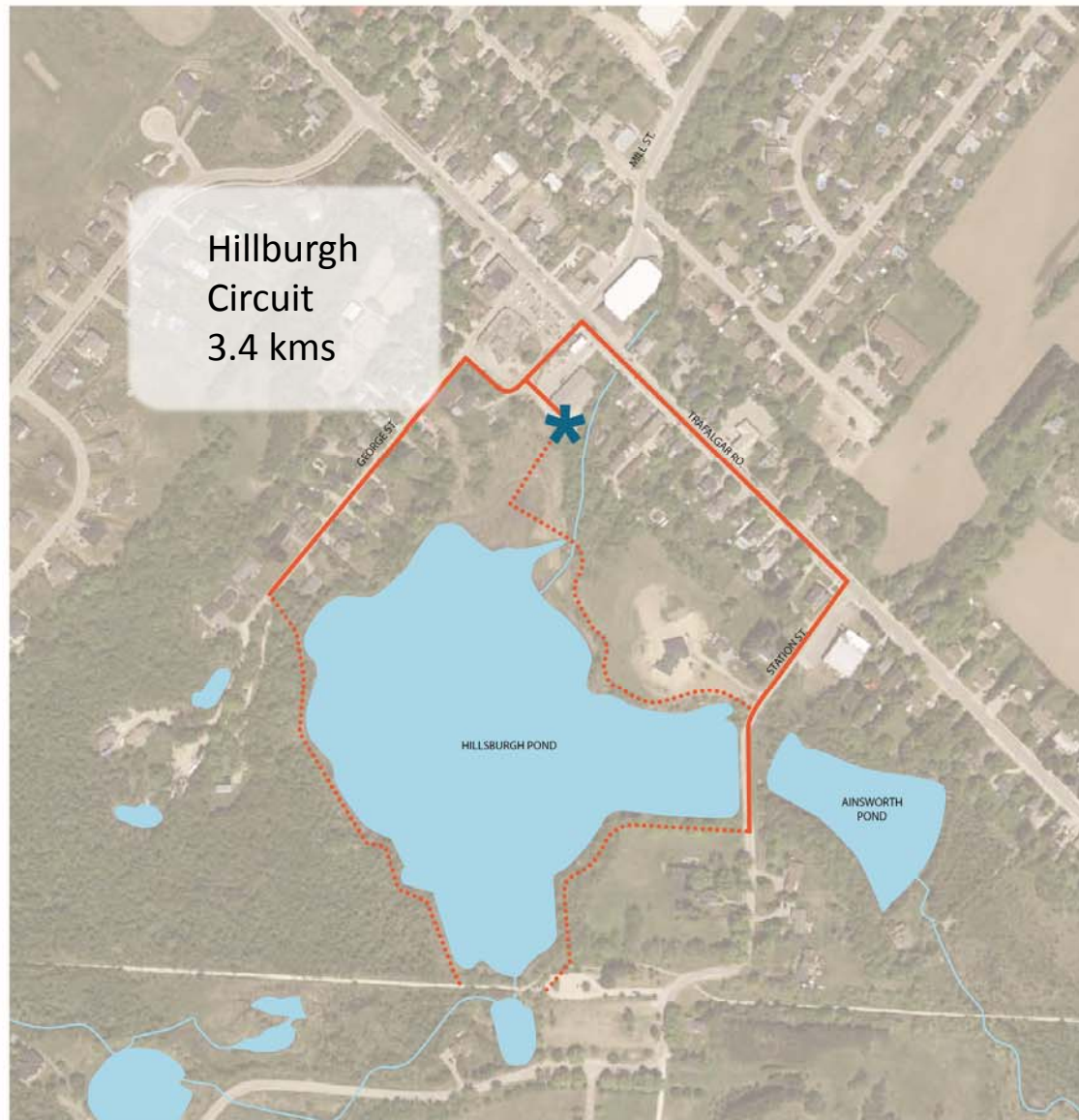
A Trail Alignment for Hillsburgh Recommended Route

This proposal will offer 3 kms of new trails through five character areas providing a variety of experiences to residents and guests of the Hillsburgh community.

Hillsburgh Mill Pond— Looking west (SKA artist rendition)



Proposed Erin Circuit . . .



Town of Erin Rotary Riverwalk Trail
Proposed Hillsburgh Circuit

- Hillsburgh Circuit
- Hillsburgh Circuit
- * Primary Staging Area
- * Secondary Staging Area

0 50 100 200m



Report Section 4.0

Making the Case

Discusses what is needed in regards to trail management and speaks to aspects including funding, insurance, liability, risk management, and general trail maintenance requirements.

Hillsburgh Upper Station Street – Looking south (SKA artist rendition)





Understanding what is needed . . .

The trail's development will only be successful if funding, Town staff resources, and openness to community participation are embraced and are committed by Council on a frequent and sequenced basis. This would include:

- *Yearly objectives*
- *Yearly investment*
- *Yearly implementation*

Erin Main Street – Looking south
(SKA artist rendition)

Making the Case

Why the Town should make the investment . . .



Station Street Bridge –
(SKA artist rendition)

*There are numerous benefits that emphasize why the Town of Erin's commitment to implement an Erin Riverwalk trails program is so important. While much of this study has been driven by **"economic development,"** few individuals need the report to detail the various benefits of walking and cycling in terms of **recreation, health and fitness benefits; transportation benefits; and environmental benefits.** However, the Town's investment in an Erin Riverwalk trails program can be expected to yield benefits in all of these areas.*

*Finally, this Study confirmed that Town residents want governments to **invest in making Erin a more walkable and bikeable destination with "good" linkages between established trailways, like the Elora-Cataract Trail, and the downtown areas of both Erin and Hillsburgh.** The Town should make the investment in trail implementation because residents request it and it will support Council's, the Town's Economic Development Officer's, and community's efforts to make Erin one of the most desirable communities in Ontario to live, work and visit.*



Where will the money come from ?

*The town of Erin should pursue **outside funding opportunities** – over 20 sources have been identified in the report. Over the last few years funding sources made available for cycling, pedestrian and trail related projects, and generally “active health” is at or near an all-time high, likely due to the popularity of trails today. It is expected that this trend will continue and the Town should dedicate Staff resourcing to explore and solicit funding support.*

How to implement a trails program . . .



Erin's Riverwalk Trail Feasibility Study is not intended to be a static document. The timing and details related to implementation, particularly the detailed alignments of recommended routes and facility types should and will evolve through additional design, community consultation and technical review – hence more work will be required if the Town chooses to proceed with implementation. At the same time, however, the extensive effort that established feasibility and subsequently the overall direction for the Riverwalk Trails network should be respected when network implementation and modifications are being contemplated.

BEYOND FEASIBILITY: A NEXT STEP PROCESS

The following process is a “step-by-step” approach to further assess each route or segment recommended in this study at the time implementation is proposed. It will assist Town staff from responsible departments to work together, to share information and to facilitate the implementation of the trails.

Assessing a Project
(for each route or segment)



Conceptual Design
and Evaluation



Detailed Design, Tender
and Implementation



Monitoring
Phase



A SUCCESSFUL TRAILS PROGRAM REQUIRES CHAMPIONS AND LEADERSHIP TO MOVE FROM FEASIBILITY, TO PLAN AND DESIGN STAGE, TO THE FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION STAGE.

The formal relationships between individuals and organizations and their operational practices are important factors in determining whether a trails initiative will proceed and be successful. Maximizing participation and removing obstacles to the flow of information between participants are two of the main objectives in managing implementation

3

Management
Recommendations

8

Implementation and
Funding Recommendations

5

Messaging
Recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

This feasibility study provides 16
recommendations for the Town of
Erin in the following 3 categories:

MANAGEMENT AND CHAMPIONING OF THE INITIATIVE(S) IS PARAMOUNT

Any trail's program is an integrated body of landscapes and components, and requires a strategic approach for implementation, management as well as an associated funding commitment and celebration of successes.

What the Study set out to do . . .



Riverside Park Trail –
(SKA artist rendition)

*To determine the feasibility of implementing a Riverwalk Trail for the Town of Erin; with **specific focus on capturing the Lower West Credit River experience in Downtown Erin and the Mill Pond located in Hillsburgh** – both with connections to the Elora-Cataract Trail and the Town's retail areas.*

What the Study achieves . . .



The study's goal involved assessing the feasibility of trail access and alignment opportunities along the West Credit River and pond environment in Erin Village and Hillsburgh; the intent being the creation of desirable connections and attractive functional spaces for residents, guests and visitors. The study also supports the Town's economic development initiatives and informs considerations towards future downtown 'staging and connection' enhancements. It encourages business economic activity through heightened awareness and enjoyment of the Town's commercial centres through connections to the Elora-Cataract Trail (ECT). And finally, it proves flexible alternative options for aesthetic improvements and functional connections/spaces along the Town's prime waterscapes.

Erin's Downtown Laneway Loop –
(SKA artist rendition)

Making the Case



Many thanks to . . .

- **The Project Team:**
 - *Town of Erin, Erin BIA, Agricultural Society, Erin Heritage Committee, Erin Trails Committee, Rotary Club of Erin, Erin Insight, Erin Equine, Credit Valley Conservation, Elora-Cataract Trailway, and Wellington County.*
- **The Erin and Hillsburgh Communities**
- **Project Management:**
 - *Robyn Mulder, Economic Development Officer, Town of Erin*

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