



# Richmond County Trail Strategy

Final  
October 2022

**UPLAND**





**Final Strategy**  
*October 2022*

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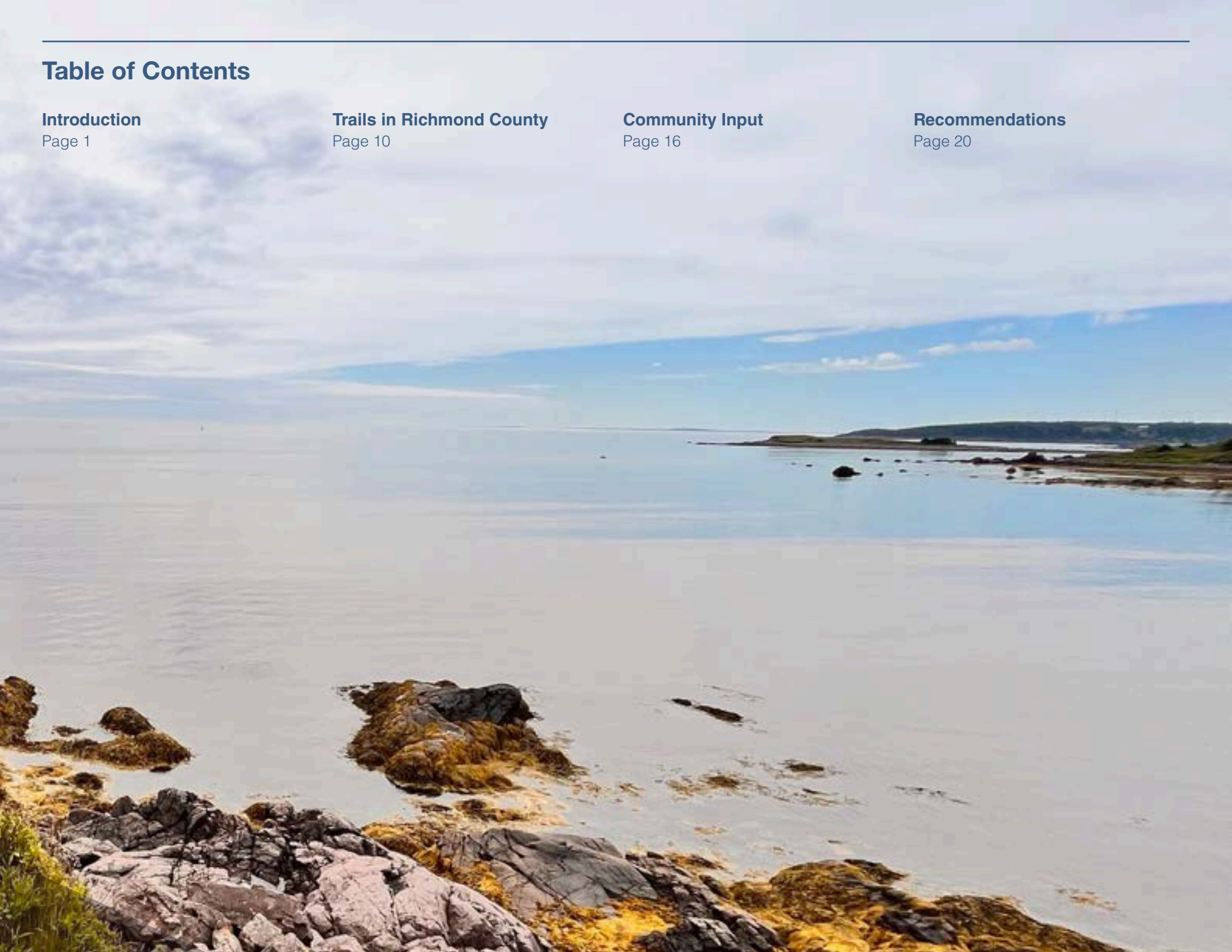
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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 About the Project

Richmond County is located in the southern area of Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia. The county's population is distributed between many rural communities, as well as the village of St Peter's and the Chapel Island Reserve community of Potlotek First Nation. Richmond County is considered the "Gateway to the Bras D'Or Lakes", which are designated as a UNESCO ecological site. The many historic sites and natural gems scattered throughout this landscape are well known by residents and draw visitors to the area to experience the unique recreation opportunities that this region provides.

While there are a number of scenic and attractive hiking and walking trails, as well as well-established off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail networks in the County, the majority of these are not well-known outside the area, or not established enough to attract visitors. There is, however, great potential to develop Richmond into a definitive outdoor recreation destination by building upon the trail experiences locals already know and love.

This Trail Strategy aims to build off previous work by providing an overview of the opportunities that exist with trail development and how the Municipality can play a role in recognizing the potential of the area.

## 1.2 Process

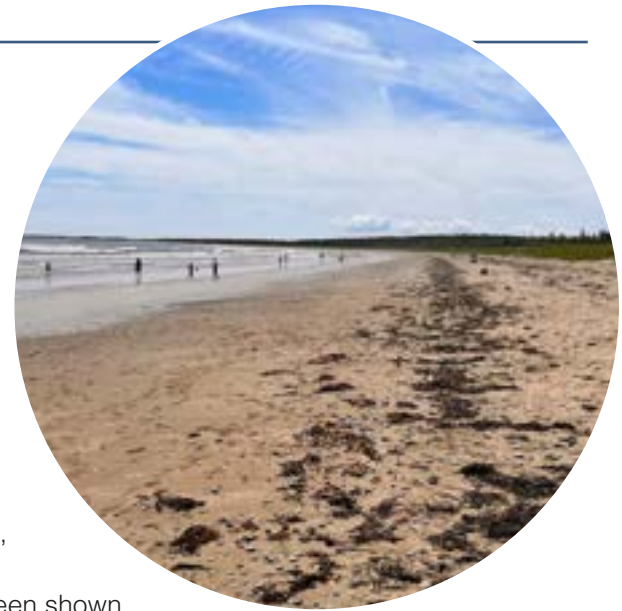
A background document inventoried and analyzed existing conditions, amenities, and opportunities regarding trails and trail development. This report built on the previous analysis as well as public input to provide a plan of action intended to guide smart and resource-effective development of Richmond's trail network.



## 1.3 Objectives

The purpose of this project is to create an up-to-date Trails Strategy for Richmond County, building on the previous two studies, to provide guidance for trails in the area. The objectives of this project are to:

1. **Assemble a general inventory of Richmond County's existing trail assets**
2. **Identify opportunities for the improvement of existing assets and the development of new trails**
3. **Provide strategic direction for trail development in Richmond County that will help guide community groups and the County as a whole in developing cohesive and marketable trail experiences**



## 1.4 Benefits of Trails

Communities across Canada and North America are realizing the benefits of promoting trails. The following section outlines some of the high-level benefits of implementing trail projects at a local level.

### Environmental

Trails can help to protect habitats for the county's native plants and animals, while preserving regionally significant natural landscapes and unique natural features. Sustainable and responsible behaviours are critical factors to preserving our natural environment while also accommodating recreational use. Trails can raise environmental awareness and provide an active means of teaching people about their surrounding natural environments and the importance of preserving them.

### Economic

Trail-based tourism has been growing steadily over the past few decades, initiated by successful experiences in Northern Europe and the UK. This growing trend stems from the shifting inclination of tourists to healthier, more experiential and contemplative methods of travel. Locally, a 2016 study of the Rum Runners Trail on Nova Scotia's South Shore found that 82% of the \$4.2 million in trail-related spending came from visiting users, with \$409,000 spent within 20 minutes of the trails. This spending generated by active tourism goes a long way to support local businesses when visitors make use of shops within close proximity of trails. Nova Scotia's 2015 Thrive report indicates that 80% of tourist money is spent in walkable areas. Active transportation provides a way to enjoy the natural landscape, and playful aspects of recreation and design can attract visitors and build community among residents.

### Health

The rise of physical inactivity throughout North America is so prevalent that it is often referred to as an epidemic (Velo Quebec, 2010; Mapes J, 2009). Fitness, regardless of body mass, has been shown to be the best indicator of mortality risk (Parker-Pope, 2008). Research suggests that increasing physical activity rates is one of the most effective ways to create a culture of healthy living (Department of Health and Wellness, 2012). Nova Scotia's Thrive health initiative (2015) adds that 45% of trips are spent shopping and running errands—tasks that are easily done using active transportation if residents feel safe and comfortable.

### Social

Trails can improve relationships among residents, landowners, neighbouring municipalities, local governments and advocacy groups. Each trail within the county will boast elements of local character and regional influence. They will reflect the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment of individuals, organizations, volunteers, elected officials, and agencies who have come together for the common goal of promoting and maintaining a trail network. Trails can also help create healthy communities that meet the needs of individuals throughout their lifecycle. For communities to flourish they need infrastructure that can support their residents' physical and emotional well-being, including their ability to live, play, and learn. Access to recreation activities such as trails promotes unity by offering space for family, friends, and neighbours to gather together safely. The presence of trails can also improve community pride.

## 1.5 Trail Types

Trails can be classified in many ways - including location, surface type, width, permitted uses, level of accessibility, etc. For the purposes of this Trail Strategy, the following trail types will be examined:

- + Walking Trail
- + Multi-use Pathway
- + Shared-use Pathway
- + OHV Trail
- + Water Route
- + Mountain Bike Trail

### Walking Trail



Walking trails are basic trails that are narrower than multi-use trails and are too narrow or steep to accommodate bicycles. They can be used by pedestrians, cross country skiers, or snowshoers.

- + Trail treads should be between 0.8 and 1.5m wide
- + Both sides of the trail should be kept clear of branches and brush for a minimum of 0.6m
- + Vertical clearance must be a minimum of 2.5m
- + Trail surface consists of natural/native soil or grass
- + Desired Grade: 0 to 5%
- + Maximum Grade: 10% sustained, 15%, less than 20m
- + Outslope Grade: 4% (maximum)
- + Staircases should be provided for any sustained grades greater than 15%

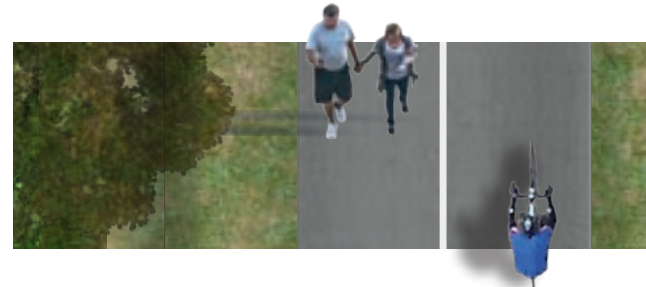
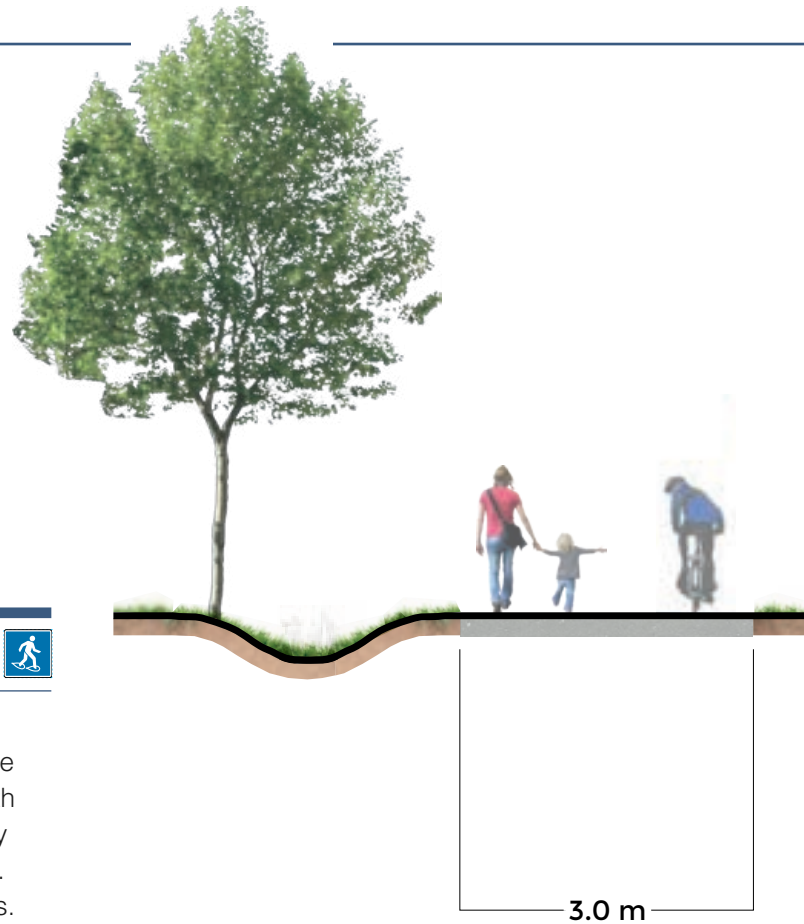


## Multi Use Pathway



Multi-use pathways are wider trails that are shared by a variety of users. These types of trails are typically between 2.5 and 3.0 metres wide and surfaced with asphalt, crusher dust, or other specialized surface materials. Paved trails may be accessible for the use of most assistive devices, while gravel trails are not. Asphalt surfaces should be considering in high-traffic or more urban locations.

- + Trail treads must be between 2.5 and 3.0m wide
- + Both sides of the trail should be kept clear of branches and brush for a minimum of 0.8m
- + Vertical clearance must be a minimum of 3.0m
- + Desired Grade: 0 to 5%
- + Maximum Grade: 8% (sustained), 12% less than 20m
- + Outslope Grade: 4% (maximum)

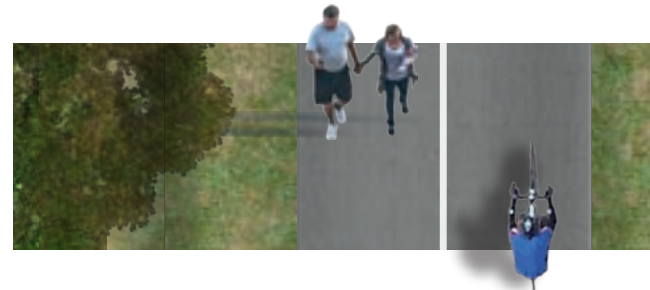
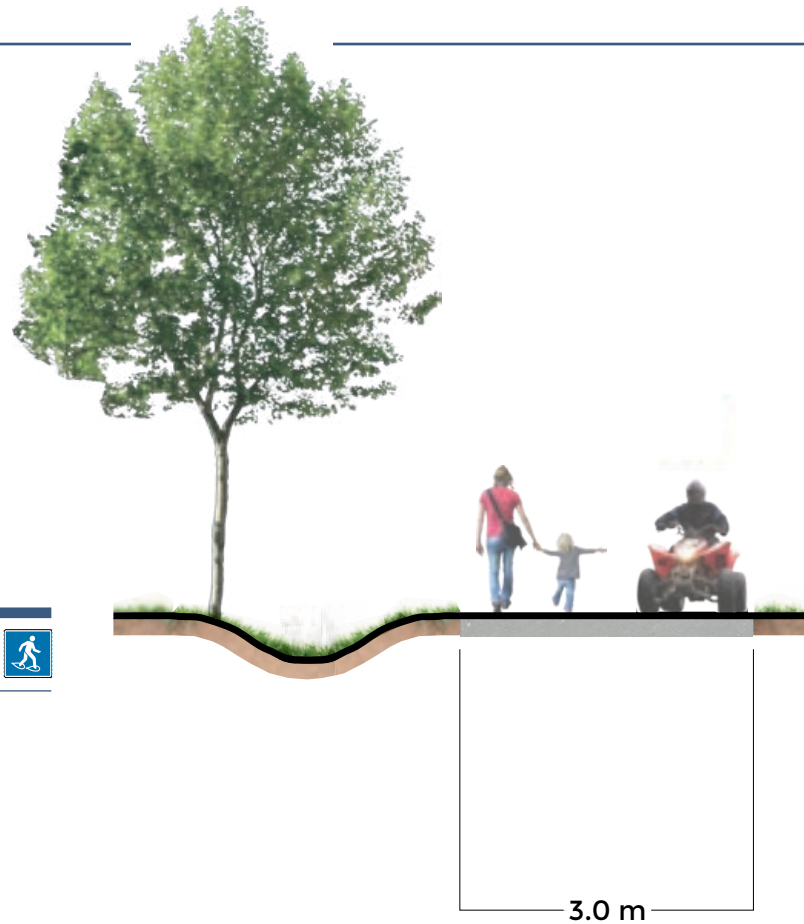


## Shared-Use Pathway



Shared-use pathways are similar to multi-use pathways, but are shared with motorized trail users, such as All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), snowmobiles, etc. Trails should be a minimum of 3.0 metres wide to ensure that all trail users feel safe and comfortable. Shared-use pathways should be surfaced with crusher dust or other specialized surface materials. Asphalt surfaces should be considering in high-traffic or more urban locations. Gravel surfaces can also be used, but would not be a suitable material for trail users that use assistive mobility devices, such as wheelchair users.

- + Trail treads must be a minimum of 3.0m wide
- + Both sides of the trail should be kept clear of branches and brush for a minimum of 0.8m
- + Vertical clearance must be a minimum of 3.0m
- + Desired Grade: 0 to 5%
- + Maximum Grade: 8% (sustained), 12% less than 20m
- + Outslope Grade: 4% (maximum)





## Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail



Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trails are used by ATVs and snowmobiles. They are minimum of 2 metres wide and typically have a natural surface. OHV trails in Richmond County vary widely in their level of development and maintenance due to the large number of trails used by ATVs. Snowmobilers typically use OHV trails during the winter months, and designated or formalized snowmobile trails typically include signage which improves safety where use is shared between snowmobilers and snowshoers or skiers.

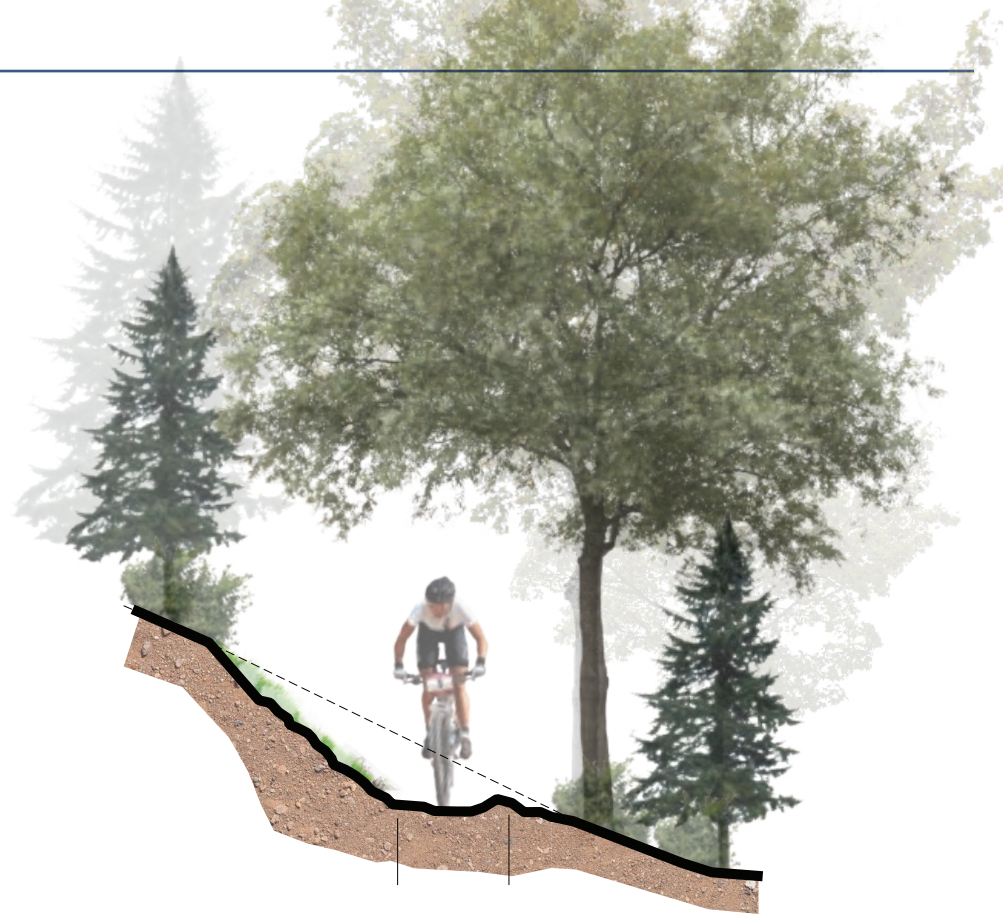
OHV trails in Richmond County are mostly inland and used primarily by local residents. According to the Cape Breton Trail Review and Inventory (2016), only 2% of visitors to Cape Breton participate in ATV activities, and 4% participate in snowmobiling. However, the ATV Association of NS (ATVANS) has over 40 chapters in the province (five in Richmond County), and is the third-largest ATV federation in Canada, indicating high levels of participation locally. Residents of Richmond County use ATV routes recreationally, as a means of transportation between rural communities, and to access sites for fishing and hunting.



## Water Trail



A water trail is a recognized, safe trail for recreational paddlers on fresh or coastal waters. These trails can provide access to camping and day use sites, conventional hiking trails, and coastal communities that offer goods and services for paddlers. Richmond County has plenty of opportunities for promoting existing water trails for fresh water lakes and coastal areas.



## Mountain Bike Trail



Mountain bike trails don't currently exist in Richmond County, but are becoming increasingly popular in many parts of the province. Mountain bike trails can range from family-friendly forest routes with small lumps, bumps, and gradients, up to challenging singletrack trails and natural or man-made obstacles, jumps and more. These trail types vary in terms of the skills, equipment and fitness level needed in order to ride them safely.

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## 1.6 Trail Development Process

Processes and timelines for developing trails can vary widely depending on the project size, context, complexity, cost, available funding, and jurisdictional involvement. Most trail projects can be broken down into four key phases, which can be expanded for more complex projects, and reduced for smaller, simpler projects.



### 1. Plan

Planning is an essential and often overlooked first step in developing trails. The planning phase starts by identifying the type of trail as well as the benefits, purpose, goals, and overall vision. Planning also involves analyzing the site, researching

funding opportunities, land ownership, legal issues, and determining the level of public support for the trail. As part of this phase, preliminary trail alignments, layout configurations, and high level cost estimates can also be completed, which will help determine the level of effort required to design, build, and maintain the trail. This information can be collected and presented in a document such as a Trail Concept Plan or a Trail Development Plan. Whenever possible, the trail planning phase should include stakeholder and public engagement. In particular, engagement with local Mi'kmaw communities is encouraged to understand the Mi'kmaw perspective, including any concerns and potential partnerships for the project.



### 2. Design

The next step of the trail development process involves designing how the trail will be built. For simple trail projects that don't require structures, permits, or contracting, the design phase may be straightforward. In most cases, however, this phase will include designing the trail

so that it can be built by a contractor using appropriate construction methods and techniques to ensure proper long-term trail maintenance and management. The design process involves finalizing the definitive trail corridor (physically or digitally flagging the trail) and designing the trail cross section, side slopes, culvert locations, water crossings, and other structures. These details are typically presented in a set of detailed design drawings or a Construction Plan with specifications. This phase will also make it possible to accurately estimate construction costs, resource and material availability, and timelines. Depending on the size and complexity of the project, the detailed design may also include trailheads/parking lots, wayfinding signage, bridges, boardwalks, and more.



### 3. Build

The next phase in the trail development process is to build the trail using sustainable construction techniques based on the Construction Plan prepared in the design phase. Depending on the complexity of the project and whether heavy/specialized equipment is required, the trail can be built by a specialized construction crew, a trained volunteer group, or a combination of the two. The duration of the construction phase can vary depending on funding availability, the size and complexity of the project, any work restrictions related to sensitive habitat, and seasonal constraints which may include the terrain being too frozen, muddy, or dry.



### 4. Maintain

Similar to the planning phase, the maintenance phase is another often underestimated step in the trail development process. Once a trail has been built, maintenance responsibilities begin and continue for as long as the trail is in operation. Maintenance activities include managing, monitoring, and inspecting related to windfall, drainage, trail surface, new growth, structures, and waste disposal. A Maintenance or Management Plan can organize these tasks into a seasonal schedule based on what tools, personnel, and equipment are needed. Volunteers can be helpful for annual or seasonal maintenance, and the Maintenance Plan should also include regular trail inspections to ensure the trail is operating in its intended manner.

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## 2 Trails in Richmond County

### 2.1 Walking Trails

There are very few officially designated walking trails in Richmond County. **Battery Provincial Park** includes a four kilometre network of short and easy walking loops. **Lennox Passage Provincial Park** offers two kilometres of walking trail through picnic areas, beaches, and a lighthouse. The park is gated in winter but trails are still used for cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

The **Cap Auguet Eco-Trail** is a nine kilometre coastal walking trail located in the Petit-de-Grat Provincial Park Reserve, and meanders alongside beaches, lakes, salt marsh, and woodlands. The trail has not been actively maintained for years and is significantly overgrown in areas, however, a community group has emerged that is interested revitalizing the trail.

Finally, the **Capelin Cove Coastal Trail** is a 16 kilometre trail located in the Fourchu Coast Wilderness Area. It begins at English Cove and follows the coastline along grassy drumlins and headlands before reaching the sand beach at Capelin Cove. The scenic hike is over rugged terrain and can be difficult depending on the season, tides, and weather conditions.

Richmond County is also home to many spectacular beaches, such as Pondville Beach, Point Michaud, Morrison's Beach, Delorier/ Janvrin Island, and more. While these are beautiful places for a coastal walk, they are not included in this inventory because they are not developed, defined or maintained trailways.

### 2.2 Multi-Use Pathways

The **St. Peter's Coastal Trail** is a multi-use pathway that runs along an abandoned rail corridor between River Tillard and St. Peter's. This section of trail is owned by the province but hasn't been maintained in years, and is experiencing severe erosion in areas. Two community groups have applied for letters of authority to revitalize the trail, including the East Richmond ATV Riders Club and the St. Peter's Community Club. The ATV club would like

to develop a shared-use trail, whereas the Community Club would like the trail to maintain it as a multi-use trail that would prevent motorized use.

### 2.3 Shared-Use Pathways

There are a handful of shared-use trails in Richmond County. The **West Richmond Rail Trail** runs along 15 kilometres of old rail corridor between Grand Anse and River Tillard. In 2014, the province granted a letter of authority to the East Richmond ATV Association, who have since been maintaining the trail.

Other shared-use trails in Richmond County include **Doyle's Road Shared-Use Trail**, an abandoned gravel road that provides an inland connection between D'Escousse and Rocky Bay on Isle Madame. The **Pringle Mountain Shared-Use Trail** climbs Pringle Mountain past an old grist mill following Pringle Brook up to Pringle Lake and beyond, and is used often by locals for fishing and swimming. Finally, there are two kilometres of shared use trail on an abandoned road near the **Cape George Lighthouse** that follows the eroding coastline from the end of Oldy's Rd around Little Harbour to the lighthouse.

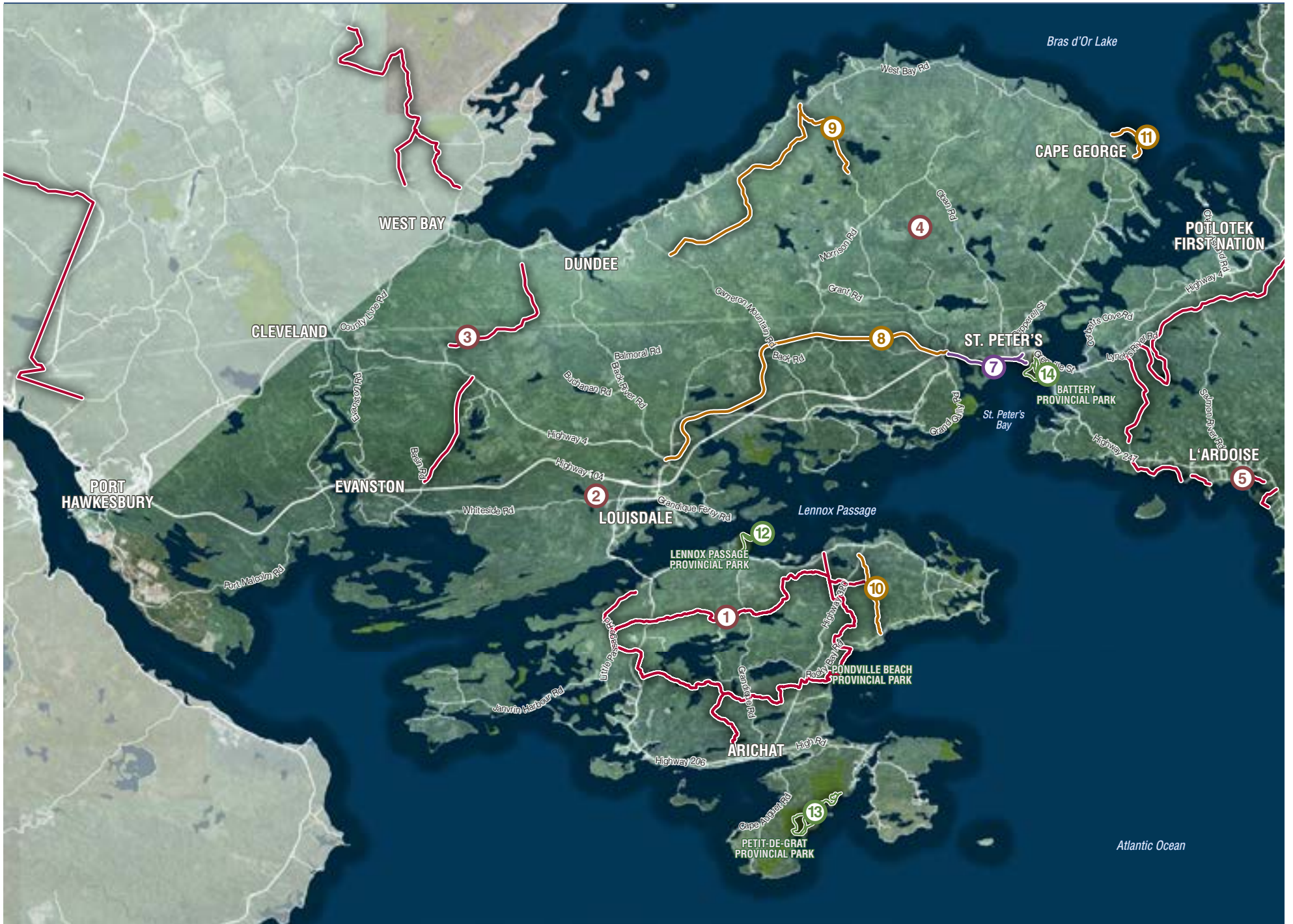
### 2.4 OHV Trails

By far, OHV trails make up the majority of the overall trail network in Richmond County, totalling over 170 kilometres of trail. These trails are maintained by five separate ATV clubs, including the West Richmond Riders Association, Isle Madame ATV Riders Association, Barachois Trail Association, East Richmond ATV Club, and Coastal Riders ATV Association. These trails require land agreements that have been acquired by the clubs where the trails travel over private property. Extensive OHV networks can be found on Isle Madame, and on either side of St. Peter's, but none of these networks are connected with each other due to barriers presented by water crossings. The OHV trails in Richmond County are also not connected to the extensive OHV network in Victoria and Inverness counties. Such connections would link OHV users from Richmond County all the way to the Cape Breton Highlands.

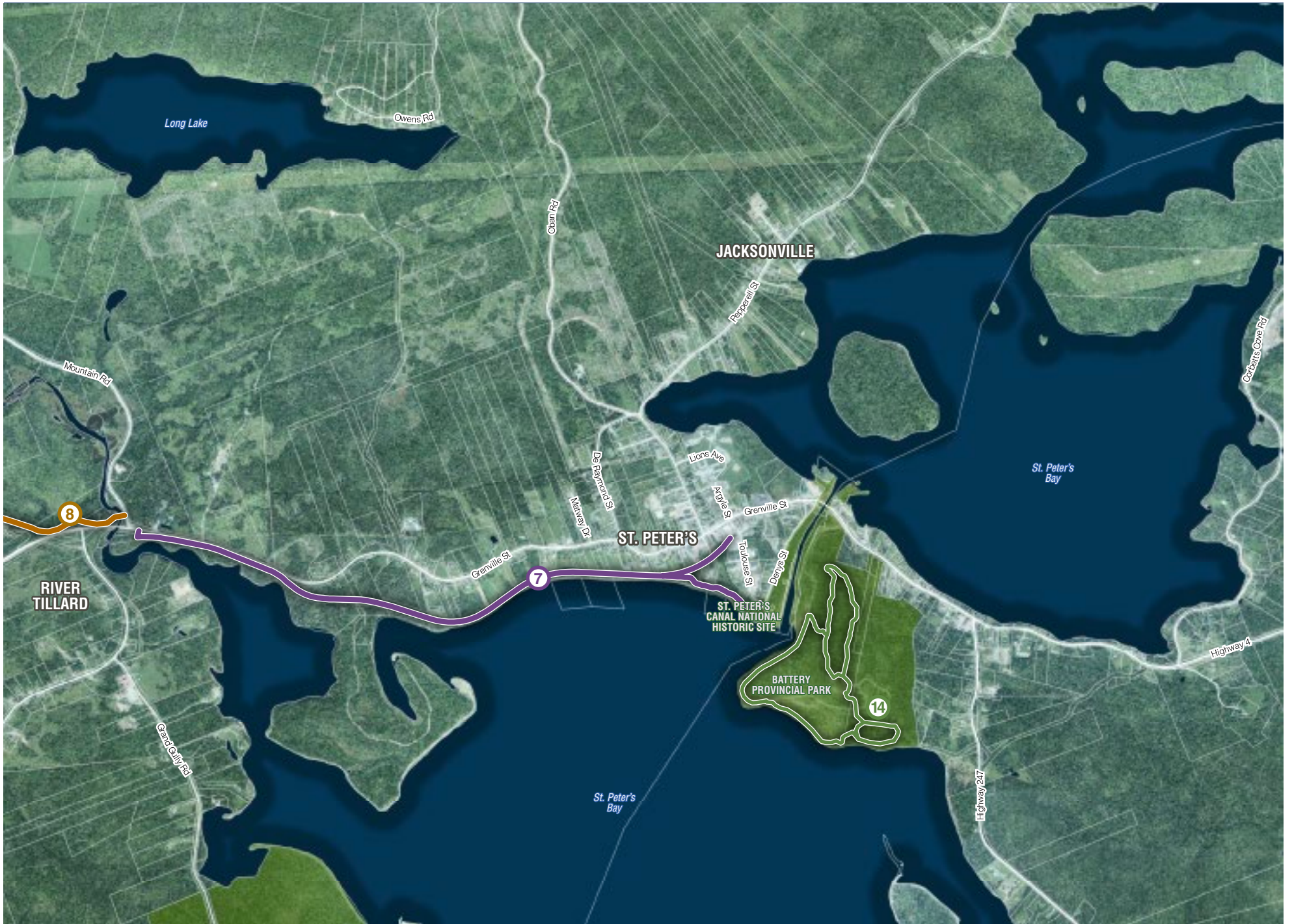
## 2.5 Trail Database

| # | Trail                            | Location                    | Length | Trail Type              | Management/Ownership                            | Notes                  |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|-------------------------|---|------------------------|
| ① | Isle Madame ATV Trails           | Isle Madame                 | ~46 km | <b>OHV Trail</b>        | Isle Madame ATV Riders Assoc.                   | Maintained by ATV club |
| ② | Barachois Trails                 | Louisdale area              | ~20km  | <b>OHV Trail</b>        | Barachois Trails Assoc.                         | Maintained by ATV club |
| ③ | West Richmond ATV Trails         | West Richmond               | ~100km | <b>OHV Trail</b>        | West Richmond Riders Assoc.                     | Maintained by ATV club |
| ④ | East Richmond ATV Trails         | St. Peter's area            | ~75km  | <b>OHV Trail</b>        | Eastern Richmond ATV Club                       | Maintained by ATV club |
| ⑤ | L'Ardoise ATV Trails             | L'Ardoise                   | ~100km | <b>OHV Trail</b>        | Coastal Riders ATV Assoc.                       | Maintained by ATV club |
| ⑥ | Fourchu ATV Trails               | Fourchu to Sydney           | n/a    | <b>OHV Trail</b>        | Isle Royale ATV Club.                           | Maintained by ATV club |
| ⑦ | St Peter's Coastal Trail         | St Peter's                  | 3.5km  | <b>Multi-use Trail</b>  | NS Dept. of Natural Resources                   | Currently unmaintained |
| ⑧ | West Richmond Rail Trail         | River Tillard to Grand Anse | 16km   | <b>Shared Use Trail</b> | Barachois Trail Assoc. & West Richmond ATV Club | Maintained by ATV club |
| ⑨ | Pringle Mountain                 | Pringle Mountain            | 13.5km | <b>Shared Use Trail</b> | Public Works                                    | Currently unmaintained |
| ⑩ | Doyle's Road Multi Purpose Trail | Isle Madame                 | 3.5km  | <b>Shared Use Trail</b> | Isle Madame ATV Riders Assoc.                   | Maintained by ATV club |
| ⑪ | Cape George                      | Dundee                      | 2km    | <b>Shared Use Trail</b> | Unknown   | Currently unmaintained |
| ⑫ | Lennox Passage Park Trails       | Isle Madame                 | 2km    | <b>Walking Trail</b>    | NS Dept. of Natural Resources                   | DNR                    |
| ⑬ | Cap Auguet Eco Trail             | Isle Madame                 | 9km    | <b>Walking Trail</b>    | NS Dept. of Natural Resources                   | Currently unmaintained |
| ⑭ | Battery Park Trails              | St Peter's                  | 4km    | <b>Walking Trail</b>    | NS Dept. of Natural Resources                   | DNR                    |
| ⑮ | Capelin Cove Trail               | Framboise                   | 16km   | <b>Walking Trail</b>    | NS Dept. of Environment and Climate Change      | Currently unmaintained |









# 3 Community Input

Input from stakeholders and the community is critical to help understand the current state of trail development in Richmond County and to determine the key issues and opportunities. Stakeholder interviews and online engagement tools were used to gather input into this Trail Strategy.

## 3.1 Stakeholder Input

The following stakeholder groups were engaged as part of this project:

### East Richmond ATV Club

#### Role:

- + manages shared-use and ATV trails in between Grand Anse and St. Peter's
- + hold a letter of authority for rail trail between River Tillard and Grand Anse
- + recently developed and improved the West Richmond Rail Trail to a "shared-use pathway" standard and it has been getting more use from cyclists and walkers

#### Input:

- + desire to continue the trail past River Tillard, into St. Peter's and across the canal into the trails in L'Ardoise and beyond
- + believe allowing OHV travel on sections of road right-of-way would help open up the OHV network and allow for more cost-effective connections

### West Richmond Riders Association

#### Role:

- + manage mostly OHV trails in the West Bay/Cleveland/Evanston area

#### Input:

- + desire to connect their trails to the SANS trails in Inverness County and into the Cape Breton Highlands
- + desire to also connect into the L'Ardoise trails through St. Peter's

### Barachois Trails Association

#### Role:

- + manages ATV trails in the Louisdale / River Bourgeois area
- + shares a letter of authority with the East Richmond ATV Club for the shared use trail in the Grand Anse area

#### Input:

- + desire to connect their trails to the trails in Isle Madame, but can't legally cross the bridge over Lennox Passage
- + desire to connect into the East Richmond trail network through St. Peter's

### Coastal Riders ATV Association

#### Role:

- + manages over 100 km of ATV trails in the L'Ardoise and Point Michaud areas

#### Input:

- + desire assistance with trail planning and funding for trail maintenance and expansion
- + desire to connect into the East Richmond OHV network to the west, but requires water crossing over the canal and an OHV trail in St. Peter's that connects to the West Richmond Rail Trail in River Tillard
- + also desire to connect into the Isle Royale OHV network to the east in the Fourchu area, which would connect their network to Sydney and beyond

### Isle Madame Trail Riders

#### Role:

- + manages ATV trails on Isle Madame

#### Input:

- + desire to connect their trails to Barachois area, but can't legally cross the bridge over Lennox Passage

### **Parks Canada**

#### **Role:**

- + manages the St. Peter's Canal National Historic Site

#### **Input:**

- + eager to help link into the St. Peter's Coastal Trail
- + open to ideas on how to use the National Historic Site as a platform to promote trails in the area.

### **Nova Scotia Department of Public Works**

- + considering legislation for a permanent solution, based on the OHV pilot project evaluation results and pilot site criteria (traffic volume, access/egress, travel speeds, and sight lines)

### **Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources**

- + DNR currently issues letters of authority for the abandoned rail corridor. has issued a letter of authority to the East Richmond ATV Club and Barachois Trail Association for the section between River Tillard and Grand Anse
- + two community groups have applied for a letter of authority for the section between River Tillard and the St. Peter's Canal - the East Richmond ATV Riders Club and the St. Peter's Community Club
- + DNR is planning to host a series of public meetings soon to determine which community group to issue the letter of authority to

### **Potlotek First Nation**

- + aren't planning to develop any trails but would be interested in accessing trail development resources and could use help with funding for trail development

### **Cape Breton Partnership**

- + have been working with interest groups in developing mountain bike trails in a handful of areas in Richmond County, including Sporting Mountain

### **West Bay/South Mountain Trails Group**

- + are interested in developing a network of trail in the West Bay/South Mountain area, including a long range wilderness trail that could link up with the many trails in the North Mountain area
- + trail could potentially utilize sections of the transmission corridor for trails
- + would welcome any trail planning support or resources to get started

### **Johnstown Community Development Association**

- + are starting the process of developing a trail network in the Irish Cove area
- + the group is looking for support to plan and design the network as a regional destination and attraction

### **Petit-de-Grat Trail Group**

- + have a letter of authority to manage the Petit-de-Grat Provincial Park on Isle Madame, including the Cap Auguet Eco-Trail
- + the Eco-Trail is overgrown and needs to be revitalized
- + the trail group is looking for support to prepare a Development Plan to reinstate the trail as a regional destination and attraction

### **St. Peter's Economic Development Association**

- + focused on revitalizing the St. Peter's Coastal Trail
- + see great potential in the trail to help support local businesses

### **St. Peter's Community Club**

- + focussed on revitalizing the St. Peter's Coastal Trail and envision it as a highly accessible, multi-use pathway

### 3.2 Public Input

In addition to extensive stakeholder input, an online engagement tool called Social PinPoint was used to gather public input on trail development opportunities in Richmond County. The interactive map tool collected information on existing trail locations and helped identify any safety issues and gaps that may exist.

#### Existing Routes Needing Maintenance

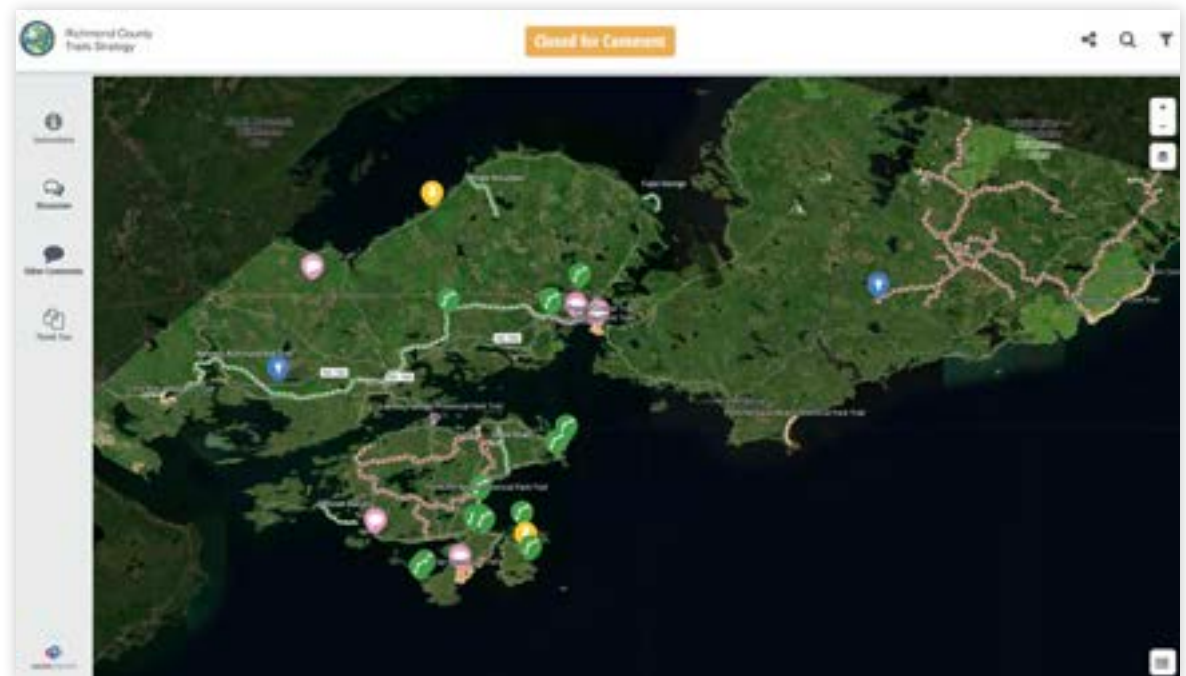
- + St Peter's Coastal Trail: needs repairs
- + Battery Park Trails: waterfront trail near Fort Toulouse could use a boardwalk or gravel—gets very wet, Fort Dorchester trail requires new stair railings and some fill
- + Trail from River Tillard to St. Peter's: concerns about damage and safety issues that motorized use could bring (prefer to focus on other ATV routes)

#### Beach Trail Opportunities

- + Beach walks possible on Petit Nez Beach and Pondville Beach/Back Beach
- + Gros Nez coastal walk (tide dependent)
- + Beach walk from Pebble & Fern south
- + View of Green Island
- + East on Veteran's Memorial Dr from waterfront, to Robins Rd, to Cape August Rd

#### Needed Connections

- + Cooper's Road connection provides access to a big network of trails (snowmobile trails, highlands) and also creates loop for Barachois Trail Association (Cooper's Rd to powerline, to Cameron Mountain Rd, to rail trail)
- + Connection to Cooper's Road needed for ATVs to access rail corridor Louisdale to Lower River (can't cross Hwy 104, but have permission to use logging rds)
- + Multi-use trail allowing ATVs from River Tillard bridge into St Peter's
- + Possibility of connecting into St. Peter's via a northern route that connects onto Oban Rd into St Peter's (completing existing extension of the rail trail), but would require permission from Public Works



### 3.3 Guiding Principles

These guiding principles flow from a review of existing conditions, site visits, and stakeholder/community engagement. The following concepts guide the Trail Strategy and proposed recommendations. The goal throughout these principles is to make trails in Richmond County an essential component of the community. Trails provide a variety of exciting and interesting opportunities that link people, communities, and natural and cultural heritage.



#### Expand regional trail connections

Expand trails connecting communities and destinations, and create a network which explores the diverse landscape of Richmond County.



#### Embrace inclusive & universal design

Make trails accessible and affordable for all residents and visitors, including people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.



#### Improve quality of life

Trails offer countless personal, community, environmental and economic benefits and thus make our county a better place to live.



#### Support the natural environment

Trails are a great way to improve environmental awareness, appreciation, and protection, and should be planned and built to mitigate negative environmental impacts.



#### Support community sustainability

Highlight the benefits of trails in creating environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable and healthy communities.



#### Simplify navigation

Encourage exploration by creating a network of communities which are well connected and intuitive to navigate.



#### Attract visitors & residents

Draw new visitors and residents to experience the natural beauty and high quality of life of Richmond County.



#### Align with adventure tourism initiatives

Work with community partners to develop adventure-based tourism initiatives that will align with other similar products throughout Cape Breton.

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# 4 Recommendations

## 4.1 Introduction

The following recommendations stem from an evaluation of existing conditions and input from stakeholders and the community, and help accomplish the guiding principles established in Section 3.3.

Recommendations are organized into five sections:

- + Trail Upgrades and Expansions
- + New Trail Concepts
- + Trail Amenities
- + Promoting Trails
- + Supporting Trails

Each recommendation includes an overview of the concept or idea, as well as maps and graphics to help explain them as clearly as possible. Each recommendation provides an overview of the steps required to implement them, including a rough time frame for completion, a high-level outline of the steps, an identification of potential partners for implementation, and where possible, an opinion of probable cost.

Cost estimates were developed based on information available at the time of developing this Strategy (Fall 2022), combined with our best professional judgment. As such, variances in these estimates will occur. The changing costs of material and labour, as well as the conditions and underlying principles from which contractors will derive their bids for the work, are outside our knowledge and control. Costs do not include HST. The range of costs indicated in each of the implementation details below includes a 20% contingency.

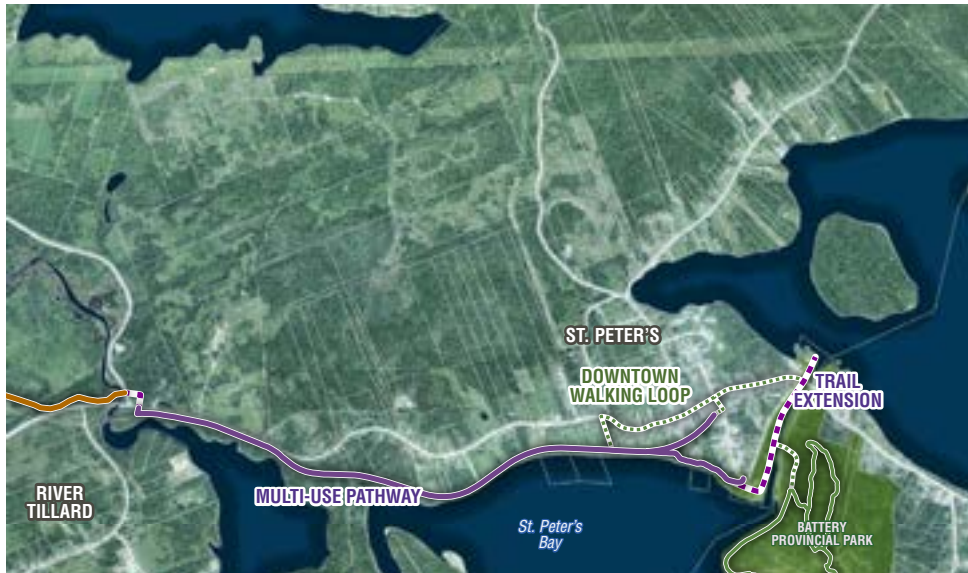
The recommendations proposed in this Trail Strategy have been developed with consideration for the human resources and financial capacity of the Municipality to undertake them.

## 4.2 Trail Upgrades and Expansion

As identified in the Guiding Principles and the Benefits of Trails sections, trail development in Richmond County presents a multitude of opportunities and benefits to businesses, residents and visitors in the Municipality. The county already has many trails that serve a variety of users, but require upgrades and connections to further improve them.

Recognizing this, trail upgrades and expansion projects should be prioritized over new trail projects because they:

- + provide connections between communities and existing trails;
- + create or expand existing trail loops/circuits; and/or
- + represent key trail destinations that will increase use by locals and visitors.



### St. Peter's Coastal Trail Revitalization

The St. Peter's Coastal Trail is an amazing community asset that connects River Tillard into the heart of St. Peter's. The trail is flat, scenic and has great potential to become an attractive destination trail. Currently, the trail is unmanaged and unmaintained. It is in need of significant repairs to bring it back up to a usable standard and protect it from future erosion. The Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources is in the process of evaluating applications from two community groups to take over the management of the trail. Both groups are aware of the significant capital costs and ongoing maintenance required to bring the trail back to standard.

#### Multi-Use Trail Concept

The St. Peter's Community Club would like to develop an accessible multi-use pathway which would not allow motorized use due to perceived noise, pollution and erosion that they cause. Their objective is to develop an accessible multi-use loop that will link in with the walking trails in Battery Provincial Park, as well as the sidewalks on Grenville Street in downtown St. Peter's. An upgraded, accessible multi-use trail would complement the surrounding walking trails, and would also offer a trail type that is currently under represented in Richmond County.

#### Shared Use Trail Concept

The East Richmond ATV Riders, who currently have a letter of authority for the trail west of River Tillard to Grand Anse, would like to develop the trail into a Shared Use Trail that would allow motorized use. Their primary objective is to connect the OHV trails west of St. Peter's (from the junction at River Tillard) to the OHV trails east of St. Peter's into L'Ardoise and beyond. Not only would this connection link two extensive OHV networks, it would also provide a way for ATVs to access goods and services in the Village of St. Peter's. The concern with a Shared Use trail is the perceived noise, pollution and erosion that they cause.

There are some ways to mitigate these concerns, such as :

- + installing posted speed limits of 15 km/hr on the trail to keep noise and dust down
- + installing trail rules that require OHV users to yield to more vulnerable trail users
- + developing the trail into a paved asphalt surface that is quieter and more resistant to OHVs
- + closing the trail to motorized use in the summer to avoid disruptions during peak tourism season



### Alternative Concept

There is a potential alternative option that would allow the OHV community to make their desired connections without using the Coastal Trail. The potential OHV Trail starts at the bridge at River Tilland, travels north of St. Peter's over a number of inland private properties (which have agreed to the concept), and ends at Oban Road, just north of the village centre. From here, OHV trail users would travel down along Oban Road and Pepperell Street to get into the village. Although NS Public Works does not currently allow OHV vehicles to use the public right-of-way for passage (except in a few areas of the province that were chosen as a pilot project several years ago), they are currently reviewing this policy issue and pilots results and may consider allowing OHV use on roads that meet certain criteria (low traffic volumes, speeds, access and egress points, etc). If evaluation results support amending legislation to permit OHVs on the road in designated areas, it would offer the ATV group a way to meet their objectives without using the Coastal Trail. In this case, both community groups could accomplish their objectives.

Ultimately, the Department of Natural Resources will choose one of these options. It plans to hold consultations over the fall of 2022 to determine community concerns and identify a group to take over the trail.

### Next Steps

#### Steps to Implementation:

1. Facilitate a discussion or workshop (hosted by Natural Resources and potentially Public Works) with both community groups to determine the best way to move forward that presents the latest information and achieves as many community trail objectives as possible. Natural Resources can facilitate the meeting internally, or hire a consultant.
2. Based on the outcomes of the workshop, Natural Resources will assign a letter of authority to one of the community groups to begin the trail development process
3. Hire a trail consultant to plan and prepare designs to upgrade and protect the trail from coastal erosion

#### Responsibility/Lead:

NS Natural Resources

#### Potential Partners:

NS Public Works,  
St. Peters Community Club,  
East Richmond ATV Club,  
Municipality

#### Potential Future Costs:

|                                    |                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Facilitation/Workshop (consultant) | \$ 12,000 - 15,000          |
| Trail Planning and Design          | \$ 18,000 - 35,000          |
| Trail Construction                 | \$ 360,000 - 540,000        |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>\$ 390,000 - 590,000</b> |

#### Trail Status:



Planning Phase



### Cap Auguet Eco-Trail

A community group in Isle Madame is in the process of signing a co-management agreement with the Department of Natural Resources at Petit-de-Grat Provincial Park. When complete, the community group plans to revitalize the Cap Auguet Eco-Trail. One section of the trail would benefit from re-routing to take it out of wet areas. This process will require several phases of work and funding from multiple sources. The first step in this process will be to prepare a Trail Development Plan that will help guide this process and present the vision for the trail and how it fits within the park and community.

When complete, the Cap Auguet Eco-Trail will be a unique trail destination in Richmond County. There are few long distance walking trails that offer a coastal

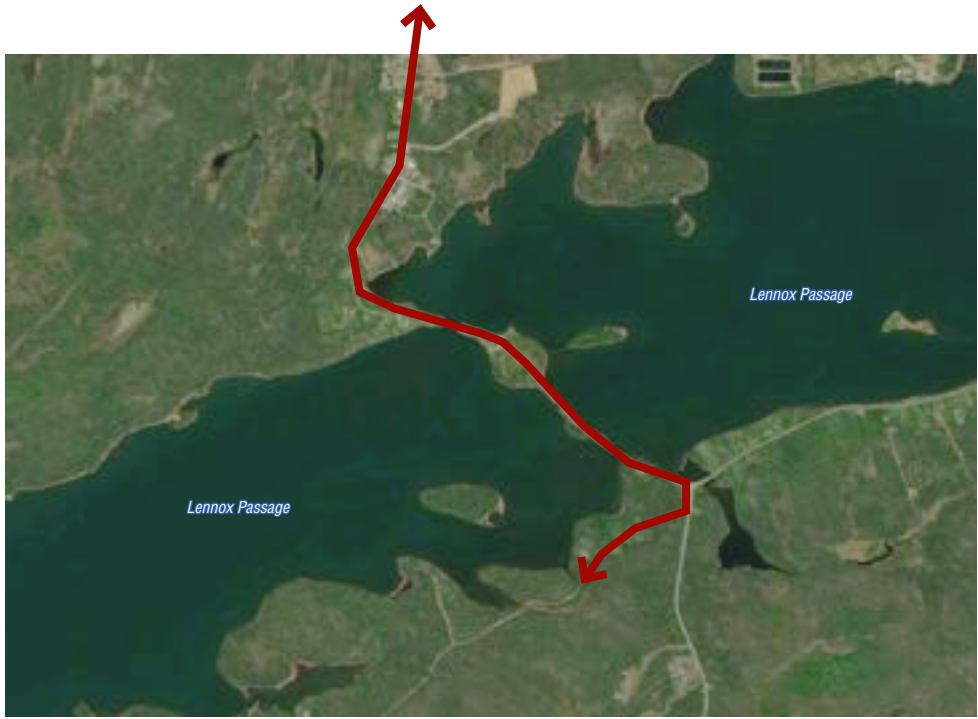
| Next Steps                      |  | Responsibility/Lead:   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Steps to Implementation:</b> |  | <b>Community Group</b>   |
| 1.                              | Prepare a Trail Development Plan, with input from stakeholders and the local community, to outline the vision for the trail, and how it can be implemented | <b>Potential Partners:</b><br>NS Natural Resources, Municipality, DIMA |
| 2.                              | Hire a consultant to prepare design drawings to revitalize the trail and add appropriate amenities   |  |
| 3.                              | Hire a trail contractor to build the trail   |  |
| <b>Potential Future Costs:</b>  |  | <b>Trail Status:</b>   |
| Trail Development Plan          | \$ 12,000 - 18,000   | <br><b>Planning Phase</b>  |
| Trail Design                    | \$ 8,000 - 32,000  |  |
| Trail Construction              | To be determined in Trail Development Plan   |  |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>\$ 20,000 - 50,000</b><br><b>+ construction</b>   |  |



### Inverness County OHV Connector


Inverness County has an extensive network of OHV trails that connect all the way into the Cape Breton Highlands. This network reaches just a few kilometres outside Richmond County near West Bay, terminating on Marble Mountain Road. A connection to the route would enable OHV users in Richmond County to travel into Inverness County and beyond. The West Richmond Riders are working on a connection from Coopers Road to County Line Road, which would enable this connection.

| Next Steps   |  |                          |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Steps to Implementation:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West Richmond Riders should continue to work with landowners and potential partners (such as NS Public Works) to secure a safe and viable connections from Richmond County into the SANS network in Inverness County, potentially using the road right-of-way</li> <li>Once all the required agreements and permits are in place, the OHV Connector can be constructed</li> </ol> | <b>Responsibility/Lead:</b><br>West Richmond Riders<br><br><b>Potential Partners:</b><br>NS Public Works (potentially), Municipality | <b>Trail Status:</b><br> |
| <b>Potential Future Costs:</b><br>Planning and Design<br>Trail Construction  | Volunteer time<br>Unknown  | <b>Planning Phase</b>    |



**Lennox Passage OHV Crossing**

A connection over the Lennox Passage bridge would allow OHV users to travel between the Barachois and the Isle Madame OHV trail networks. Currently, this connection is not possible because current legislation prohibits OHV travel along the road right-of-way. Although a separate water crossing is cost prohibitive, if NS Public Works amends legislation to allow OHV use within sections of the right-of-way and it meets site criteria, then this connection could be achieved.

| Next Steps   |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Steps to Implementation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Together, the Barachois Trails Association and Isle Madame Trail Riders can work with NS Public Works and relevant landowners to secure a safe and viable connection across the Lennox Passage Bridge to from Richmond County into the SANS network in Inverness County</li> <li>2. Once all the required agreements and permits are in place, the OHV crossing can be built</li> </ol> | <p><b>Responsibility/Lead:</b><br/>Barachois Trails Association, Isle Madame Trail Riders</p> <p><b>Potential Partners:</b><br/>NS Public Works, Municipality</p>                   |
| <p><b>Potential Future Costs:</b><br/>Planning and Design<br/>Trail Construction</p>   | <p>Volunteer time<br/>Unknown</p> <p><b>Trail Status:</b><br/> <br/> <b>Planning Phase</b></p> |



### Capelin Cove Coastal Trail Extension and Promotion

The Capelin Cove Coastal Trail offers a wilderness hiking experience that is unique for Richmond County. The trail, however, is currently unmanaged and not officially promoted anywhere online. The Municipality, or a community group, could work with the Department of Environment and Climate Change to offer a moderate maintenance program and promote the trail more actively. Some minor trail amenities such as a map and trail markers may help make the trail more accessible to inexperienced hikers. Off-site wayfinding signage along MacDonald Road and Crooked Lake Road would help hikers find the trailhead access points.

Once improvements have been made to the existing trail, the possibility of extending it further along the coast toward St. Esprit Lake can be explored. Alternatively, an inland trail between Capelin Cove and Sandy Cove could create a loop that could make the trail even more enticing.

| Next Steps  |  |                    |              |  |                    |  |   |
|---|--|--------------------|--------------|--|--------------------|--|---|
| <p><b>Steps to Implementation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Municipality and/or a community group could work with Department of Environment and Climate Change to hire a qualified consultant to prepare a Trail Development Plan that would identify upgrades and extensions to the existing trail, as well as new trails and loops that could be considered in the future.</li> </ol> | <p><b>Responsibility/Lead:</b><br/>Community Group and/or Municipality</p> <p><b>Potential Partners:</b><br/>NS Environment and Climate Change</p> |                    |              |  |                    |  |   |
| <p><b>Potential Future Costs:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Trail Development Plan</td> <td>\$ 15,000 - 25,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trail Design</td> <td>To be determined in Trail Development Plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trail Construction</td> <td>To be determined in Trail Development Plan</td> </tr> </table>  | Trail Development Plan   | \$ 15,000 - 25,000 | Trail Design | To be determined in Trail Development Plan | Trail Construction | To be determined in Trail Development Plan | <p><b>Trail Status:</b></p> <p> </p> <p><b>Planning Phase</b></p> |
| Trail Development Plan  | \$ 15,000 - 25,000   |                    |              |  |                    |  |   |
| Trail Design  | To be determined in Trail Development Plan   |                    |              |  |                    |  |   |
| Trail Construction  | To be determined in Trail Development Plan   |                    |              |  |                    |  |   |




### 4.3 New Trail Concepts

Several new and exciting trail concepts emerged during the consultation phase of this project that have existing community support and would offer new experiences and opportunities in Richmond County (and beyond). These projects are all in early stages of development and require planning and analysis to determine their feasibility.

#### Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Trail

A community group in the Dundee area is interested in developing an “around the lake walking trail” in partnership with the Bras d'Or Biosphere, that would circle around the Bras d'Or Lake and link a beehive of isolated walking trails throughout the region. This project is in early days and will require significant research, mapping and land analyses to determine the best approach, particularly in the Richmond County area of the trail. One option could be to use power line easements as the main artery for the trail, but the feasibility of this is uncertain.


The Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Association has a Trail Committee that is ready and willing to "assist local community groups interested in trail development with logistics, mapping, promotion, educational projects, and appreciation of new links in the system of trails in our Biosphere".

| Next Steps   |   |                   |              |  |                    |  |  |
|--|---|-------------------|--------------|--|--------------------|--|--|
| <b>Steps to Implementation:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire a consultant or identify a community group to create a Trail Development Plan for the portion of trails within Richmond County, with input from stakeholders and the local community, which will outline the vision for the trail network, and how it can be implemented</li> <li>Upon completion of the Trail Development Plan, hire a consultant to prepare design drawings to revitalize or build the trail and add appropriate amenities</li> <li>Hire a trail contractor to build the trails</li> </ol> | <b>Responsibility/Lead:</b><br>Community Group<br><br><b>Potential Partners:</b><br>Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Association, Municipalities, First Nation groups |                   |              |  |                    |  |  |
| <b>Potential Future Costs:</b> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Trail Development Plan</td> <td>\$15,000 - 25,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trail Design</td> <td>To be determined in Trail Development Plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trail Construction</td> <td>To be determined in Trail Development Plan</td> </tr> </table>   | Trail Development Plan  | \$15,000 - 25,000 | Trail Design | To be determined in Trail Development Plan | Trail Construction | To be determined in Trail Development Plan | <b>Trail Status:</b><br><br><b>Planning Phase</b> |
| Trail Development Plan   | \$15,000 - 25,000   |                   |              |  |                    |  |  |
| Trail Design   | To be determined in Trail Development Plan  |                   |              |  |                    |  |  |
| Trail Construction   | To be determined in Trail Development Plan  |                   |              |  |                    |  |  |



### Irish Cove Quarry Nature Trails

The Irish Cove Quarry is a reclaimed limestone quarry on the eastern shore of the Bras d'Or Lake. In 2003, soil and over 100,000 tons of leftover crushed limestone were used to contour the quarry's slopes for safety and to re-vegetate it, creating a beautiful greenspace. The Johnstown Community Development Association has identified five potential trails over the reclaimed quarry site that aim to offer recreation, education, and inspiration for locals and visitors. As part of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association, the area is also an excellent location for a dark sky observatory, and would link in well with the proposed Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Trail concept. The next step for the community group is to work with a trail consultant to determine the feasibility of their preliminary trail network and develop a phasing plan that will guide its implementation over the next few years.

| Next Steps  |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Steps to Implementation:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare a Trail Development Plan, with input from stakeholders and the local community, which will outline the vision for the trail network, and how it can be implemented</li> <li>2. Upon completion of the Trail Development Plan, hire a consultant to prepare design drawings to revitalize the trail and add appropriate amenities</li> <li>3. Hire a trail contractor to build the trails</li> </ol> | <b>Responsibility/Lead:</b><br>Johnstown Development Association<br><br><b>Potential Partners:</b><br>NS Natural Resources, Municipality |
| <b>Potential Future Costs:</b><br>Trail Development Plan \$ 10,000 - 15,000<br>Trail Design To be determined in Trail Development Plan<br>Trail Construction To be determined in Trail Development Plan   | <b>Trail Status:</b><br><br><b>Planning Phase</b>   |



Source: daveyandsky.com

hiking experience along a well developed trail.

### **Richmond County Water Routes**

There are an abundance of high quality water routes in Richmond County, but they are not well known or promoted. These experiences could be more actively marketed as a excellent paddling destinations. For example, a multi-day paddling/camping experience around Isle Madame offers some beautiful and diverse coastline which would appeal to a broad range of paddlers' interests and skill sets. The route would circumnavigate the island, linking coastal communities, public lands (Crown Land, Provincial Parks, Nature Reserves), and possibly including businesses and private land owners in a coastal paddling route. Such a project would require consultation and collaboration with stakeholders and the public but a potential "vision" for this concept is a water route. The project would require an "inventory" of natural, cultural, and recreational features along the route that would be of interest to paddlers. This water route is already well known by local enthusiasts, and was [recently profiled in a travel website](#).



Source: daveyandsky.com



Similar to the Isle Madame Water Route, a 20 kilometre water route between Framboise River and Belfry Lake (just outside Richmond County) could be more actively promoted as a paddling destination. The route weaves through interconnected lagoons and brackish lakes, sheltered from the open ocean by barrier beaches and the headlands of the Fourchu Coast Wilderness Area. The area is very scenic, but would need a few portage routes established with accompanying maps for it to realize full potential.

Finally, a water route within the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere could also be promoted, and could align well with the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Trail concept.

| Next Steps   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Steps to Implementation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Tourism Development Plan, led by a community group or stakeholder group, could identify the programming, logistics, and infrastructure required to develop these products</li> <li>2. Developing the three marquee water routes (Isle Madame, Fourchu and Bras d'Or) together could offer efficiencies, while also creating a set of experiences that are located near one another</li> </ol> | <p><b>Responsibility/Lead:</b><br/>Community Groups or Local Businesses, Municipality</p> <p><b>Potential Partners:</b><br/>NS Natural Resources, NS Environment and Climate Change, DIMA, Municipality, Tourism NS, CB Partnership</p> |  |
| <p><b>Potential Future Costs:</b><br/>Tourism Development Plan</p>   | <p>\$25,000 - 40,000</p>  | <p><b>Trail Status:</b></p> <p><b>Planning Phase</b></p> |



### Mountain Biking Trails

Mountain biking is a rapidly growing sport and a popular destination-based tourist activity. The uniquely undulating and rugged landscape of the West Mountain area is an ideal environment for mountain bike trails. The County could consider supporting trail groups or local entrepreneurs interested in building some single track mountain bike trails in this area or a mountain bike park featuring wooden tracks, jumps and courses. Providing this type of infrastructure would attract a new market segment to Richmond County and augment the existing trail network.

This concept is in the very early pre-planning phase, however, there are stakeholders that are exploring the idea of building mountain bike facilities in Richmond County.

| Recommendation   |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Steps to Implementation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When the opportunity presents itself, the Municipality can support these ventures through potential grants, sharing resources, or by endorsing such projects if they align with municipal goals and offer a positive community impact</li> </ol> | <p><b>Responsibility/Lead:</b><br/>Community Group(s) or Local Businesses</p> <p><b>Potential Partners:</b><br/>Municipality, CB Partnership</p> |
| <p><b>Potential Future Costs:</b><br/>N/A</p>  | <p><b>Trail Status:</b></p> <p>Planning Phase</p>  |



### New Wilderness Trails

Existing non-motorized use trails such as the Capelin Cove trail in the Fourchu Coast Wilderness Area have great potential as destinations that could bring visitors to the area. Similarly, the Middle River/Framboise Wilderness Area is a great wilderness destination with untapped potential. Designating resources toward developing trail experiences in Richmond’s two large wilderness areas could create experiences that would draw trail users to Richmond County.

There is a ten step process to developing trails in Wilderness Areas, which can be found [here](#).

| Recommendation  |   |                    |              |  |                    |  |  |  |
|---|---|--------------------|--------------|--|--------------------|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Steps to Implementation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A community group or organization must express interest in building a trail to the NS Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC)</li> <li>2. The group would then need to prepare a Trail Development Plan, including an impact analysis and community consultation</li> <li>3. Once the Trail Development Plan has been approved by ECC, a trail planning agreement must be signed</li> <li>4. A Trail Construction Plan must then be prepared</li> <li>5. Once the Trail Construction Plan has been approved by ECC, a trail management agreement must be signed, and then the trail can be built by a qualified contractor</li> </ol> | <p><b>Responsibility/Lead:</b><br/>Community Groups or Local Businesses</p> <p><b>Potential Partners:</b><br/>Municipality, NS Environment and Climate Change</p> |                    |              |  |                    |  |  |  |
| <p><b>Potential Future Costs:</b></p> <table> <tr> <td>Trail Development Plan</td> <td>\$ 15,000 - 25,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trail Design</td> <td>To be determined in Trail Development Plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trail Construction</td> <td>To be determined in Trail Development Plan</td> </tr> </table>   | Trail Development Plan  | \$ 15,000 - 25,000 | Trail Design | To be determined in Trail Development Plan | Trail Construction | To be determined in Trail Development Plan |  | <p><b>Trail Status:</b></p> <p><b>Planning Phase</b></p> |
| Trail Development Plan  | \$ 15,000 - 25,000  |                    |              |  |                    |  |  |  |
| Trail Design  | To be determined in Trail Development Plan  |                    |              |  |                    |  |  |  |
| Trail Construction  | To be determined in Trail Development Plan  |                    |              |  |                    |  |  |  |



#### 4.4 Trail Amenities

A well connected and organized network of trails will help accomplish many of the goals of this Strategy. Beyond this, however, the County can further encourage trail use by providing support services and amenities such as bike racks, boat launches, picnic areas, benches, equipment, maps, wayfinding signage, etc. Services and amenities can help make trails more attractive, convenient, and comfortable. They can be provided by the Province, the County, businesses, institutions, trail groups, or community organizations, and can also be placed in public parks, recreation facilities, and community centres.

##### Benches

Seating improves accessibility and comfort for all community members by providing places to stop and rest, especially for trail users. People of all ages and abilities will have an easier time walking or cycling through the County if there are places to stop and rest and/or seek protection from the elements.

To be useful benches must be carefully placed, with special consideration to comfort and view. The following criteria should be accounted for when placing outdoor seating:

- + Face towards human activity
- + Face south for peak solar exposure
- + Provide windbreaks such as plant beds to provide protection from the elements and a sense of enclosure
- + Do not block pedestrian thoroughfare

##### Bike Racks + Repair Stations

Bike racks allow cyclists to use their bikes on trails for everyday trips like commutes, errands, and social activities. Priority locations for bike racks are common destinations and key junctions in the trail network that support cycling. Furthermore, bike repair stations, which include tools for bicycles and other



recreational equipment (screwdrivers, wrenches, and pumps) could be placed at trailheads where cycling is encouraged. Several off-the-shelf products are available that provide tools necessary to perform basic bike repairs and maintenance, including changing a flat and adjusting brakes/derailleurs. Tools are typically attached to a stand with stainless steel cables and tamper-proof fasteners. Hanging the bike from the hanger arms allows the pedals and wheels to spin freely while making adjustments.

### **Waste Stations**

Separated waste stations and dog waste bags reduce the amount of littering on trails, improving the experience for all users. Dog litter bins and bag dispensers, in particular, would help prevent unwanted messes along trails.

### **Picnic Areas**

Picnic areas or rest stops provide shelter and space for trail users to stop and recharge. Their design should prioritize accessibility and comfort.



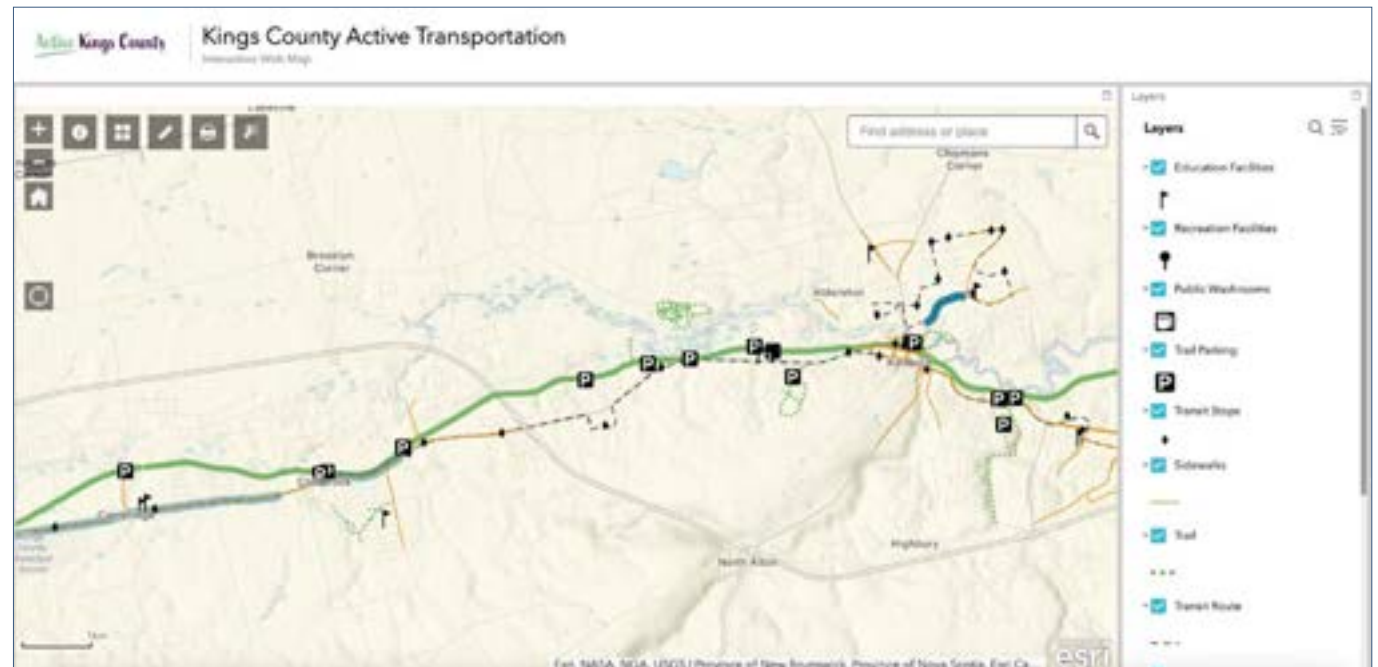
### **Signage and Wayfinding**

Wayfinding signs are useful tools that help trail users move conveniently and seamlessly throughout the network. Trail signage in Richmond County would offer the following benefits:

- + Increase awareness for trails that are lesser known due to the lack of off-site directional signs;
- + Improve internal navigability for trail users;
- + Improve links between on-road, trail, or park facilities and adjacent community amenities; and
- + Improve the sense of arrival for trail users and visitors by installing trailhead or park signs at entrances.

The province has recently released a Trail Signage Manual that can be used by Municipalities and trail groups in Nova Scotia. [The guide can be found here.](#)

An interactive map shows the trail network in Kings County, NS



## 4.5 Promoting Trails

As Richmond County builds a strong network of trails that increasingly attracts more visitors and residents through all seasons, to make the most of its offerings it will be important for the County to distribute clear information about available infrastructure and events. Marketing and promoting will attract more trail users, spread the word to local community members, and build tourism.

Improvements in trail infrastructure can help support local businesses and services through increased spending from trail users. Encouraging the business community to take advantage of opportunities to expand their reach will make local shops more accessible to trail users while offering the potential to improve their marketing and profits.

### Create an online trail map

While most of Richmond County's trails are well known to its residents, there is no central location where visitors or newcomers to the area can go to find information about trails. While hikers, mountain bikers, and OHV users have a variety of websites where trail GPS tracks and descriptions are collected, a central resource would open up Richmond's trails to many more users. An interactive online map could be used by residents and visitors alike, and might include:

- + Location marker & search function
- + Trails and other active transportation routes
- + Trail surfacing, difficulty, permitted uses
- + Updates on closures
- + Key amenities & destinations
- + Options for users to design & save routes
- + Contacts for reporting trail conditions & emergency lines
- + General safety considerations (local wildlife, poisonous plants)
- + Key etiquette & laws



### **ATV Tourism**

The OHV trails in Richmond County are well maintained and supported by the five clubs in the area. While they are currently used primarily by local residents, there is potential for marketing these trails as part of an “overlanding” experience, attracting users from outside the region who wish to travel into and across Cape Breton Island by ATV. The trails are already well maintained and well marked, but connectivity with other trail networks in CBRM, Inverness County, and access to Mainland Nova Scotia, as well as improvements to access points and amenities (such as trailer parking) would be necessary before this experience can be ready for market.



### **Work with SANS to designate snowmobile connector trails**

Inverness and Victoria Counties have extensive designated snowmobile trail networks administered by the Snowmobilers Association of NS (SANS), but Richmond County has no SANS designated snowmobile trails, mostly likely due to less snow cover in the area. While there is existing informal use of ATV trails, woods roads, and other routes by snowmobilers, there is an opportunity to formalize some designated routes in Richmond County for the purpose of connecting into the SANS trails in Inverness/Victoria. This would be particularly beneficial if the trails could be connected to SANS trails 104 and 403 which currently terminate at the boundary between Richmond and Inverness Counties.

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## 4.6 Supporting Trails

### Develop a Richmond County Trails Policy

A clear policy incorporated into Richmond County's Municipal Planning Strategies will provide significant and ongoing support for trails. The policy will remain as Council and staff change, allowing projects to crossover election cycles. A sample policy might include the following:

Policy Goal: Council's goal is to provide a trail system that allows all community members and visitors to partake in recreation, get where they need to go, hold community events and activities, and enhance Richmond County's tourism potential. Council shall adopt the Nova Scotia Trails Federation Manual: Developing Recreation Trails in Nova Scotia, as the standard in Richmond County for trail development. Council shall support the long-term development of trails that support active lifestyles, connect communities and facilities, highlight historical and cultural areas, and create a high quality of life for county residents.

### Develop a Richmond County Trails Funding Program

A Trails Funding Program will help to ensure the long-term sustainability of community trails, transparent decisions-making, and responsible municipal spending. This will allow the Municipality to support community groups to maintain and extend existing trail systems through a formalized application process using standardized evaluation criteria to determine the best use of the funds. It is recommended that Richmond County focus the majority of Municipal funds on maintaining and upgrading existing trails and filling in key gaps of the network, before new build projects.

To help with project proposal evaluation, a set of criteria are required to determine which projects should be funded. A predictable and systematic process for evaluating project proposals will help Municipal staff and Council to implement trail projects, while ensuring that each project works towards achieving goals for active living, trails, and community sustainability.

### Leverage Funding Through External Funding Programs

Trail projects can leverage Municipal seed funding through provincial and federal grants, such as:

- + [Federal Active Transportation Fund](#)
- + [Provincial Trail Funds \(leadership, engineering, expansion, maintenance grants\)](#)
- + [Provincial Active Communities Fund](#)
- + [Provincial Recreation Facility Development Grant](#)
- + [Provincial Community Development Grant](#)
- + [Provincial Community Access-Ability Program](#)
- + [Provincial Connect2 Fund](#)
- + [Provincial OHV Infrastructure Fund – Trail](#)

### Corporate Sponsorships

The County or trail groups can also try raising funds through local companies and groups interested in contributing to ongoing maintenance and development of trails, or sponsoring signage.



### **Trail Etiquette Education**

Public education informs trail users of the harm caused by activities such as dogs off-leash and the illegal dumping of garden waste close to trails. Users can be further educated in responsible trail use, stewardship, and the county's natural and cultural history. Initiatives could include targeted public campaigns such as:

- + Trail basics – promoting existing trails to new users and preparing them for their first trip;
- + Trails code of conduct/etiquette, including information on how the trail should be yielded to more vulnerable users (see above);
- + Safety tips (what to bring, wildlife and poisonous plants to watch for)
- + Health benefits of trails;
- + Impacts of illegal dumping of garbage and garden waste in natural environment areas;
- + Invasive species, sensitive species, water quality and habitat, and
- + Impacts of off-trail activity and dogs off-leash on the forest understory.

### **Volunteer Trail Building Workshops**

Volunteer trail maintenance or trail building workshops can be organized by the County along with trail stakeholders. These events bring in expert resources (trail planners, professional trail builders, etc.) to build capacity in the community for building and/or maintaining sustainable trails. They can also act as a community outreach tool to introduce potential new trail users or trail volunteers to the system or encourage youth involvement in the Richmond County trail system.

# UPLAND

