



## North of the Nith Project Charter

<b>Proposed Project Name:</b>	North of the Nith Trails & Open Space Master Plan		
<b>Project Sponsor:</b>	Phil Mete	<b>Department:</b>	Community Services
<b>Project Manager:</b>	Stacey Ellins		
<b>Project Description:</b>	Trails & Open Space Master Plan for North of the Nith Property		
<b>Project Budget:</b>	\$50,000 (2023 approved), \$50,000 (2024 approved)		
<b>Anticipated Completion</b>	December 2025		

Version History	Changes	Date
Draft #1	Original draft	Dec 19, 2023
Draft #2	Final	April 5, 2024

Steering Committee List	
Required Staff:	Position / Role / Responsibilities:
Stacey Ellins	Director, Parks & Recreation / Project Manager
Kathy Ballantyne	Director, Facilities & Special Projects / Reviewer & Approver
Phil Mete	General Manager, Community Services / Sponsor/Reviewer & Approver
Andrea Bazzard	Director, Environmental Services / SME / Reviewer
Matt D'Hondt	Solid Waste/Wastewater Operations Manager/SME- CA, transfer station / Reviewer
Michelle Schaeffe	Senior Environmental Planner/Technical Input/Mapping/Review Studies
Darryl Lee	CEO BME/ Battery Storage/ Consulted
Broader Project Team:	Position / Role / Responsibilities:
Megan Thomas	Landscape Designer / SME- design, technical review / Complete, Review
Trent Meyers	Forestry Technician/ SME- trails, forestry, mapping / Complete, Review
Mackenzie Sheppard	Horticulture/ Forestry Coordinator / SME- invasive species, mapping / Complete
Rob Walton	General Manager, Operations / Governance
Jennifer Boyer	Manager of Policy Planning/ Reviewer/guidance
Mayor & Council	Mayor/Paris Councilors/Informed
Dana Steane	Public Consultation Specialist – Engagement
Consultant(s):	Position / Role / Responsibilities:
TBD- RFP	Create Master Plan, Public Engagement, Studies
External Distribution List:	Position / Role / Responsibilities:
Brant Waterways	Dana Darnbrough / Funder / Informed (consider Consulted)
Brant Cycling Club	Duncan Ross / SME / Informed
Brant Tree Coalition	Chuck Beach
Brant for Nature	Tom Sitak/ SME / Informed
Grand River Conservation Authority	Samantha Lawson / SME, Sponsor / Review Sue Brockelbank and Jake Watson/ Stewardship
Ducks Unlimited Canada	Sean Rootham /Wetland Restoration Flood Mitigation Program
MGC Trout Unlimited	middlegrandchapter.tuc@gmail.com
Brant Death Racers	JS Esposito < <a href="mailto:js.esposito@icloud.com">js.esposito@icloud.com</a> >
Acronyms:	Definitions
BWF	Brant Waterways Foundation
BCC	Brant Cycling Club
BTC	Brant Tree Coalition
ECA	Environmental Compliance Approval



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MECP	Ministry of Environment, Conservation & Parks
MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry
GRCA	Grand River Conservation Authority
SAR	Species at Risk
SME	Subject Matter Expert

Proposed Project Definition
<p><b>Project Need:</b></p> <p>This project is to create a trails and open space master plan for the North of the Nith lands for the next 20-year horizon to guide the development of a connected, comprehensive, accessible and sustainable multi-use trail network, while preserving and enhancing the natural heritage system, reducing risks associated with natural hazards, and incorporating indigenous values.</p> <p>The North of the Nith Lands are envisioned to encompass a 205-acre parcel of underutilized land owned by the County of Brant and the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) which are partially within and adjacent to the settlement area of Paris, adjacent to the Nith River, CN railway and Paris Transfer Station.</p> <p>Creating healthy and complete communities along with active transportation and mobility networks is part of the County’s new Official Plan: A Simply Grand Plan. Along with the Transportation Master Plan (2023) and Recreational Trails Master Plan (2017) there is a framework for implementing active transportation and recreational amenities.</p> <p>This property borders on 203 acres of GRCA lands for which the County will be entering into a Maintenance Agreement over. A portion of the property is under an Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) that must be amended to allow parkland use beyond the current approved ECA uses. There is currently unauthorized use of trails by hikers, mountain bikers and ATVers and no formal access to the lands beyond the transfer station. The property contains a closed landfill site, an existing Transfer Station, and a biosolids storage facility with regulatory requirements through an ECA with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, natural areas, natural hazards, and invasive species such as the known presence of phragmites, Japanese Knotweed, and European Buckthorn.</p> <p>Located in the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan, the property is traversed by an extensive natural heritage system. Known natural areas include the Life Science of Natural and Scientific Interest known as the Nith River Forests, wetlands known as the West Paris River Swamp, a deer wintering area, the Nith River which is identified as a waterfowl winter concentration area and containing aquatic species at risk, and a tributary to the Nith River. The lands also consist of natural hazards regulated by GRCA including wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes. The extent of species at risk and additional wildlife habitat is unknown.</p> <p>In recognition of the cultural heritage values, archaeological potential, recreational, scenic and ecological values, the Grand River and its major tributaries including the Nith River were designated as Canadian Heritage Rivers.</p> <p>The area is highly used by residents and members from several stakeholder groups including the Brant Cycling Club, Brant Tree Coalition, Brant for Nature among other groups. Through this plan, the main priority will be to balance the suitable user experiences within the property while ensuring safety and security while also balancing the area’s ecological needs.</p>

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### Project Benefit / Outcomes:

#### Project Benefits:

- Utilize available lands for recreation and trails (i.e. dedicated mountain biking, hiking etc.) close to the urban boundary of Paris to provide safe and accessible opportunities for residents.
- Provide safe and legal access to the property for recreational purposes that serve a variety of special interest groups and the public.
- Enhance and restore natural heritage features, tributaries, linkages and buffers where appropriate.
- Mitigate flood risks by creating additional wetlands and planting species known for reducing erosion hazards where feasible.
- Define the operational lands of Paris Transfer Station/ monitoring lands to secure the operational lands to potentially release lands from the current ECA and incorporate battery/energy storage.
- Early engagement and relationship building with Indigenous partners.
- Provide educational opportunities and celebrate the history of the Nith River.
- Foster partnerships that further enhance the North of the Nith Lands while minimizing risks and improving safety.
- Sustainable ecotourism and economic benefit in Brant County (questionable based on political appetite).
- Opportunities for increased mental, social, and physical wellbeing of the community.

#### Project Outcomes:

- Creation of the North of the Nith Trails & Open Space Master Plan- phased 20-year development plan
  - RFP for consultant
  - Agency, indigenous, public and stakeholder engagement
  - Safe, legal and accessible recreational public access established
  - Establish connections to other trails and transportation networks
  - Establish a trail system framework that supports a wide range of trail users through safe integration between different user groups
  - Identification of the Natural Heritage System, natural hazards, and environmental constraints to trail construction, location, and materials (i.e. policy review, permitting requirements, existing conditions/monitoring, limits of operations, need for porous surfaces in sensitive areas for water drainage, etc.)
  - Environmental impact scan (inventory of terrestrial land and riparian species/concerns, ANSI etc.)
  - Ecological restoration plan (habitat creation, invasive species management, reforestation)
  - Flooding and erosion mitigation plan (enhancement of wetlands and other plants)
  - Identification of archaeological constraints and educational opportunities on cultural heritage, archaeological, and ecological values in recognition of the Canadian Heritage River designation
  - Phased development plan with costing for recreational infrastructure
- Amendment of the Environmental Compliance Approval (if necessary) of the Paris Transfer Station lands for additional uses.

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### Implementation Timeline:

#### Timeline:

- Q2 2024- Release RFP
- Q3 2024- Award Tender
- Q3 2024 to Q2 2025- Ecological monitoring
- Q3\Q4 2024- Council, Agency, Stakeholder, Staff, Public & Indigenous Engagement
- Q4 2024/Q1 2025-Preliminary Mapping & Design
- Q2 2025 -Completion of Field Studies
- Q2 2025- Draft Concept Plan, Phasing & Cost Estimates
- Q3 2025- Final Engagement
- Q4 2025- Final Master Plan & Report to Council
- Q4 2025- Revised ECA submission

#### Impact Risks:

- Review periods by staff extended
- Feedback from public/Indigenous engagement requiring major changes
- Impacts of governance redirected project intent/objectives
- Review/ approvals by external agencies
- Significant site factors discovered that do not allow the project to proceed
- Budgetary constraints

### General Scope of the Proposed Project (who is Involved/impacted):

Create a phased 20-year master plan for the development of the North of the Nith lands to balance recreational opportunities and site use with environmental constraints, needs of operations lands (Paris Transfer station and Boralex or other battery storage), and educational opportunities. This master plan will create a concept plan and phased implementation plan for all aspects of the property. A priority for the scope is to identify feasible lands for non-motorized recreational opportunities.

### Internal Stakeholders – County of Brant staff and Council

Project Scope Includes:	Project Scope Does NOT Include:
Master Plan (concept design) creation and phased implementation plan	Detailed design, tender documents for construction, building or facility plans
ECA revision submission	Design/implementation of signage and wayfinding
Defined County of Brant operations lands for battery storage (Boralex)	Completion of environmental restoration and remediation
Council, agency, stakeholders, staff, public & Indigenous community engagement	Permits that may be required under the Conservation Authorities Act, Fisheries Act, Species at Risk Act, or Endangered Species Act
Indigenous relationship building & engagement	
Identify public access and parking	
Environmental monitoring, mapping, implementation plan	
Trail mapping- existing and proposed closures and trails	
Consultant management	

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Project management	
Soils storage facility as per Ontario soil regulation 406-19	
Archaeological Stage 1 Site Assessment	
<b>External Stakeholders – BWF, BCC, BTC, BFN, GRCA</b>	
<b>Project Scope Includes:</b>	<b>Project Scope Does NOT Include:</b>
Feasibility of potential mountain biking areas	Detailed mountain biking pump track or trail design
Discussion of draft stewardship agreement with BCC	Construction of trails and infrastructure
Execution of Management Agreement – GRCA/County of Brant	Executed stewardship agreement with BCC
Planting and Ecological Restoration opportunities- GRCA, BWF, BTC, Ducks Unlimited, County of Brant	Consultant management (exception of environmental services provided by BCC/BWF)
External project funding potential- BWF, BCC, BTC	Project management
Ecological inventory and monitoring (SAR, birds, terrestrial, riparian etc.)- BCC, BTC, BWF, BFN (TOR for study) issued per authorized access permission for certain personnel	
Indigenous relationship building & engagement	
Review of detailed scope/ TOR- BWF, BCC	

Identified Project Risks			
External Risks	Probability	Impact	Strategy
Market	Low - No bidders on master plan or bids excess of budget.	High- Budget/ Timeline	Revise scope, timelines, or complete master plan internally. Request additional budget from Council. Seek external funding.
Stakeholders	Medium - Conflict of perspective for development/ use of the lands.	Medium- Timeline/ Scope	County to assess information and discuss with community groups/ stakeholders to find adequate solution. May have timeline impacts or approvals by agencies.
Archaeological Resources	Medium - Located adjacent to the river, the project area is identified as an area of Archaeological significance.	Medium- Budget/ Timeline	County to retain qualified consultants to perform Stage 1 Archeological Site Assessment and potentially, Stage 2, Stage 3 and Stage 4 if required. Should significant resources be discovered, determine solution in consultation with consultant and Indigenous communities. Request additional budget or seek funding if necessary.

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Environmental	Medium - Environmental constraints, Natural Heritage System significance, unsuitable site conditions due to hazards, presence of Species at Risk onsite, Fisheries Act approval if required for any in water works, and MECP approval for ECA and any Species at Risk.	High-Scope/ Timeline	Identify issue and solution options to discuss with project team for direction, MECP contact, and Department of Fisheries and Oceans if necessary.
<b>Internal Risks</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
Organizational	Low - Redirection or lack of buy-in from governance, competing priorities, and change of priority from Council.	High-timeline, scope, budget	Clear approvals and communications to project governance.
Technical	Medium - Capacity of technical staff completing or reviewing components/ drafts.	Medium-Timeline	Clear project communication on project roles and timelines.
Logistical	Medium - Staff changes or capacity, and timing with multiple departments/ agencies.	Medium-Timeline	Keep good project records for easy hand-off. Identify priority: scope, budget, then time.
Operational	Low - Coordination of onsite access and study completion	Low-timeline	Communicate needs for access and study timelines.
Financial	Low - Project funding not sufficient.	High-timeline, budget, scope	Reduce scope of project. Request additional funding. Find external funding. Complete master plan or components in-house. Push out completion.
Communications	Medium- Low support or conflicting perspectives from staff or residents.	Medium-scope, timeline	Develop communications strategy to address concerns and find positive path forward.

<b>Key Communication Messages</b>
To create a phased property master plan to utilize underdeveloped lands for non-motorized recreational opportunities and mountain-biking trails in phase 1. For sustainable use of environmentally sensitive lands. To create balanced use of the Operations Department requirements (transfer station, biosolids storage, battery storage), ecological restoration, recreation, indigenous values, and educational opportunities.

<b>Internal Project References</b>
<p>April 27, 2021- Brant County Council Delegation by Duncan Ross, BCC</p> <p>June 24, 2021- GRCA Board of Directors Report GM-06-18-47</p> <p>January 25, 2023- CN Rail Application</p> <p>September 14, 2023- Confidential Briefing Note</p> <p>November 23, 2023- site visit and meeting notes</p> <p>December 20, 2023- Project update to BWF</p> <p>CN Property Transfer documents</p>



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Mete".

Project Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phil Mete, General Manager of Community Services

Date: April 5, 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacey Ellins".

Project Manager: \_\_\_\_\_  
Stacey Ellins, Director of Parks & Recreation

Date: April 5, 2024