



## VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TRAILS FOR THE COUNTY OF KINGS

Draft Report



*Prepared for:*  
Municipality of the County of Kings

*Prepared by:*  
EDM • Environmental Design and  
Management Limited

*In association with:*  
SageHouse Landscape Planning  
and Design

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for this assignment clearly established three expected outcomes from the study:

- A map of the existing and proposed network of trails depicting the type and proposed usage
- A comprehensive community vision for the development and use of public trails
- An action plan that establishes direction and priorities associated with achieving this community vision for trails.

### 1.2 PROJECT PROCESS

A three-phase work plan was undertaken to address the scope of work specified in the RFP. The phases of work conducted are as follows:

- PHASE I – Situation Assessment
- PHASE II – Community Engagement
- PHASE III – Vision Plan

Each phase concluded with the submission of documents for review by the Municipal Trails Committee. These project outputs have been built to this Final Vision Implementation Plan Report, which reflects the aspirations of the community and aligns with municipal priorities and goals.

Submission of this Vision Implementation Plan concludes the research and recommendation components of Phase III of the project. The report documents our understanding of issues in Kings County based on review of relevant documents, strategic interviewing of key stakeholders, and our inventory of existing and planned trails in Kings County (including the three incorporated towns and seven village commissions within its boundaries). It also reflects community input gathered in Phase II through a Web survey, focus group sessions, and public workshops. The trails inventory and recommendations for future trails development are illustrated in a mapping contained in **Appendix A**.

### 1.3 REPORT ORGANIZATION

**Chapter 2** of this report presents an overview of the role of trails nationally and in the context of Kings County. It outlines significant trends pertinent to trails

development along with specific challenges and opportunities that may be expected to influence the development of a Trails Vision for the County.

**Chapter 3** provides a summary of research undertaken to date to develop an understanding of the existing trails system in Kings. This includes our trails inventory to date, which is illustrated in mapping incorporated in **Appendix A** and a summary of key issues identified through our stakeholder interviewing process.

**Chapter 4** summarizes our proposed Community Engagement Plan, which was tentatively outlined in our proposal. We continue to feel that the approach outlined in our proposal is valid and offer it as a talking point to develop our approach to Phase II of this project.

**Chapter 5** summarizes our conclusions and recommendations.

## 2.0 THE ROLE OF TRAILS

### 2.1 TRAILS DEVELOPMENT

It would be nice to be able to say how much trails development has taken place in Canada and Nova Scotia in the past 20 years. Various sources, such as the Nova Scotia Trails Federation (NSTF),<sup>1</sup> provide good compilations of trails but none of that we are aware of are reliably comprehensive. In **Section 3.2** below, we provide a summary of existing and planned trails in Kings, identified through our research for the current project. The compilation is drawn from sources such as the NSTF web site and consultation with informed stakeholders. We are now reasonably confident that this is a comprehensive inventory of trails that are either in use or are planned for Kings. However, we recognize that the trails network is dynamic with new trails perpetually under development, while occasionally existing trails are replaced or fall into disuse.

Obtaining and maintaining a quantitative database on the location of trails, the length of networks, and other features is challenging because they have developed organically. For the most part, trails systems have emerged from community efforts with funds raised by and work contributed by volunteers. As well, many well-used trails have evolved on K-class roads, logging routes, and traditional pathways from little more than steady use.

There can be little doubt, nonetheless, that walkways and trails are a burgeoning component of public infrastructure across Canada. Development of the Trans Canada Trail is well underway, and regional and local trails projects are widespread. Many municipal units like Kings have or are in the midst of developing trails strategies and master plans.

By all accounts most feel progress has been made. A 2004 survey of Canadian municipalities by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CLFRI) found 36 per cent considered they had a “well linked network of trails, paths, and sidewalks.” Amongst municipalities in Atlantic Canada, 45 per cent gave this response.<sup>2</sup> Only 21 per cent responded “not at all or very little” in response to a

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<sup>1</sup> Nova Scotia Trails Federation, “Your guide to Nova Scotia’s trails resources,” [www.novascotiatrails.com](http://www.novascotiatrails.com). NSTF provides a database of trails by region of which eight are located in Kings County.

<sup>2</sup> Christine Cameron, *et al.*, *A Municipal Perspective on Opportunities for Physical Activity: Trends From 2000–2004*, CFLRI, 2004, p. 85. The survey obtained responses from 1,220 Canadian municipalities of which 196 were in Atlantic Canada (23 in Nova Scotia).

separate question asking if they “agree[d] that trails and pathways [in their jurisdiction] were linked to form a network.”<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, there is far to go. As **Table 2.1** from CFLRI’s survey of the general population for its

2004 Physical Activity Monitor shows, only 27 per cent of Canadians were “very satisfied” with “the amount of places to walk” in their community, while 25 per cent were “not at all satisfied.” For the “amount of places to bicycle,” only 20 per cent were very satisfied and

Question	Response	Canada	Nova Scotia
Satisfaction with Amount of Places to Walk	Very Satisfied	27%	19%
	Somewhat Satisfied	48%	50%
	Not at all Satisfied	25%	31%
Satisfaction with Amount of Places to Bike	Very Satisfied	20%	18%
	Somewhat Satisfied	47%	39%
	Not at all Satisfied	32%	43%
Amount of Multi-purpose Recreation Trails	Very Satisfied	16%	N/A
	Somewhat Satisfied	56%	49%
	Not at all Satisfied	28%	44%
Satisfaction with Amount of Multi-purpose Recreation Trails	Very Satisfied	17%	16%
	Somewhat Satisfied	53%	47%
	Not at all Satisfied	30%	38%

**Table 2.1: Satisfaction with Places to Walk and Bike, and with Trails, Canada and Nova Scotia, 2004**

32 per cent were not satisfied at all. The figures for Nova Scotia were even more challenging, with less than 20 per cent very satisfied in both cases and significantly more not satisfied at all. Nova Scotians, in fact, showed the highest levels of dissatisfaction of any provincial population in Canada.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 DEMAND FOR TRAILS

While we often represent ourselves as a nation of skaters and hockey players, the 2001 Statistics Canada Community Health Survey indicated that walking is, in fact, the “national sport” by a substantial margin. The Community Health Survey collected very useful data on preferred recreation activities by age and gender in Canada.<sup>5</sup> Questions asked subjects what recreation activities they had participated in at least once during the preceding three months. **Table 2.2** summarizes the twenty

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87. There were insufficient responses to report on Atlantic Canada.  
<sup>4</sup> Christine Cameron, Cora Craig and Stephanie Paolin, *Local Opportunities for Physical Activity and Sport: Trends from 1999–2004*, CFLRI, 2004 *Physical Activity Monitor*, see tables on pp. 181-191.  
<sup>5</sup> Christine Cameron and Stephanie Paolin, *Increasing Physical Activity: Trends for Planning Effective Communication*, CFLRI, 2003 *Physical Activity Monitor*, see tables on pp. 131-134.

activities with the most participants, based on the percentage of people indicating they had participated in a particular activity within this time period.

Activity	12-19		20+		12-14	15-19	20-24	25-44	45-64	65+
	M	F	M	F						
Walking	48%	68%	59%	70%	58%	58%	61%	65%	68%	62%
Gardening	31%	21%	44%	38%	27%	26%	25%	42%	47%	35%
Home exercise	32%	34%	22%	26%	29%	35%	32%	25%	22%	20%
Bicycling	53%	38%	23%	15%	57%	39%	26%	24%	16%	6%
Swimming	41%	46%	18%	19%	53%	38%	27%	23%	15%	8%
Social dancing	22%	43%	14%	17%	32%	33%	32%	17%	13%	7%
Weight training	21%	15%	15%	9%	16%	30%	27%	15%	7%	2%
Golfing	19%	5%	17%	6%	12%	12%	13%	13%	11%	6%
Jogging, running	45%	42%	13%	8%	47%	42%	28%	14%	6%	1%
Fishing	16%	7%	13%	4%	14%	10%	10%	10%	8%	3%
Bowling	21%	21%	8%	7%	21%	20%	16%	9%	5%	5%
Exercise classes, aerobics	7%	15%	4%	10%	9%	12%	12%	9%	6%	4%
In-line skating	26%	26%	6%	4%	32%	23%	16%	6%	1%	0%
Skating	14%	13%	5%	4%	20%	11%	7%	7%	3%	1%
Baseball, softball	21%	13%	6%	2%	21%	15%	10%	6%	2%	0%
Hockey	22%	4%	7%	1%	15%	12%	9%	6%	2%	0%
Basketball	49%	34%	6%	2%	53%	35%	15%	5%	1%	0%
Downhill skiing	15%	11%	5%	3%	16%	11%	8%	5%	3%	1%
Tennis	13%	7%	4%	2%	12%	11%	8%	4%	2%	1%
Volleyball	23%	30%	4%	3%	36%	21%	9%	4%	1%	0%

Table 2.2: Per cent Participation, Top 20 Recreation Activities by Overall Rank, Canada, 2001

According to the data presented, walking is the most popular activity for all age groups and both sexes (excepting boys 12 to 19 who narrowly prefer bicycling). Several other activities in the top 20 are often pursued on trails and sidewalks: bicycling is fourth overall, with jogging and running ninth, and in-line skating thirteenth among all age groups. These activities tend to be undertaken individually or in small groups and are often home-based as well as normally being inexpensive and convenient to pursue, traits they have in common with other top activities such as gardening, home exercise, and swimming.

Another reason that these activities top the preference list is because they cross age and gender barriers, although walking and gardening tend to increase their adherents with age, while bicycling and swimming tend to lose popularity. The percentages shown in Table 2.2 can be applied to the current and future age-sex profile of the Kings County population (i.e., the Municipal County of Kings plus the Towns of Wolfville, Kentville, and Berwick) to assess how the aging population of Kings may change demand for recreation facilities.

As Table 2.3 shows, the result of calculations applying the foregoing participation rates to Census population profiles from 1996, 2001, and 2006, and projected profiles

estimated by EDM for 2011, 2016, and 2021, recreation participation can be expected to fall off to a degree. Overall, however, participation in activities that can be served by trails<sup>6</sup> should increase, primarily because of the anticipated increase in walkers as Baby Boomers pass through middle age and become senior citizens. Other recreation activities, including some that are served by trails, will likely lose participants, with the most active and youth-oriented, such as in-line skating, declining significantly.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>% Change 2006- 2021</b>
Walking	31,598	31,740	32,862	32,631	33,338	33,683	2.5%
Bicycling	10,981	10,872	11,281	11,134	11,190	11,101	-1.6%
Jogging, running	7,196	7,052	7,335	7,208	7,148	6,984	-4.8%
In-line skating	3,396	3,264	3,362	3,231	3,122	2,921	-13.1%
<b>TOTAL TRAILS</b>	<b>53,171</b>	<b>52,928</b>	<b>54,840</b>	<b>54,204</b>	<b>54,798</b>	<b>54,689</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>
Other Activities	43,626	42,640	44,208	43,256	42,781	41,555	-6.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96,797</b>	<b>95,568</b>	<b>99,048</b>	<b>97,460</b>	<b>97,579</b>	<b>96,244</b>	<b>-2.8%</b>
<i>Trails Related as %</i>	<i>54.9%</i>	<i>55.4%</i>	<i>55.4%</i>	<i>55.6%</i>	<i>56.2%</i>	<i>56.8%</i>	

**Table 2.3: Estimated Participation in Trails-related Recreation Activities, Kings County, 1996-2021**

This analysis, of course, assumes that current participation rates by age group and gender will remain constant – an assumption that may not hold if residents decide to become more active and/or expand their recreational options. It does, however, strongly suggest that trails should be a recreational priority for the future, particularly trails for walking.

### **2.3 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

A key practical benefit of trails networks is their facilitation of active transportation. Active transportation is described by Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), which has recently adopted an Active Transportation Plan, as follows:

Active Transportation incorporates a variety of self-propelled modes of transportation which utilize on- and off-road facilities. These modes include in-line skating, walking, jogging, cycling and skateboarding. Also included, but not as commonly thought of are manual wheelchairs, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Active

<sup>6</sup> We recognize that some “trails-related” activities, most notably jogging and running as well as some walking, are pursued on indoor and outdoor tracks, as well as on sidewalks and locations that are not purpose-designed for these activities.

Transportation should be viewed as being year round and available for all member[s] of the community.<sup>7</sup>

Encouragement of active transportation decreases motorized vehicle trips with benefits for both the environment and public health. It can also have financial benefits by reducing congestion on road networks and postponing or eliminating public investment. Each individual who walks, cycles, or skates to work can remove a car from the rush hour crush, reducing peak loads that dictate the design of roadways, the need for signalization, and various other “improvements” needed to ensure reasonable traffic flow and safety. By comparison, the cost of sidewalks, bicycle routes, and trails is modest.

Good data is readily available through the Census of Canada on the mode of travel to work. Every five years, the Census asks 20 per cent of respondents how they normally travel to work. Data is sufficient to provide breakdowns for all Census Subdivisions, including more rural areas like Kings County, which is presented in **Table 2.4** with data for Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia less Kings and HRM.

Kings County data, unfortunately, shows that the use of active modes actually declined between the 1996 and 2006 Censuses. Whereas 8.4 per cent of workers in Kings walked or bicycled to their jobs in 1996, only 7.3 per cent did in 2006, declining in absolute numbers from 1,940 to 1,870 or by 70 people. This compares to an 11.6 per cent increase in the use of active modes in Nova Scotia as a whole (3,705 people), although a fairer comparison is probably with Nova Scotia minus Kings and HRM, which clearly has different characteristics as Atlantic Canada’s primary urban centre. In the largely rural “remaining area” use of active modes increased by just 1.0 per cent or 185 people.

Notwithstanding the decline in the proportion of its workforce that walks to work relative to the balance of Nova Scotia excluding HRM, Kings has more than twice the rate of individuals riding bicycles to work. The result is that active modes account for 7.3 per cent of work trips in Kings versus 6.9 per cent in the remainder of rural Nova Scotia. It is also encouraging to note that the reduction in walking and bicycling trips to work in Kings may be at least partly attributable to increased use of public transit, which has risen by nearly 90 per cent or 195 riders.

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<sup>7</sup> Halifax Regional Municipality, “Active Transportation: What is Active Transportation?,” [www.halifax.ca/TDM/activetransportation/index.html](http://www.halifax.ca/TDM/activetransportation/index.html)

Mode	1996 Census		2001 Census		2006 Census		% Change 1996 - 2006
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<b>Kings County</b>							
Car, truck, van as driver	19,000	81.9%	19,790	82.3%	20,670	80.3%	8.8%
Car, truck, van as passenger	1,830	7.9%	2,065	8.6%	2,460	9.6%	34.4%
Public transit	220	0.9%	250	1.0%	415	1.6%	88.6%
Walked to work	1,715	7.4%	1,470	6.1%	1,665	6.5%	-2.9%
Bicycle	225	1.0%	215	0.9%	205	0.8%	-8.9%
Motorcycle	30	0.1%	35	0.1%	60	0.2%	100.0%
Taxicab	60	0.3%	40	0.2%	60	0.2%	0.0%
Other method	130	0.6%	200	0.8%	195	0.8%	50.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,210</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>24,055</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>25,740</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
<b>Province of Nova Scotia</b>							
Car, truck, van as driver	262,915	74.3%	280,360	75.2%	293,220	72.8%	11.5%
Car, truck, van as passenger	36,230	10.2%	35,870	9.6%	43,710	10.8%	20.6%
Public transit	17,990	5.1%	18,020	4.8%	23,965	5.9%	33.2%
Walked to work	29,490	8.3%	30,860	8.3%	33,020	8.2%	12.0%
Bicycle	2,450	0.7%	2,270	0.6%	2,625	0.7%	7.1%
Motorcycle	390	0.1%	380	0.1%	500	0.1%	28.2%
Taxicab	1,190	0.3%	1,540	0.4%	1,695	0.4%	42.4%
Other method	3,380	1.0%	3,740	1.0%	4,220	1.0%	24.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>354,055</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>373,045</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>402,955</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Nova Scotia (excl. Halifax Regional Municipality and Kings County)</b>							
Car, truck, van as driver	138,820	80.0%	144,740	81.0%	151,150	79.2%	8.9%
Car, truck, van as passenger	17,950	10.3%	17,535	9.8%	21,420	11.2%	19.3%
Public transit	955	0.6%	865	0.5%	1,430	0.7%	49.7%
Walked to work	12,400	7.1%	11,870	6.6%	12,510	6.6%	0.9%
Bicycle	620	0.4%	495	0.3%	595	0.3%	-4.0%
Motorcycle	130	0.1%	140	0.1%	200	0.1%	53.8%
Taxicab	700	0.4%	865	0.5%	1,115	0.6%	59.3%
Other method	2,030	1.2%	2,250	1.3%	2,385	1.3%	17.5%
Total Reporting	173,620	100.0%	178,775	100.0%	190,790	100.0%	9.9%

Table 2.4: Journey to Work by Mode of Transportation, Kings County Compared to Nova Scotia

It remains, nevertheless, that 19.1 per cent of Nova Scotia residents walk or ride a bicycle to work or roughly 12 percentage points more than Kings has achieved. Given that Kings previously had a higher proportion of its population using active modes, there is every reason to believe that substantial gains should be available if active transportation facilities can be improved.

Further it is interesting to note, that the Town of Wolfville appears to offer a model in this respect that is within Kings. In Wolfville, nearly one-quarter of workers (24.2 per cent) walk or bicycle to work. In addition, 3.6 per cent reported “Other Modes,” which tends to encompass other active methods of travel such as in-line skating or cross country skiing. Transit use, furthermore, is greater than in other areas of the county with the exception of the Town of Kentville. While this is no doubt partially attributable to the nature of employment in Wolfville, which is dominated by Acadia University, it suggests the potential that might be attained in and around other urban concentrations in the county, including New Minas, Kentville, Coldbrook, and Berwick. If these four communities could achieve the same level of participation in active transportation as Wolfville, 2006 data suggest that as many as 1,775 vehicle trips could be eliminated during peak travel periods.

## 2.4 TOURISM

Trails are an important component of tourism infrastructure. The *Doers and Dreamers Guide*, which is Nova Scotia’s tourism bible, identifies hiking opportunities in relation to hotels, historic sites, parks, and in their own right across the province. Within Kings, for example, the guide recognizes hiking as a feature of several B & Bs, campgrounds, and restaurants, as well as in relation to museums, parks, and historic sites such as the Canning Heritage Centre and Randall House Historical Museum.

Trails facilitate access to the local environment that many contemporary adventure tourists want to see firsthand. Good quality trails can substantially augment local tourism revenues. A 1999 study by Gardner Pinfold Limited for the Province of Nova Scotia, for example, reported the following findings based on the spending of 556 trail users from nine trails in Nova Scotia:

The average spending per party for non-Nova Scotians was about \$1,210 which breaks down to about \$1,120 per party beyond a 30 minute drive and about \$90 within a 30-minute drive of the trail. In contrast, the average spending per party for Nova Scotian tourist parties was \$210, of which about \$130 occurs beyond the 30 minute drive range and about \$80 within the 30 minute range.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists Limited, *A Survey of Nova Scotia Hiking Trail Users*, January 1999, p. iii.

Mode	1996 Census		2001 Census		2006 Census		% Change 1996 - 2006
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<b>Town of Wolfville</b>							
Car, truck, van as driver	1,120	62.1%	1,039	62.1%	1,016	60.9%	-9.3%
Car, truck, van as passenger	125	6.9%	192	11.5%	139	8.3%	11.2%
Public transit	20	1.1%	29	1.7%	49	2.9%	145.0%
Walked to work	501	27.8%	335	20.0%	368	22.1%	-26.5%
Bicycle	35	1.9%	55	3.3%	35	2.1%	0.0%
Motorcycle	0	0.0%	10	0.6%	15	0.9%	n/a
Taxicab	0	0.0%	14	0.8%	0	0.0%	n/a
Other method	2	0.1%	35	2.1%	60	3.6%	2900.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,803</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,674</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,668</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>-7.5%</b>
<b>Town of Kentville</b>							
Car, truck, van as driver	2,868	78.6%	2,845	78.2%	3,153	77.7%	9.9%
Car, truck, van as passenger	357	9.8%	381	10.5%	444	10.9%	24.4%
Public transit	50	1.4%	75	2.1%	138	3.4%	176.0%
Walked to work	317	8.7%	238	6.5%	208	5.1%	-34.4%
Bicycle	15	0.4%	10	0.3%	20	0.5%	33.3%
Motorcycle	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	n/a
Taxicab	32	0.9%	20	0.5%	40	1.0%	25.0%
Other method	21	0.6%	30	0.8%	30	0.7%	42.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,648</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,639</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,057</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>
<b>Town of Berwick</b>							
Car, truck, van as driver	868	81.3%	1,041	80.1%	1,082	82.7%	24.7%
Car, truck, van as passenger	103	9.7%	121	9.3%	106	8.1%	2.9%
Public transit	10	0.9%	15	1.2%	20	1.5%	100.0%
Walked to work	69	6.5%	94	7.2%	74	5.7%	7.2%
Bicycle	10	0.9%	10	0.8%	11	0.8%	10.0%
Motorcycle	10	0.9%	0	0.0%	10	0.8%	0.0%
Taxicab	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	n/a
Other method	10	0.9%	10	0.8%	0	0.0%	-100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,299</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,309</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>
<b>Municipal County of Kings</b>							
Car, truck, van as driver	14,144	84.7%	14,865	85.2%	15,419	82.4%	9.0%
Car, truck, van as passenger	1,245	7.5%	1,371	7.9%	1,771	9.5%	42.2%
Public transit	140	0.8%	131	0.8%	208	1.1%	48.6%
Walked to work	828	5.0%	803	4.6%	1,015	5.4%	22.6%
Bicycle	165	1.0%	140	0.8%	139	0.7%	-15.8%
Motorcycle	20	0.1%	25	0.1%	35	0.2%	75.0%
Taxicab	28	0.2%	6	0.0%	20	0.1%	-28.6%
Other method	97	0.6%	125	0.7%	105	0.6%	8.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,692</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>17,443</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>18,706</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>

Table 2.5: Journey to Work by Mode of Transportation, Kings County Municipal Units

Addressing overall expenditure, they further added:

Aggregate expenditure associated with the use of trails was estimated at \$90.5 million, with \$79.4 million derived from tourist trails and \$11.1 million from hiking/walking trails ... Non-Nova Scotians accounted for the bulk of the spending (\$86 million), and total spending beyond the 30 minute drive of trails accounted for \$83.3 million.

Success in promoting trails for tourism is, of course, tightly tied to the presentation and position of individual trails and groups of trails. It is also important to have appropriate supporting infrastructure such as accommodations, restaurants and cafes, and retail outlets that create opportunities for expenditure.

In Nova Scotia in 1999, Gardner Pinfold found tourists who used trails were relatively undemanding. They, nevertheless, offered the following recommendations for trails improvement to encourage tourism and related benefits:

- Improving trail information;
- Improving road signage;
- Providing more interpretative information;
- Providing more trail maintenance and upgrading;
- Increasing trail promotion;
- Reviewing multi-use management policies;
- Preventing crowding and over-development;
- Adding more facilities; and
- Creating new trails (especially ones with coastal and scenic views).

While these recommendations are now almost a decade old, they continue to be relevant to effective trails development in Nova Scotia. Adherence to their objectives will not only enhance the tourist experience, thereby increasing the potential for revenue generation from trails, but also provide benefits for residents who value many of the same features.

## 2.5 SOCIAL PURPOSE

The recent Ontario Trails Strategy notes that, “trails strengthen the social fabric.”<sup>10</sup> As we have noted above, trails across Canada have largely been developed through the

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. iv.

<sup>10</sup> Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, *Active 2010: Ontario Trails Strategy*, Toronto, 2005. P. 7.

initiative of community groups and volunteers. The Ontario strategy asserts that:

Volunteering is one measure of the vitality of a society. People working together, giving their time freely, and sharing in socially valuable, meaningful activities – these are practices that create strong communities.

The document continues on the subject by adding that trails development has frequently benefited from the generosity of private landowners. In Ontario and Nova Scotia, as well as elsewhere in Canada, trails often cross private landholdings. Many trails could not have been developed without the acquiescence of farmers, businesspeople, and residents, who willingly grant access to their property for the benefit of the community. In some cases these owners have donated land. In others, they have granted necessary easements.

Trails, in addition, are public places. They provide meeting places that can be as valuable as community centres, arenas, swimming pools, and other publicly sponsored facilities in facilitating interaction among citizens. Many friendships are started and cultivated on trails networks among unrelated individuals who are pursuing similar interests and objectives.

## **2.6 TRAILS ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The development of trails faces substantial and varied challenges. Most certainly trails development in Kings will require extensive co-operation. As noted, the Municipal County of Kings encompasses the Towns of Wolfville, Kentville, and Berwick, all of which have developed trails and are extending trails networks. Trails connecting these towns have the most potential to promote active transportation as the towns are the primary centres of employment within Kings.

The county also has seven village commissions serving the communities of New Minas, Port Williams, Aylesford, Canning, Greenwood, Kingston, and Cornwallis Square, as well as active Community Associations in locations such as Coldbrook, Centreville, and Halls Harbour. These communities are lesser employment centres, and their commissions and associations have a leading role in the provision and management of recreation facilities. For each town, village, and community, the effectiveness of trails development will be enhanced not only by coordination of trails planning but also integration of trails routes with the construction of roads and sidewalks. The benefits of coordination also extend to municipal counties and districts that border Kings (i.e., West Hants, Chester, Lunenburg, and Annapolis) and have trails projects of their own or are part of trails projects planned by groups that transcend municipal boundaries.

As the last point implies, coordination is not only required geographically but also among NGOs, levels of government, businesses and private individuals. A network of trails is currently being developed across Canada. Its spine is the TransCanada Trail, which is intended to link the entire country via a 21,500-kilometre multi-use trail running through every province and territory. Currently roughly 70 per cent (14,500 kilometres) of the TransCanada Trail (TCT) is developed.<sup>11</sup> Initial plans did not call for the TCT to reach Kings or any part of southern or western Nova Scotia; however, a branch has now been added beginning in Truro and running through the major communities within Kings as part of a large loop corresponding to the provincial coastline (Figure 2.1). Substantial portions of this trail have been developed in Kings under the auspices of the Kings Trails Society and, we understand, other segments should be complete as part of a Provincial plan to complete all components of the TCT by 2010.



Source: Nova Scotia Trails Federation

Figure 2.1: TransCanada Trail, Nova Scotia

The TransCanada Trail is a leading example of the need for inter-jurisdictional cooperation. Trails discussed in the following chapter presenting our current

<sup>11</sup> The currently planned trail joins Halifax to Amherst through Truro, with a branch extending north through Antigonish to North Sydney. See: TransCanada Trail – Trail Locator, [www.tctrail.ca/tlocator/tlocator\\_en.html](http://www.tctrail.ca/tlocator/tlocator_en.html)

inventory of trails in Kings also include many examples of trails developed within towns and villages that connect or could connect to areas of the county. There are also several examples of trails being developed or in the planning stages that will extend into Hants, Lunenburg, and Annapolis Counties.

Given the extent of so many trails, the Province should have a leading role in providing a framework for trails development. The Province in 1988 adopted the Nova Scotia *Trails Act*, which is frequently cited in relation to trails development in other provinces and apparently provided the model for Alberta's more recent trails legislation. Among other things, the act provides protection to property owners over whose land trails run. These provisions should provide substantial benefits in alleviating landowner concerns and reducing insurance costs for trails, but Province of Nova Scotia staff report that only one trail has been formally designated under the act.

Protection from liability concerns is more effectively provided by the *Occupiers Liability Act* and the *Volunteer Protection Act*. The *Occupiers Liability Act* limits the duty of care for landowners and those in control of lands such as trails groups, specifically referencing "recreational trails reasonably marked by notice as such". The *Volunteers Protection Act* similarly limits the liability of volunteers and non-profit groups.

This legislation mitigates the potential impact of litigation on volunteer organizations such as trails groups, however, there is no guarantee of its effectiveness in all circumstances. To provide full protection against liability concerns and to address the potential costs of damage from vandalism, natural events, and other causes, trails groups require insurance. Many landowners also insist that trails developers have insurance as a condition of access to their lands.

The cost of insurance can be a major burden for groups with limited finances but a variety of strategies can reduce the cost including comparison of potential insurance packages and group purchasing. Nova Scotia Trails Federation provides insurance programs for "directors and operators" and general liability insurance to assist trails providers.<sup>12</sup>

The Province also provides guidance and financial assistance for trails development. For example, the Province recently, created the Off-highway Infrastructure Fund. The fund is being built through the compulsory contribution of \$40 from each annual Off-highway or OHV registration (i.e., ATVs and snowmobiles). Funds are distributed on a matching basis to trail development groups that must contribute at

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<sup>12</sup> Nova Scotia Trails Federation, "Insurance Programs," [www.novascotiatrials.com/page.cfm?pid=1020&tid=10&hid=3](http://www.novascotiatrials.com/page.cfm?pid=1020&tid=10&hid=3)

least 50 per cent of the cost of funded projects.<sup>13</sup> Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection has also created a Trails Maintenance program through which the Province can provide up to 50 per cent of funding toward projects for the upkeep and maintenance of existing trails.

Other programs of interest through the Province include:

- A Community Recreation Capital Grant that can provide one-third of the cost up to \$3,000 “[t]o assist in the development of small-scale indoor and outdoor capital recreation projects [valued at] less than \$15,000.”
- The Recreation Facility Development Program provides one-third funding to not for profit organizations for larger projects including “trails and outdoor facilities.”
- The Go-for-Green Fund, which provides up to \$1,000 for grants to non-profit community and provincial groups, and municipalities to support “outdoor recreation activities that promote both active living and the health of Nova Scotia’s natural environment.”
- The Planning Assistance Program providing 50 per cent funding up to \$5,000 to assist municipalities and community organizations to obtain professional assistance in planning, designing and researching proposed and existing recreation facilities.<sup>14</sup>

The Province also provides accessibility programs and employment support programs that may be of considerable benefit to trails developers.

Municipalities also have a role to play. Municipal planning strategies are an ideal mechanism for encouraging trails development. The Kings MPS currently makes limited reference to trails; however, it might well be an ideal place to document a trails development plan. MPS policies can encourage trails development by tailoring such mechanisms as provisions for dedication of recreational land through

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<sup>13</sup> Natural Resources/Health Promotion and Protection, “Off-highway Trails Receive Another Funding Boost,” June 11, 2008, [www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20080611007](http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20080611007).

<sup>14</sup> See: Municipality of the County of Kings Parks and Recreation Services, *Financial Assistance For Community Volunteer Associations*, 2006. This publication provides a good summary of varied programs from the Government of Canada, the Province of Nova Scotia, and the Municipality, as well as advice on corporate support and other avenues to support recreation projects.

subdivision, development agreement specifications, and reservation of environmentally sensitive lands that may be particularly well-suited to the location of trails, most notably the banks and shores of watercourses.

Municipalities also have a role in assisting and funding community groups. Kings County has established a Trails Assistance Program (TAP) that can provide up to 50 per cent funding for trails projects within the municipality for a period of up to three years. Non-profit groups within the county are eligible and may contribute material and in kind contributions with proper documentation to cover their 50 per cent share. Also of interest for trails development through the Municipality are the Community Parks Development Program providing operating and capital funding and the Special Projects Program providing up to 50 per cent of overall project costs for sports fields, parks, trails, playgrounds and other outdoor recreation facilities.”<sup>15</sup>

TAP also requires that trails to be funded must meet guidelines outlined in the publication, *Developing Recreational Trails in Nova Scotia*. The document, which was first published in 1998, is available on the Nova Scotia Trails Federation Web site.<sup>16</sup> It provides an excellent overview of trails development considerations in a clear, easy to read format that is supported by attractive illustrations. It also includes detailed specifications for a wide variety of trail types. It is widely used by trails groups in Nova Scotia. It should not however be applied without professional input. Each trail must take into consideration specific issues such as the mix and potential number of users, terrain, and soil types that should be reviewed for every trails plan and all trails improvements.

Decisions concerning permitted users are often controversial. In particular, some trail users object to provisions for Off Highway Vehicles (OHV). Although the Province is supporting the creation of new multi-use trails through the Off-highway Infrastructure Fund, hikers and others who eschew motorized vehicle use express concern with their safety on trails shared with OHVs. Adjacent landowners also complain about land use impacts, most notably noise.<sup>17</sup> Both groups, including interview contacts whose views are summarized in **Section 3.3**, below, also point out impacts on the environment and threats to the safety of non-motorized users. Views

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<sup>15</sup> *Loc cit.*

<sup>16</sup> Natasha Maria Warren, *Developing Recreation Trails in Nova Scotia*, Nova Scotia Trails Federation, 1998, [www.novascotiatrials.com/page.cfm?pid=1052&tid=6&hid=99](http://www.novascotiatrials.com/page.cfm?pid=1052&tid=6&hid=99)

<sup>17</sup> “Unhappy Trails,” October 27, 2008, The ChronicleHerald.ca, <http://thechronicleherald.ca/Editorials/1086957.html>.

on the subject, unfortunately, have become polarized<sup>18</sup> but solutions can be found through public education, regulation, and, where necessary, separation of users groups.

The safety aspect that underlies many concerns about vehicle use on trails has many dimensions. In addition to threats posed by irresponsibly operated vehicles, trail users are frequently concerned with crime facilitated by the relative seclusion and/or isolation of many trail segments. While we do not generally think of crime as a major concern in Nova Scotia, it is interesting to note that more Nova Scotians (22 per cent) “strongly agreed” to the statement that “concerns about safety kept [them] from walking or bicycling” than residents from any other province responding to CFLRI’s 2004 Physical Activity Monitor.<sup>19</sup> A further dimension of these concerns is the potential for trails to facilitate vandalism, and petty and major property theft. Trails can provide convenient routes to backyards, farmers’ fields, and other areas that are vulnerable.

While public education and policing have important roles in limiting crime on trails, another important approach is Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). CPTED is a collection of techniques employed by planners and designers to reduce the potential for crime. These include such measures as ensuring surveillance of areas through overlooking windows, effective lighting, and provision of alternative exits that work to make criminals more cautious and allow potential victims to more readily recognize and avoid dangerous situations.

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<sup>18</sup> Gordon Delaney, “Morse: ATV rules work: Coalition believes off-highway vehicle use damages land, people,” The ChronicleHerald.ca, <http://thechronicleherald.ca/NovaScotia/1087897.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Christine Cameron, et al., *Local Opportunities for Physical Activity and Sport: Trends from 1999-2004*, p. 246.

## 3.0 TRAILS DEVELOPMENT IN KINGS

### 3.1 RESEARCH

As noted in **Chapter 1**, a key output of the current project is to be “A map of the existing and proposed network of trails depicting the type and proposed usage.” Our focus in Phase I in relation to developing this map and developing a base line understanding of trails in Kings County has been on identifying existing formally designated trails and trails plans within the boundaries of the county (i.e., including the Towns of Wolfville, Kentville, and Berwick). To this end, the locations and routings of trails were determined first from publications and brochures, and Internet resources reviewed by the consultants. **Appendix B** provides a list of trails and sources through which they have been identified. Subsequently we contacted and interviewed a range of key stakeholders involved in the planning and development of trails within the municipality. In addition, we interviewed a variety of trails proponents and trails users as listed in **Table 3.1**.

Interview contacts included administrative and recreational staff with Kings and the Towns and the Village Commissions. These individuals were primary sources identifying trails now in use and being planned. Many have provided us with or directed us to maps and other materials identifying the location and special features of these trails. Other contacts provided important additional and supplementary information on trails development and use.

All respondents were asked about additional individuals who they felt should be consulted through the current visioning and planning process. Some of these individuals were contacted and interviewed during Phase I. Others were subsequently engaged through focus groups and workshops pursuant to the Community Engagement Plan adopted at the close of Phase I and executed in Phase II.

All identified trails have been recorded on the Map Series incorporated as **Appendix A** to this report. These include both existing and planned trails. With multiple sources many of which are the product of volunteer organizations, the consistency and quality of information presented challenges to assembling a coherent and accurate map. Review by the public through Phase II consultations and by the Trails Committee has assisted in improving this compilation and our confidence in the summary it provides.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Glen Abriel	Village of Kingston
Bruce Carter	Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources
Lindsay Carter	Nova Scotia Dept of Agriculture
Robert Connell	Cornwallis River Pathways Society
Bert Currie	Valleytrekkers.com (guided walk and trips group)
John Dowell	Coldbrook Community Association
Marian Elsworth	Village of Greenwood
Vince Forrestall	Village of New Minas
Andrew Fry	Town of Wolfville
Bill Harvey	Valley Stove and Cycle
Rick Jacques	Valley Trails Coordinator
Heather Hennigar	Hennigar Farm Market
Carson Herrick	Trails Steering Committee: AT community rep
David Hiltz	King County ATV Club
Reg Knewell	Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources
David Lacey	Halls Harbour trails/Landowner at Woodville trails
Irmgard Lipp	Black Rock Trail Society
Paul Lump	Woodville Trail
Nichole Lutz	Town of Hantsport
Kieth MacCormick	Kieran Pathways (advocate group of non-motorized AT)
Susan MacDonald	CFB Greenwood
Glen MacMillan	Annapolis Valley Mountain Biking Association
Kim MacQuarrie	Canning Trail Steering Committee
Hartt McKinley	Annapolis Valley Lake & Ridgerunner Snowmobile Club
Cecil Pulsifier	Tideways Senior Coop
Tracey Roberts	Dept of Health Protection and Promotion
Annette Scholfield	Kings CED
Crystal Sheffield	Evangeline Trails
Ashlyn Sulis	Town of Berwick
Mike Sweeney	Centreville CA
Rick Whitman	Blomidon Naturalist Society
Bob Wright	Kings County Trails Society
Laura Wrightman	Village of Port Williams

**Table 3.1: Strategic Interviewing Contacts**

### **3.2 CURRENT TRAILS NETWORK**

As maps in **Appendix A** illustrate, defined walking trails are clearly concentrated in the central corridor paralleling Highway 101, along the old rail bed, through Kentville, to Berwick and Kingston, and also through Wolfville. In these sections, the trail corridor is fully developed including specially enhanced sections such as the 2.2-km Demo Trail in Berwick. The Town of Wolfville has an impressive trails system extending 26 kilometres through extensive areas of the town and collectively known as the Millenium Trail. No doubt, this intricate network contributes to the high proportion of residents employing active modes of travel to work within the town.

A trail connecting Wolfville to Kentville and Wolfville to Port Williams remains an important goal for many who see it as vital to increasing active modes of travel.

Other trails are generally associated with tourist attractions, although several, no doubt, benefit users within specific communities. Particularly notable are the trails at Cape Split and the all season trails in Blomidon Provincial Park, which according to the *Doers and Dreamers Guide* provide, “panoramic views of the Minas Basin.” Other trails along the Fundy Coast have been developed through community initiative (e.g., Hall’s Harbour Eco-trail developed by the Hall’s Harbour Community Development Association and Black Rock Trail developed by Kings Trail Society). These trails offer both tourist experiences for visitors and recreation opportunities for residents.

We do not have definitive information on the classification of most trails (i.e., non-motorized v. multi-use trails). Some such as the Black Rock Trail, the construction of which was led by individuals with specific interest in mountain biking, reflect the priorities of builders but, for the most part, we do not have a clear definition of included and excluded user groups.

We do, on the other hand, have a comprehensive map of snowmobile trails published by the Annapolis Valley Lake and Ridge Runners and the Hants Sno-Dusters.<sup>20</sup> The map illustrates all snowmobile trails in Kings and in adjacent areas of West Hants, Lunenburg, and Annapolis. All trails in Kings are portrayed on the Trail Survey in **Appendix B** with their status as groomed or ungroomed facilities. As the edition we have obtained is for the 2003 to 2004 season, updating may yet be required.

We also have obtained an ATV Trail Map prepared by the Mid-Valley ATV Club.<sup>21</sup> Trails from this map are also shown on the Trail Survey. They are also somewhat out of date as the map was published in 2003. ATV trails are confined to southwest . It is notable, regardless, that the ATV trails shown on this map coincide to a great extent with trails shown on the Snowmobile Trail Map. It is our expectation that most of the snowmobile trails in the balance of the county are also used by ATVs.

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<sup>20</sup> Annapolis Valley Lake and Ridge Runners and the Hants Sno-Dusters, *Zone 3 Snowmobile Trail Map 2003-2004*, Version 4.

<sup>21</sup> Mid Valley ATV Club, *ATV Trail Map*, September 2003.

### **3.3 ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

In addition to inquiring about trails in place and being planned, the consultants also asked all contacts about concerns that they may have and issues that they feel are confronting trails development in Kings. Following is a summary of the main themes identified by respondents:

- Need for coordination among municipalities and among user groups.
- Dispersed population in Kings outside of the relatively well developed corridor from Wolfville through Kentville to Berwick with very sparsely developed areas on the North and South Mountains.
- Need to interconnect communities and integrate trails networks.
- Conflicts between non-motorized trail users and OHVs.
- Need for operating restrictions primarily to control OHV users.
- Conflicts between equestrian users and others.
- Contradictory mandates of the Department of Natural Resources (i.e., facilitating development of multi-use trails) and Office of Health Promotion and Protection (i.e., emphasis on Active Transportation and Active Lifestyles).
- Inadequate accommodation of rollerbladers and skateboarders.
- Threats to safety and crime potential posed by rowdiness of ATVs, and drinking in trails areas by young people, as well as access to private property facilitated by trails.
- Difficulties of small groups obtaining insurance.
- Need to develop and adopt standards for trails construction.
- Excessive reliance on volunteers.
- General need for more trail facilities and active planning of trail developments and enhancements.
- Lack of funding for trails development.

These concerns were not universally endorsed. Most, in fact, were referenced by only one or two of our 31 interview subjects. The issue that was by far raised the most often was OHV use and its conflict with adjacent land uses and other trail users. Even on this subject, however, positions were not uniform. While some respondents appear to feel that ATVs are receiving excessive support and would probably prefer to see them banned, most ATV users want to see more multi-use trails. Many in between appear willing to compromise if ATVs and snowmobiles can be accommodated on dedicated trails and specific designated multi-use trails.

All respondents did appear to concur on the value of trails within Kings as corridors for alternative transportation, recreation, and tourism. Clearly, many see barriers in the current lack of coordination and mixture of priorities but none suggested that trails development should not be pursued.

## 4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

### 4.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Community engagement to involve the community in the visioning and planning processes, included Open Houses, Focus Groups, and Survey Research:

- *Web Survey* – Given the extent of Kings County, a questionnaire was posted on the Kings Municipality Web site early in 2008. Survey questions addressed trails use by respondents, trails that they would like to see developed, concerns with and expectations of trails development, and concerns with and expectations of trails use.
- *Focus Groups* – Two organized and facilitated group interviews to discuss experiences with existing trails in Kings and elsewhere, and expectations of trails development in the county.
- *Open House* – Following preparation of a Draft Vision Plan in Phase III, EDM will host an Open House in the Kings Municipal Building.

The Open House will take place on approval of this report in principle by the Trails Committee. The following sections summarize input and insight gained from the Web survey and focus group sessions.

### 4.2 WEB SURVEY

A Web survey instrument was prepared in January 2008. It was mounted on the Municipal County of Kings Web site on February 10, 2008, and was closed after roughly three weeks on March 2, 2008. In addition, to a link from the surveys page on its Web site, the Municipality also placed a newspaper advertisement to publicize the survey.

In total, the survey attracted 125 respondents, all but four of whom were residents of Kings County or one of the Towns encompassed within the boundaries of Kings.<sup>22</sup> Seventy-nine of the 125 respondents stated they were employed and, of these, 95 per cent worked in Kings County. Most completed the survey online, although three submitted completed questionnaires in hardcopy.

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<sup>22</sup> Of 125 respondents, 30 per cent were Berwick (6), Kentville (11) and Wolfville (19) residents.

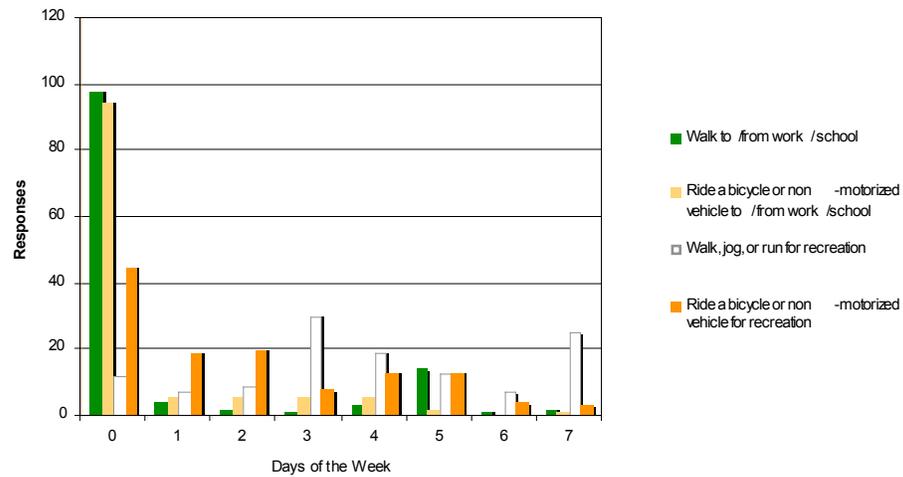
With 125 valid responses, survey data can be considered accurate within  $\pm 8.8$  per cent 19 times in 20. While this is well below the desirable standard of statistical validity of  $\pm 5$  per cent 19 times in 20, it is sufficient to draw broad conclusions, particularly where answers reinforce other opinion obtained through the focus groups and workshops.

As might be expected, a considerably higher proportion of survey respondents walk and bicycle to work (22 per cent for each) than in the general population recorded by the Census (6.1 per cent). This is attributable to several factors, most notably the inclusion of respondents from towns where more people walk or bicycle than in the county (especially Wolfville where 24.2 per cent use these modes) and the natural inclination of individuals interested in trails and active transportation to respond to a survey of this type. Most respondents indicated they use both modes with 24 walkers and runners (19.2 per cent of all respondents and 58.5 per cent of walkers and runners) stating that they biked at times.

Respondents are even more avid recreational walkers/runners/bicyclists. Fully, 90 per cent walk, jog, or run at least once in a typical week and 64 per cent use a bicycle or other non-motorized vehicle at least once (see: **Figure 4.1**). These recreation activities also overlap to a substantial extent with 98 respondents indicating they use both modes to some extent.

The role of trails in running and bicycling is however limited. Roughly, three-quarters of respondents (74.4 per cent for walkers and runners and 73.3 per cent for bicyclists) indicated that trails were not used as a component of school or work trips on foot or by bicycle. Nearly half (47.2 per cent), however, stated that these trips could be shortened or made more convenient by new or improved trails. Comments also reflected an emphasis on active transportation with 60 per cent of all comments, dealing with active transportation priorities and initiatives.

In addition, 33.6 per cent stated that they belong to at least one group or organization that they considered to have a mandate relevant to trails in Kings. Of these, the Annapolis Valley Mountain Bike Association was the most prominent (14 of 42 respondents indicating membership in an organization). The AVMBA was followed by the Kieran Pathways Association (9 respondents) and the Cornwallis River Pathway Society (7 respondents). Remaining respondents belonged to Scouts or Guides, the Annapolis Valley Lake and Ridgerunners Snowmobile Club, or at least one of several local bicycle and trails development groups.



	Days of the Week								TOTAL
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Walk to/from work/school	98	4	2	1	3	14	1	2	125
<i>% of respondents</i>	78%	3%	2%	1%	2%	11%	1%	2%	
Ride a bicycle or non-motorized vehicle to/from work/school	95	6	6	6	6	2	0	1	122
<i>% of respondents</i>	78%	5%	5%	5%	5%	2%	0%	1%	
Walk, jog, or run for recreation	12	7	9	30	19	13	7	25	122
<i>% of respondents</i>	10%	6%	7%	25%	16%	11%	6%	20%	
Ride a bicycle or non-motorized vehicle for recreation	45	19	20	8	13	13	4	3	125
<i>% of respondents</i>	36%	15%	16%	6%	10%	10%	3%	2%	

Figure 4.1: Walking and Bicycling, Kings Web Survey, 2009

Respondents noted 247 specific connections that they thought should be developed in Kings County. Nine of these connections (3.6 per cent) could not be categorized. The following connections were identified most frequently (see also: **Figure 4.2**):

- Rail bed (93 or 38 per cent of 247 identified connections)
- Port Williams to Greenwich, Greenwich to Horton High, Belcher Avenue (30 or 12 per cent)
- Routes from Towns to the North (11 or 4.4 per cent)
- Port Williams to Canning (8 or 3.2 per cent)
- Dyke trails (14 or 5.7 per cent)
- Gaspereau Trails (13 or 5.3 per cent)
- North Mountain (10 or 4.0 per cent)
- In and around Canning area (9 or 3.6 per cent)
- Kingston Greenwood (6 or 2.4 per cent)
- South Mountain (6 or 2.4 per cent)

- Cornwallis River (4 or 1.6 per cent)
- Wolfville Watershed (4 or 1.6 per cent)

Some added more general comments in support of cross country ski trails, mountain biking trails, and repair and development of existing trails.

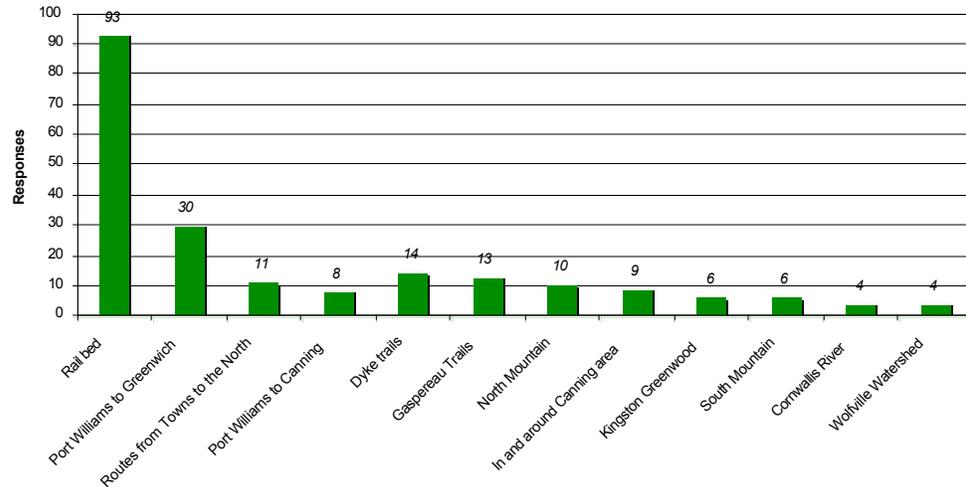


Figure 4.2: Suggested Trail Connections, Kings Web Survey, 2009,

Many respondents added comments related to trails issues. Of these, 75 comments provided direction, 3 comments were too specific to categorize, 6 comments were survey-related comments, and 1 noted that public funding should not be used for trails. In total, 60 per cent focused on the active transportation network.

Remaining comments made by three to five respondents addressed the following:

- Multi-use trails
- Promotion of trails,
- The need for municipal leadership,
- Creation of mountain biking opportunities, and
- Maintenance and provision of amenities for existing and new trails.

#### 4.3 FOCUS GROUPS

Two focus group sessions were conducted in Kentville on February 2, 2009. Invitations were issued to 41 stakeholders, and a general invitation to participants at large was made through the same newspaper ad placed by the Municipality to draw attention to the Web survey. A total of 23 people attended the sessions.

To open each session, the consultants summarized the project to date. Participation was active and attendees were asked to dot and draw on the draft trails map in the following order:

- They marked down where they lived and worked
- They noted errors and corrections to the trails network illustrated on the draft map
- They identified key features and nodes in Kings County
- They recorded significant gaps in the existing trail system.

Errors and corrections were taken into account and the maps as contained in **Appendix A** were revised. Notations concerning features and nodes, and significant gaps are summarized following.

#### **4.3.1 Key Features and Nodes**

Participants in the two focus groups identified the following key features and nodes within Kings County:

- The central corridor between Kentville and Wolfville
- Schools and places of work
- Community Centres, including Port Williams, Centreville, and Canning
- Tourism / destination trails, unique to the county, including Cape Split and the Dykelands
- Recreational facilities and sports fields
- Service destination areas.

#### **4.3.2 Significant Gaps**

Focus group participants did not so much identify “missing links” in the trails network as broad user needs or desires. For example, they urged provision of trails for uses such as rock climbing, canoeing, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. They also suggested trails designed to accommodate disabled users, adventure trails (notably, at Cape Split), and bike routes.

Discussions suggest that many feel that there may be enough day hiking trails, ATV trails, and snowmobile trails. On the other hand, several suggested that it would be beneficial to link the smaller communities on the north and south edges of the county into the main community by routes other than roads.

#### **4.3.3 Vision**

Participants were then asked to think about a vision for trails development and the key priorities and challenges that would be associated with this vision. The consensus suggested a focus on active transportation for both its environmental and health and fitness. Key priorities were defined as follows:

- Linking communities and key nodes by a network of trail systems (HIGHEST PRIORITY)
- Safe and accessible routes within communities for cyclists and pedestrians (SECOND PRIORITY)
- Encourage coordinated action of all users and trails groups working together, connecting the communities and working with different levels of government (THIRD PRIORITY)
- Identify new trail opportunities and incorporate into development planning
- Enforce new OHV regulations
- Increasing opportunities for cycle tourism.

Leading challenges noted by participants in association with the implementation of this vision include:

- Getting resources/volunteers involved with the more difficult and less desirable trail projects
- One culvert (under Highway 1, during twinning) at Greenwich
- One bridge improvement at Greenwich to Port Williams
- Getting permissions for desired routes
- Ensuring key nodes are linked to Active Transportation system
- Administrative and coordination support for trails on-staff at the municipality
- Increased public interest in Active Transportation but limited on the ground opportunities.

#### **4.4 STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK MEETINGS**

From April 14 through 27 the consultants met a number of stakeholder's individually to review the draft Trails Vision and discuss how it could be implemented through an effective plan.

Individual meetings were held with the following:

- Keith McCormick, Kieran Pathways
- Bill Harvey, cycling rep and owner of Valley Stove and Cycle
- Andrew Fry, Director of Community Services, Town of Wolfville

- Robert Connell, Cornwallis River Pathways Society
- Shawn Muzzerall, Noggins Corner
- John Owen, Active Transportation representative
- Vince Forrestall, Recreation Director, Village of New Minas.

Telephone interviews were also conducted with Chrystal Fuller Manager of Planning with Kings County and the Municipality's Project Manager for this assignment, and Carson Herrick another stakeholder with strong interest in active transportation. Some additional interviews were pursued but could not be carried out because of scheduling constraints.

At these meetings the consultation summary and draft recommendations were received. Stakeholders were shown the existing county trails map with an overlay illustrating trails connections and improvements suggested through prior consultations that reflected the vision for the community. Each stakeholder then evaluated the vision: editing, adding, or removing routes and connections. The resulting maps were used by EDM GIS staff as the basis for the Vision Plan map.

Some comments:

- Mapping is needed of recreational and tourism trails showing types (walking, bicycling, multi-use), circuits, and distances
- An alternative AT route on the Hwy 1 should be recognized for sidewalks and bike lanes, possibly getting established sooner and supplying a year round assessable route for AT.
- The Vision and Strategic Plan report would be a good place to deal with the issues of the dykes, not only technical issues, but legal issues and farmer issues, including rights of use, private property use, potential for conflict between farmers and trail users.
- Pursue opportunities for Province to assume waterfront dyke access from private land owners.
- Work together with Marshland Marsh Body Associations and the Province to establish access to waterfront dyke trails.
- A prime piece of waterfront dykeland in Port Williams is currently under some negotiation for the Province to assume from a private land owner.
- One key would be the Marshland Association and the Province working together.

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 PRIORITIES**

The consultants met with the Trails Committee and municipal staff on March 9, 2009, to present findings from Phase II of the project. At this meeting the following priorities on which recommendations were agreed to were:

- Active transportation has broad public support
- Leadership and support is needed to facilitate trails development
- Active transportation links are needed from community to community (i.e., connecting the three towns and the villages within Kings County)
- Active transportation links are needed within communities to link neighbourhoods to schools, shopping areas, and other uses as well as workplaces
- Safety needs to be improved along the edges of roadways to facilitate active transportation
- Permissions are required to enable legitimate use of ATVs and snowmobiles
- Operational and liability issues need to be addressed.

These priorities reflect the strong emphasis placed on Active Transportation. Priorities concerning AT and other issues have been refined in the goals and strategies outlined below. In addition to the development of a complete network capable of providing meaningful AT options for County residents, goals and strategies address the need to coordinate, support, and protect the many volunteer organizations and NGOs that contribute to trails development and operations.

### Active Transportation Defined

Active Transportation (AT) ... is any form of self-propelled (non-motorized) transportation that relies on the use of human energy such as walking, cycling, inline skating and jogging. These modes can utilize onroad and off-road facilities (sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use trails) and may also be combined with public (land and water) transit, especially for trips to and from work, shopping and entertainment areas, school and other community facilities like recreation centres.

[It] is defined by four categories. They are:

- *Active Commuting* which involves journeys to and from work.
- *Active Workplace Travel* which includes trips during working hours such as the delivery of materials or attending meetings.
- *Active Destination Oriented Trips* which includes trips to and from school, shops, visiting friends and running errands.
- *Active Recreation* which involves the use of an AT mode for fitness or recreational pursuits, such as hiking or cycling.

In addition to the four categories, any portion of a trip that involves non-motorized transportation modes is considered a form of Active Transportation. In this context, AT involves maximizing the use of active modes and methods of travel and reducing the dependence on motorized modes that include private automobiles, motorcycles and all terrain vehicles (ATV's).

SGE Acres Limited, *Active Transportation Plan*, August 2006, p. 1-4.  
Halifax Regional Municipality

## 5.2 VISION STATEMENT

Based on general research and consultation for this assignment but particularly on key priorities derived from focus groups sessions as described in **Subsection 4.3.3**, above, we propose the following Vision Statement to guide the development of the Kings County Trails network:

The Municipality of Kings County shall support residents and groups within its boundaries and cooperate with others outside its jurisdiction to develop a comprehensive, safe trails network connecting communities, workplaces, and facilities for Active Transportation and healthy recreation.

This statement recognizes that the municipal role in trails develop is to facilitate. The Municipality cannot be expected to be the primary developer of trails, although it most certainly has a leading role in encouraging trails development by removing institutional and physical barriers; encouraging cooperation and cooperating itself; and providing technical and financial assistance. Because trails networks transcend

municipal boundaries no single municipal unit can implement a trails strategy alone. Kings must work with the federal and provincial levels of government, as well as other municipal governments and agencies.

The statement, at the same time, creates a challenging mission for Kings. It obliges the municipality to work within this complex institutional environment to create a network of trails comparable to the road network serving vehicles that will connect all areas of the county and provide a safe alternative to vehicle use for work and play.

### 5.3 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following five goals and strategies for their achievement were presented to the Trails Committee at the close of Phase II of the project.

#### 5.3.1 Goal 1 – Community to Community AT Network

The highest priority of stakeholders consulted is to see the effective connection of major communities on the Valley floor. The railbed extending through Wolfville, Kentville, and Berwick should facilitate the required connections and several trail sections have been developed with others under construction. See AT map, **Figure 3** – existing and proposed railbed.

The Province of Nova Scotia plans to retain the rest of the rail from the Frito Lay site in New Minas east to Windsor, which will require development in this key corridor to be “trails with rails.” Low/swampy shoulders may make trails development prohibitively expensive in substantial sections.

In these cases, it may be necessary to leave the rail corridor and develop trails in alternate corridors, most likely existing road right of ways. Road right of ways will also have to be relied on to accommodate trails connections to communities that are not on the former rail line. Where road right of ways must be used, the Municipality will have to work with Nova Scotia Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to develop safe trails connections separate from the roadbed. See AT map, **Figure 3** – proposed active transport connector. Typical highway right of ways are 66 feet wide of which only 24 to 26 feet is normally required for the asphalt surface, leaving considerable scope to incorporate trailways, which normally require 3 to 16 feet of width.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Natasha Maria Warren, *op cit.*, 1998, p.3.3 Required width depends on intended users and whether the trail is intended to be one-way or two-way.

A common strategy for AT is to utilize the side of the paved surface. As traffic speeds exceed 50 km/hr safety becomes more of an issue, and therefore a parallel trail may be a better strategy in Kings.

*Strategy 1: Rail Corridor*

- Facilitate the expansion of the railbed as the main spine of the inter-community AT Corridor.
- Work with community organizations to ensure consistent management and access to the railbed AT Corridor.

*Strategy 2: Key Linkages*

- Facilitate key AT connections to communities not on the rail corridor, most notably Canning/Port Williams.
- Work with NSTIR to resolve safety issues with vehicles.

**5.3.2 Goal 2 – Internal Community AT Trail Networks**

For community to community connections to be effective, they must reach a variety of different nodes within those communities via complementary local trails networks. To some extent the development of these local networks is beyond the control of the Municipality of the County of Kings, as approximately 20 per cent of residents within the geographic boundaries are under the jurisdiction of the Towns of Berwick, Kentville, and Wolfville. Another substantial portion is in communities in which a village commission works with the County to provide services such as trails.

Attainment of this goal, therefore, will rely heavily on cooperation between and among Kings and its village commissions, and with the three towns to ensure local networks connect to inter-community networks in a way that satisfies the requirements of users (a good example of this is in **Figure 2** – noting connection from railbed up to the New Minas shopping area).

*Strategy 1: Identify and Link Important Nodes*

- Encourage communities to identify their specific AT nodes, including schools, shopping areas, employment nodes, public buildings, parks, cultural facilities, residential neighborhoods, etc.
- Encourage communities to connect nodes to each other within the community as well as to the community to community AT spine, either by sidewalk, pavement widening, trail, or other right-of-way.

*Strategy 2: Staged Renewal*

- Implement a “Green Street” policy for street, road and sidewalk renewal

to implement the AT Network for identified streets.

### 5.3.3 Goal 3 – Support Special User Groups

As noted, municipalities have not historically developed trails networks. Excepting trails through parklands and trails directly associated with recognized tourist attractions, trails in Kings County and elsewhere have largely been developed by user groups, often after lengthy informal use.

The result has largely been beneficial and is reflected in the extensive network of trails already serving the county. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the existing trails network is not well coordinated, is frequently discontinuous, and in many locations traverses lands without the authority or even the knowledge of the owners.

A key role of the Municipality therefore is to work with user groups and trails development organizations to coordinate trails development and alleviate a variety of related problems. In particular, the Municipality can assist trails groups to gain access to property and to obtain cost effective insurance to protect them from liability concerns.

Tourism trails are particularly important in this light and they are as attractive to local residents as they are to visitors, but also present challenges to preserve valued attributes. This is clearly the case for the Dykelands, which are well used by residents in and around Wolfville but are regarded as fragile by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, which is responsible for management and maintenance of the dykes themselves, and very protective of the area.<sup>23</sup> The organization Nomination Grand Pré is currently seeking to have dykes, which are 300 to 400 years old, designated as a World Heritage Site. Designation would undoubtedly increase tourism to the area and the number of walkers on the dykes, both domestic and from away. Developing an approach that will facilitate access to the dykes will be a major challenge should the dykelands be nominated and, even if they remain only a regional-level attraction.

Cape Split is a second trail system that is attractive to tourists. Despite praise in the Province's *Doers and Dreamers Guide*, current trails in the area are underdeveloped and have been inhibited by ownership concerns. The trail is not groomed and

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<sup>23</sup> The Nova Scotia *Agricultural Marshland Conservation Act* (S.N.S. 2000, c. 22, N.S. Reg. 131/94, May 30, 1994) specifies that "[n]o person shall construct works or use or develop lands within, on, or affecting the Grand Pré Marsh marshland sections in any way that is not conducive to and in conformity with sound agricultural purposes and practices." The Act, furthermore, lists "recreational activities of any kind" as "non-permitted works."

contacts state that injuries are an annual occurrence. The first three kilometers of the existing trail historically traversed private lands; however, the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources is actively working to secure ownership and has recently acquired substantial portions. The area is very popular with mountain bikers from around Nova Scotia and outside the province as well as with tourists drawn by the available views. Upgrading of the trail and connecting from Cape Split to the Blomidon trail network would facilitate increased tourism but should also preserve access for mountain bikers.

*Strategy 1: Enhance Recreational Opportunities*

- Special user groups, including equestrian, hiking, bicycling, skiing, and other groups offer opportunities for the public to recreate along user specific trails.
- Support needed includes: access to insurance, permission/access to cross lands, access to washrooms largely through agreement.
- Encourage shared resources where possible.

*Strategy 2: Tourism Trails*

- Work with the Province to ensure broad public access and special user group access to the trails on the Dykelands and at Cape Split.

**5.3.4 Goal 4 – Inclusive OHV Policy**

OHV use of trails is frequently controversial. OHV groups, however, have access to funds generated through their licensing program and have probably created more trails in Kings than any other group of trails stakeholders. OHV users also require supporting services such as gasoline and food, and offer an economic benefit to communities that can supply them.

Co-existence should be feasible but must recognize the real dangers of motorized vehicles sharing trails with walkers and runners, and non-motorized vehicles. Where feasible these users groups should be separated. Where it is essential for a connection to be available to both groups, the trail section should be well-signed to indicate the potential presence of each group and the speed of motorized vehicles should be controlled to a level that will guarantee the safety of non-motorized users.

*Strategy 1: Provide Trails to Identified Provincial Routes and for User Needs*

- ATV and snowmobile users access a Nova Scotia-wide network of trails. Access to these trails from each community should be identified and obtained. In addition, locations for food and fuel within communities should be identified and access facilitated.

*Strategy 2: Restrict Cross-Use*

- Shared access with other AT users should be kept to a minimum. Where shared access is required, special markings, special trail design and speed limits should all be imposed. Identify safe junction points for all users.

**5.3.5 Goal 5 – Leadership**

The key role for the Municipality of the County of Kings in the development of its trails network is as a leader of many stakeholders. Through the current planning process the Municipality is setting the direction for trails development. On acceptance of this plan, the Municipality will also have a role to play in moving the trails agenda forward. It will not be the only entity with this mandate given the many community groups involved in trails planning and development, and the commitment of adjacent municipal units to the same. If, however, Kings hopes to see its agenda met it must match the energy of other players and blend their goals and objectives with the vision of this Strategic Plan.

*Strategy 1: Collaboration Between Communities and Groups*

- Provide a forum to improve communication and cooperation among trails interest groups, agencies, and other levels of government involved in trails planning and development.
- Encourage individual communities and towns within Kings to participate in the AT network by constructing the internal AT linkages
- Encourage institutions, commercial districts, and community leaders to participate in trails planning and development, especially where related to tourism and economic development.

*Strategy 2: Collaboration with the Province*

- Negotiate actively with the Province to identify and develop AT links to communities not on the railbed AT corridor.
- Work with the Province to open up trails at Cape Split and the Dykelands.

*Strategy 3: Provide Information and Support*

- Provide information on property ownership, and sample access agreements.
- Provide access to a common insurance approach.
- Provide information on trails standards for construction, including standards for way-finding.
- Provide marketing for the trails, including publications, an up-to-date trails map inventory, and an AT trail map.
- Provide funding for the main spine of the AT network linking

communities to each other.

#### 5.4 IMPLEMENTATION

The phasing maps in **Appendix A** (i.e., **Figures 10** through **13**) are the physical expression of the trails Vision developed through this strategic planning process. The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) is a potent device to support this major trails development initiative. The content of the phasing maps can be incorporated in the MPS to reflect the Municipality's commitment to the development of a comprehensive trails network. Policy amendments to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space section of the planning strategy can also identify major thrusts of this document such as the connection of communities and the development of internal trails networks within communities.

The incorporation of such policies in the MPS represents a commitment to direct involvement of the County of Kings in the development of key trails but, more importantly to encourage the creation of trails by others. This includes the many groups and NGOs previously referred to, neighbouring municipal units, and developers. Publicizing the Municipality's envisioned trails network is an important step to facilitating coordination with others. It should also be valuable as a communication tool for the existing and potential trail users.

Trails should also be addressed as a component of new development as it is undertaken in the County and its villages. The MPS and secondary planning strategies, the land use and subdivision bylaws, and open space strategies can all be employed to implement this Strategic Plan and encourage new trails development.

Consideration could be given to amending existing secondary planning strategies to incorporate detailed plans for local trails networks where beneficial. New secondary planning strategies should presumably address trails development consistent with the overall framework created by this Strategic Plan and presumably endorsed by the MPS.

A major opportunity to encourage trails development in this context is the dedication of land for parks and open space purposes. The *Municipal Government Act* permits the Municipality (with the appropriate policy support in the MPS) to require developers to deed as much as 10 per cent of land to be developed for parks and open space purposes. Currently, Kings requires only 5 per cent of land to be dedicated but this could be increased to address trails needs. Provincial legislation, furthermore, allows municipalities to accept cash-in-lieu and/or in kind contributions from developers in place of land. This capability is often used by municipalities requiring higher levels

of dedication to obtain finished parkland and trails, or to accumulate funds for open space development in other strategic locations within their jurisdiction.

A final key component of implementation is coordination. One stakeholder consulted suggested that the Kings County Partnership Society Steering Committee, which oversees the provision of services that cross municipal boundaries such as transit and solid waste management, could be an effective organization to promote cooperative trails development. Certainly, all residents share in the benefits of trails regardless of the municipal boundaries crossed. An agency such as the Partnership Society would also ensure that Kings would speak with one voice to abutting municipalities as well as to senior governments.

There are furthermore a wide variety of programs available to the Municipality and community groups to fund trails development and mitigate liability concerns. The Municipality can fill a very useful role by acting as advisor to trails groups to guide them to the most beneficial sources of assistance and financial support (including the Municipality's own programs) and to address legal, insurance, environmental, and other issues.

## APPENDIX A: TRAILS MAPS, KINGS COUNTY

## **APPENDIX B: INFORMATION SOURCES FOR KINGS COUNTY TRAILS**

Trail	<a href="http://www.novascotiatrials.com">www.novascotiatrials.com</a>	<a href="http://www.annapolis-valley-vacation.com/kings-county-trails.html">www.annapolis-valley-vacation.com/kings-county-trails.html</a>	<a href="http://www.novatrails.com/annapvalley/index.php">www.novatrails.com/annapvalley/index.php</a>	Hiking Guide of Nova Scotia	<a href="http://www.trails.com/findarea.aspx?State=NS">www.trails.com/findarea.aspx?State=NS</a>	Kings Fundy Trail	<a href="http://www.explorenovascotia.com/trails/">www.explorenovascotia.com/trails/</a>	<a href="http://www.go.ednet.ns.ca/~bns/">www.go.ednet.ns.ca/~bns/</a>	Other
Acadia Nature Trails		X						X	X
Black Lake Area Trails									X
Black Rock Trails/Canada Creek	X	X			X			X	
Blomidon Provincial Trails	X	X			X			X	X
Berwick 'Demo' Trail on Rail Bed									
Cornwallis Canning Trail Proposal									
Crps Rail Trail									
Cape Blomidon to Cape Split									X
Cape Split		X	X						X
Crystal Falls (Fales River)									X
Forever Green Trail (Campground)									
Fielding Rd - Annapolis Valley Coach									X
Gaspereau Canal Trail	X	X							X
Gaspereau Mountain to Bishopville									X
Gaspereau Ravine Trail				X	X				X
Gaspereau River Trail									X
Grand Pre Dykes					X				
Grand Pre National Historic Site							X		X
Halls Harbour Eco-trail	X								
Hantsport Trail									X
Hennigars Farm and Park		X							
Kentville Annapolis Valley Time Trial Loop					X				
Kentville Ravine Trail (Kentville Research Station)	X	X						X	
Kentville Rail Trail	X								
Kentville 'Gorge'					X				
Kentville Participark		X							
Kings Fundy Trail						X			
Kingston Stronach Park and Family Fitness Trail		X							
Kingston Rail Trail									
KCTS Rail Trail - Cambridge to Border									
Lockhart and Ryan Memorial Park	X							X	
Noggins Corner Trail		X							
Ridge Style Park									

Trail	<a href="http://www.novascotiatrials.com">www.novascotiatrials.com</a>	<a href="http://www.annapolis-valley-vacation.com/kings-county-trails.html">www.annapolis-valley-vacation.com/kings-county-trails.html</a>	<a href="http://www.novatrails.com/annapvalley/index.php">www.novatrails.com/annapvalley/index.php</a>	Hiking Guide of Nova Scotia	<a href="http://www.trails.com/findarea.aspx?State=NS">www.trails.com/findarea.aspx?State=NS</a>	Kings Fundy Trail	<a href="http://www.explorenewascotia.com/trails/">www.explorenewascotia.com/trails/</a>	<a href="http://www.go.ednet.ns.ca/~bns/">www.go.ednet.ns.ca/~bns/</a>	Other
Scotts Bay Trail									
Scotts Bay Beach Route									
Three Pools									X
Wolfville Dyke Walk							X		
Wolfville Millennium Trail - Reservoir Park, Sherwood / Rawding Ravine and Rail Trail		X							
Wolfville Reservoir Watershed - SE Gaspereau School									
Wolfville Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens		X					X		
Woodville Community Trails	X	X					X		

**Other Websites:**

Outdoor Nova Scotia ([www.outdoorns.com/](http://www.outdoorns.com/))

The Trans Canada Trail Foundation ([www.tctrail.ca](http://www.tctrail.ca))

Trans Canada Trail-Nova Scotia ([www.tctrail.ca/home.php](http://www.tctrail.ca/home.php))

## APPENDIX C: WEB SURVEY RESULTS