
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ALGONQUIN TRAIL

Thank you

We would like to thank the Province of Ontario for the substantial contribution of aggregate towards the development of the Algonquin Trail. This support has been instrumental in advancing our shared vision for an active transportation corridor that is both safe and accessible. We look forward to continuing this partnership and exploring further opportunities to complete this critical recreational trail, which will enhance connectivity, while avoiding major transportation routes.

Proposal

We respectfully request the Province of Ontario's consideration of additional contributions towards the completion of the Algonquin Trail, extending its completion to the Town of Mattawa. Completing this section will:

- Promote active transportation and healthier communities.
- Provide safety measures by diverting recreational and commuter traffic away from Highway 17.
- Reduce vehicular congestion on Highway 17, contributing to safer and more efficient travel.

Background

The County of Renfrew's Algonquin Trail, being part of the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT), is 215km in length, stretching from the County's border near Arnprior northward through the County to our border near Deux Rivieres. The OVRT follows the former Canada Pacific Railway corridor and stretches from Smith Falls, in Lanark County, through Renfrew County (as Algonquin Trail), to Mattawa in the Township of Papineau Cameron. However, the Algonquin Trail is only anticipated to be completed from Arnprior to Bissett Creek, a length of approximately 184km by the end of 2025. The majority of the OVRT is now registered as part of the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) network.

There are several challenges to completing Algonquin Trail from Bissett Creek to Mattawa; including the replacement of trail structure AT032 (Highway 17 and Bissett Creek Overpass). It is estimated that the replacement of this 60-metre long bridge, which crosses both Highway 17 and Bissett Creek will cost approximately \$2,200,000. The County is planning to have design completed in 2025 so that the project will be shovel-ready for future years; with a modular type bridge anticipated to proceed. However, funding is not allocated at this time for the bridge's replacement, or for further development of Algonquin Trail past the bridge, due to budgetary requirements for Capital needs on other significant asset types such as roads, traffic bridges, and paramedic service bases. A newer and safer bridge over Highway 17 will be mutually beneficial to the County's trail, as well as to the Provincial Highway System.

Benefits of the Algonquin Trail

The Algonquin Trail provides tremendous benefits throughout the County of Renfrew. It is a recreational trail allowing a wide range of user types, including walking, cycling, equestrian, skiing, snowshoeing, ATVing, and snowmobiling. The flexibility in use of the trail leads to high user rates, which is an economic driver for every community it passes through, as well as the County as a whole. Additionally, as the trail parallels Highway 17, and passes through the same communities, it can act as alternative means of commuting for residents, reducing traffic on Highway 17 and promoting a healthier, more sustainable, active lifestyle.

Connecting the Algonquin Trail to Mattawa will further increase the connectivity of this substantial active transportation artery, further opening commuter alternatives to Highway 17. However, there are substantial needs to reach this area and the County of Renfrew would like to partner with the Ministry of Transportation to see this undertaking through to fruition.

The Path Forward

The County of Renfrew is committed to realizing the full potential of the Algonquin Trail. To achieve this, we propose a partnership with the Ministry of Transportation to:

1. Secure funding for the replacement of trail structure AT032.
2. Complete trail development from Bissett Creek to Mattawa.
3. Maximize the trail's role in promoting safety, sustainability, and regional economic growth.

We believe this collaboration aligns with the Province's priorities of enhancing transportation infrastructure, promoting active lifestyles, and supporting local economies. Together, we can ensure that the Algonquin Trail reaches its full potential as a transformative asset for the County of Renfrew, the Province of Ontario, and beyond.