



Making a difference...together

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November 26, 2021

0400-20

The Honourable Rob Fleming  
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure  
PO Box 9055 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2  
Via email: [Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Minister Fleming:

**RE: CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT (CRD) BRIEFING NOTE - REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

It was good to meet with you again at our last meeting on October 4, 2021, where we discussed the need for a more stable investment stream to fund the significant amount of regional active travel infrastructure in the capital region.

While we appreciate that the Province is facing unprecedented infrastructure challenges as a result of recent flooding events and is making major investments to support transit in the Capital Region and across British Columbia, the Regional Transportation Strategy and Regional Transportation Plan identify an equal opportunity to achieve a significant amount of transportation mode shift from vehicles and achieve our greenhouse gas reduction targets through active transportation. At the meeting, we agreed to work together to explore options to increase the investment in active transportation infrastructure and to advocate for a federal-provincial partnership approach to secure funding, as the current grant programs are focused on local community level initiatives and not regional scale investments.

The action for the CRD was to prepare a briefing note to document immediate scope of the CRD active transportation funding requirements to be used to support such a request. Attached is the briefing note that identifies the need for \$46M of funding to construct active transportation infrastructure. Staff and I are available to work with you to formulate a request and discuss this in more detail to demonstrate how this investment would achieve our collective goals.

Also at the close of the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, we discussed the next steps of setting up a follow up meeting to have a substantive discussion on governance and the intersection of transportation and land use planning for the region. Staff will follow up in early 2022 to look for possible dates that would work to continue this important dialogue.

I look forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Plant', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Colin Plant  
Chair, Capital Regional District Board

Attachment: Briefing Note – Regional Active Transportation Infrastructure

cc: CRD Board  
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD  
Kevin Lorette, General Manager, Planning & Protective Services, CRD

# Briefing Note

## Regional Active Transportation Infrastructure

Capital Regional District | November 2021

### Prepared For

British Columbia Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure, Honourable Rob Fleming

### Prepared By

Capital Regional District, Chief Administrative Officer, Bob Lapham

### Purpose

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is seeking substantial investment streams that support regional-scale active transportation infrastructure. Current grant funding opportunities are too small and narrow in scope to advance delivery of sustainable regional active transportation networks and recreational trail amenities. The required investment is estimated to cost \$46 million (M).

Active transportation systems are key to achieving federal and provincial objectives, as set out in the National Active Transportation Strategy, BC's Active Transportation Strategy, the CleanBC targets and the South Island Transportation Strategy. The CRD has taken significant steps to plan for and implement a multi-modal transportation network through its Regional Growth Strategy, Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Trails Management Plan. Sustainable funding is required to realize our shared objectives for active travel and climate action.

### Summary

The CRD's regional trail network comprises 95 km of off-street multi-use pathways that act as the spine of a connected regional active transportation system. Significant upgrades are required to address public safety and critical infrastructure improvements on this trail network. In addition, expansion of highly-used segments is needed to achieve higher rates of active travel. Order of magnitude costs are as follows:

- Critical infrastructure renewal for historical trestle bridges, paving and slope stabilization valued at \$10.5M.
- Infrastructure renewal to widen and illuminate the highest-use, 6.5 km urban section of the Galloping Goose and Lochside Trails valued at \$21M.
- Completion of the E&N Rail Trail and construction of a new trail system on the Gulf Islands valued at \$15M.

Insufficient funding sources result in incremental construction and competing priorities. The CRD is asking provincial and federal governments to broaden the scope of funding opportunities and to contribute increased funding dollars to support regional trail networks and projects that advance active transportation and greenhouse gas reduction.

## Background

The CRD manages and operates three regional trails in BC's capital region that serve as active transportation and recreational corridors for 425,000 residents. The regional trails comprise approximately 95 km of off-street multi-use pathways connecting communities across the region:

- Galloping Goose Regional Trail (1987): 55 km trail that forms the western extent of the Trans Canada Trail, connecting the downtown core with communities in the region's west shore.
- Lochside Regional Trail (2001): 29 km trail that connects the downtown core to the BC Ferries terminal at Swartz Bay and communities in the Saanich peninsula.
- E&N Rail Trail (ongoing): 17 km trail at completion that connects Victoria to Langford. 13 km have been constructed to date, with the next phase of construction scheduled for 2022.

The trails are constructed within former railway corridors or right-of-ways owned by the Province of BC. The CRD holds a license of occupation agreement with the BC Transportation Financing Authority to operate and manage the trail infrastructure. See Appendix 1 for a map of the regional trail network.

### Critical Infrastructure Renewal

Significant upgrades are required to address public safety and critical infrastructure improvements on the CRD's three regional trails. The historical Selkirk, Swan and Brett Trestles on the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails require repair and replacement in the next five years at an order-of-magnitude cost of \$10.5M. In addition, routine maintenance, such as trail paving, bridge repairs, slope stabilization and vegetation management, as well as enforcement and outreach to trail users, are all required as part of effective regional trail management. The CRD is challenged to fund existing infrastructure requirements to address public safety and asset renewal.

### Trail Expansion and Improvement

The regional trails are generally 3-4 m wide multi-use pathways, used for both active transportation and recreation. These trails see more than 2,700 users per day (+1 million per year) in the high-density urban areas, with approximately 80% of users being cyclists and 20% pedestrians. Public concern for trail safety, related to high user volumes, high speeds, lack of separation and lack of lighting has been documented since 2013.

The CRD and the BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (MOTI) recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement to partner on funding and implementation of a project to address outdated infrastructure on a 6.5 km segment of the highest-use sections of regional trails. The Regional Trails Widening & Lighting Project (the project) will upgrade the trail sections to a 6.5 m wide separated-use pathway design with lighting. See Appendix 2 for the proposed design.

Safety is a significant barrier for people to use active transportation. By increasing safety through widening, separating and lighting, more people will use the trail for active transportation. The project will advance federal, provincial and regional targets for improving active transportation opportunities and green infrastructure, as well as improving trail safety and user comfort.

Through the MOU, the CRD and MOTI are piloting a partnership approach to trail improvement and are seeking substantial grant funding to construct the project. The project costs are estimated at \$20.6M and will coordinate with municipal infrastructure renewal projects. The City of Victoria and District of Saanich have committed to coordinate municipal infrastructure renewal within the trail corridor to align with implementation of the project in a phased approach. Construction of Phase 1 is anticipated in spring 2023. However, significant investment, planning and design work is required in 2022 to prepare a shovel-ready project. See Appendix 3 for proposed phases.

### **Network Completion**

Phased construction of the 17 km E&N Rail Trail was initiated in 2009 and is anticipated to cost \$36M. 13 km have been constructed to date and construction of Phase 4 will begin in 2022. Contributions of approximately \$21M have been received from grant programs to assist in trail development, with additional funding provided through the CRD's core budget and an authorized loan. Additional grant funding is needed to construct the final phase.

The first phase of the Mayne Island Regional Trail will be constructed in 2022, with \$3.9M in funding from the CRD and an Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program grant. This 2.3 km segment is the first of approximately 50 km of regional trail planned on the Southern Gulf Islands.

### **Discussion**

The CRD is a leader in providing regional trail service to the capital region of BC and is ambitiously expanding active transportation infrastructure to serve the rapidly growing region. However, the CRD lacks sufficient financial resources to implement the full complement of planned regional trails and seeks support from provincial and federal counterparts to address the climate emergency and meet greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Investing in regional trails will advance federal, provincial and regional targets for improving active transportation opportunities and green infrastructure. New injections of funding from all levels of government is being sought to bolster the CRD's regional trail service delivery, address critical infrastructure, implement the Widening & Lighting Project, and expand the regional trail network.

The CRD Board declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has prioritized green and affordable multi-modal transportation projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Investing in regional trail infrastructure improvements aligns with these priorities and with the CRD Regional Trails Management Plan, Regional Climate Action Strategy, Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Growth Strategy, as well as with the National Active Transportation Strategy, the BC Active Transportation Strategy, CleanBC, and the South Island Transportation Strategy.

Federal funding opportunities that support regional-scale active transportation infrastructure are limited in scope, dollars and frequency to adequately advance multi-modal targets. Without substantive injections of new funding dollars and an improved model for distribution of funds, the CRD will not be able to deliver a sustainable regional trail system and meet active transportation targets.

## Financial Implications

The CRD's operational and capital budgets, along with support from external funding sources, such as the BC Active Transportation Grant Program and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, currently fund the ongoing management and expansion of the regional trail system in BC's capital region. Below is a summary of the estimated \$46M required to advance delivery of sustainable regional active transportation networks and recreational trail amenities.

### Critical Infrastructure Renewal

The CRD's capital budget is fully subscribed on critical infrastructure renewal projects to address public safety in the regional trail corridors over the next five years, including: repair and replacement of historical trestle bridges, paving, and slope stabilization. An assessment has recently been received on the condition of the Selkirk Trestle, which forms part of the Galloping Goose Regional Trail that identifies time-sensitive repairs to begin in 2022/2023. Funds for this project have not yet been secured. The table below summarizes critical infrastructure renewal projects.

Project	Cost	Timing	Funding Source
Interurban bridge repair	\$20,000	2022	Capital Plan
Lochside trail repair	\$120,000	2022	Capital Plan
Swan and Brett trestle replacement	\$4,450,000	2023-2026	Capital Plan
Selkirk trestle repair	\$6,000,000	2022-2026	Funding not secured
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,590,000</b>		

### Trail Expansion and Improvement

Improvements to outdated regional trail infrastructure are required on the highest-use, urban sections of regional trails. The Regional Trails Widening & Lighting Project is advancing towards being shovel-ready in 2022, subject to funding\*:

Project	Cost	Timing	Funding Source
Galloping Goose Selkirk Trestle to Switch Bridge (2 km)	\$6,000,750	2023	Funding not secured
Galloping Goose Switch Bridge to Grange Rd. (2.5 km)	\$8,561,700	Phase 2	Funding not secured
Lochside Trail Switch Bridge to McKenzie Ave. (1.6 km)	\$6,076,350	Phase 3	Funding not secured
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,638,800</b>		
*MOTI committed \$70,000 in 2021 to initiate geotechnical assessments and First Nations engagement for the project.			

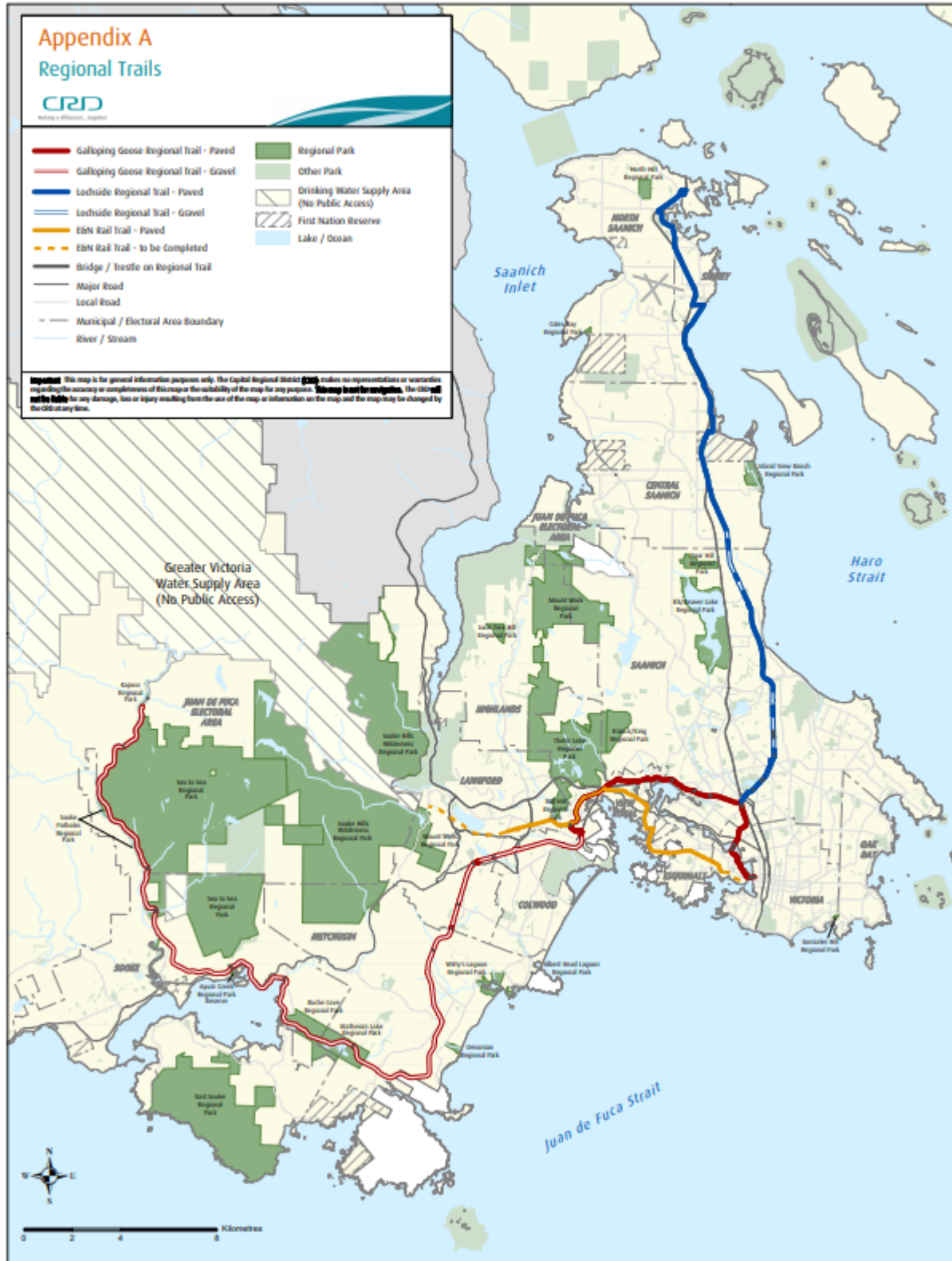
## Network Completion

Construction of new regional trail systems is ongoing and reliant on external funding sources:

Project	Cost	Timing	Funding Source
E&N Rail Trail Phase 4 (0.7 km)	\$6,600,000	2022	CRD Loan
E&N Rail Trail Phase 5 (3.6 km)	\$4,400,000	2024/2025	Funding not secured
Mayne Island Regional Trail (2.3 km of 50 km)	\$3,900,000	2022/2023	Prov/Fed Cost Share
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,900,000</b>		

There is no dedicated source of funding to sustain the regional trail system, and reliance on individual grant funding opportunities is insufficient for such a sizeable local government organization with multiple infrastructure renewal projects and competing funding priorities. A commitment to expand funding streams for regional active transportation projects is needed from provincial and federal governments.

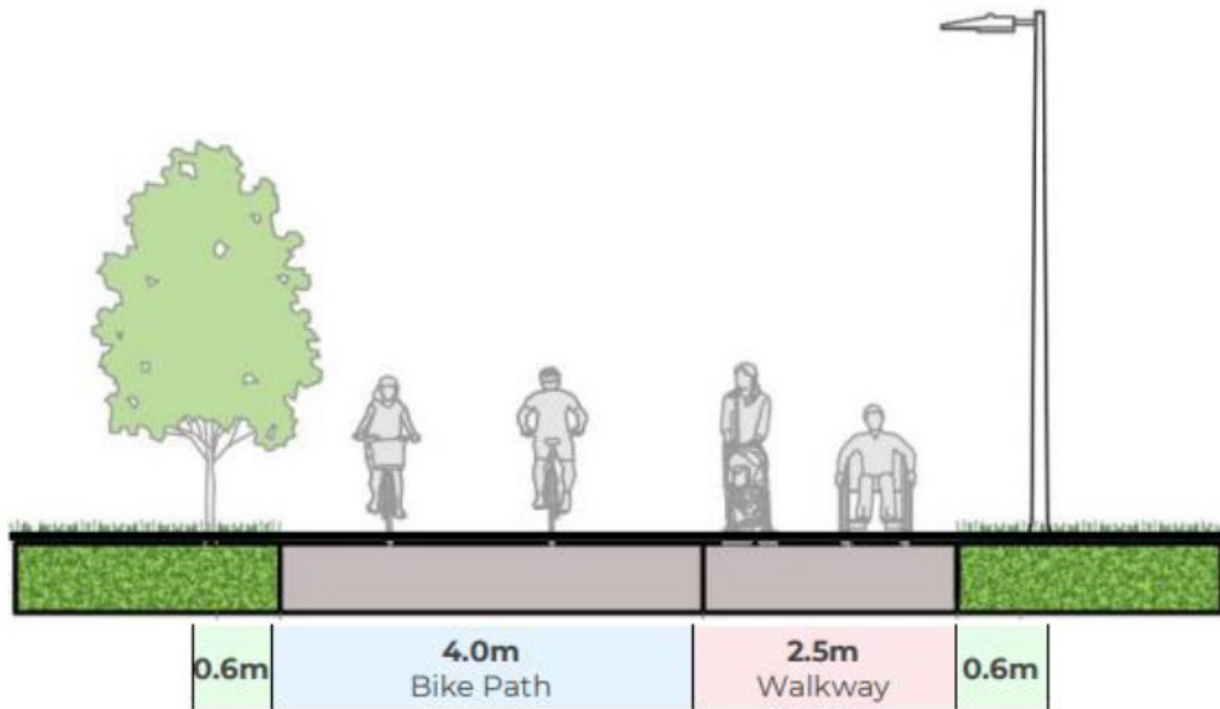
# Appendix 1: Regional Trail System



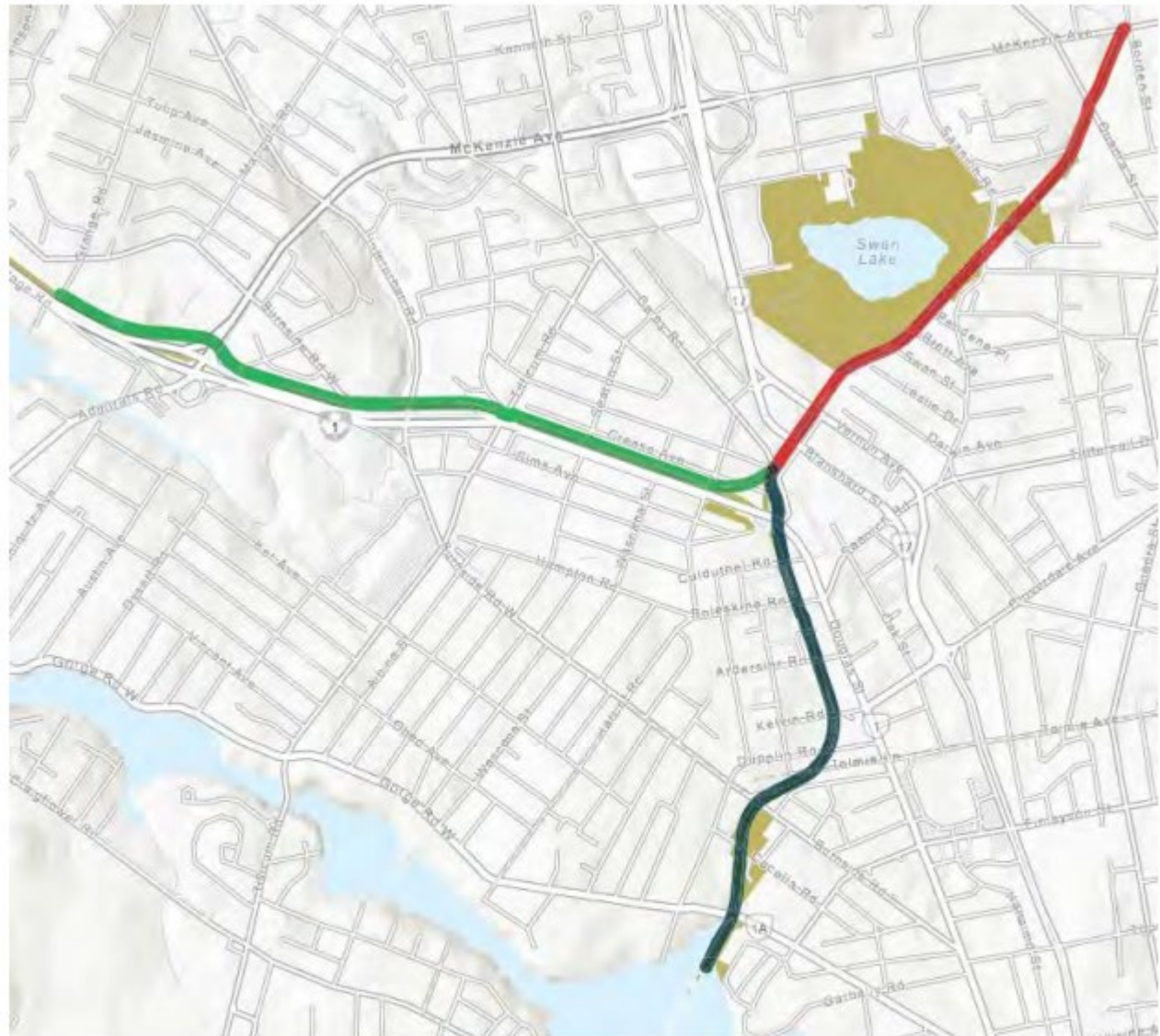


## Appendix 2: Separated-Use Pathway Design

### Separated Use Pathway



### Appendix 3: Implementation Priorities



**Trail Sections**

- Section A.** Galloping Goose, Selkirk Trestle to Switch Bridge
- Section B.** Galloping Goose, Switch Bridge to Grange Rd
- Section C.** Lochside Trail, Switch Bridge to McKenzie Ave

- Phase 1: Section A, 2 km
- Phase 2: Section C, 1.6 km
- Phase 3: Section B, 2.5 km