

STARTING AHEAD

Background

Trans Canada Trail Ontario (TCTO) has reviewed its 2020-2030 Strategic Plan in order to continue serving Ontario trail communities with a post-COVID-19 pandemic approach. This review has led to a transformative vision for province-wide trail landscape enhancement that replaces the organization's past focus on making Trans Canada Trail connections. This review has also provided a framework for strategic directions and priority actions corresponding to the updated vision.

TRANSFORMATION

A VISION for a resilient future

With this exciting, broader, and more relevant reorientation of the vision, the organization has adopted the new operating brand name of “Green Trails Ontario (GTO)”. GTO’s vision embraces the creation of environmentally sustainable trail landscapes that offer diverse uses including recreational, educational, and health benefits while providing opportunities for communities to reduce the local effects of climate change.

We envision Ontario trails that reflect GTO’s fundamental principles of “Green and adaptive.” They contribute to climate mitigation, enhance landscape functions, and welcome communities across the province to participate in environmental trail activities.

A MISSION for actions

Working through partnerships, GTO’s mission is to bring community resources, knowledge, and experience together to improve the ecological sustainability of trail corridors and landscapes that contributes to the communities health and environments. In the effort of climate mitigation, GTO’s goal is to enhance trail environments and landscapes beyond the trail corridors.

GTO programs are guided by the SHADE principles described below that are the components of GTO VISION and remain fundamental to GTO’S commitment to its climate responsive initiatives.

GTO Resiliency and SHADE Principles

Sustainable Trails

Promotes and improves the environmental sustainability by enhancing the ecological state of trail corridors by implementing SHADE programs and projects, such as creating regenerative habitats of native plant species, invasive species management and removal, ecological planning, design of the trail corridors and adjacent landscapes where applicable.

Healthy trail activities

Promotes and creates opportunities for trail activities that benefit both physical and mental health.

Access to Trails

Works with partners to ensure the trails can be used, explored, and enjoyed by people and communities regardless of economic, social and cultural backgrounds.

Diverse trail uses

Promotes and works to create opportunities for diverse activities along the trail corridors and adjacent landscapes. In addition, GTO works to create educational, health, and ecologically benefitting landscapes in the province.

Educational trails

Promotes interpretive and interactive landscapes. Working with the partners, GTO creates and transforms trail corridors and surrounding landscapes to be used by the educational institutions for environmental learning, research, awareness, and climate mitigation. GTO creates learning opportunities by connecting the ecological, cultural, and climate values of our past, present, and future.

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Strategic Directions

- **Establish and Expand Partnerships and Networks**
Work through partnerships and network building as the key to achieving the expanded and resilient GTO vision.
- **Develop and Implement Collaborative SHADE programs and projects**
The GTO vision to guide SHADE programs and projects across the province for the enhancement of local ecosystems, creation of educational landscapes, and the reduction of local climate change effects on citizens' health.
- **Develop and implement a communications plan**
A comprehensive communications plan to help achieve the GTO vision by reaching out to trail communities, individuals, governments, and non-government agencies who work for environmental improvement and will support GTO's SHADE principles.
- **Promote the GTO & SHADE programs and projects**
Demonstrate the pioneering role of GTO as an environmental trail organization focusing on the health, knowledge and climate factors. Partner with local groups and organizations through SHADE programs to aid local climate action programs.
- **Secure a sustainable funding base**
Establish a sustainable funding and revenue base for GTO to continue its activities. Secure funds to support GTO's strategic directions and partnership efforts across Ontario to maintain, restore and enhance the local trail environments.