



Wellington Plaza River Trail remake in progress

A section of hiking trail south of downtown Guelph is getting a remake, thanks to the Federal Economic Development Agency's funding commitment for "placemaking" projects across Southern Ontario.

The Guelph Hiking Trail Club received the funding, in partnership with the Guelph Community Health Centre (Guelph CHC), City of Guelph, Art not Shame and several business owners in the Wellington Plaza. Together, the partners will be collaborating to make improvements to the hiking trail behind the plaza to make it a more equitable space for all.

"We are delighted to work with like-minded partners on this opportunity to develop an existing City asset as an active transportation pathway along the Speed River and turn this trail into a welcoming space for all," says John Fisher, President of the Guelph Hiking Trail Club.

Planned upgrades include benches and seating selected by trail users, as well as resurfacing and clean up. Art Not Shame, a Guelph-based not-for-profit arts organization, will be commissioned to provide community-created art for use throughout the space.

"Guelph CHC's nursing outreach and recreational therapist staff have spoken with many trail users who have shared their input to help co-design the improvements; with a focus on creating equitable, user-centred design, this partnership is a great fit for us," says Raechelle Devereaux, CEO at the Guelph CHC.

All partners agree on the value of co-designing the space so that those who use it most have their voices heard to inform the improvements that are needed. Property owners have been provided with artist renderings for their approval.

"The Wellington Plaza trail connection is another great example of how community collaboration can tangibly benefit trail users, something our recently-approved Guelph Trails Master Plan aims to do as we navigate our future with a trail network that sustains us." says Gene Matthews, General Manager of Parks with the City of Guelph. He notes the city is committed to the equitable use and upkeep of trails.

Trail improvements are planned to be completed during Spring 2022.

CONTACTS

John Fisher, President Guelph Hiking Trails Club jhnfshr62@gmail.com

Raechelle Devereaux CEO Guelph CHC rdevereaux@guelphchc.ca

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