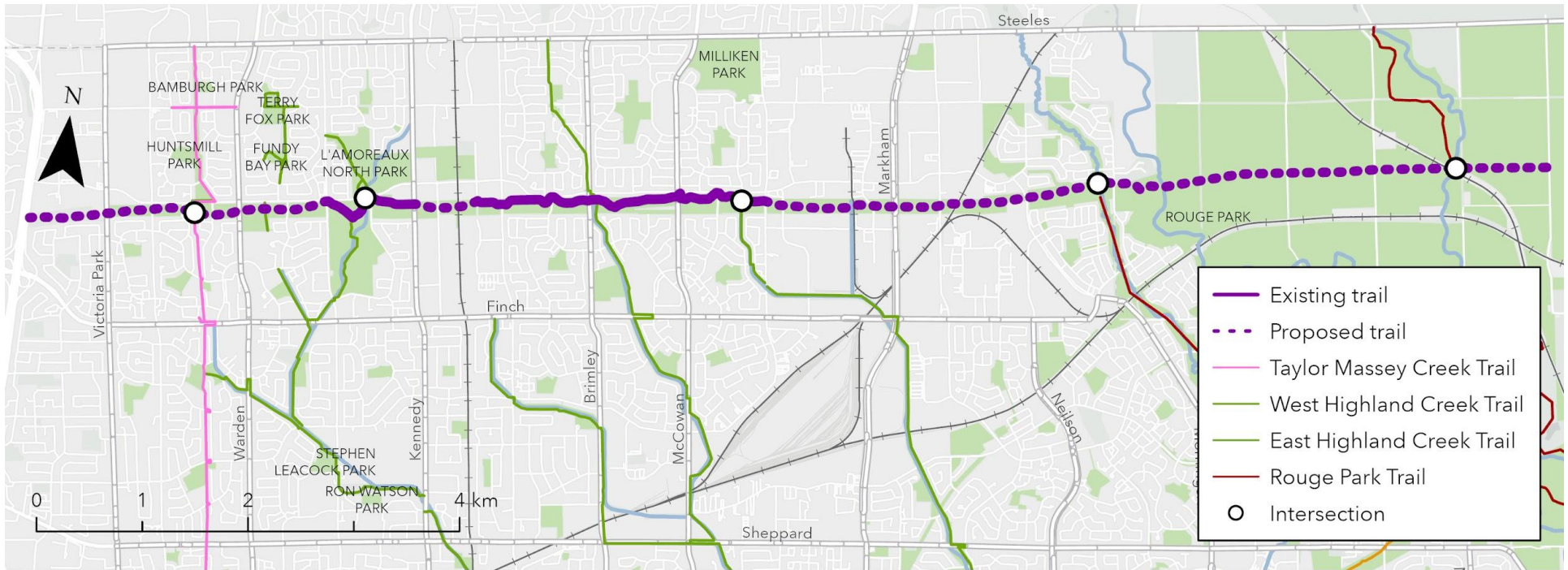


Finch Hydro Corridor Greenway

Total Length: 15.1km | 26% Existing



The Finch Greenway

Map by: Anastasiia Ostrovskaia

The wide Finch Hydro Corridor extends from Highway 404 to Rouge National Park, providing ample room for a high-capacity off-road trail.

The Finch Hydro Corridor provides an opportunity similar to the Meadoway trail that is currently being completed along the route of the Gatineau Hydro Corridor by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). The Meadoway trail project promises to create an off-road multi-use trail all the way from the Don River to Rouge National Urban Park. It will be a major asset for all of Scarborough, but will be particularly valuable for areas south of Highway 401.

Our proposed Finch Hydro Corridor Greenway will create a similarly transformative trail for areas of Scarborough north of Highway 401. This 100% off-road trail will extend 15km, from Victoria Park Avenue in the east all the way to Rouge Park in the west, where it joins with the Rouge National Park Greenway trail at Plug Hat Rd. In the future it should also connect to the Finch Corridor and Don Valley trails in North York to the west, and to Pickering in the east.

The Finch Greenway will have direct off-road connections to over 7 parks, including Rouge National Urban Park. Residents from over 8 neighbourhoods will be in direct proximity to the trail and it will also connect to the other branches of the Scarborough Greenways Network (Rouge Park Greenway, Taylor Massey Creek Greenway, and Highland Creek Greenways).

Surprisingly, even though this is an obvious place for a greenway trail, as there is a very wide and continuous green corridor all the way across the northern part of Scarborough, only one quarter of the corridor currently has trails of any kind. Existing trails are above the minimum width for multi-use trails, and are in good condition.

The [2022-2024 Near Term Implementation Program of the Toronto Cycling Network Plan](#) shows the section of the Finch Greenway from Pharmacy Ave eastwards to Birchmount Rd to connect to L'Amoreaux Park, as "underway," although no sign of construction was yet visible in September 2022. The connection from Pharmacy Ave westwards across Highway 404 to the proposed Finch hydro corridor trails and the East Don River trails in North York is shown as "under study" in the same plan. When completed this will create a major new active transportation connection from Scarborough to North York, including to the Seneca College Newnham Campus at Finch and the west side of Highway 404.

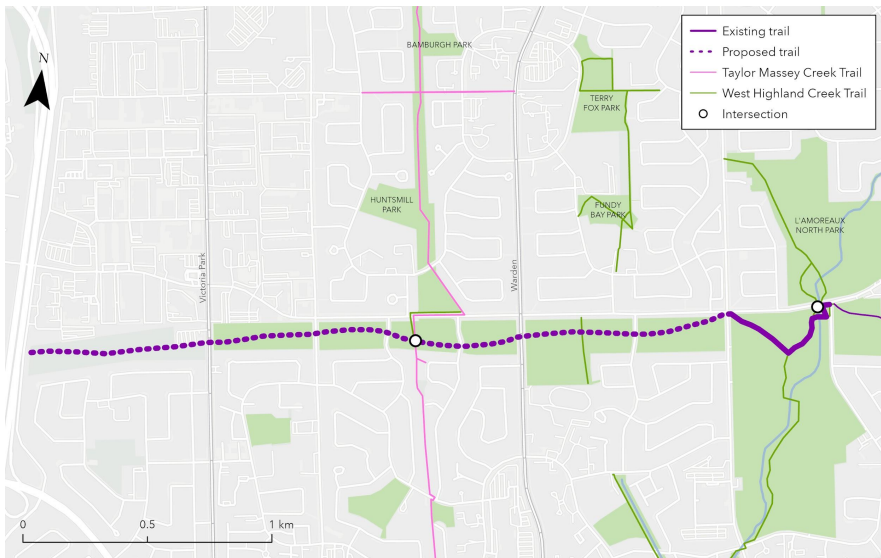


Figure 1. Looking east from Victoria Park Ave across Pharmacy Ave, showing the location of the planned new section of the Finch Greenway. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)



Figure 2. Just east of Pharmacy Ave, the Finch Greenway connects to the Scarborough West Greenway on the Warden hydro corridor. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)

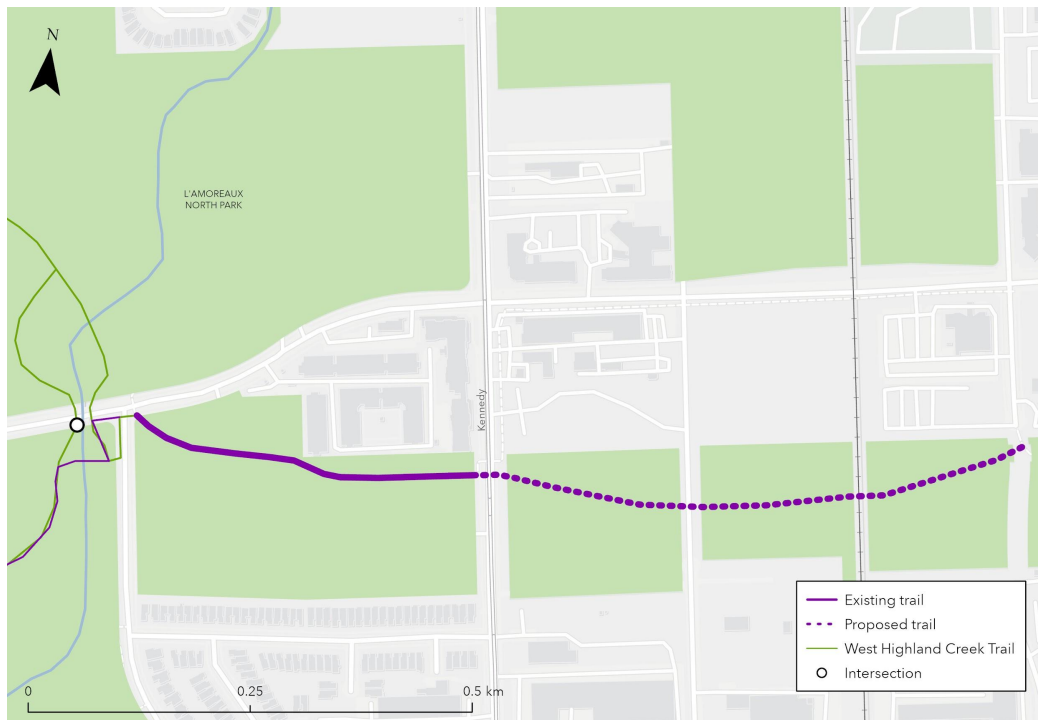
From Birchmount Rd through L'Amoreaux Park to Kennedy Rd (1km) is one of the two already existing segments of the Finch Greenway Trail. L'Amoreaux Park is one of Scarborough's premier parks, and is divided into two parts, north and south of the Finch Greenway. L'Amoreaux Park North is designed around the L'Amoreaux Forest and a large pond that is the source of West Highland Creek, which flows south across the Greenway. On the south side of the Finch Greenway is the L'Amoreaux Tennis Centre and Sports Complex.

Figure 3. Looking south from just east of Pharmacy Ave along the currently trail-less Warden hydro corridor from the Finch Greenway. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)



Existing trails go under McNicoll Ave from the Finch Greenway to L'Amoreaux Park North on both sides of West Highland Creek. This is an efficient way to ensure separation of pedestrians and cyclists from traffic.

Figure 4. Looking west where the existing trail crosses West Highland Creek over a small bridge with no paving. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)



The existing Finch Greenway trail is in two separate pieces, with no greenway trail between Kennedy Rd and Silver Star Blvd. This gap is to avoid the GO train track heading to Markham and Stouffville, which crosses the Finch hydro corridor here. The two pieces are connected with a bidirectional cycle track along the south side of McNicoll Avenue, which has a signalled level crossing across the tracks. A better medium-term solution will be to build a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the tracks in the greenway, especially as this GO line is expected to soon become a lot busier with more frequent GO trains and SmartTrack service.



Figure 5. The bidirectional cycle path on the south side of McNicoll Ave looking west towards the level crossing is a very good interim solution until a bridge is built in the greenway. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)



Figure 6. Well-designed signalled crossing of Midland Avenue, facing east. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)

Between Silver Star Blvd (just west of Midland Ave) and Middlefield Rd, 2.9km of high-quality multi-use trail already exists. This trail is all a minimum of 3.5m in width, is in good condition, and has well-designed crossings of major arterial roads such as Midland Avenue, shown in Figure 6. This greenway trail is also well connected to the neighbourhoods on either side, including with an existing part of our proposed East Highland Creek Greenway just east of Brimley Road that connects the Finch Greenway with Woodside Square, Agincourt North, and Scarborough Town Centre.

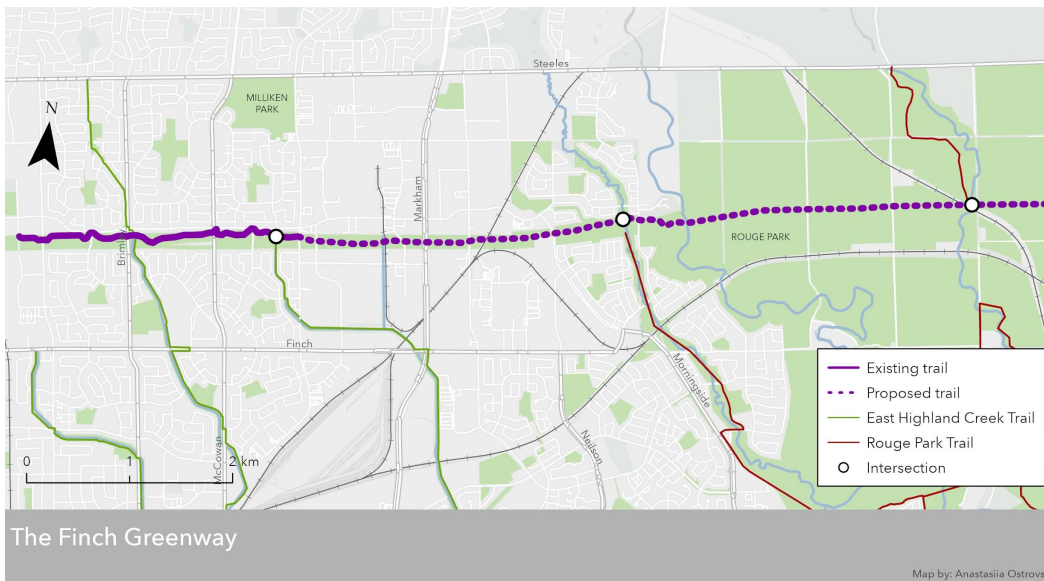


Figure 7. Existing trail along the Finch Corridor. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)

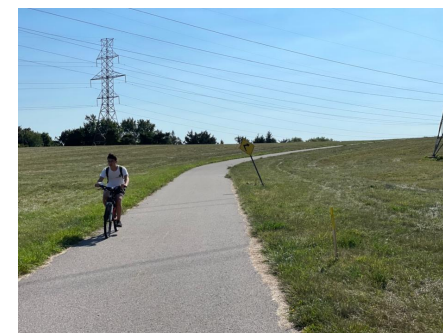


Figure 8. Cyclist riding along the existing Finch Greenway looking west towards McCowan Road. The painted center line is almost completely invisible but otherwise the trail is in good condition. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)

A peculiar feature of the existing Finch Hydro Corridor Trail is that it exists only beside residential neighbourhoods, and stops abruptly where the adjacent land-use is for employment. There is a logic to this, of course, as trail users might be expected to come from residential areas more than employment areas. The result, however, is that, as with off-road trails elsewhere in Scarborough, the segments of trail are not connected together.

The failure to systematically connect to other nearby trails is unfortunate as it makes them much less useful to get places, and seems certain to greatly reduce usage. Figure 9 shows the location where the East Highland Creek trail just west of Middlefield Rd meets the Finch Corridor and ends abruptly. A clear desire line leads from here to the bus stop on McNicoll Ave. It is puzzling that no connection was ever made between this trail and the existing Finch Hydro Corridor Trail located 120m to the north.



Figure 9: Desire line leading from the end of the East Highland Creek Greenway across the Finch corridor to a bus stop on McNicoll Ave. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)

East of Middlefield Rd there are no further existing trails in the Finch Corridor, even though there are some newly-built residential neighbourhoods just east of Morningside Ave. Between Middlefield Rd and Morningside Ave, however, are employment lands with another railway crossing near Dynamic Dr (Figure 10), so trail building was both more challenging and apparently less of a priority. From Middlefield Rd to Morningside Ave is 2.5km as the crow flies, with two more rail crossings and a major arterial road crossing at Markham Rd. From Morningside Ave to Plug Hat Rd, where the Finch Greenway should connect with the eastern Rouge Park Greenway, is 4.3km. There are no further rail crossings, but bridges will be required to cross the Rouge River and the Little Rouge Creek.

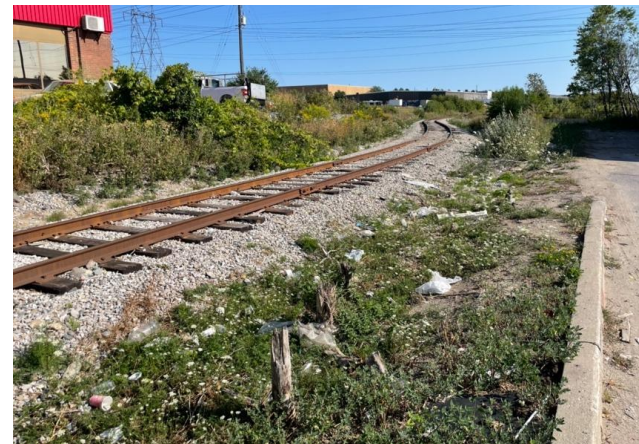


Figure 10: Freight tracks cross the Finch Hydro Corridor just west of Dynamic Dr, serving nearby employment lands. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)

The benefits of connecting the existing portions of the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail to our proposed Rouge Park Greenway is clear, as residents from the whole of the north half of Scarborough would have off-road trail access to Rouge National Park, to the Toronto Zoo, and to the Meadoway and Lake Ontario. The Finch Greenway will, however, be fairly expensive to build because there are several railway lines to cross in this northeastern part of Scarborough, and also two bridges are needed to cross the Rouge River and Little Rouge Creek. It would be economical to design all of these bridges at once, even if they are actually built incrementally.



Figure 11: Looking east across Dynamic Dr where the Finch Corridor cuts through employment lands on the way to Rouge National Park. There are no existing trails here. (Photo by Andre Sorensen)



Figure 12: Looking east from Morningside Ave towards Rouge National Park. In the foreground is the Malvern Urban Farm operated by the Malvern Family Resource Centre. *(Photo by Andre Sorensen)*



Figure 13: Parts of the Finch Corridor are currently not passable even on foot as they are not maintained, as with this location looking west from Morningside Ave. *(Photo by Andre Sorensen)*