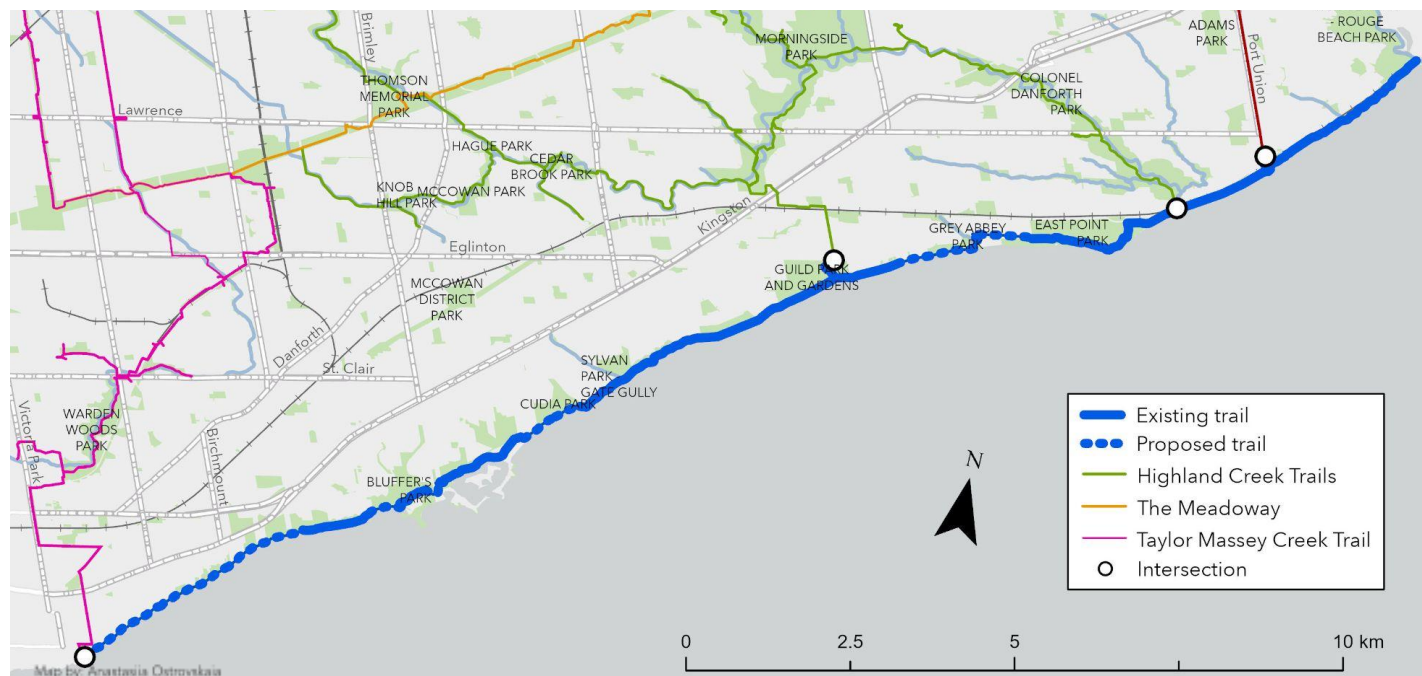


Scarborough Waterfront Greenway

Total Length: 20 Km | 60% Existing



The Scarborough Waterfront Greenway will be a marvellous route that will allow residents within and outside of Scarborough to access the entire length of the Lake Ontario shoreline, with its stunning views. This off-road trail will extend 20km along the waterfront, stretching from the Eastern Beaches at the RC Harris Water Treatment Plant all the way to Rouge Beach and Pickering.

The Scarborough Waterfront Greenway will connect to over 15 parks, including well-known destinations such as Balmy Beach Park, Rosetta McClain Gardens, Bluffer's Park and Beach, Guild Park & Gardens, and Rouge Beach Park. Residents from over 10 neighbourhoods will be in direct proximity to the trail and the breathtaking views along the Bluffs. This vital east-west trail will also connect to the north-south branches of the Scarborough Greenways Network (Rouge Park, Taylor Massey Creek, and Highland Creek).

Currently, there are several paths for pedestrians and cyclists to connect to the Lake Ontario shoreline – one between the Rosetta McClain Gardens and Scarborough Heights Park, one down Brimley Rd S to Bluffer's Park, one down the Doris McCarthy Trail through Gates Gully, one by Guild Park & Gardens, one at East Point Park, and one by the Port Union Waterfront Park. And there are also existing paths along most of the shoreline. But there is currently no continuous path along the Scarborough waterfront because of two significant gaps – east and west of Bluffer's Park – where the bluffs drop directly to the water. Below, we propose a solution for these two major obstacles, which make up a bit less than 5% of the proposed network. Currently, people will often walk down to the waterfront through one of the pathways, only to have to turn around and go back up because the trail is not continuous. This is unfortunate because the Lake Ontario waterfront is Scarborough's primary landscape asset, but it is widely inaccessible due to the lack of connections and the gaps between existing trails. Our proposed trail will help to solve these issues by filling in these gaps and fostering connectivity along the entirety of the trail so that residents can experience the Scarborough waterfront to the fullest extent.



Figure 1. The vast expanse of Lake Ontario will be visible from every point of this trail.
(Photo by: Allison Oki)

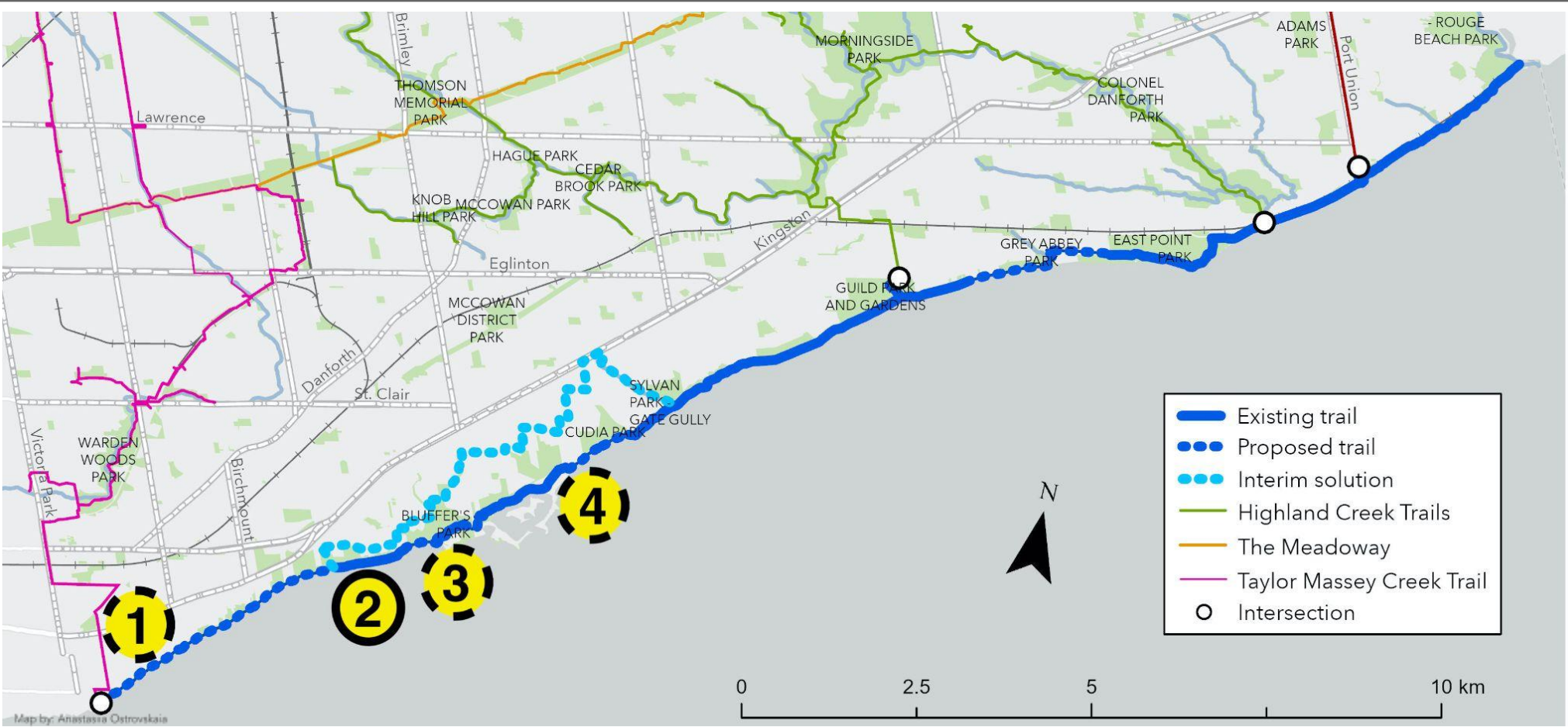


Figure 2. A resting place just east of Cudia Park, where you can have a break and take in the beautiful blue view of the Bluffs.
(Photo by: Allison Oki)

While proposing this contiguous Scarborough Waterfront Greenway sounds ambitious, one of the City of Toronto's policies is to create a continuous trail along the waterfront as part of its contribution to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. Making this multi-use trail a reality will benefit millions of people by improving access to this outstanding landscape asset.

Creating an 100% off-road trail along Scarborough's Waterfront does not involve building from scratch, as about 60% of our proposed trail network already exists. Around 35% of the proposed 20km trail doesn't yet exist, but most of this is in areas where there is more than enough space for a trail. A little over 45% of the existing trail is already paved, while the rest is either a rocky or dirt path. Overall, the narrower segments of the trail should be expanded to at least 3.6m, as per minimum high capacity multi-use trail guidelines. Luckily, this shouldn't be hard to do because these narrower trails are along stretches that have available room on either side.

There are already some existing trails that run along the Waterfront, but none of them are continuous routes at water level. All require detours up to the top of the cliffs through residential neighbourhoods and back down again. We argue that a continuous off-road multi-use trail along the shore is of such great value for everyone in Toronto that every effort should be made to connect these trails.



The Scarborough Waterfront Greenway will begin by the RC Harris Water Treatment Plant, which is where it will also connect to the Scarborough West/Taylor Massey Creek Greenway and the Eastern Beaches.

While the shoreline is open and visible from this point, it is not very accessible (as shown in Figure 3). Starting the **proposed** trail at this point will greatly improve connectivity, as there is currently no trail for 3.4km from here to the Scarborough Heights Park.

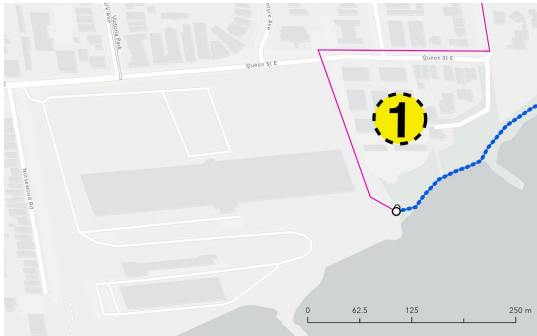


Figure 3.
The waterfront is fenced off from the RC Harris Plant and the Eastern Beaches to the west.
(Photo by: Allison Oki)

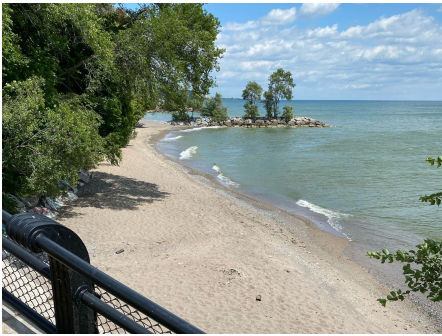
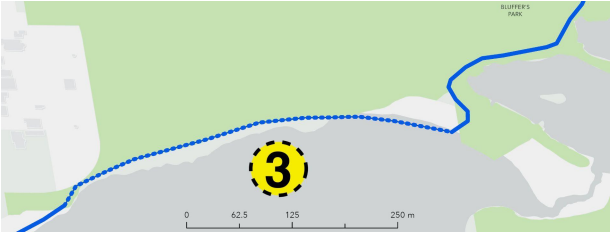


Figure 4.
There is room along the waterfront to build a trail here.
(Photo by: Allison Oki)



The Scarborough Waterfront Greenway will then connect to the **existing** trail along the Scarborough Heights Park. This trail segment just meets (and in some parts, slightly exceeds) minimum high-capacity trail width guidelines. It connects to one of the pathways to the shoreline (at the west end of the trail), so people can access this segment of the Waterfront. However, the usefulness of the pathway is restricted as there is no trail to the west, and there is no continuation of the existing trail to the east towards Bluffer's Park.



This gap is due to the steep cliffs that make up a 300m section of the Waterfront. This is one of two major obstacles around Bluffer's Park that impede connectivity along the route. However, there are both interim and long-term **solutions** to this barrier, which we will discuss.

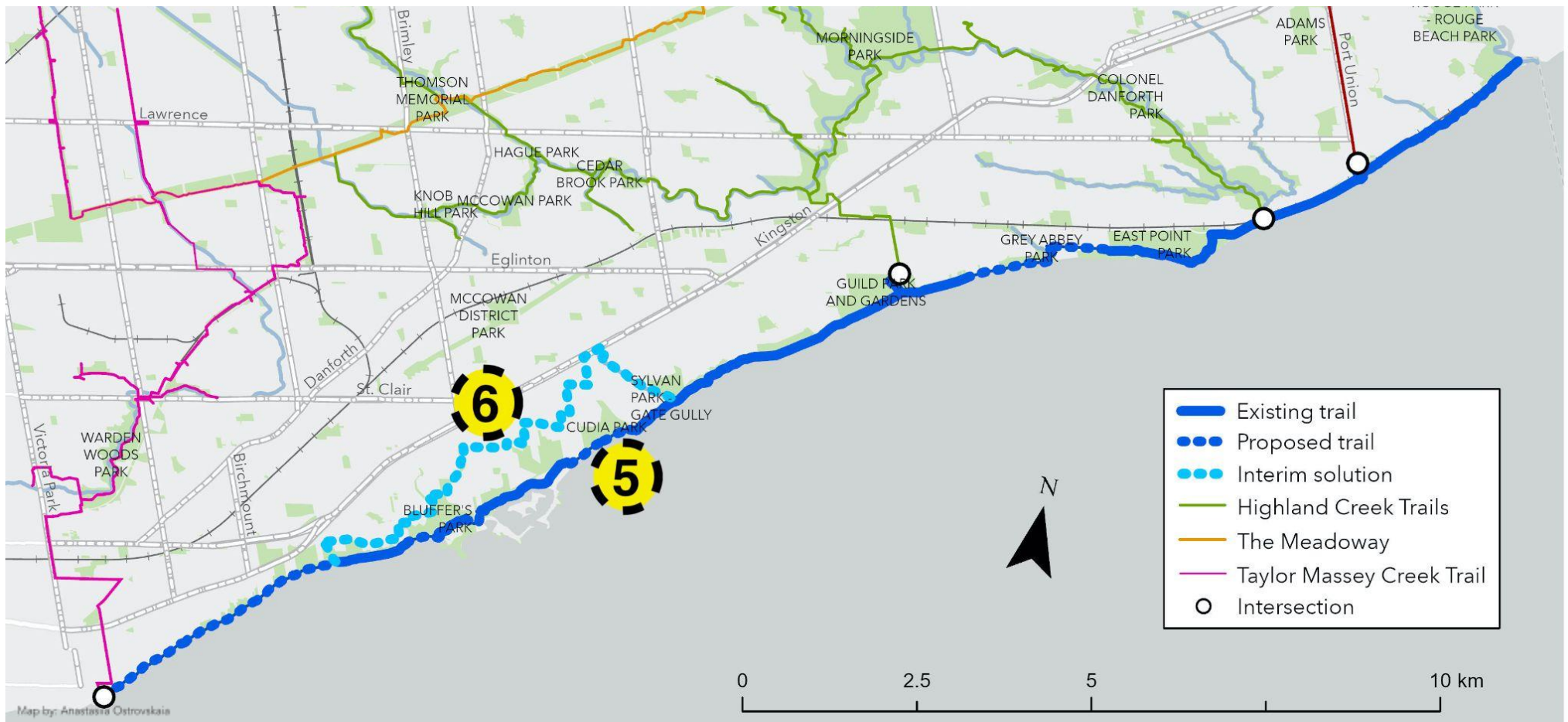
Our proposed long-term solution will allow the Scarborough Waterfront Greenway to connect to Bluffer's Park and Beach, a notable destination.



There is plenty of room to build a trail along the edge of the beach at the bottom of the bluffs here, which will help facilitate access to this popular spot. Our **proposed** paved trail will also make it easier for people to cross the beach, as sand is hard to walk and bike on.



Figure 5.
Bluffer's Beach entrance.
(Photo by: Allison Oki)



The second obstacle is the 400 m section near Cudia Park.

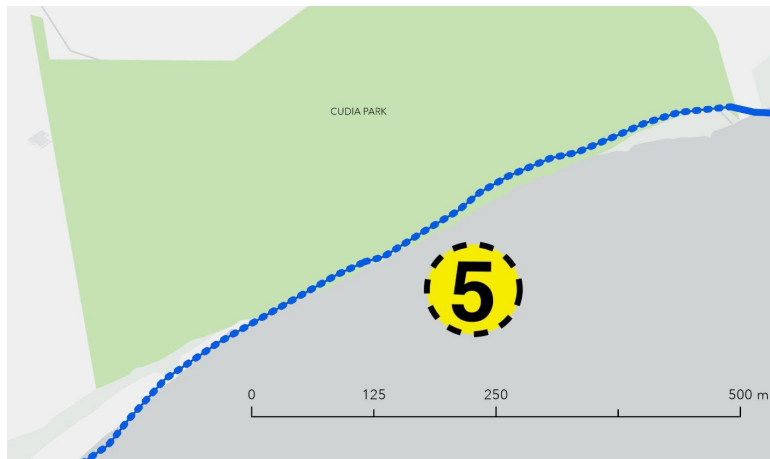


Figure 6.

The shoreline at Cudia Park is difficult to access because the cliffs go straight down into the water, and there are a lot of tree branches and rocks that need to be navigated around. This section, along with the other section just west of the Bluffs, highlights how these relatively small-scale obstacles have large impacts on the accessibility of the route as a whole. (Photo by: Allison Oki)



Since these two sections are relatively close to each other, there is only one **interim** route required to avoid both of these obstacles (other than rolling up your pants and going into the water). This route follows the path between the Rosetta McClain Gardens and Scarborough Heights Park to go up to Fishleigh Dr, and then keeps going east using the closest connecting residential roads. Then, it connects back to the shoreline by going down the Doris McCarthy Trail through Gates Gully.

This is a 5.9km long on-road detour, which takes about 15-20 minutes by bike and nearly 1 hour by foot. For many people, this is simply too long and steep a detour, and presents a barrier to accessing the full extent of the trail, especially for people with disabilities. Even if the rest of the Scarborough Waterfront Greenway is created, these obstacles make it difficult for people to connect to and from Bluffer's Park, which is a key destination along the route. There is currently neither a cycle path or even a sidewalk leading from Kingston Rd to Bluffers Park.

Our **proposed** long-term solution is to build either a bridge or boardwalk that will allow for direct connectivity to the adjacent trails. This could be done in a couple different ways, which could look something like the examples below:



Figure 7. A boardwalk (like the White Water Walk in Niagara Falls).



Figure 8. An inland bridge (like the Bluffer's Park crossings).

While there will be extra effort and cost required to make these two connections, the benefits derived from addressing these major obstacles will be well worth it. As well, since these two sections make up less than 5% of our proposed Scarborough Waterfront Greenway, these interventions will only be required on a small portion of the route.



Next is the stretch from just east of Cudia Park to between Guild Park and Grey Abbey Park.

This 4.5km long segment is not connected to the other 15.5km of the network, as it doesn't continue eastward, ending at the steep bluffs at Cudia Park to the west. The **existing** trail here ranges from between 3 to 5m, and is not paved. However, it is still easy to walk along, and this is a good spot to have a little break and take in the scenery. Some benches here will help to establish this point as a resting spot.

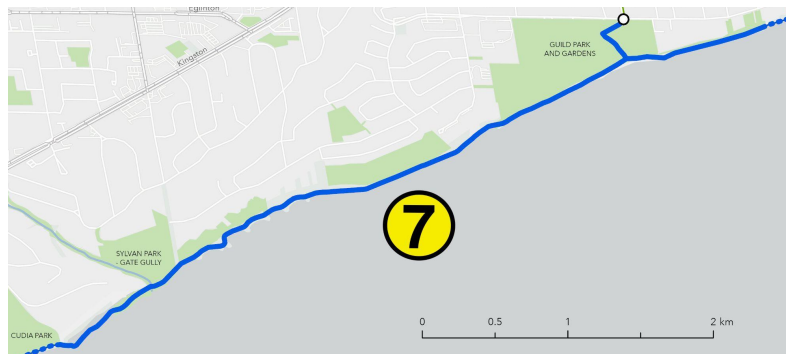


Figure 9. While this trail is unpaved, it is flat and has good width.
(Photo by: Allison Oki)



Figure 10. The Passage sculpture – representing a canoe or the ribs of a fish - is located where the Doris McCarthy Trail meets Lake Ontario.
(Photo by: Allison Oki)

Then the **proposed** trail will extend along the waterfront by Grey Abbey Park, as shown in Figure 11.



Figure 11. Much of the Lake Ontario shoreline looks like this: wide margins of sand and rocks between the cliffs and the water. The width of this margin varies, but at this point it is around 25m wide, allowing for a good separation between the water and the trail. (Photo by: Allison Oki)

The trail will then be routed up to the top of the bluffs in East Point Park. Here, the cliffs are closer to the shoreline, as there is only about 10m of space between the cliffs and the water (Figure 12). Due to these space constraints, it will be best to route the trail up along the ravine by Grey Abbey Park to the top of the bluffs in East Point Park, where there is already an **existing** path (Figure 13).



Figure 12. The shoreline along East Point Park. (Photo by: Allison Oki)



Figure 13. The trail on top of the cliffs at East Point Park. (Photo by: Karen Khan)

The trail will then connect to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.



The **existing** Great Lakes Waterfront Trail starts at the Highland Creek Treatment Plant, which is connected to East Point Park through a path up Beechgrove Dr (Figure 14). The entrance to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail has good wayfinding and signage (Figure 15), and has a centerline for the separation of users (Figure 16). There are even speed limit markings on the trail to ensure that fast bike riders do not go at dangerous speeds (Figure 16). It is well-paved, but should be slightly widened in some areas to meet the minimum high capacity trail guideline of 3.6m. Overall, this 4.65km-long segment of the Waterfront Trail is a great existing piece of our proposed Scarborough Waterfront Trail, and needs only minor improvements to be fully up to standard.



Figure 14. This unpaved path connects up to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. (Photo by: Allison Oki)



Figure 15. This map at the trail's entrance is useful for wayfinding. (Photo by: Karen Khan)



Figure 16. Speed limit markings along the Trail are intended to reduce conflicts. (Photo by: Karen Khan)

One can continue east along the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, which connects to other branches of the Scarborough Greenways Network (East Highland Creek and Rouge Park) and to Pickering..

Altogether, despite the two obstacles that make up only a small section of the entire network, the rest of our proposed Scarborough Waterfront Greenway is mostly either covered by existing trails, or is along stretches where there is adequate room along the shoreline to build a trail. By connecting existing trails to each other, the dream of walking or riding along the entirety of Scarborough's beautiful blue shoreline should be possible to achieve.