

From railway to trailway: Orangeville-Brampton Railway Corridor acquisition finalized

By **Zachary Roman**

The Region of Peel, and the communities of Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga, are all working together to add 51 kilometres of new trailway for their residents.

On July 15, an official ribbon cutting was held to formally recognize the acquisition of former railway corridor lands, which run from the Caledon-Orangeville border to just north of Streetsville in Mississauga.

The lands will be converted to a trail for residents of all municipalities to enjoy.

The lands were once part of the Orangeville-Brampton Railway Corridor and will now be protected for future recreational, broadband and utility use. The cost of acquiring the railway lands was \$5.8 million and they were purchased with money from the Region of Peel's Greenlands Securement Program.

Each of the municipalities partnering with the Region will be responsible for shouldering some of the costs and responsibility for the development, design, construction, and ongoing maintenance of the future trailway. According to the press release issued at the time of the official ribbon cutting, these costs have already been transferred to the municipalities.

The Orangeville-Brampton Railway (OBRY) was created in the 1870s by the Credit Valley Railway Company.

It was later purchased by CP Rail, which operated the line from 1883 through to the year 2000. At that time, it was acquired by the Town of Orangeville, and was used primarily as a freight line. Scenic rail tours along the Forks of the Credit were also offered on the line.

Discussions on the sale of the railway began in 2019, and the sale closed on July 14, 2022. On hand to celebrate the sale on July 15 were a number of local dignitaries including Region of Peel Regional Chair Nando Iannicca, Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson, Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown, and Orangeville Mayor Sandy Brown.

Iannicca said the acquired lands will help connect the regional community and support growth in a sustainable and responsible way.

Thompson shared his excitement about what he called an important addition to Caledon's already extensive, scenic, trailway system.

Caledon is a well-known trail community and the first community in Canada to feature a pavilion on the Trans-Canada Trailway, said Thompson. Our trailways are the natural linkages that bind our vast rural and small urban communities together. This acquisition is especially important because it gives the Town the opportunity to create a new north-south recreation trail that will travel through Caledon's breathtaking scenic areas at the edge of the Niagara Escarpment.