

## Lakeshore pathway gains support

By Summerland Review

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A proposed lakeside pathway which began as a Summerland initiative has gained support from communities and organizations throughout the Okanagan Valley.

The pathway was originally presented as a route to connect the lakeside area of Summerland with Trout Creek.

The concept has grown as the project, now called the Trail of the Okanagans, would connect communities throughout the valley.

Don Gemmell, who presented the initial pathway proposal, said Kelowna's city manager, Peachland's administrator, a newly re-elected Penticton councillor and others have added their support to the proposal.

A steering group is already in place. It consists of representatives from the Summerland Chamber of Commerce, the Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society, the Summerland Rotary Club, the municipality, the Penticton Rotary Club, Penticton Economic Development, Penticton Tourism, the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society and the Trout Creek Residents' Association.

Connie Denesiuk, chair of the steering committee, said the support for the initiative has ben impressive.

The municipality of Summerland recently committed \$20,000 to fund the engineered drawings for the first segment of the project.

Other communities in the Okanagan have also joined in the efforts to create the pathway.

"It's been community-wide and inter-community," Denesiuk said. "It's surprising how quickly things are moving forward."

Because of the scope of the pathway project, representatives from around the Okanagan will be involved.

"No one community can do this on their own," Denesiuk said.

The proposed pathway would be three metres wide wherever possible, allowing use by cyclists and pedestrians. It would follow the lakeshore, linking communities in the region.

"It's not just a sidewalk," Gemmell said. "It's a project about enhancing the enjoyment of the lakeshore and providing an environmentally responsible way of joining our communities."

He added that the trail could be a tourism driver for the region, but making it a reality will involve the cooperation of numerous organizations.

"We have to think outside our silos," he said. "It's about selling the bigger picture."

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