

OUTINGS BY BIKE WITH MIKE:

Along the Burlington/Hamilton Waterfront Trail

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The trail along the western end of Lake Ontario between Burlington and Hamilton is popular for walking, jogging, roller blading and cycling. Part of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, it seems to have many different local names, including the Breezeway Trail. The Niagara Escarpment runs along the horizon.

The view southeast from The Lakeview's observation tower on the shore of Lake Ontario in Hamilton, looking at Grimsby, Niagara and the Niagara Escarpment in the distance. People use the trail in many different ways.

Brant Street Pier in Burlington with a view toward the Burlington Canal Lift Bridge.



▲ A beautiful hand-carved bench and a whiteboard invite people to rest and add comments.



▲ Toronto firefighter Glenn created the wood bench to commemorate a friend and set it at the end of his property for the public to enjoy.



▲ The dramatic end of the Brant Street Pier. It opened in 2013 and features benches beneath curved light posts. A Great Lakes freighter is visible on the horizon.



▲ A laker preparing to sail into Hamilton Harbour.



◀ The Algoma Sault out of Sault Ste. Marie sails through the Burlington Bay Canal into Hamilton Harbour.

As a cyclist, I use my bicycle for both recreation and business when I can. I cycle to the gym where I ride a stationary bike; I cycle to the grocery store and bank. In June 2019, I decided to throw my camera into my bicycle saddlebag and try out part of the car-free Burlington/Hamilton waterfront trail.

I parked my car at the Burlington Canal Lift Bridge parking lot off Eastport

Drive. I pedalled to my starting point, the Brant Street Pier at the foot of Brant St. in Burlington. I finished travelling at Grays Road in Hamilton, just before the point where bikes have to share the road with cars again. Google says the distance is 12 km one way; to go there and back was 24 km.

From Brant Street Pier there's a pretty view of the west end of Lake Ontario. When I was there, a Great

Lakes freighter, or laker, was being positioned to sail beneath the lift bridge into Hamilton Harbour.

On my way to the lift bridge I saw a note board and hand-crafted bench for all trail users to use. I talked to the homeowner, Glenn, a Toronto firefighter who said he varies his display pieces every day, depending on the weather. He made the bench as a memorial to a friend who had recently died.

Lift Bridge

By the time I rode back to the lift bridge, it was up and I got to see the laker sail through. There is a long wait with the bridge up, which is probably a good idea, as bridges and big ships should not run into each other! The Algoma Sault, sailing under an American flag, made her way through the Burlington Bay Canal into Hamilton Harbour under the gaze of a few spectators.

Continuing along, I passed

an interesting group of homes with gardens planted along the trail. It looked like the owners kept bird feeders, dog watering dishes and benches near the lakeshore. Yet another example of local residents being proud of their community, in this case the trail, and putting something back into it. I looked back and took a photo of the way I had just cycled.

The Lakeview's observation tower offers panoramic views



◀ Lakefront homes, gardens and benches to enjoy Lake Ontario.



▲ The trail goes right along the water's edge. In the distance is the arched Burlington Skyway and the lift bridge.



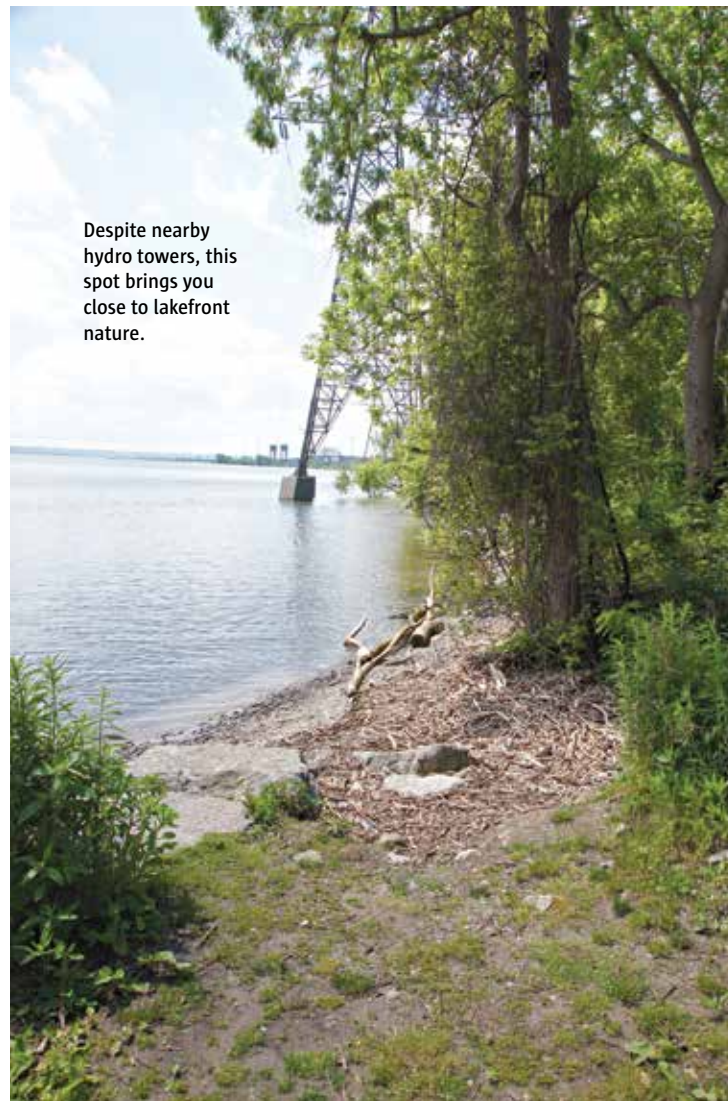
▲ This gate at Grays Road in Hamilton was the turnaround point of my ride.



▲ The Z-shaped pedestrian bridge with slanted steel arch, painted the colour of nearby red clay, connects the waterfront trail with the Red Hill Valley Trail.



▲ This sleepy creek near Grays Road flows into Lake Ontario.



Despite nearby hydro towers, this spot brings you close to lakefront nature.



The trail gives access to peaceful places close to the lake.

of Niagara, Hamilton and Toronto. You can see the mix of natural, recreational and urban uses for this area all the way from the lakefront up to the top of the Escarpment.

Near the Red Hill Valley Parkway cutoff from the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW), the waterfront trail connects with the Red Hill Valley Trail, providing access for pedestrians and bicycles over the busy, multi-lane QEW. This looks like another interesting

trail to experience in the future. The end of the road and the turnaround point for me was at Grays Road.

The trail had lots of out-of-the-way spots to connect with nature and enjoy hanging out. Most of my photos, taken half a year before COVID-19 even existed, showed mostly social distancing even then, before anyone called it that. In the summer of 2020, perhaps this will be a safe way to get out. **NEV**