



September 24, 2021

Essex Region Conservation Authority
Attention: Kevin Money, Director of Conservation Services
360 Fairview Ave. W.,
Suite 311,
Essex, Ontario
N8M 1Y6

Kevin,

Re: Recommendations for Improving Accessibility on Trails

The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee at the September 16, 2021 meeting reviewed three months' worth of data collected via the We Check The Trails project. This data is the first being reviewed since the project started. The ECAAC has uncovered some common themes for accessibility in that data, and is proposing some recommendations to the Essex Region Conservation Authority for your consideration. The first set of recommendations from the ECAAC are as follows:

1. Signs: (Improved Trail Head Markers, Orientation Signs and Mile Markers)

It was identified by the majority of the respondents that improved signs were needed at the trail heads, access points and along the trails themselves. Among signs being recommended are mile markers. Mile markers are important for safety and communication purposes in the event of an emergency situation. Signs at trail heads and access points that include information about current geographic location, description of the trail length, rest stops and features (grade, width, surface etc.) would be beneficial to all users.

2. Traffic Control Gates:

Some maintenance issues such as trimming back of brush and maintaining surface condition at the gates was noted for the areas of the Chrysler Canada Greenway at Wigle Ave., Kratz Sideroad and Heritage Rd., as well as at WFCU Entrance. The trail surface at the entrance of the Rotary 1918 Centennial Hub trail is often unstable, making it difficult to pass through.

Also noted that the gates are narrow, by design, to control access on trails for ATVs, but also pose an issue for people using certain wheelchairs or other mobility

aides as well as for people with vision disabilities. For example, the gates at the Cypher Systems section of trail located in Kingsville Train Station at the roadway crossing are more difficult to deal with than those on the Chrysler Greenway section. The narrow gates are also an issue on the Rotary 1918 Connector Trail.

3. Parking:

The sections of trails that have access at road crossings should have identified accessible parking locations, which would be adequate to allow users to safely load and unload vehicles. Larger parking areas could benefit from designated accessible parking spaces with ramped and packed surfaces to reach the trails from parking locations.

4. Trail Condition (mowing, maintenance and fall-away):

A significant grade change located near the Kingsville Golf Course makes it a challenge to navigate to the west. While packed gravel surface is adequate for some users, there are softer areas, and areas that have vegetation growing on the paths. This makes navigating the trail with a mobility aide or wheelchair more difficult if not impossible. An example of this issue is between the 3rd Concession (Fox Road) and 4th Concession of Amherstburg. Cutting back the vegetation that lines the trails would improve the visibility for upcoming bends in the trail, especially for those who have visual impairments. Ensuring that the trimmings and brush is not left on the trail is important as well. Suggesting weekly patrol of all trails to ensure conditions are adequate and that no damaged or dangerous areas are left unmarked or unaddressed.

There was also a 'fall-away' or degrading of the edge of the trail on the Chrysler Greenway in McGregor area.

5. Toilet Facilities:

At areas where parking sites exist, consider adding accessible outhouse or toilet facilities.

6. Rest Areas:

Additional rest areas, such as benches should be added along trails at more frequent intervals. Benches are also recommended at trail heads and parking areas.

In addition to the suggested improvements, many compliments were received with regard to the existence of the trails network in general and of the value of these

resources for the region. Many respondents expressed thanks to this group for taking on this WE Check The Trails project and program. We look forward to a continued stream of insightful and meaningful submissions in the coming months and years. We respectfully submit this information and recommendations to ERCA in the spirit of collaboration and with optimism. We hope these recommendations will be considered by your administrative and elected members for future implementation.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Committee.

Regards,

Christine Easterbrook
Chair, Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee