



## **Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, September 16, 2021**

**3:00 pm**

**Online Attendance Only**

Committee Members: Debbie Alexander  
Christine Easterbrook, Chair  
Rachel Jewell  
Gord Queen

Absent: Brad Frenette  
Diana Kirkbride  
Stephanie Olewski

Administration: Katherine Hebert  
Crystal Sylvestre

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:18 pm.

### **2. Recording of Attendance**

All members were in attendance virtually, with the exception of Brad Frenette, Diana Kirkbride and Stephanie Olewski who sent their regrets.

### **3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no conflicts of pecuniary interest declared.

### **4. Adoption of Regular Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of the August 12, 2021 ECAAC Meeting.

**Moved By** Gord Queen

**Seconded By** Rachel Jewell

That the minutes of the August 12, 2021 meeting of the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee be adopted as presented.

**Carried**

## **5. Delegations and Presentations**

### **5.1 County Wide Active Transportation System (CWATS)**

Diana Radulescu, County of Essex Active Transportation Coordinator to provide a presentation regarding the activities of the CWATS program.

Diana Radulescu provided an overview of the CWATS program that began formally with the Master Plan in 2012. Ms. Radulescu explained that the network of on and off-road routes aims to promote connected communities, health and active living as well as assist in economic development and tourism. The CWATS Charter was also developed in 2012 and was supported by all seven local tier municipalities.

The CWATS Master Plan guiding principles of good active transportation planning and include Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation. These guiding principles are used to develop CWATS policies, network and programs.

CWATS infrastructure support a wide range of users for various forms of active transportation. The different types of facilities were explained and the degrees of separation from vehicle infrastructure. Ms. Radulescu clarified that sidewalks are not including in the CWATS network, they are the responsibility of the local tier municipalities to plan and deliver where they are required.

Ms. Radulescu clarified the relationship between Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) and CWATS. ERCA owns and maintains the Chrysler Canada Greenway, the Cypher Systems Group Greenway and the Rotary Centennial Hub trails and CWATS includes them in their planning and communications to illustrate the connectivity of the two systems.

To identify which segments of the Master Plan will be completed, the CWATS Committee depend in the local municipalities to apply to the County outlining which segments they prefer. Once applications are received, the CWATS Committee deliberates and votes on the segments to be completed in the following year. The location of the facility dictates the financial obligation of each party. In order to expand the system quickly, paved shoulders are frequently included in County Road Rehabilitation

projects. As a result, fifty five percent of the 2012 Master Plan has been completed.

Through the CWATS Municipal Partnership Program, the County provides signage, benches, and various bicycle amenities to the local tiers. These amenities are funded by the County of Essex.

The CWATS Committee meets every other month and includes the local municipalities, The Ministry of Transportation, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Chatham-Kent. External partners include organizations that promote active transportation.

Education and Encouragement initiatives collaborate with schools and other groups. Online initiatives to promote active transportation are frequently offered including Rethink Your Drive promotion beginning October 2021.

Evaluating the existing system indicates a rise in usage over time. The Master Plan update will include new design guidelines, trends and best practices, including the addition of Equity as the sixth guiding principle. A consultant is working on the update now. Public consultation has been started with various events, there will be further public consultation opportunities as the plan is developed. Ms. Radulescu will return to present the next Master Plan draft to the ECAAC for review and comment once.

The ECAAC suggested implementing rest places and washroom facilities. Ms. Radulescu recommended sending suggestions to either ERCA or the respective municipality. Either group can then apply to the Committee for the feature to be considered and possibly implemented the following year. The ECAAC intends to connect with ERCA regarding their suggestions on a quarterly basis. Each municipality has a representative on the CWATS Committee. Contact information can be found on the CWATS website.

## **6. Communications**

**Moved By** Gord Queen

**Seconded By** Rachel Jewell

That Communication items listed as 6.1 through 6.12 on the agenda for September 16, 2021 be received as information and filed.

**Carried**

## **6.1 Pathway to Potential**

### [Information Sharing Newsletter](#)

A new discount bus pass program is available for recipients of OGSP or OW. There is an application process to determine eligibility available online

September is Suicide Awareness Month, there are free online mental wellness sessions available.

## **6.2 The Buzz**

Disability Without Poverty - [Party platforms and disability](#)

September 20, 2021 is Federal Election Day. This website compiles the parties perspectives on disabilities.

## **6.3 CNIB**

### [Virtual Program Offerings](#)

## **6.4 AbilitiesBuzz**

[Winnebago Opens up #VanLife to Broader Population with the Wheelchair-Ready Roam Class B RV](#)

## **6.5 AODA Alliance Updates**

### [What's New?](#)

Election commitment information and discussion regarding the inaccessibility of mail in ballots

## **6.6 Accessibility Month in British Columbia**

In The News - [Accessibility Month at Small Business BC](#)

Free webinars for more inclusive workplaces.

## **6.7 Global Accessibility News**

August 2021 - [Latest News](#)

Global movement called WeThe15 is a movement to improve the lives of people with disabilities, end discrimination and campaign for inclusivity. Considered to be the largest movement in regards to making things better for people with disabilities.

## **6.8 Abilities Centre**

Living with a disability during COVID - [Take the survey](#)

## **6.9 Canadian Disability Participation Project**

[News and Notices](#)

## **6.10 NewsHook - Changing Attitudes Towards Disability**

[Latest News Stories](#)

## **6.11 Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance (CASDA)**

[CASDA Election Toolkit](#)

CASDA Tool kit is a kit to help those with autism to advocate for action.

## **6.12 Paralympic.ca**

Tokyo 2020 Social Check-In: [Canadian Paralympians Reflect on Tokyo Games](#)

# **7. Unfinished Business**

## **7.1 Social Media Updates**

- ECAAC on [Facebook](#)
- [@EssexCountyAAC](#) on Twitter

The Kingsville Lions Club has provided a donation to construct an accessible playground. The Club's initial commitment was to contribute \$60,000 but offered \$83,000 for a children's park.

Richard Wyma has indicated that the Town of Kingsville will be reviewing their facilities and making plans to upgrade washroom facilities to make more accessible.

WE Check the Trails campaign will be refreshed online.

## **7.2 ECAAC Budget**

Proposal for ERCA Benches along trails

It was decided by the committee that the 2021 ECAAC budget will be used to purchase benches for placement along ERCA trails where issues were identified through WE Check the Trails project. The decision of the Committee was to approve the purchase of two benches initially and a third if budget permits later in the year. Christine suggests ensuring the concrete pad is on grade to ensure they are accessible.

**Moved By** Gord Queen

**Seconded By** Rachel Jewell

That the Committee will dedicate budget funds to the purchase of 2 benches.

**Carried**

### **7.3 WE Check The Trails**

Review of data collected for first 3 months of the project.  
(attached separately)

The Committee reviewed the feedback from the project. Some suggestions to be presented to ERCA included:

- Amend mowing practices to keep grass clippings off the trails. Piled grass impedes access to manual wheelchairs.
- Install a barrier where the trail edge has eroded to reduce the fall risk.
- Addition of accessible parking spaces and garbage cans at trail heads.
- Install garbage cans.
- Increase signage for mile markers and trail head info for visually impaired.
- Review the distance between posts at entrances to ensure they are not too narrow and ensure the grade between gates is fairly even, smooth, and free from weeds or debris.

Other feedback identified that more rest spots are needed. The Committee has agreed to offer their budget funds to purchase benches.

The construction project at Highway 3 at Victoria in Essex was not accessible for a period of time. It appears there is movement being made to do curb cuts. Katherine Hebert will connect with the Ministry of Transportation to confirm.

The Committee deliberated the lack of washrooms facilities. The discussion included remarks regarding the cost of such facilities and the responsibility for maintenance. Members agreed their recommendation would include that if a facility was constructed, that accessible features should be considered.

The Committee agreed to invite Kevin Money from ERCA to a meeting to offer feedback on what of their recommendations can be done.

Christine and Katherine will work with ERCA to determine the location of the two benches to be purchased.

**Moved By** Gord Queen

**Seconded By** Rachel Jewell

That Christine and Katherine represent the Committee when negotiating the location of the benches purchased.

**Carried**

#### **7.4 Joint Meeting of the Windsor-Essex County Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs**

Meeting date to be determined. Call for agenda items.

The Joint Chairs meeting is being planned for early November 2021 and will be hosted by the City of Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee will add the following items to the agenda:

- WE Check the Trails project
- Creating a flag for National Accessibility Week
- Discuss a plan to cost share hiring a speaker for 2022.

#### **8. Reports and Questions**

There were no reports or questions presented at the September 16, 2021 meeting.

#### **9. New Business**

##### **9.1 ECAAC 2022 Platform and Possibilities**

Discussion regarding the ECAAC plan for 2022 and exploration of potential ideas and activities.

The ECAAC agreed to consider inviting a speaker in 2022, continuing on with the WE Check the Trails project, and host a formal ceremony to raise the new accessibility flag at the start of AccessAbility Week.

#### **10. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee is scheduled for October 14, 2021 at 3:00PM

#### **11. Adjournment**

**Moved By** Gord Queen

**Seconded By** Rachel Jewell

That the September 14, 2021 meeting of the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee be adjourned at 4:20 PM.

**Carried**