



July 15, 2022

Warden McNamara and Members of Essex County Council
360 Fairview Ave. W., Suite 314
Essex ON
N8M 1Y6

Dear Warden and Members of County Council,

Re: Purchase of a Commemorative Bench

As you may be aware, there are over eighty kms of Essex Region Conservation Authority Greenway trails and over eight hundred kms within the CWATS network, most of which have limited, if any, rest areas. This issue was identified as part of the [WE Check the Trails \(WECTT\)](#) Phase I campaign.

In 2021 County Council endorsed that the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee purchase two benches to be installed along the ERCA trails. These benches were meant to help mitigate an identified lack of rest areas, and are especially important to people who have issues that prevent them from walking or exerting themselves for long periods of time without a break. These benches were funded through the ECAAC budget. Although many more benches will eventually be needed, the ECAAC is proud of the contribution that they have made to a solution.

In June, the ECAAC launched Phase II of the WECTT campaign, which enhances the trails available for review and feedback, and includes some trails within the County Wide Active Transportation System as well as the ERCA trails. This endeavor has had a positive impact, and has improved the dialogue with all stakeholders with the goal of improving accessibility of our County assets and resources, so that everyone has equal access.

Although the past few years have been a challenge for many reasons, 2022 has seen some reopening and the resuming of a variety of local activities. The ECAAC has been busy as well, working actively to increase accessibility awareness, to break-down barriers and to improve access for all who live, work or visit Essex County. Consistent with that strategy, and considering the impact that the ECAAC has made with the installation of two benches to increase the accessibility of trails during the pandemic, we would like to have one additional bench installed along the trails this year.

519-776-6441
TTY 1-877-624-4832

360 Fairview Ave. W.
Essex, ON N8M 1Y6

countyofessex.ca

The ECAAC has adequate funds available in their 2022 budget to cover the cost of installing an additional bench, but would like to have the support of County Council on this acquisition.

Although we have made great strides over the past decade, and we continue to have support of the County Council with regard to improving accessibility for all, we still have a long way to go before persons with disabilities enjoy equal and unhindered access to all of the programs and resources available to others. This bench will be another stride in the right direction as we continue to make our community more accessible together. We welcome your support in ensuring we continue to remove barriers to accessibility in our communities, and ask for your approval to move ahead with the purchase of a bench.

Sincerely,

Christine Easterbrook
Chair, Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee