

Supporting trails and trail development in our community

With the marked increase in the number of residents using the trails, sidewalks and multi-use pathways in Pelham, the Pelham Active Transportation Committee has focused its discussion on the continuous improvement and expansion of this important infrastructure in our community.

To support this discussion, the PATC used the ATMP (Active Transportation Master Plan), input gathered from residents and research prepared by PATC members.

The PATC considered the following:

- What is the existing infrastructure: sidewalks, trails, multi-use pathways?
- What connections exist within the community? What connections are needed?
- What enhancements are needed: information, routes, signs, cycling routes?
- How can we ensure a variety of trails and multi-use pathways that are safe, with natural environments and some that are fully accessible?

An accurate, up-to-date map of the Town of Pelham's sidewalks, multi-use paths and trails is critical to further discussions, planning, recommendations and decisions. Planned and proposed developments should also be included on this map.

In addition to this request for the preparation of an up-to-date map of this infrastructure, the PATC is also requesting Council's consideration and support for the following:

1. Information for Residents:

Many municipalities share Information about their trails and routes, and they do so in a variety of accessible formats. The PATC is recommending that the Town of Pelham also provide this information to residents and visitors. We recommend the following enhancements of information:

a) Information available to the public should include:

- Online maps of trails, pedestrian, and cycling routes
- Available amenities including public restrooms, water stations, benches, bike repair stations, bike racks
- Descriptions of trails including accessibility, degree of difficulty, availability in winter months
- Designated and described routes within the Town of Pelham, including routes which are scenic, routes which lead to local businesses and farm markets, routes which lead to parks and recreation
- Information about historical features, identification of flora and fauna available online and on signage in key areas

b) Printed maps of the trails, pedestrian and cycling routes

c) Add and update information on well-known and used apps such as AllTrails.

2. Signage on trails

Improved signage on trails and routes throughout Pelham would improve safety for all users. Signage will provide critical location information in the case of an emergency, allowing first responders to quickly find anyone in distress. Signage will inform trail users of safety rules and etiquette. Informational signage can also provide trail users with historical facts or information about local flora and fauna.

3. Connectivity in the Town of Pelham

Sidewalks, trails and multi-use pathways provide users with safe connections to destinations such as schools, parks, recreational areas, the Meridian Community Centre, and the libraries, as well as retail, restaurants and services throughout Pelham. These important linkages can be further expanded and enhanced by ensuring that main trails connect to neighbourhoods, by adding trails and sidewalks in areas or neighbourhoods where they do not currently exist and by identifying areas and neighbourhoods where trails do not connect. Proposed developments should also include provisions for this connectivity.

4. Connecting to other trail networks

There are two significant opportunities to improve the trail network and link Pelham to other municipal and regional networks.

- a) The completion of the Thorold/Fonthill/Welland Spur trail would provide a linkage to the Grater Niagara Circle Route for pedestrians and cyclists alike. All three communities have expressed interest in the completion of this trail. Welland has applied for funding to pave the trail from the paved section in Fonthill to Prince Charles Drive in Welland, linking directly to other well-established trails along the canal.
- b) There may be an opportunity to work collaboratively with the Bruce Trail Club, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and adjacent municipalities to create the Fonthill side trail to the existing Bruce Trail.

The PATC is seeking Council's support for the initiatives described above. This support would include:

1. A 2022 budget allocation for three summer students to undertake the following:
 - Assist with the preparation of the web and print based information for residents (1 student)
 - Assist with the development and delivery of pedestrian and cyclist programming for youth, seniors and others during spring and summer months (1 student)

- Assist with trail maintenance (1 student)

Financial support for student summer employment is normally available from both the provincial and federal governments.

2. Investigation of opportunities for partnerships, financial support and grants to:
 - Complete the Thorold/Fonthill/Welland trail network
 - Complete the Fonthill Side Trail connection to the Bruce Trail
3. Installation of signage on trails and routes using the Rural Economic Development grant recently awarded to the Town of Pelham.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Pelham Active Transportation Committee

Bea Clark, Chair
Brian Baty, Vice-chair
Rhys Evans
Bob Fish
Lisa Gallant, Recorder
Dave Nicholson
Barbara Rybiak

Councilor John Wink, Town of Pelham
Regional Councilor, Diana Huson

cc. Jason Marr, Director, Public Works and
Tolga Aydin, Engineering Technologist, Public Works

June 21, 2021