



Subject: Referral: Friendship Trail Standard Crossing & Signage

To: Council

From: Public Works Department

Report Number: 2022-49

Meeting Date: March 22, 2022

Recommendation:

That Public Works Department Report 2022-49 be received,

That Council approve the crossing standard as shown in Exhibit-A, in Appendix A to Public Works Department Report 2022-49; and

That Council approve the installation of 14 sign boards and 11 wayfinding markers for the Friendship Trail crossings as shown in Exhibit-B, in Appendix B to Public Works Department Report 2022-49.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide supplementary information to Council Report 2022-16, presented on January 25, 2022. The overall purpose is to improve safety at the Friendship Trail Crossings and improve signage, and wayfinding.

Background:

On January 25, 2022, a report to Council to improve the Friendship Trail Standard Crossing and Signage was presented. During the meeting, Council considered the removal of wigwags, referred to as P-gates in the Ontario Traffic Manual.

The common denominating objective of Council is to keep pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists safe at the trail and road intersections. To meet this objective, it takes joint responsibility:

- For trail users to “Stop-Look-Listen” prior to crossing,
- Vehicular drivers having a clear sightline at the prescribed stopping site distance,
- City to provide proper signage for both trail users and drivers on the road.

While staff considered increasing the design spacing of the opposite side of the wigwags (P-gate), Council was supportive of the removal of these devices, aligning with the recommendations outlined in the Ontario Traffic Manual. However, bollards will remain a feature at the trail entrance to discourage vehicular passage.

The spacing on both sides of the bollard will be maintained at the minimum width of 1.80 meters to allow access for users of adapted cycles (e.g., handcycles, tricycles, etc.) and other similar uses. See Figure 1: Trail Entrance Spacing.



Figure 1: Trail Entrance Spacing

Council acknowledged that there are limited options to deter or discourage entry of motorized vehicles including snowmobiles, ATVs, golf carts or other forms of motorized vehicles using the trail. While illegal entry may be an enforcement issue, the proposed signage will place emphasis on “Non-Motorized Users Only” as Regional Police will not have the resources to respond to such infractions.

Council expressed approval for the consolidation of signage at each of the road crossings. This will include QR codes to extend other information about the trail and places to visit within the City of Port Colborne.

In summary, staff outlined in this report additional supporting guideline and best practice for the renewed consolidated signage and the design details for the striped painted crossing and pedestrian stop bar.

Discussion:

Removal of Wigwags

The wigwags, also known as P-gates, are currently found at three locations along the rural Friendship Trail. At the January 25th, 2022 Council meeting, Councillors shared their concerns regarding the wigwags.

The existing barriers have several elements presenting significant risks to users of the trail. These risks include clipping handlebars and difficulty for users of longer dimension bicycles including adapted cycles, tandem bicycles, and bicycles with trailers. Staff feel this situation could discourage some user groups from enjoying the trail.

Based on this discussion, Option 1 – Bollard without wigwag gates, as outlined in Report 2022-16 is recommended by staff.

The existing wigwag (P-gate) at Fares Street and Fraser Street, intersects the railway. The Transportation Association of Canada shares a design approach for a Bicycle Lane Jug Handle at Skewed Railway Crossing with Unrestricted Right-of-Way and no Gate. See Figure 2: Unrestricted Right-of-Way and no Gate. Thus, staff's recommendation is to adopt the design as outlined for this crossing.



Figure 2: Unrestricted Right-of-Way and no Gate

Stopping Sight Distance

An intersection is a point where different modes of transportation and associated facilities cross paths. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation Bikeways Design Manual suggests increasing visibility between cyclists, motorists, and other roadway users as a means of reducing collisions.

Cyclists and road users need to have clear sight lines to one another on the approach and through the intersection to provide sufficient time to identify a potential conflict and react if necessary. Report 2022-16 addressed the required minimum sight distance, derived from the Transportation Association of Canada guideline, Table 5.6.1 Minimum Sight Distance for Multi-Use Path Crossing. This guideline recommends a minimum distance of 150 metres.

Motorized Vehicle Access and AODA Compliance

The area on either side of the existing trail entrance may provide spacing for motorized vehicles to bypass the bollard, thus accessing the Friendship Trail. The proposed consolidated signage will indicate “No motorized vehicles” at all crossing entrances, however Council directed Staff to further review trail access.

Each trail access point is unique in topography and thus provides a challenge to offer an all-encompassing standard design. According to the Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18, where there are two openings for two-way facilities, each opening should be a minimum of 1.8 metres to allow access for people using adapted cycles.

To reduce trail access of motorized vehicles, City Road and Parks Operations will review each trail entrance and install natural barriers for any space larger than 1.8 metres. The natural features will include boulders, shrubs, planters and signage on both the left and right side of the trail. These features would only be placed in locations where sightlines are not obstructed 15 meters from the road crossings.

The features selected for each trail location to reduce trail access will depend on site specifics and consider the topography of the site. Each crossing differs in respect to

natural drainage features, grade, slope, etc., but the proposed standard will consider using a combination of the natural barrier features.

According to the Ontario Traffic Manual - Book 18, rocks, curb stops, concrete blocks or chains are not recommended as access restrictions. The features within or immediately adjacent to a cycling facility pose a hazard, particularly for people who are vision impaired. The hazard created by the physical measures should be weighed against the hazard of unauthorized motor vehicle access.

As identified during the Council meeting, these features may not ultimately deter motorized vehicles from gaining access to the Friendship Trail. The risks of attempting to narrow the trail access points may cause motorized vehicle users to find a suitable alternative around and may pose more of a safety issue.

Signage

Staff's recommendation was to install signage at the road and trail intersections. The signage component is being led by the Communications Department with support from Engineering and Parks.

Structure and Content

- Sign size: 74" H x 30" W (same as previous sign).
- Arch design: keeping the original arch design, similar to current trail signs across the City.
- Material: Aluminum composite. This has been used for recent signs produced and is guaranteed to last for life.
- Road/location identification for emergency response.
- Map: staff are currently reviewing the maps on signs to ensure accuracy, landmark identification, etc. Once staff have completed a review, Staff will be engaging with active trail users/committees for their feedback.
- Directional markers to other landmarks.
- Etiquette/Do's and Don't of the trail system.
- Partner logos/information including Trails Canada Trail, Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, Greater Niagara Circle Route, and information about the monarch butterfly/pollinators.

QR Codes

- This section of the sign will be used as a decal and not permanently imprinted on sign in case the QR code needs to be changed or technology changes and a way of accessing websites is created.
- QR codes are a great way to direct trail users to updated, accurate information on the designated Friendship Trail website.
- Staff have access to creating unique QR codes that also allow us to track usage/scans of the QR codes.

- Signage throughout the City of Port Colborne is not bilingual; however, in designing the new website staff incorporated a translate feature, which allows visitors to translate website information in any language once the user scans the QR code.

Location and Quantity of Signs

The proposed consolidated sign locations in Report 2022-16 are based on staff's review of the locations and focused on paved crossings that did not have existing trail signage for users upon entering the trail from the road right-of-way. Since Report 2022-16, staff have added two more locations: Snider Road and Welland Street.

The following fourteen (14) locations have been selected for the Friendship Trail signage:

- 1) Holloway Bay Road
- 2) Pleasant Beach Road
- 3) Sherkston Road
- 4) Empire Road
- 5) Michael Road
- 6) Wyldewood Road
- 7) Silver Bay Road
- 8) Cedar Bay Road
- 9) Pinecrest Road
- 10) Weaver Road
- 11) Lorraine Road
- 12) Snider Road
- 13) Elizabeth Street
- 14) Welland Street

Along the trail, some of the distances between these locations are over 800 metres. Staff are also exploring the addition of eleven wayfinding signs at the half-way point between the arch signs to allow trail users to determine the two streets they are between for emergency purposes.

These wayfinding signs will be designed similarly to wayfinding signs that will be installed across the city. Staff are currently working with Symetric Productions Inc., the same design company that created the City's new branding, to evaluate and re-design signage for the city, which includes all trails, parks, and facilities. Many of the elements addressed in this report with respect to the Friendship Trail will be incorporated into all other trail signs across the City to ensure consistent branding and ease of use by trail users.

Exhibit B displays the proposed locations for the sign boards and wayfinding markers.

Questions from Council

- 1) What is the total number of accidents on the whole circle route, for cyclists and cars?

The Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) noted no accidents at the intersections of the Friendship trail in Port Colborne. Other sections including Fort Erie and Wainfleet also had no accidents reported.

- 2) What is the penalty for a motorized vehicle caught trespassing on the trail? (Such as an ATV, golf cart, etc.)

The City's By-law does not handle moving violations, that is the responsibility of the NRPS. The trespassing violation can be handled by NRPS or By-law.

The City's By-law Division has limited authority to obtain drivers licenses and personal information to write a ticket. The penalty under Schedule 85, Trespass to Property Act, Part 1 under Parks - \$150 +VST (Victim Surcharge Tax) – Drive motorized recreational vehicle without authorization

Trespass to Property Act – see fines listed below

| Schedule 85 | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------|----------|
| <i>Trespass to Property Act</i> | | | |
| Item | Offence | Section | Set Fine |
| 1. | Enter premises when entry prohibited | 2(1)(a)(i) | \$50.00 |
| 2. | Engage in prohibited activity on premises | 2(1)(a)(ii) | \$50.00 |
| 3. | Fail to leave premises when directed | 2(1)(b) | \$50.00 |

- 3) Are the stop signs on the trail legal? Are people obligated to stop?

The Highway Traffic Act of Ontario (1990) defines a bicycle (including electric assisted E-bikes) as a vehicle. As such, cyclists are required to comply with all rules and regulations that apply to the operator of a vehicle.

- 4) Are electric/motorized wheelchairs allowed on the trail?

Assistive devices such as electric wheelchairs are an exception to the rule governing motorized vehicles on the trail. These devices are allowed, and should be allowed, on public trails for those individuals who require them.

Internal Consultations:

- Niagara Regional Police Service

- AODA Committee
 - Transportation Advisory Committee
 - Operations Dept.
 - Communication Dept.
 - Fire Department
 - By-law Division
-

Financial Implications:

This project has \$97,672.45 available through previously approved projects 21C-PW-B04 and 22C-PW-B36.

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust has offered a grant in the amount of \$5,000 to be used to offset the cost of updating the artwork increasing the total available budget to \$102,672.45.

Public Engagement:

Friendship Trail Standard Crossing Report 2022-16 received delegations from 2 local citizens. The delegation comments were shared with the Active Transportation Advisory Committee for discussion. The delegate commented on the consistency of signage which staff had taken into consideration with the recommendation of this report.

The Active Transportation Advisory Committee is supportive of the current recommendation, including the removal of the wigwags and improvements to signage and safety of the trail. Staff will continue to update and include the Active Transportation Advisory Committee for comments on this project.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following strategic community pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- City-Wide Investment in Infrastructure and Recreational/Cultural Spaces
-

Conclusion:

Council approval would enhance and improve the user experience for all Port Colborne residents and visitors accessing the Friendship trail.

If approved and implemented, the crossing standards would enhance the existing safety requirements, wayfinding, and improved esthetics on the Friendship Trail crossings.

Appendices: (If none delete section)

- a. Exhibit A – Proposed Configuration for Standard Trail Crossing
- b. Exhibit B – Proposed Sign Boards (14) & Wayfinding Marker (11) Locations

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza Durant,
Civil Technologist
905-835-2900 Ext. 215
Eliza.Durant@portcolborne.ca

Michelle Idzenga,
Corporate Communications Officer
905-835-2900 Ext. 307
Michelle.idzenga@portcolborne.ca

Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.