

HALIFAX

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Item No. 11.1.5
Halifax Regional Council
August 18, 2020

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 26, 2020

SUBJECT: Trail Etiquette Signage

ORIGIN

On May 21, 2019 the following motion of Halifax Regional Council:

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee;
THAT Halifax Regional Council request a staff report on creating Trail Etiquette signage for installation at HRM owned/maintained trails, public walkways and paths. The report is to include samples of signage content and format.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter

61 (3) The property vested in the Municipality, absolutely or in trust, is under the exclusive management and control of the Council, unless an Act of the Legislature provides otherwise.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter

79 (1) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for playgrounds, trails, trails developed, operated or maintain pursuant to an agreement made under clause 73(c), bicycle paths, pools, ice arenas, and other recreational facilities.

By-Law p-600 Respecting Municipal Parks

12. (1) The Director may cause to be erected a sign or other devise specifying an area in a park where specific activities are permitted, prohibited or restricted.

(2) Every person in a park shall observe and obey every prohibition and restriction stipulated by a sign or other devise erected under the above-noted section.

(3) the Director may cause to be erected any sign deemed appropriate in any park or on any trail including, but not excluding, interpretive, special event, and commemorative signage.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council endorse the trail etiquette signage process as indicated in this report.

BACKGROUND

The HRM trail system is used by a wide variety of users such as hikers, runners, mountain bikers, cyclists, pedestrians, and dog walkers. They are affordable, accessible and provide unscheduled active opportunities that are and will continue to be popular. In the spring of 2018, Parks received requests for trail etiquette signs in and around the Dartmouth Common. The signs were requested to inform users of the possibility of encounters with various types of users, identify who has the right of way, who yields to who and how, create awareness of appropriate behavior, and therefore reduce the likelihood of potential conflicts.

A sign was created with input from HRM Corporate Communications and was approved by the Director of Parks and Recreation (Attachment A). The signs are slightly larger than a standard street sign at 62cm x 92cm and can be easily viewed by walkers and cyclists alike. The feedback has been positive and appreciative. The signs are considered successful, in part, due to the decrease in the number of trail related complaints since the signs were installed.

DISCUSSION

There are various types of trail assets throughout HRM, differing in size, construction materials and purpose. They include multi-use pathways, trails, pathways, and walkways which all together equate to approximately 427km.

Basic descriptions of each type of trail asset are:

- **Multi-use/ Active Transportation Pathways**

Typically described as active transportation trails, they can extend for long distances connecting rural communities and other destinations by way of existing corridors such as abandoned railroads or utility lines and are often referred to as greenways.

These may also extend shorter distances when located within the Regional Centre where development is denser. There are numerous multi-use pathways throughout HRM and many provide off-street connections to parks, recreation features, tourist destinations and various business. They tend to be of hard surface up to 4 meters wide and a higher volume of users can be expected. They are often referred to as Urban Multi-use Pathways and Greenways.

- **Trail**

These may also be referred to as recreational trails or loop trails. This asset class is usually found within parks or may also connect to active transportation trails. These are mostly at grade trails which may be up to 3 meters wide and hard surface, but some soft surface examples do exist.

- **Pathway**

These are generally less formal asset types and are mostly soft or natural surface and are considered more utilitarian in nature. These are generally located within parks and will typically be found meandering from park asset to park asset.

- **Walkway**

Walkways are more formal than pathways and may connect street to street within neighbourhoods and/or street to park or school. These are mostly constructed of hard surface and are typically 1.8 meters wide.

Although there are various types of this particular asset, for the remainder of the report they will be referenced as trails.

Signage

Trail Etiquette signs have been erected at various locations encompassing both Parks and Active Transportation (AT) multi-use pathways such as the Shubenacadie Canal Greenway and Park (Attachment B). In addition to trail etiquette signs, shared pathway signs have also been erected at various locations. These signs have been installed over several years and can be found at Bissett Greenway, Porters Lake Connector, Sackville Greenway, and Portland Lakes Greenway.

Since the new trail etiquette signs have been installed at the Dartmouth Common and Shubenacadie Canal Greenway, the number of complaints related to dogs, walkers, runners, and bicycles, have shown a decrease in 2019 (11) over the previous year (26) with zero (0) complaints in 2020 to date. While the overall total number of complaints is relatively low, the timing of the trail etiquette signs seems to have a direct correlation to the decrease in user driven complaints.

The approach taken thus far has been to recognize the importance of trail sign installation and to not overwhelm the trail in complexity or number of signs. Too many signs can deter from the trail experience and compete for the attention of the user. Therefore, a balance must exist between providing adequate signage for message delivery while avoiding sign pollution.

Trail Etiquette

As Per Attachments A and B, Trail Etiquette signs share the same font and similar branding aesthetics as the Park Identification (Park ID) signs (Attachment D).

Trail Etiquette signs will include the following information:

- Name of the trail/pathway/walkway
- Keep to the Right of the pathway except to pass
- Cyclists yield to pedestrians
- Travel at safe speed
- Use bike bell before passing
- Call 911 for emergencies
- Call 311 for maintenance or to report matters
- Visit halifax.ca for information on Parks and Active Transportation

Various icons can be added to the bottom portion of the sign, similar to the Park ID signs, such as no smoking and no littering as well as specific information relative to the individual trail itself.

Shared Pathway Signs

The Shared Pathway signs are a regular street right of way (ROW) standard sign size of 30cm x 45cm. These signs are mostly used on AT Multi-Use Pathways (Attachment C). The Shared Pathway signs are posted in separate locations from the Trail Etiquette signs, especially on longer routes that have many entrances and exit points as friendly reminders of shared use practices.

Continued Implementation Approach

Multi-use Pathways, trails, walkways and pathways will continue to be inspected for signage requirements consistent with the ongoing Parks Signage Renewal Program which currently updates signs to consistent formatting and and relevant messaging. Locations will continue to be monitored and assessed to determine if trail etiquette and shared usage signs should be added. Monitoring of 311 requests and concerns for appropriate signage will also continue to be considered when updating existing and installing new signage.

Capital Construction

All new construction on HRM owned and maintained trails also now includes Trail Etiquette signage as part of the construction project, similar to the Park ID sign process. This will include construction of any new Multi-Use AT Pathways, trails created through Area Rate funded capital projects, as well as the new

Recreational Trails program which provides funding for trails constructed by community groups.

New Signage

As a result of Park staff inspections and recommendations, 311 concerns and suggestions and capital construction projects, trail etiquette signage will be installed at a number of trails in the coming months.

Existing Trails:

- Bissett Greenway
- Sackville Greenway
- Chain of Lakes Greenway
- Portland Lakes Greenway
- Forest Hills Parkway
- DeWolf Park Waterfront Greenway

New Construction:

- Penhorn AT Connector (new construction)
- McIntosh Run AT Greenway Trail head (recreation trails)
- Halifax Mainland Common trail upgrades and connectors (recreation trails)
- First Lake Trail Extension (recreation trails)
- Lakeshore Drive Park (area rate project)

As noted, staff will continue to assess locations and add new signage as required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for parks signage is included in the Parks & Recreation Operating Budget. There are sufficient funds in the Parks operating budget as part of the Park Signage Renewal Program to continue with the placement of Trail Etiquette signs.

RISK CONSIDERATION

The risks associated with the recommendation in this report are minimal. The risk is considered rate Low. To determine this, consideration was given to operational, financial and legal risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community groups who are stewarding recreational trails in HRM have been engaged to provide feedback on various issues related to operations, including the etiquette signs. Feedback obtained through 311 concerns and requests have also been taken into consideration.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could choose to not endorse the trail etiquette signage approach as indicated in this report or direct changes to it.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Dartmouth Common Greenway Corridor Sign

Attachment B: Shubenacadie Canal Greenway Sign

Attachment C: Shared Pathway Sign

Attachment D: Park Identification Sign

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Ray Walsh, Manager, Parks, Parks and Recreation 902.490.6591

Dartmouth Common Greenway Corridor

Please share this multi-use pathway



Keep right except to pass



Cyclists must yield to pedestrians



Travel at safe speed



Use bike bell before passing

Call 911 for emergency only

Call 311 for maintenance or to report matters

Visit halifax.ca for info on parks and active transportation

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Shubenacadie Canal Greenway

Please share this multi-use pathway



Keep right except to pass



Cyclists must yield to pedestrians



Travel at a safe speed (20km/hr)



Use bike bell before passing



Keep pets on a short leash

Call 911 for emergency only

Call 311 for maintenance or to report matters

Visit halifax.ca for information on active transportation

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Astral Drive Neighbourhood Park

627 Astral Drive
Cole Harbour

TO ALL USERS OF THIS PARK:

Park hours of operation 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Dogs must be on leash

In an emergency call 911 – For scheduling and maintenance call 311

Visit halifax.ca for further information on parks

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