

Chair and Members
Community and Protective Services Committee
City of London

Re: Item #14, Agenda of October 20, 2015

RECOMMENDATION

A. The construction of this trail be delayed until the CN crossing is finalized as it may not be needed once the crossing is constructed.

B. If recommendation A is not accepted:

i. Closing the existing trails through the NR MZ areas with wood barricades and strategic plantings of Prickly-ash be done concurrent with the creation of the trail be included in the Committee's recommendation to Council.

ii. The Committee's recommendation to Council note that the decision is notwithstanding the Trail Standards as it does not permit bicycle use in Natural Area 1 zones.

BACKGROUND

I participated in the TAG site visit. We were asked for our consensus at the site visit. (In hindsight, it would have been more appropriate for members to be given some time to reflect before being asked to make a decision). I did not block the consensus as it is hoped that this new trail will reduce or eliminate the uncontrolled trails that have developed across the nesting habitat of Species at Risk (The Nature Reserve Zone). However, this would require additional budget for greater monitoring than can be provided by the 4 members of the UTRCA ESA Team that the City pays for. Frankly, 4 people cannot adequately monitor 8 city-managed ESAs.

TAG also agreed that closing the existing trails through the NR MZ areas with wood barricades and strategic plantings of Prickly-ash, is best for the protection of the significant habitat. However, this is **not** included in the staff recommendation. The concern is if you do not include this in the recommendation that you pass, it will not be done concurrently. I ask you to specify in your recommendation that the work be done concurrently.

During the site visit questions were asked about the CN crossing the City is working on with CN. We were told that it was not under discussion at the site visit. This seems odd as the crossing of the CN tracks will require creating a trail on the east side of the tracks where the environmental sensitivities are somewhat less and the locations are limited due to the topography. So why is a trail on west side also needed?

I also share David Wake's (Nature London's other TAG representative who was unable to attend the site visit) concerns in his communication to you about the Trail Standards. We provided input to staff and the consultant's work on this document. It is not being followed in this case. This highlights why the review that Council, at its last meeting, directed staff to complete by Q2 2016 is so important, and why the recommendation should be a notwithstanding one to avoid setting a precedent.

In your report on page 1 in the context section, there is a partial quote from from p. 31 of the Trail Standards. The complete paragraph is:

Level 3 pathways are not part of a trail system within an ESA. In exceptional circumstances, Level 3 pathways may be constructed **to provide access to a viewing platform or a cultural heritage feature**, or to maintain an existing connection among neighbourhoods where a safe alternative route outside of the ESA is not available. **In such cases, it must be demonstrated that the pathway will not result in negative impact to the ecological features and functions of the ESA.**

As you will note, however, the trail to be constructed fits more closely with a Level 2 trail as agreed to by consensus at the TAG visit (p. 31 of the Trail Standards):

Level 2 trails are hiking trails improved with surface hardening, where the travelled portion of the trail falls within a variable standard of 0.5 – 2.0 m width.

Pedestrian Trail means that part of a publicly owned ESA that has been marked, posted or blazed for the same purpose as hiking trails, but has an “improved” surface to provide access for people with disabilities, baby strollers, and young children on bicycles accompanied by parents on foot. (adapted from Parks and Recreation Area By-Law PR-2).

However, bikes are not a permitted use in the Natural Area 1 zone. To assist you with your decision, I have attached page 36 from the Trail Standards which is TABLE 3: Summary of Management Zones, Overlays and Trail Hierarchy for Environmentally Significant Areas.

Sincerely,

Sandy Levin, chair EEPAC, TAG member

MANAGEMENT ZONE	TRAIL TYPE	USERS	TRAIL WIDTH	TRAIL SURFACE	TRAIL STRUCTURE*
Nature Reserve Zone					No Access, No Trail, No structures unless Special Feature Overlay applies. A span bridge may cross a Nature Reserve Zone with demonstration of no impact For Special Feature Overlay areas, a viewing platform or lookout may be installed at the edge In absence of trail, users are allowed entry through scientific research permit; access via an approved route
Natural Area Zone 1	Level 1 – Hiking	Pedestrians	0.5 – 1.5 m	Natural earth surface Wood chips Boardwalk Corduroy logs Stepping stones	Boardwalk Viewing platform Bridge Control structures Stairways (wood, or stone) Directional signs Interpretive signs Warning signs
Natural Area Zone 2	Level 1 – Hiking Level 2 – Pedestrian	Pedestrians, Pedestrians, stroller, children on bicycles accompanied by pedestrian adults, wheelchair, dogs on leash	0.5 – 1.5 m 1.0 – 2.0 m	Natural earth surface Wood chips Boardwalk Corduroy logs Stepping stones Asphalt or other suitable non-erodible material for Level 2 only	Boardwalk Viewing platform Bridge Control structures Stairways (wood, or stone) Directional signs Interpretive signs Warning signs
Cultural Heritage Zone	Level 1 - Hiking Level 2 - Pedestrian Level 3 – Pathway	Pedestrians Pedestrians, stroller, children on bicycles accompanied by pedestrian adults, wheelchair, dogs on leash All of the above plus bicycles	0.5 – 1.5 m 1.0 – 2.0m 3.0 m	Natural earth surface Wood chips Boardwalk Corduroy logs Stepping stones Asphalt or other suitable non-erodible material for Level 2 and 3 only	Depends on type of feature and relationship to adjacent or underlying zones
Access Zone	Level 1 - Hiking, Level 2 - Pedestrian Level 3 – Pathway	Same as Cultural Heritage Zone	0.5 – 1.5 m 1.0 – 2.0 m 3.0 m	Natural earth surface Wood chips Boardwalk Plus hardened surface (e.g. asphalt or granular) to prevent erosion	Bike rack Parking –car Kiosk Control structures Viewing Platform Interpretive signs
OVERLAYS					
Special Feature					Generally trails should be consistent with the underlying Management Zone Structures such as boardwalks or viewing platforms are permitted as required to protect natural features
Restoration					Consistent with the underlying Management Zone
Utility					Consistent with underlying and/or adjacent Management Zones