



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To:** **Members of the General Committee**

**From:** **Cynthia Fletcher,  
Commissioner of Infrastructure and Planning Services**

**Meeting Date:** **October 15, 2019**

**Subject:** **Report IPSTR19-018B  
Access to Parks Canada's Thompson Bay Dam via Waverley  
Heights Park**

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## **Purpose**

A report to follow-up on Report IPSTR19-018 and to recommend allowing Parks Canada to construct an access trail to Thompsons Bay Dam via Waverley Heights Park.

## **Recommendations**

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report IPSTR19-018B dated October 15, 2019, of the Commissioner, Infrastructure and Planning Services as follows:

- a) That Parks Canada be authorized to construct a maintenance access trail through Waverley Heights Park as described in this report.
- b) That the Commissioner of Infrastructure and Planning Services be authorized to sign an agreement with Parks Canada, in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor, for the execution of this project and to permit Parks Canada to use the access trail for maintenance purposes.

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

The cost of construction of the maintenance access trail will be covered by Parks Canada, at no capital cost to the City. This project will result in a slight increase in the

length of multi-use trails to be maintained by the City. No winter maintenance of the trail connection will be required, as the Canal Trail is not maintained by Parks Canada during the winter months.

## **Background**

Report IPSTR19-018, attached as Appendix A, was originally considered at the General Committee meeting of September 3, 2019.

As described in the previous report, Parks Canada has indicated that it requires an improved access to the Thompsons Bay Dam and has asked permission to construct a 3.0 m wide multi-use trail through a portion of Waverly Heights Park to serve as maintenance access to the dam and permanent connection to the new canal trail system.

Council in considering Report IPSTR19-018 passed the following motion:

“That the matter be deferred to enable staff to obtain additional information on the access trail.”

Since that time, staff have met with Parks Canada staff and one of the Ward Councillors on site to discuss the proposal and to answer any questions related to the need for and potential use of the proposed access trail. The proposed trail location will also serve the City's need for an accessible route for residents to access park amenities and to connect to the new canal trail system.

### **Need for Access and Frequency of Use**

Parks Canada has used Waverley Heights Park to access the old Thomson Bay Dam site for several years. During the site visit, staff examined the existing walkway that is north of the park and confirmed that it is not a satisfactory route for maintenance vehicles to use due to its location at the base of the dam (where flooding could be occurring) and the steep incline and curve required to get up to the top of the earthen dam, as shown in Figure 1 (Appendix A). Maintenance vehicles used to add or remove logs cannot negotiate the steep grade to access the top of the dam and canal, particularly during the winter or early spring, which is when Parks Canada staff typically have to gain access to remove or add logs to the dam to control water levels in the bay. The best location for access to the dam is from the top.

In the past, when Parks Canada has required access with larger vehicles, they have driven through Waverly Park, often resulting in damage to the grass in the park. Areas of the park are unusable while Parks Canada undertakes the repairs.

Parks Canada does not want to continue this practice and is willing to pay for the construction of an access trail to avoid damaging the park in the future.

**Figure 1 – Existing Walkway Access to Thomson Bay Dam Site**

With the modernization of the dam structure, access through the park with larger vehicles is only anticipated once every two to three years to move logs in the dam.

Parks Canada anticipates the need for a smaller half-ton truck with a trailer to use the access trail once or twice per year to transport the equipment used for cutting vegetation on the earthen dam. The size is similar to the City's Public Works vehicles and equipment used to maintain parks.

### **Size of Access Trail**

During the construction of the dam, Parks Canada installed an access road to allow for heavy construction equipment to reach the dam site. The access road was approximately 5-6 m wide.

The proposed permanent access trail would be built to a width of 3.0 m, similar to the current standard width that the City uses for trails and paths within other parks. This would give a solid surface to allow for a maintenance truck to occasionally use the path to access the dam and canal trail without damaging the grass and creating ruts in the open play areas of the park.

Parks Canada is proposing to build this trail access at their expense using material salvaged from the construction access road. They have also agreed to place a limestone surface treatment on the trail to provide a smooth surfaced trail, that meets current accessibility standards, for residents and trail users of all abilities to access the park play areas and the new canal trail.

### **Location of Access Trail**

During the public consultation for this trail access proposal, there were several different preferences and concerns expressed about the location of any future access trail, but there was no clear consensus on a preferred location from the neighbourhood.

During the recent onsite review, locations on either side of the park were reviewed. One side is in very close proximity to a residence. The other side has a significant grade change, which would make construction of the trail and subsequent use very difficult.

### **Accessibility**

The proposed location would satisfy the AODA requirements for an accessible route to park amenities and to connect to the new canal trail system. The City's Accessibility Plan requires all new park projects with play areas provide accessible walkways to connect the play areas plus other park amenities such as garbage / recycling bins, benches, and sidewalks. If the play areas in Waverly Heights Park were being constructed today, the City would build a similar trail / walking path in a centralized location to connect the sidewalk, basketball court and playground areas to ensure these play spaces are accessible for all residents. Numerous parks across the City have already been updated to provide accessible paths through them; including Rogers Cove, Rotary Park, Nicholls Oval, Barnardo Park, and Kiwanis Park.

Eventually the City would need to construct an accessible trail in Waverly Park to meet AODA requirements. The City has the opportunity to add this accessible trail at no capital cost.

Given the lack of neighbourhood consensus on a preferred location for the trail, and the accessibility considerations Parks Canada and City staff recommend that the new trail access be installed in the location as recommended in the original staff Report IPSTR19-018, dated September 3, 2019, and as outlined on Figure 1, attached as Appendix A.

### **Access to a Broader Trail Network**

During the site meeting, Parks Canada provided a tour of the new trail constructed along the canal south of the Peterborough Golf & Country Club. Parks Canada staff indicated that the total value of the capital work they are undertaking to protect the City from flooding is estimated at \$100,000,000 including; a new guard gate just north of Nassau Mills Road, replacing the Thompsons Bay Dam, rehabilitating the earthen dams all along the canal, replacing Lock 19, and replacing the Parkhill Road bridge across the canal.

In time, these new trails created along the rehabilitated earthen dams of the canal will connect to existing City trails and neighbourhoods to provide access for residents and tourists alike. The ultimate vision: to create a continuous new trail from Lock 19 to Trent University, is an exciting and bold initiative that will significantly enhance the local trail network for all residents to use and enjoy and is consistent with the City's Ultimate Cycling Network identified in the 2012 Comprehensive Transportation Plan. To ensure that this investment in infrastructure can be well maintained, the access trail is important.

## Summary

The maintenance access trail that Parks Canada has requested to construct through Waverley Heights Park will increase accessibility to the facilities in the park at no capital cost to the City. A stable and reliable trail is important to facilitate access to the new Thomson Bay Dam and canal trail and avoid seasonal damage to the grass within Waverly Park. The \$100,000,000 investment in capital works that Parks Canada has made over the last four years will protect the City from flooding and provides a significant enhancement to the trail network in the City.

Submitted by,

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Commissioner of Infrastructure and Planning Services

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**Attachments:**

Appendix A – Figure 1

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