

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Quidi Vidi Loop Multi Use Pilot
Date Prepared: May 11, 2016
Report To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of Council
Councillor and Role: Councillor Dave Lane, Task Force Representative
Ward: 1 & 2

Decision/Direction Required:

To determine if the loop trail around Quidi Vidi Lake will be designated as a multi-use trail for the 2016 season as a pilot project.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The Bike St. John's Task Force has identified the importance of off-road multi-use trails as part of the cycling network in the City. Currently, the city has three main multi-use trails. These are:

- The T'Railway
- Virginia River Trail from Torbay Road at Penny Crescent to Windsor Lake
- The shared path from Captain Whelan along Columbus Drive and Prince Philip Drive

The possibility of converting existing trails from walking only trails to multi-use trails has been raised. This strategy would leverage the existing trail network in the City for great use by residents and visitors without the expense of new trail construction.

This conversion of trails and pathways from single use (walking only) to multi-use (walking and cycling) must be explored carefully to ensure that safety, comfort, convenience, and accessibility for all users is respected.

The loop trail that circumnavigates Quidi Vidi Lake has been identified as an ideal test case for conversion from a walking only environment to a multi-use environment. This is proposed to occur as a pilot project over the 2016 season.

The use of the Quidi Vidi loop trail as a pilot project for multi-use trail conversion has several benefits. These benefits include:

- The trail is popular enough to test the interaction between different types of users.
- Most of the trail is wide enough with good lines of sight to accommodate mixed use with no physical modifications to the trail.
- The trail is flat and allows us to test the interaction between users without the difficulties of challenging terrain.

There are however a few challenges that need to be considered with this pilot project:

- The long boardwalk sections near the Quidi Vidi Village end of the lake. These boardwalks often do not have a railing on both sides. Others do not have a railing that is high enough to provide protection to cyclists while riding. It is common for trails around

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St. John's to have conditions similar to this. For example, several areas of the T'Railway have no protection from running off the trail down hazardous banks.

It is proposed that these hazards will not be addressed during the pilot period. This assumes that users will be able to manage their own risks in this context. If the pilot reveals an issue with this assumption then action will be taken in response.

- There are three very narrow sections on the loop trail. These are noted by (1) on the attached *Quidi Vidi Lake Reference Map*. Each of these sections is relatively short but so narrow that a person cycling would not be able to safely pass a person on foot while riding.

At these locations a warning sign is proposed that highlights the hazard and advises cyclist to slow down, yield and/or dismount for pedestrians as necessary. This sign concept is shown in the attached set of *Proposed Trail Signs*.

- The trail does not currently have an off road segment to pass the Boathouse area. To ensure that new users that may be cycling on the trail are aware of this issue a new sign is proposed to direct trail users onto Clancey Drive behind the boathouse. This sign concept is shown in the attached set of *Proposed Trail Signs*. The approximate location for these signs is noted by (3) and (4) on the attached *Quidi Vidi Lake Reference Map*.

Some administrative issues also need to be considered as part of the proposed pilot project:

- The current rules for the Quidi Vidi Lake Trail prohibit bicycle use on the trails. There are several signs of various types currently posted to this effect. These signs would need to be removed to proceed with the pilot.

It is proposed that these would be replaced with permissive signs such as the sample shown in the attached set of *Proposed Trail Signs*. The approximate location for these signs is noted by (2) on the attached *Quidi Vidi Lake Reference Map*.

If the pilot project is successful these signs would remain on a permanent basis.

- In order to properly evaluate the performance of this pilot project the City will need to collect information on how users are reacting to the change in use. A survey is proposed for August where users on the trail will be asked to answer a few short questions about their experience with the trail as a multi-use trail.

In addition, any comments received through 3-1-1, social media, council or other means will be included in the evaluation. This evaluation will form part of a briefing note to council in late 2016 to report on the pilot project and determine a long term approach to multi-use trail conversions.

- The current St. John's Parks By-law prohibits cyclists from using the Grand Concourse Trail network. This by-law needs to be updated to reflect existing issues but would also need changes to reflect any conversion of existing walking trails to multi-use trails.

The proposed pilot project allows the City to test a range of conditions and rules that may be appropriate to apply in an update to the by-law. Possible draft amendments are included with the attached *City of St. John's Parks By-law*. These amendments are not intended to be made at this time. Rather, they are to be reviewed after the completion of the pilot project and brought to council for consideration at that time.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications
A small cost for the required signs is expected.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders
N/A
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans
Permitting a multi-use environment on City trails will contribute to these strategic directions and goals:
 - Neighbourhoods Build Our City: Promote a safe and secure City & Improve neighbourhood-level services
 - A City for All Seasons: Support year-round active transportation & Promote active and healthy living
4. Legal or Policy Implications
N/A
5. Engagement and Communications Considerations
Will need to publicize the change in trail use. Staff are prepared to advertise through social media, press release and a May 24th, 2016 launch event at the Boathouse.
6. Human Resource Implications
N/A
7. Procurement Implications
Will need to procure appropriate trail signage.
8. Information Technology Implications
N/A
9. Other Implications
N/A

Recommendation:

That the City launch a pilot project which converts the Quidi Vidi Lake loop trail to a multi-use trail. This pilot project will commence on May 24th and will be assessed for continuation in the fall of 2016 following an evaluation of performance.

(Note that no change to City policy or by-laws are proposed as part of this project.)

Prepared by:

Garrett Donaher, Transportation Engineer

Signature: _____

Approved by:

Karen Sherriffs, Manager, Community Development, Recreation Division

Signature: _____

GD/dm

Attachments:

Proposed Trail Signs
Quidi Vidi Lake Reference Map
City of St. John's Parks By-law



Warning Sign for Hazard Sections



Permissive Sign for Trail Entrances



Direction Sign for Boathouse Area (1 of 2)



Direction Sign for Boathouse Area (2 of 2)

QUIDI VIDI LAKE REFERENCE MAP

