



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Transportation Services and Accessibility Advisory Committees

FROM: Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas, Commissioner of Transportation Services

DATE: September 9, 2009

RE: **York Regional Forest Trail Accessibility**

Staff has been working with the Oak Ridges Trail Association and members of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, to advance the consideration of the accessibility of trails for persons with disabilities in the York Regional Forest. In February 2009, the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee requested that staff assess providing one or two fully accessible trails in the York Regional Forest.

A York Regional Forest Trails Accessibility Sub-committee was formed with members from the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, the York Regional Forest Advisory Team, a trails accessibility consultant and Regional staff (Natural Heritage and Forestry, and AODA/ODA Community and Health Services). This team met on August 4, 2009 to discuss this project and ensure that staff were on the right track.

The meeting was very positive and valuable in confirming the direction of staff (*Attachment 1 – Minutes*). Ian Buchanan, Manager, Natural Heritage and Forestry Services provided a presentation on progress to date (*Attachment 2*). An informative presentation (*Attachment 3*) by the trails accessibility consultant (Ms. Patti Longmuir, PEL Consulting) provided detailed background on the application and benefit of the Universal Trails Assessment Process (UTAP).

For trails in general, it has been identified that the greatest barrier to use by persons with disabilities is a general lack of information about on-trail conditions and lack of knowledge about the location of access points. Staff has had two trails evaluated under the UTAP. The UTAP is an international standard which allows objective information on trail conditions to be presented to users in a standardized way.

On July 14, 2009, the Ontario government released the draft Accessible Built Environment Standard for public comment. The Accessible Built Environment Standard includes the criteria

and information relevant to natural environment trails. Staff are currently reviewing implications of this standard to the Region and this York Regional Forest trails initiative.

Next Steps:

- August 2009 – assess the UTAP criteria for the Regional Forest trails against the draft Accessible Built Environment Standard, to determine the fit and inform the development of options.
- August/September 2009 – provide comments on the draft Accessible Built Environment Standard.
- September/ October 2009 – York Regional Forest Trails Accessibility Sub-committee tour of UTAP signed Oak Ridges Trail and also the candidate site for an accessible trail in the York Regional Forest.
- November 2009 – develop options and costs for discussion around the consideration of providing fully accessible trail(s) in the York Regional Forest.
- January 2010 – as appropriate, report to Committee (Transportation Services and Accessibility Advisory Committees) and Regional Council on options, costs and implementation.

Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas
Commissioner of Transportation Services

IB/bm

Attachments (3)

Copy to: Lois Davies, Program Manager, AODA/ODA, Community Services and Health Department

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York Regional Forest - Accessibility

Tuesday August 4th, 2009 10:00 – 12:00 noon
Transportation Services
90 Bales Drive East
Conference Room 169

Present: Ian Buchanan (York Region), Wilf Morley (Vice Chair - York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee), Kirsten Hill ((York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee), Kevin Shackleton (Regional Forest Advisory Team), Dave Puttock (Regional Forest Advisory Team), Patricia Longmuir (Accessibility Consultant, PEL Consulting), Lois Davies (Program Manager, AODA/ODA, York Region), James Lane (York Region), Catherine Collinson (York Region).

Regrets: Regional Councillor John Taylor (York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee), Marg Gaukel (York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee)

1. Welcome and Introductions (IB)

2. Purpose of the Meeting (IB)

- York Region and its partners are advancing the accessibility of York Regional Forest (YRF) trails. Considering the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC) request to consider implementing 1 or 2 fully accessible trails in the YRF.
- Need to determine if York Regional Forestry staff is on the right track in regards to the steps taken to determine the current and future accessibility of trails, and that the Universal Trails Assessment Process (UTAP) is fully understood by committee members.
- What does the UTAP mean to people with disabilities, and what does it mean to be fully accessible? The issue is much larger than just the physical trail; it means the marketing, parking, signage, and the whole experience.

3. Accessibility - Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) - presentation Patti Longmuir, PEL Accessibility consultant.

- Greatest barrier of trail use by persons with disabilities is a general lack of information about on-trail conditions and lack of knowledge about the location of access points.

- UTAP generates objective trail information which allows individuals to make informed decisions about the accessibility of the trail. Key UTAP information: length, grade, width, cross slope, surface, features, and facilities.
- UTAP provides a standardized way to provide information on trail conditions with comparable signage to other trails.
- Objective information includes: access and use; construction and maintenance; mapping and interpretation; environmental protection and management; compliance with design standards.
- Signage at the head of the trail must be developed in order to convey the information provided by the UTAP to the trail users and educate the users on what to expect.
- Careful consideration for the types of trails and materials used for the surface must be made. Limestone screenings are good, there have been problems with asphalt – the grades and cross slopes are key, while being sensitive to drainage and maintenance.
- Surface and Cross Slope are very important in the accessibility of a trail.
- York Region needs to give careful consideration when choosing how to make the trail surface accessible and install it correctly. Compaction of surface material to create stability is the key.
- The current trail surface may already be accessible as long as the cross slope is right. A Rotational Penetrometer to measure compaction of the base, could help determine the accessibility of the YR trails.
- Along with surface material considerations, drainage issues must also be considered. Poor drainage can cause the trail to become inaccessible even with the proper surface material. Whenever possible the natural drainage pattern of the trail should not be changed.
- Choosing a current trail that is frequently used by the public is important in educating the public of the accessibility of the trail.
- **Key consideration:** Members' suggestion - making the trail fully accessible may be the wrong goal, making the trail as accessible as possible may be a more realistic goal. Fully accessible indicates that all of the standards are met; however a trail can meet 99% of the standards and can still be very accessible to a wide range of persons with disabilities.

4. Overview of York Regional Forest Proposal - presentation

Ian Buchanan, Manager, York Regional Forest

- 3 step process: 1) Apply the UTAP to 1-2 trails in the YRF (done), 2) match information against recent (June 2009) draft Built Environment Standard for accessible trails i.e. assess match with fully accessible trail criteria, 3) report back with options.
- The Hollidge Tract has been chosen for the focus of this initiative because it is very popular and has a better surface base than many of the other tracts (not as sandy).
- North Loop is the most attractive because it has less horse traffic (which may damage trail base).
- Status Review:
 - Trails (2) UTAP assessed in 2008.
 - Input from the YRAAC- fully accessible trail (Feb 2009).
 - Assessed against the Accessible Built Environment Standard - pending.
 - Review parking access options and functional trail linkage -ongoing.
 - Develop cost estimates/ options – report to Committee (YRAAC/ TRN).

- Installation target for 2010.
- Marketing of the trail.
- Education of the trail usage.
- Monitoring the trail: use, horse damage, ecological footprint, and maintenance issues.
- Adaptive management approach should be taken with this initiative.

5. Discussion

- Realistically, many of the Regional Forest trails probably are not far off the standard and could be inexpensively brought up to the standards with a little bit of funding and manual labour. Alternatively, cost out upgrades to provide full accessibility. For this natural environment experience, the Oak Ridges Moraine sand and trail grades are the biggest issue for the YRF.
- Report back to committee – Vice Chair of YRAAC suggested:
 - **Action** (York Region): prepare a memo for the September YRAAC
 - **Action** (York Region): Put together site visit to Seneca King Campus to view the UTAP trail and the proposed areas of the York Regional Forest. Invite the committee members.

6. Next Steps

- Prepare brief minutes and copy presentations.
- Draft a memo to send to the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Set up site visit and send out invitations.
- Assessment of the selected trail against Built Environment Standard (draft 2009).
- Cost out options
- December/January report to Committee (YRAAC/TRN).

Meeting adjourned 12:05

UTAP presentation - Patricia Longmuir, and
York Regional Forest Proposal presentation - Ian Buchanan
- attached to these minutes.

Minutes prepared by Catherine Collinson/ Ian Buchanan – errors or omissions, please advise.



York Regional Forest Trails Accessibility

Ian Buchanan
Manager Natural Heritage & Forestry Services
August 4th, 2009



Accessibility of York Regional Forest Trails

– follow up to Feb 2009 YRAAC feedback

RECAP

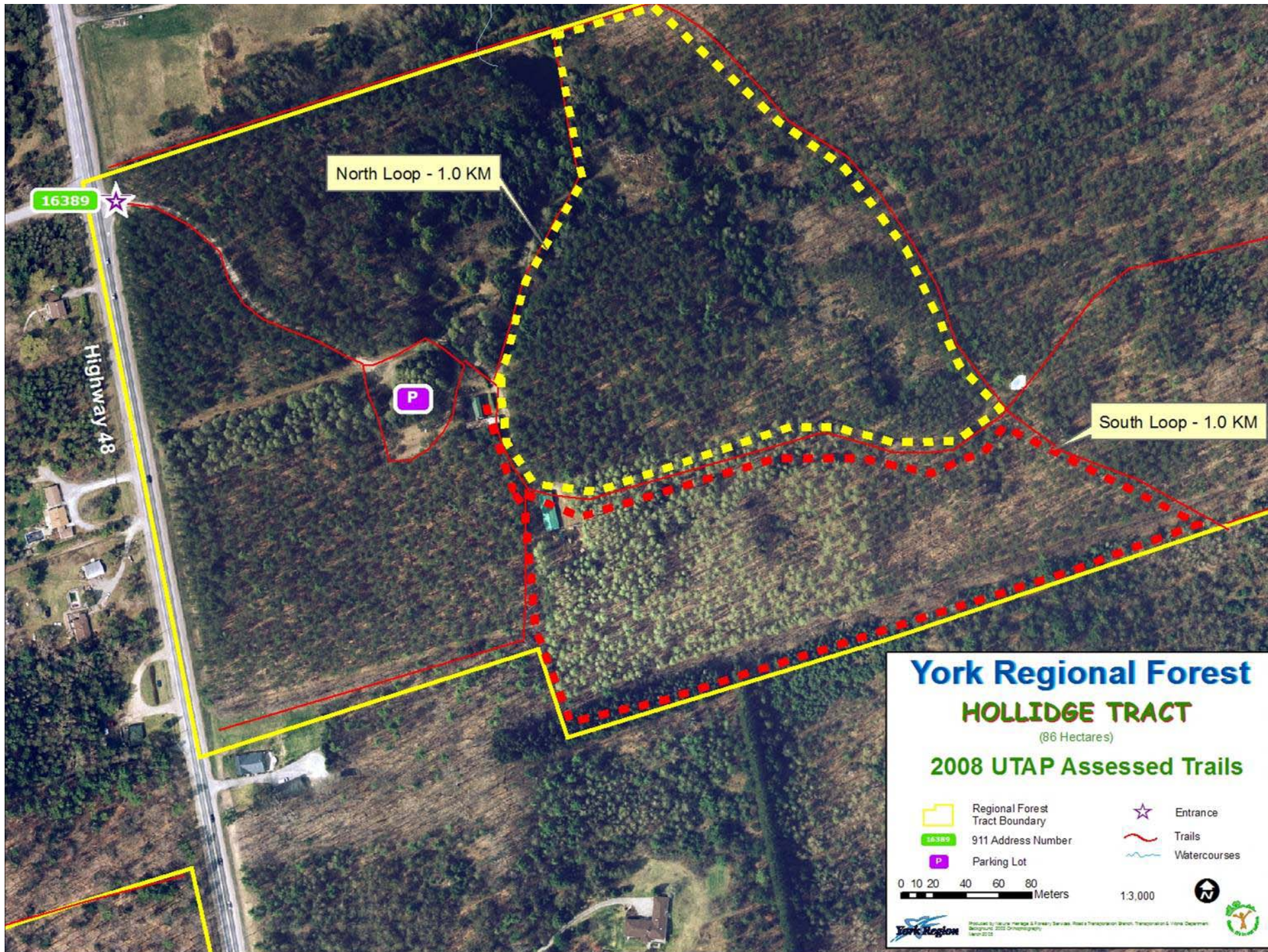
2 Step process:

- ❑ Apply Universal Trail Assessment Protocol (UTAP)
- ❑ Consideration of a fully accessible trail
 - built environment standard (June 09 draft)

Current Initiatives

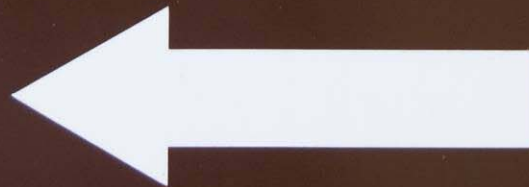
- ❑ Universal Trail Assessment Protocol (UTAP) – Hollidge Tract Pilot – trail assessment complete
 - Assessment based on trail characteristics (grade, cross slope, width, surface, trail length)
 - Partnership between York Region and Oak Ridges Trail Association







**ACCESSIBLE
TRAIL
PARKING**





Slide 6

Woodland Passage Trail

Seneca College - King Campus

Trail Uses



Hiking

Trail Length 0.3 mi (0.5 Km)

Linear trail

Cumulative Elevation Change Gain 45 ft (14 m)



Typical Grade is 3.4%

60% of the trail is between 3% and 8%
932 ft (284 m) is between 3% and 8%
8% grade is a standard ramp.



Typical Grade Slope is 2.1%

51% of the trail is between 2% and 5%
794 ft (242 m) is between 2% and 5%



Typical Tread Width is 122 in (310 cm)

Tread Width ranges from 87 in (220 cm) to 138 in (350 cm)



Trail Surface is Aggregate/Gravel

100% of the trail is Firm or better
1555 ft (474 m) of the trail is Firm or better

Trail head Location

- 1) Parking lot on road to Eaton Hall
- 2) Eaton Hall



**Trail
Access
Information**

Warning : Trail conditions may have changed since this trail was assessed. Temporary obstructions (e.g. fallen trees or land slides) may not have been mapped. Maximum grades and cross slopes may vary.
This report is generated by TrailWare which has been created by Beneficial Designs, Inc.

Seneca



Woodland Passage Trail

Seneca College - King Campus

Trail Length 0.3 mi (0.5 Km)

Linear trail

Cumulative Elevation Change Gain 45 ft (14 m)



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Status review

- ❑ Trail in Hollidge Tract UTAP assessed in 2008
- ❑ Input from YRAAC – fully accessible trail
- ❑ Input from Working Group 2009
- ❑ Assess against Accessible Built Environmental Standard
- ❑ Review parking accessibility options
- ❑ Develop cost estimate/options – Committee update(s)
- ❑ Installation target - Spring 2010
- ❑ Market trail and monitor use



Universal Trail Assessment Process - UTAP



**American Trails
Beneficial Designs, Inc.**

Greatest Barrier to Trail Use

Lack of knowledge about actual on-trail conditions

Lack of knowledge about where access is possible

Need for UTAP

All users and land managers need accurate trail data



Objective trail information is very limited, but it enables informed decisions about trail use and conservation

Subjective information is not related to individual abilities

UTAP Generates Objective Information

Access and Use

Construction and Maintenance

Mapping and Interpretation

Environmental Protection and
Management

Compliance with Design Standards

Key UTAP Information

Length



Grade



Width



Surface



Cross
slope



Features &
Facilities





UTAP is suitable for any trail or path of travel in an outdoor environment.

**What are different
types of trails?**

Shared Use Path



Recreation Trail (Front Country)



Recreation Trail (Back Country)



Outdoor Recreation Access Route (ORAR)



Paths of Travel at Recreation Facilities



UTAP Records Typical and Extreme Values

Grade

Cross Slope

Width

<u>Trail</u>	Grade (%)		Cross Slope (%)	
	<u>Typ</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>Typ</u>	<u>Max</u>
Kersey Lake	5	70	11	32
Indiana Falls	8	10	16	19

Surface

Firmness Category
Surface Type



Features and Facilities

Location

Type

Description

Dimensions

Quantity



Feature Example



Scenic
Viewpoint

Feature Examples

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Dist</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Rem.</u>
Rock	50	TB	11x23x7	48
Rock	60	TB	10x23x6	17
Rock	70	VF	11x22x8	n/a
Rock	5020	TB	12x22x7	12