

REVIEW OF PATHWAYS IN BLACKBURN HAMLET

Introduction

The following is a look at the pathways throughout Blackburn Hamlet, primarily from a community safety perspective. The review looks at the present condition of the pathways, their ease of use by residents, and their continued suitability for our growing community. The observations were made by a physical walk on all the trails, combined with feedback from many residents. In addition, cursory reviews of other pathways of the city were conducted.

Use of Pathways by Residents

The pathways serve all areas of Blackburn Hamlet. The pathways are actively used, day and night, in both winter and summer, by pedestrians and bicycles. The pathways intersect with multiple roadways throughout the Hamlet, which, in turn feed into playgrounds, recreational facilities, schools, and essential services, such as dentists, doctors. This allows children, families, residents, an easy and safe corridor to these areas. In the winter the pathways are efficiently maintained by the City of Ottawa for the clearing of snow and ice.

One notable observation was the width variance of the pathways, and in particular, the width of the asphalt. The pathways width of asphalt can vary from 0.9 metres (3 feet) to 2.1 metres (7 feet).

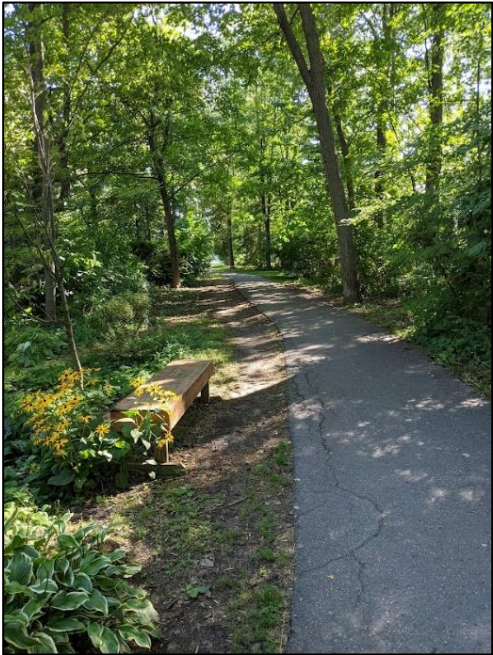


The width of the pathways is important, especially when multiple users are using the pathways or passing one another. In our time of Covid rules a proper distance between residents is essential.

Note: Some other areas of the city, such as Ottawa South, have a standardized width of 2.1 metres.



Requests were also made for more benches along the pathway system. Many residents would like to stop and enjoy the ambiance of the forest canopy or embrace the quietness of their surroundings. The bench style is preferred.



Pathways Condition

Many areas of the pathways are in need of repair or replacement. Throughout the pathway system there are asphalt cracks, some quite large. Other areas have been patched, such that they now have very rough areas for walking or bicycling. Furthermore, some areas are missing sections of asphalt and represent a safety concern, particularly for walking residents.

There is a notable erosion of soil along many of the pathways. This too is a safety concern because reports have been received whereby residents have had twisted ankles or bicycles falling down because of the drop off from the asphalt. The soil erosion also causes problems for the city winter maintenance crews because while clearing the pathways the drop off causes the snow clearing vehicles to vary off the pathways and do damage to the pathway embankments.

Pathway Lighting

Many residents have expressed about the lack of lighting along the pathways, particularly in the Diceman and Bush Park areas where large trees restrict sunlight. Light posts are located sparingly throughout the pathway system. Establishing what lighting is needed will require a professional assessment.



Specific Pathway Definition

The various pathways in the Hamlet are not defined by name, such as what occurs with other pathways in the city.



For this reason, the review uses the various parks in the Hamlet as a centralized focus point for the review. The review starts at the Bearbrook Park, to South Park, to Woodhill Park, to Bush Park, to Diceman Park, to Richard Dagg Park. Note: the review also includes the pathway between Orient Park and the shopping mall in the discussion. Each Park area is reviewed individually.

Bearbrook Park

The pathways in this area leads to the Emily Carr School, the swimming pool, the tennis court, and the park's playground. They connect to roadways of Bearbrook, Innes and Northpark. The pathways in this area are mostly in good condition, but some areas have deep cracks, in particular the pathway leading to North Park and by the swimming pool. The width of the pathways is between 1.5 and 1.8 metres.



South Park

The pathways in this area lead to L'Ecole Sainte Marie, Good Shepherd, Glen Oglivie schools and the park's playground. They connect to roadways of Bearbrook, Southpark and Centrepark.

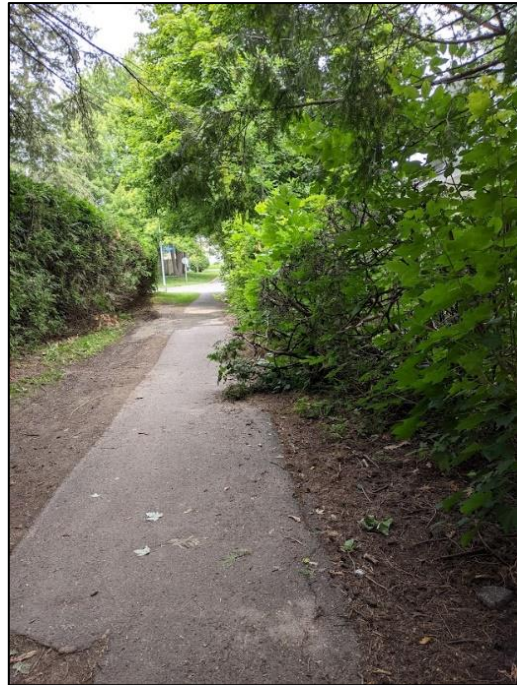


The asphalt needs maintenance for the many cracks, especially for the pathway leading from the park to the Glen Ogilvie School. Consideration should be also given for replacement of asphalt near L'ecole Ste.Marie. There is also an overgrowth of the hedge that forces pedestrians and bicycles to move off the pathway. This overgrowth condition can also hamper winter maintenance. The width of the pathways is mostly between 1.5 and 1.8 metres.

Woodhill Park

The pathways in this area lead to Blooming Gardens playground area and the Glen Oglivie school. They connect to the roadways of Woodhill Crescent and Westpark. Some areas of the pathways need immediate maintenance where there is missing asphalt. This is especially dangerous in the darkness hours because of no lighting. Other areas of the pathways have cracks that need to be addressed. There is also an overgrowth of a hedge that forces pedestrians and bicycles to move off the pathway.

The asphalt width of the trails in this area vary from is 1.5 to 1.8metres.

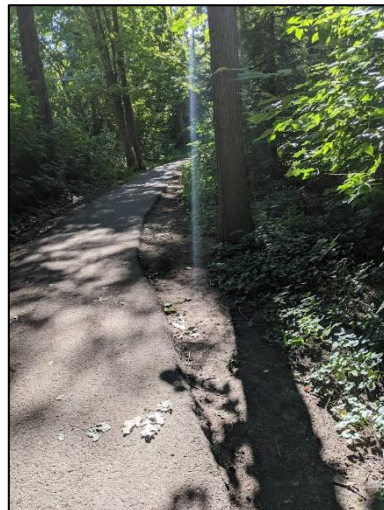


Bush & Diceman Parks

The pathways in these two parks are interconnected so the review includes both park areas. Their pathways connect to the roadways of Bearbrook, Nothpark, Ridgeburn and Diceman Crescent. The pathways in this area need immediate attention because of the restrictions of movement for pedestrians and bicycles, and the degenerating condition of the asphalt. There is also a safety concern on the pathways for both pedestrians and bicycles due to the increased growth of trees. The potential for the collisions of two parties is so high that users have been made alternate paths. While the removal of the trees is not a favorable option the city has done it in other parts of the pathway system.



The asphalt condition in the Diceman Park area requires immediate attention. In some areas there is no asphalt remaining while in others areas the asphalt is badly broken. Many areas have cracks or uneven sections. Erosion of the pathways is also a major concern in this area.



There is also one section of the pathway system that leads to a dead end.

The asphalt width in some areas of this pathway (Path 1) area is the least width of any pathway in the Hamlet. The general width ranges from 1.2 metres to 1.8 metres.



Richard Dagg Park

The pathway system connects to the roadways of Rondell Street and Innes Road. Other than a few cracks and the growth of roots under the asphalt the pathway is well defined and in very good condition. The asphalt width in this area is the widest of any pathway in the Hamlet. The general width ranges from 1.5 metres to 2.7 metres.

Orient Park

There is a pathway between Orient Park and the central shopping area of Blackburn Hamlet. The pathway serves as a link to the arena, community center and shopping area. The pathway is heavily used by both pedestrians and bicycles. The pathway has seen a significant increase in pedestrian traffic and with the newly opened arena and splash pad.

The pathway is quite narrow in some areas while only a small portion of the pathway is asphalt. The remaining pathway is earth base, with crushed rock in some places. Consideration should be given to a having this pathway completely asphalt covered. Its present width and solid base are ideally suited for asphalt.



The asphalt width in this area is mostly 1.5 metres whereas the non-asphalt portion of the pathways ranges from 1.5 to 2.7 metres.

Recommendations

The pathways require both short term and long- term solutions.

In the short term:

Develop a plan to immediately replace the asphalt in areas where it is identified as being a safety factor.

Develop a plan to address the areas where the severe cracks in the asphalt constitute a safety concern.

Conduct an onsite review by qualified city staff to the soil erosion problem on the pathways, especially in those areas where accidents/injuries have occurred, and effect the solutions, as required.

Engagement of both the city and homeowners in clearing back hedges that are restricting safe movement of pedestrians and bicycles along the pathway system.

In the long term:

Develop a plan to replace the asphalt in areas where the asphalt has seriously disintegrated or is completely missing. The plan should include adopting a standardized width of asphalt when the asphalt is replaced.

Develop a plan to address the areas where cracks in the asphalt are occurring before they become a major repair item.

Develop a plan to install an asphalt pathway from Orient Park to the arena area. This would entail improving upon the existing pathway.

Install benches across more areas of the pathway system. Consider engaging private interests, such as Lafarge, for their assistance.

Request the city to review the present lighting system and present what measures could be done to enhance the visibility along the pathway system.

Conclusion

The pathway system in Blackburn Hamlet is an integral part of the everyday life in the Hamlet. Above all it serves as a means for many to safely and effectively move about the community.

Its present condition and structure is inadequate. Repairing cracked, broken or missing asphalt, replacing soil due to soil erosion, installing proper lighting, and adopting a standardized pathway width are some of the challenges for the days ahead.

