

Report to/Rapport au :

**Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales**

and Council / et au Conseil

**June 24, 2013
24 juin 2013**

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INNES (2) WEST CARLETON-MARCH (5)
STITTSVILLE (6) COLLEGE (8) / COLLÈGE (8)
GLOUCESTER-SOUTHGATE (10) CUMBERLAND
(19) OSGOODE (20) RIDEAU-GOULBOURN (21)
GLOUCESTER-SOUTH NEPEAN (22) /
GLOUCESTER-NEPEAN SUD (22) KANATA SOUTH
(23) / KANATA-SUD (23)

Ref N°: ACS2013-PAI-PGM-0150

SUBJECT: RURAL PATHWAY SHARED-USE POLICY REVIEW

**OBJET : EXAMEN DE LA POLITIQUE SUR L'UTILISATION PARTAGÉE DES
SENTIERS RURAUX**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee recommend Council approve
the amendments to the Rural Pathway Shared-Use Policy as outlined in
Document 1.**

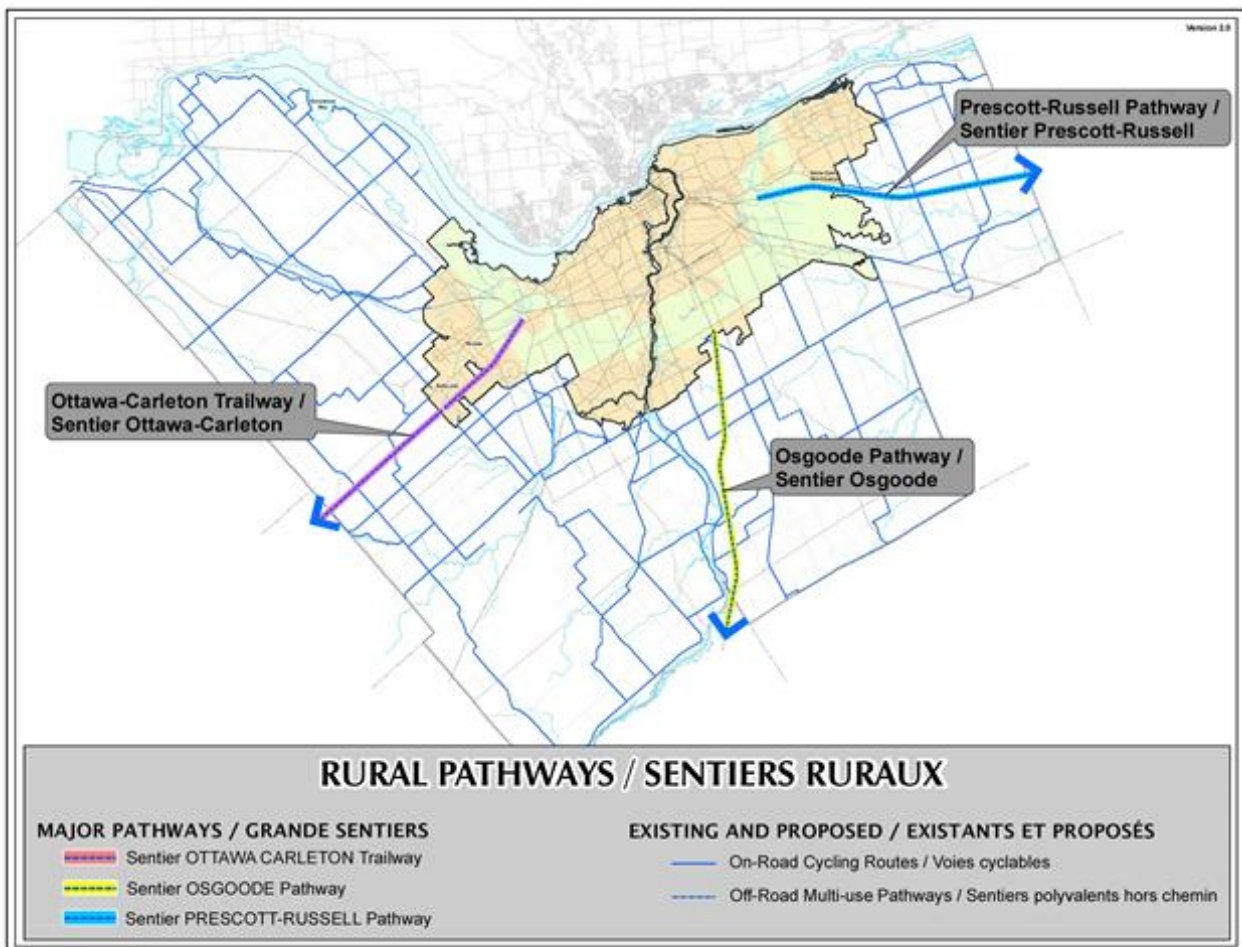
RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que le Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales recommande au Conseil
d'approuver la Politique sur l'utilisation partagée des sentiers ruraux mise à jour,
telle qu'elle est exposée dans le document 1.**

BACKGROUND

In 2010, as part of the Economic Stimulus Funding Program, two new rural pathways were established along former rail lines: the Osgoode Pathway running north-south from Leitrim Road to Buckles Street; and the Prescott-Russell Pathway running east-west from just west of Anderson Road to the eastern City limits.

These two pathways combined with the Ottawa-Carleton Trailway, running east-west from Fitzgerald Road to the western City limits, comprise Ottawa's major rural pathways.



During the planning and development stages of the Osgoode and Prescott-Russell pathways, a number of community and stakeholder groups with competing viewpoints related to the potential permitted activities to take place on the pathways made their interests known. Largely due to the differing views on access to the pathways for motorized vehicles, such as snowmobiles and all-terrain-vehicles (ATV), the City developed the Rural Pathways Shared-Use Policy to govern who should have access to the pathway and, in some cases, under which restrictions they might have access. After significant public consultations, the Rural Pathways Shared-Use Policy was presented to the Joint Transportation and Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committees and subsequently approved by Council on 10 March 2011.

A subsequent motion to extend the application of the Shared-Use Policy to the Ottawa-Carleton Trailway was considered by the Joint Committees and approved by Council on 27 April 2011. Additionally, the motion included a prohibition of all motorized vehicles and horses east of West Ridge Road and a follow up review of the pathway signage to ensure consistency with the other two Rural Pathways.

In addition to the Rural Pathways Shared-Use Policy, Council approved a two-year monitoring program to evaluate the success of the policy, and directed staff to report back in summer 2013. The purpose of this report is to present the results of the monitoring program and to recommend modifications to the Shared-Use Policy (Document 1) based on those results and observations.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the monitoring program was to identify usage levels and obtain feedback from pathway users and residents. This program included:

- Automated counters to measure pathway usage levels at two locations along each pathway;
- Intercept Survey to obtain feedback on 'shared use' experiences;
- Complaints and Incident Monitoring to summarize the complaints and incidents along each pathway; and
- Maintenance Costs Record to determine the upkeep costs per pathway.

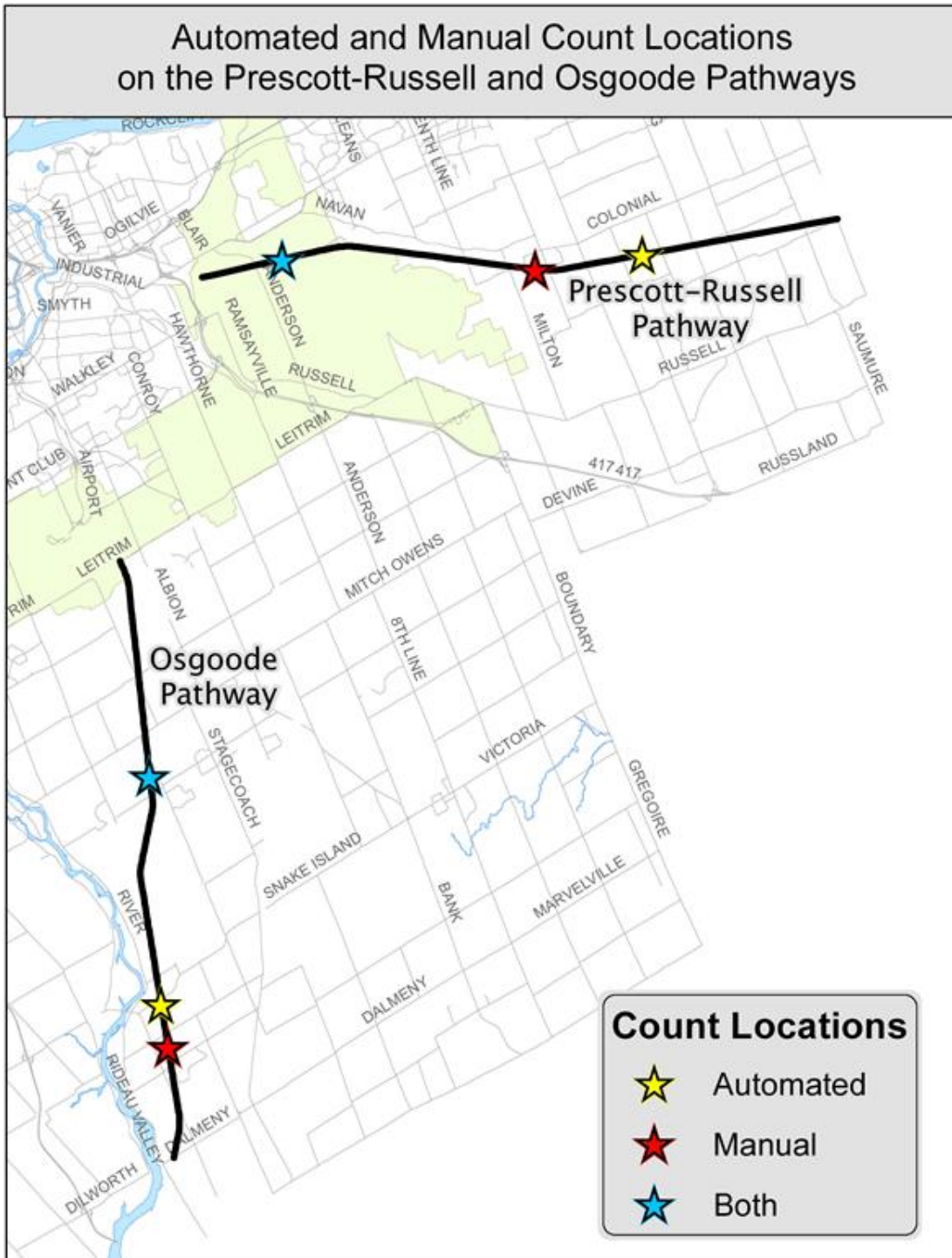
While the monitoring program focussed on the Osgoode and Prescott-Russell pathways, some additional data related to the Ottawa-Carleton Trailway were also collected.

Four automated counting devices were installed at four sites along the Prescott-Russell and Osgoode Pathways. These devices have the ability to distinguish different types of users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorized vehicles, and are able to determine the direction of travel. Two of the counters have the capability to count equestrian traffic. Regular manual counts were carried out (between 20 May 2011 and 25 August 2012) to support the data collection while the automated counters were procured and installed.

The following are highlights from the count data between 20 May 2011 and 19 April 2013.

- Saturdays and Sundays are the days of highest visits to the pathways.
- Summer and winter are the two seasons during which the pathways are more often visited.
- The two-year combined manual and automated data average per user type are 28.5 per cent cycling, 22.8 per cent walking, 0.4 per cent horseback riding, and 29 per cent motorized vehicle use.

- For the four automated count locations there were a total of 34,087 pathway users counted from 26 August 2012 to 19 April 2013.
- The monthly average was 3,790 users and the daily average was 143.
- There were a total of 77 vehicles counted on the pathways outside the snowmobile season, likely these were unauthorized vehicle users (ATV or dirt bike). This represents 0.2 per cent of all users and an average of 1.4 vehicles per week on the pathway at any given point.



Intercept surveys were performed on the Prescott-Russell and Osgoode Pathways in conjunction with an identical online survey through Ottawa.ca in the winter and spring of 2013. The online survey also allowed for participants to provide responses related to the Ottawa-Carleton Trailway. In addition to the intercept surveys, a targeted outreach campaign was undertaken to solicit the input of key stakeholder groups via the online survey. Broader outreach efforts were also undertaken, particularly through the local Councillors offices and newsletters.

During the survey period, 677 surveys were completed. The following are highlights from the results.

- 77 per cent of respondents are adults (age 26 – 65).
- 57 per cent of respondents live within 5 kilometres of their pathway of choice.
- 91 per cent of respondents reported walking (leisure walking, dog walking, or running/jogging) as an activity that they engage in on the pathways (respondents were able to select multiple activities).
- Reported activities were as follows: 42 per cent leisure walking, 26 per cent dog walking, 22 per cent running/jogging, 55 per cent cycling, 5 per cent horseback riding, 12 per cent skiing, and 42 per cent snowmobiling.
- Reported activities varied per pathway; for instance, cycling was more significant (71 per cent) on the Ottawa-Carleton Trailway, as was snowmobiling (58 per cent) on the Osgoode Pathway, and horseback riding (12 per cent) on the Prescott-Russell Pathway.
- Dog walkers and snowmobilers were the most likely groups to be rated as bothersome or disruptive by respondents. Fourteen per cent of leisure walkers, 28 per cent horseback riders and 10 per cent skiers rated dog walkers in this category. Between 16 and 62 per cent of non-snowmobiler winter user groups (leisure walkers, dog walkers, joggers/runners, horseback riders, and skiers) rated snowmobilers in this category.
- The most common concerns reported by respondents included snowmobilers passing too close at high speeds, dog feces, interactions with off-leash dogs, and verbal conflicts with prohibited user groups (ATVs and dirt bikes).
- The most common positive comments reported by respondents included the enjoyment of the natural environment, quietness of the pathway, no cars, and convenient access to the surrounding communities.
- Overall, respondents reported that the trails were well maintained and that they felt safe while on the pathways.
- Finally, the most common suggestions that respondents provided were for more benches, trash bins, and clearer signage and maps at access points.

The Public Works Department assumed maintenance for both the Osgoode Pathway and the Prescott Russell Pathway in 2011. Total costs for both pathways in 2011 were \$30K and in 2012 the costs increased to \$85.5K. In the initial year, a significant amount of staff time was dedicated to operational assessments to determine the full scope of both routine and unplanned maintenance required to provide quality trails. This orientation period is reflected in significant variance in cost between 2011 and 2012.

In 2012, all maintenance activities increased; this was caused partly by unplanned requirements such as a new locking system for the Prescott Russell Path gate, unforeseen litter volumes based on pedestrian/cyclist traffic and a requirement to increase routine inspection. The other key contributor to the increased costs is the high volume growing season that was experienced in 2012.

The full costs for pathway maintenance can be found in the tables below. Costs are separated by pathway and broken down into activity types to give a more accurate description of operational expenditures.

Table 1: Osgoode Pathway Costs

2011 Costs Osgoode Pathway		2012 Costs Osgoode Pathway	
General Maintenance	\$ 374.08	General Maintenance	\$11,303.97
Inspections	\$ 809.74	Lock mechanism modification	\$12,703.65
Litter Pickup/Cleanup	\$ 731.17	Inspections	\$10,015.90
General Grass/Mowing/Trimming	\$ 8,522.99	General Grass/Mowing/Trimming	\$15,888.99
Shub/Trees/Hedges/Planter Maint	\$ 2,681.44	Shub/Trees/Hedges/Planter Maint	\$ 1,336.48
Waste Receptacle Servicing	\$ 265.88		
Grand Total	\$13,385.30	Grand Total	\$51,248.99

Table 2: Prescott Russell Pathway Costs

2011 Costs Prescott Russell Pathway		2012 Costs Prescott Russell Pathway	
General Maintenance	\$ 1,516.07	General Maintenance	\$ 7,619.03
Litter Pickup/Cleanup	\$ 1,519.80	Inspections	\$ 7,194.77
General Grass/Mowing/Trimming	\$ 11,859.61	General Grass/Mowing/Trimming	\$16,762.10
Shub/Trees/Hedges/Planter Maint	\$ 1,605.60	Shub/Trees/Hedges/Planter Maint	\$ 2,076.00
Waste Receptacle Servicing	\$ 265.88	Waste Receptacle Servicing	\$ 547.28
Grand Total	\$ 16,766.96	Grand Total	\$34,199.18

Complaints related to the pathways were received by the City through 311, the Ottawa Police Service and through the Councillors' offices. Overall, there was not a significant amount of complaints or requests sent to the City.

Fourteen 311 inquiries were logged with the City during the monitoring period. All of these were related to pathway maintenance, mostly requests for litter/dog feces/obstruction removal and gate maintenance due to vandalism to gain access to the pathway.

During the monitoring period, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) received 26 reports related to snowmobile use, of these eight were related to snowmobilers in prohibited areas on the rural pathways, predominantly on the Ottawa-Carleton Trailway. The majority of these reports were of snowmobilers with no licence numbers or driver descriptions; as such, no follow up action was possible.

The Councillors for Wards 2, 5, 6, 10, 19, 20, 21, and 23 reported that there were few complaints or inquiries related to the rural pathways received by their offices.

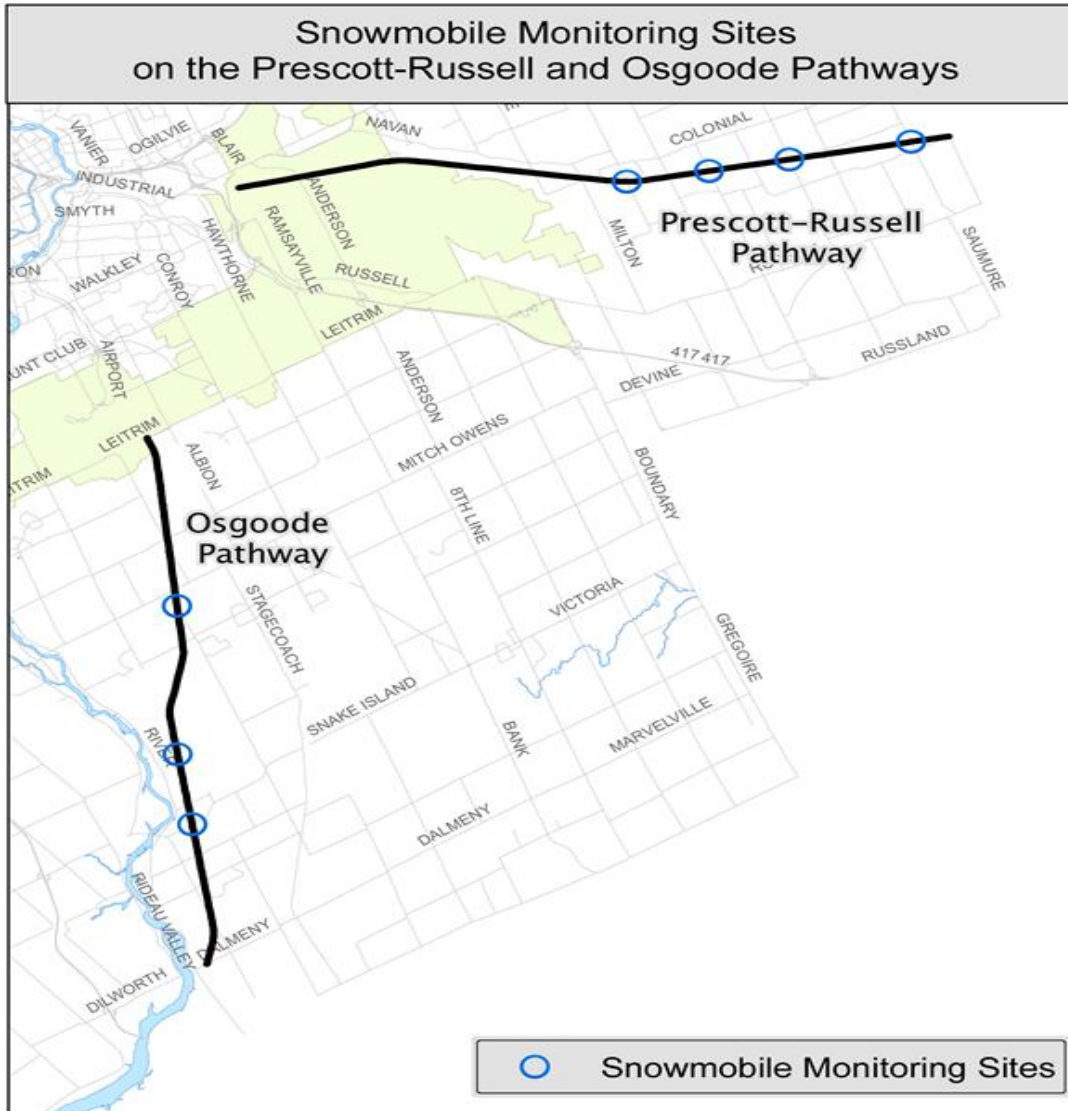
Snowmobiles

During the development of the Rural Pathways Shared-Use Policy, the City received communications from residents of Osgoode and surrounding areas expressing concern about the noise created by snowmobile use on the pathways.

To help mitigate the impact of snowmobile noise on surrounding communities, the City implemented several speed reduction and restricted access zones in built up areas, prohibited snowmobiling between midnight and 6 am, and banned snowmobiles defined as 'Classic' (1996 or older) by the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC).

Additionally, the City undertook an Assessment of Noise Impacts on the Rural Pathways, specifically on the Prescott-Russell and Osgoode pathways. Acoustical measurement equipment was set up at seven different locations on the pathways for the snowmobile seasons of 2012 and 2013. A total of 1,847 snowmobiles were observed during these periods; 526 single pass snowmobiles were used in the noise analysis. The following are highlights from the study:

- Saturdays and Sundays are the busiest days for snowmobile activity with the busiest period being from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Only a small number of snowmobiles (65 recorded) use the pathways during the curfew hours (12:00 – 06:00 a.m.).
- The average maximum sound level for single snowmobile (LASmax) passes is 75.32 dBA, equivalent to a passing car at 7.5 metres.
- 90 per cent of snowmobiles had LASmax under 80 dBA, equivalent to loud truck traffic at 7.5 metre.
- Only 3 per cent of snowmobiles had LASmax over 84 dBA, a very high noise level likely to cause significant impact to nearby observers, equivalent to a chainsaw at 10 metres.



There are two principle ways that noise impacts can be assessed and resulting nuisance considered. These two methods of analysis are based on the maximum noise level generated or based on the average sound level over a one minute interval.

The impacts on residents based on maximum noise level considers the likelihood of a noise to cause a disturbance indoors where maximum levels of 64 dBA are marginally acceptable for the general population (equivalent to conversational speech at 1 metre). Using this approach, the closest separation residence for which noise would be considered acceptable to the general population is 95 metres from the centre of the pathways; this would be increased to 210 metres if accommodating vulnerable groups where the maximum level is 58 dBA. These vulnerable groups include children, the chronically ill, and the elderly.

The second method to assess noise impacts on residences is based on average noise levels from passing snowmobiles. This approach is consistent with the Ministry of Environment and the City's methodology of assessing the impact from road traffic noise.

Using this approach based on the City Guidelines for Mitigation of Road Traffic Noise, residences as close as 15 metre from the centre of a pathway do not warrant noise mitigation based on the highest levels of observed traffic.

There are a total of six buildings along all three rural pathways, excluding snowmobile-prohibited areas, that are within 15 metres distance to the pathway. Extending further away from the pathways, there are 330 and 616 buildings within the 100 metres and 200 metres distances. The majority of these buildings are clustered in the villages along the pathway, particularly in Manotick Station, Osgoode, and Navan Villages.

While the LASmax method has been applied in previous studies, particularly in recent studies in Quebec, the average noise level methodology is directly comparable with existing regulations already in effect in Ottawa. Additionally, traditional road traffic models account for a mix of traffic including louder heavy truck traffic, which is not relevant to snowmobiles. The comparison of road traffic to snowmobile traffic on a one hour average basis demonstrates that snowmobile traffic, in terms of noise impact, is roughly equivalent to the estimated noise impact of a road with 30 vehicles per hour, which is consistent or lesser than existing conditions due to road traffic noise in the rural areas of the City in question.

Finally, the snowmobile season is weather dependent and lasts for only a few weeks per year. For these reasons, the average noise level methodology will be used as the primary basis for the assessment of the noise impacts of snowmobiles on the residential properties along the rural pathways. Given the noise levels described above, it is recommended that the snowmobile related components of the Rural Pathway Shared-Use policy remain in place as they exist now.

Enforcement

Enforcement is one of the keys to the success of the shared use along these pathways. While most pathway users have abided well by the policy, there have been a few issues that can be easily resolved.

Some of the noise data reveal that there were fast moving snowmobiles in designated reduced speed zones. In addition, the most common snowmobile related comment received was that snowmobiles were passing other pathway users too quickly. These two observations suggest that the speed limits are not being respected in the restricted zones. This may also be the case on the rest of the pathway. Snowmobile speeding is the single most concern of other pathway users and therefore enforcement should target these violations.

The OFSC has traditionally been a key partner in the operation and maintenance of the shared trails and pathways. They have a Code of Conduct for their members and have undertaken self-enforcement. The OFSC's Licence of Occupation Agreements are conditional upon their memberships' adherence to the Rural Pathway Shared-Use Policy. Continued partnership and cooperation with the OFSC should be maintained and utilized in the effort to control speeding and safe passing.

Additionally, the counter data indicates that there are motorized vehicles accessing the pathways during the non-snowmobiling seasons. As snowmobiles are the only authorized vehicles on the pathway; enforcement should target these unauthorized uses. The Ontario Federation of All-Terrain Vehicle Clubs (OFATVC) and affiliated ATV clubs are potential partners to inform their membership of the Shared-Use Policy and to self-enforce the prohibition on the pathways.

Finally, there were reports of off-leash dogs causing distress among other pathway users; enforcement should ensure that dogs remain on-leash.

The Marine, Dive, and Trails Unit (MDT) of the Ottawa Police Service is responsible for the enforcement on trails including the rural pathways. During the monitoring period they received a total of 26 snowmobile related police reports, eight specifically for the rural pathways. Current enforcement resources on the pathways are appropriate to the overall use and events on the pathways. The targeted actions previously discussed should be prioritized within the MDT's allotted enforcement of the rural pathways.

All-Terrain Vehicle Trail Network Pilot Project

The ATV trail network pilot project for Osgoode Ward was approved by Council on 12 June 2013. The pilot project report granted conditional access for ATV users to City roads by way of Municipal By-law, and to unopened road allowances by License of Occupation Agreements, each of which will expire on 30 November 2015. The ATV right of access has been designated by the ATV network map, as provided in the By-law in Schedule C.

The report also contained the following direction in reference to the Osgoode Pathway:

“The City-owned Osgoode Multi-Use Pathway will not be part of the proposed ATV trail network. However, the proposed network does cross the Osgoode Multi-Use Pathway in two locations, as per the map (Schedule C of Document 1). The Rural Pathways Shared-Use Policy, approved by Council in March 2011, prohibits motorized vehicles (except snowmobiles through a separate License of Occupation) from using the Pathway. Therefore, in order to establish the proposed network, it will be necessary as part of the approval of the pilot project for the Transportation Planning Branch of Planning and Growth Management Department to make a minor amendment to the Rural Pathways Shared-Use Policy to permit all-terrain vehicles to cross the Osgoode Multi-Use Pathway in these locations only. Appropriate signage, requiring ATVs to stop before crossing the Pathway will be installed at the Club's expense.”

The proposed update to the Rural Pathway Shared-Use Policy includes a clause to address this issue.

Conclusion

The data collected as part of the two year monitoring program has shown that the rural pathways are frequently used, particularly as desirable recreational weekend activity destinations. The data and feedback have also shown that the pathway users, for the majority, shared the pathway civilly and enjoyed the pathways without complaint or incident, and respected the Shared-Use Policy. There are a few issues, as previously described, that can be addressed by existing measures. As such, the following actions are recommended:

Amend the Rural Pathway Shared-Use Policy with the following modifications as detailed below:

- For snowmobiles: That the curfew hours be changed to 11:00 pm to 7:00 am to match common noise curfew hours as found in the City's Noise By-law No. 2004-253, as amended;
- Maintain the 2011 established pathway maps, in particular the prohibited access and reduced speed zones;
- Enforcement to continue with emphasis of enforcing speeding violations within existing resources, especially in the designated reduced speed zones, and of the prohibition of marked 'classic' snowmobiles;
- That future license of occupation agreement renewals with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) be contingent on the OFSC and/or associated snowmobile clubs providing description of efforts to promote passing safety and Shared-Use Policy adherence among their members;
- That all new development and construction applications adjacent to the rural pathways be reviewed to ensure proper distances, if feasible, of the future dwellings from the pathways to mitigate snowmobile noise impacts;
- Apply the policy to all future rural pathways of similar design and operation; and
- The Policy recognizes the limited and specific access to the Osgoode Pathway for ATV users for crossing purposes as provided in the Council-approved "Temporary ATV and Other Vehicles By-law".

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is focused exclusively on rural pathways which have proved to be significant amenities for the rural and adjacent suburban communities. The ongoing application of the Shared-Use Policy will continue to make the shared enjoyment of the pathways easy and comfortable for all users.

CONSULTATION

The principle form of consultation was done through the Shared-Use Experiences Survey, both intercept and online. Forty community and interest groups were contacted to solicit participation in the survey. The City also issued a public service announcement and a series of announcements through the City's twitter feed. Finally,

several Councillors included a notice of the survey in their weekly columns/newsletters. The survey efforts resulted in 677 responses.

The City's Planning and Growth Management Department, Rural Affairs Office, Parks, Buildings and Grounds Operation and Maintenance Branch, Public Works Department, the Corporate Development and Environmental Law Branch, the Ottawa Police Service, and Councillor offices for Wards 2,5, 6,10, 19, 20, 21, and 23 were consulted during the development of this report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLORS

Councillor Deans:

"I am pleased that our rural pathways are enjoyed and well used by cyclists and pedestrians. I support keeping all terrain vehicles off of the Osgoode Rural Pathway network, except where it intersects as per the approved ATV trail network policy (June 26, 2013)."

Councillors Bloess, El-Chantiry, Qadri, Chiarelli, Blais, Thompson, Desroches and Hubley are aware of this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to implementing the recommendation in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Rural pathway users are responsible for their actions and behaviours on the pathway. It is for this reason that the City developed the Shared-Use Policy to help guide users to proper use and behaviour on the pathway to minimize the potential risk. In addition the City erected appropriate signage to inform users of the Shared-Use Policy and undertook significant levels of maintenance to ensure the high quality condition of the pathways. The rules of use of the Pathways are enforced by the OPS and in partnership with stakeholder groups (self-enforcement).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Enforcement of the policy and maintenance of the pathways will be done from within existing financial resources.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility issues related to this project, the pathways are completely accessible.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

Information Technology approved this report without comment.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The content and recommendations contained herein do not directly support any of the objectives of the City Strategic Plan adopted by Council in July 2011, update in May 2012.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Document 1 Rural Pathways Shared-Use Policy
- Document 2 Snowmobile Route Map – Ottawa-Carleton Pathway
- Document 3 Snowmobile Route Map – Osgoode Pathway
- Document 4 Snowmobile Route Map – Prescott-Russell Pathway

DISPOSITION

Following Committee and Council's approval of this report, City Staff will proceed with the ongoing application of the updated Rural Pathways Shared-Use Policy.

RURAL PATHWAYS SHARED-USE POLICY

DOCUMENT 1

The following shared uses are permitted on a year-round basis unless otherwise stipulated:

- a. Pedestrians/skiers, cyclists, and on-leash dog walking;
- b. Bicycles, including eBikes (as defined by the Province of Ontario);
- c. Horse-riding;

All motorized vehicles are prohibited except as expressly exempted or permitted under this policy as follows:

- i. Exempted Motorized Vehicles;
 - All police and emergency response vehicles;
 - Low-speed motorized mobility aids for the disabled including wheelchairs and scooters; and,
 - Motorized vehicles as duly authorized for pathway maintenance or trail grooming.
- ii. Snowmobiles are permitted on shared-use pathways during a specified winter period based on the following general conditions :
 - All snowmobilers must slow to a dead slow speed and provide a wide berth when passing any other pathway user;
 - All snowmobilers using the pathways must be members of or under the authority of clubs that have entered into license of occupation agreements with the City and Snowmobile Clubs on a per-pathway basis, and must abide by the terms of those agreements;
 - All snowmobilers must adhere to the prohibited access and reduced speed zones as indicated on the pathway-specific maps;
 - Only clubs belonging to the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC), where membership can be proven by way of appropriate documentation, identification, and valid OFSC stickers on the snowmobile vehicle, can enter into licence of occupation agreements with the City;
 - That snowmobiles 1996 or older (defined as 'Classic by the OFSC) be excluded from access to these Pathways as a condition of the license;
 - That for the 2013/14 season and later, license of occupation agreements with snowmobile clubs for the Prescott-Russell and Osgoode pathways, the Ottawa-Carleton Trailway, and any future designated rural pathway incorporate 20km/hr speed reduction zones and curfews between 11 PM and 7 AM through built-up areas as indicated on pathway-specific maps; and
 - That future license of occupation agreement renewals with the snowmobile clubs be contingent on the club's providing a description of

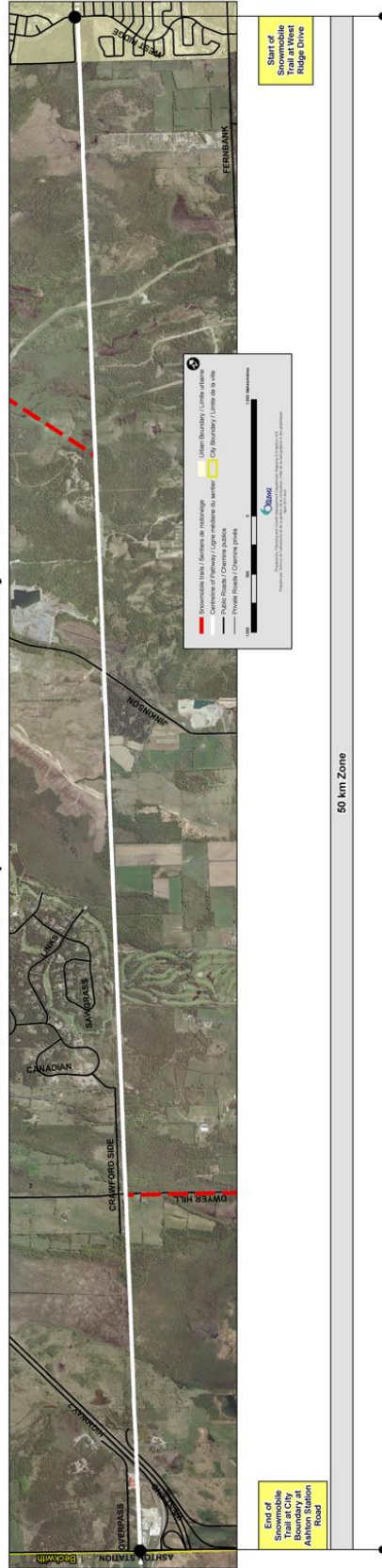
efforts to promote passing safety and Shared-Use Policy adherence among its members

- iii. The City shall grant access to the Osgoode Pathway to All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) users for the purposes of crossing the pathway at the designated locations as identified by Schedule C of the ATV By-law. Only ATV users that are members of the Ontario Federation of All-Terrain Vehicle Clubs (OFATVC) or affiliated ATV clubs shall be granted the access rights, as detailed in the ATV By-law.

SNOWMOBILE ROUTE MAP – OTTAWA-CARLETON PATHWAY

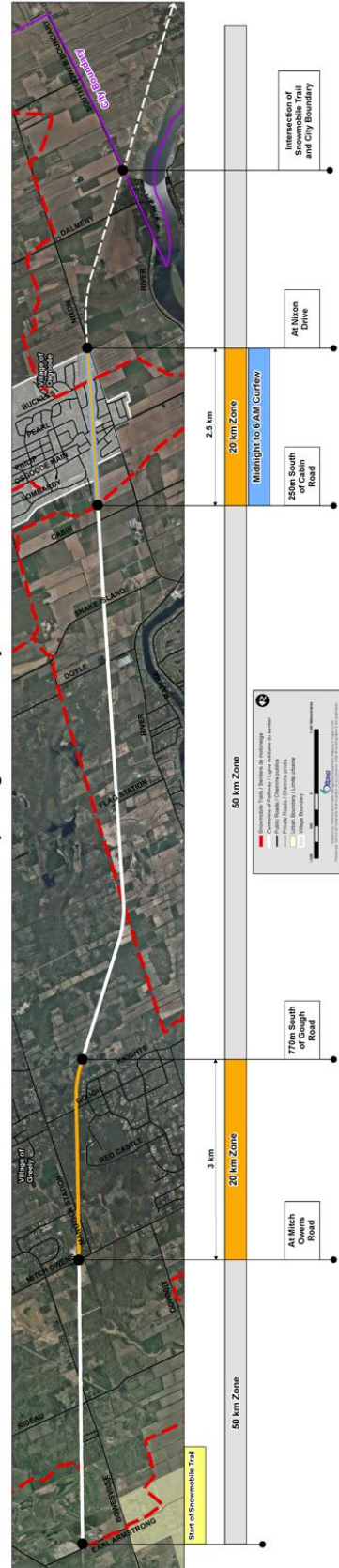
DOCUMENT 2

Snowmobile Route Map - Ottawa-Carleton Pathway - Version 1.0



SNOWMOBILE ROUTE MAP – OSGOODE PATHWAY

Snowmobile Route Map - Osgoode Pathway - Version 2.1



SNOWMOBILE ROUTE MAP – PRESCOTT-RUSSELL PATHWAY

DOCUMENT 4

Snowmobile Route Map - Prescott-Russell Pathway - Version 3.1

