

NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

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| | | No. | 2025-i173 |
| | | To | Board of Directors |
| For | INFORMATION | Date | 2025-04-10 |
| Subject/Title | | | |
| Enhanced mapping for inclusive trail use | | | |
| Summary | | | |
| <p>The <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> (ACA) was passed in 2019 with a mandate to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040. All federal organizations must comply with the ACA.</p> | | | |
| <p>The National Capital Commission (NCC) has developed its first accessibility plan to fulfill its responsibilities under the ACA. The plan outlines the barriers that exist at the NCC and the steps we will be taking to address them over the next three years (2023-2026).</p> | | | |
| <p>The NCC plan has identified barriers in the built environment, including access to the trail system. According to the NCC website, only two trails meet official universal accessibility criteria for a total of approximately 2 km out of the 300 km of walking trails in the network offered by the NCC. It has been noted, however, that several NCC trails have a low level of difficulty that allows them to be used by a very large number of users.</p> | | | |
| <p>By official dissemination information only for universally accessible trails, the NCC provides a very limited picture of what is actually available to users with varied abilities. In some cases, this information dissemination strategy may even contribute to creating artificial barriers to accessibility.</p> | | | |
| <p>A more inclusive approach for all users is to provide more accurate trail information so that users can make their own decisions regarding the locations that are accessible to them or not. This strategy gives individuals more options and autonomy, allowing them to access locations they would not otherwise have thought available to them.</p> | | | |
| <p>In order to develop this new approach, the Capital Stewardship Branch has created a project aimed at improving the quantity, quality and availability of information on the condition of certain trails. This project consists of a multi-platform geographic information system that allows users to take virtual tours of certain trails and access relevant information such as length, width (average and minimum), topographic profiles, slopes (average and maximum), trail surface, services available in the area and any barriers with a threshold greater than 5 cm (walkways, steps, roots, etc.).</p> | | | |
| <p>While the goal of this initiative is not to make trails universally accessible, the Capital Stewardship Branch took advantage of this project to remove some barriers and improve the experience for all users.</p> | | | |
| <p>This project was achieved through close collaboration between the Capital Stewardship Branch, the Information Technologies and Geomatics Services (ITGS) Division and the Canadian Disabled Outdoor Society (CanDO).</p> | | | |

Objectives

- Inspect and improve certain trails in the Greenbelt and Gatineau Park.
- Produce accurate and complete information on the condition of certain trails.
- Process and collate the information produced in an intuitive and efficient geographic information system.
- Disseminate the information to make it easy for everyone to find and use it.
- Improve the trail experience for all users.

Risk Summary

If this project were to be a major success, growth management will have to be done in compliance with NCC resources. In addition, the strength of this tool depends on the quality and updating of the data contained within it. The information shared with the public may be inaccurate if the mapping data is not properly maintained.

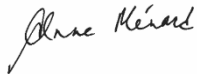
Recommendation

For information purposes only

Submitted by:

Anne Ménard, Vice-President, Capital Stewardship Branch

VP Name and Title



Signature

1. Strategic Priorities

Accessible Canada Act (S.C. 2019, c. 10):

- 6. (b) all persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities;
- (d) all persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities;

The Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067

- Plan accessibility of public spaces and natural areas for all ages and abilities [...].

National Capital Commission Accessibility Plan 2023-2026

2. Authority

N/A

3. Context

The Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility provided feedback on this project on March 18, 2025.

This is the first time this project has been presented to the Board of Directors.

The project has been presented to the Board of Directors for information purposes only and does not require a decision.

4. Options Analysis / NCC Staff Analysis

The project was received favourably by the NCC Leadership Committee on February 26, 2025.

The Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility was pleased with the project and provided feedback at the meeting on March 18, 2025.

5. Financial Details

Project costs are estimated at approximately \$50,000. These are comprised of salaries, person-hours and operational costs from existing operating budgets.

6. Opportunities and Expected Results

The goal of the project is to provide useful mapping information so that people can easily find and use trails tailored to their needs and abilities.

More trails could be incorporated into the mapping tool in the future.

In addition, the mapping data collected as part of this project may be useful in developing other applications.

7. Alignment with Government and NCC Policies

Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+):

This project aims to improve trail accessibility for all users. Geographically, it will have a significant impact on the population groups using the Greenbelt and Gatineau Park. Functionally, it will be of particular benefit to people with disabilities, as well as gender-diverse groups and seniors by reducing barriers to participation in outdoor activities.

The project can be adapted to meet the specific needs of these groups, providing them with a sense of being welcomed, comfort and confidence when accessing the trails. By providing detailed trail information, users will be able to make their own decisions about where they are accessible to them, increasing their autonomy and choice.

Residents in the National Capital Region (NCR) – with a particular focus on accessibility organizations – were consulted as part of the GBA Plus analysis to better understand their needs and how best to design trails to meet those needs. The project team also consulted the Capital Design Guidelines to make use of existing best practices in public space design.

The project will help improve the trail experience for all users by creating a more inclusive and accessible environment.

Directions for sustainable development:

This project aligns perfectly with NCC directions for sustainable development on several fronts. It promotes **active mobility** by encouraging the use of trails for walking and cycling, while ensuring **equitable and sustainable access** to green spaces for all people. It also contributes to the **preservation of biodiversity** by raising awareness among more people about ecosystem protection issues. By providing detailed and accessible trail information, the project is helping everyone better understand and appreciate the natural wealth that is the Greenbelt and Gatineau Park, while promoting environmentally friendly practices.

8. Risks and Mitigation Measures

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigation Measure |
|---|------------|----------|---|
| Managing project growth and public expectations | Moderate | Moderate | Manage project growth by prioritizing and respecting the availability of NCC resources. |
| Maintain trail conditions throughout the project. | Moderate | Moderate | - Conduct regular monitoring of trail conditions. |

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| | | | - Inform employees and contractors about this project. |
| Future obsolescence of the data | High | Moderate | Schedule periodic data updates (3-5 years). |

9. Public Engagement and Communications

The project was developed in partnership with the Canadian Disabled Outdoor Society (CanDO).

The Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility provided feedback on this project on March 18, 2025.

The general public and future users will be informed of the existence of this new mapping tool through various media before the summer of 2025.

The public will be able to comment and submit potential improvements to the mapping tool in the years to come to contribute to the continuous improvement process of the project.

10. Next Steps

- Incorporate input from the Board of Directors and the Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility into the project.
- Hone the mapping tool.
- Put the mapping tool online and disseminate information to the public.
- Have the mapping tool undergo a continuous improvement process.

11. List of Appendices

PowerPoint Presentation

12. Authors of the Submission

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