

City of Mississauga Memorandum



Date: 2020/11/30

To: Chair and Members of Mississauga Cycling Advisory Committee

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Meeting Date: 2020/12/08

Subject: Trail Signage Best Practices

Introduction

The City of Mississauga features approximately 500 kilometres of cycling infrastructure. This memo outlines the signage used along our trail networks including park paths, multi-use trails, and off-road trails.

Regulatory Signage

To achieve uniformity in regulatory signage throughout our trail network, the City references design guidelines such as the Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18 Cycling Facilities, Ontario Traffic Manual Book 5 Regulatory Signs, and Transportation Association of Canada's Bikeway Traffic Control Guidelines for Canada. These guidelines ensure regulatory signage such as Bicycle Lane, Shared Pathway, Dismount and Walk, and Crossing Ahead are consistent in size, shape, placement, spacing, and content throughout Mississauga.

Trail Etiquette Signage

Trail etiquette is a code of conduct expected of all users. The common "dos and don'ts" of shared trail systems include:

- Stay on the right, pass on the left
- Be courteous of all trail users
- Do not block the trail
- Do not litter
- Use safe speeds
- Be alert
- Communicate to other travellers when passing
- Keep dogs on a leash

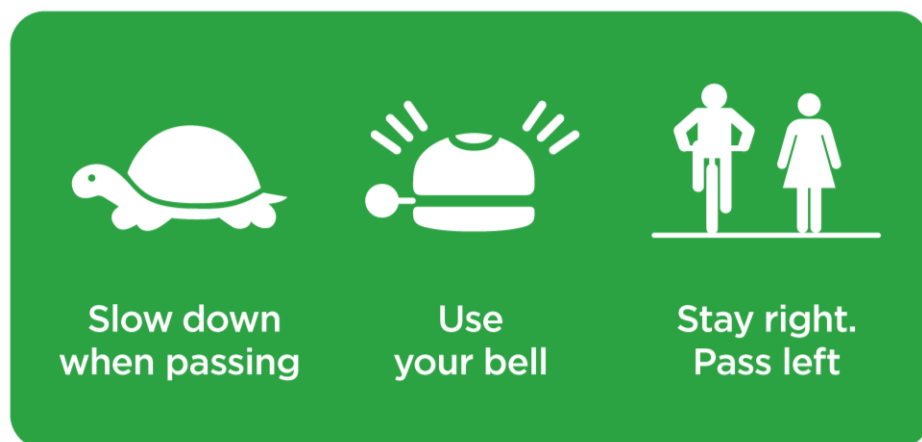
The design manuals mentioned above do not standardise the design, content, or placement of trail etiquette signage. Instead, each municipality is responsible for developing and implementing their individual trail etiquette messaging.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, an increase in trail and pathway traffic has been prevalent. Many municipalities throughout Ontario have been introducing educational signage and messaging to the public to ensure the trails are safe for all users.

City of Mississauga Share the Trail Campaign

Earlier this year, The City of Mississauga launched the [Share the Trail Campaign](#). The campaign includes educational messaging being shared through the City's website and social media outlets. As part of the campaign, a trail etiquette sign was developed (shown in Figure 1) by Strategic Communications and Active Transportation to feature three key safety messages for all trail users. The key messages on the sign also address common concerns the City receives from residents regarding shared trails.

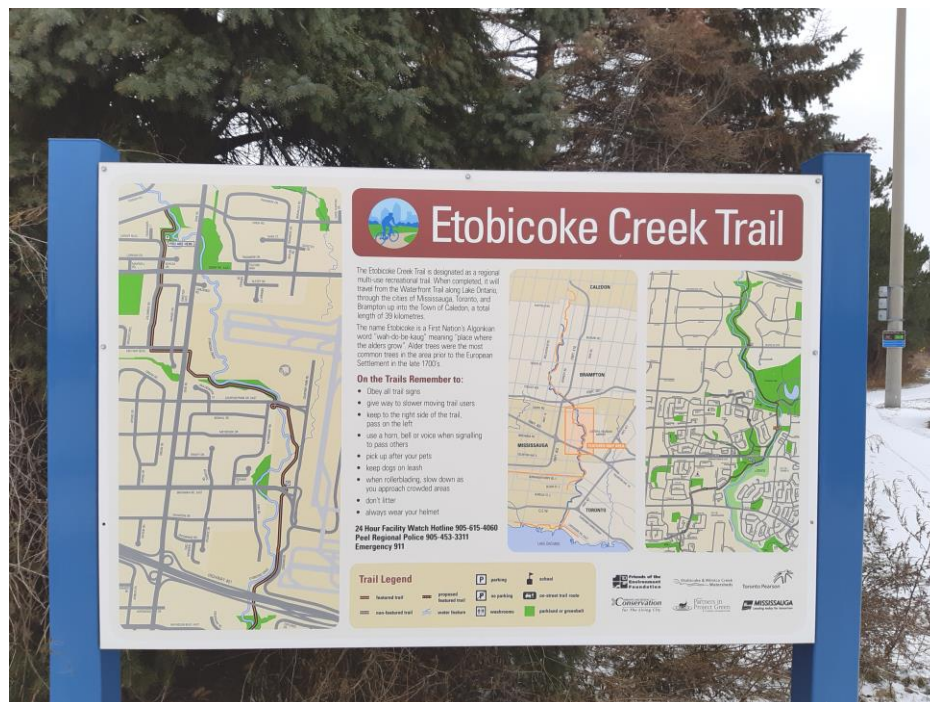
Figure 1 Share the Trail Campaign Trail Etiquette Sign



As part of a pilot, 25 total trail etiquette signs were installed within the Lake Aquitaine and Lake Wabukayne trail systems at trail entrances. The City is currently collecting [feedback](#) on the mississaugabikes.ca website, to allow residents to provide comments on the trail etiquette signage.

Additional trail information including history, maps, further trail etiquette messaging, and contact information can be found on the City's Trailhead signage (Shown in Figure 2 below).

Figure 2 City of Mississauga Trailhead Signage



Trail Etiquette Signage in Other Municipalities

Town of Ajax

The Town of Ajax introduced trail etiquette signage along their seven-kilometre Waterfront Trail as part of a pilot project. The goal of the project is to collect public feedback on the content and placement of the signage. Ajax's sign (Shown below in Figure 3), displays six key messages to trail users along with colourful illustrations.

Figure 3 Town of Ajax Trail Etiquette Sign



Town of Caledon

The trail etiquette signage implemented by the Town of Caledon (Shown in Figure 4), displays key messages for all trail users including cyclists, pedestrians, equestrians, and pet owners.

Figure 4 Town of Caledon Trail Etiquette Sign



City of Toronto

As part of their Parks and Wayfinding Signage Strategy, the City of Toronto introduced new “Trailhead Pillar” signage throughout their network. The signs include wayfinding information and trail etiquette messaging, as shown in Figures 5 and 6 below.

Figure 5 City of Toronto Trailhead Pillar Sign



Figure 6 City of Toronto Trailhead Pillar Sign



City of Ottawa

The City of Ottawa installed pathway etiquette signage throughout their network to inform all trail users (in both English and French) of four key messages. In 2019, students from Algonquin College conducted a research study reviewing the design and effectiveness of Ottawa's trail etiquette signage. The study incorporated public surveys and analyses to determine the original sign (Shown in Figure 7) was ineffective. The majority of the trail users were not reading the sign due to the amount and size of text and the limited number of signs installed. The students developed a new sign design (Shown in Figure 8), which included less text, a larger font size, and illustrations.

Figure 7 City of Ottawa Original Sign



Figure 8 City of Ottawa Newly Designed Sign



Discussion

Due to a lack of federal and provincial regulations to follow, there does not appear to be a consistency in the colour, content, size, shape, or placement of trail etiquette signage in the municipalities reviewed. However, there are design similarities seen in each of the signs reviewed, including:

- Displaying key safety and courtesy messages
- Use of visual illustrations to demonstrate and create interest in the key messages displayed

Conclusion

The City of Mississauga's trail etiquette signage displays three key safety messages to the public in a clear and concise manner. The simple yet effective design allows the educational messaging to be understood by all trail users. Feedback opportunities will allow staff to assess the effectiveness of the signage among the general public. Staff will report back to the MCAC with the results of the feedback received.