

STAFF REPORT



To: Council
From: Adam Dedrick, Director of Recreation & Parks
Approved by: Trudy Payne, Chief Administrative Officer
Date: October 13, 2021
Subject: Jordan River Trail Letter of Authority Amendment

ORIGIN

On September 21, 2021 the Municipality hosted a public meeting about their plans to potentially expand the use of the Jordan River Trail to include off highway vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT, Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne submit a request to the NS Department of Lands & Forestry to amend the Letter of Authority for the Jordan River Trail to include Off Highway Vehicles.

BACKGROUND

There is currently a Letter of Authority from the NS Department of Lands and Forestry for all of the municipal trails and the Jordan River Trail is included as a multi-use trail. One of the early steps of the process to change the LOA is to hold a public meeting with adjacent landowners and users of the trail to identify their interests, desires and issues that may need to be considered. Those considerations can then be included in the request to change the LOA.

DISCUSSION

The public meeting had around 45 people in attendance which consisted of residents, trail users and stakeholders. This included representation from the Woodland Multi-Use Trail Association, NS Trails Federation, ATVANS and the NS Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage. A few municipal staff and several councilors were also in attendance. The rationale for expanding the use of the Jordan River Trail was reviewed as was the plan to convert the trail. The meeting was then opened for questions and comments.

Only a few questions asked, all by the same individual, which were related to wilderness protection, repair costs for the Jordan River bridge and how the Municipality would fund the repairs. The individual also asked if the Municipality would consider, in its planning for the bridge repairs, to partner with NSTIR to make the bridge a Bailey bridge to provide access for vehicles in emergency situations.

There was only one other person who spoke, and it was a representative of the Woodland Multi-Use Trail Association and the Shelburne County ATV Association. The individual thanked the Municipality for exploring the expansion of the Jordan River Trail and their continued support for trail development in the Municipality.

With no further comments or questions, it was apparent that the majority of those in attendance were in support of expanding the use of the trail to include OHVs.

In addition, there was previous community consultation completed that provided evidence of support for OHV use on trails. In 2020, the Recreation & Parks Department conducted a survey to gather data on the use of local trails located in the Municipality that are regularly maintained by a trail group or organization. The results of the survey, which had 298 respondents, showed an overwhelming support of a connected trail system and one that allows motorized use. In addition, trail counts were done for the Municipal trails only, to get a better idea of the frequency of activities taking place on the trails. This showed that there is already motorized use on the Jordan River Trail.

The public meeting results along with the results of the trail use survey and trail counts give valid reasons to pursue the amendment of the Letter of Authority to include OHVs.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

None at this time.

ALTERNATIVES

To not pursue an amendment to the LOA, but this would result in the trail remaining as is, stalling any further trail development, which would create a gap in connecting the Jordan trail system.

ATTACHMENTS

-Recorded Notes from the Jordan River Trail Public Meeting September 21, 2021