

# Pathways Newsletter

The Pathways for People newsletter is published three times a year and shares trail stories and updates, events and local news on infrastructure work happening across Norfolk County



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# Pathways Newsletter

## HAPPY TO BE BACK

Submitted by Alex Dobias  
Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit

After taking a pause on routine events during the COVID-19 pandemic, Pathways for People is excited to resume normal activities and continue to advocate for improved connected pathways in Norfolk County.

Pathways is actively recruiting new members who are passionate about active trail use and advocating for a connected community that is safe for walking and biking in Norfolk County. Meetings are held monthly at the Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit. Anyone is welcome to join and see what Pathways is all about. Contact any member to learn more, <https://norfolkpathways.ca/contact/>.



## UPCOMING TRAIL WALK

Pathways is very excited to host our first trail walk of the year on Saturday May 4th, 2024! The walk will take place at Shadow Lake Trail in Waterford starting at 2pm. Meeting location is the parking lot located on Concession 8 in Waterford.



A full map can be viewed here: <https://www.waterfordtrailsandponds.ca/maps-parking>.

This trail is surrounded by gorgeous wetlands and features the historic Black Bridge and newly added (2023) Moccasin Identifier teaching circle.

Rain or shine, come and join us for a great day! Walkers are reminded to bring a water bottle and appropriate foot wear.

Check out our poster on page 9!

# Pathways Newsletter

## A FINAL LOOK BACK ON COVID-19

Submitted by Rob Luke

Pathways for People, Turkey Point Mountain Bike Club

The COVID-19 pandemic lasted 38 months and had a profound effect on society and everyone has a personal experience dealing with it and how it changed our lives and living habits. Safe to say, the event had an effect on the Turkey Point Mountain Bike Club (TPMBC), our trail network, membership, and the cycling community as a whole. Strange days indeed!

TPMBC was formed in 2011 and our membership numbers increased every year until levelling off to around 400 members leading up to the pandemic in 2020. Once pandemic restrictions were implemented, many people were looking for a safe outlet to exercise and de-stress. Consequently, our membership increased dramatically to around 600 and the demand for mountain bikes increased too. Bike manufacturers were overwhelmed and high demand caused delivery delays for many wanting a bicycle and drove the prices up.

The use of our network increased and then took an ominous turn when authorities and landowners closed our network in the perceived belief in public safety. TPMBC and groups like Norfolk Pathways for People appealed to the authorities to keep the trails open as social distancing could be achieved safely in a trail setting. Furthermore, limiting people to access to outdoor exercise and the peace and serenity of exposure to nature could very well cause a lot of mental health harm. People that were used to being on the trails were now shut out; and they needed the forest experience more than ever during those stressful dark days.

Thankfully, the authorities reconsidered and allowed trails to reopen. In all fairness to the public policy decision makers; that was a time of great uncertainty as no one had experience dealing with a calamity of this size in generations. They erred on the side of caution.

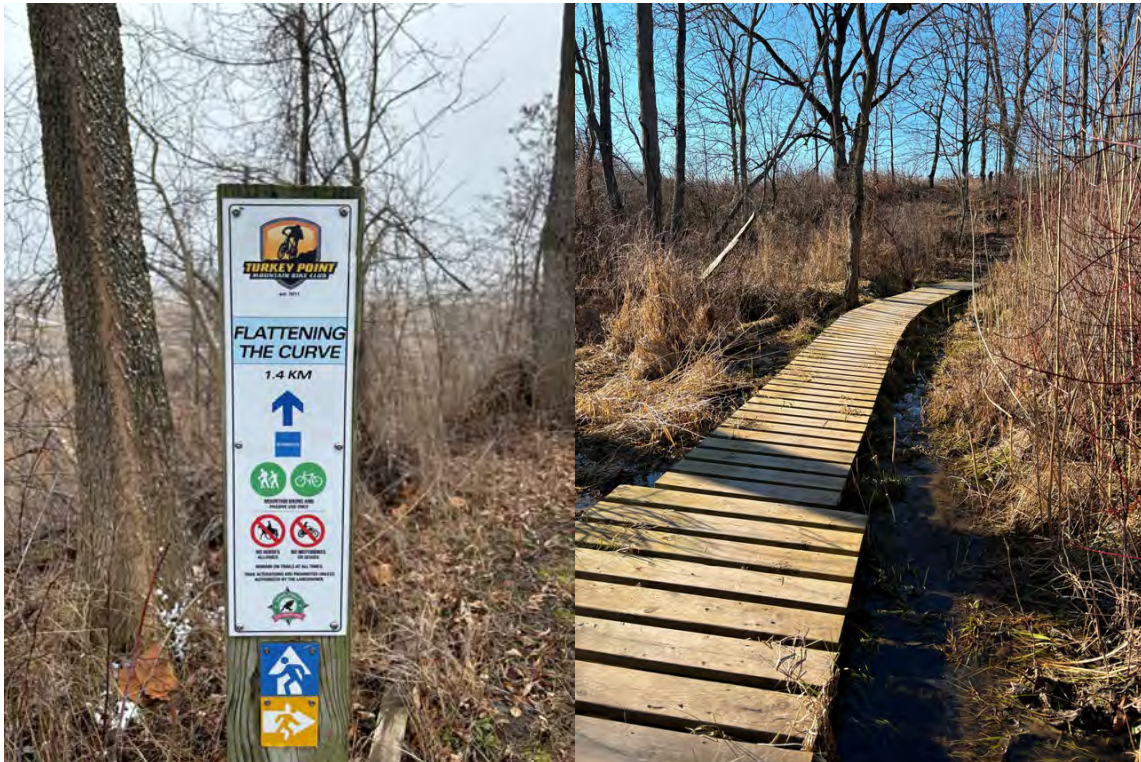


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# Pathways Newsletter

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TPMBC built a new trail during the pandemic on private land. Two groups of five volunteers practiced social distancing while bushing out a trail and the two groups never worked on the same day and never met. We named the 1.4 km long trail, 'Flattening the Curve'. It has a 60' catwalk that is actually curved and raised! (see photo)



Post COVID now and there is a glut of bikes available as manufacturers over produced. Many people purchased bicycles with good intentions and they are now hiding in the back of the garage and many units are available for resale. TPMBC membership numbers did decline back to pre COVID numbers but has recently been rising as many people looking for exercise and adventure did take up the sport. We have had a very large increase in the number of hikers on our trail network as people discovered it during the pandemic.

The COVID 19 Pandemic was a very impactful event in all our lives. It changed our public health, and strangely, our political views. It changed the way we worked and viewed our lifestyles. It was a tragedy for many who fell sick and for those that lost their loved one's lives. If one positive came out of the situation; it was the realization by many, that mental health and well being could be achieved by exercising in the forest. Taking the time for that restorative hike or bike ride is now foremost in many people's approach to better health. In paraphrasing a good friend, 'The forest needs people; and people need the forest'

# Pathways Newsletter

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Submitted by Rob Martin

Pathways for People, Silver Spokes Cycling Club

In 2016, Norfolk County officially adopted the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) that had been developed by Public Works and the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit with significant input from Pathways for People. Since then, we've seen a gradual implementation of cycling infrastructure initiatives identified in the ATP as Public Works conducts annual road repairs and reconstruction.

The most noticeable and beneficial are the paved shoulders to be found on various county roads and highways within Norfolk. Paved shoulders are primarily intended to support and preserve the main travel lanes. However, they are generous in width and thereby very suitable for use of cyclists needing to use arterial roads.

Summary of areas already addressed:

- Cockshutt Rd from Thompson/County Road 9 to Silver Lake Rd
- Portion of Radical Road from Nelson West towards Trailer Park
- Portions of Thompson Rd/County Rd 9 towards Villa Nova
- Old Hwy 24 from Bloomsburg to Con 6 Townsend
- Swimming Pool Rd. North from Con 11 Windham
- Hwy 6 West from Port Dover to Hwy 24 South
- Hwy 24 South from Simcoe to Turkey Pt Rd



With over 50 individual locations slated in the ATP for Paved Shoulders, good progress has been made with Norfolk County clearly committed to delivering as projects are prioritized.

Also noteworthy are the 35 locations which will be evaluated for even more enhanced cycling infrastructure in the form of bike lanes, buffered paved shoulders and in boulevard multi use trails.

Further, an initiative is ongoing between Norfolk County, Pathways, and Silver Spokes CC to improve Share the Road signage in critical areas destined for infrastructure on an interim basis. Hillcrest and Radical Roads are but two areas already addressed with two dozen others to be considered.

Finally, these same groups will also be stakeholders when the ATP comes up for review in a couple of years' time.

While the ATP is progressing well and areas of concern beyond the 2016 plan well documented, suggestions and questions are welcome. Readers of the P4P newsletters are invited to voice their observations. Submissions should identify the location, reasons, and benefits. We will review all suggestions with the current ATP and if not include it for consideration. We will also respond to the contributor.

Forward your suggestions to: Rob Martin ([themartins@amtelecom.net](mailto:themartins@amtelecom.net)) or Gord Mason ([mason\\_gordon@hotmail.com](mailto:mason_gordon@hotmail.com))

# Pathways Newsletter

## WATERFORD HERITAGE TRAIL ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Submitted by Frank Woodcock

Pathways for People, Waterford Heritage Trail Association

This year marks our 22nd Anniversary. A lot has happened since 2002. We have become a destination, a part of the Trans Canada Trail System, a friendly neighbour, a fresh air and exercise venue, a Nature corridor, a pollinator garden, an environmental steward, accessible, an all-round good place to be and we have plans for much more. Want to clear your head or your heart, refresh your body, commune with Nature, spend time with friends or family, then think of us. In fact, spending time on the Waterford Heritage Trail (WHT) earns you environmental credits which makes the World a better place.



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2023 was calmer after a year of paving. We completed our Federal grant commitment with Andy Kooistra finishing off the Teaching Circle with a professional look. This well-located meeting place will give pause to reflect on the Indigenous heritage our trails are laid upon. This year also saw Katherine McCurdy organize a successful run/walk in conjunction with Pumpkinfest, an initial planting of our Memorial Grove, signage to welcome respectful cyclists to our trail system and direct traffic more safely.

In preparation for the new Provincial financial reporting called ONCA we are updating our constitution which coincides with the resignation of our long time Treasurer, Ross Coomber and the recruitment of a new Treasurer, Marg Gurney. Ross we really appreciate all you have done for us and look forward to working with you as a Director. Marg, welcome and thank you for taking on this important role.

In the spring we are planting another 4 acre section of prairie grass and wildflowers in conjunction with ALUS and the Canadian Wildlife Federation. They provide the seeds and we prepare the land by killing the weeds, cutting the dead stalks and planting the seed. If you have the time and equipment for any of these jobs, please contact us. Help is always appreciated.

We have been asked to provide feedback on constructing a pavilion in the shadow Lake area. Waterford is the only Norfolk community without a pavilion and we may have an opportunity to rectify the situation.

And most importantly, thank all of you for your continuing support.



# Pathways Newsletter

## LYNN VALLEY TRAIL ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Submitted by Jan Dean

Pathways for People, Lynn Valley Trail Association

After a winter that wasn't, the Lynn Valley Trail Association (LVTA) is gearing up for the warmer weather that will bring walkers, joggers and cyclists back onto the trail in droves.

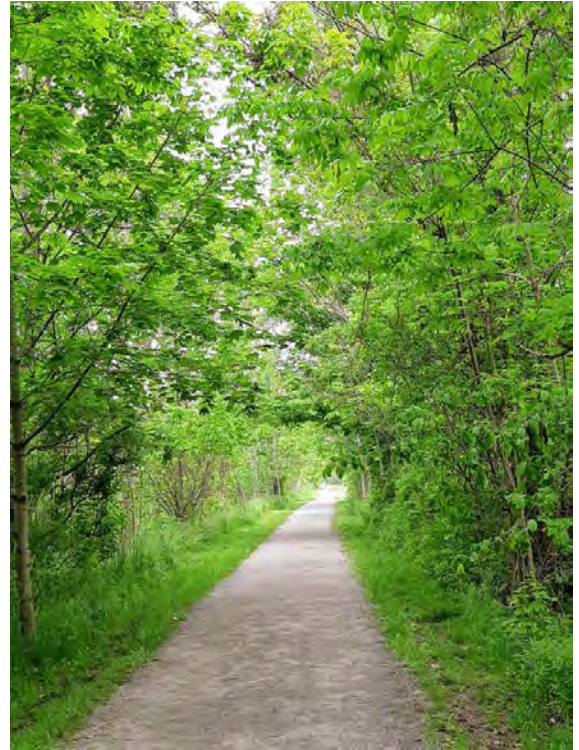
The Lynn Valley Trail proved itself a critical piece of Norfolk County infrastructure during the COVID shutdown when it became the most used facility in the County. It remains critical infrastructure and the LVTA is committed to enhancing the quality of user experiences on the trail.

Through the winter we've been setting up plans and contracts for trail maintenance. Discussions continue about a port-a-potty and the issue of garbage is on going. A second bike repair station is being installed. New signage is being organized.

Now that social distance isn't mandated we are also investigating the possibility of guided nature walks along the Lynn Valley Trail. We also plan to liaise more with local schools for activities on the trail.

The LVTA is also researching Moccasin Identifiers for the trail to make users aware that First Nations have walked these lands long before we did.

On the administrative side of things, the LVTA is pleased to announce that we are now in compliance with the new Ontario legislation regulating not-for-profit corporations and charities.





# Pathways Newsletter

## SPRING TRAIL WALK POSTER



**Walkers Wanted!**  
Join Norfolk Pathways for People

for a *Spring* **WALK** on the  
Waterford Shadow Lake Trail

SATURDAY  
**MAY 4**  
2024

2 to 4 p.m.  
Rain or shine  
All are welcome!  
Walk or Wheel



- Meeting location: parking lot on Concession 8, Waterford (view full map here: [waterfordtrailsandponds.ca/maps-parking](http://waterfordtrailsandponds.ca/maps-parking))
- Trail highlights: Moccasin Identifier teaching circle, Black Bridge, and stunning wetlands!

For information, contact: Alex Dobias  
519-426-6170 Ext. 3367 or [alex.dobias@hnhss.ca](mailto:alex.dobias@hnhss.ca)

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