

Phase 2 Millennium Trail Issues

April, 2005

This issues summary responds to the public comments from opponents of the proposed relocation of Phase 2 of the Millennium Trail on the east side of the Niagara Power Canal south of McLeod Road. This proposed relocation of the trail is the result of the Ontario Power Generation (formerly Ontario Hydro) advising the City that Phase 2 of the Millennium Trail not be pursued on the west side of the Power Canal. This stems from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority requesting the construction of a second canal to the west of the existing Power Canal to alleviate water fluxuation levels up stream along the Welland River. This second canal project is estimated to cost 15 million dollars and is planned for construction by 2010. Due to the new information, the use of the east side of the Power Canal is being revisited for Phase 2 of the trail. City Council has requested the hosting of a Public Meeting to address the future of the Millennium Trail.

Summary of comments from residents opposed to Phase 2 of the trail on the east side of the Power Canal south of McLeod Road and responses are as follows:

- **Cost of the \$300,000 would be better utilized for roads and sewers** - *This argument was not used a year ago when Council agreed to develop the trail and expend an additional \$400,000 for a pedestrian bridge for the trail on the west side of the Power Canal. The actual amount of tax dollars to be used for the project would be approximately 50% as there will be approximately \$100,000 from the development charges fund and \$50,000 from community fundraising. The City has a proactive plan with respect to rebuilding and resurfacing roads and separating sanitary and storm sewers. Decisions for all expenditures including municipal works services, recreation facilities, fire services requires a careful balance and rests with City Council. The Millennium Trail has been identified as part of the Greater Niagara Circle Route and the Niagara Region will include the Millennium Trail in future funding program opportunities.*
- **Concern with increase in garbage** - *Garbage can be addressed through maintenance. The experience in Phase One is that there is very little litter and garbage. Cardinal Newman and Greendale Schools have adopted Phase 1 of the Millennium Trail. These groups have reported very little garbage along the trail.*
- **Concern with the loss of privacy** - *There would be a sizeable buffer of 50 to 60 feet from the rear residential property line to the recreational trail. There will be an opportunity to enhance the landscaping with the planting of trees and shrubs.*
- **Concern with negative effect on wildlife** - *The experience is that wildlife will adapt. It has been found that wild turkeys and deer are not effected by Phase 1 of the Trail. The advantage of the accessing the natural green space corridor along the Power Canal is that all residents of the City will have an opportunity to experience nature so close to*

where they live.

- **Concern with safety by travelling along a short portion of McLeod Road** - There would be a short section (about 100 yards) where people will travel along the south side of McLeod Road (either along the road or sidewalk) to reach the start of Phase 2 of the Millennium Trail on the east side of the Power Canal. This is not considered a safety concern as there is a set of traffic lights at the intersection of McLeod Road and Oakwood Drive.
- **Concern that parking inadequate for Phase 1** - The existing parking lot was not designed to be large. It was the intent that most people in the community would be able to access the trail through a linked system without having to drive.
- **Concern that few people use the trail** - It has been the City's experience that Phase 1 of the Millennium Trail is well used by the community and particularly in the spring and summer when the weather is pleasant.
- **Concern that people using the trail will view and see in my back yard** - The users of the trail will be 55 to 60 feet from the rear lot line of the residential properties. Trail users are using the trails for leisure walks and exercise. They generally have no interest in viewing people's back yards. There will also be the opportunity for landscaping and in many cases the rear yards may be screened from view.
- **Concern with increased vandalism** - Research indicates that in areas where there are people using trails there is less vandalism. There has been no report of increased vandalism from the industrial businesses along Phase 1 of the Millennium Trail who have expensive equipment in view. A research was carried out of police reports for 2004 and it was found that there was no crime problem stemming from the development of Phase 1 of the Millennium Trail. There has been a few reports of minor incidences such as graffiti painted on the trail and small sign in 2002. Staff quickly painted over the graffiti and repaired the sign. There has been the occasional bottle broken on the trail and dog feces. However, these types of problems are often cleaned up quickly and are not uncommon in many of the City's parks.
- **Concern that there are no problems with Phase I of the Millennium Trail because there are no homes along the trail** - There are industrial operators along Phase 1 and they have not experienced problems. There is Oakwood Lodge and the new Millennium Trail Manor along Oakwood Drive and the trail is used on a regular basis by their residents. Another residential development is being proposed north of the new storage units along Oakwood Drive and they wish to have access to the trail as part of their residential development. The City has not experienced problems along the Haulage Road trail or the new Mitchell Line Trail where the rear yards are considerably closer to the recreational trail than what is proposed in Phase 2 of the Millennium Trail.

- **Concern that the sale price of homes backing onto the trail will be lower** - *Today many home buyers want to be close to nature and within close vicinity to recreational trails. There is no indication that home prices will devalue. In fact there is a good likelihood that the trail will increase property value.*
- **Concern that they bought a house because of hydro land behind and nothing would be developed** - *There will be a change with the introduction of a trail on the east side. As hydro lands, they are a public resource and many view them as lands that should be shared and experienced by all of the community.*
- **Concern that early walkers would disturb homeowners** - *Some walkers will use the trail early in the morning but they would not likely generate much if any noise. The distance from the back property line will be 55 to 60 feet. Walkers currently using sidewalks in the front of the residents are much closer.*
- **How would hydro access area for maintenance** - *Hydro will have the ability to travel between the new security fence and the Power Canal for their inspections.*
- **Concern that trees and shrubs to be planted could take a long time to grow** - *The proposed landscaping will include trees and scrubs of various sizes and age.*
- **The City should build the Downtown Trail** - *The Downtown Trail is one of a number of trails identified in the Trails & Bikeway Master Plan for development. However, the Downtown Trail is listed lower on the priority list. The trail development along the Power Canal is identified as a priority because of the natural green space character and the ability to serve a majority of the community.*
- **There is no connection from the Millennium Trail to the New Community Centre** - *A sidewalk exists along the south side of McLeod Road from Oakwood Drive to Montrose Road and bikelanes are proposed along McLeod Road in the future.*
- **There are lots of parks such as Dufferin Islands and the Niagara Parkway Trail** - *These are lands owned by the Niagara Parks Commission. For most residents, they are required to drive to these areas and they are busy in the summer and on weekends with tourists. The intent of the Millennium Trail is to provide inexpensive leisure recreational opportunities for people who wish to walk, jog, rollerblade or cycle within a relatively short distance from their home. It is a community trail system for the local community.*