



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

OFFICE OF PARKS, FACILITIES, RECREATION & CULTURE

MISSION STATEMENT: *Committed to delivering cost-effective and efficient services for the residents of the Town of Amherstburg with a view to improve and enhance their quality of life.*

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Author's Phone: 519 736-5712 ext. 2128	Date to Council: December 11, 2023
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To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: Windsor Essex Bike Community (WEBC) Libro Centre Mountain Bike Trail Proposal Phase 2

1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

1. Council **AUTHORIZE** the conditional approval to proceed with Phase 2 of the Windsor Essex Bike Community (WEBC) Libro Centre Mountain Bike Trail Project at the Libro Centre subject to a due diligence process ensuring conformity with the design criteria and initiatives outlined in the current and future phases of the Libro Centre Master Plan, with an understanding that the proposed concept may be subject to change; this is to permit WEBC to raise funds needed to complete Phase 2 of the project.
2. Council **DIRECT** Administration to diligently proceed with the planning, design and execution of Phase 2 of the Libro Centre Mountain Bike Trail Project in partnership with WEBC; ensuring compliance with relevant regulations through a thorough evaluation and planning process,
3. Council **DELEGATE** authority to the Chief Administrative Officer and Clerk to negotiate, sign and execute any modifications to the existing Land Stewardship Agreement and/or any such agreement, declarations or approvals required for the implementation of Phase 2 of the Libro Centre Mountain Bike Trail Project, satisfactory in form to the Chief Financial Officer, in technical content to the Director of Parks, Facilities, Recreation and Culture, and in legal content to the Chief Administrative Officer. This is with an understanding that the proposed concept may be subject to change.

2. BACKGROUND:

The Town of Amherstburg Parks Master Plan was approved by Council in 2018. The Master Plan has 77 recommendations and provides a framework for the development of parks in Amherstburg, outlining guiding principles and best management practices for the development of a robust park system. The plan helps to identify and evaluate future park projects, including new opportunities as well as the redevelopment of existing assets.

In late 2022 Administration was approached by the Windsor Essex Bike Community (WEBC) with respect to creating a bike trail network at the Libro Centre located at 3295 Meloche Street in Amherstburg. WEBC is a registered non-profit organization that advocates for the development and improvement of cycling trails and promotion of healthy active living within the Windsor Essex Community. WEBC is committed to advocating for all types of cyclists in Essex County, while providing a platform to promote mutually beneficial partnerships between the riding community and local government. They advocate for the development of new cycling specific trails in Windsor Essex County and promote all aspects of cycling to increase community involvement, tourism, and economic growth within the region.

The project at the Libro started with a vision to create a safe trail network that is inclusive, is for all ages and skill levels of riders and provides a new and unique mountain bike experience for residents in Amherstburg and the surrounding area. The group approached Council in 2023 requesting permission to approve their plans in principle and worked tirelessly on fund raising efforts in order to raise enough money to construct Phase 1 of the project. In six short weeks they raised a total of \$33,120 in community donations including 15 local business and 50 residents who supported the project to fully execute and construct the trails as proposed for Phase 1 of the project.

WEBC signed a Land Stewardship Agreement with the Town of Amherstburg in order to build the trails at the Libro. Some of the trail features were built with a professional trail building company along with experienced and fully insured volunteers. WEBC and 50+ volunteers put in over 1500+ hours of work to successfully execute the installation of the trails for Phase 1 in just 3 short months. A well attended grand opening was held on Saturday June 10th 2023 with well over 50+ riders when the trails officially opened. The trails have been highly used since the grand opening in June and are constructed for all ages and abilities from beginners to advanced riders and are designed to the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) standards for trail building.

3. DISCUSSION:

The Town of Amherstburg now has the beginnings of a premier cycling venue for a fraction of what it would have cost the Town to build these trails without the partnership of WEBC. WEBC's Phase 1 trail proposal uses a portion of the Libro property that is under utilized space and is not at this time identified for future development plans at the Libro. The trail is supported under Recommendation #59 of the Parks Master plan that states: *'Foster Stakeholder partnerships to enhance the long-term stewardship of trails and greenways.'* and Recommendation #60 *'Develop a community cycling and pedestrian plan that builds upon this Parks Master Plan by assessing policies, standards, education /awareness initiatives, and current and future infrastructure requirements.'*

During the end of construction of Phase 1 WEBC approached Administration requesting conditional approval be granted to start evaluations on Phase 2 of the project. The proposal attached under **Appendix A** outlines the plans for Phase 2 as currently suggested.

In order to offer a more lengthy and robust riding experience, attract more riders and host races and events, expansion of the trails are needed. Phase 2 of WEBC's proposal targets an additional 3 km of cross country (XC) mountain bike trails that loop behind the Libro Centre and will allow riders the opportunity to safely improve their cycling skills.

Phase 2 will complement the Phase 1 (beginner or green level) country trail loop and will provide progressively more difficult terrain and features consistent with an intermediate level (blue) trail. Phase 2 will be an excellent addition to the already very popular Phase 1 trails constructed at the Libro Centre. The land on which this is being proposed is currently unused space where fill was placed during the construction of the Libro Complex in 2012. Council should be aware that an update to the Parks Master Plan is proposed in the upcoming 2024 budget at which time the Libro Master Plan will also be updated.

Administration has reviewed the proposal for Phase 2 from WEBC with respect to space requirements and there appears to be room to accommodate the trails without interfering with planned future amenities. If direction is provided, the trail footprint would be reviewed against the space needs to ensure that any future expansion spaces required are preserved. Administration has also informed WEBC that if in the event future space was needed to accommodate further amenities it will be at the Town's complete discretion to have WEBC re-work the trails so that they fit harmoniously with any future planned amenities. The existing Land Stewardship Agreement contemplates these provisions.

The WEBC cycling trails at the Libro provide the community so many opportunities including a new recreational venue and experience for over 500+ local and out of town riders who rode the trails in summer and fall of 2023. This initiative has also positively impacted the community from an economic standpoint with the opening of a brand-new bike shop in Amherstburg (Flow Café & Bikes) which opened as a direct result of Phase 1 of the trails. In addition to these positives, 100+ local youth riders are estimated to participate in WEBC's Youth Mountain Bike Club which is planned for 2024 and will be hosted at this facility and WEBC will be partnering with the Town to offer riding classes to teach people about the sport. WEBC also donated four brand new mountain bikes to North Star High School so that students can safely ride the newly constructed trails.

WEBC has provided a proposal outlining their strategies and benefits, including, personal, social, community as well as economic benefits of creating more cycling trails (**See Appendix A**). The proposal identifies the 3 km cross country trail at the Libro Centre, which would be located on the east side of the hill behind the large artificial turf football field. Administration has reviewed WEBC's Phase 2 proposal and will ensure that it fits within the context of the site and the final layout chosen will be authorized in a way not to interfere with future development plans at the Libro Centre.

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

Conditional approval of Phase 2 carries with it minimal risk that the expanded trails will interfere with future proposed amenities at the Libro. This risk is low due to the fact that

the trails are comprised of simple dirt pathways that can easily be relocated with very minimal cost and impact to the existing site. The space required for Phase 2 of the bike trails is currently under-utilized space that supports the recreational opportunity. If, in the future the trails need to be moved or decommissioned to accommodate future uses this can easily be accomplished, although Council should be aware that there are reputational and political risks associated with decommissioning any recreational amenity.

Owning and operating a recreational amenity like a mountain bike trail carries associated risk related to injuries that may be sustained while using the amenity. In seeking to offset the associated risk, the risk management strategy utilized is one of risk transfer. The Land Stewardship Agreement indemnifies the Town in relation to its activities, and carries with it the requirement for WEBC to provide the Town with a Certificate of Insurance in the amount of \$10,000,000, which can be increased in the future should this agreement persist for a significant amount of time and the amounts associated are deemed too low. The risk treatment with this site has also involved a series of engagements with WEBC, to which they have been accommodating to ensure that there are accurate and timely reporting of any hazards or harms and that other elements such as trail closing procedures and signage are provided to the Town for review and comment. The Town will further modify the associated risk by ensuring that staff are trained to recognize hazard conditions on such an amenity. Through these engagements in Phase One, a strong relationship has been built which can be relied upon to ensure timely and effective risk mitigation.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The funding strategy to support this initiative being brought forward by WEBC is through community outreach, sponsorship, donor funding opportunities in conjunction with applying for grants in order to raise the funds needed to fully complete Phase 2.

At this time WEBC is not seeking any financial support from the Town to support this initiative. Should the group require financial support from the Town Administration will bring back a report to outline and request funding.

6. CONSULTATIONS:

Clerk / Risk Manager
Manager of Parks and Naturalized Areas
Manager of Facilities
Manager of Recreation Services

7. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, Administration supports conditional approval of Phase 2 of the trail proposal submitted by WEBC as it aligns not only with the Parks Master plan under recommendations #59 and #60 but also fits within the context of the site with little to no impact on future uses.

Improving our trail networks throughout the Town is one of many ways we can promote Amherstburg as a healthy active community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Baillargeon', written over a horizontal line.

Heidi Baillargeon

Director of Parks, Facilities, Recreation and Culture

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Windsor Essex Bike Community (WEBC) Libro Centre Mountain Bike Trail Proposal Phase 2.docx
Attachments:	- WEBC PHASE 2 PROPOSAL Appendix A (Nov. 15th Update)-compressed.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 30, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Tracy Prince



Valerie Critchley



Kevin Fox