



# ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

## Outdoor Spaces

### City of ELLIOT LAKE

June 22 to 24 2020

Performed by: Wade Watts and Arlene Tinunas

**Purpose:** The purpose of this audit is two fold: one to identify accessibility defects as per Canadian Federal and Provincial Building Codes, International Accessibility Standards, Barrier Free and Universal Design Principles (Friendly Design). Two to make recommendations to address existing concerns and help eliminate future issues. We also take into consideration the UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability), Canadian Human Rights, Bill C-81 ACA(Accessible Canada Act) and Inclusiveness at all times.

**Meaning:** This Audit is primarily data, recommendations and education with "A FRESH APPROACH TO ACCESSIBILITY" for "AN ACCESSIBLE WORLD FOR ALL" regardless of ability. This principle along with UNIVERSAL DESIGN guidelines helps to ensure Elliot Lake can be enjoyed by all persons equally this is accomplished by upholding the 4 main principals DIGNITY, INDEPENDANCE, INTERGRATION and EQUALITY. This applies to all persons who live, visit, work and play in Elliot Lake giving better Health and Safety and Emergency Management thus making Elliot Lake much safer destination while lowering it's liability footprint.

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**Introduction and Observations:** This Audit was preformed later than intended and under isolation conditions during the Covid 19 lock-down. It should be noted that all legally mandated isolation and PPE precautions were maintained during this audit. It was observed that all outdoor locations were closed and barricaded to ensure public separation and isolation. For these reasons portions of this audit were completed with the assistance of a sophisticated drone and information provided by Public Works. The purchased beach mats and beach wheelchairs had not been deployed as the beaches where not open. The pictures and video had been taken do not demonstrate the latest beach accessibility. An updated audit to will be preformed once these measures are in place and can be used as a tools for Elliot Lake to inform and promote these accessibility upgrades to the public.



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#### **Main Concerns Observed and Identified in this Audit:**

- 1)-The required compliance for accessibility within the Design of Public Outdoor Spaces in accordance with legislated codes and laws. To ensure the mandated compliance both city employees and contracted services hired by The City of Elliot lake must abide by all accessibility laws and codes. It is equally the City of Elliot Lake's and the contractors accountability for accessibility, however The City of Elliot Lake is ultimately responsible.
- 2)-Systemic physical barriers must be addressed such as washrooms, trails, downtown access, public transportation, pick up/drop off areas. Currently compliance is lacking with standard and laws, training and education will address these omissions.
- 3)-Prioritizing must be made in order of importance to appropriately develop a budget, plan and timeline for completion.
- 4)-It is highly recommended an accessibility specialist is retained or contracted on a part time basis. It would be a resource for the City of Elliot lake at least in the development of projects expected in the near future. It is also recommended that a permanent position be created within the city to work in conjunction with the community development position. These positions working together will provide The City of Elliot Lake accessibility specialist.
- 5)- A guide including checklist for outdoor events should be developed and instituted as well as an agreement signed prior to any permits, permission or licensing granted. A rental/damage charge for the use of accessibility equipment and MobiMats would assist Elliot Lake in offsetting costs for these products.



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6)-The City of Elliot has beautiful and accessible outdoor areas including: scenic lookouts, historic sites, beaches, boardwalk/fishing pier and trails. It was observed at each audited location that maintenance and upkeep is lacking. This is not related to general maintenance but instead is related to seasonal maintenance (beginning of the season). Note: This portion of the audit was done during Covid19 city shut down and we believe this played a major roll in these observations.

All items listed above are in our expert opinion the underlying reason for the issues in Elliot Lake at this time. It should also be noted that going forward the majority of these issues are easy and cost effective fixes with a few notable exceptions. From this point forward this audit is a summary strictly identifying the issues and possible cost effective solutions. We would be happy to consult, educate, present and work with the City of Elliot Lake in any way to identify cost effective solutions to identify issues. Some items will be repeated and/or indicated on a city-wide basis.





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## Spruce Beach (Spruce Ave)

A beautiful beach within the city offering accessibility with the addition of the new beach mats and amphibious beach wheelchairs. At the time of this audit these were not in place due to Covid 19 restrictions but will be deployed as quickly as possible once these are lifted.

The accessibility this beach affords is continuously changing as legislation changes in Canada and Ontario. The City of Elliot is proactive with this and with the following issues resolved will be an accessible location on par with world-wide universal design guidelines.

The following listed items are in need of attention:

- The washroom facilities require upgrade with bars, dispensers, trash containers, push button door operators as indicated in the buildings audit.
- A second path from facilities to main trail to reduce distance to the washrooms.
- Proper signage for accessible parking minimizing the distance from both beach mats and parking.
- The playground area is positioned to far from the grass area and is surrounded by sand. This is not an accessible playground and that's fine but any future upgrades and possible considerations should be made ongoing to add accessible features in an area that can be accessed. Examples wheelchair swing, raised ramp park, accessible fort style with coordination apparatus for dexterity which is good for any age
- The entrance to pathway from street is cracked and has a lip that should be repaired.



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## Spine Beach (Spine Road)

A beautiful beach within the city offering accessibility with the addition of the new beach mats and amphibious beach wheelchairs. At the time of this audit these were not in place due to Covid 19 restrictions but will be deployed as quickly as possible once these areas are allowed to reopen.

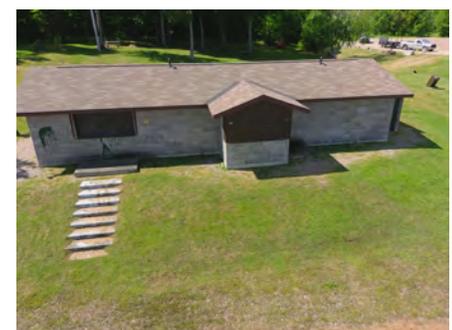
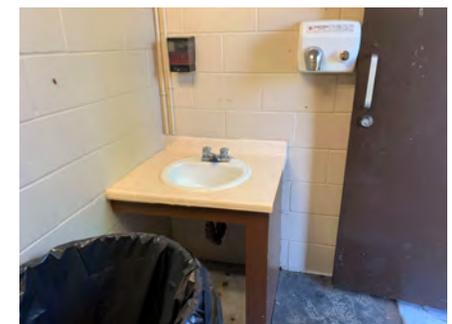
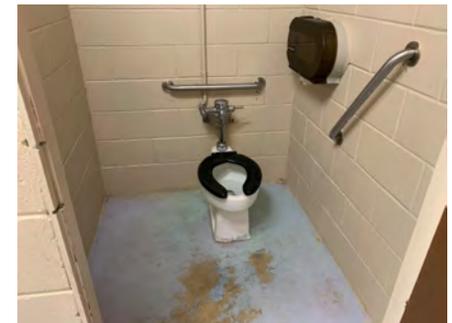
Being a beach that is continuously ongoing change as legislation changes in Canada and Ontario. The City of Elliot is proactive with this and with the following issues fixed this will be a great accessible location in par with world-wide universal design guidelines. The following listed items are in need of attention:

-Washrooms require attention as back bars are way to low and useless and toilet roll above the bar is wrong and the wall bar is of an approved type but is placed completely wrong. Sink support prevents entire washroom for being accessible by wheelchair or used. Soap dispenser is placed so it can't be used and dryer is placed way to high for use. Handles on main doors are too high and push button doors should be considered. Trash can is a large obstacle and needs to be replaced with something accessible.

-The service area stairs are dangerous and a ramp trail from beach and parking needs to be installed that includes access to service counter at minimum 5ft wide for safe access to this service area.

-Accessible parking as close to service area and beach mat access needs to be installed with proper signage.

This is also a popular Elliot lake beach and with the addition of the beach mats purchased and water/beach wheelchair it will be much more accessible and with the above items fixed it will be truly barrier free.





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#### Elliot Lake Boat-launch/Boardwalk/Fishing Pier (Highway 108)

This is a beautiful new facility that is close to being fully accessible and will be barrier free when completed. It is a ongoing project that when finished will be fully accessible. Plans are already in motion to add fully accessible parking near the rest room facility with added spots close to pier access ramps. As this is a ongoing project the audit only covers the already built items. The following are observations made:



- The initial access threshold for the 4 access ramps to the pier on both parking and dock sides are not compliant or safe. A slope no greater than 1/12 needs to be achieved
- The washrooms could not be inspected inside as they are barricaded due to covid 19 however an inspection will be conducted once new parking area around washroom area is complete and area open for public use.



Note: this project as discussed with all involved on location is obviously a source of pride in Elliot Lake and it was designed from the beginning to be accessible. We are sure with consulting from the accessibility specialist and Tulloch Engineering this will be fully accessible and enjoyable for all. Many exciting plans are in store for this addition to The City of Elliot Lake.



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### Miner's Memorial Park (Highway 108)

Memorial Park is extremely accessible and compliant. We consulted on a plan to add accessible parking and a trail ramp to connect main area with egress to the monument area. This is a terrific plan and will not just add to the location but to the City of Elliot Lake as a whole. We truly enjoyed this area and only have a few items needing ongoing correction.

- Proper class A and class B parking with signage and markings
- Trail / Access route.
- Accessible tables





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## Glenden Fitness Park (Corner of Washington Cres & Ottawa Ave)

It was great to see this area with excellent outdoor exercise equipment including a few workout area capable of being used by persons with disabilities. Access to this area was problematic. This is list of issues:

- No proper parking and nothing signed
- No trails to equipment and slope from parking could be trail ramped to workout area.
- Picnic area on slopes should be put in level area.

This is an enjoyable area and should be a consideration for improvements to accessibility on an ongoing basis.





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#### Westview Park (Highway 108)

This is a beautiful accessible park with the highlight being the play area with accessible elements and good accessible trails and paths. The entire area appears to be accessible with accessible trails including an accessible pathway with a walking bridge from the new boardwalk/pier. The services and washroom facility require upgrades on an ongoing basis and maintain areas like the bridges and paths ensuring there are no lips or edges that prevent safe accessibility as well removing trip hazards.





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## Fire Tower Lookout (Milliken Road)

A good accessible destination with access to almost everything. The parking lot ramp access is a little to steep and needs some maintenance at the threshold to eliminate safety and trip hazards. The playground is not accessible and any future upgrades this would need to be considered. There is a lower area accessed only via stairs but due to the slope it would be difficult to make accessible and the cost would be too high. There is also a second level to the viewing platform but because there is accessibility everywhere else at this location and due to cost this is not a priority. We were impressed with this older construction being so accessible and with a little effort can be 90% accessed. The parking area requires properly posted accessible parking signage and markings.





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## Trailhead Information Centre

This location is accessible but requires the following upgrades:

- Parking area is not marked/signed properly
- Parking to sidewalk access curb has lip over 1/4 inch and is a trip hazard (weed removal and maintenance required).
- Maintenance of accessibility including 2 inch or less trip hazard at doorways. Threshold may be the best solution for this.
- No information showing accessible facilities within Elliot lake.
- Washrooms need proper signage and upgrades inside including bars.
- Signage visible from Hwy 11 indicating this is an accessible stop. People traveling between Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie would appreciate this and is an opportunity to educate people that Elliot Lake is an accessible destination.





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### Kiwanis Park (Dieppe Ave.)

The area and access to the areas are relatively flat and accessible. The addition of trails would be better but considering closeness of everything to parking it functions well now. The biggest issues are the washrooms which are plenty big to be accessible but the privacy barriers takes any accessibility away. There are no bars and sink is incorrect. These washrooms should be considered for updating on an ongoing basis

Upgrading these washrooms will greatly improve accessibility. Proper signage and marked parking needs to be established as the city moves forward with their accessibility plan.





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### Glenden Park Gardens

Not an accessible location per say but it is fairly level. There is no where to park or to off load safely. For the purpose of this audit we list it non-accessible. Note: There is no legal requirement for all parks to be accessible. When any future work is implemented on the property all legal requirements must be considered, including use as a community garden.



### Paris & Axmith Park (Paris Dr & Axmith Ave)

Paris & Axmith Park is not an accessible location as per say but it is fairly level. There is no where to park or off load safely. For the sake of this audit we list it non-accessible. The playground is completely un-accessible due to the sand base.

Note: There is no legal requirement for all parks to be accessible. When any planned work on this property is done in the future then it must be done compliant.



### Roger Parsons Memorial park (Spruce Ave & Central Ave.)

This area being part of the Community Arena was mentioned in the buildings report. All accessibility requirements for outdoor spaces applies to this area summer and winter as it is used in both seasons. Accessibility could be improved with some screenings at entrance in summer and maintaining a pathway for ice access in winter.





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### Kain Crescent Park

This area is not accessible as this picture demonstrates and requires improvement. This can be accomplished when any upgrades are completed but we would suggest since it an easy fix that it be put in 2020-2025 accessibility plan for an accessible entrance upgrade.



### Esten Park Public School

Esten is another great park within the city but it is not designed for accessibility. The playground has a couple accessible features however these are not usable due to the sand base. Access to this park would be difficult as there are no proper trails or entrance to the park. It is close to a school and looks fairly new. In future any upgrade or work done needs to include accessibility to be compliant.





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#### **Burley Park Playground**(125 Mississauga Ave & Pearson Drive)

Burley Park is not an accessible park and none of the equipment has any accessible features. It is in a very large property area but it is difficult to access. All future upgrades or work on this park has to be accessible but with a sand base it cannot be fully accessible. The rest of the property does not appear to be used at this time.





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## Roman Avenue Park

The trail in this park leading to the stairs even though old is still usable, stairs ends the accessibility of the trail. The parking area is not accessible due to loose gravel and has no parking for person with disabilities. The playground equipment has no accessible features and due to sand base is not able to be accessed. For the purpose of this audit this park is deemed not accessible.



## Nordic Park (On Gauthier Place)

We were informed that this is an unused park. It is not accessible for this audit



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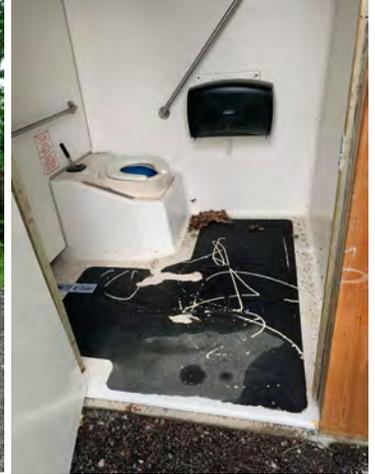
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## Depot Lake Boat Launch

The Boat launch requires minimal maintenance at the edges of the docks, and entrance to washroom to assist with access. The crushed stone used is compacted and usable in a wheelchair (minus some larger stones). The washroom even though it does not look that good inside in actuality is fairly accessible. Upgrade and improvements can be made. The new lower floating dock is not accessible and although being fairly new it should be. This may be difficult to achieve due to the different nature between the foundation docks and new floating dock. These considerations to ensure accessibility must be included in the future.



## McCarthy Lake Boat Launch

This is not accessible and so remote that anyone using this launch would require support. For this reason this does not need to be considered for accessibility at this time. Any construction or expansion of this area then accessibility would need to be considered.





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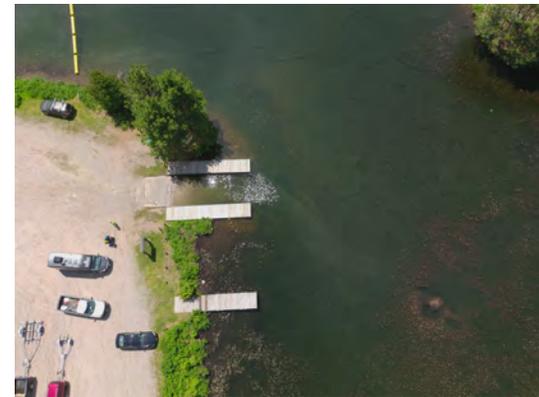
## Dunlop Lake Boat Launch and Park

Dunlop Lake and Park was a wonderful location to audit as it was beautiful and the accessibility was good. The parking area and surface was crushed stone chips and was easy to maneuver in manual wheelchair. The docks were relatively equal to the ground and accessing the docks was done with no problem. There is no protection around the dock to ensure wheels do not slip off so caution is required. This is not an area where a person should be alone and assistance would be required with anyone using this location.

The trail and island had adequate level of accessibility again related to the stone chips used and good compaction. The area is relatively flat and easy to maneuver.

The accessibility could be improved with a lift for getting in and out of boats, but otherwise than this area is a natural setting and accessibility is acceptable.

Future upgrades need to ensure better accessibility.





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## Quirke Lake Boat Launch

Quirke Lake is an outer city boat launch that for the purpose of this audit is not accessible. It is on a steep incline which could be hazardous without assistance. The location and terrain make it difficult to ensure this property is fully accessible. In the future as an ongoing project for accessibility in Elliot lake a look at this boat launch may bring about accessible parking and a ramp for access onto the dock.

Locations such as these the reality is a person whether disabled or not should have assistance or someone to help for safety reasons. This area has the potential of being a popular area so upgrading the accessibility will be an important discussion to be had.



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### Dog Park (Off Pearson Drive)

The dog park can be accessed by wheelchair however the gates may be difficult to open as well no trail to access seating area and shelter. The gravel road and stop area is coarse gravel and difficult for mobility equipment to maneuver safely. There is a parking area that is compliant under existing legislation but due to maintenance it is not easily used. The grass gravel combination has unevenness and larger stone is not a good base for accessible parking. It should be on a maintenance/public works checklist and/or inspection at least annually as well as all accessible parking areas.





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### West View Tent & Trailer Park (Hwy 108)

It was good to see two fairly accessible camping areas with easy access to the facilities building. It was in close proximity to the accessible sites. It consisted of flat area that appeared well maintained with good accessibility although not being used due to Covid 19 . The addition of accessible picnic tables at these two sites would be an excellent accessibility upgrade. The facilities were not open and from what we did see the entrances are too narrow for compliance. Due to Covid 19 we did not get to look inside but from information provided by staff it is not an accessible washroom and requires upgrades as stated in the building's portion of audit.





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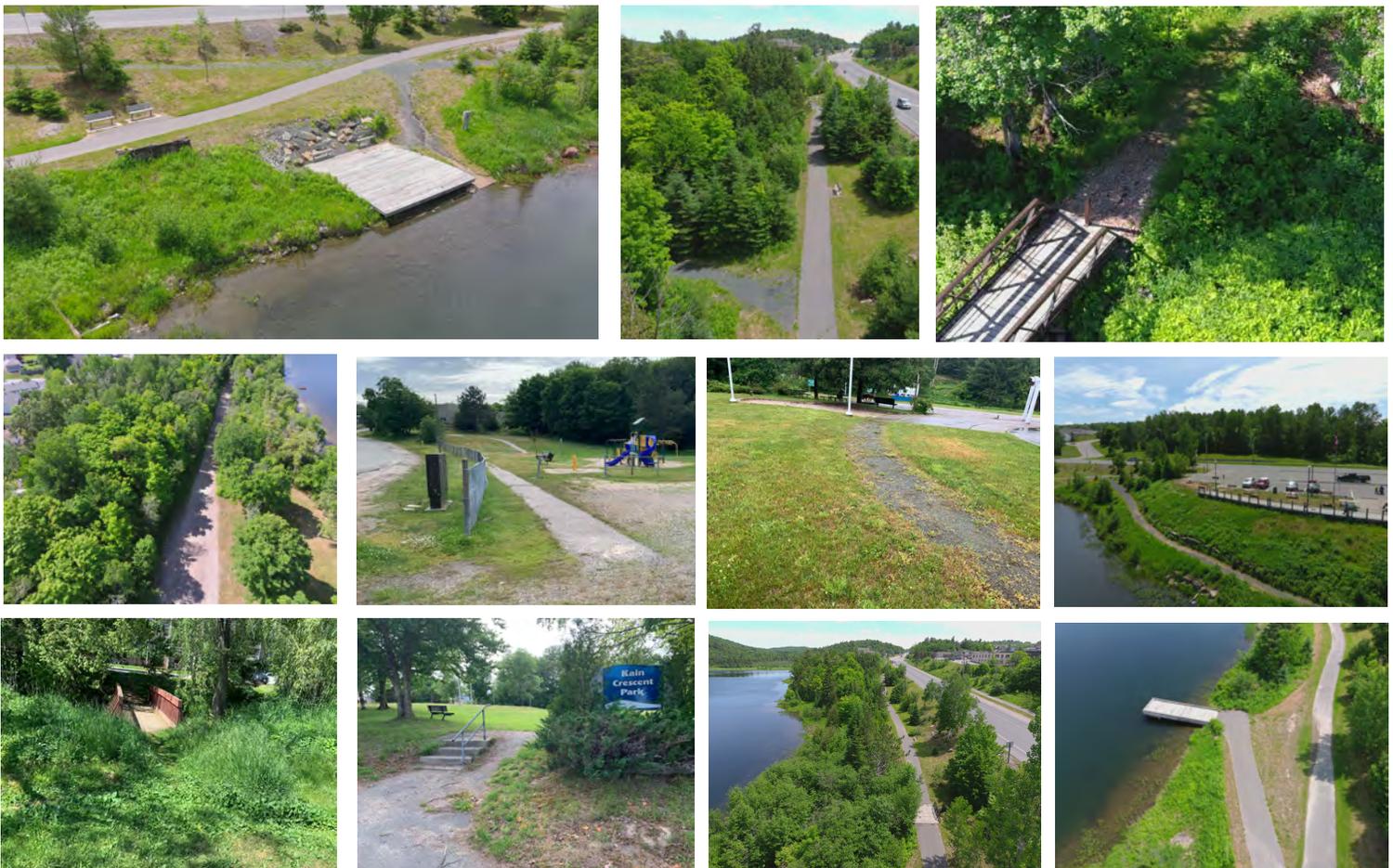
## Trails and Paths

The trails and paths observed during this audit appeared to be accessible mostly with a few notable exceptions and a couple of safety issues.

The bridges that are on the trails as documented require adjustment at the thresholds at both ends. The off shoots to these trails to docks or viewing platforms require maintenance as well to ensure everyone can enjoy these trails equally and safely.

There are some amazing inter connecting trails that are beautiful and peaceful and should be constructed for persons with disabilities. The trails lack of seasonal maintenance appear to be the larger issue but due to Covid 19 this was most likely delayed for the 2020 season.

I spoke with the head of public works who was already aware of this due to the bad winter pushing some bridges out of place by as much as 6 inches. He was clear and had a plan in place to rectify this and may already be done by the time this audit is presented to the city.





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### Maintenance of Accessibility in Outdoor Areas

The AODA and Bill C-81 ACA clearly state once accessibility is established it must be maintained. In many cases it is the the lack of a sufficient maintenance plan that includes accessibility that negatively affects compliance. All public works dept should include a plan for accessibility and should include it's maintenance and upkeep. During this audit there were may maintenance issues identified. It needs to be noted that this was done during Covid 19, and thus many maintenance issues had to be delayed as all public areas were closed. Below are some of these items.

