NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CLASSIFYING MULTI-USE TRAILS IN CANADA

Classification of Trails, Trail Experiences & Trail Tourism Readiness

December 2021

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DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

These guidelines are being made available to our trail ecosystem partners and all of Canada's trail ecosystem to help trail operators and the trail ecosystem classify trails, define their trail experiences and evaluate their trail's tourism readiness. This guide is not a standards or engineering specification. Any graphics or visuals used are for illustration purposes only and should not be used as an issued directive for construction specification or development. Trail operators, planners and designers are responsible for ensuring their trails and trail infrastructure are appropriately approved, designed, constructed and managed by appropriately qualified volunteers, staff and/or subject matter experts. Trail operators should regularly review the condition of their trails and ensure information used in this classification process is kept up to date and adjustments are made as needed. Trans Canada Trail (TCT), its contractors and other contributors assume no liability for this content or its application.

Sound Judgement

Trail operators, designers and decision makers should make every effort to apply these guidelines. Situations may occur where trail operators or designers may make judgments that deviate from these guidelines. In these cases, the rationale for departing from these guidelines should be documented and retained. It is suggested that professional/subject matter expertise and/or legal advice be obtained.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TCT acknowledges that:

The Trans Canada Trail is situated on the traditional territory of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples from coast to coast to coast. TCT also acknowledges that the Trans Canada Trail includes land and water routes that were created and used, both historically and in some cases presently, by Indigenous peoples as seasonal travel and trade routes.

Our head office is situated on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) Nation, part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We recognize the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation as the custodians of the lands and waters of Tiohtiá:ke (Montreal), which has long been a gathering place for diverse First Nations, including Algonquin-Anishinaabe, Atikamekw and Huron-Wendat.

We are thankful that we are able to collaborate, play and work on the Trans Canada Trail. We support community efforts to sustain a relationship with Indigenous peoples based on respect, dignity, trust and cooperation, in the process of advancing truth and reconciliation.

TRANS CANADA TRAIL

Connecting Canada from coast to coast to coast, the Trans Canada Trail (TCT, the Trail) is the longest multi-use recreational trail in the world. More than 28,000 km in length, the Trail traverses each of Canada's 10 provinces and 3 territories and many Indigenous peoples' traditional territories, and connects 15,000 communities across the country. Approximately 80% of Canadians can access a local section of the Trail within 30 minutes from their home. True to its name, the Trail is a national legacy that connects people living in and visiting Canada to the vastness of our country's landscapes and the diversity of our people. TCT inspires, thrills and contributes to the health, happiness and adventurous spirit of all people.

Mission

As the longest trail network in the world, the Trans Canada Trail connects Canadians and visitors to nature and to one another, from coast to coast to coast, through accessible and inclusive outdoor activities. Through collaboration and partnerships, we build, maintain and steward Canada's national trail, a unique system of connected urban and rural trails.

Vision

Building on the achievement of connection, the Trans Canada Trail will continue to inspire everyone to embrace the outdoors, to discover the diversity of our land and people, to enhance their health and well-being, and to share their stories along this globally significant and iconic trail network.

Whitehorse, YT

SECTION: 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHY THESE GUIDELINES?

Great trails are one of the most desired recreational resources in Canada. Trails are also tourism drivers that bring important economic benefits to communities across the country and help to attract and retain residents, businesses and investment. But great trails do not "just happen". They are the product of deliberate planning, design, construction and management. And, clear, consistent and visitor experience focused trail classification is the foundation of good trail planning and design and for helping visitors find the right trail for them.

Consisting of three separate guides, these guidelines are being made available to our Trail partners and all of Canada's trail ecosystem to help trail operators (see Glossary for definitions):

- classify mixed and multi-use trails
- define the general experience their trail offers
- evaluate their trail's tourism readiness

Focused on mixed and multi-use trails, these guidelines apply to both existing trails and to new trails that are in the planning and design stage.

Through these guidelines, we are working to:

- create national consistency in how trails are described and understood by TCT, trail operators, trail builders, visitors, land managers and the trail tourism ecosystem
- enable a robust and consistent pan-Canadian inventory of trails
- better ensure that trails are deliberately designed, built and managed to deliver the intended trail experience and meet desired trail user objectives
- enable trail operators to consistently and accurately communicate essential information to visitors about each trail; allowing visitors to select trails that have a better chance of providing their desired experience
- help minimize and avoid conflicts between differing trail activities
- support the tourism industry and local communities with the growth of trail tourism, visitor-centred investments and the promotion of trails to appropriate target markets

We recognize that trail classification and other guidelines exist for single use (e.g. hiking only) and activity optimized (e.g. mountain biking) trails and encourage trail operators to use these guidelines in conjunction with those.

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives."

– William A. Foster

Providing Answers to Common Questions

Though it may not be immediately obvious, trail operators, builders, visitors and the trail tourism ecosystem ask many of the same questions about trails, albeit at different stages of each trail's lifecycle.

Questions we all have…

Trail operators, designers, builders ask…

- **Who** are we trying to attract to the trail and what are their expectations?
- What **type** of trail exists or is to be constructed (summer, winter, water)?
- What **modes of travel** are to be permitted on the trail (non-motorized, motorized, mechanized, adaptive, mixed use)?
- Will the trail permit one activity or multiple activities (single-use, multi-use)? Will the trail be designed to optimize the experience of any single activity type?
- What **activity types** will be permitted on the trail? Which activities will determine the trail design parameters?
- What are the intended recreation setting, the **level of development** and amenities?
- What is the intended **level of challenge** of the trail?

Trail visitors ask…

- On which trail am I permitted to undertake my desired activity and is that trail in the recreation setting I am seeking?
- Are there permitted activities that I do not wish to share the trail with?
- Given my skill level and abilities, can I travel the trail and utilize amenities safely and enjoyably?
- Do I have the proper equipment or do I require any special preparation to travel the trail safely and enjoyably?
- Does the trail include the comfort and convenience amenities I need?

Trail tourism ecosystem asks…

- What sections of the trail provide the type and quality of experience that my target markets expect?
- Is the trail experience unique, appealing and of interest to my target markets?
- Are the necessary amenities, accommodations and services available on the trail to meet the needs of my guests?
- Can my guests be confident that the service providers they rely upon will be available to serve their needs?
- Is the trail of an appropriate level of challenge and does it require an appropriate level of preparedness for my target markets?

Through these guidelines, we are creating an approach that allows these questions to be answered consistently and proactively by anyone in Canada's trail ecosystem.

1.2 WHO ARE THESE GUIDELINES FOR?

These guidelines are for anyone or any organization involved in Canada's trail ecosystem who is interested in providing great trail experiences on the Trans Canada Trail or any other trail in Canada.

If you are...

- a trail operator or advocate
- a trail designer or builder
- a land manager or owner
- part of the trail tourism ecosystem, such as a tourism operator or Destination Management Organization (DMO)

...these guidelines are for you!

Though prepared by Trans Canada Trail, these guidelines are relevant to all mixed-use and multi-use trails in Canada.

Mont-Tremblant, flickr.com

1.3 HOW DO I USE THESE GUIDELINES?

Each of the three guides within these national guidelines are intended to be used as individual documents. However, the **Guide to Defining the Trail Experience** and the **Guide to Evaluating a Trail's Tourism Readiness** documents build off of the **Guide to Trail Classification**.

As such, we recommend that trails be classified in accordance with the classification guidelines as a first step, before attempting to define the trail experience or evaluate tourism readiness. The purpose and primary audiences for each guide are illustrated in the graphic to the right.

Guide to Trail Classification

Purpose

Provide visitor-focused planning, design and management direction.

Enable clear communication of trail accessibility information and characteristics.

Primary Audience/Users

Trail operators, designers, builders

Visitors

Trail tourism ecosystem

Guide to Evaluating a Trail's Tourism Readiness

Purpose

Identify priorities to grow trail tourism.

Support the attraction of tourism investment.

Enable the communication and marketing of trails to appropriate visitors.

Primary Audience/Users

Trail tourism ecosystem
- Destination Management Organizations
- travel trade
- tourism operators and services

1   **2**   **3**

Guide to Defining the Trail Experience

Purpose

Enable the communication and marketing of the trail to appropriate visitors.

Enable visitors to better select sections of the trail that align with their desired experience and abilities.

Understand the inventory and supply of trail experiences.

Primary Audience/Users

Visitors

Trail system planners

Trail tourism ecosystem

Destination marketing and trip planning

Pinawa Trail, MB
Daniel Baylis

SECTION: 2

A GUIDE TO CLASSIFYING TRAILS

Purpose:

- Provide a consistent communication tool to inform users of what they can and should expect on the trail.
- Provide trail operators, designers and builders with a consistent way to communicate the trail classification to the target audience.
- Provide visitor-focused trail planning and management direction.

Target audiences:

Trail operators, designers, builders

Visitors

Trail tourism ecosystem

2.1 A VISITOR-CENTRED APPROACH TO TRAIL CLASSIFICATION

We are approaching things a bit differently with the new process for classifying trails. Recognizing that the primary purpose of a trail is to provide positive visitor experiences, it only makes sense that visitors and their experiences be at the core of how we approach trail classification.

Trail classification is typically based on a set number of trail classes or types (e.g., type 1, type 2, type 3, class A, class B, class C). Each type or class usually provides prescriptive engineering and design-based direction for parameters such as tread widths, surfacing, grades, etc. These traditional approaches, though simple, do not allow trail operators to consider the true and often varying needs of their visitors. The historical approaches oversimplify the desires of the visitors and the factors that drive the visitor experience. They presume that visitor expectations will fit neatly into one of the structured trail classes and are unable to truly account for the diversity in actual needs of the various trail activities that may be permitted on a trail.

Over time, we have found this approach can result in a homogenous trail network and experiences that do not meet the needs of different users. In addition, the past approach does not adequately consider and reflect a trail's intended level of challenge, the needs of various activity combinations, or recognize that some trails may be multi-use and deliberately designed to provide an optimized experience for one of the permitted activity types.

These guidelines are not intended to and should not be interpreted as detailed design direction. Trail operators should refer to and apply detailed designs that are appropriate for local conditions.

Recognizing this, we are establishing new national guidelines and approach to trail classification.

This approach recognizes the unique combinations of trail activities and desired experiences. It allows for many different classification combinations, all of which are driven by deliberate decisions about the intended visitors, trail activities and experiences.

These decisions can be used to evaluate whether a trail's design parameters are appropriate for the intended experience on existing trails and to determine the selection of appropriate design parameters for new trails. This will ensure the physical characteristics of the trail have a better chance of delivering the intended visitor experience.

[**Trail Activity** + **Difficulty** + **Setting**]
X Natural Region → Experience

BENEFITS

Community   Financial   Health + Wellness

Figure 1   Elements of a Trail Experience (Justin Ellis, 2018)

What is a trail?

A trail is a defined type of infrastructure that is purposefully designed and used for one or more recreation activities or for active transportation. To be recognized as a trail, it must be approved by the landowner, mapped and marked, as well as actively managed and maintained.

What is a trail experience?

The ability for a visitor to engage in a desired trail activity, at a desired level of challenge, within a desired recreation setting and in a desired natural region.

Meewasin Trail, SK
Daniel Baylis

2.2 A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO TRAIL CLASSIFICATION

Trail classification, the selection and/or determination of trail design parameters and the communication of trail characteristics to visitors is an intertwined and step-by-step process (Figure 2).

Step 1

The process begins with trail operators making deliberate decisions about the desired trail classification components and documenting those decisions in a Trail Management Objective (TMO) form (**Appendix A**).

Step 2

For an existing trail, the trail operator should assess the physical design parameters of the trail. Trail operators should compare the current design parameters of the trail with the design parameters identified in the TMO. Trail operators may need to re-evaluate the trail classification if the current design parameters do not align with the TMO or if they undertake modifications to the trail design to align it with the intended design parameters in the TMO. For new trails, the design parameters set through the TMO should be used to guide the construction of the trail.

TCT has developed an audit tool that can help trail operators determine a suggested technical challenge rating for their trail. Contact TCT at **info@tctrail.ca** for support. This tool is available to both TCT partners and other trail groups.

Step 3

Once the trail classification and design parameters are determined, trail operators should use the information to communicate the trail class (type, permitted activities, level of challenge, level of development and preparedness) and the trail's physical characteristics (e.g., length, surfacing widths, grades, etc.) to visitors on the trail website, trail signage, maps, mobile device applications and other channels.

Flow

Step 1: Classification ➕ **Step 2: Assess Design Parameters** ✖ **Step 3: Communication**

Step 1: Classification	Step 2: Assess Design Parameters	Step 3: Communication
1. Season	1. Clearing Limits	Trail operators should consistently communicate the trail classification, design parameters, and visitor amenities available on or along the trail through signage, websites and other trip planning tools.
2. Mode of Travel	2. Travelled Surface Width	See section 2.5 for further details.
3. Type of Use	3. Tread Surface Type & Compaction	
4. Activity Type(s)	4. Tread Obstacles	
5. Level of Challenge	5. Grades	
6. Preparedness	6. Cross Slope	
7. Level of Development	7. Turning Radius	
8. Design Parameters	8. Sight Lines	

Step 2A: Reconcile Differences
For Existing Trails Only

1. Desired VS Actual

Figure 2   Process

2.3 TRAIL CLASSIFICATION

Trail classification is a comprehensive approach to describing and documenting the intended characteristics of a trail and, by doing so, providing answers to the common questions asked by trail operators, builders, visitors and the trail tourism ecosystem (see section 1.1). The trail classification system is comprised of the following components:

1　**Season**

2　**Mode of Travel**

3　**Type of Use**

4　**Activity Type(s)**

5　**Level of Challenge**

6　**Preparedness**

7　**Level of Development**

8　**Design Parameters**

Each component in the trail classification represents an important and deliberate decision for the trail operator. Trail operators should treat this as a step-by-step process where decisions about each component are made and documented sequentially. For each component, trail operators should reflect on a trail's current conditions - or in the case of a new trail, the trail operator's desired conditions - and select the options that best reflect these conditions.

Documentation of these deliberate decisions is important, and we encourage trail operators to document each decision in a TMO form (**Appendix A**). Once completed, the TMO should be saved, as it can be used to provide consistent development direction to trail maintenance crews and builders. It is also important documentation and evidence should litigation about the trail's condition or development arise in the future.

Each component in the trail classification system is described in the following sections.

Trail Management Objective

A TMO synthesizes and documents, in a single form, the management intention for a trail in a clear, consistent and understandable way. TMOs are referred to and used in guiding all future trail planning, maintenance, design, construction and management decisions.

City of Vancouver, Stanley Park, BC

Season	Mode of Travel	Type of Use	Activity Type(s)	Level of Challenge	Prepared-ness	Level of Develop-ment	Design Parameters
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
• Summer • Winter • All seasons	• Non-motorized • Motorized (only non-TCT sections) • Mixed-use	• Single-use • Multi-use • Activity-optimized	• Select from list (see page 2.13)	• Easiest • Moderate • Difficult • Very difficult	• Standard • Enhanced	• Developed • Moderately developed • Minimally developed	• Select based on activities with highest design needs (see Appendix C)
Select One			**Select All Applicable**	**Select One**			**Select All Applicable**

Communicate to Visitors

Figure 3   Trail Classification System at a Glance

TCT has developed an audit tool that can help trail operators determine a suggested technical challenge rating for their trail. Contact TCT at **info@tctrail.ca** for support. This tool is available to both TCT partners and other trail groups.

Trail Tip!

Classifying Parallel Trail Treads

In some instances, trail operators utilize parallel separated-use trail treads within the same trail corridor to manage conflicting activity types, visitor experience, volume of use and/or visitor safety. Where parallel trail treads exist, trail operators should classify each trail tread using this guide, and communicate the classification information to visitors through onsite signage and trip planning sources.
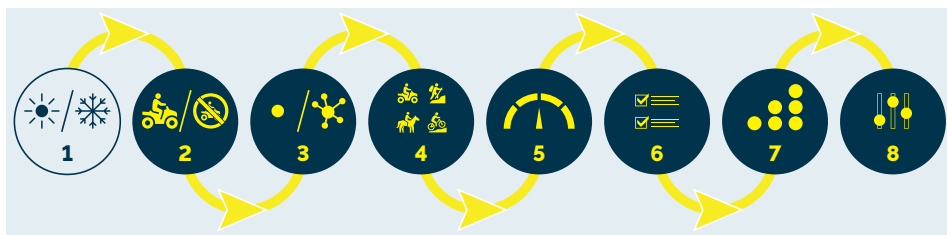
2.3.1 Season

The first decision that needs to be made for the trail classification is to determine in which season(s) the trail will be open/accessible (choose one):

Summer – A trail that supports non-snow-based activities during non-frozen conditions.

Winter – A trail that supports snow-based activities during frozen conditions where the trail is predominantly covered with snow and/or ice.

All-season – A trail that supports trail activities during both summer and winter conditions.

Cataraqui Trail, ON

Trail Tip!

Be sure to have a Trail Management Objective Form (**Appendix A**) available and use it to document decisions about each component in the classification.
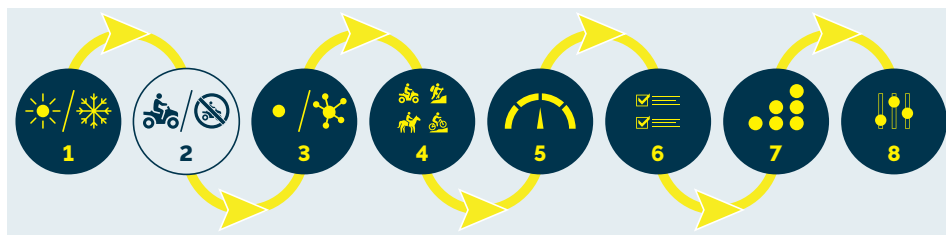
2.3.2 Mode of Travel

Next, determine which mode of travel the trail supports, or is intended to support. Select from one of the following options:

Non-motorized – a type of travel that is propelled by humans or animals (e.g., horse, dog).*

Note, type 1 electric-bicycles (see section 2.3.4.1), adaptive cycles (see section 2.3.4.2) and electric mobility devices for people with physical disabilities are considered to be non-motorized modes of travel.

Motorized – a type of travel that is fully propelled by anything other than muscular power, such as internal combustion engines, type 2 and 3 electric bicycles, segways, etc.

Mixed-use – a trail that permits both non-motorized and motorized modes of travel.

Trail Tip!

Mode of Travel Can Vary by Season

The mode of travel selection may vary by season. For example, during the summer a trail may be designated as a non-motorized trail, but in the winter the designation may shift to mixed-use to support snowmobiling in addition to non-motorized activities.

City of Barrie, ON

2.3.3   Type of Use

With the mode of travel identified, the next step is to determine whether the trail accommodates single or multiple trail activities. Select from one of the following options:
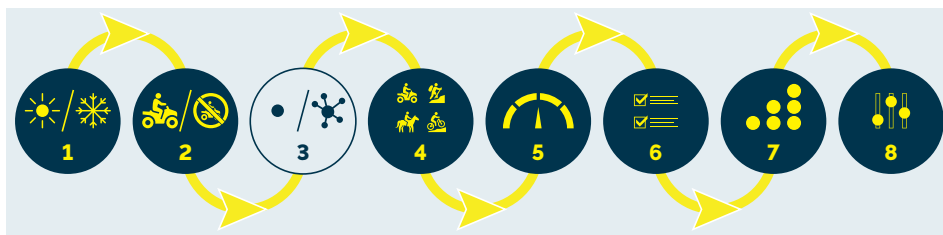
Single-use – trail is designed and managed to permit a single trail activity.

Multi-use – trail is designed and managed to permit multiple activities in compliance with the permitted modes of travel. Note: all mixed-use trails are, by definition, multi-use as they permit more than one activity.

For a multi-use trail, a determination needs to be made as to whether it is optimized to enhance the experience for a specific activity or not.

Activity-optimized – a trail that permits multiple activities but has been designed and is managed to optimize the experience for one specific activity. Activity-optimized trails are multi-use trails that contain purposeful features, routings or elements that enhance the experience for one of the approved activity types. For example, a non-motorized trail may permit hiking and mountain biking, but the trail could be designed with appropriate activity-optimized technical trail features to enhance the experience for mountain biking.

Activity-Optimized Features

Activity-optimized features are developed to enhance the experience of a specific trail activity. These features should be strategically placed in the trail corridor where they can be enjoyed as a preferred activity, but remain relatively unnoticed by other permitted trail users.
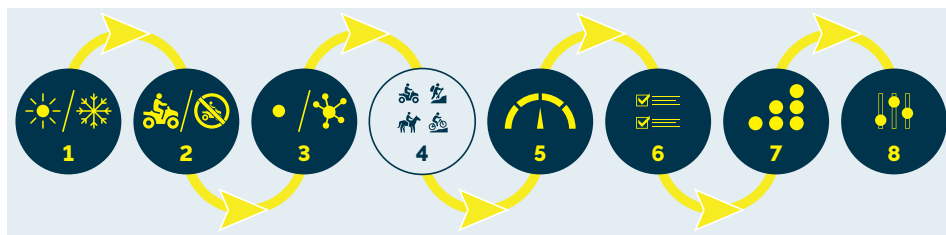
2.3.4 Activity Type

The next step is to determine which activities are permitted on the trail. Note that different activities may be chosen for different seasons. For convenience, trail activities are presented by mode of travel: non-motorized and motorized.

Non-Motorized

- Pedestrian - walking, hiking, running
- On-road cycling*
- Leisure cycling*
- Mountain biking*
- Adaptive cycle, mountain biking
- Small-wheeled
- Equestrian
- Equestrian drawn vehicle (buggy, cart, wagon, sleigh)
- Cross-country skiing (classic, skate)
- Snowshoeing

*   includes self-propelled and type 1 electric assist — see section 2.3.4.1 for definitions

Motorized

- On-road cycling**
- Mountain biking**
- Off-road motorcycle, dual sport motorcycle
- Motorized vehicle — width 1.5m (60") or less
- Motorized vehicle — width greater than 1.5m (60") but less than 1.83m (72")
- Motorized vehicle — width greater than 1.83m (72")
- Snowmobile or snowbike — width 1.5m (60") or less
- Snowmobile — width greater than 1.5m (60")

**   includes type 2 & 3 electric bicycle — see section 2.3.4.1 for definitions

Note - this is a list of common trail uses at the time of this document being developed. If the trail operator has additional permitted uses they can certainly be added to their TMO.

2.3.4.1 Power-Assisted Bicycles (electric bicycles)

The popularity of power-assisted bicycles, more commonly known as e-bikes or electric bicycles, has grown rapidly in the past few years. Electric bicycles have brought many benefits as well as some new management and policy challenges for trail operators. Some electric bicycles simply assist a rider by making pedalling easier while others allow the rider to travel without any pedalling through a throttle control. From a trail management perspective, this new technology begins to blur the traditional definitions of non-motorized and motorized activities, and consequently which activities are permitted on which trails.

Electric bicycle technology is highly variable and is rapidly evolving. National and provincial/territorial governments are responsible for establishing clear definitions, classifications and regulation of power-assisted bicycles. Currently, these elements are not consistent across Canada. Where definitions do exist, they are broad and do not provide detailed stratification to support trail management. In response, some jurisdictions (e.g., British Columbia) have refined their policies to enable clear trail management decisions.

TCT wants to maximize trail use and does not believe that the definition of "motorized vehicles" should be so broadly construed as to automatically prohibit the use of bicycles or other devices equipped with electric-assist motors. Decisions as to which classes of e-device should be permitted on a trail are best made by provincial/territorial and local trail organizations given the great variability of trail conditions, facilities and uses. However, a primary consideration in determining the appropriateness of electric bicycles should be the compatibility of trail uses and the trail's design parameters to better ensure visitor safety and meet visitor expectations.

TCT encourages trail operators to use trail classification as an opportunity to clarify management and policy decisions on the use of electric bicycles on their trails. To help inform this exercise, a number of jurisdictions[i & ii] have classified electric bicycles into three categories, based on a number of defining characteristics. At the time of preparing these guidelines, TCT encourages the use of the following electric bicycle classifications to help clarify management and policy decisions regarding the appropriateness of electric bicycles on their trails:

Class 1 Power-Assisted Bicycle Classification

A Class 1 electric bicycle is one that is equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedalling (pedal assist), ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches 32 kilometres per hour, and has a maximum continuous wattage output of 500 watts.

Class 2 Power-Assisted Bicycle Classification

A Class 2 electric bicycle is one that is propelled by a motor (throttle equipped) with no pedalling required and ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches 32 kilometres per hour.

Class 3 Power-Assisted Bicycle Classification

A Class 3 electric bicycle is one that is equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedalling (pedal-assist) and ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches 45 kilometres per hour.

Class 1 electric bicycles are typically considered to be a non-motorized mode of travel and are often permitted where self-propelled bicycles are permitted. Meanwhile, Class 2 and 3 electric bicycles are typically considered to be motorized modes of travel and are permitted on trails that permit motorized activities. Electric personal assistive mobility devices are typically considered to be a non-motorized mode of travel.

TCT recognizes that some major urban trails are intended to serve as active transportation corridors and, though generally considered to be for non-motorized use, they may permit the use of the three classes of electric bicycles as a low carbon-emitting mode of transportation. In these instances, trail operators should clearly articulate the classification and permitted activities, ensuring appropriate trail design parameters are applied.

Crow Wing Trail, MB
Actif Epica

2.3.4.2 Adaptive Cycles and Mountain Bikes

Adaptive cycles and adaptive mountain bikes are a large category of wheeled recreational cycles consisting of hand cycles, recumbent leg cycles, tandem bicycles, etc. They are intended to provide specifically-adapted opportunities for individuals who cannot use a two-wheeled bicycle. Electric adaptive bicycle technology has evolved and has significantly increased market share, and has become a desired alternative for many users.

Adaptive cycles and adaptive mountain bikes with electric motors should be exempt from electric bicycle class restrictions as long as they meet the following criteria and are being operated on trails designated for an adaptive cycle activity:

- have three or four wheels
- have a maximum nominal power wattage set at 800W or less
- have pedal assist, hand cranks and/or direct throttle power

Capilano River Regional Park, BC
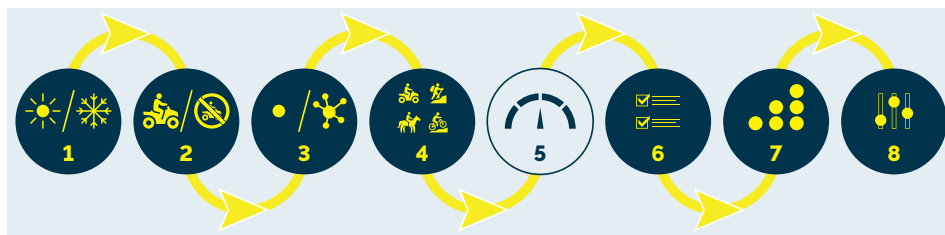
Trail Tip!

A difficult rating is one parameter of the classification, and should not be interpreted to represent the degree of accessibility of a space.

2.3.5 Technical Level of Challenge

Trail operators should now determine how technically challenging the trail is, or in the case of a new trail, how challenging the trail is intended to be. Is the trail appropriate for all skill levels? Is it appropriate for only the most experienced visitors? Or is it something in between?

Rating the level of challenge is one of the most important components of the classification system. Matching visitors with trails that have an appropriate level of challenge for their needs is fundamental to ensuring quality visitor experiences, and it is also a critical component in managing risk and liability for trail operators.

Rating the technical challenge of a mixed or multi-use trail is a relative categorization of how difficult the trail is to travel. The physical characteristics of a trail, not the length or elevation, determine the technical challenge of a trail. More specifically, the technical challenge is rated based on the following physical characteristics (also known as design parameters):

- tread surface type and compaction
- travelled surface width
- maximum and target grade
- tread obstacles
- technical trail features

It is important to recognize that rating the technical difficulty of a trail is not an evaluation of the physical exertion that is required to travel the trail due to its length or elevation change.

The technical challenge of trails can be rated as follows:

Rating	Experience	Rating Symbology	Class
Easiest	Beginner	●	1
Moderate	Intermediate	■	2
Difficult	Advanced	◆	3
Very Difficult	Expert	◆◆	4

To improve and maintain national consistency, trail operators are encouraged to adopt the standard challenge rating symbology and integrate this symbology into appropriate signage, trip planning tools, websites, etc. This system has been adapted from the International Mountain Bike Association's Trail Difficulty Rating System and the International Trail Marking System, which are applied in ski areas throughout the country and beyond.

Though rating the technical challenge of a trail is guided by transparent criteria, it is not a completely objective exercise. It requires informed and sound judgement by trail operators. To support the objectivity of the process, we have developed tables that outline the general design parameters by level of challenge for the most common trail activities. These tables are available in **Appendix C**. The following process should be used to rate the technical challenge:

1   **Review the design parameter tables in Appendix C for each of the activities permitted on the trail.**

2   **Reflect upon or inventory the trail to collect data on the current physical characteristics (design parameters).**

3   **Assemble a committee to review and contrast the current physical characteristics of the trail against the design parameter tables in Appendix C and determine an appropriate technical challenge rating. If multiple organizations have rated the technical challenge of a trail and those ratings vary, the organizations should be engaged directly to identify an agreed upon technical challenge rating through this process.**

It may be possible that the level of challenge for one permitted activity type is substantively different than that for another permitted activity type. In these instances, trail operators may need to communicate the level of challenge for both activities to visitors through trip planning materials as well as trailhead and on-trail signage.

4   **Seek input from trail users on the proposed challenge rating.**

5   **Finalize the technical challenge rating and document it in the Trail Management Objective form.**

6   **Communicate the technical challenge rating to visitors through signage, trip planning tools, websites, Destination Management Organizations, etc.**

TCT has developed an audit tool that can help trail operators determine a suggested technical challenge rating for their trail. Contact TCT at **info@tctrail.ca** for support. This tool is available to both TCT partners and other trail groups.

Technical Trail Features

Technical Trail Features (TTF) are constructed or natural obstacles that are purposefully integrated or built into a trail to deliver specific user objectives and require visitors to negotiate them. In addition to rating the overall level of challenge of the trail, the level of challenge of TTFs should also be rated and signed. Trail operators are encouraged to identify industry accepted TTF difficulty rating standards that are applicable to the activities the TTFs are serving and apply these rating systems.

As a general guideline, the level of challenge of a TTF should match the level of challenge of the trail and should not exceed more than one challenge level higher than the trail's challenge rating. As an example, a green activity-optimized mountain bike trail can include blue rated TTFs but should not include black diamond TTFs.
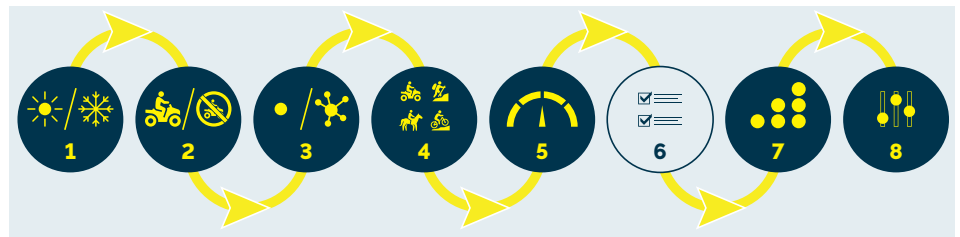
2.3.6 Preparedness

In addition to the technical challenge of the trail, the level of preparedness required to travel it safely must also be determined. The preparedness level is a relative categorization of what the visitor needs to travel the trail safely.

All visitors are expected to take standard preparedness measures to ensure a safe experience (e.g., leave a trip plan, and – take the essentials such as seasonally appropriate clothing, appropriate footwear, water and snacks, etc.). However, it is possible that a trail may be technically easy to travel (e.g., flat rail to trail section), but that its remote location, technical terrain, the inability to get off the trail and/or lack of amenities may require visitors to have a higher level of preparedness for their outing.

It is also possible that visitors may be exposed to hazards along the trail that they need to be aware of in advance; or they may require specialized training and equipment in order to manage risks from the hazard (e.g., avalanche training). In these cases, trail operators are encouraged to use the trail classification to communicate the recommended preparedness level.

Preparedness triggers should be used to identify when an enhanced level of preparedness is required to safely navigate the trail due to the need for special equipment, special skills, increased level of fitness or unique hazards. Trail operators are encouraged to use the definitions and preparedness triggers outlined below to select the appropriate preparedness level for the trail:

Standard – visitors should make standard preparations to travel the trail safely (e.g., trip plan, clothing, water, etc.)

Enhanced – visitors need to make enhanced preparations in order to travel the trail safely. Triggers include, but are not limited to:

- specialty equipment required to travel the trail safely (water purification, avalanche beacon/probe/shovel, etc.)
- specialty skills required in order to travel the trail safely (navigation, wildlife awareness, backcountry travel, mountaineering/route selection, avalanche, etc.)
- enhanced fitness required in order to travel the trail safely
- hazards on or near the trail (avalanche, swift water crossing, etc.) that require visitors to be aware of, and prepare for, in advance of their trip in order to travel the trail safely. This does not require the identification of all inherent hazards on the trail, just those that a visitor needs to pre-plan and prepare for

For trails that do not have an enhanced level of recommended preparedness trail operators are encouraged to provide a standard preparedness statement to their visitors. There are activity-specific considerations to take into account, however at a minimum, trail organizations should advise visitors to know the local conditions, leave a trip plan and take the essentials, such as food, water, clothing, communication and emergency equipment. There are many organizations that provide outdoor safety and education materials, contact TCT at **info@tctrail.ca** for more information on local and national organizations.

For trails that are classified as an enhanced preparation level, trail operators should be sure to communicate which enhanced preparations are required in addition to the above standard preparations.

K&P Trail, ON
Sonya Richmond
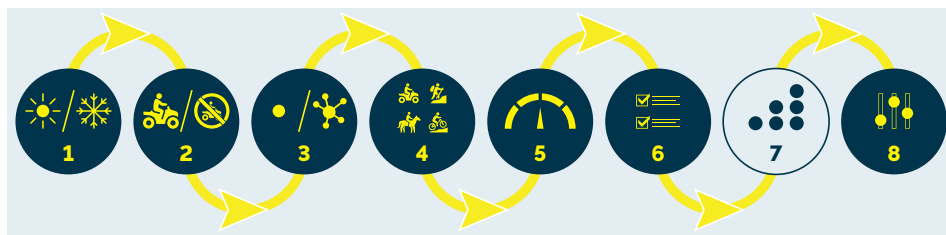
2.3.7 Level of Development

The level of development of the trail also needs to be determined. Does the trail provide visitors with access to all the comforts and conveniences of home? Are visitors expecting to rough it with few comforts and conveniences? Or does the trail offer visitors something in between?

When determining the intended level of development of a new trail, or looking to enhance the level of development of an existing trail, it is important to be aware that decisions about the trail's level of development can complement or contradict the recreation setting in which the trail travels. Misalignment between the level of development of a trail and the recreation setting can result in undesirable impacts on the visitor's trail experience.

Figure 4   Level of development should align with the recreation setting

In most cases, the level of development should be guided by, and complement, the trail's recreation setting (see **Appendix B** for a description of recreation settings from the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum). For example, if the trail is travelling through a remote backcountry setting, visitors are unlikely to expect, or want, frequent comfort and convenience amenities and, where provided, will expect these amenities to be of a lower level of service. However, in more front-country and developed areas, visitors may expect more frequent and higher level service amenities.

In determining the level of development, trail operators should be mindful of the level of visitation. Efforts should be taken to ensure that the amenities provided are appropriate for the level of use. In addition, making decisions about the level of trail development affords the opportunity to provide justification to establish or take management actions in order to manage the volume of visitation. This ensures the level of use remains consistent with the intended level of development.

When making decisions about the level of development for a trail, it is recommended that the level of development of nearby trails, in the larger network, also be considered. Just as not all trails provide for the same activity types, not all trails should provide the same level of development. To meet the broad range of desired trail experience, it is important that purposeful decisions be made about the level of development to ensure diversity in the broader trail system.

Three commonly-used terms for levels of developments are:

- developed
- moderately developed
- minimally developed

To determine the level of development, the table on the following page should be reviewed. The matrix is provided to assist in determining which amenities are, more or less, consistent with each of the three levels of development and to help ensure that the level of development aligns with the recreation setting through which the trail travels.

The following table is provided for guidance only and trail operators should determine the supply of amenities with due consideration of the mix of activity types, the volume of use, the recreation setting, the supply of trail experiences, and capital and operational resourcing and capacity.

Dutton-Dunwich Trail, ON
MP Prosser

Trail Setting & Amenities by Level of Development

AMENITIES		Level of Development		
		Developed	**Moderately Developed**	**Minimally Developed**
RECREATION SETTING	Developed	Appropriate	Appropriate	May be appropriate
	Frontcountry	Appropriate	Appropriate	May be appropriate
	Midcountry	May be appropriate	Appropriate	May be appropriate
	Backcountry	Inappropriate	May be appropriate	Appropriate
TRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE		Structures are frequent and typically constructed of imported materials. May include bridges, boardwalks, curbs, handrails, etc.	Structures of limited size, scale and quantity; typically constructed of native materials. Structures adequate to protect trail infrastructure and resources. Bridges as needed for environmental protection and appropriate access.	Structures minimal to non-existent. Drainage typically accomplished without structures. Bridges as needed for environmental protection and appropriate access.
ACCESS	Major trailhead	Appropriate – depending on degree of use/trail significance.	Appropriate – depending on degree of use/trail significance.	Appropriate – depending on degree of use/trail significance.
	Minor trailhead	Appropriate – depending on degree of use/trail significance.	Appropriate – depending on degree of use/trail significance.	Appropriate – depending on degree of use/trail significance.
	Rustic trailhead	Appropriate – depending on degree of use/trail significance.	Appropriate – depending on degree of use/trail significance.	Appropriate – depending on degree of use/trail significance.
SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING	Major trailhead signs with maps	Appropriate	May be appropriate	May be appropriate
	Minor trail signs with maps	Appropriate	Appropriate	May be appropriate
	Trail markers/ directional signs	Appropriate	Appropriate	May be appropriate – but bare minimum required to navigate
	Regulatory/caution/ advisory signs	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate – but minimal
	Interpretive signs	Appropriate	May be appropriate	Appropriate – but minimal
COMFORT & CONVENIENCE	Flush toilet	May be appropriate	Inappropriate	Inappropriate
	Composting toilet	May be appropriate	Appropriate	May be appropriate
	Vault toilet	Appropriate	Appropriate	May be appropriate
	Waste receptacles	Appropriate	May be appropriate	Inappropriate
	Recycling receptacles	Appropriate	May be appropriate	Inappropriate
	Benches	Appropriate	May be appropriate	Inappropriate
	Picnic tables	Appropriate	May be appropriate	Inappropriate
	Off-loading ramps	May be appropriate	May be appropriate	Inappropriate

A Guide to Classifying Trails
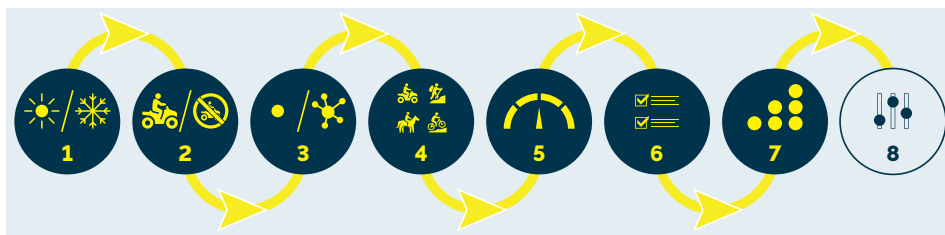
2.4 TRAIL DESIGN PARAMETERS

Trail design parameters describe the physical characteristics of the trail. The design parameters of a trail, whether new or existing, should reflect a) the needs of the activities permitted on the trail and b) the technical level of challenge of the trail. Once determined, trail operators should regularly inspect and maintain their trails to ensure that the physical characteristics remain in line with appropriate design parameters. In the case of new trail construction, trail designers and builders should ensure that the constructed trail aligns with the intended design parameters.

Whether managing an existing trail or building a new one, appropriate values for the following design parameters should be determined and documented on the TMO:

Clearing Limits

The area over and beside the trail tread that is cleared of obstructions that may impede use of the trail. There are two key clearing limit parameters:

Clearing Height

The minimum height of the clearing limit, measured from the trail tread to the lowest obstacle above the trail tread. Note, that for winter activities, the dimension is measured from the top of the average snow level (varies by location), not from the ground surface.

Clearing Width

The minimum width of the clearing limit, measured horizontally across the trail corridor at its narrowest point.

The design parameters provided in these guidelines are general in nature. In the case of some single-use or activity-optimized trails, it may be appropriate to apply activity-specific design guidance from other sources (e.g., International Mountain Bike Association).

Clearing Width

Clearing Height

Travelled Surface Width

Tread Surface
Type & Compaction

Travelled Surface Width

The travelled surface width is the minimum width of the trail tread, including structure width, on which the visitor directly travels. The travelled surface width varies based on the combination of permitted activities and the intended level of challenge.

Trail operators should ensure that structure widths are, at minimum, equal to the tread width to enable trail visitors to travel over or through the structure without a narrowing of the trail tread width. The structure width must provide additional clearance space to allow the widest permitted activity type to easily pass through and to limit the potential of contacting other visitors or the structure (e.g., handlebars against the handrails of a bridge). Structure width and loading should also be sufficient to accommodate maintenance equipment (e.g., groomers).

Tread Surface Type & Compaction

This parameter is a general description of the type of material used to surface the trail tread, and the firmness and stability of that surfacing material. The most appropriate surfacing description for the following general categories of tread surface type should be selected:

Asphalt, Concrete, Pavers

The trail tread has been surfaced with permeable or non-permeable asphalt, concrete or interlocking pavers. The tread surface is very firm, stable and slip-resistant.

Aggregate – Firm surface

The trail tread has been surfaced with crushed angular aggregates and fines (crusher fines). The tread surface has been compacted, is firm, stable and slip-resistant.

Aggregate – Loose surface

The trail tread has been surfaced with loose gravel or other aggregates without fines. The tread does not compact and remains loose and unstable.

Natural – Firm surface

Tread is composed of native soils with an appropriate mixture of clay, loam and sand. The tread material has been compacted, is firm, stable and does not displace when travelled on.

Natural – Loose surface

Tread is composed of native soils with less appropriate mixture of clay, loam and sand or utilizes other unconsolidated natural materials such as wood chips. The tread material is unconsolidated, may displace when travelled on and/or may be slippery (e.g., clay).

The firmness and stability of a trail tread affects the physical accessibility of the trail.

Firmness

The extent to which the trail tread material compacts or gives way while under pressure from the visitor's mode of travel (e.g., foot, wheelchair, mobility device). As an example, when travelling or turning on sand, the visitor's foot or wheel sinks, making travel difficult.

Stability

The extent to which the trail tread material shifts from side to side when the visitor travels on it. As an example, when a cyclist is travelling on sand and turns their wheel, the wheel displaces the sand, making turning difficult.

Obstacles & Accessible Trails

In most cases, obstacles are barriers and reduce the accessibility of a trail.

Attention should be given to obstacles that are larger than 2.5 cm on aggregate surfaces and larger than 1.27 cm on paved or wooden surfaces.

Trail Tread Obstacles

A tread obstacle is anything that interrupts the evenness of the tread surface and is unavoidable without leaving the trail tread. Common examples of tread obstacles include roots, rocks, water/erosion channels, uneven boards, openings in the tread (e.g., drainage grate) or "lips" created where two different tread materials meet (e.g., crusher fine tread meets bridge decking). Obstacles may be intentionally included or built into a trail to make it more challenging or exciting, or they may emerge overtime as the tread settles and visitation displaces/compacts tread materials or tree roots grow above the surface. Obstacles can limit the accessibility of a trail and, if visitors are not expecting them, introduce tripping hazards. Whether classifying an existing trail or considering the development of a new trail, deliberate decisions should be made as to the intended frequency of trail tread obstacles and the intended height that obstacles will protrude above the tread. This information should be clearly and conveniently communicated to visitors (e.g., trailhead signage, trip planning materials, etc.).

There are two major design parameters relating to trail tread obstacles:

Obstacle Frequency

Obstacle frequency is a general and qualitative description of how often visitors are intended to encounter a trail tread obstacle, and is expressed as:

- none
- occasional
- frequent

Obstacle Height

Obstacle height is an approximate measure in centimetres of how pronounced obstacles are above the tread surface.

Temporary obstacles such as fallen trees are not considered permanent obstacles as they are intended to be removed through maintenance regimes.

Grades

Grade is the vertical difference in elevation (ascent and descent) of a trail. Grade is expressed as the percentage of change in elevation or as a ratio of vertical distance (rise) to horizontal distance (run). There are three major design parameters relating to a trail's grade:

Target Grade

The typical grade of a trail over its entire length (or section of trail) that is deemed to be appropriate for the permitted trail activities and intended level of challenge.

Maximum Grade

The steepest acceptable vertical grade permitted on the trail (or section of trail) that is deemed to be appropriate for the permitted trail activities and intended level of challenge.

Maximum Grade Proportion

The proportion of a trail with grades that exceeds the target grade but is less than or equal to the Maximum Grade. For example, if a trail meets its target grade over 80% of its length but exceeds the target grade for the remainder of the trail, its maximum grade proportion is 20% (grade exceeds target but is less than maximum grade).

Grade

Rise

Run

Cross Slope

The grade of the trail tread measured perpendicular to the direction of travel. Treads can be out-sloped (sloping toward the downhill side of the trail) or in-sloped (sloping toward a ditch on the uphill side of the trail). There are three major design parameters regarding cross slope:

Target Cross Slope

The average horizontal grade of the trail tread, measured perpendicular to the centre line, over the trail's entire length (or section of trail) that is deemed to be appropriate for the permitted activities and intended level of challenge of the trail.

Maximum Cross Slope

The steepest acceptable horizontal grade, measured perpendicular to the centre line, permitted on the trail (or section of trail) that is deemed to be appropriate for the permitted trail activities and intended level of challenge of the trail.

Maximum Cross Slope Proportion

The proportion of a trail where the cross slope exceeds the target cross slope but is less than or equal to the maximum cross slope value. For example, if a trail meets its target cross slope over 80% of its length but exceeds the target cross slope for the remainder of the trail, its maximum cross slope proportion is 20% (cross slope exceeds target but is less than maximum cross slope).

Back Slope

Cross Slope

Centre Line

Turning Radius

The horizontal radius a trail activity requires to negotiate a curve (e.g., switchback, climbing turn or horizontal turn) in a single manoeuvre. There is one major design parameter relating to a trail's turning radius:

Target Turning Radius

The minimum horizontal radius required for a permitted trail activity to negotiate a curve in a single manoeuvre.

Radius

Centre Line

Sight Lines

The distance a trail enthusiast can clearly and safely observe the trail ahead or behind. Providing appropriate sight distance allows the visitor to have the time to recognize an obstruction such as debris, other trail users or intersections, and take the appropriate action. There is one critical design parameter regarding sight lines:

Sight Line Distance

The minimum distance that a visitor must be able to see that is appropriate for the permitted trail activities and intended level of challenge of the trail.

Sight Line

Direction of Travel

2.4.1 Selecting Design Parameter Values on Mixed-use and Multi-use Trails

In keeping with the visitor experience focused approach to trail classification, it is imperative that trail operators ensure that the physical dimensions of a trail, whether new or existing, meet the basic design parameters of all permitted trail activities, as well as the intended level of challenge. However, it should be recognized that some trail activities have more demanding trail dimension requirements than others. For example, the clearing height for equestrian users is much greater than that of mountain bikers. Known as "critical design parameters", mixed use, multi-use and activity-optimized trails should be designed in accordance with the most demanding (or greatest) design parameter value from the permitted trail activities.

To determine the design parameters:

1   **Review the TMO to identify the intended level of challenge and the activities that are permitted on the trail.**

2   **Use Appendix C, to identify the design parameter values for the permitted trail activities. If the trail is a multi-use, mixed-use or activity-optimized trail, it is important to identify which activity has the greatest demand for each design parameter and utilize that value from the respective activity table.**

3   **Document the required design parameter values on the TMO.**

4   **For an existing trail, determine whether any changes to the trail design should be made to address misalignment between the intended and actual trail conditions. Areas of misalignment can become focal points for maintenance and/or trail upgrades.**

See **Appendix C** for design parameters for each major trail activity and level of challenge.

Critical Design Parameter

The most demanding (or greatest) design parameters based on the permitted trail activities.

Selecting Critical Design Parameters

As an example, consider a summer non-motorized multi-use trail that is intended to provide a moderate technical challenge for pedestrian, equestrian and mountain bike activities. Appendix C provides the design parameters per activity. The activity that has the highest demand for each design parameter should dictate the design of that parameter.

Classifications

Activities

Pedestrian

Equestrian

Mountain Biking

Design Parameter		Activity with Most Demanding Design Parameter
Clearing Limit	Clearing Width	🐴
	Clearing Height	🐴
Tread Width	Tread Width	🚶
	Structure Width *(minimum width)*	🐴
Surfacing	Surface Type	🐴
	Obstacles *(max height)*	🚴
Grades	Target Grade	🚶
	Maximum Grade *(short)*	🚶
	Maximum Grade Proportion	🚶
Cross Slope	Target Cross Slope	🐴
	Maximum Cross Slope	🐴
Turning	Target Turning Radius	🚴
Sight Lines	Sight Line Distance	🚴

Salt Marsh Trail, NS
Paul Tingley

2.5 COMMUNICATING THE TRAIL CLASSIFICATION TO VISITORS

An effort should be made to integrate the most pertinent trail classification information into trailhead and on-trail signage as well as to communicate the trail classification details to visitors through trip planning information sources such as trail maps, brochures, websites, smart phone applications, etc. At a minimum, the following information should be made available to visitors before they arrive, as well as at the trailhead before they begin their trail experience:

- season of use
- mode of travel
- whether the trail is optimized for a particular activity
- permitted trail activities using standardized representational icons
- prohibited trail activities using standardized representational icons
- technical level of challenge using the class rating symbol
- preparedness rating, standard preparedness statement as well as any enhanced preparations
- physical design parameters of the trail including (see Figure 5):
  » length
  » elevation gain and loss
  » typical and minimum tread and clearing width
  » tread surface, firmness and stability
  » typical grade, maximum grade and maximum grade proportion
  » typical cross slope, maximum cross slope and maximum cross slope proportion
  » tread obstacle frequency and height
- amenities available on/along the trail and whether they are universally accessible

2.6 ACCESSIBLE TRAILS

Trails offer numerous physical and mental benefits. TCT believes everyone deserves access to trails as a means of improving their health and well-being, and is committed to making trail experiences available to all.

TCT's vision is to inspire everyone to embrace the outdoors, and accessible trails are an important component of developing meaningful access on trail networks. Accessible trails may fall under different designations: accessible, universally accessible, barrier-free or other regional/national categories. Each of these categories have different parameters, and it is important to note that some have legislated requirements, depending on the trail, as well as the province/territory.

TCT encourages and supports the meaningful development of accessible trails. All too often, trails are built with some accessible features, but with other inaccessible features. An example is an accessible trail with an inaccessible washroom. Or an accessible trailhead with an inaccessible trail. Meaningful access involves careful planning of all aspects of the trail experience to ensure that all users can enjoy full participation.

Providing accessible trail experiences requires deliberate planning and design, not only of the trail tread (e.g., tread width, tread firmness and stability, clearing heights/widths, grades, cross slopes), but of every component of the trail experience. Trail operators must build access into all amenities and services, from pre-trip planning (websites, maps) to parking, washrooms, signage, amenities, programming and other elements.

TCT also encourages the Universal Design of trails. Often accessible trails are designed using a narrow definition of accessibility. But all trail users, at some time, will require accessible trail elements – whether it is a washroom, seating, low grade changes, clear signage, guide ropes or audio tours. Planning for *everyone* will ensure that everyone belongs on trails.

"When we work together, nothing can stop us from creating an accessible world. It's an inclusion revolution."

Maayan Ziv, Founder
CEO, AccessNow

2.6.1   Trail Information

Another important component of accessibility is providing accurate and timely information to visitors about a trail's physical characteristics and conditions. This information will help visitors make better-informed decisions about the suitability of a particular trail. However, currently, this information is not always being regularly or consistently communicated.

At a minimum, trail operators are encouraged to make the following Information readily available to visitors prior to using the trail:

- trail length
- surface type, firmness and stability
- typical and minimum tread width
- typical and maximum grade, and maximum grade proportion
- typical and maximum cross slope
- frequency and height of obstacles
- trail map
- washrooms and other facilities and amenities present along the trail
- infrastructure barriers to accessing the trail, such as width-limiting or right-angle gates
- any other barriers that could impact a visitor's experience

This information should be made available through trailhead signage but also through all trip planning channels so that visitors can make informed decisions before they arrive at the trail. Without this information, it is difficult to know what barriers may be faced on a trail and whether the trail is appropriate and safe.

TCT has partnered with AccessNow (**www.accessnow.com**) to map the accessibility of sections of the TCT across the country. The project will use the AccessNow platform and technology to highlight lived experiences of disability, and to provide users with a navigational resource to discover trail accessibility. The public can access this information, or map their own section of trail, using the AccessNow app.

Trail Information...

...will help visitors make better informed decisions about the suitability of a particular trail for their needs and abilities.
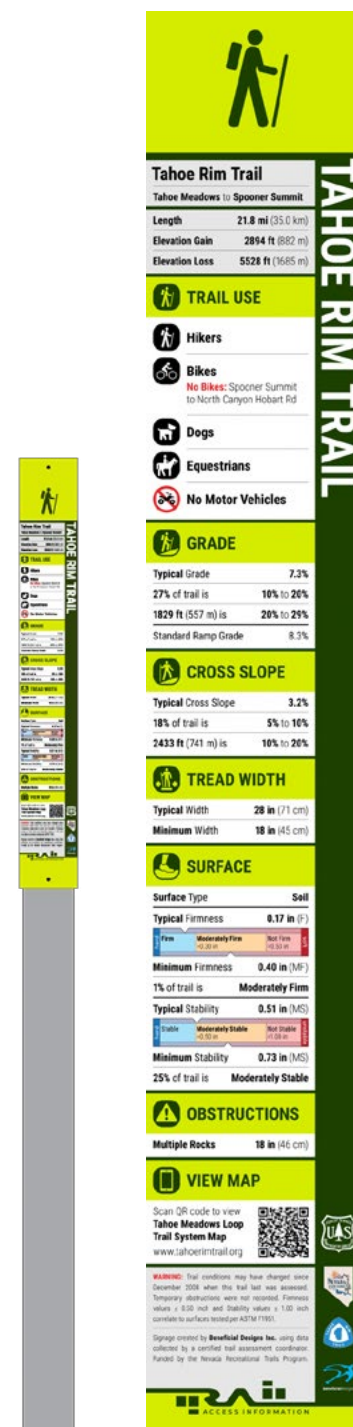
Figure 5   Example sign with trail accessibility information
https://www.beneficialdesigns.com/assessment/trails/signage/

2.6.2 Accessible Design Guidelines

These guidelines are not intended to be design guidelines for the development of accessible trails. Given the breadth of provincial/territorial legislation, building codes and accessibility design guidelines across the country, TCT has not, at this time, specified design guidance for accessible trails, comfort and convenience amenities, or visitor services. Trail operators are required to adhere to, or exceed, applicable legislation. If none exists, trail operators are encouraged to refer to other accessibility legislation and municipal and/or sectoral accessibility design guidelines in the design of the trail and associated amenities and services. As an essential component of any accessible trail project, TCT encourages operators to engage trail users with diverse abilities to participate at each stage of the project – to review plans prior to construction, and to test the accessibility features prior to opening.

In some cases, trail users may seek to participate in adventure trail experiences while requiring some accessible elements. Adaptive mountain biking (aMTB) is a fast-growing sport that makes mountain biking available to riders with disabilities. For trail operators interested in developing adaptive trails for mountain biking, Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association (KASA) has developed standards and a rating system for building aMTB trails. Other organizations have created their own versions of aMTB guidelines, many available online.

Laurier Park, City of Montreal, QC

SECTION: 3

A GUIDE TO DEFINING TRAIL EXPERIENCES

Purpose:

- Enable the communication and marketing of the trail to appropriate visitors.
- Enable visitors to better select sections of the trail that align with their desires and abilities.
- Understand the general supply of trail experiences.

Target audience:

Trail operators   **Visitors**   **Trail tourism ecosystem**

The first step in ensuring visitors have a positive trail experience is enabling visitors to easily and accurately find trails that are well suited to their desired experience. All too often visitors find themselves on trails that may not be suitable for their desired experience, or appropriate for their abilities or level of preparation. When this happens, it can lead to a poor visitor experience, pose a risk to the trail brand and create potential visitor safety concerns.

It is essential that the marketing of a trail and all trip planning tools and information accurately depict and communicate the nature of a trail experience. Trail operators and destination marketing/management organizations should work collaboratively to help visitors identify trails that are best suited to their desired experience, their abilities and their level of preparation. We understand that our national network is quite diverse, and that, in turn, it is challenging to create a single approach to describing the experiences that it offers. However, we also know that there are some fundamental characteristics that are at the root of all trail experiences, regardless of the activity undertaken. These characteristics can be used to help define the general trail experience.

With this understanding, we have developed a simple typology of trail experiences to communicate the general nature of the trail experience. This typology can be utilized by any trail organization across the country.

By defining the trail experience through this typology, we are working to more consistently communicate the:

- visitor objectives that the trail may satisfy
- physical characteristics of the trail
- level of expertise, degree of difficulty and degree of preparedness required to safely travel the trail
- specialized skills and equipment required to enjoy the trail
- level of development, as well as comfort and convenience amenities and services along the trail

flickr.com

3.1 TRAIL EXPERIENCE TYPOLOGY

Regardless of the trail activity undertaken, it can be generally categorized into one of three distinct trail experience types:

1. strolls
2. excursions
3. epics

Strolls are...

Easy and short to moderate distance trails that are well-marked and easy to navigate. These trails can support single to multi-day trips, have modest or no elevation gain, require little pre-planning and do not require any special skills or equipment for a safe experience. These trails are typically within, close to, or easy to access from urban centres or small towns through a variety of transportation modes. They provide a full range of comfort and convenience amenities, as well as easy access to accommodations on or near the trail, such as resorts, hotels and B&Bs. Visitors to these trails are typically less interested in the physical challenge, and more focused on experiencing and learning about the local cultures and heritage, and sampling local flavours and attractions in a relaxed way.

Excursions are...

Moderate to longer distance trails that are well-marked and suitable for visitors who are at the beginner and intermediate levels of proficiency in their chosen activity. These trails typically support full- to multi-day trips, and may also provide for part-day outings. With a diversity of terrain, these trails are more physically demanding and are of a moderate or greater technical difficulty. Trip pre-planning is typically required, and the trail may require visitors to obtain specialized equipment and some level of training in order to experience the trail safely. These trails are typically located outside of settled areas but are still readily accessible without requiring any specialized modes of transportation. Visitor comfort and convenience amenities are available, though they may be more rudimentary in nature. On and near-trail accommodations are usually available and typically include comfort camping, organized camping or B&Bs.

What's your desired trail experience type?

Similar to how Destination Canada encourages travellers to identify their "Explorer Quotient Travel Type" (**https://quiz.canada.travel/caen/all-traveller-types**), these trail experience categories can be used to create a national "What's Your Trail Type" tool that allows visitors to determine their desired trail experience type. A simple online tool can be developed that poses key questions to visitors to help determine their desired experience, then based on that information, offers trail suggestions that best match their needs and desires.

Epics are...

Moderate to long-distance trails that may or may not be well-marked, and are most suitable for visitors who are at the intermediate to expert levels of proficiency for their chosen activity. These trails typically support multi-day to extended trips, and can be very physically and mentally demanding, as well as technically challenging. Containing technical terrain and features, these trails require considerable trip planning, specialized equipment and/or training in order to experience the trail safely. They are most often located outside of settled areas and can be challenging to access or may require specialized modes of transportation. Visitor comfort and convenience amenities may or may not be available. When offered, they are typically rudimentary. On or near-trail accommodations may be available, and would typically include random/backcountry camping, wilderness lodges, comfort camping or organized camping. In some cases, long-distance trails may be comprised of short local trail sections that have varying levels of technical challenge or trail experience type, but when integrated into a longer trail, the sections collectively result in an epic trail experience rating.

These typologies, though general, allow trail operators and marketers to clearly communicate the nature of the trail experience. As a result, visitors will be able to easily research and understand the general experience a particular trail may provide, and make an informed decision as to whether it aligns with their needs/expectations.

This typology will also help the trail tourism ecosystem understand their trail, select the most appropriate market segments, and tailor their offerings and marketing to relevant target markets. In both cases, this typology increases the likelihood that visitors will find their way to the trails that best meet their needs.

3.2 TRAIL EXPERIENCE TYPE CRITERIA & ASSESSMENT TOOL

In alignment with the trail experience type definitions above, there are a number of fundamental factors and characteristics that will determine the experience a particular trail provides, regardless of what activities are permitted. These factors (with examples) include:

- The visitor objectives the trail satisfies.
  - » Will the trail satisfy the desires of those seeking a leisurely outing, or is it more tailored to the most ardent adventurer, seeking risk, personal challenges and physical demands?
- The length of the trail.
  - » Can the trail be enjoyed as a short outing or does it require a multi-day expedition?
- The trail surfacing.
  - » Is the trail tread relatively compacted, hard and smooth or is it loose, rough and technical?
- The width of the trail tread.
  - » Is the trail tread width considerable, giving visitors a sense of space and ease, or is it tight and narrow, making visitors feel more constrained?
- The grade of the trail.
  - » Is the trail generally flat, not requiring an extensive expenditure of energy, or is it steep and long, requiring visitors to exert considerable energy for extended periods of time?
- The technical challenge of the trail.
  - » Is the trail technically easier and accessible to all, or is it challenging, testing the skill of the most experienced visitors?
- The level of preparation required to enjoy the trail safely.
  - » Can the trail be safely enjoyed with basic preparation or do visitors need to spend considerable time planning and preparing (including a need for specialized equipment and training)?
- The level of development, comfort and convenience amenities on the trail.
  - » Can visitors access all of the comforts and conveniences of home, or do visitors need to "rough it"?

The answers to these types of questions come together in different combinations that can be used to categorize trail experiences into the three general trail experience types described above (strolls, excursions, epics).

However, determining the trail experience type should not be viewed as an exact science. It is not a simple equation, based on scored variables with one conclusive result. No single criterion or indicator determines the overall trail experience type rating.

Instead, categorizing the trail experience types should be viewed as a qualitative, yet structured, evaluation of a trail's most fundamental characteristics with the purpose of determining which experience type definition the trail best reflects. The trail experience types should be viewed as a spectrum. Some trails will fit clearly into one trail experience type while others may have elements from multiple experience types.

Recognizing this, TCT has developed the Trail Experience Type Assessment Tool (**Appendix D**). The tool provides a structured process by which trail operators can determine the trail experience type that best aligns with their trail.

City of Greater Sudbury - Junction Creek Waterway Park, ON

Applying the Trail Experience Type Assessment Tool

The Trail Experience Type Assessment Tool utilizes clear criteria and indicators to help define the trail experience type. To complete the assessment, trail operators should undertake the following steps:

1 Review the Trail Experience Type definitions presented in section 3.1.

2 Review the criteria, indicators and value ranges outlined in the assessment tool.

3 Review the TMO form (if one has been developed) and consider the characteristics of the trail that is being assessed.

4 Work through each criterion and indicator in the assessment tool to identify the response option that most closely reflects the trail being assessed. The assessment tool can be printed from Appendix D.

5 Once all criteria and indicators have been assessed and the appropriate responses made, review the results to determine which trail experience category was selected most often. This will indicate which trail experience type is the best match for the trail.

K&P Trail, ON
Alija Box

3.3 ALIGNING TRAIL EXPERIENCE TYPES WITH MARKET SEGMENTATION

As previously indicated, it is imperative that we help visitors find trails that are aligned with their expectations and abilities. This is known as a "product market match". Doing so begins with identifying and understanding the general expectations of trail visitors. With this understanding, trail operators and destination managers can use their trail experience type rating(s) to identify which market(s) is most likely to be attracted to their trail(s).

To support trail operators and destination managers, TCT has developed a product market match tool (see table below). Applying the Adventure Travel Trade Association's Adventure Traveller Type market segmentation categories and Destination Canada's Explorer Quotients, this tool illustrates which market segments are more or less likely to be aligned with each trail experience type. This tool can be used by trail groups to help direct marketing efforts to the right market segments.

For more information on the Adventure Travel Trade Association's Adventure Traveller Type market segmentation tool visit:

https://www.adventuretravel. biz/research/what-kind-of-adventure-traveler-are-you/

For more information on Destination Canada's Explorer Quotient market segmentation tool visit:

https://www. destinationcanada.com/en/ tools

Trail Experience and Market Segmentation Tool

Travel Market Segment		Trail Experience Type		
		Strolls	**Excursions**	**Epics**
Adventure Travel Trade Association's Adventure Traveller Types	**Adventure Grazers**	Strong Alignment	Potential Alignment	Poor Alignment
	Adventurers	Potential Alignment	Strong Alignment	Potential Alignment
	Adventure Enthusiasts	Poor Alignment	Potential Alignment	Strong Alignment
Destination Canada's Explorer Quotient	**Free Spirits**	Strong Alignment	Potential Alignment	Poor Alignment
	Cultural Explorers	Potential Alignment	Strong Alignment	Potential Alignment
	Authentic Experiences	Potential Alignment	Potential Alignment	Strong Alignment

City of Montreal, QC

SECTION: 4

A GUIDE TO EVALUATING TRAILS TOURISM READINESS

Purpose:

- Identify priorities to grow trail tourism.
- Support tourism investment attraction.
- Enable the communication and marketing of the trail to appropriate visitors.

Target audience:

Trail operators, designers, builders

- Destination Management Organizations
- Economic Development Officers
- Tour Operators & Service Providers
- Trail Operators

Trails that are well developed, managed and strategically marketed can become important economic drivers for host communities, and valuable destinations that help to diversify and grow Canada's tourism economy. Tourism relates to the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business or other purposes for not more than one consecutive year. Trail tourism is tourism that is primarily motivated by a visitor's desire to experience a trail and/or trail destination.

Maximizing the benefits of trail tourism requires destinations to provide a high-quality and dependable trail tourism experience, complete with the appropriate trail conditions, as well as the amenities and services that visitors expect. And visitors, as well as tourism operators, expect that this experience will be provided each and every time they visit the trail. This responsibility goes well beyond the trail operator. It is the responsibility of the destination's entire trail tourism ecosystem (Figure 6).

The destinations that are most successful at maximizing the benefits of trail tourism recognize that it is about much more than the physical trail itself. Of importance for trail tourism destinations are the interconnectedness and interdependency of the tourism ecosytem, the important role each entity in the system plays, and the deliberate work to coordinate, align and collaborate with the players across the entire ecosystem.

The trail tourism ecosystem can be thought of as a complex, interwoven and dynamic network of entities, each of which have their own mandates, but that purposefully come together to support and deliver trail tourism. Each entity in the ecosystem plays an important role in providing the visitor's trail tourism experience. In the most general sense, the trail tourism ecosystem includes:

- trail operators who plan, build and maintain the trail
- land managers who manage the land the trail is on and provide authority for the development of the trail
- accommodations where visitors stay before they start on the trail, while they are on trail and when they complete the trail
- food and beverage providers
- attractions on or near the trail that elevate and enrich the visitor experience
- tour operators who sell tours and guide visitors on the trail
- transportation providers who help visitors get to, from and even along the trail
- local, regional, provincial/territorial and national Destination Management Organizations that help to market the trail, promote visitation, and lead the development and management of the destination

Figure 6   Canada's Trail Tourism Ecosystem

Canada's Trail Tourism Ecosystem

Trails & Trail Operators
- Municipal Trails
- National Park Trails
- NGO Trails
- Public Land Trails
- Prov/Terr Parks Trails

Transportation
- Bus
- Air
- Taxi
- Ride Hailing
- Public Transit
- Rail

Amenities & Services
- Service Stations
- Restaurants
- Equipment Rentals
- Tour Operators/ Guides

Host Community
- Residents
- Recreation Clubs
- Local Trail Users
- Elected Officials

Marketing
- DMOs
- Promotion Agencies

Public & Private Attractions
- World/ National/ Prov/Terr Heritage Sites
- Breweries/ Distilleries
- Parks
- Museums
- Indigenous
- Ski/ Mountain Bike Areas
- Events/ Festivals
- Arts & Culture
- Agri-Tourism

Accommodations
- Hotels
- Resorts
- Eco-lodges
- Campgrounds
- Peer-to-Peer Rentals
- Huts

Greatest

Tourism Benefits

Minimal

Experience &
Tour Packaging

Services, Amenities,
Attractions & Accomodations

Wayfinding, Storytelling,
Trail Information &
Trip Planning

Activity & Difficulty

Landscape & Setting

Tourism Readiness

VISITOR READY
Relatively
undeveloped
most basic experience

MARKET READY
Provides moderate
levels of infrastructure
and supporting services
currently being marketed
to potential visitors

EXPORT READY
Experience that
is well-known or has the
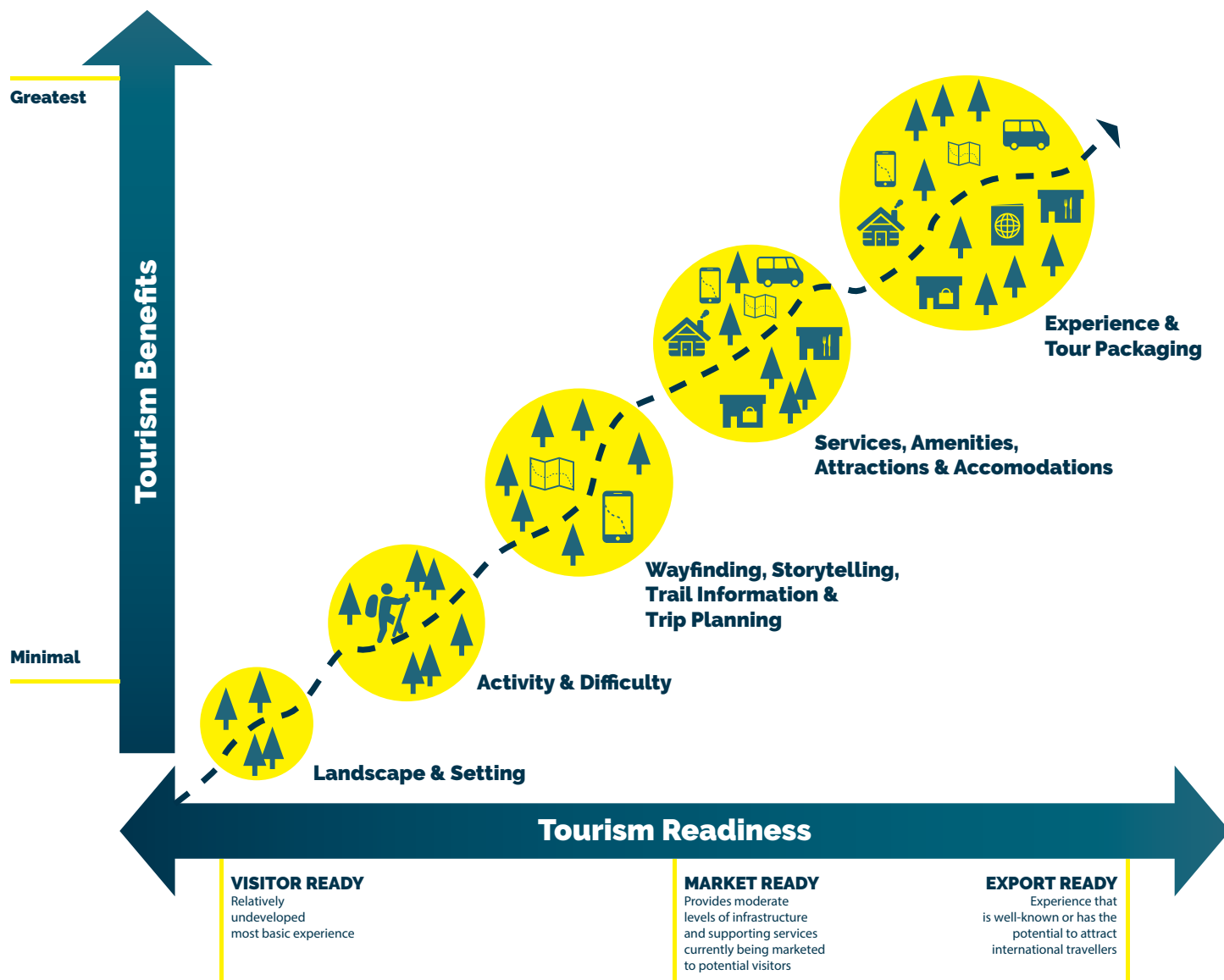potential to attract
international travellers

Figure 7   Trail Tourism Benefits & Readiness Spectrum (Justin Ellis, 2016)

What is Tourism?

Tourism relates to the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business or other purposes for not more than one consecutive year.

What is Trail Tourism?

Tourism that is primarily motivated by a visitor's desire to experience a trail and/or trail destination.

Who is a Tourist?

A tourist is anyone who stays one or more nights away from home or, if no nights are spent away from home, travels at least 40 km one way from home to the destination.

The reliability and confidence that a destination's trail tourism ecosystem can ensure a quality and consistent experience is known as "tourism readiness". Tourism readiness is the rating of how "ready" a trail is to welcome visitors, to be promoted as a travel-motivating tourism attraction and to ensure a positive experience.

Tourism readiness criteria are commonplace in nearly all provinces and territories across the country. However, the existing tourism readiness criteria have not been tailored to be relevant to trail tourism. Recognizing this, this guide:

- creates a common lexicon and approach for discussing and identifying the tourism readiness of trails across the country
- enables destinations to better understand the tourism readiness status of their trail(s) and identify future priorities to enhance its tourism readiness
- supports the creation of plans/strategies/proposals to attract trail tourism investment
- inspires excellence in trail tourism experiences across the country

Through this guide, TCT aims to establish a consistent national approach to evaluating the tourism readiness of trails in Canada. This guide provides a self-assessment tool that trail operators, destination managers or others within a local trail tourism ecosystem, can apply to their respective trails. The outputs of the assessment will assist in increasing the understanding of current trail tourism readiness and help identify ways to advance trail tourism potential.

4.1 TRAIL TOURISM READINESS CATEGORIES

Trails can be categorized into one of three levels of tourism readiness: 1) Visitor Ready, 2) Market Ready, 3) Export or Travel Trade Ready. These categories are generally defined as follows:

Visitor Ready — Refers to a legally operated trail that is ready to support local visitors. These trails provide a relatively undeveloped trail experience, are likely known primarily by locals and potentially short-haul domestic travellers, and are typically not actively promoted beyond local markets.

Market Ready — Refers to a trail that meets the *visitor ready* criteria, and also provides a refined trail experience and visitor amenities. These trails have a brand, are known regionally and provincially/territorially, and are actively marketed to potential visitors in domestic short and long-haul markets.

Export Ready — Meeting the criteria for both *visitor* and *market ready*, these trails are the best of what Canada has to offer and are well positioned amongst the best trail destinations in the world. They contain a critical mass of on- and off-trail activities that can provide multi-day experiences. As primary travel motivators, these trails provide a refined and fully-integrated experience. They offer exceptional quality infrastructure and amenities, dependable support services and excellent trip planning information. Access to knowledgeable staff (e.g., trail operator, Destination Marketing Organization) and trip planning tools are in place, ready to meet the needs and expectations of the more experienced trail tourist. The tourism industry in the region acts as an ambassador for the trail and is highly knowledgeable about the available trail experiences. The trail is regularly maintained and visitation is actively managed. This ensures the desired trail experience can be achieved and undesirable impacts to the host community are mitigated or avoided.

Tourism readiness should be thought of as a spectrum (Figure 8). Although there are three general categories, the lines between each are, in fact, blurred. The process of determining a trail's or a trail network's tourism readiness is structured through the evaluation of transparent criteria, but still remains a professional opinion. As such, TCT recommends that the process of determining tourism readiness should be undertaken by a panel of individuals who represent multiple interests within the local trail tourism ecosystem. Such a process with allow for structured discussion, debate and ultimately greater buy-in to the end result.

Trail Tourism Readiness

Tourism readiness is the rating of how "ready" a trail is to welcome visitors and serve as a travel motivating tourism attraction. The higher the tourism readiness rating, the higher the quality and consistency of the trail experience and the appeal the trail will have with longer-haul markets or even international markets.

Tourism Readiness

VISITOR READY
Relatively undeveloped most basic trail experience

MARKET READY
Provides moderate levels of infrastructure and supporting services that are marketed to potential visitors

EXPORT READY
Trail experience that is well-known or has the potential to attract international travellers

Figure 8   Trail Tourism Readiness Continuum

Goat Creek Trail, AB
Parks Canada

4.2 TRAIL TOURISM READINESS CRITERIA & ASSESSMENT

Trail operators and host communities are often excited about their trail's potential for trail tourism. This passion and excitement are fundamental to a successful trail tourism destination. But there are many other elements that must be considered and addressed before a trail and a trail tourism destination begin to be marketed.

Like other tourism products, criteria can be used to determine the tourism readiness of a trail. We have looked closely at the tourism-readiness criteria applied in other segments of the tourism industry, as well as at the criteria developed and applied in other leading trail tourism destinations around the world. We engaged trail and tourism industry leaders across Canada to help inform and identify the criteria that should be used to evaluate and rate the tourism readiness of the TCT and other trails across the country. These criteria provide a clear indication of how ready a trail and its trail tourism ecosystem are to create and support a successful trail tourism destination.

In general, the trail tourism readiness criteria are grouped as follows:

- approvals, planning, management and maintenance
- uniqueness of the trail
- branding, marketing and promotions
- visitor amenities and services
- staffing and funding

The criteria used to evaluate and rate tourism readiness are outlined below. Some criteria play a more significant role in determining tourism readiness than others, and, as such, some criteria serve as "minimum filters" that must be met before a higher tourism readiness rating can be considered. If the trail does not meet a "must" criterion, the trail cannot be rated at the tourism readiness category in which that criterion is presented.

The following pages provide a graphic representation of the criteria and how responses align with the tourism readiness categories. Please see **Appendix E**, for a more detailed Trail Tourism Readiness Evaluation Tool that can be completed to help understand a trail's tourism readiness.

Ville de Chambly, QC

Approvals, Planning, Management & Maintenance

Criteria	VISITOR READY	MARKET READY	EXPORT READY
The trail has been formally approved by the land manager/landowner.	➤ Yes / No	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A
A trail operator (e.g., volunteer group, government agency) has formally accepted responsibility for the management of the trail.	Must / ➤ Desirable / N/A	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A
An approved management/master plan is guiding the development and management of the trail and pursuit of tourism.	Must / ➤ Desirable / N/A	Must / ➤ Desirable / N/A	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A
A visitor management plan is in place to guide the management of visitors on the trail.	Must / ➤ Desirable / N/A	Must / ➤ Desirable / N/A	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A
The basic trail classification, permitted uses and rules of use of the trail are clearly communicated to visitors.	Must / ➤ Desirable / N/A	Must / ➤ Desirable / N/A	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A
Quality and appropriately-located wayfinding, regulatory, safety/warning, and responsible use signage is installed along the trail.	Must / ➤ Desirable / N/A	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A
Trail conditions are formally inspected and documented…	Weekly / Monthly / Quarterly / ➤ Annually / ➤ No set sched	Weekly / ➤ Monthly / Quarterly / Annually / No set sched	➤ Weekly / Monthly / Quarterly / Annually / No set sched
Regular maintenance occurs on the trail…	Weekly / Monthly / Quarterly / ➤ Annually / ➤ No set sched	Weekly / ➤ Monthly / Quarterly / Annually / No set sched	➤ Weekly / Monthly / Quarterly / Annually / No set sched
When serious maintenance problems that create visitor safety or environmental/cultural risks are identified, the trail operator has the capacity to address them…	Immediately / Minor delays / ➤ Extended delays	Immediately / ➤ Minor delays / Extended delays	➤ Immediately / Minor delays / Extended delays
A long-term, sustainable funding model is in place to support capital asset replacement and renewal.	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A	➤ Must / Desirable / N/A

Criteria — VISITOR READY | MARKET READY | EXPORT READY

Uniqueness

The trail travels through and/or provides visitors with an experience that is unique…

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
…Internationally…			►
…Nationally…			
…Prov/Terr…		►	
…Regionally…	►		
…Locally…			

On its own, or when combined with other connected trails, the trail can support…

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
Extended trips			►
Multi-night trips			►
Overnight trips		►	
Day trips	►		

Branding & Marketing

A distinct and unique trail brand has been developed and incorporated into trail amenities and signage on the trail and in marketing materials.

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
Must			►
Desirable	►	►	
N/A			

A user-friendly website has been developed to support trip planning, provide visitor information and showcase marketing initiatives.

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
Must			►
Desirable	►	►	
N/A			

A visitor-focused mobile device application (including off-line capabilities where relevant) has been developed to support and enhance the visitor experience.

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
Must			
Desirable	►	►	►
N/A			

The trail is being deliberately marketed to target markets at all stages of Destination Canada's "Pathway to Purchase".

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
Must			
Desirable	►	►	►
N/A			

The trail is currently being marketed by…

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
Destination CA			
Prov/Terr DMO		►	►
Regional DMO			
Local DMO	►		
No DMO	►		

A library of compelling and high-resolution photos and video footage of the trail has been developed.

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
Must			►
Desirable	►	►	
N/A			

DMOs attract, or are working to attract, and host international media and travel trade familiarization tours.

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
Must			
Desirable			►
N/A	►	►	

The trail is integrated into visitor experience packages and sold through travel trade.

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
Must			
Desirable			►
N/A	►	►	

Visitor Amenities & Services

The quality of comfort and convenience amenities provided for visitors along the trail are…

Scale	Visitor Ready	Market Ready	Export Ready
High-end			►
Mid-range		►	
Basic	►		
None offered	►		

Visitor Amenities & Services

Criteria	VISITOR READY	MARKET READY	EXPORT READY
Visitors have access to market or export-ready accommodation on or near the trail. *(if trail supports overnight use)*	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	**→ Must** / Desirable / N/A
Accommodations are appropriately distributed along the trail to service visitors on each night of their journey. *(if trail supports overnight*	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	**→ Must** / Desirable / N/A
Visitors to the trail have access to a clustering of market or export-ready attractions on or near the trail.	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	**→ Must** / Desirable / N/A	**→ Must** / Desirable / N/A
Communities on or near the trail have developed signage and visitor information strategies to attract trail visitors to their communities.	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	**→ Must** / Desirable / N/A
Communities on or near the trail have developed a welcoming and inviting atmosphere for trail visitors (e.g., welcome signage, beautification, themed banners).	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A
The trail is animated through events/festivals/competitions that attract visitors to the trail from beyond the local community.	Annually / **→ Periodically** / **→ Never**	Annually / **→ Periodically** / Never	**→ Annually** / Periodically / Never
The trail can be accessed by dependable and bookable public or private sector transportation providers.	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A
Trail operator maintains staff (or other similar arrangement), including trained customer service personnel who can respond to enquiries about the trail.	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	**→ Must** / Desirable / N/A
When an enquiry about the trail is received, a response can be provided within…	24 hours / One week / **→ >One week** / **→ If/as we can**	24 hours / **→ One week** / >One week / If/as we can	**→ 24 hours** / One week / >One week / If/as we can
Formal training and information about the trail is provided to front line staff and businesses in the tourism industry to help them be ambassadors for the trail.	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	**→ Must** / Desirable / N/A
Local tourism businesses are knowledgeable about the trail, and are active ambassadors.	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A
Locally elected officials actively reference the trail as both an important quality of life and economic asset in the community/region.	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A	Must / **→ Desirable** / N/A

Capital Pathway, ON
Daniel Baylis

4.3 TRAIL TOURISM READINESS ASSESSMENT: INSIGHTS TO ADVANCE A TRAIL TOURISM STRATEGY

Undertaking the trail tourism readiness assessment provides the essential insights needed to advance the success of a destination's trail tourism sector. Learnings from the trail tourism readiness assessment allow trail destination leaders to understand the strengths of the destination as well as areas that require further work in order to ensure the trail, or trail network, is ready to attract target markets and consistently satisfy the expectations of target visitors.

The most successful trail destinations ensure strong coordination across the entire trail tourism ecosystem. To do so, we encourage destinations to work collaboratively with all trail tourism players to utilize the findings of the trail tourism readiness assessment to inform the development of a trail tourism strategy. Once complete, such a strategy will help ensure that all elements of the trail tourism ecosystem support the future vision for the trail/trail network and are focused on advancing shared priorities that put the needs of both visitors and host communities at the forefront.

4.3.1 Trail Tourism Readiness & Marketing the Trail as a Destination

Marketing can rapidly grow visitation to a trail or trail network. When a destination is market-ready, this marketing will help to maximize the benefits that come from trail tourism while minimizing any negative impacts. However, when a trail destination is not ready for visitors, marketing can create serious problems for trail operators, residents, the environment and the destination brand. Before beginning to market a trail or trail network, destination marketers should ask themselves:

- Is the trail and the host destination ready to accept greater numbers of visitors?
- What target market segments and market origins are most likely to have a positive trail experience given the current condition of the trail and the trail tourism ecosystem?
- Does the planned marketing messaging, also known as the brand promise, match the visitor experience that the trail and trail tourism ecosystem currently provide?

Maintaining the brand promise and ensuring ongoing community support for trail tourism is the number one priority when making decisions about marketing trails. It is imperative that the trail destination be able to deliver the experience that is being "sold" to visitors, and that it can be done in a way that avoids host community complaints and concerns. Overstating the quality of the trail and/or trail experience will lead to unmet visitor expectations. Unmet visitor expectations can lead to visitor complaints and considerable risk to the trail's brand and the broader reputation of the destination, and can pose a risk to tourism businesses and local support for trail tourism.

Recognizing these concerns, TCT encourages anyone who is working to market a trail or trail network to undertake the trail tourism market readiness assessment and use the results to determine which target market origins are most appropriate for marketing the trail to. Figure 9 illustrates the target market appropriateness based on the trail's tourism readiness rating.

If My Trail Tourism Readiness Rating is…

Not Visitor Ready

…the trail should NOT be marketed…

or actively promoted until the trail is visitor ready.

Visitor Ready

…the trail can be marketed to…

hyper-local and/or short-haul markets.

Market Ready

…the trail can be marketed to…

mid-haul domestic and/or long-haul domestic markets.

Export Ready

…the trail can be marketed to…

long-haul international markets.

Figure 9   Tourism Readiness Rating & Marketing

Confederation Trail, PE

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TRAIL MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE FORM

Region: **Trail Operator:**   **Land Manager:**

Trail Name: **Trail Number:**

Trail Beginning: **Beg. Milepost:**

Trail Ending: **End. Milepost:**

Trail Inventory Length: km   **Trail Mileage Source:**   Wheel   GPS   Map   Unknown

TMO Trail Section

Section Beginning: **Beg. Milepost:**

Sec. #   **Section End:**   **End. Milepost:**

Trail Classification

(Check any that apply)

(Check one in each category)

Season:

    Summer (snow-free)

    Winter (snow-covered)

    All

Mode of Travel:

    Non-Motorized

    Motorized

    Mixed-Use

Level of Challenge:

    Easiest

    Moderate

    Difficult

    Very Difficult

Level of Development:

    Developed

    Moderately Developed

    Minimally Developed

Use Type:

    Single Use

    Multi-Use

    Activity-Optimized

Preparedness:

    Standard

    Enhanced

Optimized Activity Types

(Check all that apply)

    Pedestrian

    Equestrian

    Cross-Country Ski

    Snowshoe

    Mountain Bike

    Two-Wheel Motorized

    Motorized <1.5 m wide

    Motorized 1.5-1.83 m wide

    Motorized >1.83 m wide

    Snow Vehicle <1.83 m wide

    Snow Vehicle (<1.5 m wide)

Design Parametres

(Fill in all that apply)

    Travelled Surface Width (m)

    Target Grade (%)

    Max Grade (%)

    Proportion Grade (%)

    Target Cross Slope (%)

    Max Cross Slope (%)

    Proportion Cross Slope (%)

/   Clearing Width/Height (m)

    Turning Radius (m)

/   Obstacle Frequency/Height

Tread Surfacing:

    Asphalt/Concrete/Paver   Nat - Firm

    Agg - Firm   Nat - Loose

    Agg - Loose

Target Frequency

Per Year *(Fill in all that apply)*

    Tread Repair

    Drainage Cleanout

    Tread Grading

    Brushing

    Condition Survey

    Enforcement Patrols

Trail Name: _____   **Trail Number:** _____

Travel Management Strategies

Permitted Uses	From Date (mm/dd)	To Date (mm/dd)
(Check all that apply)		
Pedestrian		
On-Road Cycling		
Leisure Cycling		
Mountain Biking		
Adaptive Cycle/MTB		
Equestrian		
Equestrian Drawn Vehicle		
Cross-Country Ski - Classic		
Cross-Country Ski - Skate		
Snowshoe		
Off-Road Motorcycle		
OHV <1.5m		
OHV 1.5-1.83 m		
OHV >1.83m		
Snow Vehicle <1.5m		
Snow Vehicle >1.5m		
Class 1 E-Bike		
Class 2 E-Bike		
Class 3 E-Bike		
Electric Mobility Assistive Devices		
Electric Skateboards/One-Wheels		

Prohibited Uses	From Date (mm/dd)	To Date (mm/dd)
(Check if applicable)		
All Motorized Use		
(Fill in all that apply)		

Other Uses	Accept	Discourage
(Optional: include any that apply)		

	Yes	No
Universally Accessible:		

Trail User Objectives

Escape	Nature	Socializing
Solitude	Risk	Efficiency
Challenge	Exercise	Connectivity
Play		

Remarks/Reference Information

Trail Designer or Manager

Name: _____   **Signature:** _____

Title: _____   **Date:** _____

APPENDIX B: RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM – RECREATION SETTING DEFINITIONS

Developed: This setting is found within urban environments and is dominated by human development and easy vehicle access. Recreation and tourism infrastructure and management controls are extensive, elaborate and desired. Large volumes of users are expected, and the sights and sounds of others dominate. Many modern conveniences are available.

Frontcountry: A vehicle accessible area that is naturally scenic, although evidence of human development is obvious. Encounters with other visitors are frequent and parking lots, trailheads, trails, visitor buildings, full-service washrooms and other visitor amenities are common and expected by visitors.

Midcountry: A natural but not backcountry area. Motorized and non-motorized uses occur and vehicle access may be available but may require travel on rough roads that limits vehicle volumes and types. Evidence of human development may be visible but does not dominate the area. Encounters with other visitors are not frequent, and may not occur. Visitor amenities such as parking lots, trailheads, trails, washrooms and campsites may be available but are of a basic design.

Backcountry: A natural area where evidence of human development is limited or non-existent. Access occurs via non-motorized modes of travel and encounters with other visitors are minimal to non-existent. Basic visitor amenities such as primitive trails and rustic campsites may be available. Signage is limited to non-existent. In this setting, visitors can expect to experience solitude, isolation, closeness to nature and higher levels of risk and personal challenge.

APPENDIX C: TRAIL DESIGN PARAMETERS BY TRAIL ACTIVITY

🚶 Pedestrian - Walking/Hiking/Running

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Tread Width	Traveled Surface Width	>1.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	0.3 - 1.0 m	<0.3 m
	Technical Trail Features - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt-out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt-out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spans width of trail tread – there is no opt-out option
Surface	Surface Type	Paved	Aggregate - Firm surface	Natural - Firm surface	Natural - Loose surface
	Obstacle Frequency	None	Occasional	Frequent	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	< 0.025 m	0.025 - 0.05 m	0.05 - 0.15 m	> 0.15 m
Sightline Clearing	Clearing Width	> 2.0 m	1.5 - 2.0 m	0.5 - 1.5 m	< 0.5 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.0 m	> 3.0 m	2.5 - 3.0 m	< 2.5 m
Inclines/ Grades	Trail Grade	< 3%	3 - 10%	10 - 15%	> 15%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 7%	7 - 15%	15 - 25%	> 25%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 10%	10 - 15 %	15 - 20 %	> 20%
Cross Slope	Target Cross Slope	< 2%	2 - 8 %	8 - 15 %	Natural
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 2%	2 - 10%	10 - 15%	> 15%
Oversight	Maintenance	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Immediate	Within a month	Within a few months	Annually or never
Segment Length	Segment Length	< 5 km	5 - 10 km	10 - 30 km	> 30km
Facilities	Facilities	Parking/potable water/restroom	Parking/potable water	Parking	None
Geography	Geography	Frontcountry	Midcountry	Midcountry	Backcountry

Horseback Riding

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Tread Width	**Traveled Surface Width**	>2.5m	1.5 - 2.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	<1.0 m
	Technical Trail Features - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt-out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt-out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spans width of trail tread – there is no opt-out option
Surface	**Surface Type**	Aggregate/Natural - Firm surface	Aggregate/Natural - Firm surface	Aggregate - Loose surface	Natural - Loose surface
	Obstacle Frequency	None	Occasional	Frequent	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	< 0.05 m	< 0.05 m	> 0.05 m	> 0.05 m
Sightline Clearing	**Clearing Width**	> 4.0 m	2.5 - 4.0 m	< 2.5 m	< 2.5 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.5 m	> 3.5 m	< 3.5 m	< 3.5 m
Inclines/ Grades	**Trail Grade**	< 5%	5 - 10%	10 - 12%	> 12%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 10%	10 - 15%	15 - 20%	> 20%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 5%	5 - 15 %	15 - 20 %	> 20%
Cross Slope	**Target Cross Slope**	< 2%	2 - 5 %	5 - 10 %	> 10%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 5%	5 - 8%	8 - 10%	> 10%
Oversight	**Maintenance**	Monthly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Immediate	Within a month	Within a few months	Annually or never
Segment Length	**Segment Length**	< 10 km	10 - 15 km	15 - 25 km	> 25 km
Facilities	**Facilities**	Parking/potable water/restroom	Parking/potable water	Parking	None
Geography	**Geography**	Midcountry	Midcountry	Backcountry	Backcountry

Cross-Country Skiing

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Tread Width	Traveled Surface Width	>4.0 m	2.0 - 4.0 m	<2.0 m	<2.0 m
	Technical Trail Features - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt-out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt-out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spands width of trail tread – there is no opt-out option
Surface	Surface Type	Groomed/Track Set	Groomed/Track Set	Ungroomed/No Track Set	Ungroomed/No Track Set
	Obstacle Frequency	None	Occasional	Occasional	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	N/A	< 0.05 m	0.05 - 0.25 m	> 0.25 m
Sightline Clearing	Clearing Width	> 4.0 m	2.0 - 4.0 m	< 2.0 m	< 2.0 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.0 m	> 3.0 m	< 3.0 m	< 3.0 m
Inclines/ Grades	Trail Grade	< 5%	5 - 10 %	10 - 15 %	> 15%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 10%	10 - 20%	20 - 25%	> 25%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 10%	10 - 15 %	15 - 20 %	> 20%
Cross Slope	Target Cross Slope	< 5%	< 5%	5 - 15 %	> 15%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 10%	10 - 15%	15 - 20%	> 20%
Oversight	Maintenance	Daily	Daily	Weekly	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Immediate	Within a day	Within a month	Annually or never
Segment Length	Segment Length	< 2 km	2 - 5 km	5 - 10 km	> 10 km
Facilities	Facilities	Parking/potable water/restroom/ warming area	Parking/restroom/ warming area	Parking	None
Geography	Geography	Midcountry	Midcountry	Backcountry	Backcountry

Snowshoeing

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Tread Width	Traveled Surface Width	>1.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	<1.0 m
	Technical Trail Features - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt-out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt-out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spans width of trail tread – there is no opt-out option
Surface	Surface Type	Groomed/Track Set	Groomed/Track Set	Ungroomed/No Track Set	Ungroomed/No Track Set
	Obstacle Frequency	None	Occasional	Occasional	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	None	< 0.05 m	0.05 - 0.25 m	> 0.25 m
Sightline Clearing	Clearing Width	> 2.5 m	1.5 - 2.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	< 1.0 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.0 m	> 3.0 m	2.5 - 3.0 m	< 2.5 m
Inclines/ Grades	Trail Grade	< 10%	10 - 15%	15 - 20%	> 20%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 10%	10 - 20%	20 - 30%	> 30%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 5%	5 - 10%	10 - 20%	> 20%
Cross Slope	Target Cross Slope	< 5%	5 - 10%	5 - 10%	> 10%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 10%	10 - 15%	15 - 20%	> 20%
Oversight	Maintenance	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Immediate	Within a month	Within a few months	Annually or never
Segment Length	Segment Length	< 2 km	2 - 5 km	5 - 10 km	> 10 km
Facilities	Facilities	Parking/potable water/restroom/ warming area	Parking/restroom/ warming area	Parking	None
Geography	Geography	Urban	Frontcountry	Midcountry	Backcountry

🚴 On-Road Cycling

Subtype	Subtype	1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Subtype	Subtype	Bicycle Lane, Advisory Bike Lane	Bicycle Boulevard, Country Lane, Gravel Roads	Shared Lane, Shared Roadways	Bicycle Accessible Shoulder
Oversight	Maintenance	Daily	Daily	Weekly	Weekly
	Identified Hazard Response	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Segment Length	Segment Length	< 1 km	1 - 5 km	5 - 15 km	> 15km
Facilities	Facilities	Parking/potable water/restroom	Parking/potable water/restroom	Parking/restroom	None
Geography	Geography	Frontcountry	Frontcountry	Frontcountry	Backcountry

Leisure Cycling (Off-Road)

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Tread Width	Traveled Surface Width	>2.5 m	1.5 - 2.5 m	1.5 - 2.5 m	<1.5 m
	Technical Trail Features - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt-out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt-out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt-out option available along existing trail tread
Surface	Surface Type	Paved	Aggregate - Firm surface	Natural - Firm surface	Natural - Loose surface
	Obstacle Frequency	None	Occasional	Occasional	Occasional
	Obstacle Height	< 0.05 m	< 0.05 m	> 0.05 m	> 0.05 m
Sightline Clearing	Clearing Width	> 3.5 m	3.0 - 3.5 m	2.0 - 3.0 m	< 2.0 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.5 m	> 3.5 m	3.0 - 3.5 m	< 3.0 m
Inclines/ Grades	Trail Grade	< 5%	<5 %	> 5%	> 5%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 10%	10 - 15%	10- 15%	> 15%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 15%	15 - 25 %	25 - 30 %	> 30%
Cross Slope	Target Cross Slope	< 2%	2 - 5 %	> 5%	> 5%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 8%	8 - 10%	10 - 12%	> 12%
Oversight	Maintenance	Weekly	Monthly	Monthly	Seasonally
	Identified Hazard Response	Weekly	Within a month	Within a few months	Within a few months
Segment Length	Segment Length	< 5 km	5 - 15 km	15 - 25 km	> 25 km
Facilities	Facilities	Parking/potable water/restroom	Parking/restroom	Parking	None
Geography	Geography	Urban	Frontcountry	Midcountry	Midcountry

Mountain Biking (Off-Road)

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Tread Width	Traveled Surface Width	>2.5 m	1.5 - 2.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	<1.0 m
	Technical Trail Features - Width	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt-out option	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt-out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt-out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spans width of trail tread – there is no opt-out option
Surface	Surface Type	Aggregate - Firm surface	Natural - Firm surface	Aggregate - Loose surface	Natural - Loose surface
	Obstacle Frequency	Occasional	Occasional	Frequent	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	< 0.05 m	< 0.05 m	0.05 - 0.25 m	> 0.25 m
Sightline Clearing	Clearing Width	> 3.5 m	3.0 - 3.5 m	2.0 - 3.0 m	< 2.0 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.5 m	> 3.5 m	3.0 - 3.5 m	< 3.0 m
Inclines/ Grades	Trail Grade	< 5%	5 - 12 %	12 - 20 %	> 20%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 10%	10 - 15%	15 - 25%	> 25%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 15%	15 - 25 %	25 - 30 %	> 30%
Cross Slope	Target Cross Slope	< 2%	2 - 5 %	5 - 8 %	> 8%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 8%	8 - 10%	10 - 12%	> 12%
Oversight	Maintenance	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Weekly	Within a month	Within a few months	Annually or never
Segment Length	Segment Length	< 5 km	5 - 15 km	15 - 25 km	> 25 km
Facilities	Facilities	Parking/potable water/restroom	Parking/restroom	Parking	None
Geography	Geography	Frontcountry	Frontcountry	Midcountry	Midcountry

OHV 1.5m Wide

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Tread Width	Traveled Surface Width	>3.0 m	2.0 - 3.0 m	<2.0 m	<2.0 m
	Technical Trail Features - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt-out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt out-option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spans width of trail tread – there is no opt-out option
Surface	Surface Type	Aggregate/Natural - Firm surface	Aggregate - Loose surface	Aggregate - Loose surface	Natural - Loose surface
	Obstacle Frequency	None	Occasional	Occasional	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	< 0.05 m	0.05 - 0.15 m	0.15 - 0.25 m	> 0.25 m
Sightline Clearing	Clearing Width	> 4.0 m	3.5 - 4.0 m	< 3.5 m	< 3.5 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.5 m	> 3.5 m	< 3.5 m	< 3.5 m
Inclines/ Grades	Trail Grade	< 5%	5 - 10 %	10 - 15 %	> 15%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 5%	5 - 10%	10 - 20%	> 20%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 15%	15 - 25 %	25 - 30 %	> 30%
Cross Slope	Target Cross Slope	< 2%	2 - 5 %	5 - 8 %	> 8%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 5%	5 - 8%	8 - 10%	> 10%
Oversight	Maintenance	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Weekly	Within a month	Within a few months	Annually or never
Segment Length	Segment Length	< 5 km	5 - 45 km	45 - 75 km	> 75 km
Facilities	Facilities	Parking/potable water/restroom	Parking/restroom	Parking	None
Geography	Geography	Midcountry	Midcountry	Backcountry	Backcountry

Snowmobile - Groomed

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Tread Width	Traveled Surface Width	>5.0 m	4.0 - 5.0 m	2.5 - 4.0 m	<2.5 m
	Technical Trail Features - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	None or technical trail features not permitted	None or technical trail features not permitted	None or technical trail features not permitted
Surface	Surface Type	Groomed/Track Set	Groomed/Track Set	Ungroomed/No Track Set	Ungroomed/No Track Set
	Obstacle Frequency	None	Occasional	Occasional	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	None	None	< 0.05 m	> 0.05 m
Sightline Clearing	Clearing Width	> 4.0 m	> 4.0 m	3.5 - 4.0 m	< 3.5 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.5 m	> 3.5 m	< 3.5 m	< 3.5 m
Inclines/ Grades	Trail Grade	< 5%	5 - 10%	5 - 10%	> 10%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 15%	15 - 20%	20 - 30%	> 30%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 10%	10 - 15 %	15 - 20 %	> 20%
Cross Slope	Target Cross Slope	< 2%	2 -5%	5 - 8 %	> 8%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 5%	5 - 10%	10 - 15%	> 15%
Oversight	Maintenance	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Weekly	Within a month	Within a few months	Annually or never
Segment Length	Segment Length	< 5 km	5 - 45 km	45 - 75 km	> 75 km
Facilities	Facilities	Parking/potable water/restroom	Parking/restroom	Parking	None
Geography	Geography	Midcountry	Midcountry	Backcountry	Backcountry

APPENDIX D: TRAIL EXPERIENCE TYPE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Stroll

Visitor Objectives

What visitor objectives are being delivered by the trail?
Relaxed
Slow
Low Adventure

Trail Design Characteristics

What length of trail experience does the trail provide?
Part day - Full day

What is the surfacing of the trail tread?
Paved
Aggregate – firm
Natural - firm

What is the typical width of the trail tread? (Note: may vary based on activity)
1.5 m +

What is the typical grade of the trail?
0-3%

What percentage of the total trail length is above a 5% grade?
0-20%

Obstacles – Frequency & height
None to few, low height

How much elevation gain occurs over the length of the trail?
Little elevation gain

Trail Level of Challenge & Preparedness

What is the Technical Challenge Rating for the trail?
Easiest 🟢

What is the Level of Preparedness Rating for the trail?
Standard

Visitor Amenities

What is the extent of visitor comfort and convenience amenities on the trail?
A full range of comfort and convenience amenities are provided as needed and are of a high level of service.

What is the extent of wayfinding signage on the trail?
Wayfinding signage is present, navigation skill not required.

What visitor services are available on or near the trail to support visitors?
A full range of visitor services are available on or near the trail (e.g., food & beverage, retail, repair, rental, guiding).

Are accommodations available on or near the trail?
This indicator is only relevant to trails that intend to provide overnight/multi-day experiences.
Accommodations are available on or within easy access from the trail and are of a higher level of service (e.g., hotel/resort, peer-to-peer, comfort camping, fully serviced campground).

How is the trail accessed?
Easily accessed via multiple modes of transportation including public transit.

TOTAL
(add the number of cells checked for each Trail Experience Type and write the total in the adjacent cells)

Excursion

- Less relaxed
  Some risk
  Some adventure

- Full day - Overnight

- Paved   Natural – firm
  Aggregate – firm   Natural – loose
  Aggregate – loose

- 0.3-1.0 m

- 3%-8%

- 21-40%

- None to many, variable heights

- Some elevation gain

- Moderate ■
  Difficult ◆

- Enhanced

- Some comfort and convenience amenities provided, and are of a mid-to-low level of service.

- Basic wayfinding signage is provided, navigation skills may be required on some sections of the trail.

- Some basic visitor services are available on or near the trail.

- Accommodation options on or near the trail are limited and are typically of a lower level of service.

- Accessed via multiple modes of transportation, with the exception of public transit.

Epic

- Challenge
  Risk
  High adventure

- Overnight - Multi-night

- Aggregate – loose
  Natural – firm
  Natural – loose

- <0.3 m

- 8% +

- 40% +

- Many, variable heights

- Significant elevation gain

- Difficult ◆
  Most difficult ◆◆

- Enhanced

- Comfort and convenience amenities are limited or non-existent; where provided they are of a basic level of service.

- Wayfinding signage is limited or non-existent, navigation skills are required.

- No visitor services are available on the trail; basic visitor services may be available near the trail.

- Accommodation options on or near the trail are non-existent or limited and where provided are of a basic level of service.

- Access to the trail is more challenging with limited modal options. Specialized modes (e.g., 4x4 vehicle, helicopter, float plane) may be required.

APPENDIX E: TRAIL TOURISM READINESS EVALUATION TOOL

The intent of these questions is to allow trail operators to classify the tourism readiness of the trail (not visitor ready, visitor ready, market ready, export ready) based on objective criteria.

* It should be noted that some of these questions may be difficult for a trail operator to answer (e.g. clustering and tourism readiness of accommodations, attractions, etc.).

* "Filter for classification" means that the particular criteria can individually determine the tourism readiness classification of the trail given its fundamental importance. This is most often used for determining if the trail is or is not visitor ready. Determining whether the trail is market or export ready is an aggregation of the other responses.

	Question	Response Options	Tourism Readiness Classification	Score	Weight	Max Score
Approvals, Planning, Management, Maintenance	Has your trail been formally approved by the land manager or land owner?	Yes	If no, the trail is not visitor ready.	1	1	1
		No		Not visitor ready		
	Has a trail operator formally accepted responsibility for operations of the trail including active management and maintenance?	Yes	If no, the trail is not visitor ready.	1	1	1
		No		Not visitor ready		
	Has an approved management plan and/or master plan been prepared to guide the development and management of the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	2	4
		No		0		
	Does the approved management plan and/or master plan address how the trail will be developed and managed to grow trail tourism?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	2	4
		No		0		
	Has a visitor management plan been developed to guide the management of visitation on the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		
	Are the trail classification, permitted uses and rules of use clearly communicated to visitors at the trailhead and on-trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	2	4
		No		0		

	Question	Response Options	Tourism Readiness Classification	Score	Weight	Max Score
Approvals, Planning, Management, Maintenance	Have all of the following signage types been installed on the trail - wayfinding, regulatory, safety/ warning, responsible use	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	2	4
		No		0		
	How often are trail conditions formally inspected and documented?	Weekly	Not a filter for classification.	2	1	2
		Monthly		2		
		Quarterly		1		
		Annually		0		
		No set inspection schedule		0		
	When serious maintenance problems that create visitor safety or environmental risks are identified, which best describes how quickly your organization can address those concerns?	Problems can be immediately addressed	If delays may occur due to lack of funding or capacity, the trail cannot be higher than visitor ready.	2	2	4
		Minor delays may occur		1		
		Extended delays may occur due to lack of funding or capacity		Visitor ready		
	Which of the following best describes how often regular maintenance is undertaken on your trail?	Weekly	If there is no set maintenance schedule, the trail cannot be higher than visitor ready.	2	2	4
		Monthly		2		
		Quarterly		1		
		Annually		0		
		No set maintenance schedule		Visitor ready		
	Does your organization have a long-term sustainable funding model to support capital asset replacement and renewal?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		

	Question	Response Options	Tourism Readiness Classification	Score	Weight	Max Score
Uniqueness	Which of the following best reflects the uniqueness of the visitor experience that your trail provides?	Locally unique	If locally unique, the trail cannot be higher than visitor ready.	Visitor ready	2	8
		Provincially/territorially unique		2		
		Nationally unique		3		
		Internationally unique		4		
	Please describe why your trail is provincially/ territorially/ nationally/internationally unique	Open ended	N/A			
	Can the trail support multi-night trips or be combined with other trails to support multi-night trips?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		
Branding & Marketing	Has a user-friendly website been developed to support trip planning and to generate interest in the trail?	Yes	If no, trail cannot be higher than visitor ready.	2	3	6
		No		Visitor ready		
	Has a visitor-focused mobile device application (including off-line capabilities where relevant) been developed to support and enhance the visitor experience?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		
	Has a distinct and unique trail brand been developed and incorporated into marketing materials, website, on-trail signage?	Yes	If no, trail cannot be higher than visitor ready.	2	3	6
		No		Visitor ready		
	Is the trail being deliberately marketed to potential visitors at each stage of the visitor "pathway to purchase"?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	2	4
		No		0		
	Which of the following best reflects the level of Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) that is currently marketing your trail? (select all that apply)	Local DMO	Not a filter for classification.	1	3	12
		Regional DMO		2		
		Provincial/territorial DMO		3		
		Destination Canada		4		
		Trail is not marketed by any DMO		Visitor ready		

	Question	Response Options	Tourism Readiness Classification	Score	Weight	Max Score
Branding & Marketing	Has your organization, or a Destination Marketing Organization that you work with, established a library of high resolution and compelling photos and video footage to support marketing of the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	1	2	2
		No		0		
	Does your organization, or a Destination Marketing Organization that you work with, work to attract and host international media and travel trade familiarization tours?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		
	Is your trail currently integrated into any visitor experience packages that are sold through Travel Trade?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	4	8
		No		0		
Visitor Amenities & Services	Which of these best reflects the level of quality and design of visitor comfort and convenience amenities on your trail?	No amenities are offered	If no amenities or only basic amenities are offered, the trail cannot exceed visitor ready.	Visitor ready	3	6
		Basic		Visitor ready		
		Mid-range		1		
		High-end		2		
	Do trail visitors have easy access to market or export ready accommodations on or near the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		
	Are the accommodations appropriately distributed along the trail to service visitors for each night of their journey on the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		
	Is there a clustering of market or export ready visitor attractions on or near the trail that are promoted to trail visitors to enhance their experience?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		
	Have communities on or near the trail developed signage and visitor information strategies to attract trail visitors into their	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		

	Question	Response Options	Tourism Readiness Classification	Score	Weight	Max Score
Visitor Amenities & Services	Have communities along or near the trail developed a welcoming and inviting atmosphere for trail visitors (e.g. welcome signage, themed banners, beautification)?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		
	How frequently is the trail animated through events/ festivals/competitions that attract visitors to the trail from beyond the local community?	Never	Not a filter for classification.	0	3	6
		Periodically, but not regularly		1		
		Annual schedule of events		2		
	Do private or public sector entities offer regular, dependable and bookable transportation services to help visitors access the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		
	Does your organization maintain staff, or have another similar arrangement, where trained customer service personnel are available to respond to enquiries about the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	4	8
		No		0		
	When an enquiry about the trail is received, which of the following best reflects how long it typically takes to respond?	Within 24 hours of receiving the enquiry	Not a filter for classification.	3	4	12
		Within a week of receiving the enquiry		2		
		Over a week from receipt of the enquiry		1		
		If/as we can		0		

	Question	Response Options	Tourism Readiness Classification	Score	Weight	Max Score
Visitor Amenities & Services	Does your organization, or one of your partners (e.g. DMO), provide training to frontline staff and businesses in the tourism industry about the trail?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	3	6
		No		0		
	Do local elected officials actively reference the trail as both an important quality of life and economic asset in the community/region?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	2	4
		No		0		
	Are local tourism businesses knowledgeable about the trail and effective trail ambassadors?	Yes	Not a filter for classification.	2	2	4
		No		0		
					Maximum Score	**186**

Tourism Readiness Rating	Score Range
Not Visitor Ready	0-46
Visitor Ready	47-93
Market Ready	94-140
Export Ready	141-186

GLOSSARY

Activity-optimized trail - A trail that permits multiple different activities but has been designed and managed to optimize the experience for one specific activity.

Adaptive cycle/mountain bike - A large category of wheeled recreational cycles consisting of hand cycles, recumbent leg cycles, tandem bicycles, etc. that are purposefully intended to provide specifically adapted opportunities for individuals who cannot use a two-wheeled bicycle due to disabilities, special needs or other physical or neurological challenges.

Clearing height - The minimum height of the clearing limit measured from the trail tread to the lowest obstacle above the trail tread.

Clearing width - The minimum width of the clearing limit measured horizontally across the trail corridor at its narrowest point along the trail.

Cross slope - The grade of the trail tread measured perpendicular to the direction of travel.

Electric personal assistive mobility device - Electric power-assisted devices that provide mobility (e.g., electric wheel chairs, scooters, segways) for people with physical disabilities.

Grade - The vertical difference in elevation (ascent and descent) of a trail. Grade is expressed as the percentage of change in elevation or as a ratio of vertical distance (rise) to horizontal distance (run).

Mixed-use trail - A trail that permits both non-motorized and motorized modes of travel.

Multi-use trail - A trail that is designed and managed to permit multiple activities in compliance with the permitted modes of travel (Note: all mixed-use trails are multi-use, as they permit more than one activity).

Technical Trail Feature (TTF) - Constructed or natural obstacles that are purposefully integrated or built into a trail to deliver specific user objectives and require visitors to negotiate them.

Trail - A defined type of infrastructure that is purposefully designed and used for one or more recreation activities and/or non-road based transportation. To be recognized as a trail, it must be approved by the landowner, mapped, marked, and actively managed and maintained.

Trail classification - A comprehensive approach to describing and documenting the actual or intended characteristics of a trail.

Trail experience - The ability for a visitor to engage in a desired trail activity, at a desired level of challenge within a desired recreation setting in a desired natural region.

Trail Management Objective (TMO) - A form that documents the management intention of a trail in a clear, consistent and understandable way. Trail management objectives are referred to and used to guide future trail planning, maintenance, design, construction and management decisions.

Trail tourism ecosystem - A complex, interwoven and dynamic ecosystem of organizations involved in the planning, design and management of trails (e.g. land managers, transportation, accommodations, food and beverage providers, on/near trail attractions, destination marketers). Successful trail destinations recognize the interconnectedness of this ecosystem and its importance to the success of the trail and destination.

Travelled surface width - The minimum width of the trail tread, including structure width, on which the visitor directly travels.

Tread obstacle - Anything that interrupts the evenness of the tread surface.

Tourism - Tourism relates to the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business or other purposes for not more than one consecutive year.

Tourist - A tourist is anyone who stays one or more nights away from home or, if no nights are spent away from home, travels at least 40 km one way from home to the destination.

REFERENCES

i   https://bcparks.ca/recreation/biking/

ii https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/sports-recreation-arts-and-culture/outdoor-recreation/camping-and-hiking/rec-sites-and-trails/ebike_policy_final_04-25-2019.pdf

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