

BIKEWAYS & PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN

2.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1. A HISTORY OF PATHWAYS IN LETHBRIDGE

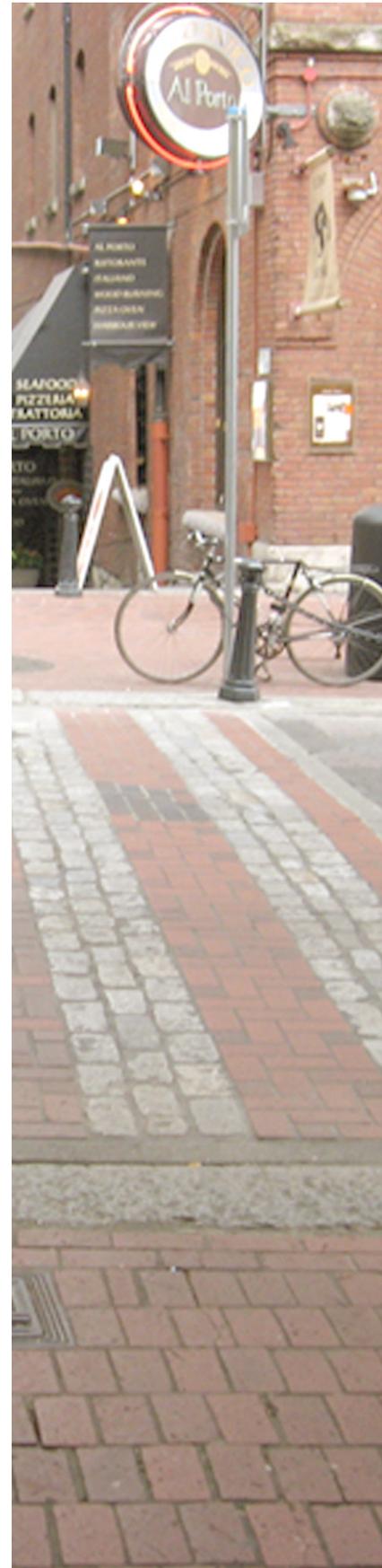
The first pathway documented in Lethbridge was constructed in 1906 in Galt Gardens, consisting of cinder. Following the development of Henderson Park in Lethbridge in 1909, and the creation of pathway through the park in the years following, a pathways footprint slowly made its way to small neighborhood parks. The initial layout was simple with only few connections through small pocket parks but by late 1960, subdivision design began to incorporate green strips which were informally used to connect the community. In the late 1990's, pathway access points to a regional trail network were incorporated into subdivision plans that served to link several communities and sectors of the city.

The Coal Banks Trail, named after the original mining town of Coal Banks in the Oldman River Valley, was developed as a regional pathway in the early 1980's. It was designed to be a 30 kilometer linked trail traveling from North to South and to West Lethbridge through manicured parks, natural river valley areas, industrial parks, residential neighborhoods and green strips. The Coal Banks Trail was classified as a Regional Trail and continues provide an uninterrupted and picturesque opportunity for community recreation.

On September 5, 2006, Lethbridge City Council passed a Notice of Motion directing Administration to review other municipality experiences with Cycling Bylaws and make recommendations to Council whether such a Bylaw would be appropriate for Lethbridge to promote responsible cycling behaviour and safe cycling practices. The report will also investigate and make recommendations on whether bicycle corridors should be incorporated into future City road projects.

2.2. PLANNING PRECEDENT

Following a thorough review of bikeway and pathway systems across Canada, it is evident that the City of Lethbridge has clearly demonstrated engineering and planning creativity and foresight in developing solutions to overcome the unique challenges created by the steep and majestic coulees created by the Oldman River. Further development that address the collective and unique challenges of terrain, topography, seasonal challenges, microclimate and demographics can only be achieved by formulating a creative, thoughtful and environmentally sensitive Made-in-Lethbridge solution. The following projects highlight a number of adaptable elements that can be incorporated into the Master Plan:



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Comprehensive Trail Development Guidelines, Three Sisters Mountain Village – Canmore, Alberta, October 2004

The trail development guidelines developed for this mountain resort community detail a trail hierarchy system based on user experience, trail function and intensity of use. The hierarchy permits the seamless integration of a variety of trail types and users into a larger network. The notion of ‘trail character’ not only creates a cohesive aesthetic for the trail network, it also provides way-finding cues to limit potential user conflicts.

Guelph Trail Master Plan, City of Guelph, Ontario, Fall 2005

The Guelph Trail Master Plan utilized GIS as an analysis tool to identify the existing trail system and destination points within the city, and identified potential trail network opportunities and connections. The trail hierarchy provides a framework for a proposed network where on-road bikeways and off-road trails reflect the density, variety and character of the city. Early collaboration with developers in community planning identifies appropriate links between neighborhood destinations and the city trail network, ultimately providing a comprehensive, integrated network.

Brampton’s Pathways Master Plan – Volume One, City of Brampton – Brampton, Ontario, June 2002

The goals, objectives, pathway system hierarchy, and design standards evolved from an extensive stakeholder engagement process. The dynamic nature of this Master Plan establishes a design character that defines Brampton by identifying and developing connections within the network to meet user needs.

Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan, Niagara Region – Ontario, July 2003

Central to this Bikeways Master Plan is the concept of a regional network of off-road and on-road bikeway connections. To create this connectivity, comprehensive design guidelines, planning and a strategy to increase co-ordination between various administrative jurisdictions are outlined. The network hierarchy is established through planning and design, relating bikeway trail types to user groups and route destinations.

Learnings and best practices from master planning processes, planning perspectives, and trails organization adopted by other jurisdictions are considered in the development of the Lethbridge Bikeway and Pathways Master Plan.