



GROUP WALK AUDIT GUIDE

*Used in the TCAT study:
“How can we make Toronto’s
multiuse trails and ravines better
spaces for women & newcomers?”*

JUNE 2025

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Research shows that access to green space plays a vital role in supporting people's physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being (Lai et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2021). In Toronto, multiuse trails – shared pathways designed for non-motorized uses such as walking, running, cycling, and rolling – connect the [city's many parks and ravine system](#), offering nature-based recreation and transportation routes removed from motor vehicle traffic.

[Previous research](#) conducted by The Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT) into Toronto's multiuse trails and ravines found that women and newcomers face distinct barriers to accessing and enjoying the trail system. One of our findings was that women were significantly underrepresented on the Humber River Recreational Trail (just west of Islington and Finch) compared to the surrounding neighbourhood demographics.

In March 2025, TCAT conducted a walk audit of the Humber River Recreational Trail at this location to better understand the needs of women-identifying trail users. This document is a copy of the walk audit template we used for this research.

We welcome other non-profits, researchers, community organizations, and citizen scientists to adapt this template as a resource to guide their own walk audit of a multiuse trail or other green space in their own neighbourhoods.

Questionnaire adapted from:

Moening, K., Zimmerman, S. (2018, January). *Taking steps toward equitable, safe park access: A toolkit for planning and conducting a safe routes to parks walk audit. Safe Routes to School National Partnership.*

https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/resource_files/safe_routes_to_parks_walk_audit_toolkit.pdf

GROUP WALK AUDIT GUIDE

INSTRUCTIONS

Thank you for participating in this walk audit. The results of this audit will be used to advocate for improved access, infrastructure, and programming-related opportunities on Toronto's multiuse trail system.

This document is divided into three sections:

- 1) Please start by filling in the introductory questions in [Section One](#).
- 2) We will be making three stops along the trail route together. At each stop, we will spend about 10 minutes discussing the area and answering the questions in [Section Two](#).
- 3) After we have visited all three stops, we will devote our remaining time to discussing your experience on the trail as a whole, and addressing the questions found in [Section Three](#).

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS

Your full name:

Your input will be anonymized in any published outputs - the TCAT team only asks for your name so that we can match the demographic information you provided with your input for our own analysis.

About the Walk

Date:

Time of day:

Weather conditions:

Questions

1. What mode of transportation did you use for arriving at the trail today?
If you used more than one, select all that apply.

- Walk
- Run
- Bike
- Public transit
- Car
- E-bike
- E-scooter
- Mobility device
- Wheel-Trans
- Other: _____

2. On your trip today, how long did it take you to reach the entrance to this trail from your home?

- 0-15 minutes
- 15-30 minutes
- 30-60 minutes
- More than 60 minutes

3. How often do you visit this trail in good weather?

- Everyday
- 2-3 times per week
- Once per week
- 2-3 times per month
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- This is my first time here

SECTION TWO: WALK AUDIT QUESTIONS (REPEAT AT EACH TRAIL STOP)

Stop location/description:

Please evaluate the stretch of trail we just walked on the following criteria, selecting all that apply.

1. Trail Infrastructure & Maintenance:

- Trail is broken, cracked, or has tripping hazards
- Trail has snow, ice, rain puddles, mud etc. that makes it difficult or dangerous to navigate
- Trail is blocked by overgrown landscaping, poles, signs, plants, etc.
- Trail is not continuous
- Trail is not wide enough (two people cannot easily walk together side by side)
- Trail has nothing separating it from the street (grass, trees, parked cars)
- Trail does not have a meridian separating cycling and pedestrian traffic
- Other problems: _____

2. Safety:

- Bike/car speeds are too fast
- There's too much traffic
- Streetlights are few or not present
- My personal safety feels threatened along the walk, including seeing or experiencing street harassment
- Unleashed dogs or other loose intimidating animals are present
- There is a lack of eyes on the trail (e.g., absence of people, no houses or store fronts)
- Law enforcement is present
- Law enforcement is not present
- Other problems: _____

3. Comfort:

- There is not enough shade from canopies, awnings, or trees
- There are few or no street trees or other landscaping
- There are vacant lots or rundown buildings
- The trail needs benches and places to rest
- Other problems: _____

4. Trail Appearance:

- There is vandalism (e.g., damaged signs, benches, etc.)
- There is excessive litter (e.g., noticeable amounts of trash, broken glass, etc.)
- Abandoned buildings or poorly maintained properties
- There are parts of the trail that feel isolated and hidden from view
- Other problems: _____

5. Trail Features:

- There is no direct, convenient access from street to enter or exit trail system
- There are no walking/bike paths that connect the trail entrances/exits
- There are no signs showing directions to the trail or information about the trail or trail activities
- There are no playgrounds, ball fields, courts, gardens, trails, or other quality park features
- There are no water fountains along the trail
- There are no restrooms
- There is no bike parking
- There are no benches at the park
- The gates/entrances to the park are locked during the day and/ or night (circle day or night)
- There is no physical activity programming at or near the park
- Other problems: _____

6. Of all the problems you identified on this stretch of our walk, which is the **most** important to you?

7. Of all the problems you identified, which one is the **least** important?

8. If you could wave a magic wand and modify one thing about the trail stretch we just covered, what would it be and why?

9. Think about the different intersecting identities that you might hold (gender, racial/ethnic background, age, ability, etc.). In what ways, if any, do you feel like your experience navigating this trail might differ from a man's experience?

SECTION THREE: FINAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS (AFTER ALL TRAIL STOPS)

1. Rank the entire trail on the themes discussed above.

1 = I think this aspect of the trail *very bad*

2 = I think this aspect of the trail is *somewhat bad*

3 = This aspect of the trail is *just okay*

4 = I think this aspect of the trail is *pretty good*

5 = I think this aspect of the trail is *excellent*

Overall, the **maintenance** of trail infrastructure is:

1 2 3 4 5

Overall, the **feeling of safety** on this trail is:

1 2 3 4 5

Overall, the **comfort and appeal** of this trail is:

1 2 3 4 5

Overall, the **trail appearance** is:

1 2 3 4 5

Overall, the **quality of trail features** is:

1 2 3 4 5

2. What, if anything, would encourage you to visit this trail more often?
Select all that apply.

- Seating that accommodates group activities (e.g. eating or socializing)
- Year-round public washrooms
- Enhanced nighttime lighting
- Covered spaces (shelter from rain or sun)
- Drinking fountains
- Improved maintenance of trail paths
- Improved entrances and exits to trail system
- Wider trails
- Safe walking and cycling routes to the trail system
- Toronto Bike Share stations in and around the trail system
- I already use the trail as much as I am going to
- Other: _____

3. Thinking about the quality of the trail and facilities, would you say they are...?

- Very Good
- Good
- Neither good nor bad
- Bad
- Very Bad

4. What barriers, if any, prevent you from using or enjoying Toronto's multi-use trails and ravines more often? Select all that apply.

- Long distances between home and trails
- Lack of time
- Off-leash dogs and wild animals
- Lack of programming and formalized activities
- Trails are not well maintained
- Trails don't have the amenities I need (e.g. washrooms, seating, etc.)
- Trails are not accessible for people with disabilities
- I don't feel safe or welcome on the trails
- Fear of harassment or discrimination
- Fear of ticketing or policing
- I'm unsure of the rules or what I am allowed to do
- Unsure how to access or navigate the trail system
- Unsure of locations of trails and ravine paths
- None of the above
- Other: _____

5. If you received an invitation to participate in the following types of on-trail programming opportunities, pick the three options you would be **most** likely to say yes to (mark these with a checkmark), and the three options you would be **least** likely to say yes to (mark these with an 'X').

- Group walking and/or running groups
- Group fitness activities outdoors (e.g., yoga, Zumba, HIIT, tai chi, etc.)
- Family fitness programs (e.g., family yoga)
- Live music and/or theatre events
- Early childhood programming (e.g., singalongs, story time, etc.)
- Nature education (e.g., bird watching, nature walks, etc.)
- Cultural festivals
- Winter activities (snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, etc.)
- Learn to cycle programs
- Group cycling events
- Community gathering (e.g., potluck, barbecue)
- Pet-related activities (e.g., group dog walking, pet parties, etc.)
- Other: _____

6. Pick the 3 channels that you would be most likely to go to to find out about multiuse trail programming.

- City of Toronto website
- Social media platforms
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Bluesky, Mastodon, or similar platform
 - Whatsapp groups
 - Other: _____
- Newsletter
 - Community or neighbourhood
 - City of Toronto
 - Other: _____
- Newspaper (print or digital)
- Bulletin boards at my local library or community centre
- Through my faith-based community (e.g., at my church, mosque, synagogue, or temple)
- Word of mouth from friends/family
- Other: _____

7. Imagine you have received an invitation to an activity at this trail site. Please rank the extent to which each of these activity characteristics would influence the likelihood of you choosing to participate in the activity.

1 = This would make me *much less* likely to participate in the activity

2 = This would make me *somewhat less* likely to participate in the activity

3 = This would have *no effect* on how likely I would be to participate in the activity

4 = This would make me *somewhat more* likely to participate in the activity

5 = This would make me *much more* likely to participate in the activity

The activity is **exclusive to women**

1 2 3 4 5

The activity has **childcare support** and/or activities for children

1 2 3 4 5

The activity includes clear **communication about accessibility** and/or accommodation for people with disabilities

1 2 3 4 5

The activity is **pet-free** (i.e., dogs not allowed)

1 2 3 4 5

The activity explicitly **allows pets**

1 2 3 4 5

The organizers will **provide all necessary equipment** or materials to participate

1 2 3 4 5

The activity is held **during daylight** hours

1 2 3 4 5

The activity is held on the **weekend**

1 2 3 4 5

This activity is held **after 5pm** on a weekday

1 2 3 4 5

The activity is explicitly **2SLGBTQ+** inclusive

The activity is offered in a **language other than English**

(Please specify which language or languages you would like programming to be offered in: _____)

1 2 3 4 5

Other ideas for activity characteristics or information the activity's promotion should provide:

Additional comments, thoughts, or observations:



IMAGE CREDIT: IVAN SMUK, ACCESSED VIA CANVA PRO

The logo for tcat features a stylized graphic of three white, parallel, slanted rectangular bars of increasing length from left to right, positioned to the left of the lowercase text "tcat".

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