



Administrative Policy # 2026-03

Road Trails Designation Bylaw Regulation and Application Requirements Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish clear, consistent, and transparent requirements for the regulation, review, and approval of applications made under the Town of Digby's **Road Trails Designation Bylaw** (the "Bylaw"). This Policy is intended to:

- Support safe, orderly, and sustainable use of designated road trails;
- Clarify application requirements, review criteria, and approval conditions;
- Ensure alignment with municipal planning, transportation, public safety, and environmental objectives; and provide procedural guidance to applicants, staff, and Council.

2. Authority

This Policy is adopted by Council of the Town of Digby pursuant to the authority granted under the **Municipal Government Act (Nova Scotia)** and is intended to be read in conjunction with:

- The Road Trails Designation Bylaw;
- The Town of Digby Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Planning Strategy;
- Any applicable Traffic, Streets, or Active Transportation policies; and
- Any other relevant municipal bylaws or provincial statutes.

Where a conflict exists between this Policy and a bylaw, the bylaw shall prevail.

3. Scope and Application

This Policy applies to:

- All requests to designate a road or portion of a road as a **Road Trail**;
- All requests to amend, extend, or remove an existing Road Trail designation; and
- All uses, activities, or events proposed within a designated Road Trail area where approval or authorization is required by the Bylaw.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

- **Applicant** means any individual, organization, association, or government body submitting an application under the Bylaw.
- **Bylaw** means the Town of Digby Road Trails Designation Bylaw, as amended from time to time.
- **Council** means the Council of the Town of Digby.
- **Road Trail** means a road or portion of a road designated by bylaw for shared or trail-related use in accordance with the Bylaw.
- **Staff** means employees of the Town of Digby authorized to administer and review applications under this Policy.

5. General Policy Principles

In administering the Bylaw, the Town shall be guided by the following principles:

- Public safety is paramount;
- Road Trails should complement existing transportation and land use patterns;
- Impacts on residents, businesses, and emergency services must be considered and mitigated;
- Environmental stewardship and accessibility should be encouraged; and
- Decisions should be evidence-based, transparent, and consistent.

6. Application Requirements

6.1 Submission

All applications for Road Trail designation or amendment shall be submitted in writing to the Town of Digby on the prescribed form, accompanied by all required supporting documentation.

6.2 Required Information

At a minimum, an application shall include:

- Applicant name, address, and contact information;
- Legal description and civic address of the road or road segment proposed for designation;
- A map or plan clearly identifying the proposed Road Trail limits;
- Description of the intended use(s) and user groups;
- Proposed days and hours of use, if applicable;
- Identification of any proposed physical improvements, signage, or markings;
- Assessment of potential impacts on traffic, parking, residents, and businesses;

- Confirmation of land ownership and any required permissions;
- Proof of insurance and indemnification, where required by the Town; and
- Any additional information deemed necessary by Staff to properly evaluate the application.

6.3 Application Fees

Application fees, if any, shall be established by Council from time to time and shall be paid in full prior to review.

7. Review and Evaluation Process

7.1 Staff Review

Upon receipt of a complete application, Staff shall:

- Circulate the application to relevant departments (e.g., Public Works, Planning, Protective Services);
- Consult external agencies as required (e.g., emergency services, provincial departments);
- Evaluate the application against the criteria set out in this Policy and the Bylaw; and
- Prepare a written report with recommendations.

7.2 Public and Stakeholder Input

Where deemed appropriate by Council or required by bylaw, public notice and consultation may be undertaken, including:

- Notification to affected property owners;
- Public information meetings; or
- Consideration of written submissions.

7.3 Council Decision

Council shall consider the application and Staff report at a duly constituted meeting and may:

- Approve the application as submitted;
- Approve the application with conditions;
- Defer the application pending further information; or
- Refuse the application, stating reasons.

8. Evaluation Criteria

In making a recommendation or decision on an application under the Road Trails Designation Bylaw, Council and Staff shall consider, at a minimum, the following criteria. These criteria are intended to guide decision-making and do not fetter Council's discretion.

9.1 General Evaluation Criteria

The Town shall consider:

- Compatibility with existing road use and traffic volumes;
- Pedestrian, cyclist, motorist, and user safety;
- Access for emergency and service vehicles;
- Impacts on adjacent land uses and neighbourhoods;
- Consistency with municipal plans, bylaws, and policies;
- Environmental and accessibility considerations; and
- The Town's capacity to maintain, monitor, and enforce the designation.

9.2 Additional Evaluation Criteria – OHV Organization Submissions

Where an application is submitted by, or on behalf of, an Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) organization, the following additional criteria shall be evaluated:

- **Connectivity:** The extent to which the proposed road trail provides logical and efficient connectivity between existing trail segments, trail networks, or trail-related services and amenities.
- **Stopping Sight Distance:** Adequacy of stopping sight distance along the proposed road trail to ensure safe interaction between OHV users and other road users.
- **Traffic Volume:** Suitability of the road based on Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), generally targeting roads with AADT of approximately 4,000 vehicles per day, plus or minus ten percent ($\pm 10\%$).
- **Length of Road Trail:** Total length of the proposed road trail, which should generally not exceed 10 kilometres, unless otherwise justified to the satisfaction of Council.
- **Road Classification:** Use of non-controlled access roads only, including Trunk highways, Routes, and local roads. Controlled access highways shall not be considered.
- **Posted Speed:** Posted speed limits of 80 kilometres per hour or less along the proposed road trail.
- **Community Support:** Demonstrated support from local residents and affected property owners along the proposed road trail, which may include letters of support, petitions, or results of community consultation.

Council may require additional studies, traffic data, or community engagement to adequately assess the above criteria.

8.1. Conditions of Approval

Council may impose conditions on any approval, including but not limited to:

- Limitations on permitted uses or user groups;
- Time-of-day or seasonal restrictions;
- Requirements for signage, markings, or physical improvements;
- Ongoing maintenance responsibilities;
- Insurance, indemnification, and liability provisions; and
- Monitoring, reporting, or review requirements.

Failure to comply with conditions may result in enforcement action or revocation of the designation.

9. Mandatory Documentation for OHV Applicants

To be considered complete, submissions by Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) organizations under this Policy **must include**:

- 1. Traffic and Road Safety Data**
 - Source of Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) figures and methodology for data collection to support evaluation against volume criteria.
- 2. Connectivity Plan**
 - A **map and written explanation** that clearly shows how the proposed road trail links existing trail networks or service points.
- 3. Sight Distance Assessment**
 - A technical evaluation of stopping sight distances along the proposed road segment.
- 4. Resident and Property Owner Support**
 - Evidence of community engagement such as consultation summaries, letters of support, or petition results.
- 5. Environmental, Access, and Service Impact Statements**
 - A description of potential impacts on land use, emergency services access, and natural features.
- 6. Compliance Summary**
 - Documentation demonstrating compliance with Nova Scotia's **Road Trails Act** and related OHV

10. OHV Evaluation Scoring Matrix (Internal Checklist)

For internal use by Staff and Council, the following scoring matrix should be applied consistently when evaluating OHV trail applications. Each criterion is scored on a **0-3 scale**:

Criterion	3 – Excellent	2 – Good	1 – Marginal	0 – Does Not Meet Criteria
Connectivity to existing trails	Fully connects and extends network	Connects tangentially	Limited network value	Does not connect
AADT suitability (approx. ±10% of 4,000)	Clearly within range	Slightly outside range	Needs justification	Outside range
Stopping Sight Distance Safety	Meets or exceeds best practices	Minor concerns	Several concerns	Does not meet safety standards
Road Classification and Access	Non-controlled access, local road	Local road with minor issues	Some controlled access segments	Controlled access or unsuitable
Length (≤10 km)	10 km or less	Slightly longer with mitigation	Significantly longer	Unacceptable length
Speed Criteria (≤80 km/h posted)	All segments ≤80	Majority ≤80	Some >80	Mostly >80
Community Support	Strong documented support	Moderate support	Mixed feedback	Lacks support

Total Score Interpretation for Recommendation:

- **18–21:** Strong candidate (recommend approval)
- **12–17:** Moderate candidate (recommend with conditions)
- **0–11:** Weak candidate (recommend further info or refusal)

Staff reports should include this matrix summary for Council's review.

11. Alignment with Provincial OHV Legislation and Standards

In addition to municipal policy criteria, applications must demonstrate alignment with relevant Nova Scotia provincial legislation governing OHV operation on designated trails and roads, including elements of the **Road Trails Act** and associated OHV regulations such as **trail permit requirements, operator licensing, OHV equipment requirements, and prohibition of controlled-access highways** for road trails.

This alignment helps ensure that Council's decisions are consistent with both **municipal authority** and **provincial statutory requirements**.

12. Trial Period and Revocation

Council may designate a road trail on a **trial or pilot basis** for a specified period (e.g., 12–24 months). During this time:

1. Monitoring Requirements

- The applicant and Town Staff must collect and submit data on safety incidents, traffic impacts, and community feedback at regular intervals.

2. Review Milestones

- At the midpoint and at the end of the trial period, Staff will prepare a review report for Council.

3. Revocation of Designation

- Council may revoke the trail designation before the end of the trial period if monitoring data indicates significant negative impacts, non-compliance with conditions, or safety concerns.

4. Criteria for Continued Designation

- Continued designation beyond the trial period will depend on meeting safety benchmarks, community acceptance, and adherence to conditions of approval.

This ensures that temporary designations can be evaluated before becoming permanent or long-term, and that the Town can respond adaptively to real-world conditions.

13. Enforcement and Compliance

All Road Trails and associated activities shall comply with the Bylaw, this Policy, and any conditions of approval. Enforcement may be carried out by municipal officials or peace officers authorized under applicable legislation. Non-compliance may result in penalties, orders, or removal of the designation in accordance with the Bylaw.

14. Amendments and Review

This Policy may be amended by Council resolution. Council may also direct a review of the Policy from time to time to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

15. Effective Date

This Policy shall take effect on the date of adoption by Council of the Town of Digby.

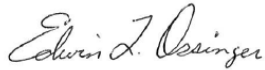
Clerk's Annotation for Official Policy Book

Date of Notice: July 13, 2026

Date of Adoption: August 4, 2026

Policy Effective Date: August 5, 2026

I certify that this **Road Trails Designation Bylaw Regulation and Application Requirements Policy** was adopted by Council as indicated above.



August 5, 2026

Town Clerk

Date