

Petition
Regular Council Meeting, March 23rd, 2021

This petition is submitted to the City of Kawartha Lakes Municipal Council on behalf of these 65 area residents who are directly impacted by activities on that section of the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor that is located on the east shore of Cameron Lake in the City of Kawartha Lakes and it is specifically addressing a **PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUE** that exists in this area.

This petition is requesting that the City of Kawartha Lakes ensures that all gate barriers on the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor between Knox Crescent and Northline Road remain closed and locked year-round. This is a priority public safety issue because the operators of snowmobiles who use this area of the trail system are travelling at high rates of speed and disobeying the stop signs, the pedestrian slow signs, the children at play crossing signs and the 20km/h maximum speed signs in this area, thereby endangering the lives of anyone who might reasonably be expected to be in this area. This area is clearly posted as a high pedestrian traffic area with numerous vehicle and pedestrian crossings and year-round residences immediately bordering the trail in this area. The current dangers to the public's safety in this area will be significantly reduced by the securing of these gate barriers on a year-round basis.

Background Information:

Hundreds of public complaints have been submitted to the City of Kawartha Lakes regarding the high rates of speed that snowmobiles are travelling through these clearly marked crossings and disobeying the clearly posted stop signs at these crossings on the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor in the City of Kawartha Lakes. This area of the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor has been a public safety concern for several years now and during that time, the City of Kawartha Lakes, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Kawartha Lakes Snowmobile Club have all been alerted to those dangers. Correspondence, documentation and actual video footage of the hundreds of offences that have occurred on the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor in this identified area have been submitted to the City of Kawartha Lakes, but there has been no change to the existing dangers to public safety. Staff members for the City of Kawartha Lakes have stated for years that enforcement of this complaint area have been increased to address the concern. This action has resulted in absolutely no change to the ongoing unlawful behaviour of the

snowmobile operators in this area and therefore the danger to public safety continues to go unresolved. At the time of this submission, the City of Kawartha Lakes by-law enforcement division manager still doesn't know if the signage posted on the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor related to the maximum permitted speed and STOP signs in this identified area are posted in accordance with municipal guidelines or any other applicable guidelines. At the time of this submission, there appears to be only two Municipal Enforcement Officers assigned to enforcement duties on the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor. Information received directly from those officers, indicates that they are unequipped and untrained to actually do speed related enforcement duties on the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor. Those same officers state that speed enforcement on the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor must be done in the presence of both an OPP officer and a Municipal By-law Enforcement Officer. Those same officers state that the stop sign enforcement duties have been assigned to the Ontario Provincial Police. Unfortunately, those members of the Ontario Provincial Police who actually attend this area of the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor advise the public that the posted stop signs currently located at the crossings in this complaint area are unenforceable because they are not of the correct size. Therefore, after all these years of complaints, the signage that is currently posted on the Victoria Rail Trail Corridor in this area remains unconfirmed whether or not they are actually enforceable signage under the currently existing regulations and by-laws.

The above issues are serious in nature and without clear direction to who is responsible for what specific enforcement duty or confirmation whether or not the existing signage is enforceable should be a major concern of the current municipal government and council. These issues should have been addressed years ago when the first complaint was submitted to the city identifying the dangers. Those issues should have been readdressed when the dangers persisted, and the community continued to request assistance from the city on these same dangers.

At this time, it is clear that the enforcement presence in this complaint area is minimal. It is also clear that enforcement efforts have been ineffective at addressing the public safety issue in this area and there is no reasonable expectation that enforcement alone will resolve the dangers at these crossings.

Conclusion:

At this time, the most cost effective and most efficient method of addressing the high speeds at which the snowmobiles disobey the stop signs at the clearly

identified crossings is to immediately secure the gate barriers on a year-round basis. The gate barriers are already in place and functional in accordance with the ongoing maintenance schedules for municipal property. The barriers are already closed for the other three seasons of the year and have been proven to effectively cause the all-terrain vehicles to slow at these same crossings, therefore there is no reason for them to be open during the winter. If there is a necessity to facilitate oversize vehicles to periodically negotiate the trail at these crossings, such as municipal vehicles, emergency vehicles or even the snowmobile groomer, the gates can be easily opened as they are merely secured by a keyed padlock device. The gates can then be simply secured once that vehicle has completed its task. The gate barriers in their closed configuration facilitate the movement of pedestrians, horseback riders, snowshoers, cross-country skiers, cyclists, all-terrain motor vehicles and snowmobiles. The key safety feature that the gates possess is that they physically cause the identified motor vehicles (snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles) to reduce their speed so that they slowly approach all the crossings. This significantly reduces the risk to the motorized vehicle operators on the trail at these crossings and to all those pedestrians and motor vehicle operators who utilize those crossings on the trail.

The bottom-line is, by ensuring that the gates are closed year-round, this ongoing public safety issue is significantly reduced, and this public safety issue is addressed at no additional cost to the taxpayer and the effectiveness of this action is felt 365 days of the year.

Thank you from the 65 supporters of this petition.

Person Submitting the Petition

Name:	Michael Hoskin
Address:	[REDACTED]
Phone:	[REDACTED]

Petition

To: the Council of the City of Kawartha Lakes, 26 Francis Street, Lindsay, ON K9V 5R8.

I/We the undersigned, petition the Council of the City of Kawartha Lakes as follows:

The City must ensure that all gate barriers on the Victoria Rail Trail between Knox Crescent and Northline Road remain closed and locked year-round. This is a priority public safety issue because the operators of snowmobiles and other motorized vehicles who use this area of the trail system are travelling at high rates of speed and disobeying the stop signs, the pedestrian slow signs, the children at play crossing signs and the 20km/h maximum speed signs. This is a clearly posted high pedestrian traffic area with numerous vehicle crossings and year-round residences immediately bordering the trail in this area. The current dangers to the public's safety in this area will be significantly reduced by the securing of these gate barriers on a year-round basis.

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