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MMC's Western Promenade Assessment

Helen Donaldson <hcd@portlandmaine.gov>
To: Helen Donaldson <hcd@portlandmaine.gov>

Wed, Sep 5, 2018 at 9:51 PM

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From: **Ethan Hipple** <ehipple@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: Wed, Sep 5, 2018 at 12:33 PM
Subject: Re: MMC's Western Promenade Assessment
To: Helen Nell Donaldson <hcd@portlandmaine.gov>, Sally Deluca <sld@portlandmaine.gov>, Tuck Stuart O'Brien <sgo@portlandmaine.gov>
Cc: Ethan Owens <eowens@portlandmaine.gov>, Matthew Coleman <mcoleman@portlandmaine.gov>

Hi Nell,
Here are our comments on the Valley St Paved Path and the associated goat paths.

In speaking with our sidewalk plow operators, they have made it clear that even during light snow events, the grade and tight radius of the Valley Street Paved Path switchbacks makes it very difficult/impossible to clear snow with our existing Trackless or Holder sidewalk plows. The root of the problem is that the switchbacks themselves are too small and steep, making it very tricky to get the plows around the steep corners. The narrowness of the path also contributes to the difficulty. Enlarging and flattening the switchbacks (requiring alteration or additional retaining walls) would reduce the problem. Because of the difficult passage there, when an operator is clearing snow on the neighborhood routes, they will typically skip the Valley St Path and come back later with a different piece of equipment that can clear the steep sections. This can lead to delay of up to several days because we will complete our standard routes first (using Trackless or Holders), then return to get problem areas/pinch points with specialized equipment when all other routes are cleared.

If we were to improve the trail so that we could clear it safely with the normal Trackless or Holder equipment, it would be cleared as part of the regular route and would result in much timelier completion. If we leave it as is, we will continue to clear it using alternative equipment, but it will cause delays and will certainly have an impact on the higher expected volume of pedestrians using that route.

For the goat paths leading from Valley St to Gilman Place, then up the grassy slope to MMC, we recommend the following:

Lower Goat Path (Valley St to Gilman Place): At Valley Street, create a break in the retaining wall with stairs leading to the lower goat path. Install timber box stairs and stone dust fill on steep, eroded sections of trail.

Upper Goat Path (Gilman Place to MMC): Combine braided system of multiple goat paths into a single improved trail. Install timber box steps and stone dust fill on steep sections. Alternative is to pave this section of trail.

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