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## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** 23 March, 2011  
**TO:** Communities  
**FROM:** BlazeSports America  
**RE:** Accessible Trails Checklist<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the Accessible Trails Checklist (below) is to help the community review and evaluate significant components of technical provisions of existing trails to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. The checklist has been compiled and modified to support communities interested in developing a proposed trail or modifying an existing trail; therefore, the checklists provided present all relevant information to your community about not only, the technical accessibility provisions, but also the development and promotion of a trail/path network in your community.

Importantly, the accessibility checklist is intended for consultative purposes. Moreover, the technical provisions stem from different sources in order to create a comprehensive form so that the community can assess the issues and concerns relating to inaccessibility.

Notably, the compiled checklist<sup>1</sup> is not the universal standards, as previous accessibility standards, such as the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), do not transfer precisely to the natural environment. However, the comprehensive checklist is significant, as it includes a wide range of recommended technical provisions for consideration. The checklist presents the minimum scoping and technical requirements for a proposed or existing trail. Thus, the technical provisions may help your community to evaluate any barriers and variables stemming from the uniqueness of each trail. Additionally, the reasonable features of an accessible trail may depend on natural or artificial structures of each trail.

Perhaps most importantly, it is imperative to understand that every trail project is unique, albeit not all of the detailed steps and questions in the checklist will be relevant to each project. Therefore, it is recommended that the community may adapt the checklist to your own community's needs.

Links to all relevant online references:

- National Center on Accessibility and United States Access Board, 2007  
<http://www.ncaonline.org/index.php?q=taxonomy/term/138>

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<sup>1</sup>A updated version of guidelines compiled and reviewed by BlazeSports America

- America Trails, the world's largest online trails retrieved from: <http://www.americantrails.org>
- Partnership for Prevention: Facilitating Development of a Community Trail and Promoting Its Use to Increase Physical Activity Among Youth and Adults  
<http://www.prevent.org/The-Community-Health-Promotion-Handbook/Places-for-Physical-Activity.aspx>
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy retrieved from <http://www.railstotrails.org>



## Accessibility Guidelines Checklist for Exiting Trails

Provisions	Barriers for Use of Existing Trails	Technical Provisions for Accessible Trails
<input type="checkbox"/> Parking	There are no accessible parking spaces	<input type="checkbox"/> Accessible parking spaces should be located Closest to the trailhead entrance <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible parking spaces should be 96 inches wide with an aisle way 60 inches wide beside it <input type="checkbox"/> The access aisle way must be part of an accessible route to the trailhead <input type="checkbox"/> The surface of the parking area must be level and made of a hard, non-skid surface <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible parking spaces should be designated as reserved for people with disabilities by a sign showing the international symbol of accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible parking signs should be clearly visible <input type="checkbox"/> Directional signs shall indicate the location of accessible entrances, parking, restrooms, and other accessible facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Entrance		<input type="checkbox"/> The accessible parking space access aisle way must be part of an accessible route to the trailhead entrance <input type="checkbox"/> Directional signs shall indicate the location of accessible entrances and other accessible facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Restrooms	No signage indicating the location of accessible restrooms	<input type="checkbox"/> Directional signs shall indicate the location of accessible restrooms
<input type="checkbox"/> Signage and maps/guides	No signage or maps/guides indicating accessibility features of the trail, accessible segments, distance of accessible segments	<input type="checkbox"/> Should include signage with information on the total distance of the accessible segment and the location of the first point of departure from the technical provisions;

		<input type="checkbox"/> Should provide information on the length of the trail or trail segment, surface type, tread width (typical/minimum), and running and cross slope (typical/maximum); <input type="checkbox"/> Should be located at the edge of the trail, and not protrude into accessible route of travel;
<input type="checkbox"/> Surface	Soft surfaces, e.g., sand and gravel, are more difficult for all users – bicycles, strollers, and wheelchairs – to negotiate the path	<input type="checkbox"/> Should be firm and stable (please see attached article “Trail Surfaces: What Do I Need to Know Now” from the National Accessibility Center)
<input type="checkbox"/> Maximum (or Sustained) Running Slope	The slope or grade of the trail is too steep	<input type="checkbox"/> Cannot exceed 5% (1:20 – Moderate) for any distance <input type="checkbox"/> If resting intervals are provided over 200 feet, the running slope may be a maximum 1:12 <input type="checkbox"/> If resting intervals are provided over 30 feet, the running slope may be a maximum 1:10 <input type="checkbox"/> If resting intervals are provided over 10 feet, the running slope may be a maximum 1:8  ** Exception: 1:7 (for 5ft maximum for open drainage structures)
<input type="checkbox"/> Maximum Cross Slope	Two slopes – <b>running slope and cross slope</b> – are crucial elements to people with mobility impairments	<input type="checkbox"/> Must comply (Running slope) with one or more of four provisions with no more than 30 percent of the total trail length exceeding 1:12 <input type="checkbox"/> May comply with 3% (1:33 – Easy and Moderate)  ** Exception- 1:10 (at the bottom of an open drain where clear tread width is a minimum 42 inches)
<input type="checkbox"/> Minimum Clear Tread Width	Large rocks and fallen trees can be obstacles to trails users, particularly those who use strollers, wheelchairs, and walkers	<input type="checkbox"/> Must have 36 inches clearance (Moderate) for any distance <input type="checkbox"/> Must have 48 inches clearance (Easy) for any distance  ** Exception: 32 inches
<input type="checkbox"/> Edge	Trail edge drops off into a ravine, gutter or	<input type="checkbox"/> Trail edge must have a minimum height of 3 inches

<p>Protection and Curbs</p>	<p>steep slope.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should provide 4-inch curb at dangerous and difficult locations &amp; at landings (Moderate)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should provide 4-inch curb on downhill side of trail &amp; at landings (Easy)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Edge protection at dangerous sections of trail and at landings shall have curbs, walls, or railings that prevent people from traveling off the trail</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Curbs or barriers shall be a minimum of 4 inches high</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Handrails for ramps, bridges, boardwalks, etc. shall be mounted between 34 and 38 inches above the trail or structure surface and shall maintain a consistent height</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Tread Obstacles</p>	<p>Obstacles include tree roots, rocks, brush, downed trees or branches projecting from the trail</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cannot exceed a maximum height of 2 inches</li> <li>** Exception: 3 inches max (where running and cross slopes are 1:20 or less)</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Passing Spaces</p>	<p>People who use wheelchairs cannot pass other hikers easily</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should be a minimum of 60 x 60 inches</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should occur at every 1,000-foot intervals when the clear tread width of the trail is less than 60 inches</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should be utilized to offer a more convenient way for people to pass one another</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should be 300-foot maximum interval (Moderate)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should be 200-foot maximum interval (Easy)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> An alternative - a T-shaped space – still needs to occur every 1,000 feet, whenever possible;</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Passing Surfaces</p>	<p>Existing trails may not have resting intervals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shall be placed at the maximum interval of every 300 feet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should be firm and stable (please see attached article “Trail Surfaces: What Do I Need to Know Now” from the National Accessibility Center)</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vertical Clearance</p>	<p>Does not adequately offer protection for persons with visual impairments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should provide 80 inches – the clear head space over the accessible route</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Handrails</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May provide 34"-38" (Easy to Moderate) railings</li> </ul>

		at dangerous or difficult locations and at bridges
<input type="checkbox"/> Changes in Level (or transitions in Surface)	Change in level can cause many difficulties for people with mobility impairments, such as cane or crutch users or wheelchair users	<input type="checkbox"/> Should not exceed 2 inch (e.g., where a boardwalk or bridge meets; where wood decking is used, planks must run perpendicular to the direction of travel and joints must be no matter than 2 inch) <input type="checkbox"/> Shall be 2 inch maximum very firm, compacted, skid-resistant surface (Moderate) <input type="checkbox"/> Shall be 2 inch maximum hard, skid-resistant surface (Easy)

SOURCE: \*Adapted from National Center on Accessibility and United States Access Board \*\*Conditional Exceptions: Apply on a provision-by-provision basis; where full compliance with a technical provision is not possible because of the limitations and constraints included in the conditional exceptions; and, maximum extent feasible.



## Guidelines Checklist for Community Trail Development & Promotion

Action Steps	Details
Step 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Collect information [information gathering] <input type="checkbox"/> Identify available resources that will help facilitate community trail development and promotion depending on your situation.
Step 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin organizing the human, material, and financial resources that you will need for trail development and promotional activities.
Step 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage existing partners and key stakeholders by informing them about your plans to develop a community trail and educating them about its benefits. Target outreach to disability serving organizations to promote trails accessibility.
Step 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring together committed partners and stakeholders in the form of a working group to facilitate trail development and promotional activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin planning for the evaluation component.
Step 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Promote your project to build community support.
Step 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that working group members understand the application and funding processes for your state's Transportation Enhancements (TE) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) opportunities.
Step 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify specific trial locations that the working group will consider. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish criteria by which to make the final selection.
Step 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Approach public agencies in your community to determine which agency is interested in sponsoring your project.
Step 9	<input type="checkbox"/> After identifying a project sponsor, find out which of its staff members will serve as your points of contact for the remainder of the project. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin to discuss key issues with them.

Step 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Reach out to landowners of each trail location that you are interested in to educate them about your project and to help narrow down your list to those locations showing potential for trail development.
Step 11	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify all permits needed for each potential trail location.
Step 12	<input type="checkbox"/> Estimate the costs of trail development for each potential trail location.
Step 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze your trail location and funding options to select the best location and to determine which funding source(s) you will apply to.
Step 14	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for trail funding. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to build community support. <input type="checkbox"/> Wait for funding approval before proceeding with further trail development.
Step 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with the working group to review. <input type="checkbox"/> Refine your project evaluation activities.
Step 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all preparations for groundbreaking are complete before construction begins.
Step 17	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay connected with those responsible for trail construction throughout the construction process.
Step 18	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct promotional activities within your community during trial construction to keep residents engaged and to encourage future trail use.
Step 19	<input type="checkbox"/> Organize a kick-off event and ongoing promotional activities to further encourage trail use.

SOURCE: \*Adapted from Partnership for Prevention. *Facilitating Development of a Community Trail and Promoting Its Use to Increase Physical Activity Among Youth and Adults.*