

Safety and Etiquette on the Trails

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I know that I am preaching to the choir here, that is, the good members of the Gateway Browns Creek Trail Assn. But we all need to up our game to improve safety and etiquette along these two beautiful trails.

The most common complaints we hear are about bikers disrespecting pedestrians, or vehicles at crossings. We also hear an occasional negative comment about pedestrians. I would like to engage all of you to clearly model good behavior to encourage all trail users to be safe, and practice proper trail etiquette.

- Clearly announce your intended pass on the trail, with bell or verbally.
 - To those that do announce their pass, please give them a loud “Thank You”.
- If someone does not announce their pass, call them out in a non-confrontational manner. “Please announce your pass, Thanks”.
- Ride single file, in your lane, when the trail is busy. If you ride side by side, look ahead and move over early if traffic is coming the other way, or if visibility is reduced.
- Be very careful at bends in the trail, where there is limited visibility. Stay to the far right in your lane and slow down. I’ve seen many near misses in these locations. Caution others, if you have the chance.
- Do not ever form a peloton (a tight group of riders taking up multiple lanes) on the trails. If you want to do this, please move to a road.
- Control your speed, and caution others to do so, when appropriate. These are multi use trails. If you want to go fast, again, please move to a road.
- Some folks, pedestrians mainly, like to wear earbuds or headphones. Please avoid doing this, as you may not be aware of your surroundings, nor can you hear bikers announce a pass. Maybe only put one ear bud in, so one ear is open? Give a friendly caution to those persons you see using earbuds, when appropriate.
- Stop at all road crossings, with a STOP sign, before proceeding. I know, this is not a popular request and few follow it. But if we start, hopefully others will catch on.
 - One challenge at road crossings is vehicles stopping to allow for bikes and others to cross (when there is not a STOP sign for the vehicles). Although this is a very nice gesture, it messes up the system, as cars are only required to stop for pedestrians, not bikes. (Bikes are considered a ‘vehicle’ by statute, therefore cars have the right-of-way over bikes at ALL intersections) If a car stops in one direction that is no guarantee that the following car, or car coming from the

opposite direction will stop. My advice; come to a stop and wave the cars thru, then proceed when safe to do so. And model this behavior for others.

- Walkers also need to stay in their lane. Do not walk three abreast. And dog walkers, please keep your dog in your lane; snub up the retractable leash.
- I love to see children on the trail; walking or riding their little bikes. But their behavior is very unpredictable, and they can suddenly veer in to your lane when passing. So slow way down, and expect the unexpected.

On a recent Saturday morning, my wife and I had a very nice ride up to Pine Point Park. The variety of users that day was amazing. We saw the usual bikes, pedestrians, roller blader's and dog walkers. But we also saw a wheel chair, a little girl with training wheels, and a whole bunch of horses doing a 'poker ride'. These two trails are a gem and an amazing resource for all. Please help us to keep them safe. Thanks!