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The National Battlefields
Commission

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RELEASE

For immediate release

Work to start soon on new mixed-use interpretive trail

Québec, April 2, 2015 – Hikers and cycling enthusiasts will be delighted to know that work on the new *Plains of Abraham Trail*, due to open to the general public this fall, will start in the coming days. A large part of the trail, which will be set in natural surroundings and independent of road infrastructure, will be integrated into the cliff along Gilmour Hill.

Mandated by the National Battlefields Commission, Public Works and Government Services Canada has awarded a contract worth approximately \$3.7 million to *Les Constructions Bé-Con inc.*, through an open and transparent competitive process, to build a safe and accessible path for pedestrians and cyclists. The Commission strongly favours the construction of a staircase (an option in the contract), but would like to ensure that funds are available within the allotted budget before giving the green light.

The Honourable Denis Lebel, Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, has been closely following the Gilmour Hill redevelopment project announced on August 2, 2013, and is delighted to see the second phase of the project get underway. “Our government is proud to have financed this project for the people of Québec and all Canadians who visit the Battlefields Park national historic site. Our investment enables citizens to use Gilmour Hill year round and, starting this fall, will allow them to discover the park’s history thanks to the creation of a new multi-use interpretive trail.”

André Beaudet, Secretary and Director General of the Commission, reiterated that “This project, divided into two inseparable and complementary phases—the road and trail components—aims to benefit all types of users while maximizing their safety. That’s why pedestrians and cyclists will also have a dedicated route, and not just drivers. The trail will focus on the park’s history and become a valued link between Promenade Samuel-de-Champlain and Québec’s Upper Town. This addition is a perfect example of our desire and ability to work for the well-being of all park users and Québec residents, and we’re proud of that.”

The new path will facilitate recreational traffic and the development of active transportation. The path, which is 1,190 metres long and has a steep grade of over 8% in places, will be cleared and packed down in winter. It will include, among other things, a multi-purpose trail, six rest and interpretation areas, and safe crossings.

This optimal route aims to preserve the site’s heritage and historic cachet and minimize the impact on the cliff’s vegetation and morphology. It will help ensure the safety of users (hikers with or without strollers, cycling enthusiasts, and snowshoers in winter) while keeping the project on time and on budget. Work primarily includes tree cutting and reforestation, excavating loose soil, rock excavation in the cliff, earthworks, building gabion retaining walls, stabilizing rock walls, and related civil, structural, landscaping, and development work.

The project meets the requirements of all federal environmental codes, laws, and regulations and complies with relevant local and provincial standards. Monitoring will be provided due to the possible nesting of endangered species. The presence of tree species with protected status, such as the butternut, required a permit from Environment Canada.

The work will require the removal of trees on the new path, but the Commission is committed to offsetting this by planting an equal number of trees. To repurpose the timber cut, the contractor will be responsible for finding the best possible way of maximizing its reuse and must submit a report.

Road traffic on Gilmour Hill may be temporarily affected during trail construction. If such is the case, more details will be disclosed.

www.theplainsofabraham.ca

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