

# MEETING REPORT

## INITIATIVE

Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail & Trans Canada Trail

## PURPOSE

Tourism Northern Ontario and Waterfront Regeneration Trust is continuing to conduct implementation activities of the Lake Huron North Channel Cycling Route Study and implementation activities of the Trans Canada Trail Concept Plan - Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail.

## BACKGROUND

As a follow-up to previous community meetings, discussions and correspondence, this follow-up meeting/mapping workshop session was with the community and those they felt should be in attendance (mayor, councillors, tourism/recreation staff, roads personnel or others) to provide input/comments on the Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail and Trans Canada Trail route.

Attached is the agenda for the meeting/mapping workshop. We brought maps and asked that the communities develop a community list of items identifying community attractions, amenities, connections and concerns.

By the end of the session, we anticipated to have a clear understanding of what particulars will be identified on the community's section of the map and the final route that will be signed as the Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail and the Trans Canada Trail.

This map of the route and the particulars identified will be digitized and become part of the provincial cycling trail mapping system and part of the national Trans Canada Trail system. Communities will have another opportunity to view the route and maps before they are finalized. These are continuing steps in the implementation process.

## DATE and TIME

May 8, 2015 at 10:00am

## LOCATION

Town of Blind River  
11 Hudson Street  
Blind River, ON

## PARTICIPANTS

Brenda Wilson, Deputy Mayor – TWP of North Shore  
Paul Berney, Economic Development Officer – Mississauga First Nation  
Kieth Sayers, Land and Resources Program Manager – Mississauga First Nation  
Stoney Burton, General Manager, Blind River EDC  
John Jones, Manager Building Planning and By-Law – kBlind River  
Tyler McCaver, President – Blind River Chamber of Commerce  
Michael Wozny, Coordinator – Tourism Northern Ontario (TNO)  
Marlaine Koehler, Executive Director – Waterfront Regeneration Trust (WRT)

## **PARTICULARS**

### 1. Welcome and introductions.

### 2. Brief update of Lake Huron North Channel Cycling Route project and Trans Canada Trail initiative:

- Met with the communities along the route last year and they are supportive of the TNO initiative.
- Received resolutions of support from many communities, and board approval and support from the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM).
- Tourism Northern Ontario continues to be supportive and vested in the logistics regarding this regionally based new product development initiative.
- Waterfront Regeneration Trust has expanded their mandate and agreed to be the coordinating agency for the route. Waterfront Regeneration Trust is a charitable non-profit group that has been coordinating over 1,400 km of cycling trails (the Waterfront Trail) in southern Ontario through over 70 communities for 20 years. The expansion of their mandate to include the 370 km Lake Huron North Channel Cycling Route provides the north with a great opportunity and guarantee of success. The Waterfront Trail is a well-known provincial cycling brand and we will be linked and part of this brand with the route identified as the Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail.
- As per partnership agreement with Trans Canada Trail and funding through the Trillium Foundation, this route will also be part the official Trans Canada Trail, a national trail system that will span from coast to coast and open in 2017.
- Discussed the Ministry of Transportation's News release titled "Ontario Investing \$25 Million in Cycling Infrastructure". There is \$15 million for key connections and linkages on provincial highways in which the Lake Huron North Channel Cycling Route is specifically identified to receive funding. There is also \$10 million for municipal cycling infrastructure cycling routes and preliminary information indicates that it may be 50% funding with a \$250,000 cap. Mayor Watson is attending FONOM conference this week and will attempt to ask MTO minister about having a higher grant portion for Northern Ontario municipalities.
- Efforts of the communities, TNO, FONOM and WRT have been well acknowledged by MTO and important in the announcement of MTO to provide funding and to incorporate cycling infrastructure and activities.
- MTO has issued a Request For Proposals for the assessment and evaluation of a coordinated provincial cycling route in accordance with their #CycleON strategy.
- There is a lot of interest and the expansion of cycling trail to Northern Ontario has been very well received at the recent cycling show in Toronto.
- Cycling continues to grow as a transportation option, recreational activity and tourism opportunity.

### 3. Community update highlights

- The communities are very supportive of cycling and the trail project. Mississauga First Nation and Blind River are on-board with the partnership letter and particulars, including installing the signs. The Township of the North Shore will have to get council approval for any membership fee but seeing no problem in installing the signs.
- A lot of the trail in the regions will require approval with MTO.
- They are pleased to be part of the multi-community 370km cycling project. There are a number of cyclists cycling in the region.

#### 4. Review and mark cycling particulars on master map

- Collected data from community representatives in the following areas on the map:
  - a) Alerts - trail/road conditions (change in surface, gravel, high speeds, railway crossings, busy crossings, cyclists have to dismount etc.)
  - b) Amenities - washrooms and parking as well as other important items such as shopping areas, hospitals, restaurants, general stores, etc.
  - c) Attractions - museums, galleries, parks, conservation areas, cultural particulars, farmer's market, camping, provincial parks, historical and heritage sites, marinas, terrestrial or aquatic natural features
  - d) Connections - to other trails or tours
- The Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail/Trans Canada Trail goes along Highway 17, through Mississauga First Nation, into the Town of Blind River, south of Highway 17, then back onto Highway 17, then onto a trail parallel to the highway then onto Highway 538, bank onto Highway 17 then onto Martin Road and Riverview Road. There will have to be approval from MTO for some portions of this trail.
- These are good roads and trails that are used by cyclists and hikers. There are other trails and roads that are also used by cyclists, hikers and tourists, such as the Boomer Camp Trails.
- Blind River will have a staging area to be determined. Mississauga First Nation will have a staging area at the Broken Canoe Trading Post site. Mississauga First Nation would like to have a sign in ojibway.
- There will be a signage audit to determine sign locations. Discussions included the distance between signs which has been 2 ½ km. However, due to the nature of the Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail of long straight stretches of road with no turn-offs, the guidelines will be modified. Perhaps a sign every 5 km when appropriate. Installation will occur in 2016.
- Communities agreed to install the signs. Communities want the WRT website to promote the community websites, have a link to each community site. Mississauga First Nation would like to promote the First Nation narrative.
- WRT to supply signs and poles. All efforts will be made to use existing poles, such as mileage speed limit poles.
- WRT stated that they are always fund raising and accessing government programs and have always managed to pay for replacement signs.
- There is a joint community trail project in the planning and engineering stage. It is the West End Trail Partnership Project. Mississauga First Nation would like to apply to Trans Canada Trail's Grants For Aboriginal Trail Tourism for this project. Mississauga First Nation and maybe Blind River would like to take advantage of the \$10 million MTO Community Infrastructure Program for the project. If this project goes through, it could take about 4.5 km of the trail off of Highway 17.
- The communities have some great amenities and attractions such as the Boom Camp Trails, accommodation on the lake, a network of existing trails, public beaches, marina with public showers, a variety of stores with LCBO outlet, restaurants, retail and others. Stoney will forward a map with various amenities on it.

#### **FOLLOW-UP ITEMS**

1. WRT to get high resolution logos from communities when needed (M. Koehler).
2. Stoney to forward a community attractions/amenities map (Stoney).

3. Contact Trans Canada Trail and liaise with Mississauga First Nation and assist where possible with GATT program particulars (M. Wozny).
4. Keep in contact with Mississauga First Nation and Town of Blind River regarding the West End Trail project and the MTO community infrastructure program (M. Wozny, P, Berney and S. Burton).
5. When complete, forward draft trail map with particulars identified for final review (M. Koehler)
6. Continue to keep municipality up-to-date on key activities and milestones (M. Wozny & M. Koehler).