

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 20, 2015 at 1:00pm

LOCATION

Town of Espanola
100 Tudhope Street, Suite 2
Espanola, ON

PARTICIPANTS

Cheryl Kennelly, Community Economic Development Officer & Program Manager Leisure Services – Town of Espanola
Paula Roque, Deputy Clerk – Town of Espanola
Joel Yusko, Manager of Public Works – Town of Espanola
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.
- 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

- They are supportive of the project and as per resolution passed in 2014.
- They have a new council but are still supportive and pleased to be part of the multi-community 370km cycling project.
- They have no anticipated concerns with the \$1,000 annual contribution and partnership.
- They are impressed that we got MTO totally on-board. They believe this bodes very well for the creditability of the project and cycling in Northern Ontario as well as in other regions of the province.
- A map of Manitoulin Island was shown to the group identifying the commitment of MTO to pave shoulders, etc. on Highway 6 from Espanola to South Baymouth. They were very pleased that Espanola would be a tri-terminus for the cycling routes. There are 4 or 5 communities on Manitoulin Island that will need to be brought into the initiative.

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 cycling route comes into Espanola from Lee Valley Road through the town and exits via Jacklin Road. These are good roads and should be good for cycling.
- There was discussion regarding re-routing the cycling trail in the town to go more downtown. The existing route goes from Lee Valley Road to Barber Street into town. After considerable discussion, it was decided to leave the route as mapped. However, it was decided there will be a staging area at the Espanola Regional Recreation Complex (175 Avery Drive, Espanola) with directional signage to the other parts of downtown. The complex has plenty of parking and amenities, such as showers, and is a centre of interest for the community.
- The community felt it was important to do the signage audit. Sign installation will occur in 2016.
- The community has some traffic count statistics and they will get these figures for us.
- Activity will be driven to their website with hyper-links. They will decide where the landing page will be on their site, probably to their business directory.
- There was discussion of QR codes and their use in this project. Due to interface issues for diverse users, they don't work very effectively in this type of environment. Therefore, we don't anticipate putting a QR code on the Espanola trailhead sign. WRT will continue to use their mobile friendly website.
- The community will determine if there are any projects that they could take advantage of the \$10 million MTO Community Infrastructure Program.

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

1. Community to send traffic counts (P. Roque).
2. When complete, forward draft map with particulars identified for final review (M. Koehler)
3. Continue to keep municipality up-to-date on key activities and milestones (M. Wozny & M. Koehler).