

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

July 3, 2015 at 11:00am

LOCATION

Garden River First Nation
7 Shingwauk Street
Garden River, ON

PARTICIPANTS

Marlene Buller-Lasage, NHQ-AC - Garden River First Nation
Chester Langille, CAO – Garden River First Nation
Caroline Barry, Councillor - Garden River First Nation
Alanna Jones, Garden River First Nation (regrets)
Michael Wozny, Coordinator – Tourism Northern Ontario (TNO)

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

- After discussions with Marlene Buller-Lasage and Alanna Jones of Garden River First Nation, Marlene believes that Garden River First Nation has a renewed vision and enthusiasm for special projects and initiatives, such as the Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail/Trans Canada Trail. Marlene arranged this meeting with the new CAO and members to get an update on the Lake Huron North Channel/Trans Canada Trail project and to get Garden River First Nation support.
- Chester Langille, CAO, indicated that they would be pleased to be part of the multi-community 370km cycling project. This would include allowing signs on Highway 17B. It would appear at this time there are no signs for them to erect as the trail goes entirely along Highway 17B. Therefore, erecting the signs would be the responsibility of MTO.

- Garden River First Nation has just completed a master plan which includes the establishment of various trails. This initiative fits with this master plan and they would like to build connecting trails.
4. Review and mark cycling particulars on master map
- Collected just some very preliminary 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 17B right through the middle of Garden River First Nation. There will have to be approval from MTO to erect signage.
 - Highway 17B currently has paved shoulders the entire way through Garden River First Nation. It is believed that there are to be upgrades to Highway 17B in the near future. This is a good road and trail that can be used by cyclists and hikers.
 - Garden River First Nation wants to have various trail links in the future. The first trail project would be the trap rock trail that would be a lollipop trail that goes north off of the Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail/Trans Canada Trail to a high point and spiritual place and back. Another possible trail would link Third Line through Batchawana First Nation to the golf course area. Another trail link could be through the Ojibway Park area. These projects and other related trail projects and initiatives would fit within the master plan.
 - 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.
 - They believed this would be a good project as it would also help connect the community to Sault Ste. Marie.
 - Garden River First Nation will like to take advantage of the Grants For Aboriginal Trail Tourism to get funding to build the trap rock trail rail link from the Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail/Trans Canada Trail. This trail link is very important and key to the initiative.
 - They will need band council approval for the membership fee which would make sense with the trap rock trail and GATT.
 - Garden River First Nation would like to promote the First Nation narrative in their region. This would include the installation of a large trailhead sign that is in ojibway as well as english.
 - WRT to supply signs. All efforts will be made to use existing poles, such as mileage speed limit poles. WRT has stated that they are always fund raising and accessing government programs and have always managed to pay for replacement signs.

- The community has some great amenities and attractions such as two campgrounds, stores, golf course with some trails, bingo hall, access to the river and lake, native art, retail and activities.

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

1. Contact Trans Canada Trail to get program details and assist with GATT application for trail project (M. Wozny).
2. Follow-up and when complete, forward draft trail map with particulars identified for final review (M. Koehler and M. Wozny)
3. Continue to keep community up-to-date on key activities and milestones (M. Wozny & M. Koehler).