

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 5, 2015 at 10:00am

LOCATION

Township of MacDonald Meredith & Aberdeen
208 Church Street
Echo Bay, ON

PARTICIPANTS

Lynne Duguay, Clerk – Township of MacDonald Meredith & Aberdeen
Lynn Watson, Mayor – Township of MacDonald Meredith & Aberdeen
Cindy Findlay, Leisure Services Coordinator - Township of MacDonald Meredith & Aberdeen
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

- They are very supportive of cycling and the trail project. They are on-board with the partnership letter and particulars.
- They want a trailhead sign at the giant loonie site. Will have to confirm with MTO. This is a natural staging area and has amenities. Be sure to deal directly with community staff as to the location of the trailhead sign.
- They are pleased to be part of the multi-community 370km cycling project. There are a large number of cyclists cycling in the township and using it as a trailhead.

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/Trans Canada Trail goes along Highway 17B, then onto Bar Road and then onto Government Road. These are good roads and are used a lot by cyclists. There are other township roads that are also used by cyclists, such as Highway 638.
 - 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.
 - Community agreed to install the signs. Signs cannot be installed on hydro poles.
 - 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.
 - The community is not certain if they will be able to take advantage of the \$10 million MTO Community Infrastructure Program. They cannot afford only 50% funding.
 - The community has some great amenities and attractions such as the wetlands boardwalk, the giant loonie attraction, confectionary store and LCBO outlet, beach, lake and others.

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

1. WRT to get high resolution logo from community when needed (M. Koehler).
2. Community will request letter from WRT, if they want a letter of support, if and when road improvements are being made (L. Duguay).
3. When complete, forward draft map with particulars identified for final review (M. Koehler)
4. Continue to keep municipality up-to-date on key activities and milestones (M. Wozny & M. Koehler).