

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

Serpent River First Nation
479 Highway 17
Culter, ON

PARTICIPANTS

Kerry Commanda, Coordinator Lands and Resources Unit - Serpent River First Nation
Miles Reid, Marketing Officer - Serpent River First Nation
Brent St. Dennis, Acting General Manager, Serpent River EDC (brief initial appearance)
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

- As demonstrated previously by Chief Isadore Day, the community is very supportive of the trail project. They confirmed the chief's previous position of installing the signs and will need band council approval for the membership fees.
- They are pleased to be part of the multi-community 370km cycling project. They would like to construct a trail link from the Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail/Trans Canada Trail to their trading post on Highway 17.

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 then south of Highway 17 to Riverview Road. There is a bridge that has been decommissioned that the trail needs to cross. The bridge is in very good and solid condition and should be able to get approval as a cycling/hiking trail bridge. WRT will help to get money to get pedestrian approval use of bridge.
 - There will have to be approval from MTO for some portions of this trail.
 - Generally, these are good roads and trails that can be used by cyclists and hikers. A portion of River Road on the south side of the bridge will need to be brushed out a bit.
 - Serpent River First Nation wants to have a trail link from the Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail/Trans Canada Trail on the south side of Highway 17, to their trading post site.
 - 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 confirmed the chief's initial comments of agreeing to install the signs. They will need council approval for the membership fee. There is some surface treating to be done to the roads this year
 - They would like the WRT website to promote the community website and have a link to the community site. Serpent River First Nation would like to promote the First Nation narrative in the region. Perhaps the installation of a trailhead sign.
 - 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 has some great amenities and attractions such as the trading post with its native art, retail and activities.
 - Serpent River First Nation will like to take advantage of the Grants For Aboriginal Trail Tourism to get funding to build the trail link from the Lake Huron North Channel Waterfront Trail/Trans Canada Trail. This trail link is very important and key to the initiative.

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

1. WRT to get high resolution logo when needed (M. Koehler).
2. Contact Trans Canada Trail and assist regarding the submission of a GATT funding application (M. Wozny and M. Reid).
3. When complete, forward draft trail 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).