

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 21, 2015 at 10:00am

LOCATION

Town of Spanish
8 Truck Road
Spanish, ON

PARTICIPANTS

Ted Clague, Mayor – Town of Spanish
Pam Lortie, CAO/Clerk Treasurer – Town of Spanish
Robert – Town of Spanish
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

- The town is supportive of the project and as per resolution passed in 2014.
- They have no concerns with the \$500 annual contribution and partnership. They will bring it to council for approval.
- They are pleased that MTO is playing an active role in the project and cycling.
- There is considerable work and resurfacing being done on Brennan Harbour Road currently underway.

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 Spanish from Brennan Harbour Road, crosses the highway and proceeds on Sheddon Road. There was some discussion as the condition of Sheddon/Declerk Road and if there was an alternative (such as staying on Highway 17). This is not an option as MTO will only deal with sections of Highway 17 where there is no alternative. Road resurfacing is not a priority in this northern section of the town, due to low population and low traffic. This section may be a candidate for MTO infrastructure funding.
 - The community liked the concept of the signage audit. 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.
 - Cycling tourism is big business as it is a \$47 billion industry in the US.
 - The community asked if people will ride just for a day or two. Discussions included cyclist from the marina and area. There are a number of events in Spanish that may appeal to cycling tourists.
 - Community is pleased to be part of the entire project and linked with the other 20 communities along the North Shore.
 - Discussions also included the website linkages and ability to provide timely updates. The development of an APP was discussed but it is too costly to develop and constantly update. CAA has an APP that includes the Waterfront Trail. WRT continues to use a mobile friendly website work works best for this type of attraction/project.
 - The community will determine if there are any projects that they could take advantage of the \$10 million MTO Community Infrastructure Program. The Town of Spanish needs 90% funding in order to do any roads projects (they are getting 90% funding for the current work on Brennan Harbour Road).
 - Community asked who supplies the poles, if required. WRT use existing poles where possible and will supply poles where needed as determined by the signage audit.
 - The community does not have any traffic count figures.
 - Community wants to link other attractions and activities with this project.

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

1. Re-send a copy of partnership letter, MMM Group study and their particulars to CAO/Clerk Treasurer (M. Wozny).
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).