

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 6, 2015 at 10:00am

LOCATION

Township of Johnson
1 Johnson Drive
Desbrats, ON

PARTICIPANTS

Patrick O'Gorman, Recreation Coordinator - Township of Johnson
Marlee Hopkins, Councillor – Township of Johnson
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 township is supportive of the project. They may have concerns with the \$500 annual contribution. There are two new councillors and the focus is to keep taxes down. They will need to bring it to council for approval. No problem with installing signs.
- Patrick says that he often sees cyclists using the township roads.

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 is primarily on Government Road. WRT agreed with the discussion to re-routing the trail. As the trail goes along Government Road, we will divert and to go south on Margret Street, into the community of Desbrats, along Main Street then back north to Government Road.
- 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.
- Discussed the possibilities of including St. Joseph Island. Pat said that traditionally the communities didn't get along but that there is some new politicians there, such as Jodi Wildman.
- 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 the profile page. WRT continues to use a mobile friendly website. They would like to post events on their webpage.
- The community cannot afford only 50% funding and will need an increased level of funding in order to take advantage of the \$10 million MTO Community Infrastructure Program.
- Community has no problem with putting up the signs where needed as determined by the signage audit.
- The area could serve as a trail head area.
- The community does not have any traffic count figures.

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

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