

The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes

Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number ED2019-016

Date: June 4, 2019

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Place: Bobcaygeon Service Centre

Ward Community Identifier: N/A

Title: Trent-Severn Trail Towns

Description: A new regional tourism program is being created by the Regional Tourism Organization RTO8 to enhance, develop and promote the communities along the Trent-Severn Waterway

Author and Title: Laurie McCarthy, Economic Development Officer - Tourism

Recommendations:

That Report ED2019-016, **Trent-Severn Trail Towns**, be received;

That the City of Kawartha Lakes participate in the Trent-Severn Trail Towns Program as per Appendix "C" of Report ED2019-016; and

That this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the June 18, 2019 Council Meeting.

Department Head:_____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other:_____

Chief Administrative Officer:_____

Background:

In 2017, the City of Kawartha Lakes adopted the Economic Development Strategy to support a stronger and more diversified economy. The strategy identifies tourism and retail as one of five key industries and focuses on supporting existing assets to foster growth and establish a strong local economic base.

The City has a comprehensive economic development program that supports growth in the tourism cluster as well as community economic development. This program is supported by partnerships with the business community to provide complementary services to support the goals of the strategy.

Research shows that regional focused tourism programs with regional leadership support a highly coordinated and collaborative approach to destination development and marketing that maximizes resources, encourages strategic planning and investment, and results in stronger marketing with better reach.

The concepts of "trail towns" and "trail communities" have successfully impacted communities along other long-distance multi use trail systems such as the Appalachian Trail, Great Allegheny passage, C&O Canal Towpath, and the North Country National Scenic Trail, all located in the USA. It is worth noting that in these examples, towns located further away from the trail also experience benefit when their assets and events are promoted as destinations for trail visitors.

The Trent-Severn Waterway (TSW) is one of the most significant and internationally recognized tourism assets in Kawartha Lakes. The communities along the TSW recognize the economic benefit from visitation to the waterway and have identified an interest in further development of opportunities to partner with and promote the communities along the TSW. The Trent-Severn Trail Towns program has been developed and will be launched by RTO8 and Parks Canada in August 2019.

This report addresses the current opportunity to work with the Regional Tourism Organization RTO8/Kawarthas Northumberland and Parks Canada/TSW as well as the other partner communities within the region to develop and leverage the Trent-Severn Trail Town program.

Rationale:

RTO8/Kawarthas Northumberland has developed the Trent-Severn Trail Towns program in partnership with Parks Canada. The Trent-Severn Trail Towns program will be the first of its kind in Canada with the goal of utilizing a water trail to attract travelers from outside the region by way of the Trent-Severn Waterway. As detailed in Appendix A of this report, a "Trail Town" is a destination along a long-distance trail be it a land based trail or water trail. A "Trail Town" is a friendly and welcoming place that encourages trail users to visit and welcomes them with warm hospitality. It provides amenities to visitors and offers overnight accommodations, food and retail opportunities and meets the needs of both the

trail users and residents. The Trent-Severn Waterway is the trail that this program is being built around with a focus on both the land based visitors as well as boaters and paddlers.

The Trent-Severn Trail Towns program will work with the participating communities to develop mechanisms to entice trail visitors to explore the community and draw them into the business districts. It will assist in identifying gaps in assets (ie. benches, canoe and kayak racks, etc.) as well as goods and services that trail users need. The program will educate local businesses on the economic benefits of meeting trail tourist needs, promote the “trail-friendly” character of each community, and facilitate partnerships with neighbouring communities to promote the entire trail corridor as a tourist destination.

The communities of Fenelon Falls, Bobcaygeon, Lindsay, Kirkfield, Rosedale and Coboconk have expressed an interest in participation and designation in the Trent-Severn Trail Towns program. Upon designation, these communities through their community committee chair, will be required to sign the Trent-Severn Trail Towns MOU document that appears in Appendix B of this report. In order to seek designation, communities must submit a completed application which includes a Municipal Resolution of support and a simple 3 year action plan based on the walking assessments of the community.

It is expected that the project will bring increased visitation to the area, which will be of economic benefit as well as increased development and business expansion. Furthermore, the Trent-Severn Trail Towns program will provide regional exposure to the trail town communities in Kawartha Lakes with brand recognition as the program expands and includes more communities along the Trent-Severn Waterway system.

Other Alternatives Considered:

As an alternative to participation in the regional tourism Trent-Severn Trail Towns program, Council could choose to opt out of participation in the program and continue with municipal focused tourism development and marketing. This will exclude local communities from participating in the regional marketing benefits of the Trent-Severn Trail Towns program. This option is not recommended.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

There is no financial support required from the City.

Staff resources from economic development staff will be required to assist in the development and facilitation of the program at the local level with the communities in Kawartha Lakes that choose to participate in the program.

Relationship of Recommendation to the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan:

This project aligns with Goal 1 – A Vibrant and Growing Economy by increasing visitation to the region and the communities in Kawartha Lakes along the Trent-Severn Waterway, which will increase visitor spending encourage development expansion and growth of the tourism and hospitality sector and increase economic impact in Kawartha Lakes.

Consultations:

Consultations have been held with the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport, Parks Canada/Trent-Severn Waterway, Peterborough and the Kawarthas Tourism, Northumberland Tourism, the Kawartha Lakes Downtown Revitalization Committees, the four local Chambers of Commerce in Kawartha Lakes.

Attachments:

Appendix A – What is a Trail Town: concept overview



What is a Trail
Town.pdf

Appendix B – Trent-Severn Trail Town Community MOU



Trent-Severn Trail
Towns MOU -2019.pdf

Appendix C – Trent-Severn Trail Town Resolution



TSW Trail Town -
Resolution.pdf

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Department Head: Chris Marshall