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# Staff Report

## Community Services

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**Report To:** Committee of The Whole  
**Meeting Date:** October 2, 2017  
**Report Number:** CSPW.17.100  
**Subject:** Support of Great Lakes Waterfront Trail  
**Prepared by:** Shawn Everitt, Director of Community Services

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### A. Recommendations

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THAT Council receive Staff Report CSPW.17.100 entitled "Support of Great Lakes Waterfront Trail";

AND THAT Council direct Staff to advise the Waterfront Regeneration Trust that it wishes to participate in the extension of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail through the Town of The Blue Mountains;

AND THAT Council support Grey County proposal to act as the "one-window" for the payment of annual dues to the Trust;

AND THAT Council direct Staff to advise the Waterfront Regeneration Trust that, in partnership with Grey County, the Town will supply hardware and labour for the installation of the required Great Lakes Waterfront Trail signage on roads which are under the Town's jurisdiction.

### B. Overview

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This report outlines Staff recommendations supporting the Town's participation in the extension of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail initiative to provide a continuous waterfront route along the shores of all the Great Lakes.

### C. Background

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The Waterfront Regeneration Trust (WRT), established as a Royal Commission in 1988, is a non-profit organization that has been coordinating the establishment of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (GLWT) which is a continuous route along the Canadian shoreline of the Great Lakes. Its founding Chair (and present Board of Directors member) is former Toronto Mayor and Federal Cabinet Minister David Crombie. More information regarding the WRT and the GLWT can be found on the following website:

<https://www.waterfronttrail.org/>

The GLWT is promoted by the WRT and partners as a signature cycling tourist attraction for Ontario. It is also recognized as a popular fitness and active transportation amenity.

The GLWT expansion through Huron, Grey and Bruce Counties, and through Manitoulin Island to Espanola will connect 22 communities and First Nations through some of Ontario's most iconic geography via approximately 650 kilometers of signed cycling route (refer to Attachment 1). Further, this expansion will serve as a bridge between the GLWT, Lake Huron North Channel expansion and the remainder of the GLWT, connecting communities and trail users from Sault Ste. Marie to the Quebec border on the St. Lawrence. The GLWT serves a number of provincial policy priorities including: CycleON, as a foundational piece of the Province's cycle network, the Great Lakes Strategy, Trails of Distinction Program, the Trails Strategy, and Tour by Bike.

The WRT has secured funding through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to coordinate the implementation of this expansion and will secure funding to provide the faceplate for the inaugural installation of way finding signage along the route.

Participation in the GLWT does not require the construction of any new trails. The GLWT uses existing infrastructure including local, county and provincial roads and trail routes that follow as closely as reasonably possible to the shorelines of the Great Lakes, with the goal of connecting trail users to and celebrating communities and the scenic landscape around them. Over time, partners seize opportunities to fulfill the legacy goal of a dedicated trail as close to the water's edge as ecologically feasible. The route would need to be consistently signed using the GLWT logo.

The WRT requests annual dues of \$500 per participating municipality. However, a "one-window" approach is available where participating upper tier governments receive a discounted annual rate of \$1,500. Grey County has approved funding of the annual dues in the amount of \$1,500 per year which includes payment for the municipalities within Grey County that the trail network passes through (refer to Attachments 2 and 3). The County's providing this one window approach reduces the annual dues per municipality.

For this fee, the WRT provides the following services and assistance to the County and its local municipalities:

- Extending their mapping program to Grey County, producing PDF-style maps and adding the route and select points of interest and local itineraries to their Google-based map system;
- Developing and maintaining content for the GLWT to promote the County and its communities, as well as connect GLWT users to County and Municipal websites;
- Extending the "State of the Trail" inventory to the County. This tool tracks planned, in-progress and completed capital progress across the GLWT and allows the WRT to present, to the senior governments, the level of investment and build a case for their investment;

- Launching the new Grey portion of the GLWT with a “Great Waterfront Trail Adventure” style event;
- Engaging Google.com in GLWT promotions. For example, using Google Trekker to photograph and enhance local Google Streetview coverage to include off-road sections of trail and My Maps to promote businesses and attractions;
- Connections to external agencies and partners such as the Canadian Automobile Association and Metrolinx, which are significantly increasing their promotion of cycle travel and tourism.

## **D. Analysis**

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The expansion of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail through Grey County would allow each of the shoreline communities to be linked to 22 other counties and regions and 114 communities and First Nations along the Canadian Great Lakes Waterfront.

The trail allows participating communities to take advantage of the marketing, linkages and partnerships already established by the WRT to promote both local healthy, active lifestyles and cycle tourism, which is a rapidly expanding sector of the tourism market, all for a very small financial investment.

The costs associated with this project are minor. The WRT will secure funding for the inaugural sign faceplates themselves, however in all other municipalities along the route, the local municipalities have been responsible for supplying signage hardware and installing the signs themselves. Presently, the WRT does not have a specific number of signs required, however signage, in both directions, would be needed before and after each turn, after major decision points, and approximately every 2.5km on straight sections of road in order to enhance user confidence. Existing signposts may be used where appropriate and legal in order to take advantage of existing infrastructure and reduce installation costs.

In the Fall of 2017, the WRT will host a Leader’s Mobile Workshop during which a group of volunteers, tourism industry leaders and County and local municipal dignitaries and staff will be invited to ride the route, using the contemporary draft of the expansion’s map as the sole wayfinding tool. The goal of this exercise is to both test the maps and identify the potential need for improvements along the GLWT. Results of this exercise will be shared with County and local municipal staff.

Following the Mobile Workshop, the WRT will undertake a recommended signage audit, which will identify potential locations for wayfinding signage installation. Data from this audit will be made available to the County and local municipalities in order to reduce local time investment and expedite the route implementation process. In order to meet funding deadlines, the signage would be installed in early Spring of 2018.

## **E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan**

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- Goal #1: Create Opportunities for Sustainability
- Goal #2: Engage Our Communities & Partners
- Goal #3: Support Healthy Lifestyles
- Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence
- Goal #5: Ensure Our Infrastructure is Sustainable

## **F. Environmental Impacts**

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Promotion and providing active lifestyles and active transportation opportunities.

## **G. Financial Impact**

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Town Staff would provide assistance with installing required signage that is determined through the Partnership with Grey County. Staff suggest that installation can be achieved through the Community Services 2018 annual operations budget.

Grey County has approved the funding of the annual dues of \$1,500 per year and full funding of the Annual dues will be ten responsibility of the County of Grey

## **H. In consultation with**

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Senior Management Team

Bryan Plumstead, Grey County Tourism

## **I. Attached**

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- 1) Map of Great Lakes Waterfront Trail
- 2) July 24, 2017 Grey County Clerks Department letter to Waterfront Regeneration Trust
- 3) August 15, 2017 Grey County Clerks Department Letter to Town Clerk Ms. Corrina Giles

Respectfully submitted,

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Shawn Everitt  
Director of Community Services

For more information, please contact:

Shawn Everitt

[severitt@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:severitt@thebluemountains.ca)

519-599-3131 extension 281

# Map of Great Lakes Waterfront Trail





## Clerk's Department

595 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, Owen Sound Ontario N4K 3E3  
519-372-0219 / 1-800-567-GREY / Fax: 519-376-8998

July 24, 2017

Marlaine Koehler  
Executive Director  
Waterfront Regeneration Trust  
4195 Dundas Street West, Toronto ON M8X 1Y4

Dear Marlaine:

At its July 13 meeting, Grey County Council endorsed the minutes of the June 14, 2017 Tourism Advisory Committee meeting, and formally accepted Report CAOR – TAC-12-17 and the following resolution:

**That Grey County formally advise the Waterfront Regeneration Trust that it wishes to participate in the extension of the Waterfront Trail through Grey County in the municipalities of the Township of Georgian Bluffs, City of Owen Sound, Municipality of Meaford and The Town of The Blue Mountains; and**

**That Grey County advise the Waterfront Regeneration Trust that Grey County will pay the annual dues of \$1,500 per year which includes the dues for the municipalities through which the trail network passes; and**

**That Grey County work with the affected municipalities and the Waterfront Regeneration Trust to identify Waterfront Trail sign requirements, costs and potential funding partners and that any funding not secured through other sources for the entire trail signage would come from the Grey County Transportation general reserve.**

We understand the Waterfront Regeneration Trust is working with a group of staff and volunteers to move this project ahead, as outlined in the attached report. By way of this letter, we are advising you that Grey County fully supports the extension of the Waterfront Trail through Grey County and that Grey County will pay the annual \$1,500 membership dues. We will also be circulating this report and recommendations to the four municipalities of Georgian Bluffs, City of Owen Sound, Municipality of Meaford and Town of The Blue Mountains and requesting their endorsement of the route and commitment to their support of the route that may be located on municipal roads or trails.

If you have any questions, please contact Bryan Plumstead at extension 6110.

Yours truly,

Tara Warder  
Committee Coordinator  
(519) 372-0219 x 1294  
[tara.warder@grey.ca](mailto:tara.warder@grey.ca)  
[www.grey.ca](http://www.grey.ca)

Enclosures

cc. Township of Georgian Bluffs  
Municipality of Meaford  
Town of the Blue Mountains  
City of Owen Sound



## Report CAOR-TAC-12-17

**To:** Chair Gingras and Members of the Tourism Advisory Committee  
**From:** Pat Hoy, Director of Transportation and  
Bryan Plumstead, Manager of Tourism  
**Meeting Date:** June 14, 2017  
**Subject:** Great Lakes Waterfront Trail - Southern Georgian Bay  
**Status:** Recommendation adopted by the Tourism Advisory Committee as  
presented per resolution TAC02-17;

### Recommendation

1. That Grey County formally advise the Waterfront Regeneration Trust that it wishes to participate in the extension of the Waterfront Trail through Grey County in the municipalities of the Township of Georgian Bluffs, City of Owen Sound, Municipality of Meaford and The Town of The Blue Mountains;
2. That Grey County advise the Waterfront Regeneration Trust that Grey County will pay the annual dues of \$1,500 per year which includes the dues for the municipalities through which the trail network passes;
3. That Grey County work with the affected municipalities and the Waterfront Regeneration Trust to identify Waterfront Trail sign requirements, costs and potential funding partners. Any funding not secured through other sources for the entire trail signage would come from the Grey County transportation general reserve.

### Great Lakes Waterfront Trail in Grey County

The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (Waterfront Trail) is a signed route that connects 100+ communities and First Nations over its 2000 kilometre length from Quebec to Toronto to Sault Ste. Marie (Map attached following report.) It follows the St. Lawrence River to three of Canada's Great Lakes (Ontario, Erie and Huron), the earth's largest group of freshwater lakes and a Canadian icon. It connects 500 parks and natural areas including wetlands, beaches, forests, three UNESCO Biospheres, heritage sites and villages and many popular wine regions.

A workshop for the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail was held March 7, 2017 at Grey Roots and included staff from the City of Owen Sound, the Tom Thomson Trail, the Municipality of Meaford, the County of Simcoe, Blue Mountain Resorts, the Town of Collingwood, Regional

Tourism Organization 7 and Grey County Tourism and Transportation. All present supported the implementation of the trail, and the group has continued to work to finalize the exact trail routing. Subsequent to the meeting, staff from Waterfront Regeneration Trust (WRT) followed up with Georgian Bluffs and The Blue Mountains, who could not attend, to inform them of this trail development.

Participation in the Waterfront Trail would not require the construction of any new trails. It uses existing local, county and provincial roads and trail routes which follow as close as reasonably possible to the shoreline. In some places, the trail goes right along the shore, in others it is a considerable distance back from the bay, traversing farmland, forest or the rocky terrain of the Niagara Escarpment. It will allow cyclists to enjoy the beauty of the region, as well as views and access to the Georgian Bay shoreline.

In Grey County, the Waterfront Trail will utilize Grey Roads 1, 12 and 15 in addition to other roads and trails, notably the Tom Thomson Trail and the Georgian Trail. The route would need to be consistently signed using the Waterfront Trail logo.

The current proposed draft of the trail route can be found [here](#)

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust staff and its Board are very excited about the extension of the Trail through Grey County, and wish to move forward quickly on implementation. The WRT has secured funding to provide the directional signage to our local communities, but the poles, hardware and installation costs would be borne by Grey County and the local municipalities. This has been the practice in all 68 other municipalities through which the Trail passes.

The WRT also requires a nominal annual fee from Grey County and the municipalities for participation in the Trail. If the County acts as the direct contact, the fee would be \$1,500 annually. Note that if each municipality were to join individually the cost would be \$2500. The WRT will provide the following types of services and assistance to the county and its member municipalities:

- Extending their mapping program to Grey County, producing PDF-style maps and adding the route to their Google-based map system;
- Developing and maintaining content for the Waterfront Trail website to promote the County and its communities, as well as to connect trail users to our own web resources;
- Extending the "State of the Trail" inventory to Grey County. This tool tracks planned, in-progress and completed capital projects across the Trail, and allows the WRT to present to the senior governments the level of investment and build a case for their investment;
- Producing and installing trail route markers and trailhead signs at major staging areas along the route;
- Launching the new Grey County portion of the Trail with a "Great Waterfront Trail Adventure" style event;
- Connections to external agencies and partners such as the Canadian Automobile Association, which is significantly increasing its promotion of cycle tourism.

## Background

The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (Waterfront Trail) is a signed route that connects 100+ communities and First Nations over its 2000 kilometre length from Quebec to Toronto to Sault Ste. Marie (Map attached following report.) It follows the St. Lawrence River to three of

Canada's Great Lakes (Ontario, Erie and Huron), the earth's largest group of freshwater lakes and a Canadian icon. It connects 500 parks and natural areas including wetlands, beaches, forests, three UNESCO Biospheres, heritage sites and villages and many popular wine regions.

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust, established as a Royal Commission in 1988, is a non-profit organization that has been coordinating the establishment of The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. Its founding Chair (and still a member of the Board of Directors) is former Toronto mayor and federal cabinet minister David Crombie. <http://www.waterfronttrail.org/index.html>

## Expansion of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail around Georgian Bay

The idea of a cycling route around Georgian Bay came from the Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates (MICA) who established a volunteer steering committee to oversee a feasibility study for the route. The Study was conducted by Transportation options and the Resource Management Consulting Group in 2013/14. Over the course of the study, 65 representatives of municipalities, tourism organizations, health units and cycling clubs participated in workshops held in Little Current, Sudbury, Parry Sound, Gravenhurst, Midland, Collingwood, Owen Sound and Wiarton or were interviewed by telephone. Support for the Georgian Bay Cycling Route was strong with 58 letters of support for the concept received, including letters from Grey County, Township of Georgian Bluffs, City of Owen Sound, Municipality of Meaford and The Town of the Blue Mountains, and the Grey Bruce Health Unit. [Link to the Feasibility Study](#)

In May 2014, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust (WRT) accepted an invitation from the Georgian Bay Cycling Route Steering Committee to lead the implementation of the Georgian Bay Cycling Route as part of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. In the interim, Grey County's Cycling Advisory Committee has suggested route refinements and has been kept informed of the progress of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust in completing other routes with the intention of working on the Georgian Bay Route in 2017/18.

With funding from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust is set to expand the Trail and its partnership of communities into Manitoulin, Bruce, Grey and Huron Counties by the fall of 2018. The initiative will add 650 km to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail and connect the section in Northern Ontario from Sault Ste. Marie to Sudbury to the Southern Ontario section, which currently terminates in Grand Bend. Workshops were recently held in Owen Sound and Saugeen Shores to kick-off the trails expansion along the Lake Huron Shoreline and Southern Georgian Bay.

## Financial/Staffing/Legal/Information Technology Considerations

Staff recommend that Grey County be responsible for the annual fees payable to the WRT in the amount of \$1,500 (or \$300/partner). If each local municipality and the county pay individually the cost would be \$2,500 (or \$500/partner)

The WRT has secured funding for the signs themselves, but in all other municipalities along the route, the local municipalities have been responsible for supplying sign hardware and installing the signs. WRT will be undertaking a sign audit to determine the specific number, type and

locations for signs. While staff do not have a specific number of signs required, directional signs would be needed where the trail route turns, but on straight stretches of the route, the standard is approximately one sign every 2.5 kilometers. Existing sign posts may be used where that is appropriate and legal.

The waterfront trail route would cover approximately 95km on roads in Grey County and the member municipalities and another 30 kms along the Georgian Trail. An estimate of signs (both directions) every 2.5km plus corners would work out to about 250 signs. Grey could likely produce and install these for \$80/sign. Actual costs would depend on how many signs could be mounted on existing posts. An outside estimate would be \$20,000 and the likely cost would be less. They could be maintained at a lower unit cost than regulatory signage as they would not require the same standards for reflectivity. This signage could also qualify for 50% funding under RTO7's Partnership Funding program, and Grey County could apply on behalf of all municipalities to simplify this. Any unsecured signage funding would come from the transportation general reserve.

## Link to Strategic Goals/Priorities

Joining the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail addresses the Grey County goal of supporting Healthy Connected Communities. The trail will supply residents and tourists with connections between attractions as well as an area for local recreation. This will also support Growing Grey's Economy through enhanced tourism visitation and expenditures.

## Attachments and Background Information

Great Lakes Waterfront Trail Map

Respectfully submitted by,

Bryan Plumstead, Tourism Manager

Pat Hoy, Director of Transportation









## Clerk's Department

595 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, Owen Sound Ontario N4K 3E3  
519-372-0219 / 1-800-567-GREY / Fax: 519-376-8998

August 15, 2017

Corinna Giles  
Clerk  
Town of the Blue Mountains  
32 Mill Street  
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0

### VIA EMAIL

Dear Corinna:

At its July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting, Grey County Council endorsed the minutes of the June 14, 2017 Tourism Advisory Committee meeting, and formally accepted Report CAOR – TAC-12-17 and the following resolution:

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**That Grey County work with the affected municipalities and the Waterfront Regeneration Trust to identify Waterfront Trail sign requirements, costs and potential funding partners and that any funding not secured through other sources for the entire trail signage would come from the Grey County Transportation general reserve.**

The attached report provides some background on this project. As noted in the attached report, the Waterfront Trail would not require the construction of any new trails. By way of this letter, we are requesting the Town of the Blue Mountains' support of the extension of the Waterfront Trail through the Blue Mountains and your commitment to work with the Committee as needed to move this project forward.

If you have any questions, please contact Bryan Plumstead at extension 6110.

Yours truly,

Tara Warder  
Committee Coordinator  
(519) 372-0219 x 1294  
[tara.warder@grey.ca](mailto:tara.warder@grey.ca)  
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Enclosures

cc. Bryan Plumstead, Tourism Manager  
Kim Wingrove, CAO



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## Attachments and Background Information

Great Lakes Waterfront Trail Map

Respectfully submitted by,

Bryan Plumstead, Tourism Manager

Pat Hoy, Director of Transportation



