FRONTENAC

Report 2019-077

Committee Information Report

To: Chair and Members of the Community Development Advisory Committee

From: Richard Allen, Manager of Economic Development

Date of meeting: July 11, 2019

Re: **Community Development Advisory Committee – Camino Trail Proposal**

Recommendation

This report is for information only. It is intended to solicit advice from the Committee on options to consider in the development of an Eastern Ontario "Camino".

Background

On June 15, 2019 the Manager of Economic Development attended the inaugural meeting of the Friends of the Cataraqui Trail, a newly formed group of volunteers that will assist the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) with patrolling and maintenance on the Cataraqui Trail. This group takes the place of the former trail management committee that operated on behalf of the CRCA.

At that meeting, Nancy Mucklow, a resident of Kingston proposed the creation of a seven day "Camino" walking route along the Cataraqui Trail from Smiths Falls and up the K&P Trail to Sharbot Lake. The Camino di Santiago is a popular walking route in Spain, attracting hundreds of thousands of walkers every year. The proposal suggests that if the County were to activate these trails with this route, there is an existing target market group that the County could reach out to and attract to our region.

According to official records over 5000 Canadians finished the entire Camino in 2018, with similar numbers expected in 2019. The official records don't include walkers who only travel a portion of the camino route, or those who don't finish. It can be assumed that the number of walkers from Canada is much higher. Developing a "Camino" route along the Cataraqui and K&P Trails will help to attract a new market of trail tourists that will support our local economies and contribute to the evolving heritage of our regional trails.

Strategic Priorities

Priority 1.2: Refine and invest in efforts to accelerate Economic Development – to grow businesses, attract more visits, and expand the tax base –

Development of a walking itinerary with a “Camino” style theme and basic, supportive accommodations supports the Trips & Trails pillar of the Frontenac Economic Development Charter.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications included with this report.

Organizations, Departments and Individuals Consulted and/or Affected

Community Development Advisory Committee

K&P-Cat Camino Concept

June 20, 2019

Stages		Km	Needs
1	**Smiths Falls-Portland**	**25km**	
	Smiths Falls – Lombardy 11km		
	Lombardy – Portland 14km		
2	**Portland – Chaffeys Locks**	**19km**	Short stage to give more time in Chaffeys Locks
3	**Chaffeys Locks- Perth Road**	**27km**	Long stage – needs two picnic tables (covered) and one more outhouse – a source of water would be useful – Chaffeys could provide an optional service to drive partway in to reduce the distance
4	**Perth Road – Sydenham**	**12km**	Short route as a rest day
5	**Sydenham-Verona**	**16km**	Easy route with frequent food, water, toilet stops
	Sydenham-Harrowsmith 6km		
	Harrowsmith – Verona 10km		
6	**Verona – Tichborne/Parham**	**22km**	Add picnic tables - Parham could offer pickup at the trail
	Verona- Godfrey 7km		
	Godfrey – Cole Lake 5km		
	Cole Lake – Tichborne /Parham 10km		
7	**Tichborne/Parham – Sharbot Lake**	**12km**	Short stage to give more time in Sharbot Lake

Proposal

The communities of Portland, Chaffeys Locks, Perth Road, Sydenham, Verona, Tichborne/Parham, and Sharbot Lake find a way to each provide low-cost ($25/night)basic bunk accommodations to sleep <u>six</u> individuals to allow caminoists to walk the stages in sequence.

- Caminoists would bring their own sheet sack and towel. The accommodation would provide a mattress, pillow, and blanket.
- The accommodation would have or have easy access to a bathroom and a shower.
- Reservations would be made via email and pre-paid via etransfer.
- Caminoists would pre-purchase a camino credential ($10) in order to be given access to the low-cost accommodation. The accommodation would stamp and date the credential upon arrival to signify that the caminoist is walking/cycling the stages.

- The accommodation does not need to provide staffing. Caminoists would have instructions on how to get the key upon arrival and how to clean up upon departure.
- The accommodations can be provided by churches, civic clubs, resorts, community offices, and/or individual property owners.

With a minimum of six low-cost beds at each stage, the camino would be able to begin operation and promotion. Over time, as the popularity of the camino grows, there would be options for more types of accommodation at different price points and in other communities along the route.

Benefits to the Communities

1. An infrastructure for walking tourism would bring people into and through small communities along the K&P and Cataraqui Trails. Caminoists would spend money on a bed, for food, and for activities, which would stay in the community. Since most stage can be completed in a half day, caminoists would have the afternoon and evening to relax in the community.
2. Individuals or organizations offering accommodation would earn money. With six bunks at $25/night, an accommodation can earn up to $150/night during high season (June 1 – Sept 30). Snowmobilers and cross-country skiiers will provide some business during the low season.
3. As use of the trail increases, funds from the sale of credentials will help upgrade the trails (e.g., picnic tables, rain shelters, and improved signage).
4. Local businesses and organizations (e.g., museums, resorts, restaurants) can offer discounts to caminoists with a credential to promote to this market.
5. General community life benefits: Meeting new people, exchanging stories, enjoying the outdoors, creating opportunities.

Markets for the Camino

1. **Walking Tourism Market**: 5000 Canadians travel to Spain each year to complete the Camino di Santiago (approx. 35 days). Over 70% are age 55 and older. There is interest among Ontarians in walking tourism.
2. **Seniors**: As baby boomers enter their retirement years, many in excellent health, there will be an interest in close-to-home fitness and tourism activities.
3. **Cycling Tourism Market**: [need data]
4. **Groups and Clubs**: Many groups and clubs seek community-building activities for their members.
5. **Pre- and Post-Santiago Walkers**: During preparation to walk the 35-day Camino di Santiago, caminoists may be interested in walking a shorter “practice” camino. As well, after return from the Camino di Santiago, many caminoists are interested in more walking. The Canadian Company of Pilgrims is a nation-wide organization of caminoists would meet regularly in several Canadian cities to prepare new caminoists and organize post-Santiago walks. They disseminate information about walking.

Marketing

1. **Website**: The camino would get simple branding and keep updated information on a website. The website would list:
    a. stages and distances
    b. accommodations at each destination community as well as at communities along the route, with contact information, details, and instructions
    c. activities and sites at the destination communities
    d. activities and sites along the route
    e. sources of food and water
    f. maps
    g. requirements, expectations, necessary equipment, and safety information
    h. Facebook page where walkers can post their photos, ask questions, and discuss the route
2. **Regional Tourism Offices and Organizations**: Information and website links would be provided to local tourism organizations to promote to international tourists, cycling tourists, and local citizens.
3. **Regional Cycling and Fitness Clubs**:
4. **Cycling and Walking Tourism Websites**: Information and website links would be provided to North American cycling and walking tourism websites.
5. **Presentations** could be made by volunteers upon request to seniors centres, golden age clubs, church groups, fitness groups, scouts groups, etc.
6. **Canadian Company of Pilgrims**: The CCoP may be interested in providing information about our camino on their website as a pre- or post-Santiago walking opportunity.
7. **Internet**: The website would be search engine optimized with key words to ensure that it shows up in appropriate searches.

Partners

- Friends of the Cataraqui Trail
- K&P Trail
- Frontenac County
- ???
- ???

Photo of a stamp and a credential with stamps.

Photo of a typical large hostel room with eight bunks.