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**TO:** GENERAL COMMITTEE

**SUBJECT:** NORTH SHORE TRAIL WORKING GROUP

**PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT:** W. FISCHER, B.L.A., O.A.L.A. *sf.*  
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GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE, DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL:** C. LADD *CL*  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**RECOMMENDED MOTION**

1. That the Terms of Reference for the North Shore Trail Working Group attached as Appendix "A" in Staff Report ENG038-12 be endorsed.

**PURPOSE & BACKGROUND**

2. The purpose of this staff report is to present the proposed Terms of Reference for the North Shore Trail Working Group (NSTWG), and to gain Council endorsement.
3. On September 26, 2011, Council adopted Motion 11-G-274 to update the North Shore Trail Vegetation Management Plan. The updates to the Vegetation Management Plan were a result of extensive public consultation and included adjustments to the maintenance of the shoreline vegetation along Kempenfelt Drive and the entire length of the trail. Enhancements were to improve views into and through the adjacent vegetation (safety) and to improve views of the water from the trail (public enjoyment).
4. On June 4, 2012, City Council adopted Motion 12-G-147 regarding the creation of a North Shore Trail Working Group which states:

"That a working group be established consisting of one representative from each of the various stakeholders including but not limited to, local residents, naturalist clubs, trail users, service clubs and staff from the Engineering Department and Roads, Parks and Fleet Department concerning the ongoing maintenance of the North Shore Trail."

"That staff in the Engineering Department prepare a report for General Committee with a proposed Terms of Reference for the North Shore Trail Working Group."

**ANALYSIS**

5. The request to create a North Shore Trail Working Group arose from area residents wanting to have increased participation in the development and operation of the North Shore Trail.

6. Staff have implemented the first year of the Council-approved North Shore Trail Vegetation Management Plan. The main strategies of the management plan include:
  - a) General maintenance of the trail corridor, including the removal of all trees, branches and/or shrubs within 1 metre horizontally and minimum 3.5 metres vertically from the trail surface;
  - b) Modified pruning and thinning width of an additional 2 metres along the trail where all small shrubs are removed or pruned to a height of less than 60 cm and trees pruned to a height of 2.5 metres for under canopy visibility;
  - c) Removal of dead, diseased or hazardous trees from the vicinity of the trail;
  - d) Removal of all non-native, invasive vegetation from the trail corridor and replanting of native plants;
  - e) Consideration of the use of a direct application of an approved forestry herbicide to treat stumps which are continuing to aggressively coppice (suckering); and
  - f) Maintenance of the trail and existing viewpoints as identified within the North Shore Trail Master Plan (Final Concept: Multi-Use Trail, May 2002) and the approved Vegetation Management Categories.
7. There are precedents for informal advisory groups within The City of Barrie. The "Friends of Sunnidale Park" is a citizen-based advisory group. It was formed as a result of a recommendation in the Council-approved Sunnidale Park Master Plan with a similar aim to maintain an avenue of communication between residents and City Hall regarding the development of the park. Another example of an informal advisory group is the Active Transportation Barrie Working Group. Staff recommend that the NSTWG be established to serve in an advisory role to the City, as outlined in the Terms of Reference.
8. The Terms of Reference identify one resident be included in the NSTWG for each of three key trail sections. The first section between Heritage Park and Duckworth Street is closest to the downtown core and existing residents and businesses back directly onto the trail. The second section from Duckworth Street to Puget Street is an area where residents have views of Kempenfelt Bay. The third section from Puget Street to the City Limits is characterized by private residential lots and water lots on both sides of the trail. By choosing a local representative for each of these sections from the Adopt-a-Trail User Group membership, in consultation with the City, input pertaining to the unique aspects of each section of the trail would be received. These three members of the working group will be responsible to bring forward concerns from other residents within their respective neighbourhoods. The Terms of Reference is attached in Appendix "A".
9. Up to three residents from other non-local neighbourhoods to the North Shore Trail (i.e. other areas within the City) are also proposed to be included in the NSTWG. These members of the NSTWG would be responsible, in association with City staff, to bring forward concerns from other members of the public. These members of the NSTWG will be chosen through random selection of interested candidates.
10. In accordance with Council Motion 12-G-147, the membership will include a representative from the Brereton Field Naturalists, trail users, service clubs and staff from the Engineering Department and Roads, Parks and Fleet Department. Staff also recommend that the membership include a representative from each of the following: Accessible Advisory Committee, the Environmental Advisory Committee, the Barrie Police Service, and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, as required.

11. Additional relevant stakeholders not previously identified could be part of the NSTWG provided that they have multiple ongoing concerns which could not be expressed adequately by other existing members of the Working Group. Efforts will be made by City staff to be as inclusive as possible to ensure that all concerns from the public are heard and considered, while still ensuring that the working group membership is small enough to allow the group to function efficiently.
12. As an advisory working group, staff recommend the following topics for the group to review and comment on:
  - planning, development and improvement projects;
  - policies and processes;
  - funding and fundraising for trail enhancements;
  - accessibility issues;
  - environmental monitoring of the trail; and
  - trail safety and security.
13. Staff recommend that the Engineering Department provide the administrative support and point of contact for the NSTWG. This would include electronic communication, record taking and circulation, and information distribution. City staff from other departments may be asked to attend meetings as/when their expertise is required.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

14. There are no environmental matters related to the recommendation.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

15. There is one Alternative available for consideration by General Committee:

**Alternative #1**      General Committee could choose to not establish a working group for the North Shore Trail.

This Alternative is not recommended as it would miss an opportunity to expand community involvement and interactive communication between the City and its residents.

#### **FINANCIAL**

16. The staff time associated with the North Shore Trail Working Group has not been included in the 2013 Business Plan. It is anticipated that approximately 25 hours of staff time annually will be required to support the Working Group and the required meetings. The workload associated with this Working Group could be absorbed into the Engineering Department's 2013 Work Plan. No additional staff resources will be required to implement the recommendation.

#### **LINKAGE TO 2010 – 2014 COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN**

17. The recommendation included in this Staff Report supports the following goals identified in the 2010-2014 City Council Strategic Plan:
  - Manage Growth and Protect the Environment
  - Improve and Expand Community Involvement and City Interactions

18. Continued public involvement into the development of the North Shore Trail will help to ensure that improvements to the linear park system are compatible with the interests of the neighbourhood, park users and the environment. This will contribute to public acceptance and support for the ecological health of the trail.
19. The creation of the NSTWG allows for local residents and businesses to provide feedback on park improvements in an efficient and effective manner. More focused communications between the City and the NSTWG will allow up-to-date information to be disseminated to the neighbouring residents along the trail and other community stakeholders, resulting in a higher level of awareness in the community.

**APPENDIX "A"**

**North Shore Trail Working Group Terms of Reference**

1. **PURPOSE**

The North Shore Trail Working Group (NSTWG) shall serve in an advisory role to provide staff with input into the planning and development of the North Shore Trail and serve as an avenue of communication regarding trail-related issues for trail users, stakeholders and neighbours of the trail. Formal motions or votes on issues to establish priorities are not the function of this group.

2. **MEMBERSHIP**

The North Shore Trail Working Group shall consist of the following:

- Three residents living in the neighbourhood of the trail, each representing one of the following trail sections:
  - Heritage Park to Duckworth Street – representing the portion of the trail closest to the downtown.
  - Duckworth Street to Puget Street – representing residents along Kempenfelt Drive.
  - Puget Street to the City limits – representing owners with lots abutting the north and south sides of the trail.

These three members of the working group will be responsible to bring forward concerns from other residents within their respective neighbourhoods.

- Up to three residents from non-local neighbourhoods to the North Shore Trail (i.e. other areas within the City). These members of the working group would be responsible, in association with City staff, to bring forward concerns from other members of the public. These members of the working group will be chosen through random selection of interested candidates.
- One representative from each of the various stakeholders, including but not limited to:
  - Brereton Field Naturalist Club,
  - Simcoe Trails,
  - Trail users,
  - Service Clubs,
  - Staff from the Engineering Department and Roads, Parks and Fleet Department.
- May also include, but not limited to a representative from each of the following:
  - Accessibility Advisory Committee,
  - Environmental Advisory Committee,
  - Barrie Police Services, and
  - Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.
- Additional relevant stakeholders not previously mentioned could be added if their concerns could not be expressed adequately by other existing members of the Working Group.

3. **TERM**

The working group shall exist for a term concurrent with the term of Council. Membership shall be established through invitation to stakeholder groups and through public advertisement. Non-local neighbourhood resident selection shall occur by application to the City.

4. **REMUNERATION**

None.

5. **DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS**

The role of the working group would be:

- a) To advise and comment on planning, development and improvement projects.
- b) To advise and provide comments to City staff on the North Shore Trail policies and processes.
- c) To identify possible partnerships and to liaise with other community and service groups, government agencies, and businesses on fundraising and funding opportunities on future enhancements within the trail.
- d) To advise and make comment to City staff regarding monitoring the environmental health of the trail including vegetation management, tree enhancement planting programs, shoreline stabilization and restoration.
- e) To review and comment on issues affecting the safety and security of trail users through programs such as Park Ambassadors and Neighbourhood Watch.
- f) To review and make comments on universal accessibility issues throughout the trail, as possible and achievable, where terrain and physical conditions allow.
- g) To work with City staff to develop a defined protocol for communication between the Working Group and City staff.
- h) To advise and provide comments to City staff on other elements associated with the North Shore Trail not included above.

6. **MEETING TIMES AND LOCATIONS**

The working group shall meet at least two times annually, to review the experience over the previous six months and provide input on upcoming issues. Meeting times and locations will be publicly posted on the City's web page. Additional meetings may be held as required at the discretion of the group.

7. **CITY RESPONSIBILITY**

The City will be designated as administrator to provide the following functions:

- a) Designate a City staff member as the email contact for members of the NSTWG to ensure good communications and a single contact point to avoid duplication.
- b) Distribute meeting materials, record and provide meeting summaries as a matter of record, but not minutes that are subject to approval. Circulate agendas, summaries and meeting material in electronic format. Post agendas and summaries on the City's web page.
- c) Invite other City staff to attend meetings on an as-required basis.
- d) Provide responses to the various issues raised by the Working Group.
- e) Provide City standards dealing with maintenance of the trail.
- f) Circulate proposed capital works, operations and maintenance elements as early as possible in the various processes to enable input from the Working Group to be considered.
- g) Provide updates on projects including anticipated schedules.