

The Corporation of the Town of Lakeshore

Report to Council

Community & Development Services

Recreation Services



To: Mayor & Members of Council

From: Tammie Ryall, Director of Community and Development Services

Date: February 28, 2020

Subject: Earth Walk Trail

Recommendation

1. Direct Administration to proceed with the park node design and construction for the Earth Walk Trail improvement program;
2. Direct Administration to apply for the County Wide Active Transportation System (CWATS) Municipal Partnership Program (2020 intake) for the design and construction of an Earth Walk Trail feature; and
3. Direct Administration to pursue any possible grant opportunities related hereto.

Background

This report is prepared due to a motion from Council. During the 2020 Budget deliberations, Council moved the following:

538-11-2019 – Bailey/Walstedt

Freeze implementation of further parks nodes for the Earth Walk Trail and direct Administration to bring a report regarding further implementation.

Carried

At the January 15th 2019 Regular Meeting of Council, a report was presented on a theme for Earth Day in Lakeshore (Attachment 1 - Earth Day Celebration) and the following resolution was adopted:

That Council endorse the Earth Day Celebration program as laid out in this report and name the trail north of the ATC 'Earth Walk Trail

Carried

The concept design for various nodes and features along the trail was also presented to Council through this report. Work was commenced on the Carolinian Garden node in 2019 with display boards of the design erected inside the Atlas Tube Centre (ATC). The intent was to commission the first garden node on April 20th 2019 however due to heavy rains the ceremony was cancelled and activities moved inside the ATC. To date, reaction from the public to the Earth Walk node and the design boards, as reported to ATC staff, has been positive.

The Earth Walk design concept (Attachment 1, page 4) illustrates the proposed learning gardens and feature areas along the pathway that will provide opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists to rest along the corridor, and interact with trail features and the local community. The plan was to commission a new learning garden or feature area design each year in celebration of Earth Day, with tree planting occurring in the surrounding space. Over time, a vibrant, unique, community attraction will be created paying homage to our natural environment and the Earth with a restored native tree grove introduced throughout the corridor.

The first node with the Carolinian Garden node theme was partially constructed in 2019. Additional bushes and interpretive signs need to be included to complete the node.

In 2019 the Town applied for and received a \$20,000 grant from the CWATS Municipal Partnership Program towards the \$40,000 cost of the node. The construction of the physical amenities matched the eligibility requirements of the CWATS Municipal Partnership program. The Program is intended to support outreach and local initiatives that align with the objectives and recommendations of the CWATS Master Plan. The program is currently open to receive new applications to the end of March 2020.

Earth Day is scheduled for Wednesday April 22, 2020. Since it started in 1970, Earth Day has been celebrated around the world every year on April 22 to highlight important environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and plastic waste. The aim is to educate people and encourage environmental movements around the world.

Comments

Should Council wish to continue supporting the Earth Walk Trail program, Administration will commence work to finalize the Carolinian Garden node in 2020 and commission the design work for the next node, which is a Wild Life Learning Space/Natural Playground/Pollinator Garden. The second node would be designed in 2020 and constructed in 2021.

The project estimates for the next Earth Walk trail improvements are set out below. An estimated cost for 2020 is \$51,500. Administration can apply to the CWATS Municipal Partnership Program to provide up to 50% of the funding for the 2020 projects. The remaining amount can be funded through the \$40,000 budget line. If for any reason there is a shortfall, it can be addressed through sponsorships and volunteer efforts, as described below.

2020	Node # 1 Carolinian Garden Interpretive signage Stone Features and Plaques	\$21,500
2020	Node # 2 Wildlife Garden/Natural Playground and Pollinator Garden – Conceptual and Detailed design work.	\$30,000
2021	Node # 2 Wildlife Garden/Natural Playground and Pollinator Garden - Construction	\$28,000

Administration can approach businesses for donations towards the 50% of the costs not covered under the grant. One business has been approached, and has expressed interest in supporting the program.

Administration has met with the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) in the past to inquire about providing support for tree planting and to assist in Earth Day activities. If Council wishes to proceed with the program, staff will contact ERCA for support.

Administration will seek the assistance of volunteers. Preliminary discussions have occurred with the Belle River Horticultural Society to assist in selecting native plant species. In addition, the Belle River District High School environmental club is interested in partnering with the Town to celebrate Earth Day and take part in tree planting at the Earth Walk trail.

A budget of \$7,500 to support the Earth Day event and assist with material procurement for the Earth Day trail was approved in the 2020 budget.

Others Consulted

Essex Region Conservation Authority

Belle River District High School Environmental Club

Belle River District Horticultural Society

Financial Impacts

In accordance with the conceptual Earth Walk trail design endorsed by Council, the first node constructed in 2019 was the Carolinian Garden. The total construction cost of this project was \$42,431 of which \$20,000 was funded from the CWATS grant and the remaining \$22,431 was funded from the Parks operating budget. In addition, the overall concept and detailed design costs including design costs of the Carolinian garden of \$19,725 was funded from the Planning consulting budget.

As part of the 2020 Budget, Council approved \$40,000 to continue work on the Earth walk trail pending a report back to Council. Should Council continue to support this project, completion of the Carolinian garden as well as design costs for the next phase can be funded from this line item. In addition, Administration will continue to seek alternative funding opportunities such as grants and third party community groups to help support the full build out of the Earth Walk trail and minimize the impact on the Town's financial resources.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Earth Day Celebration Report December 14, 2018

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Earth Walk Trail.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 Earth Day Celebration Report Dec 14, 2018.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Mar 5, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Rosanna Pellerito

Kristen Newman

Truper McBride