



Subject: DeCew House Heritage Park – Trans Canada Trail Grant Application
Report to: Thorold City Council

Recommendations

1. That Council **APPROVE** the plan for phased improvements at the DeCew House Heritage Park and Trail, and,
2. That Staff be **DIRECTED** to work with Friends of Laura Secord to complete the Trans Canada Trail Grant Applications.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval of the plans to improve the DeCew House Heritage Park
- The next phase includes continued partnerships with Friends of Laura Secord, who will submit two grant applications to the Trans Canada Trail to assist with parking lot development/improvements and tree maintenance/planting and with Ontario Power Generation who has offered land to develop additional parking.
- Project components include paving the existing parking lot; development of an additional parking lot on OPG lands (south of DeCew Road); traffic calming measures (i.e. intersection and cross walk); and significant tree maintenance and plantings along the trail and within the park.

Budgetary Status

The two grant applications being completed by the Friends of Laura Secord could supplement the cost of the proposed projects by a maximum of 38% toward the Parking Lot Improvements/Construction; and 50% of the Tree Planting component. It is proposed that the City's share of the two projects be committed to contingent on the success of the Trans Canada Trail Grant applications. Notwithstanding the conditional approval to advance construction this year, full funding for this phase of the project will be added to the Capital Forecast (2026).

Analysis

The City of Thorold is blessed with the ownership of many significant historic properties including DeCew House Heritage Park. The development of the park and associated amenities, through the ongoing volunteer efforts of the “Friends of Laura Secord”, has been a wonderful success and a testament to the interest and value of keeping our historical attributes in good standing, and making them accessible for all to enjoy.

Key enhancements to date have included the development of the First Nations Peace Monument, including associated pollinator memorial gardens and an accessible (i.e. paved) pathway leading from the Monument to the remnants of the original DeCew family homestead.

In it's meeting of June 20th, 2023, Council acknowledged the need for continued for continued improvements to address AODA compliance including drainage and paving, as well as the need to replace dead and dying trees. In addition to those benefits, the proposed work will reduce parking in uncontrolled areas, implement traffic calming measures, and continue to encourage local historical tourism.

Additional parking at DeCew House Heritage Park will be a significant asset for the future extension of the Trail (i.e. Phase 3) to Morningstar Mill.

At its meetings of June 15th 2021 and June 20th 2023, Council endorsed a Master Plan for DeCew Heritage Park improvements, while working closely with Friends of Laura Secord to develop a phased implementation strategy. The following provides a summary of anticipated costs associated with Phase 2 of the DeCew House Heritage Park Improvements:

- Parking Lot Expansion and Improvements: \$310,000
- Tree Removals and Planting: \$ 12,000

Friends of Laura Secord will be submitting two grant applications to the Trans Canada Trail: Trail Infrastructure and Repairs; and Tree Planting for Tomorrow.

Phase 3, including the extension of the Trail to Morningstar Mill will be addressed in future budget deliberations.

Impact on the Environment, Climate Change

Recognizing the loss of trees along the trail as a result of invasive species (i.e. emerald ash borer, etc.) and disease; as well as the need for select tree removal in the development of the south side parking lot; it is proposed that this project include the planting of more than 100 new trees in the project area (i.e. along the trail, in the park space, and adjacent to the parking lots).

Relationship to Strategic Plan

The recommendations are consistent with each of Council's Strategic Priorities:

- Vibrant and Prosperous Community
 - Liveable Community
 - Economic Prosperity
- Service Delivery Excellence
 - Community Engagement
- Sustainability
 - Environmental Sustainability

Other Pertinent Reports

- PWCS 64-2023
- PWCS 52-2021

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Appendices

None.