

## ANNEX A-2



### North Grenville moving ahead with integrated community trails strategy

Kemptville EMC - part of the Performance Group of Companies

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Page: K3

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Byline: Ashley Kulp

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EMC News - After receiving a \$50,000 grant from the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion last fall and having selected a consulting company, North Grenville is ready to get down to work on the development of its integrated community trails strategy.

Council endorsed a recommendation by director of planning and development, Forbes Symon, to award the contract for the development of the strategy to **MMM Group** during Monday evening's Committee of the Whole meeting. Out of six companies who submitted bids in response to the municipality's request for proposals (RFP) document released in late October, **MMM Group** was the most qualified and lowest bidder at \$68,000. (The project will be financed not only with the \$50,000 grant but with \$20,000 from development charges).

According to Symon, **MMM Group** has extensive background in the creation of trails master plans.

"They are leaders in the development of trails master plans and have worked with municipalities who have also received Ministry of Health Promotion grant funding for plans in the past," he explained, adding they have done plans for the City of Guelph, the City of Ottawa's cycling strategy as well as the integrated waterfront trail plan which runs from Niagara Falls to Montreal. "I'm excited to work with them on this project."

During an interview in his office last week, Symon could barely contain his excitement for the project, which will build upon North Grenville's 150 kilometres of trails, established in 2006 as one of the legacy projects to celebrate Kemptville's 150th anniversary.

"This is what I live for everyday; to be doing this wonderful community development work," he remarked.

The strategy will include those 150 kilometres of trails as well as develop design standards for additional trails throughout the municipality to link areas of the community. In addition, sustainability and maintenance plans, use standards and protocols, standards for signage, as well as a policy for dealing with the integration of the trails to regional and national pathways and a communications and marketing strategy will be explored.

"The idea is to use the trails to knit the community together," Symon commented.

"We've got these scattered rural residential communities and we want to be able to tie them in with our major community assets, such as the schools, downtown and the arena."

Due to the fact that the strategy is heavily community-based, the municipality has several partners on the project, many of which have helped make up a steering committee that will meet with the consultants to help establish a plan. Those partners include the Ferguson Forest Centre; Community Living North Grenville; Kemptville District Hospital; University of Guelph-Kemptville Campus; United Counties of Leeds and Grenville;

representatives from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit and Ministry of Natural Resources; as well as Symon, CAO Andy Brown and director of parks, recreation and culture, Darren Patmore.

A solid relationship with the Ontario Trails Council (of which Symon serves as vice-president), also places the municipality in a good position as they embark on this project.

Throughout the process, which got underway with the first steering committee meeting on Monday and is expected to conclude in June, public consultation from all members of the community, including children and youth, seniors, low-income residents, those with disabilities and women and girls, will be sought.

"The idea is that we want to have a very, very broad-based community consultation...what do they want to see?" Symon said, noting that the steering committee will generate the trails master plan, but it isn't just their input that's needed. "It's not just about the 10 people and they decide what they want...these trails are for the community."

Symon admitted there is a "relatively short period of time" to create the strategy, but the plan should put the municipality in the position to begin developing more trails as early as later this year or 2012. It is his hope that in the future other communities look to North Grenville when doing similar master plans.

"There's a desire to have North Grenville become a center of excellence in eastern Ontario for trails development. We want other communities to look at us and say that North Grenville did trails right and that they need to talk to us about trails in their community," he remarked.

Down the road, Symon said he would love to see this plan lead to routes with dedicated bike lanes and trails that link up with other regional trails. "These are the types of things we're talking about: linking up to regional trails and the trails neighbouring municipalities have," he said, adding linkages with the Trans-Canada Trail and the waterfront trail from Niagara Falls to Montreal would be beneficial.

"We have to think beyond our boundaries while at the same time keeping in focus that these (North Grenville's) trails are first and foremost for our residents and their quality of life."

Those who wish to share their comments or opinions on the community-focused trail network have several ways to do so including filling out an online survey at [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) from Jan. 24 to Feb. 22 (search for North Grenville Trail Strategy) and write, email or call Symon (613-258-9569 or [fsymon@northgrenville.on.ca](mailto:fsymon@northgrenville.on.ca)) or **MMM Group** project manager Jonathan Loschmann (613-274-3200 or [LoschmannJ@mmm.ca](mailto:LoschmannJ@mmm.ca)).

Members of the study team will also be on hand during Feb. 13's North Grenville Community Sweetheart Brunch at the North Grenville Municipal Centre for residents to learn more about the strategy and provide input. And the municipality will be using Facebook to reach out to younger residents.

"At the end of the day, I hope we will have a product that the municipality, University of Guelph-Kemptville Campus, FFC, service clubs, youth groups and schools, should they want to do a project or something in the community, we can give them a section of trails that need to be built and here are the standards and give them the blueprints for how it should happen," Symon stated.

"...We need to have this master plan so we have a strategy and we know what we're doing and how to do it," he continued.

"The important thing here is to spend the money wisely so these (trails) can be sustained over the long run."

In the coming days, the North Grenville Trails website ([www.ngtrails.ca](http://www.ngtrails.ca)) will be revamped and become the place where residents can receive up-to-date information on the integrated community trails strategy.