



TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE


SUBJECT: SIMCOE COUNTY LOOP TRAIL AND TRANS CANADA TRAIL ADJUSTMENTS

WARDS: 1, 2, 4 AND 5

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: W. FISCHER, B.L.A., O.A.L.A. 
SUPERVISOR, PARKS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (Ext. 5101)

SUBMITTED BY: J. WESTON, M.A.Sc., P. Eng., PMP 
DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: R. J. FORWARD, MBA, M.Sc., P. Eng. 
GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: C. LADD 
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

1. That the designation of the Simcoe County Loop Trail (SCLT) through the City of Barrie, as per Appendix "A" and "B" in Staff Report ENG009-16, be endorsed.
2. That the realignments of the Trans Canada Trail through the City of Barrie, as per Appendix "B" in Staff Report ENG009-16, be endorsed with the following actions required by City staff:
 - a) That staff adjust existing Trans Canada Trail signage to reflect the new route from the northern City limits on Anne Street, south towards Sunnidale Road and past Sunnidale Park; and
 - b) That staff modify all drawings and mapping on the City's web site for public viewing accordingly
3. That the temporary realignment of the Trans Canada Trail be endorsed and that staff in Engineering and Roads, Parks and Fleet Departments work to post new signage for the Trans Canada Trail in the south end of the City to reflect the 2-year temporary realignment due to the reconstruction of the McKay Road bridge over Highway 400 (Spring 2016 to Spring 2018) including posting all route changes on the City's web page for public viewing, as per Appendix "D" in Staff Report ENG009-16.
4. That the approved Pilgrimage Routes within the City of Barrie be cancelled as the Simcoe County Trails organization no longer exists and thereby removes their support for the trail designation. This trail was originally approved through Council Motion 14-G-023.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

5. The purpose of this Staff Report is to advise Council of several realignment changes to our existing Trans Canada Trail (TCT) network and its overlay trails, and to seek endorsement for these changes including the designation of the Simcoe County Loop Trail (SCLT) alignment and the removal of the City's designation and approval for the Pilgrimage Routes by the Simcoe County Trails organization.

6. On February 10, 2014 City Council adopted motion 14-G-023 PILGRIMAGE ROUTES DESIGNATION (WARDS 1,2,4,5,7,8,9 and10) as follows:

"That the designation of Pilgrimage Routes through the City of Barrie to Martyr's Shrine in Midland on the Nine Mile Heritage Trail, the North Shore Trail, and the Trans Canada Trail, as per Appendix "A" and Appendix "B" in Staff Report ENG002-14, be endorsed.

That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute a trail user agreement with Simcoe County Trails in accordance with the following terms and conditions, as per Appendix "C" in Staff report ENG002-14:

- a) That Simcoe County Trails maintain a minimum of \$5 Million liability insurance naming the City of Barrie as additional insured; and,
- b) That Simcoe County Trails be responsible for all costs for installation, maintenance and upkeep of the signs in accordance with City of Barrie standards. (ENG002-14) (File: R04-PI)."

ANALYSIS

7. The following updates propose changes to existing trail alignments in the City of Barrie based on either operational changes from outside agencies affecting trail alignments that lead into the City or with construction projects requiring short term realignments of our existing trails to by-pass activities and/or bridge removals.

Simcoe County Loop Trail

8. In August 2014, Simcoe County released its Simcoe County Trails Strategy. One objective of the Trails Strategy was to develop a regional signature loop route in the central and northern part of Simcoe County to create a unique cycling tourism asset to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors. A large 160 km loop trail was proposed, which is an ideal length for a 2-3 day cycling trip. The new trail was named the Simcoe County Loop Trail (SCLT). Throughout the County, its alignment follows the TCT on existing trail networks within each municipality. Where off road trail networks are not available, the SCLT is accommodated on existing roads. Refer to Appendix "A" for the location of this trail within the County.
9. On February 25, 2016, the County of Simcoe's Committee of the Whole approved the realignment of the TCT in Springwater Township to approach the City of Barrie along Anne Street versus the previous alignment overlay of the Nine Mile Portage Heritage Trail as follows:

"Committee of the Whole Item CCW 16-071 - Update on the Simcoe County Loop Trail Recommendation

THAT Item CCW 16-071 regarding an update on the Simcoe County Loop Trail, be received;

AND THAT County staff be directed to use up to \$25,000 of funds from the 2016 Trails Connecting Communities Program budget towards the purchase of trail design consulting services;

AND THAT the proposed Barrie – Springwater Gap route be supported in principle;

AND THAT the Warden and Clerk be authorized to execute any necessary documentation related to the implementation of the proposed Barrie – Springwater Gap route as outlined in Item CCW 16-071."

10. On March 8, 2016, the County of Simcoe's Council ratified the above trail realignment and the route realignment was subsequently endorsed by the TCT Board of Directors in late March 2016.
11. According to County staff, each municipality designates its portion of the SCLT as part of its own trail and TCT network. This avoids duplicate liability coverage as each municipality's liability coverage for the TCT would also cover the SCLT designation. In Barrie's situation, as the SCLT is predominantly an on-road route, this TCT liability coverage is not required. Once on the North Shore Trail, the SCLT would be covered by the City's liability coverage for recreational trails.
12. The final routing of the SCLT will be both an on-road and recreational trail route and is detailed in Appendix "B" and described as follows:
 - a) Follow the new alignment of the TCT from Anne Street to downtown Barrie along Sunnidale Road, Ross Street, Toronto Street and Dunlop Street.
 - b) The SCLT would travel through Heritage Park to continue along the North Shore Trail where it connects into the Lake Country Oro-Medonte Rail Trail heading east towards Orillia.
 - c) The reverse direction from the North Shore Trail to the north end of the City will also be signed by Simcoe County as part of this route implementation.

Simcoe County Loop Trail – Proposed Signage

13. Within the 2014 County Trails Strategy, research indicated that there was no uniform approach to directional wayfinding across the municipal boundaries. To this end, the Trails Strategy called for a standardized approach to trail wayfinding for regional trail routes based on the existing Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) Wayfinding signage. This standard for pedestrian and cycling trails offers an opportunity to be consistent with other municipalities across the region, including the counties of Bruce and Grey.
14. As a result, the SCLT signage concept is to establish a signature route for tourism and economic development throughout the county. Consistent signage will benefit those municipalities along the route by providing a recognizable wayfinding system across each municipally on their own trail networks. The Simcoe County's Corporate Communications Department produced a standard template for the signs with space on the panel for the Simcoe County Trails logo and space for each municipal logo for branding recognition within their municipality.
15. For information purposes, County staff have been working with City staff and Access Barrie to produce a final sign version for the City of Barrie. While the City of Barrie Loop Trail alignment is over top of our existing TCT, the signs will be separately mounted on our existing street poles and sign channels. Manufacturing and implementation of these signs will be contracted out by Simcoe County to a private company who will be responsible for the installation of 42 signs along the route. There is no cost to the City of Barrie for the production or installation of the signs. Refer to Appendix "C" for the proposed wayfinding sign.
16. For future replacement of signs, the County of Simcoe has produced additional templates that can be used for replacement of any damaged, vandalism or theft, should this occur. The costs for replacement are to be borne by the County through its various trail funding programs so there is no expectation of City Operational costs required to manufacture replacement signs.
17. Assistance from the City would be required in order to re-mount any damaged signs that require replacement but this is not expected to be a significant undertaking as very few signs have ever been needed for replacement for our existing trails throughout the City.

18. During the construction of Meridian Place-Memorial Square, City staff will work with County staff to have the SCLT signage installed along Bayfield Street and across Simcoe Street as a temporary route around the redevelopment of square. Once the square is complete, City staff will reposition the signage to have the SCLT travel through the square as illustrated in Appendix B.

Simcoe County Loop Trail – Alignment with Trans Canada Trail

19. As part of this SCLT development, Springwater Township needed to realign its TCT route to better serve its residents within Midhurst and along Snow Valley Road. As a result, Simcoe County staff requested that the City of Barrie consider changing its northern TCT route from a westerly direction (Sunnidale Park/Landfill) to a northerly direction along Sunnidale Road to Anne Street North. Refer to Appendix "B" for additional details.
20. This realignment of the TCT does not impact the current alignment of the Nine Mile Portage Heritage Trail which will continue as a designated trail between Barrie and Fort Willow.

Trans Canada Trail – South Section Temporary Detour

21. With the upcoming reconstruction of the McKay Road bridge over Highway 400 by MTO in 2016, the City of Barrie requires the temporary realignment or detour of the TCT northwards from the Town of Innisfil so that the trail users can continue their journey around the construction zone to Barrie's waterfront.
22. Based on staff conversation with the Town of Innisfil, their municipality is in the process of signing their only TCT gap section from the end of the Cookstown-Thornton Rail Trail northwards along the 5th Sideroad to Barrie's municipal boundary immediately south of McKay Road.
23. As a result, the best and most efficient option for the Barrie's TCT detour results in the following alignment:
 - a) From Barrie's south boundary on the 5th Sideroad, continue the TCT northwards on Veteran's Drive to Mapleview Drive, utilizing the on-road bike lane and sidewalk system from Salem Road to Mapleview Drive.
 - b) At Mapleview Drive, the trail will turn east, pass underneath Highway 400 to Huronia Road where the trail will continue along its original configuration north on Huronia Road to Loon Avenue.
 - c) The reverse direction will be signed by the City as part of this detour routing.
24. Signage for this detour section has already been received from the TCT Foundation as part of their free rebranding program to replace all existing worn out signs before summer 2017. In discussion with Road Operations staff, Engineering staff will assist in the layout and positioning the new temporary signs on existing street lights and signage posts to make implementation easier without multiple utility stakeouts.
25. Staff has reviewed the process of registering this detour with the TCT Foundation and their organization is supportive of the work that City staff have made to ensure trail continuity during construction. Staff has already submitted an application to have this portion of the trail temporarily realigned.
26. Staff understand that the McKay Road bridge will be under construction from Summer 2016 to late 2017 which would result in the temporary re-routing signage being in place till Spring 2018. At this time, the signs would be removed and re-positioned along the original TCT alignment along McKay Road from Veteran's Drive/5th Sideroad easterly towards Huronia Road. Staff are also in the process of updating the City's web page to allow the detour to be advertised to the public. Refer to Appendix "D" for the proposed trail re-routing during this construction period.

Pilgrimage Routes

27. In late 2015, the City of Barrie became aware that the Simcoe County Trails organization was disbanding and their organization could no longer endorse the development or implement the installation of signage for this Pilgrimage Route thereby divesting themselves of all partnering responsibilities for trail maintenance. It should also be noted that this trail organization is not affiliated with the County of Simcoe. Refer to Appendix "E" for the letter from the Simcoe County Trails organization. As a result, staff are recommending the removal of this trail designation within the City as this trail will no longer exist.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

28. There are no environmental matters associated with the proposed recommendations.

ALTERNATIVE

29. These Alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1 General Committee could choose not to endorse the Simcoe County Loop Trail through the north end of Barrie.

This Alternative is not recommended as it represents a missed economic development and tourism opportunity to promote use of the City of Barrie's existing trail system to a larger local and provincial population.

Alternative #2 General Committee could choose not to endorse the TCT Realignment in north Barrie.

This Alternative is not recommended as our existing TCT network would not connect properly into the changes being made by Springwater Township.

FINANCIAL

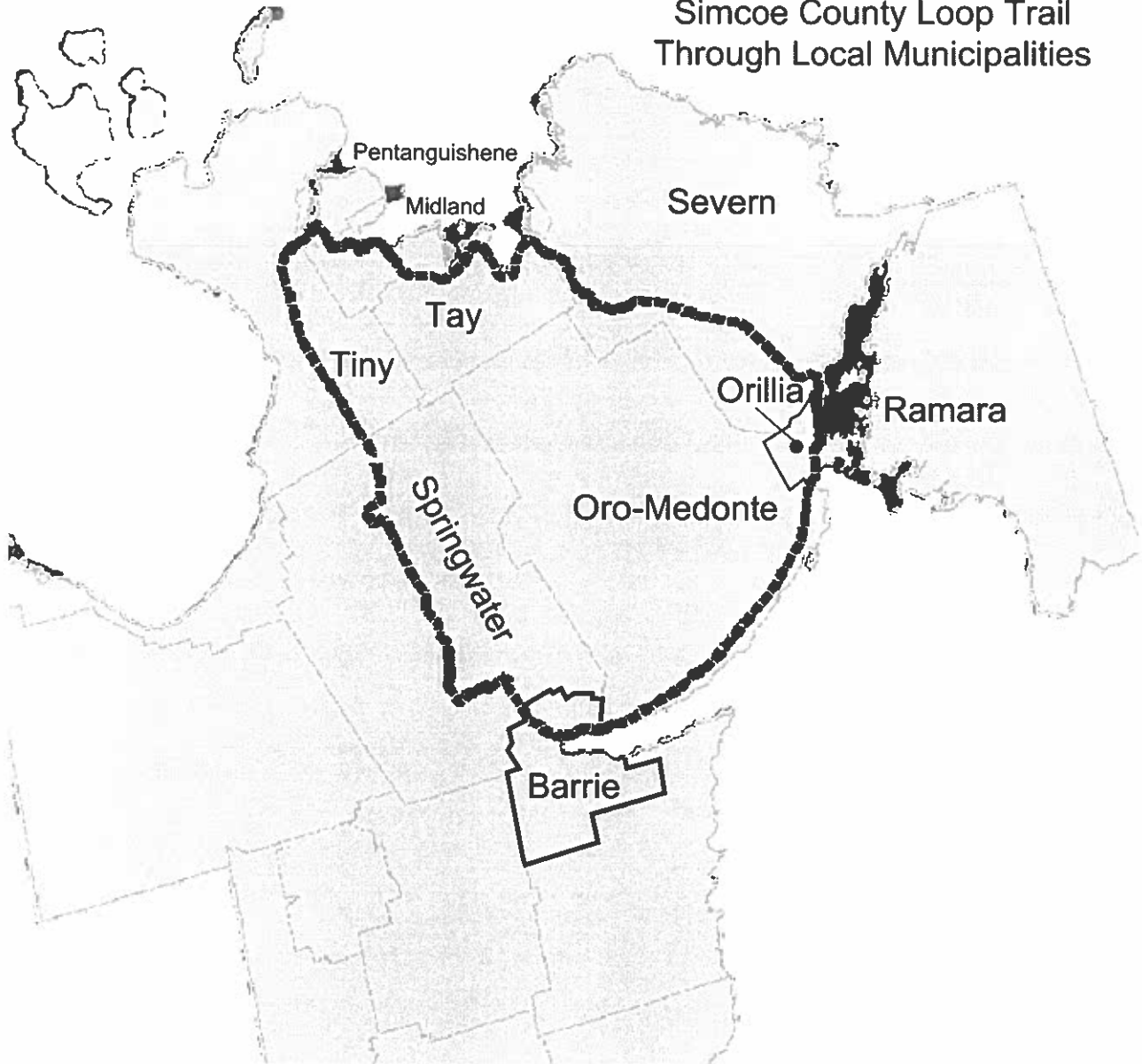
30. There are no capital cost implications associated with the recommendations for the SCLT as the County is paying for the supply and installation of the signage in the City of Barrie.
31. For the existing TCT realignment, in the north end of the City, and the temporary detour in the south end of the City, staff time would be required to install the new TCT signs along each of the adjusted routes at an estimated time of 60 hours. These hours would be covered through the current 2016 operational budgets of Roads, Parks and Fleet and Engineering Departments.

LINKAGE TO 2014 – 2018 COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

32. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report support the following goal identified in the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan:
- Vibrant Business Environment
 - Inclusive Community
33. The Simcoe County Loop Trail represents the development of a new tourism attraction within the City and broader Simcoe County region with the potential for visitor's spending money at local businesses within the City. The new signs would provide the opportunity for increased use of existing trails. The trail passes directly through downtown via Meridian Place-Memorial Square, creating additional opportunities to explore the downtown and promote businesses and the public's enjoyment of the waterfront.

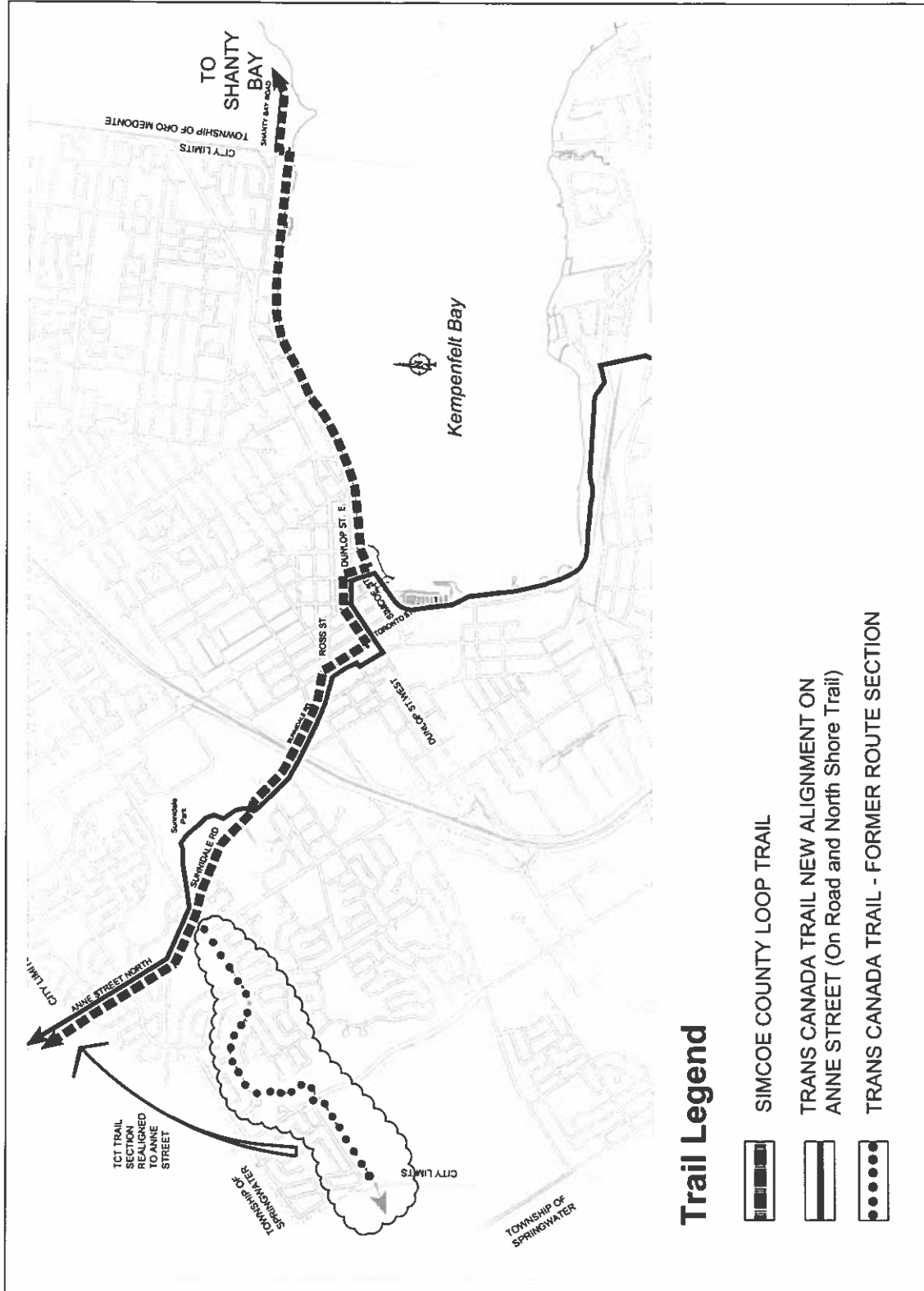
APPENDIX "A"
Proposed Simcoe County Loop Trail Route

Simcoe County Loop Trail
Through Local Municipalities



APPENDIX "B"

Detailed Simcoe County Loop Trail within the City of Barrie



APPENDIX "C"

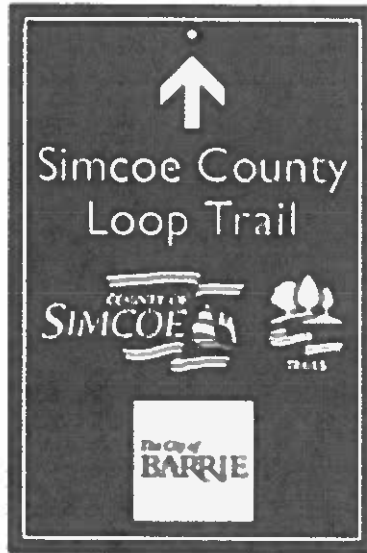
Proposed Simcoe County Loop Trail Signage for the City of Barrie

Matt Avery with gloss lam mounted on 10mm Alumincore

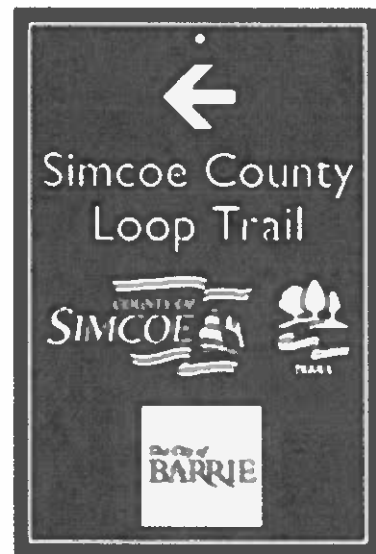
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Qty: 28

■ PMS 2756C



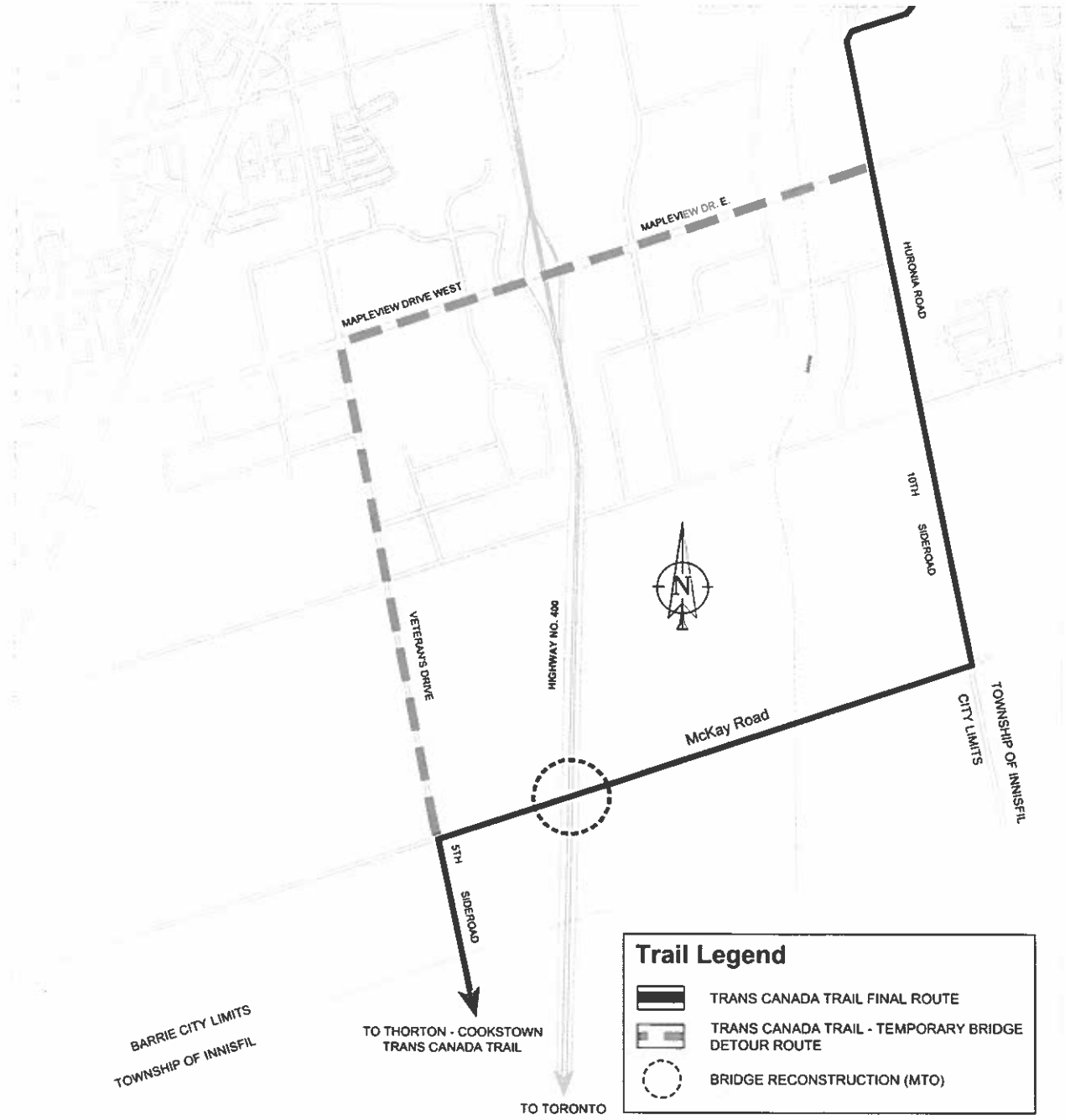
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APPENDIX "D"

Proposed Detour of the Trans Canada Trail – South End of Barrie



Appendix "E"

Request to Remove Pilgrimage Route Designation in the City of Barrie



April 16, 2016

Mr. Walter Fischer
Supervisor, Parks Planning & Development
City of Barrie
70 Collier Street, Box 400,
Barrie, ON L4M 4T5

Dear Mr. Fischer,

At a Special Meeting on November 3, 2015 a motion was made to begin preparations for surrendering the charter of the Simcoe County Trails Association (formerly known as Huronia Trails and Greenways). While Ian Hughes of our Board of Directors advised you of this decision verbally, this letter is to serve as official notice of our status.

The decision to dissolve was not made lightly, but can make way for the possible emergence of a new organization with a much tighter focus on promotion and networking between trail users, land management agencies, including lower and upper-tier municipalities, and organizations which have emerged and developed since the incorporation of our own organization.

The need for trails and interest in trail use is by no means diminished in Simcoe County or the City of Barrie, it has simply grown beyond our capacity to operate under the current broad mandate and lean volunteer structure.

As such, the organization is divesting itself of all partnering responsibilities for maintaining trails through agreements and understandings, including the Pilgrim Route as it passes through your municipality.

On behalf of current and past Directors of the organization, and trail-users, I extend sincere thanks to the City of Barrie for your contribution to the work of Simcoe County Trails in the past.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judy Gilchrist".

Judy Gilchrist, President
Simcoe County Trails, c/o 1062 Wood St. Churchill, Ont L0L 1K0