

### REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND CULTURE

Re: Proposed Intercity Trails MOU With The Elliot Lake XC Ski & Bike Club

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council direct staff to work with the Elliot Lake XC Ski & Bike Club to prepare a memorandum of understanding that details a working relationship between the club and the City with respect to the care and maintenance of intercity trails.

And that staff bring the MOU to a future meeting of Council.

### BACKGROUND

On January 12, 2023, Council resolved to enter into a tripartite memorandum of understanding between the City, Retirement Living, and the Elliot Lake XC Ski & Bike Club to define a working relationship between the parties where the club took on operations, care and maintenance of the Spine Beach cross country ski trail for the winter season of 2023.

After a successful season, all three parties wished to extend this agreement through to May of 2026, and Council resolved to do so on April 11, 2023.

The club now has expressed an interest in entering a similar agreement with the City, which would see them adopt a similar role for a number of existing trail routes throughout the City.

Currently these trails are under maintained. The Municipality has relied on volunteer groups such as the Courier De Bios and others to perform minor maintenance on these trails causing a potential liability issue.

### ANALYSIS

A copy of a proposal from the Elliot Lake XC Ski & Bike Club along with a map of proposed trails to be included in an agreement is attached to this report for Council's review.

The Elliot Lake XC Ski and Bike Club has been able to secure an insurance policy through IMBA Canada that provides liability coverage for trails that the club operates and maintains. This policy coverage effectively lowers the City's liability in operating the Westview to Spine Beach trail and would do the same for the additional proposed trails under a new agreement.

As well, having an organized volunteer group to assist with trail maintenance would relieve some logistical pressure on Staff relating to care of the trail system. From a tourism perspective, having a group actively maintain, identify and become stewards of the City's trails would only assist in establishing Elliot Lake as a premier walking/hiking destination while greatly limiting the Municipality's capital investment to do so.

There are several details that need to be addressed to define the particulars of such a relationship, but it is Staff's opinion that the proposed MOU is an opportunity to build a sense of community stewardship for the trail system, and is an appropriate way to support this user group.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Strictly speaking, the recommendations offered in this report do not have an associated financial impact. The recommendation offered to Council is to direct staff to formalize an agreement. However, entering into a memorandum of understanding with an outside group to formally adopt care, and maintenance of our trail systems would alleviate operational costs and insurance liability for the municipality.

## **LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

This project directly relates to the following key section of the strategic plan:

- Development of strong partnerships
- Strong municipal corporate administration and governance
- Health and community wellness

## **SUMMARY**

Staff recommends that Council give direction to collaborate with the Elliot Lake XC Ski & Bike Club to prepare an MOU that details a future working relationship between the club and the City relating to intercity trails, and that staff bring forward that agreement to Council when ready.