



STAFF REPORT

TO: Regional Parks and Trails Select Committee **MEETING:** October 9, 2018

FROM: Joan Michel
Parks and Trails Coordinator **FILE:** 2017-020

SUBJECT: Trans Canada Trail – Renewal of Island Timberlands Licence

RECOMMENDATION

That the RDN enter into a licence renewal with Island Timberlands' for the Trans Canada Trail from August 1, 2018 to July 31, 2020.

SUMMARY

The RDN's licence to operate approximately 15 km of Trans Canada Trail (TCT) on Island Timberlands forest lands expired at the end of July 2018. The non-exclusive licence originated in 2004 and was renewed several times. Island Timberlands' has offered to renew the licence until 2020 (Attachment 1).

The 2018-2020 expanded licensed area licence will include a new trailhead parking lot on Timberlands Road and about 1.5 km of access trail connecting the parking lot to the TCT in the Province's DL 6 and 20 gravel pit lands. The cost of the two-year licence will be \$1,000 plus GST.

BACKGROUND

Nanaimo area volunteers led by Trails BC conceived and initiated the RDN's section of Canada's national trail, recently rebranded as The Great Trail, in the late 1990s. The RDN began its formal involvement with the TCT in 2001 by developing the Haslam Creek Suspension Bridge under licence from Island Timberlands and TimberWest. In 2004, the RDN assumed responsibility for all of the TCT on Island Timberlands property between Nanaimo and Haslam Creek, and that licence was renewed in 2009, 2014 and 2016.

The RDN's approximately 22 km section of TCT is located within Electoral Area C (Attachment 2). The trail runs south from the City of Nanaimo through Extension to the border with the Cowichan Valley Regional District, with a gap at the Nanaimo River. Most of the trail sits on Island Timberlands property; other landowners include the Province and TimberWest.

The south end of the RDN's TCT is being extended because the Province plans to restrict vehicular passage through its nearby DL 6 and 20 gravel pit property. Currently, trail users park in the gravel pit before heading out on the TCT. In March 2017, the RDN received a \$30,000 grant from BC's Rural Dividends Program to help develop a parking area outside of the pit property along with access trail to and through the pit. In July 2018, Parks Services concluded negotiations with Island Timberlands regarding use of their lands for a parking lot and new access

trail, and this is reflected in the attached TCT licence renewal offer. The new trail involves a 25 m stretch of road that is held by Island Timberlands under statutory right of way. The landowner involved supports use of the right of way for trail and will conclude a land access agreement, subject of a separate staff report. Development of all new works will be completed by year-end 2018.

Island Timberlands' recent agreement to licence more trail and a parking lot on Timberlands Road reflects the company's support for TCT near the firm's proposed residential development in Cassidy.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the Island Timberland's 2018-2020 Trans Canada Trail licence renewal offer be approved.
2. That alternate direction be provided.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The previous licence fee of \$525 has increased to \$1000 plus GST for the two year 2018-2020 term and is included in the 2018 Regional Parks operating budget. The operation and maintenance costs of all of the TCT in the amount of \$5,000, including the new Timberlands Road parking lot, is incorporated into the Regional Parks 2018 operating budget.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The RDN's strategic priority to focus on service and organizational excellence includes recognition that community mobility and recreational amenities are core services. Operation of a regional trail network in the RDN depends upon access to private forest lands. The RDN is grateful to the private landowners for access.



Joan Michel
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September 11, 2018

Reviewed by:

- W. Marshall, Manager of Parks Services
- T. Osborne, General Manager of Recreation and Parks Services
- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments

1. Island Timberlands 2018-2020 Licence Offer for Trans Canada Trail
2. Map of Trans Canada Trail