

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE
Regional Headquarters -Committee Room 4

THURSDAY, June 25, 2009 - MEETING NOTES

ATTENDANCE

Phil Bergen	Niagara Region Public Works
Dave Evans	Public-at-Large
Marc Hansen	Public-at-Large
Dave Hunt	Public-at-Large
Paul Pattison	Public-at-Large
Penny Pitt	Administrative Assistant
Frank Pravitz	Public-at-Large, MTO
Bob Romanuk	Public-at-Large/ N.F.Trails & Bikeways Committee
Wade Smith	Public-at-Large
Paul Taylor	Niagara Region IT Department

Regrets – Chair Baty, Peter Davies, Scott Elliott, Eric Flora, Betsy Foster, Ken Forgeron, Ben Lyon, Tom Whitelaw

In Chair Baty's absence, Bob Romanuk assumed the role of chair for the meeting.

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by Dave Hunt
Seconded by Paul Pattison

That the agenda be adopted as amended with the addition of items under Items for Information: CanBike Instructor Courses/Advisory Committee and Bike Summit.

Carried

2. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES OF MAY 21, 2009

Moved by Dave Hunt
Seconded by Paul Pattison

That the RNBC Meeting Notes of May 21, 2009 be adopted as amended with minor corrections not affecting the outcome of discussions.

Carried

3. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEM 1

An update was given that bike racks on buses in the City of St. Catharines would be done by April 2010.

ACTION ITEM 3

In Ken Forgeron's absence this item was deferred until the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM 17

The bicycle/transit shelter has been installed and a ribbon cutting is being planned for August.

ACTION ITEM 18

Phil Bergen stated strategy to move forward with the St. David's Road EA and associated multi-use trail is under investigation by the City of St. Catharines.

ACTION ITEM 23

Phil Bergen and Paul Pattison met with the personnel from the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission and were shown the procedure for bikes entering the Queenston/Lewiston Plaza and how the Toll Capitan personally guides the bikes to the proper lane of traffic. The procedure is complicated and information needs to be available to the public. An aerial photo of the plaza and a photo of two small bike signs were provided to them. It was suggested that the Region needs to provide signage on Portage Road directing bicycles to the Queenston/Lewiston Bridge.

ACTION ITEM 24

In Ken Forgeron's absence this item was deferred until the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM 28

In Ken Forgeron's absence this item was deferred until the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM 32

Eric Flora will provide an update the Hwy 406 – Port Robinson Rd to East Main Street improvements at the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM 34

In Ken Forgeron's absence this item was deferred until the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM 35

Information that had been completed was removed. Action Item 52 was merged with Action Item 35 and then removed.

ACTION ITEM 38

In Ken Forgeron's and Chair Baty's absence this item was deferred until the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM 39

Action Item 50 was merged with Action Item 39. Phil Bergen summarized the findings from the Collision Statistics report by Petar Vujic. A formal staff report will be drafted and taken to the TSSC or ICP&PWC in September.

ACTION ITEM 40

Dave Evans apprised the staff that he will start preparing video footage in late summer to be used in planning next year's bike show. He hopes to capture, by helmet cam, area bicycling events that will include road racers, off road bicycles, and recreational rides featuring family and children. Marc Hansen and Wade Smith informed Dave that they could possibly provide a helmet cam. The committee was urged to email Dave any ideas for the best cycling venues to video along with any footage they may have themselves.

ACTION ITEM 44

Report ICP 30-2009 respecting Initiation of Proposed Policy Plan Amendment: Bicycle Transportation Policies was received on June 15, 2009 at the Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee Meeting. This item will be removed from the outstanding action items list.

ACTION ITEM 45

A meeting was held in May to initiate the Regional Bicycle Signage and Wayfinding Program. This item will be removed from the outstanding action items list.

ACTION ITEM 46

Updating the Terms of Reference has been deferred to the next meeting.

ACTION 47

The Joint Annual Meeting with Hamilton, Burlington, Haldimand County, Waterloo and the City of Guelph was held and reported on. This item will be removed from the outstanding action item list.

ACTION ITEM 49

Gary Murphy provided a map of proposed city routes and this item will be removed from the outstanding action item list.

ACTION ITEM 53

The final edition of Identified Priorities for 2009 and Suggested Priorities for 2010-2011 was deferred to the next meeting.

4. BUSINESS ARISING

None to report.

5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Hartzel Road EA – Design Recommendation

Following the PIC held on June 9, 2009, Frank Pravitz informed the committee that the preferred design recommendation for Hartzel Road-Merritt Street includes conversion of the four-lane undivided roadway section to a three-lane roadway with on-road bike lanes. This will consist of resurfacing and striping and not construction of a new road.

Thorold's Draft Bicycle Routes Feasibility Study

This committee provides advice to local municipalities. Frank Pravitz informed the committee that he had received the Bicycle Network Plan for Thorold and the plan looks good with the focus on roads and not trails. Frank Pravitz will finalize and consolidate the comments received from Dave Hunt to go forward to the next ICPPWC meeting. The areas that comments were provided are listed below.

1. Praise for Thorold's Efforts
2. Public Consultation (Chapters. 1.2.2 & 2.2)
3. Facility Types (Chapters. 3)
4. Regional and Local Networks (both on and off-road) should both be mapped

5. Network Suggestions

- Beaverdams Road (Chapters. 5.1.5. & 5.1.18)
- Railway Crossing Concept (Chapters. 5.1.12)
- Disjointed Design Application on Richmond Street (Chapters. 5.1.9 to 5.1.13)
- Fonthill Spur (Chapter. 5.1.5 & 5.1.18)
- Holland Rd. as a by-pass of Beaverdams Rd. (Chapter. 5.1.19)

6. Possible Additional Local Routes

7. Monitor, Evaluate, Review and Update

Moved by Dave Hunt

Seconded by Dave Evans

That comments received concerning the Thorold Bicycle Network Plan be forwarded to Frank Pravitz for consolidation and forwarded to Chair Baty for signature and on to TSSC for July 14, 2009.

Carried.

Comments on Proposed Plan for Regional Signage and Wayfinding Program

Frank Pravitz provided through email to Councillors Baty and Timms the following comments on the proposed plan for Regional Signage and Wayfinding Program:

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation is offering a grant of up to \$50,000 for TDM projects, on a 50-50 cost sharing arrangement. We now have a draft proposal for developing a comprehensive signage program for the on-road and off-road Regional Bicycle Network. Both the Regional Niagara Cycling Committee and the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committees have discussed the need for a wayfinding sign network in Niagara.

I would encourage you to make this a priority at committee meetings, and to pursue the proposal with Regional staff.

The need for better way finding signage has come up several times.

- Trekzone recommendations
- The Council approved Regional Niagara cycling master plan and a top priority of the RNBC
- City of St. Catharines is pursuing bicycle related signage, and are waiting to coordinate with the Region
- Way finding are an issue with tourist coming on the Bike Train and Go Train in Niagara Falls
- Most municipalities are now implementing bicycle supportive policies
- Integration with major trail systems (Waterfront Trail, Trans Canada Trail, Greater Niagara Circle Route)

- Niagara is now recognized as a bicycle destination
- Implementation of the Regional Niagara Bikeways Network has made significant progress
- Bicycle signage guidelines are addressed in professional engineering standards (TAC)

Attached is a final draft of a proposal to pursue an integrated wayfinding signage program for Niagara that has some minor additional comments from RNBC Committee members and Regional Planning staff.

The funding applications are due by October 2, 2009 and this can help offset the costs of developing an integrated and professional plan for implementing way finding bicycle signage. This proposal includes bicycle signage that denotes bikeways routes, destinations (e.g. Fonthill, Conservation Authority properties, tourist destinations), direction, distance and possible 'branding'. This proposal is consistent with what is currently occurring in many other jurisdictions in Ontario, North America and across Europe. The benefits will include greater safety on the road, encouragement for more people to cycle, and increased bicycle tourism across the 12 municipalities of Niagara.

Proposed Municipal Consultation of Bicycle Facility Development

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Rules for Use of Bike Storage Facility

In Ken Forgeron's absence this item was deferred until the next meeting.

6. TASK FORCE REPORTS

Engineering Task Force

Phil Bergen summarized the findings from the Collision Statistics report by Petar Vujic. A formal staff report will be drafted and taken to the TSSC or ICP&PWC in September.

Education and Enforcement Task Force

Nothing to report at this time.

Encouragement Task Force

Nothing to report at this time.

Policy Task Force

Dave Hunt informed the committee that the development of a model local bicycle policy would begin in the fall.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Bike Racks of St. Catharines Buses

Paul Pattison reported to the committee that bike racks will be installed on more than half of the St. Catharines transit fleet of buses. The racks will be installed on the city's 25 newest buses. Each rack holds two bikes, and cyclists will be responsible for loading and unloading their own bikes. The cost of the racks will be covered by the federal gas tax reserve fund.

Thorold-Fonthill Spur Trail Development Status

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Progress on Reconfiguring RNBC Website

A meeting had taken place between Bob Romanuk, John Docker, Paul Taylor, and Marc Hansen regarding the reconfiguration of the RNBC website. The following are notes from that meeting that were provided to the committee by Bob Romanuk.

Changes to the Region's information policies have resulted in a review of all information available from the Region and its agencies either directly or indirectly on the Internet. There are only a handful of websites outside of the Region's direct umbrella, and the RNBC site is one.

Areas of concern include the following:

- Consistency of branding. The Region's information is being revamped with consistency across all Divisions.
- Controls over who has access to web publication. This enables a second look at proposed information (a good thing)
- Policies regarding posting of information and potential liability. Issues arise regarding privacy, accuracy and copyright.
- Relevance, stale information may not reflect well on the Region.

Specifically with the RNBC site, the following issues need address:

- Liability. The Press Room is problematic without copyright authorization.
- Timeliness: There is some stale information on the page.
- Links, contrary to the Region's policy to commercial ventures.
- Determining the ownership of the url, www.rnbc.info ,
- An appropriate cycling start page on the Region's website, with a link to other cycling information determined vital to the Committee's perception of the needs of local and visiting cyclists.

There are at least two options regarding the ownership and control of the URL. The first would involve no change in the current arrangement but the “home” page would simply provide two choices, likely buttons. The first button on the www.rnbc.info would take a visitor to the start page of the RNBC at the Region. This page on the Region’s domain would also include direct links to mapping, brochures produced by the Committee and various subcommittees and other information the Committee feels should be on this page. Bob suggested a link to: road closures, the EA timetable for various construction projects, surfacing work, and other links from within the Region’s Public Works, Health and other departments that have an impact on cycling.

The second button on the www.rnbc.info start page would direct visitors to all of that same information with additional mapping, ferry schedule, commercial sites of interest to cyclists (bike shops, cycle friendly businesses etc) advocacy groups and related information, other outside cycling groups and other information that may be contrary to the Region’s website policies.

The second option is to surrender ownership and control of the URL to the Information systems department at the Region in exchange for a link on the Region’s bicycling start page. Traffic going to www.rnbc.info would be redirected to the Bicycling Start Page at the Region. From this page visitors would have the option of jumping out to the newly formulated Regional Cycling Information page. This is the preferred option of the Region.

To consider the second option, a new URL I would have to be established. Hosting costs would remain virtually the same for either option.

The Press Room will be deactivated. If anyone is aware of any other pages that may have copyright issues, please let me know.

Archive: When the site is rebuilt, attention will be paid to archiving information rather than having at the bottom of current info. Also, directing pages should not require scrolling to reach any options where now the left panel of links has grown beyond the capacity of some browsers to display all content.

The pictures depicting RNBC.info opening page Options 1 and 2 were provided.

Progress on RNBC Revised Terms of Reference

The draft of the revised RNBC Terms of Reference was made available as an information item and had been previously circulated to RNBC members to review and provide input to Dianne Coppola. Dave Hunt indicated that the review team had incorporated further refinements and urged members to read this document and come prepared with any comments at the next meeting. It was requested that this item be moved to “Items for Consideration” under the agenda.

Queenston/Lewiston Bridge Update

As reported in the Review of Action Items, Phil Bergen and Paul Pattison met with personnel from the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission and were shown the procedure for bikes entering and crossing the Queenston/Lewiston Plaza and were provided aerial photos of the site.

New Niagara Agritourism Trip Tic Map

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Update on Proposed On-Road Bicycle Route Enhancements in St. Catharines

As reported in Previous Action Item 49, Gary Murphy from GCAST provided a map of proposed city bicycle routes, the regional bike network and regional roads within the City of St. Catharines.

Timing of Regional Bikeways Master Plan Update

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

INFORMATION FOR DISTRIBUTION

1. Letter from Urban Environmental Management Inc. – Hartzel Road/Merritt Street Operational and Safety Review
2. Letter from E. Flora to Mr. Minh Le, GO Transit
3. Report CSD 79-2009/PWA 53-2009 Initiation of Project ZRC0955 Cost Sharing on Bike Paths and Approval of Funding for Bicycle Facilities on Fourth Avenue, in the Town of Lincoln

8. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- Volunteers for RNBC Task Force
- Proposed Municipal Consultation of Bicycle Facility Development - Presentation
- Rules for the use of bike storage facility
- Thorold-Fonthill Spur Trail Development: Status
- Timing of Regional Bikeways Master Plan Update
- New Niagara Agritourism Trip Tic Map
- Ribbon Cutting – Bike Storage Facility (August)
- RNBC Revised Terms of Reference

9. **OTHER BUSINESS**

CanBike Program

Dave Hunt informed the committee that following the CanBike instructor course held in May, there were now 8 new instructors in Niagara which now brings the total number to 10 available to teach the CanBike courses. Marion Laundry with Niagara Regional Public Health is responsible for organizing and financially supporting this effort to increase bicycle safety and get more people cycling. Two adult CAN-BIKE courses have been held resulting in 7 graduates, while instructors will also be teaching at two one week YMCA summer camps for 40 children at the Niagara Safety Village in Welland.

Phil Bergen indicated that A Niagara CanBike Advisory Committee has been formed and members from the RNBC have been invited to join. It is important that the lines of communication be open between the two Committees so that the strategic policy priority of bicycle education can move forward on an informed basis. Scott Elliott, Dave Hunt and Phil Bergen are on both Committees. The next meeting of the CAN-BIKE Advisory Committee is schedule for Sept. 2 at 3:00pm (location TBD).

Toronto Bike Summit 2009

Dave Hunt provided the committee with the main points regarding the Toronto Bike Summit (2009) that he and Ken Forgeron attended.

- Presentations were provided showing wide ranging support for cycling, from policies to infrastructure and from many different countries (e.g. Netherlands, USA)
- New York City is trying a new approach for supportive on-road bike lanes which are physically separated (i.e. protected) from the traffic lanes. This infrastructure has resulted in a 35% increase in cyclists within a corridor over the last year. Toronto advocacy groups are also trying to obtain approval for a similar approach in the form of a pilot project.
- Norma Moores with IBI provided a review of the updated TAC Bikeway Pavement Marking Guidelines, which should be available by 2010.
- A study of "Bike Stations" connected with intercity transit in Long Beach California showed a 30% conversion from autos to bicycles.
- Toronto has a final draft for review of their new Bike Parking Zoning By-Law, which outlines bike parking space dimensions and quantity, location requirements and supportive shower and change facilities.
- Go Transit/MetroLinx provided an overview of their programs to implement GO Station bike parking and bike racks on all GO Buses. A question about how many bicycles can be accommodated on a GO Train was answered with a range of 30 to 36 (Derived from 12 cars on a GO Train, maximum of 4 bikes per car (2 on each end), minus the ends of any cars with washrooms, and minus any cars that are for the disabled)).

- Two secure bike parking pictures were shown that had used clear materials either extended out from buildings (Toronto Records Library) or used on its own (GO Station Bike Parking structures).
- Eleanor McMahon with Share the Road Cycling Coalition provided a presentation about where her organization is going to support province wide cycling (e.g. Shape the role of government to support cycling, develop a provincial policy plan for cycling, appointment of a senior MTO official to support cycling, development of the Ontario Bicycling Route, and formation of a Provincial Cycling Advocacy Committee). An invitation for membership with her organization will be coming soon and a fall bicycle conference in Waterloo will also be held on Sept. 21 - 22/09

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Regional Niagara Headquarters - Committee Room 4

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 p.m. to meet again on Thursday, August 6, 2009.

Brian Baty
Chair

Penny Pitt
Administrative Assistant
Clerk's Department