

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE
Regional Headquarters - Cafeteria

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2009 - MEETING NOTES

ATTENDANCE

Brian Baty	Regional Councillor (Chair)
Eric Flora	Niagara Region Public Works
Ken Forgeron	Niagara Region Integrated Community Planning
Dave Hunt	Public-at-Large
Bob Romanuk	Public-at-Large/N.F.Trails & Bikeways Committee
Pat Maloney	Public-at-Large
Paul Pattison	Public-at-Large
Frank Pravitz	Public-at-Large, MTO
Penny Pitt	Administrative Assistant

Guests – Mark Burrows, Marc Hansen, Wade Smith, Tom Whitelaw, Lucy DeFazio, John Slobodzian, MTO Project Coordinator, Terry Hilditch, MTO Assistant Project Coordinator, and Patrick Puccini, URS Canada Inc., Project Consultant

Regrets – Dianne Coppola, Scott Elliott, Peter Davies, Betsy Foster, Ben Lyon, Dave Evans

Bob Romanuk assumed the position of Acting Chair until Councillor Baty could attend after the Regional Council meeting.

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved By: Pat Maloney
Seconded By: Dave Hunt

To adopt the agenda with two additional items under Items for Consideration – a motion from the Greater Niagara Circle Route meeting and under Items for Distribution - Winning Campaign Workshop.

Carried

2. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ken Forgeron introduced two candidates that may be interested in joining the RNBC; Lucy DeFazio, Niagara Region Graphic Artist and a member of the Sunflower Squad and Tom Whitelaw, a retired planner formerly with Niagara Region. Ben Lyon, a Brock University representative was unable to attend the meeting.

Guests Mark Burrows and Marc Hansen of the Thorold Trail Hogs Race Team along with Wade Smith of the Short Hills Cycling Club (SHCC) were also introduced. This group of

97 members blankets the two race teams Thorold Trail Hogs Race Team based in Thorold and Short Hillbillys Race Team based in Port Colborne .There were also approximately 30-40 members of a fringe group. They boasted an active web forum receiving 60,000 hits from January to February 15, 2009. An analysis of the hits is provided below:

Statistics from Jan. 1, 2009 to Feb 15, 2009

Country/Territory – Number of Visits

Canada - 5,906
United States - 47
Germany - 2
Finland - 2
Cuba - 1
Netherlands - 1

City – Number of Visits

St Catharines - 2,851
Welland - 969
Niagara Falls – 838
Thorold - 493
Toronto - 173
Hamilton - 110
Kingston - 90
Fonthill - 85
Grimsby - 61
Scarborough - 57
Oakville - 40
Port Colborne - 30
Burlington - 25
Mont-Royal -17
Montreal - 14
Don Mills - 9
Brampton - 8
Richmond Hill - 7
Etobicoke - 4
Windsor - 4
Outremont - 4
Cornwall - 3
Weston - 3
Fenwick - 2
Kitchener - 2
Sault Sainte Marie - 1
Brantford - 1
Oshawa - 1
Carleton Place - 1
Vancouver - 1

Site Content – Number of Hits – Unique Hits

Forum - 58,459 - 36,581
Website Homepage - 717 - 667
Pictures - 66 - 58
Training - 52 - 34
Links - 35 - 31
Sponsors - 26 - 24
Nutrition - 18 - 18

3. PRESENTATION – NIAGARA TO GTA CORRIDOR

Representatives John Slobodzian, MTO Project Coordinator, Terry Hilditch, MTO Assistant Project Coordinator, and Patrick Puccini, URS Canada Inc., Project Consultant attended the meeting. Mr. Slobodzian gave an informative power point presentation regarding the Niagara to GTA Corridor. Copies of the presentation were provided to the committee.

Discussion took place following the presentation. It was suggested that Council should be made aware of the MTO recommendations. This information should also be forwarded to the Transportation Strategy Steering Committee and from there to the Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee.

The committee was invited to provide comments or possible solutions to the MTO before March or after the draft report was prepared for review. Dave Hunt kindly agreed to coordinate comments for submission to the MTO. RNBC members were encouraged to provide Dave with comments. **(ACTION ITEM 43)**

4. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES OF JANUARY 8, 2009

*Moved by Bob Romanuk
Seconded by Pat Maloney*

That the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee Meeting Notes of the December 11, 2008 meeting be approved with the addition of Action Item 39-42.

Carried

Councillor Baty assumed the role of Chair.

5. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEM 2

Councillor Baty apprised the committee that the Ontario Cycle Tourism Forum was an excellent conference and well attended. Bob Romanuk provided a written summary and others who attended commented on the highlights. A key message is that bicycle tourism is a new emerging market that municipalities should seize on.

ACTION ITEM 6

Bob Romanuk met with the 1812 Legacy Council and two routes will be developed showcasing 1812 sites. These routes will be included on the new RNBC web based scenic bicycle loop ride inventory.

ACTION ITEM 17

Councillor Baty and Ken Forgeron met with Facilities Staff regarding the construction of a bicycle shelter. The project is estimated to cost under \$7000 for the construction of an expandable 12 x 12 structure to secure up to eight bicycles. The expense is expected to be covered from the Corporate Services account.

Moved by Paul Pattison

Seconded by Bob Romanuk

That the RNBC supports the construction of the proposed bicycle shelter under the canopy at Campbell East as described in the preliminary stages.

Carried

ACTION ITEM 18

Eric Flora reported that in previous discussions with the cities of St. Catharines and Thorold sidewalks and the centre median multi-use trail were noted as issues. It is not in the Region's budget to undertake an EA addendum (as the City of St. Catharines was the proponent for the original EA). An update will be given at a later date once more is known.

ACTION ITEM 24

The development of two routes (above and below the Escarpment) from Hamilton to Niagara Falls is in progress. Peter Davies is doing this work.

ACTION ITEM 27

Eric Flora reported that there is \$6M in the 2009 Regional Budget for resurfacing.

ACTION ITEM 32

Eric Flora stated that the Hwy 406 – Port Robinson Rd. to East Main St. improvements study was completed and on schedule. N-GTA second Public Information Centre notice was distributed to the members. To date, the MTO has not identified this project in its 2007-2011 Southern Ontario Highways program (i.e. construction budget).

ACTION ITEM 38

Councillor Baty met with the CAO and members of CMT to discuss budgetary concerns in support of RNBC initiatives. Funds for the RNBC are not available in the current budget. A further report will be given at the next meeting.

6. BUSINESS ARISING

Nothing to report to date.

7. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- RNBC Strategic Plan priorities and actions were deferred to the next meeting with this as the primary topic for consideration.

- Volunteers for Toronto International Bicycle Show

Ken Forgeron informed the committee that a number of volunteers are needed for the upcoming Toronto International Bicycle Show being held on March 13-15, 2009. Volunteers would receive a free entrance pass and would be paid \$30 for travel. Members were encouraged to volunteer and a "sign up sheet" was provided. Carpooling is strongly encouraged.

- PPA: Bicycle Policies and Mapping

Prior to the meeting, members received by email the proposed Section Nine of the Regional Bicycle Policies for review. Dave Hunt discussed the amendments to each objective and policy with the committee. The following motion was made: **(ACTION ITEM 44)**

Moved by Dave Hunt

Seconded by Pat Maloney

That the RNBC approve the proposed Bicycle Policy Plan suggestions, as revised, and recommend that Regional staff prepare a background report to Council to initiate a formal Policy Plan update amendment.

Carried

- Niagara 1812 Legacy Council: Mapping

Bob Romanuk is developing one or more bicycle routes, one of which traces the steps that Laura Secord took from Queenston to the Decew House. Additional information on the historical background is still needed to enhance the routes and an appeal to local tourism bodies may be made. He will wait for a reply from the Niagara Parks Commission historian after sending him the information for review. During discussion it was suggested for more information to contact Vince Del Buono, who was hired by Niagara Region to coordinate the work of the Niagara 1812 Legacy Council.

- Regional/Local Bicycle Signage and Wayfinding

A meeting will be set to follow-up on Bicycle Signage and Wayfinding Program. **(ACTION ITEM 45)** A request from the City of St. Catharines regarding implementation of bicycle lanes in the City over the short-term (mainly re-striping some roads to identify bicycle lanes within existing road platforms) was also discussed. The meeting will include the following topics for discussion regarding signage:

- Existing draft for bicycle signage
- Approvals needed to proceed
- Research on best practises
- Adoption of an approach for Niagara
- Integration with local municipalities

- Timing and phasing
- Resources and possible hiring of a student
- Funding

On the subject of the implementation of bicycle lanes, discussion would include:

- Nature of the St. Catharines' request
- Region's response/position
- List of potential candidate roads and the impacts
- Approach and process to address candidate roads
- Timing
- Communications with St. Catharines

- Bicycle Route Development in St. Catharines

The following report from Gary Murphy was received by email regarding the January 15, 2009 meeting amongst the Niagara Region, Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee (RNBC) the City of St. Catharines and Garden City Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (GCAST).

"It was a great success and in attendance was Eric Flora, Associate Director Transportation Services for the Niagara Region, Councillor Brian Baty, Chair RNBC, Paul Pattison, Frank Pravitz, Ken Forgeron, Kris Jacobson, Peter Leyser Traffic Technologist, and Gary Murphy.

We presented our ideas on what we would like to see done on City Streets that are controlled by the Region as well as roads that are on the Bike Network, controlled by the Region. We explained what we have been doing in terms of dealing with the low hanging fruit, intersections, and lines leading up to the intersections. We explained that in almost all instances, intersections are not complete, no intersection boxes, lines stop 50 metres before the intersection, or lines stop in the middle of streets, on road markings not being maintained and poor signage. We also went over the streets that we would like to have bike lanes on. The City's responsibility in this case is removal of the on road parking; the Region would pay for the lines and signs. We brought forth the idea of Sharrows, they liked them. Signage was addressed; we wanted to see a common sign, throughout the Region. This is an issue that will require more consultation, however there was a buy in and an acknowledgement that signs are needed and that a route numbering system is required.

The meeting concluded with the following:

- *The Region would like to see GCAST at their meetings where issues concerning St Catharines are on the agenda. We will be added to their distribution list.*
- *Eric Flora wanted us to send him our wish list of streets to be lined. We discussed this item, in more general terms, however, it is now up to us to prepare that list and forward it to Kris and Eric.*

- *Eric Flora will look at intersections with the idea of defining the most practical way of dealing with them.*

I was most gratified with the acceptance of what we were proposing. It was a cordial meeting. The Region bought into the idea of putting on road bike lanes, where the width is available, but that were not in need of repaving or rebuilding. There may be successive meetings, although at this point, most of our dealing will be via email, or our attendance at RNBC meetings. We now need to prepare our wish list of streets to be done, some of which we addressed at the last GCAST meeting, namely, Carlton, Welland, Queenston, St Paul, 3rd line etc. “

A key point made at this meeting was that the City of St. Catharines staff support the removal of on-street parking on roadways serving as bicycle routes. Roadways should serve to move vehicles (including bicycles) not to store them. (i.e. parking)

- Request to Name Portion of GNCR Trail in Honour of George Nicholson

Mr. Patrick Connor, Executive Director of the Ontario Trails Association and Mr. Michael McKinley, former Rector with St. Thomas' Church in St. Catharines contacted Drew Semple at the Region requesting support for naming a portion of the Greater Niagara Circle Route Trail in honour of George Nicholson.

The suggestion is that a portion of the Port Weller East Side Spit trail in St. Catharines, perhaps the tip of the spit itself be named in honour of George. This is the last portion of the trail to be completed and coincidentally is located in the municipality where George lived. Through resolution the GNCR Committee is expected to support the renaming of a portion of the Port Weller East Side Spit Trail in honour of George Nicholson.

Moved by Paul Pattison

Seconded by Bob Romanuk

That the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee strongly supports and endorses the resolution by the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee that the City of St. Catharines be requested to rename a portion of the Port Weller East Side Spit Trail (a portion of the GNCR Trail) in honour of George Nicholson who was a leader in Niagara and throughout the Province in promoting and helping to build trails.

Carried

- **TASK FORCE REPORTS**

Engineering Task Force

Eric Flora reported on the following items:

- Hartzel Road/Merritt Street (between Oakdale Avenue and Queenston Street) – Operational & Safety Review Class EA – City of St. Catharines – City staff are in the process of hiring a consultant to undertake the study and initiate the study mid-March. There will be stakeholder meetings and one Public Information Centre.

- Niagara Falls Transportation Master Plan – City of Niagara Falls – City staff are in the process of hiring a consultant to undertake this study. Once the study is initiated, there will be stakeholder meetings and Public Information Centres. The Region has agreed-in-principal to cost-share, subject to budget approval.
- Copies of PWP 09-2009 Projects/Studies Activity Report – Transportation Strategy and PWP 11-2009 Project Activity Report – Transportation Services will be distributed to the committee members once they are approved at the February 25, 2009 ICP – PWC meeting.
- Transportation Services Sustainability Review – staff report going to April 8th ICP&PWC. The recommendations in the report will be implemented over a period of months or years (subject to Council approval). Result – review approximately 53 linear km of road for assumption by the Region and 44 linear km back to the area municipalities/MTO; net increase on the regional road network of 9 linear km.

Education and Enforcement Task Force

Nothing to report to date.

Encouragement Task Force

Nothing to report to date.

Policy Task Force

One of the next priorities for the Policy Task Force will be to compile model cycling policies for use in local Official Plans.

The Chair added an additional task; to draft a reply from the RNBC to MTO's request for how active living and cycling can be included within the Niagara to GTA Corridor Transportation Study, as presented in Agenda Item 3. **(ACTION ITEM 42)**

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- Highlights and Possible Actions – Ontario Bicycle Tourism Forum

An outline of the forum was distributed among the committee and a link to the website was provided. <http://www.ontariochycletourismforum.ca/agenda>

Bob Romanuk stated that the forum was an energizing experience and many visitors that were non bicyclists showed great interest. It was felt that Niagara Region was recognized as leaders in Ontario.

- Niagara Bicycle Tourism Initiatives

Ken Forgeron apprised the committee that there was incredible work being done in both Quebec and Holland where governments promote bicycling tourism. Some criticism of the Ministry of Transportation was shown with questions posed “How do we get cyclists and pedestrians safely across roadways at interchanges?” Mr. Forgeron informed the committee that there was a major funding announcement from the Ministry of Tourism and Greenbelt Foundation for an enhanced Bike Train program in 2009 in the Niagara,

Windsor, North Bay and Ottawa areas. Dave Hunt expressed the opinion that although the Ministry of Tourism was supportive, we don't have National or Provincial support of bicycling.

- **CanBike II Bicycle Training Opportunity**

Dave Hunt provided an overview of the CanBike II Training opportunity being offered by the Niagara Region Public Health Department, which has a goal of increasing the number of CanBike instructors in Niagara Region. This 5 day course from May 4-8/09 is being offered free to 8 selected participants, chosen by application due on March 6/09.

Requirements include; volunteering for a minimum of 12 hours per year for 3 years, and prior to training completing a standard First Aid-CPR course, obtaining membership with the Canadian Cycling Association or affiliate, and submitting a police check. Peter Davies and Dave Hunt have submitted applications.

- **ITEMS FOR DISTRIBUTION**

Winning Campaign Workshop – Dave Hunt

This was presented by Dave Hunt as a learning opportunity for RNBC members as advertised in the Cyclometer Newsletter from the City of Toronto Cycling Advisory Committee. It is a 3 day course in Toronto from March 27-29, 2009, put on by the Thunderhead Alliance (an American bike advocacy organization) in partnership with the Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation and the Toronto Cyclists Union. It is geared to leaders of provincial and municipal bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations be they board members, staff or super volunteers. A proven curriculum will be presented on choosing, directing and winning campaigns to increase bicycling and walking. Cost is \$50 for early registration (prior to Mar. 1/09) and \$75 thereafter. You can register on-line here: <http://www.thunderheadalliance.org/site/index.php/site/EventRegistration/>

The following items were distributed amongst the committee:

- Ontario Government Notice of Public Information Centre #2 Niagara to GTA Corridor
- 2009 Great Waterfront Trail Adventure Tour –July 4-11, 2009-03-04
- Creating a Great Welland – Community Workshop - Feb. 20, 2009
- An Invitation to a Fun Cycling Weekend in Wine Country – May 15-18,2009
- Magazine article – Alternative transportation may be the thing to do
- Magazine article – Walking and biking to school encouraged

9. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

The final stages of the priorities and objectives will be the primary topic on the agenda.

Note: There may be other topics if warranted at Councillor Baty's approval.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Meeting Adjourned at 9:50 p.m. to meet again on Thursday, April 2, 2009 - Niagara Regional Headquarters - Committee Room 4.

***Moved by Pat Maloney
Seconded by Dave Hunt***

That the RNBC meeting be adjourned.

Carried

Brian Baty
Chair

Penny Pitt
Administrative Assistant
Clerk's Department