

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING
COMMITTEE

Thursday, June 26, 2008
Regional Headquarters – Campbell East - CE101
7:00 p.m.



MEETING NOTES

In Attendance:

Brian Baty	-	Regional Councillor (Chair)
Barb Henderson	-	Mayor, Township of Wainfleet/Regional Councillor
Bob Romanuk	-	Public-at-Large/N.F.Trails & Bikeways Committee
Pat Maloney	-	Public-at-Large
Peter Davies	-	Public-at-Large/Niagara Freewheelers
Paul Pattison	-	Public-at-Large
Tim Whittle	-	Niagara Region Police Service
Dave Evans	-	Guest
Eric Flora	-	Regional Public Works Department
Ken Forgeron	-	Regional Planning Services Department
Dianne Coppola	-	Niagara Region Public Health
Penny Pitt	-	Administrative Assistant –Council Support

Guests

Dave Brown	-	Guest – Brock University
Peter Hart	-	Guest – Tour de Greenbelt

Regrets

Dave Hunt		Public-at-Large/Cycle Ontario Alliance
Frank Pravitz		MTO

1. Adoption of Agenda

Adopted with the addition of the following items by Eric Flora: Metro Linx, Transit Website, Municipal Collision and Coding, MTO Transportation Demand, and Web Domain.

2. Introduction of Invited Guests

Ken Forgeron introduced Dave Brown from Brock University, who would give a power point presentation on the Niagara Greenbelt Website, and Peter Hart, Tour Director of Tour de Greenbelt.

3. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (May 15, 2008)

One revision noted:

Eric Flora to be added to the list of regrets.

Motion:

To approve RNBC Meeting Notes of May 15, 2008 as revised.

Moved By: Paul Pattison

Seconded By: Patrick Maloney

Carried

4. Review of Previous Action Items

Committee members updated the Action Items noting the completion of Items 4, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 18. Action Item 16 – Police Enforcement on the Trails - to be an Agenda Item at the next meeting. Item 17 – Proposed Bicycle/Transit Shelter – Councillor Baty reported that the item was discussed with Mike Trojan and verbally supported. The RNBC is waiting for follow up action from the Corporate Management Team (CMT) on this initiative. (**Action Item**)

5. Business Arising

None.

6. Items for Consideration

Presentation – Niagara Greenbelt Gateway Website

Dave Brown of Brock University, during his presentation gave an overview of the soon to be available Niagara Greenbelt Gateway Website (www.niagaragreenbelt.com).

The Niagara Greenbelt Gateway Website is a non-profit, interactive community resource and information commons about the Niagara Greenbelt which allows users everywhere to quickly and easily plan activities in the area. It contains a number of innovations not seen in other tourism websites, and is designed to help users explore the Greenbelt and its features, attributes and attractions in many new ways. When the site is complete, users will be able to:

- discover individual attractions and points of interest, organized by category - everything from accommodations to trails, natural areas to cycling routes, and restaurants to heritage buildings. Over 500 points of interest (POIs) have been catalogued in the Niagara Greenbelt region alone, and counting;
- get directions to, from, and between their home, local accommodations, and any Niagara Greenbelt points of interest, by car, bicycle, public transit, or on foot, emphasizing low-impact sustainable tourism and incorporating non-motorized transportation options and accessibility information;
- Create their own custom tour itinerary, joining together any points of interest they choose. They will get a detailed itinerary with directions, maps, and full POI descriptions delivered to their computer in a zip file. In some cases, users can also download Greenbelt *TripClips* - audio or video descriptions and tours to play on their iPods or in the car - and download detailed coordinates for their GPS units;
- Share their own innovative custom itineraries with other Greenbelt explorers by posting them to our site;
- Choose one of our prepared tour itineraries for a thematic Greenbelt tour experience of short or long duration;
- Share comments, tips, suggestions and reviews of POIs with other users;
- Upload photos, video, and other multimedia content pertaining to POIs and Greenbelt activities;
- Contribute new information, edit and update POI pages in a monitored Wikipedia-like format, to ensure that knowledgeable users can share valuable insights and information with the rest of the user community.

For further information about the Niagara Greenbelt Gateway Website, please contact David T. Brown at dbrown@brocku.ca / 905-688-5550 x. 3293, or Renato Romanin at rromanin@niagaracanada.com / 905-685-1308.

GIS Mapping of Niagara Freewheeler Routes – Health Living Niagara

Ken Forgeron provided an update on the development of the website. The project involves a library of some 350 scenic bicycle rides developed by the Freewheelers. Ken Forgeron requested that RNBC members develop two routes (above and below the Escarpment) from Hamilton to Niagara Falls. **(Action Item)** Paul Pattison circulated a proposed map entitled “Canals Past and Present” which describes various landmarks along the bicycle route. He also suggested that the map could be handed out at the VIA train station embarking point for the Bike Train passengers.

Tour de Green Belt

Peter Hart, Tour Director, gave a brief introduction of his background and provided the committee with an explanation and mission statement of Tour de Green Belt to be held this fall. He described the group’s first year’s upcoming activities with their expected goal of 600 -1000 riders. A \$30 registration fee is required with the final routes be available in 2-3 weeks. The questions of permit requirements and liability perspectives were discussed. It was suggested that the NRP and EMS should be informed of these events along with posting the information on the Tourism Niagara website, the RNBC website and informing Rob Forester of the Niagara Freewheelers. Mr. Hart distributed two handouts with explicit information pertaining to the events.

RNBC Strategic Plan: Proposed Framework for Prioritizing and Operationalizing

Dianne Coppola provided members with a summary of the advantages and limitations associated with different Prioritization Methods that could assist with the next phase of the strategic planning process – prioritizing the various action items under each of the three areas of focus. Due to time constraints, the committee agreed to defer further discussion on the methods until the next meeting. Members were encouraged to review the handout and bring back any questions to the next meeting.

Joint Meeting – GNCR/RNBC Strategic Plan

Councillor Baty (Chair) stated that the proposed July 16th joint meeting with the GNCR needs to be rescheduled to the fall. A definite date (Wednesday night preferred), place and time will be arranged and the committees will be notified.

New RNBC Administration and Procedures

Councillor Baty introduced Penny Pitt, Administrative Assistant from the Clerk’s Department, who will be clerking the RNBC meetings in future.

Cross Country Cycling in Niagara: Community Introduction

Dave Evans announced to the committee that Liberty Cycle hosted cross country bicycle rides every other Wednesday with approximately 350 riders attending. Bob Romanuk will follow up with the suggestion that the RNBC website include a link to the Cross Country website. Tim Whittle advised to make sure of the legal aspects of this before any endorsement from the RNBC committee. Ken Forgeron will contact Stuart Green and Kurt from Liberty Cycle with the expectation of meeting in September. **(Action Item)** Bob Romanuk stated that Kurt should send us a list of Liberty Cycle’s events for posting on the RNBC website. The Sunflower Squad events could also be promoted on the RNBC web site.

Bicycle Map Request – 2009 Planning Conference

Ken Forgeron advised that a request for maps was made from the Canadian Institute of Planners/Ontario Professional Planners Institute for their 2009 Niagara Falls Planning Conference. It was noted that there would be 1000 – 1500 delegates attending.

Motion:

To supply the 2009 Niagara Falls Planning Conference Committee with 1000 maps in exchange for a donation to the RNBC.

Moved By: Paul Pattison

Seconded By: Patrick Maloney

Carried

Great Waterfront Trail Adventure Tour: Niagara Start (July 4, 2008)

Ken Forgeron encouraged everyone to attend the official launch of the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure Tour with the Minister of Health Promotion in attendance. A “Discover Old Port Dalhousie” Walk and Quiz tour was also being offered for those support people not riders. Flyers and quiz forms are available for distribution and the website provided for more information www.waterfronttrail.org.

Bicycle Planning in St. Catharines

Ken Forgeron advised the committee that in conversation with Kris Jacobson, Transportation Services Manager, City of St. Catharines, he stated the city was seeking guidance from the RNBC as to the benefits of having its own bicycling committee or relying instead on the services of the RNBC. The RNBC is reluctant to assume responsibility regarding bicycling matters in lieu of the City of St. Catharines forming its own committee. It was noted that the City of St. Catharines previously had a bicycling committee but it had been disbanded following the development of a draft bicycling network map and official plan policies some years ago.

7. Task Force Reports

Engineering Task Force – Eric Flora

Ontario St. EA: “To Bike or Not to Bike”

A report regarding the Ontario Street, St. Catharines EA is being prepared for presentation to the Planning and Public Works Committee on July 16, 2008 (PWA 75-2008). A copy will be included in the meeting notes. The report recommends that this new two way road conversion include a wide curb lane to accommodate both cyclists and motorized vehicles. This is contrary to the City of St. Catharines position of providing more lanes inclusively for cars and trucks.

Motion:

That the RNBC Committee support the expected Regional Public Works recommendation (on wide shared use lanes) for presentation at the PPWC of July 16, 2008.

Moved By: Patrick Maloney

Seconded By: Paul Pattison

Carried

St. David’s Road EA: Status Update

Further discussion of this matter would be held at the next meeting and possibly a presentation would be made. An invitation to Brock University’s Vice President of Student Affairs was extended to attend an RNBC meeting in September or October. **(Action Item)**

Highway 406 – Port Robinson Road to East Main Street – Preliminary Design/Environmental Assessment

This project is moving forward with positive feedback. Due to other issues being involved, the Committee would receive a report at the next meeting. Provision is being made to allow bicycle facilities on Port Robinson Road over Hwy. 406 also, some discussion is occurring on the provision of a pedestrian/cycling bridge from Merritt Island in lieu of crossing the Trillium Railway bridge.

Glendale Avenue/QEW Planning Study

The Region has agreed to undertake this study as per the MTO's formal request. The study should commence in 2009, subject to budget approval. Staff from the Region, MTO and Town of NOTL will meet over the summer to discuss the scope of work and study Terms of Reference.

East-West Line between Concession 2 Road and Niagara River Parkway

The Town of NOTL has submitted an official request to the Region to approve funding of bikeways facilities (paved shoulders) along this section of roadway which is identified on the Region's Bikeways Network. The amount requested is \$145,000. A staff report will be brought forward to an upcoming PPWC meeting recommending approval. This will complete the works required along East and West Line.

Geneva Street Road Diet

Paul Pattison indicated that instead of two lanes in each direction between Scott Street and Linwell Road, new lines for bike lanes will be painted on the recently repaved street, converting Geneva Street from four lanes to one lane in each direction, with a centre turn and bike lanes. The change is intended to reduce speeds and make the predominately residential street more pleasant, easier to make left turns, easier to enter and exit driveways, and speeding drivers won't weave back and forth between lanes. Geneva Street is on Niagara Region's bicycling network.

2008 Roadway Priorities

The following Bikeways Priorities list was provided by email from Frank Pravitz, Chair of the RNBC Network Taskforce. This information was requested from the Commissioner of Public Works. Transportation and Planning staff are appreciative of receiving this information from Mr. Pravitz and will review this information when setting its Capital works program.

1. Adhere to Provincial Policies
 - Provincial Policy Statement
 - Provincial Growth Plan
 - Greenbelt Legislation
 - Consider the Metrolinx papers, if the Region wants Metrolinx to scope it in
2. Implementation of the Bikeways Plan
 - Add lanes as construction takes place on any roadway identified on Regional Bikeways Network
 - Continue funding local projects on the Bikeway Network
3. Key Roads
 - Complete major corridors (Sodom, Fly, RR#55, River Road (if any), and Four Mile Creek Road
 - Urban roads, especially Lakeshore, RR#81, Waterfront Trail, Effingham, western N/S link to Lake Erie, Mountain Road, Beechwood – Taylor corridor completion
 - Road diet, further conversion from four lanes to two lane/centre turning lanes/bike lanes (e.g. Geneva north of Scott, Glendale at GM)

4. Strategic Positioning of Capital Works Projects
(It is anticipated that more \$\$s will become available for capital projects from the federal and provincial governments – particularly involving sustainability.)
 - Ensure that there are projects available to fund should \$\$s become available (e.g. \$300M provincial funding); this means having EAs completed
 - Projects should be green, should green capital money become available (bike lanes, Waterfront Trail, Wineries Network)

5. Sustainable Transportation Co-Coordinator
 - Can pay for itself by being aware of funding sources and establishing and making partnerships with Not for Profit Groups (funding sometimes goes to these groups e.g. Tourism, Municipal, MTO, MPIR, Transit, Trillium, MPH, Environment, TAC, Federal/Provincial/Federation of Municipalities)
 - Promote maps, brochures, safety programs, signage studies, planning studies (similar to the proposal for inter-city regional bus service proposal)

Metrolinx

Eric Flora explained that Metro Linx was a consortium between Hamilton and the GTA with Regional Chairman Partington appointed to represent Niagara Region on the Advisory Committee. The question of bicycles being allowed on trains at all times and bike racks on the inter-city carrier buses was asked and Eric will provide follow up. **(Action Item)**

The RNBC was advised of the recently posted 'white papers' for discussion on the Metrolinx website. Paper #1 – Vision, Goals and Objectives and Paper #2 – Preliminary Directions and Concepts.

Transit Website

Transit information website is under development with the expectation to be up and running by September or October. It will have a link to the cycling map and once developed the site should be reviewed by the committee.

MTO Ontario Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Municipal Grant Program 2008-2009

In support of TDM in Ontario, the MTO has established the above-noted program. This will assist municipalities in the development and implementation of TDM initiatives. \$250,000 is available and the maximum funding available per project is \$50,000, and the municipality must match the MTO's contribution. Applications for grants are due by August 29, 2008. Information will be forwarded to the RNBC **(Action Item)**

Web Domain

The Region's website is being changed in September to www.niagararegion.ca. All correspondence and distribution lists that include Regional staff will need to be revised. **(Action Item)**

Education and Enforcement Task Force –Tim Whittle

A NRPS Media Release document which included a self registration form was distributed to the committee regarding the launching of the Bike Self Registration Program. It was suggested providing the bicycle shops with an initial supply of the registration forms and adding a link to the RNBC website to download the form in a pdf format.

Prince Philip School recently held a bicycle rodeo with a great turnout of 200 riders. With the comment that Bike safety needs to be in schools, Tim Whittle will talk to the principal of the school about developing a template to share with other schools.

Encouragement Task Force – Dianne Coppola

“Bike to Get There” Summary

The cycling season has begun with 1200 cycling trips being logged from May 26 – June 1, 2008 on the “Bike to Get There” campaign. A media event at Keefer Mansion is being held on July 3 2008 to present a prize to the winner. The winner is an employee of the City of St. Catharines who cycles year round and only missed three days last year. Keefer Mansion has installed a bike rack and has nominated themselves for a Bicycle Friendly Award.

“Bike to Get There” passports are trickling in with a deadline for receipt of July 15, 2008 and the first draw being held on July 15, 2008 as well. The campaign ends at the end of October with monthly prizes.

Niagara Kids CAN Bike – Twenty priority youth from East Welland will be participating in a one week summer camp which includes a CAN bike course. Participants will be given their bikes at graduation. Grants from Wise Guys Charity and Healthy Living Niagara (HLN) funded the purchase of the bikes. Marian Landry, one of the camp organizers is looking for one volunteer for the Bike Hike which starts at the Children’s Safety Village. Councillor Baty graciously volunteered.

An Active Transportation Advisory Committee has been established in Thorold. Also, Pelham’s Active Transportation committee will have their first meeting on July 14, 2008.

Think First – Ontario Safe Sport Helmet Initiative

Niagara Region Public Health will receive five hundred - \$25 vouchers towards the purchase of bike/sport helmets as part of a provincial initiative to address injury prevention for youth experiencing financial constraints. The Health Department is partnering with the YMCA of Niagara, Niagara Regional Housing and Niagara Region Community Services for the distribution of the vouchers and roughly 29 retailers throughout Niagara have agreed to accept the vouchers.

8. Items for Information

- Items for Distribution

The following items were distributed at the June 26, 2008 meeting:

- a. An article from thisweek.com entitled “Include bike traffic in planning: cyclists”
 - b. Great Waterfront Trail Adventure flyer
 - c. Waterfront Trail Adventure Tour: Niagara Section – Discover Old Port Dalhousie
 - d. Canals Past and Present article
 - e. Tour de Green Belt – A fresh air festival on wheels
 - f. Greenbelt – new release
 - g. RNBC Business Planning Worksheets
 - h. Overview of Prioritization Methods – compiled by Dianne Coppola
 - i. Highlights from Web-Presentations “Cycling for Everyone: Lessons for Vancouver from the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany – by Professor John Purcher (Rutgers University)
 - j. Passport – Bike to Get There
- Improvements to Queenston-Lewiston Plaza – Ken Forgeron reported that \$62M has been assigned to the redevelopment which is expected to have an impact on cyclists. Eric Flora will obtain a summary of plans. Paul Pattison will monitor this development as it proceeds. **(Action Item)**

9. Items for Next Agenda

- Ken Forgeron – Scenic Route website launch
- Dianne Coppola to invite Marion Landry to report on her Niagara Kids CAN Bike project
- Highlights of May 24, 2008 Joint Meeting of Bicycling Committees
- Joint Meeting between GNCR and RNBC
- Tim Whittle - Police Enforcement on the Trails

10. Meeting Adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

11. Date of Next Meeting (Summer Social)

- August 7, 2008 at Maloney's Alpaca Ranch (map to be sent out)
- Time: 5:30 p.m.
- Potluck (email to be sent out for responses)

Meeting Notes Reviewed by: Ken Forgeron, Regional Planning, Eric Flora, Public Works and
Dianne Coppola, Public Health

Meeting Notes Recorded by: Penny Pitt