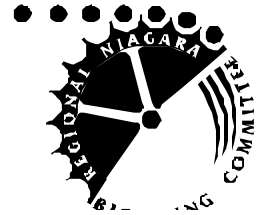


**REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES**



**Thursday, June 22, 2006
24 Wolseley Ave., St. Catharines
6:00 p.m.**

Present:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Ken Forgeron | - Regional Niagara Planning (Acting Chair) |
| Gregg Dame | - Public at Large & Port Colborne Trails & Bikeways Committee |
| Bob Romanuk | - Public at Large & Niagara Falls Trails & Bikeways Committee |
| John Reep | - Public at Large |
| Paul Pattison | - Public at Large |
| Peter Davies | - Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club |
| John Docker | - Regional Niagara Public Works |
| Tom Jamieson | - Corporate Services: Information Management Systems and Communications |
| Peter Leyser | - City of St. Catharines |
| Dianne Coppola | - Regional Niagara Public Health |
| Tim Whittle | - Regional Niagara Police Services |
| Phil Bergen | - Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation) |
| Julie Bittner | - Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation) |

Regrets:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Frank Pravitz | - Ministry of Transportation |
| Eric Flora | - Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation) |
| Ron Leavens | - Regional Councillor (Chair) |
| Brian Baty | - Regional Councillor |

The meeting commenced at 6:30 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

With the addition of the agenda items listed below, the agenda was adopted.

- Under New Business Mr. Forgeron will provide an update on the Mountain Road EA.
- Possible new project related to Healthy Living and the Safe Routes to School Program (Ken Forgeron)
- Announcement regarding additional work on bicycling lanes on East/West Line in Niagara-on-the-Lake (Ken Forgeron)

Motion:

To accept the agenda of June 22 as revised.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

2. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (May 18, 2006)

Motion:

To accept and approve the meeting notes of May 18, 2006.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

3. Business Arising

The Committee was provided updates on a number of "Action Items" which arose out of the May 18, 2006 meeting notes:

- The Action Item on the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge was deferred until later in the meeting as it is also an agenda item.
- Councillor Leavens will ask Gwen Speranzini if she is available to facilitate the RNBC Strategic Planning Session to be held in September. This action item was deferred as Councillor Leavens was not in attendance. **(Action Item)**
- The meeting notes from the joint meeting with Burlington/Hamilton/Niagara cycling committees have not yet been finalized. Once completed they will be distributed to RNBC members. **(Action Item)**
- Phil Bergen and John Reep provided comments on the issue of abutting neighbours encroaching on the Upper Canada Trail in NOTL. Although peach trees have been planted close to the trail, they are not right on the trail itself. However, farm equipment does go onto the trail when the farmers are working in the fields and turn the corner to go down another row of trees. As the trail is not paved, when the ground is wet and the equipment is driven over the trail, ruts do develop. Mr. Reep said that he cycles the part of the Upper Canada Trail in question and has not noticed any change in the amount of encroachment by the neighbours over the past few years. Having said this, Mr. Reep expressed concern that if the issue is not addressed by the Town, then further encroachment would likely occur. Mr. Forgeron said that Mr. Flora had previously agreed to raise this issue with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake when he meets with them to discuss the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Transportation Masterplan. **(Action Item)**

4. Regional Bicycling Signage Program: Action

This item was deferred. However, Mr. Forgeron requested that a sub-committee be formed in order to get the project started. Peter Davies, Frank Pravitz and Dave Hunt have volunteered to join the sub-committee. As Mr. Flora was not in attendance for the meeting, a request was made to Phil Bergen to ask if Mr. Flora would make meeting arrangements. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Davies said that on Glenridge hill leading to Brock University, there is a sign indicating that vehicles are not to pass cyclists on the hill. Although this sign is for information and is not a legal sign under the *Highway Traffic Act*, Mr. Davies suggested that perhaps this type of signage could be used on roads where there is little to no space for a bike lane. As this signage program is developed, safety issues should also be incorporated into the work

program and appropriate signage installed, if necessary, on the network. **(Action Item for signage program)**

5. Two-Way Traffic Conversion Initiative in St. Catharines

In 2005, Paradigm Transportation Consultants prepared a report for the City of St. Catharines and the Region of Niagara on the conversion of certain one way downtown streets to two way traffic. Travel surveys, background work and public information centres were conducted throughout the year. A number of alternatives were formulated, ranging from a "do nothing" scenario to full conversion of all one way streets to two way traffic. The alternatives were analyzed in a number of areas, including but not limited to parking, traffic operations, pedestrian safety, effect on businesses, streetscaping and other socio-economic impacts. City Council approved Alternative 5, which changes Ontario St., William St., King St., Church St. and St. Paul St. to two way operation.

The next step before Council is to determine budgeting and staging of the project, with a decision likely in the fall. Council could direct the conversion to occur in anything from one to three years.

The existing pavement width will not be altered, so dedicated on-street bike lanes are not an option. City staff have agreed that "Share the Road" or prohibited passing of cyclists signs (similar to Glenridge Avenue northbound at the Escarpment) could be considered for the downtown area. It has been noted that many cyclists choose to cycle on sidewalks in the downtown area. This is contrary to City By-law 89-2000, though police are often reticent to lay such charges for a variety of reasons. (ie. low fines, court procedures, low probability of conviction). This issue will require further attention.

6. Queenston-Lewiston Bridge Access - Status

Mr. Pattison reported that the project to install signage to direct cyclists to the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge is moving forward, albeit slowly.

Mr. Bergen reported that the signage will be installed on existing poles. It should take approximately one to two weeks for the signs to be manufactured. A further update will be provided on this work. **(Action Item)**

7. St. David's Road Pedestrian & Cycling Needs Study

Mr. Bergen reported that he had advised the project consultant of the RNBC's suggestion to include the City of Thorold in the origin/destination survey scheduled to take place in the fall. There will likely be no new information to report on the project until the next phase is completed in the fall. This is a problematic stretch of roadway that connects Brock University to a substantial student population living in Thorold. On and off ramps of Highway 406 are very dangerous to cyclists and pedestrians.

8. Web-Based Applications: Regional Bicycling Map

Mr. Jamieson spoke to the RNBC about possible new short and long term applications for the map. In terms of short term applications, there will be a digital version of the graphical map – an I-map viewer - where a person can pan, print or zoom in to a specific area and print a specific area. You will have the ability to make measurements with this system, for example, measure out the distance between two specific areas.

In terms of mid-term applications, a GIS version of the map will be available which will be integrated with other data layers which are currently available through the GIS department. Some core information included in the GIS system are addresses, water bodies and aerial photography. The map will be included on Niagara Navigator “Your Niagara” and the capabilities will be there to do a query by typing in keywords or by doing a spatial query, for example, locate a property and find out what trails are within a certain distance of that property.

Mr. Jamieson also discussed possible long term goals. The RNBC needs to give thought to what additional layers they would like included on the map (for example, Freewheeler loop rides) and what we would like to do for the 3rd edition of the map. Aside from specific cycling layers, all other layers have been built in the GIS. The RNBC should focus on customizing the map so that it is as easy as possible for users. There is still great value in having a paper map for those who are not computer savvy.

The biggest issue right now is staff resources. Mr. Jamieson indicated to the RNBC that Niagara College has an internship program and this type of project fits in very well. The internship program would begin in September/October. Mr. Jamieson suggested that a sub-committee be formed and hold discussions on what it is we would like to have student do. Some suggested layers to map include: themed rides (eg. Underground Railway route, b & bs, Tim Horton locations, restaurants, hotels, a “ride of the month”). Dave Hunt agreed to forward information about restaurants in Quebec which are certified as cycle friendly. These types of establishments could be mapped on Niagara’s map.

9. RNBC Initiatives: Year in Review

Mr. Forgeron distributed copies of the Spring 2006 Burlington Cycling Committee-Update newsletter. This newsletter contains information on who they are, issues they are currently dealing with and a listing and description of upcoming cycling related events. Of interest also is their summary of committee project highlights for the year. Mr. Forgeron suggested that the RNBC could publish a similar type of newsletter on an annual or semi-annual basis to highlight accomplishments. Contributions to the newsletter would be made by RNBC members and co-ordinated by Task Force Chairs. Mr. Whittle suggested publishing the newsletter once a year at the beginning of Bike Month. Mr. Romanuk said that this type of newsletter could be a sales tool to guide people to the website if they are seeking more information. Mr. Reep and Mr. Romanuk volunteered to work on this project. **(Action Item for the Fall)**

Motion:

To strike a committee to develop an annual report/newsletter for production and release to the public in spring prior to Bike Week

Moved by: Bob Romanuk

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

10.

Highlights – International Trails Day

Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate for this year's International Trails Day. Leading up to International Trails Day it was reported that the Peace Bridge would be closed to cyclists, but on the day of the event the Peace Bridge was open to cyclists.

Mr. Romanuk suggested that perhaps International Trails Day should consider building off a larger event which is already taking place, for example, the Friendship Festival, and have a cycling component included. Mr. Whittle said he would mention this suggestion to the International Trails Day organizing committee, but said that the goal of this event is to get the Peace Bridge to shut down a lane and he didn't think that it was likely this would happen during the Friendship Festival.

11. Recreational Map Update

Mr. Docker explained that the target audience for the map appears to have been narrowed down to focus on women and children. It is also in the process of being re-named from a recreational map to a healthy lifestyles map. Dianne Coppola noted that there is a strong link to the Region's Obesity Prevention Strategy. Along with trails, they would like to include schools and playgrounds on the map. Some thought has been given to focusing on urban areas. They are keen on having their product complement the Region's bike map as well as having web functionality.

Mr. David Brown, who started the Niagara Greenways Network, has mapped out many of trail systems in the Niagara region. The group is interested in perhaps working with Mr. Brown and discussing what he could offer in helping put together the map.

12. Task Force Reports

Encouragement

Ms. Coppola reported the following information on Bike-to-Work-Week:

- Approximately 800-900 ballots were turned in this year which is less than last year. The weather that week was extremely hot with some rain which was a deterrent.
- The focus this year was to get new people to participate who don't typically ride. It is estimated that 30% of this year's participants are new to this initiative.
- There was more media coverage this year than last year.
- The Bike-to-Work-Week launch was less successful this year and t-shirt sales were not as successful as last year as well.

Ms. Coppola reported that from a staffing perspective, in terms of resource time, there is a need to shift to a more sustained campaign. Perhaps have the kick-off to Bike-to-Work-Week and then stretch the campaign out for a longer period of time. It was suggested that the venue for next year's campaign be at the St. Catharines Market Square.

Engineering

Mr. Forgeron distributed copies of a letter received regarding an upcoming public information centre for the Regional Road 101 (Mountain Road/Portage Road) Class EA. Mr. Forgeron encouraged all members to attend the PIC and emphasize the need to have proper bicycle facilities in this area. Since this likely will become a truck route for landfill and aggregate haulage, two metre bike lanes might be appropriate. Mr. Whittle suggested sending to Delcan – the consultant for this project - a copy of the memo he wrote to the RNBC in which he provided his assessment on the proposed new entrance off of Taylor Road to access a proposed landfill expansion by Walkers. Mr. Whittle's memo discussed the current status of the bicycle network in the area including proposed road width, speed controls, traffic control, lane configuration and signage. The memo also had a number of recommendations. Mr. Forgeron asked Mr. Bergen to please forward a copy of the memo to Delcan. **(Action Item)**

Policy

Mr. Forgeron distributed an excerpt from the San Francisco Bicycle Program: Bicycle Parking Ordinances. The San Francisco Planning code includes provisions for cyclists on city owned and leased properties. Some of the provisions include: lockers, monitored parking, the number of bicycles parking spaces required and shower facilities. This information will be useful to local municipalities who develop zoning by-laws that provide for cyclists.

Enforcement and Education

Mr. Whittle reported that the Niagara Head Injury organization will once again be having the "We Caught You Using Your Head" program. This initiative encourages children to wear a helmet. Children who are "caught" wearing their helmet will be rewarded with a prize voucher. This program can be applied at skateboard/trick bicycle parks where helmets are quite important, but frequently avoided.

13. New Business

Cycle Ontario Alliance Request – OBR Tour

On behalf of the Cycle Ontario Alliance, Mr. Hunt thanked the RNBC for supporting the recommendations pertaining to various COA initiatives (see May 18/06 meeting notes).

It was suggested that a letter from the Cycle Ontario Alliance be sent to the Regional Chair, CAO and Ron Leavens thanking the RNBC and Regional Council for participating in this event and for supporting the COA's work. **(Action Item)**

Funding of Paved Shoulders on East & West Line During Road Reconstruction in NOTL

Mr. Forgeron reported that Public Works staff has received notification from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake that Town Council recently approved the resurfacing of East and West Line between Four Mile Creek Road and Townline Road (3.2 km). To comply with the Region's Bikeways Master Plan, the Town is considering paving the shoulders as part of this project for bikeway facilities and the Region has been requested to fund the cost of the bikeway facilities.

A report by Public Works staff has been submitted to the Planning and Public Works Committee requesting that approval be granted for the Region to fund the cost of the paved shoulders. This work is in addition to the work on East/West Line over to Regional Road 55.

The item regarding the possible new project related to Healthy Living and the Safe Routes to School Program was deferred until the next meeting. **(Action Item)**

14. Items for Distribution

- June 14th letter from Delcan Consulting announcing that the PIC for Regional Road 101 (Mountain Road) will be held on June 28.
- Spring 2006 Burlington Cycling Committee Update (newsletter).
- Niagara This Week newspaper article dated May 17th entitled "Bicycle safety Thorold mom's mission after daughter's accident."
- Summary of Regional Niagara Bicycling Map donations from March 3 – June 14 (\$3400 collected)
- Notice regarding the kick-off of the Niagara on the Move physical activity tool kit

15. Items for Next Agenda

- Possible new project related to Healthy Living and the Safe Routes to School Program

16. Next Meeting

MOTION:

To adjourn the June 22, 2006 RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

Meeting Notes Taken by:
Julie Bittner
RNBC Recording Secretary

Reviewed by:
Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner