

**REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE  
MEETING NOTES**



**Meeting of Thursday, March 11, 2004  
Committee Room #4  
7:00 p.m.**

**Present:**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Ron Leavens   | - Regional Councillor (Chair)                    |
| Brian Baty    | - Regional Councillor                            |
| Peter Davies  | - Niagara Freewheelers                           |
| Bob Romanuk   | - Public at Large                                |
| Greg Dame     | - Guest  |
| Dave Hunt     | - Public at Large                                |
| Jan Somerwil  | - Public at Large                                |
| John Reep     | - Public at Large                                |
| Paul Pattison | - Public at Large                                |
| Frank Pravitz | - Ministry of Transportation                     |
| Tim Whittle   | - Regional Niagara Police Service                |
| Marian Landry | - Regional Niagara Public Health                 |
| Ken Forgeron  | - Regional Niagara Planning                      |
| Eric Flora    | - Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation) |
| Julie Bittner | - Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation) |

**Regrets:**

|             |                       |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Rob Gabriel | - Regional Councillor |
| Dave Arnott | - Public at Large     |

**1. Adoption of Agenda**

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

- Comments on the Bicycle Master Plan – Addendum on Municipal Costs
- Environmental Assessment (EA) for Regional Road 81 at Fifteen Mile Creek
- Volunteers for the RNBC display during Police Week in May
- Toronto Star Supplement
- Millennium Trail Ride on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Freewheelers second open house in Welland.

***Motion:***

***To accept the agenda as amended.***

***Moved by: Jan Somerwil***

***Seconded by: Bob Romanuk***

***Carried***

2. Review of Meeting Notes of February 12, 2004

**Motion:**

**To adopt the RNBC Meeting Notes of February 12, 2004.**

**Moved by: Dave Hunt**

**Seconded by: Jan Somerwil**

**Carried**

3. Business Arising

The Committee was provided updates on a number of "Action Items" which arose out of both the January and February meeting minutes.

- Mr. Flora reported that he had made inquiries with the Public Works Properties Section and could confirm that Government Road in Thorold was now called Welland Canal Parkway.
- Mr. Flora reported that the Clare Avenue/Colbeck Drive only has a 0.5 metre shoulder because both Lincoln and Webber are not on the Network. However, when the work is done on Clare, a wider shoulder will be provided. The expected time frame for the work to be done is between five and ten years.
- It was reported that the RNBC budget has \$3,600 remaining in its account. Any monies received for map donations at various events are not included in this amount. It has recently been determined that map money is included. Therefore, only about \$13,000 is available for RNBC use. Mr. Flora reported that a meeting is scheduled for March 12<sup>th</sup> to review transportation priorities and a determination will be made at that meeting as to the amount of money the RNBC will receive for their 2004 budget. An update will be provided at the April RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Flora told the Committee that Ralph Scholz from the Transportation Division in the Public Works Department has indicated that he will continue to sit on the Engineering Network Task Force.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that he had not had an opportunity to compile the draft list of potential task force projects for 2004. He told the Committee that he would have the draft completed very soon and would e-mail the list to Committee members to add any additional items. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Flora updated the Committee on the status of the Regional Police Service Safety Task Force. The strategic plan is currently being developed and will be presented to the Executive Committee in April. He will provide an update at the April RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**

- Mr. Flora reported that there was a revision to the Glendale Avenue EA options report as reported at the last RNBC meeting. The preferred alternative is to have a ten (10) metre roadway width from Merritt Street to the CNR railway and from the crossing easterly, there will be a three lane cross section (will include bikeway facility, but to date, the exact type has not been determined). A future grade separation at the railway crossing is also being looked at. The EA has been extended to now include the former Domtar lands. Another public information session will be held for comment.
- Mr. Flora reported that he had spoken with John Rizzo, Project Manager, regarding the EA for Regional Road 81 at Fifteen Mile Creek. Mr. Rizzo had indicated that a major reason for the design of the roadway was due to drainage concerns. (In order to avoid slope erosion, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Conservation Authority and the Department Fisheries and Oceans did not want to introduce any new storm water outlets.) The roadway was designed with a multi-use trail outside of the road area and drainage swale as you enter the valley where the road curves. Mr. Flora also reported that Public Works Operations had some concerns about safety and maintenance of the wide shoulder in the winter season. Mr. Flora will provide another update at the next meeting. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron provided an update on the Dorchester Road EA. As discussed at the last RNBC meeting, the suggested changes were made to the letter to the City of Niagara Falls. The comments focused on providing for bicycling. A copy of the letter was provided to Committee members. Mr. Forgeron reported that he had recently learned that the Dorchester Road EA may have been approved without including accommodation for cyclists.

Mr. Romanuk also provided an update on the Dorchester Road EA. He said Niagara Falls Council has asked Municipal Works if, perhaps, an error had been made in the evaluation of Alternative 13 that did not provide a rating for cyclists. Niagara Falls Councillor Joyce Morocco submitted a handout to Council showing Dorchester Road with a proposed four lane reconstruction and a three lane layout with a mutual centre turn lane and 1.5 metre bicycle lanes. The handout also showed another option which was to have Dorchester Road with a four lane reconstruction with no bicycle lanes. Future discussion are pending.

- Mr. Whittle reported that he had spoken to the creator of the bicycle safety computer game and said that the creator hoped to have the upgrades to the game completed this summer. The computer game will be made available to the RNBC at no charge for its educational use.
- Mr. Forgeron requested clarification on the following comment included on page 8 of the February 12 RNBC meeting notes regarding the Bicycle Master Plan, "The final report will need to be endorsed by each municipality before Regional

Council will provide approval.” Mr. Flora said that meetings will be arranged with municipal Planning Directors and Public Works Officials. The purpose of the meetings will be to receive municipal endorsement of the Master Plan in principle. Mr. Forgeron suggested that the wording should perhaps say, “Regional staff will seek local municipal support prior to re-submission to Regional Council.” Mr. Flora said that Regional Council could approve the report without municipal endorsement. The Region would like to ensure that key stakeholders have been met with. Therefore, the meeting notes should be revised to reflect Mr. Forgeron’s wording. **(Action Item)**

- Mr. Forgeron said he had discussed the Victoria Conference (i.e. Pro Bike/Pro Walk in September) with Councillor Timms. Councillor Timms indicated that he and George Nicholson had made a submission to make a presentation at the conference and is waiting to hear if the proposal has been accepted. The Committee decided to wait to hear if the proposal is accepted before making a decision on who should attend, if any.

#### **4. Welcome and Introductions to New Members**

Committee members provided introductions (and some background) to the new members from Regional Council, Councillors Leavens and Baty.

#### **5. Agenda Items for Joint Bicycling Meeting with Hamilton & Burlington Committees**

Mr. Forgeron reported that the Joint Bicycling Committee meeting will be held on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Directions to the meeting venue were distributed. He requested potential agenda items from RNBC members. The following items were suggested:

- Velo Ontario status report
- Bicycle Map – comments to date and next steps
- Status of Hamilton and Burlington Bicycling Committees
- Hamilton/Burlington roundabout experiences
- Regional Niagara Bicycle Master Plan status report
- Update on the cross border bridge issues that Niagara is facing
- Suggestions on how to sign bicycle routes

#### **6. Presentation on Glendale Environmental Assessment (EA)**

Mr. Pravitz reported that Councillor Timms, Paul Pattison and himself had met and looked at the plans. Mr. Pravitz reported that Councillor Timms suggested having the area at Government Road and the bridge straightened into one intersection. Another suggestion, although not agreed to, was to have turning lanes at Wembley Road.

Mr. Pravitz told the Committee that he was invited to make a presentation on the Glendale EA at the Merritton Community Centre on Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. In particular he would like to impress upon the community group how the bicycling network could help connect them to other areas as well as the benefits of having cyclists using the network (example, coming to see tourist attractions and utilizing local shops). Also, he would like to receive support from local councillors as to what we're trying to achieve as a group.

Mr. Flora said that he would provide Mr. Pravitz with some more recent information on what is happening in this area in case questions are asked at the meeting.

As reported by Mr. Flora earlier in the meeting, (see also page 3, item 1) the preferred alternative for Glendale to date is a three lane cross section with the possibility of wide curb lanes between the railway tracks and the Canal. Mr. Flora reported that another public information session would be held for members of the public to look at these plans. Paul Pattison expressed concerns regarding this change.

Mr. Whittle questioned this alternative as this section is a Regional Road and it was his understanding that the Region's policy in regards to roads on the network would receive dedicated bicycle lanes when they were reconstructed. Mr. Flora said that he would get more clarification and provide an update at the next meeting. **(Action Item)**

## **7. Possible Summer Student Projects**

Although the budget has not yet been set for the RNBC, some possible projects for a summer student to complete were suggested.

Mr. Pravitz suggested trying to integrate some of the work our Task Forces do and promote both Niagara tourism and recreational cycling. Perhaps a catch phrase could be created and added to a promotional poster. The poster could also include professional photographs of bike sites with cyclists in the picture. The poster could be included at different shows that the RNBC attends and the slogan could be included on RNBC promotional material.

Another suggestion is to hire a student who has graphics/GIS knowledge in order to work on enhancing the bike map, perhaps by adding insert maps. Also, some corrections need to be made to the map based on input received to date.

Another suggested project was to develop a signage protocol for the bike network. Mr. Flora told the Committee that \$5,000 had been budgeted for signage as part of capital works program.

## **8. Queenston-Lewiston Bridge EA Update**

Mr. Pattison reported that he had received a letter from McCormick Rankin Corporation who are the consultants working on the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge EA. The consultants were responding to an e-mail Mr. Pattison had sent them requesting that paved shoulders be provided for cyclists by reducing the travel lane widths and increasing the west side shoulder width. In the letter received, the consultants responded that based on discussions held, the lane widths could be reduced to 3.5 metres. The west shoulder will now be 1.0 metre and the east shoulder will be 1.25 metres.

Mr. Flora said that he had also sent an e-mail to Mr. Jack Thompson of McCormick Rankin regarding lane and paved shoulder widths. He commented that one good thing about the revisions is that the information makes reference to Ontario's Ministry of Transportation's Planning and Design Guidelines, March 1996 document. Also, it provides detailed information on how the consultant developed the bridge widths. He also reported that the Ministry is looking to develop a traffic manual (Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18) on bicycle facilities. Marshall Macklin Monaghan will be submitting a proposal to the Ministry in the near future to undertake Book 18's development.

Mr. Forgeron reminded the Committee about the importance of attending public information sessions and providing comments on EAs. He also complimented the Committee on the networking that they have done and the comments provided, especially in terms of the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge EA. Various agencies across Ontario and the northeastern U.S. provided comments in support of maintaining bicycle access across the border, so much so that cycling related groups were probably the main commenting body on the EA.

## **9. Toronto International Bike Show Highlights**

Mr. Forgeron reported that the RNBC booth was positioned strategically just inside the main entrance at the Toronto International Bike Show and that, approximately, 25,000 to 30,000 people attended the show. The RNBC booth was staffed by both volunteers from the Committee and from the Niagara Freewheelers. He reported that, in total, approximately, \$1,000 in donations was raised from the distribution of the new bike maps.

Mr. Reep said that the volunteers at the Bike Show would mention the Grand Island Circle Route in the US to show visitors. He suggested that perhaps we should consider using the American trail network as an extension of our own. Mr. Flora advised that he would contact the GBNRTC and invite a representative to attend a future RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Forgeron told the Committee that he would be preparing a joint report to be submitted to the Planning and Public Works Committees. The report will summarize the RNBC's participation at the Toronto International Bike Show. **(Action Item)**

#### **10. Glenridge Avenue EA & Proposed Roundabout**

Mr. Forgeron reported that an EA is being prepared for the section of Glenridge between the railway tracks and Glendale. Currently, one of the options is to have a roundabout at Glenridge and Glen Morris. One public information session has been held and comments were to be provided to Dave MacLeod, Project Manager, by March 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Forgeron suggested that an RNBC Sub-Committee be established to provide comments on the roundabout to Mr. MacLeod.

The Committee's understanding on the design is that for cyclists who did not wish to use the roundabout, they could use the off-road pathway which would direct them around the roundabout and then back onto the bike lane. There was some concern regarding this design because in order for cyclists to get back on the bicycle lane after they go around the roundabout, they need to cross over the road (i.e. Belton Avenue). Mr. Whittle expressed some concerns as to who would be looking after the cleaning of the off-road pathway in the winter. He would like to see cyclists accommodated on the roadway only. He explained that roundabouts are effective in traffic calming and cyclists should be able to mix in with other traffic, including pedestrians.

The Committee also discussed the issue of signage. There was concern that drivers would assume that cyclists should be on the pathway only and incidents of road rage may occur if signage was not included to indicate that cyclists could use either the roundabout or the pathway. They also should have the right-of-way.

***Motion:***

***To form a sub-committee of RNBC members to provide comments to the Region regarding the roundabout at Glenridge and Glen Morris. A report would also be brought to the April RNBC meeting.***

***Moved by: Peter Davies***

***Seconded by: Bob Romanuk***

***Carried***

Mr. Hunt said that he would like to get a second opinion on the roundabout and offered to bring the idea forward to a group which does some work for Velo Ontario. He said that he would need an electronic version of the roundabout design as well as a description.

Peter Davies, Tim Whittle, Bob Romanuk and Jan Somerwil agreed to sit on the sub-committee to provide comments on the roundabout design option. They also agreed to report back to the RNBC on this issue at the April meeting.

Mr. Whittle and Mr. Davies requested a copy of the comment sheet distributed at the public information session. **(Action Item)**

### **11. Bicycle Safety of Off-Shore Workers**

Mr. Whittle reported that the "OWL" program had been established by the Community Policing Chairs. The Chairs will present a plan outline indicating the anticipated number of bicycles and then they will receive the appropriate amount of reflective tape needed. Another update will be provided at the next RNBC meeting.

### **12. VeloOntario General Meeting Debriefing**

Mr. Hunt provided a briefing of the February General Meeting. At this meeting the 2004 Board of Directors was established. Dave Hunt was elected the President for 2004 and Bob Romanuk a board member. The next board meeting will be held on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Hunt distributed a pamphlet which provided a brief history of the provincial organization as well as identifying the entire 2004 Board of Directors and a listing of priority projects.

### **13. Task Force Reports**

#### **Engineering**

Mr. Pravitz informed the Committee that he had written an article called, "Cycling Advocacy," which was featured in the Freewheelers newsletter. Mr. Pattison also wrote an article on the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge EA which was included.

Mr. Pravitz reported that the roads included in the 2004 Hot Mix Program would not be identified until later in the year.

Mr. Whittle told the Committee that the EA for Regional Road 20 in Pelham had been re-opened. Councillors said that May 1<sup>st</sup> was the deadline for comments. Mr. Flora said that it was his understanding that there would be no exclusive bike lanes as part of the preferred design as Regional Road 20 through Pelham was not included on the Bicycle Master Plan Network. Mr. Whittle had concerns regarding the accessibility to the Fonthill and Pelham area for cyclists. As well, it is a major route used by touring cyclists traveling to Niagara Falls. Having paved shoulders along this route would be good for cyclists and also helps with safety. Mr. Flora will provide an update at the April RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Flora reported to the on the following:

- Public Works has met with the MTO regarding widening the QEW through St. Catharines. The MTO is currently in the preliminary design stage.

- The Ministry of Transportation has agreed-in-principal to have bike facilities both north and south along the Martindale Road structure. The recreational trail right-of-way through this area still needs to be clarified.
- The MTO's preliminary design for the Lake Street structure shows sidewalks and four lanes, but does not include any separate cycling facilities. Lake Street is identified as part of the Network, but it is under the City of St. Catharines' jurisdiction. Mr. Flora said that he would ask Joe Cousins to speak to Paul Mustard at the City regarding the provision of separate cycling facilities on Lake Street.
- The Region will be undertaking an EA of Carlton Street between Geneva and Bunting Road. This area is included on the Masterplan.
- As you approach the curve to the south of Stanley Avenue at Thorold Stone Road, a Brownfield redevelopment will be considered at the northwest corner. Current considerations include a three lane cross section.

## Encouragement

Ms. Landry reported that the Greater Niagara Circle Trek would be held on May 2.

On April 17<sup>th</sup> the grand opening of the East Side Trail would be held at Ramey's Bend in Port Colborne. Included at the grand opening will be both an equestrian and a bike ride.

It was reported that all the mall displays have been organized for the Greater Niagara Circle Trek. The display will be set up at local malls throughout the month of April. Volunteers will be needed to staff the displays and will be required to talk about the Greater Niagara Circle Route and encourage people to participate in events in a municipality of their choice.

As previously reported, the time frame for Bike Week has been extended. The month of May is now known as Bike Month. Ms. Landry reported that she currently is busy identifying various events for bike month and collating all the information. She requested a volunteer from the Committee to review the information once she had it completed. Mr. Whittle kindly volunteered to do this job. **(Action Item)**

Ms. Landry told the Committee that a decision needed to be made on the number of flyers to be printed for Bike Month. The flyers could be printed on either letter or legal size paper. The cost of printing 3,000 letter size flyers is \$212 and the cost to print 3,000 legal size flyers is \$214. The Committee agreed to have 3,000 flyers printed on green legal size paper at a total cost of \$214.00.

**Motion:**

**To approve the cost of printing 3,000 flyers at a cost of, approximately, \$214.00**

**Moved by: Dave Hunt**

**Seconded by: Paul Pattison**

**Carried**

Ms. Landry presented a stand-alone poster in both English and French, advertising Bike Month. A discussion was held regarding the correct wording in French for Bike Month. Mr. Flora offered to contact a Ministry official who translates signs and find out the correct wording. **(Action Item)** Ms. Landry said that 23 posters would be created, however, they would be printed in-house so the cost could be absorbed by the Public Health Department. The posters and flyers will be included in a display at the local libraries. Each library will have a feature table which will also include cycling books. Mr. Hunt remarked that the Ministry has a cycling skills book which we may want to consider distributing. Mr. Romanuk said that there was also a book designed for children.

Ms. Landry told the Committee that she had recently attended a Freewheelers Open House and was able to interest a teacher from E. L. Crosley Secondary School in promoting the Bicycle Friendly Awards.

### **Education and Enforcement**

Mr. Whittle reported that a safety display was set-up at a recent Freewheelers Open House. Also, a helmet program is being arranged through the Port Colborne detachment. Approximately 36 helmets will be distributed to children, with partial funding coming from both the Freewheelers and Thorton's Bicycle Shop in Welland. They are also hoping to receive some funding from the Head Injury Association.

### **14. Information Items for Distribution**

- Copy of Waterfront Trail – "Your Pedal Passport"
- Copy of the letter to the Mayor and Members of City Council in Niagara Falls from the RNBC re: Accommodating Bicycling on Dorchester Road
- Copy of a letter from Tim Whittle to the RNBC re: Police Week 2004
- Copy of an e-mail to Ken Forgeron re: May 15 Joint Niagara/Hamilton/Burlington Cycling Committee Meeting. E-mail is requesting agenda items for the meeting
- Copy of a letter to Paul Pattison from Jack Thompson, Consultant Project Manager re: the EA for the Stanley Avenue Bridge Redecking and Widening Lane and Shoulder Widths
- Copy of a memo from Alan Gummo, Planning Department to John Rizzo, Public Works Department re: Environment Assessment for Regional Rd. 81 Improvements at 15 Mile Creek, City of St. Catharines/Town of Lincoln

### **15. Assistance for 2004 Police Week Display**

Mr. Whittle told the Committee that he was organizing a Police Week Display once again. He volunteered to set-up the RNBC display and requested RNBC members to staff the booth. The dates are as follows: May 12<sup>th</sup> at the Niagara Square Mall in Niagara Falls, May 13<sup>th</sup> at the Seaway Mall in Welland and May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> at the Pen Centre in St. Catharines. Mr. Whittle circulated a sign-up sheet for volunteers.

### **16. Toronto Star Supplement on Bicycling**

Mr. Hunt told the Committee that the Toronto Star is running a special supplement on cycling on May 20<sup>th</sup>. This special supplement would be strictly focusing on the Toronto area, however, he suggested that the RNBC may want to pass this information on to the NETC in case they would like to purchase some space in the supplement. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Whittle suggested two public events where there was an opportunity for the RNBC to promote both the new bike map and the proposed bicycle network. The first event is a Freewheelers Open House to be held on March 24<sup>th</sup> at Centennial High School. The second event is the Greater Niagara Circle Trek event to be held on May 2<sup>nd</sup> in Niagara Falls (Fireman's Park). Mr. Whittle offered to set-up the RNBC display, but requested volunteers to staff the booth. Mr. Hunt volunteered for the March 24<sup>th</sup> event and Mr. Forgeron volunteered for May 2<sup>nd</sup>. **(Action Items)**

### **17. Suggested Agenda Items for April 8, 2004**

- Bicycle Master Plan update
- Future Bike Map distribution
- Report on Glendale Avenue EA
- 2004 Hot Mix program
- Construction on Highway 55 at East/West Line
- GBNRTC update on a representative attending a future RNBC meeting
- Recommendation on the possible Glenridge roundabout
- May 15 Joint Meeting - Reminder

Mr. Romanuk suggested having a speaker attend a meeting to explain the EA process to the Committee. Mr. Flora also suggested perhaps having the municipal Clerks add RNBC members to their notification list. This would ensure that members were aware when EAs were taking place at the Regional and local malls.

### **18. Next Meeting – April 8, 2004**

The next RNBC meeting will take place on Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup> Committee Room #3 at Regional Headquarters beginning at 7:00 p.m. **(Note: The April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting**

has been rescheduled to Tuesday, April 13, at 7:00 p.m. in Committee Room #2.)

***Motion:***

***To adjourn the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee meeting.***

***Moved by: Peter Davies***

***Seconded by: Dave Hunt***

***Carried***

Meeting Notes Taken by:

Julie Bittner

Reviewed by Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner