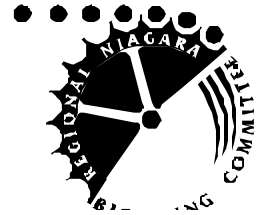


# REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, May 18, 2006  
Committee Room #4  
7:00 p.m.

## Present:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Peter Davies	- Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Dianne Coppola	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Tim Whittle	- Regional Niagara Police Services
Phil Bergen	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

## Regrets:

Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large/Cycle Ontario Alliance
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large & Niagara Falls Trails & Bikeways Committee

The meeting commenced at 7:03 p.m.

## 1. Adoption of Agenda

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

- O'Reilly's Bridge and Mountain Rd./Portage Rd. Class EAs (Ken Forgeron)
- Queenston-Lewiston Bridge, Collier Rd., Gas Tax, RNBC Display, St. Catharines Downtown Street Conversion Study (Paul Pattison)
- International Trails Day (Tim Whittle)
- Highlights of Joint Meeting with Hamilton/Burlington/Niagara Bicycling Committees (Ken Forgeron)

### ***Motion:***

***To accept the agenda of May 18 as revised.***

***Moved by: Jan Somerwil***

***Seconded by: Paul Pattison***

***Carried***

## 2. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (April 6, 2006)

Mr. Pattison indicated that on page 8, under Downtown St. Catharines, the meeting notes should be amended to read, St. Catharines Council endorsed a proposal.

Mr. Forgeron said that on page 4, under Bike Network Signage, the meeting notes should be amended to read, For example, unsafe areas could be signed last.

On page 4, under Ideas & Priorities for the 2006 RNBC Budget the meeting notes should be amended so that where the word *budgeted* or *allocated* appears, it should be changed to *was suggested as a budget item* or *a suggested allocation*.

### **3. Business Arising**

***Motion:***

***To accept and approve the meeting notes of April 6, 2006 as revised.***

***Moved by: Peter Davies***

***Seconded by: Brian Baty***

***Carried***

The Committee was provided updates on a number of “Action Items” which arose out of the April 6, 2006 meeting notes:

- Mr. Whittle reported that he had received a copy of the Toronto brochure on how to properly develop and use bicycle lanes. He indicated that he would review the brochure and develop some ideas over the summer for Niagara’s brochure.
- Mr. Forgeron said that he would speak to Public Works regarding keeping map donations (ie. carry over to subsequent years) in an account to be used only for the reprinting of future bike maps. Mr. Forgeron also mentioned that he 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Bicycle Map had been entered into a map competition (VRISA). Although the map did not win, the map received positive feedback. The map will be entered into other map design competitions as well. The next competition will be in San Diego in July.
- Arrangements have been made for Joe Cousins to attend the next RNBC meeting.
- Mr. Pattison said that he had received correspondence from Mr. Flora regarding approval being requested for an additional vehicle access from Portage Road to the Queenston Plaza parking area as well as the building of a parking garage. Any comments on the Portage Road – Queenston access requirements should be sent to Mr. Flora. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Pattison reported that he had spoken to Kris Jacobson from the City of St. Catharines regarding the St. Catharines one-way to two-way street conversion project. The project has been endorsed by St. Catharines Council, but no money has been budgeted for it. Mr. Pattison said that he would like to invite Mr. Jacobson to a future RNBC meeting to discuss the entire street conversion project.

### **4. Cycle Ontario Alliance Request: OBR Tour**

The Cycle Ontario Alliance (COA) will be having a promotional cycling tour on a portion of the Ontario Bicycling Route from Windsor to Niagara-on-the-Lake from June 25 to July 1. Although only a small section of the tour will take place on regional roads, the COA has requested, through the Regional Chair and CAO’s office, that the RNBC endorse the following recommendations. Ken Forgeron agreed to present this to the RNBC. Prior to the meeting, discussions were held with the Regional Public Works Department.

#### **Recommendation 1.1**

*The RNBC recommends that the Regional Municipality of Niagara continues its endorsement of the concept of an Ontario Bicycling Route as a province-wide facility, due to its many benefits including, encouragement of healthy active living, cycle recreation, tourism and environmental sustainability.*

**Recommendation 1.2**

*The RNBC recommends that the Regional Municipality of Niagara works with the COA to review, approve and designate the OBR locations as part of the Niagara Bicycling Network, as outlined and shown on attachment "The OBR in Niagara".*

**Recommendation 1.3**

*The RNBC recommends that the Regional Municipality of Niagara incorporates consideration of the OBR sign design and placement of these signs on OBR routes in Niagara as part of the Region's proposed cycling signage study.*

**Recommendation 1.4**

*The RNBC recommends that the Regional Municipality of Niagara endorse the placement of temporary laminated OBR route signs on Regional roads along the COA's Lake Erie Ontario Bicycling Route (OBR) Tour, being held from June 24 to July 1, 2006.*

**Recommendation 1.5**

*The RNBC recommends that the Regional Municipality of Niagara incorporate consideration of the OBR Facility Guidelines during the Region's planning and design process for roadway improvements on OBR locations.*

**Recommendation 2**

*The RNBC recommends that the Regional Municipality of Niagara continues to share information and work with the Cycling Ontario Alliance to identify initiatives that can be mutually supportive towards objectives that promote cycling.*

**Recommendation 3**

*The RNBC recommends that the Regional Municipality of Niagara sends a Regional representative (s) to speak at the June 30<sup>th</sup> Fort Erie and at the July 1<sup>st</sup> NOTL media event as part of the COA's Lake Erie (OBR) Tour, to show regional support for the OBR, progress on the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan and identify cycling partnership initiatives with the COA.*

The COA has asked the Region for permission to install OBR route marker signs on the Regional roads the cyclists will be riding on during the tour. It was reported that whether the Region or COA volunteers will install and take down the temporary signage is still under

discussion. The larger signs which will be comprised of a standard 450 x 225 mm ONTARIO sign mounted above a standard 450 x 450 mm ROUTE sign will likely only be erected at the entrance to towns and municipalities as these signs are quite expensive to produce. Mainly the smaller directional signs will be used along the route. The smaller signs will be comprised of a small circular marker (100 mm diameter) with an arrow that can be erected in any direction to indicate changes in the route direction. Both the large and smaller signs will be white on green. Jan Somerwil expressed his concerns about sign pollution. This issue will need to be addressed when the Regional bicycling signage program is developed and the COA proposals are considered further.

In regards to Recommendation #3, Mr. Forgeron reported that he had spoken to both Regional Councillors Ron Leavens and Bruce Timms about speaking at either the Fort Erie or NOTL media events scheduled as part of the ride. Councillor Timms has agreed to speak at the media event in Fort Erie. Mr. Dave Hunt, who is a member of both the COA and the RNBC, has offered to prepare speaking notes. Councillor Baty also may be available to speak.

**MOTION:**

***To approve the recommendations from Cycle Ontario Alliance as presented.***

***Moved by: Paul Pattison***

***Seconded by: Brian Baty***

***Carried***

**5. RNBC Strategic Planning Session**

Councillor Leavens reported that it may be difficult to find a facilitator for the \$3500 the RNBC may budget for the strategic planning session. He suggested that we have an upset limit of \$5000 which would be for the entire strategic planning session.

Councillor Baty asked whether we are restricting strategic planning session attendees to only committee members or are we also inviting those who have an interest in cycling, for example, bike shop owners. Ms. Coppola suggested posing this questioning to potential facilitators and asking what the advantages and disadvantages might be with this suggestion.

Councillor Baty suggested contacting Gwen Speranzini who is the Region's Organizational Development Manager to see if her schedule would permit her to facilitate the RNBC strategic session. If Ms. Speranzini is not available, Councillor Leavens said that he had received leads on other possible facilitators from both Brock University and Niagara College.

**MOTION:**

***To ask Gwen Speranzini if she is available to facilitate the RNBC Strategic Planning Session to be held either September 16<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>.***

***Moved by: Brian Baty***

***Seconded by: Peter Davies***

***Carried***

endorsed by roundtable members. She then provided a brief background by reporting that

last April the Region convened a number of people from various sectors, for example, education, workplace, to look at what could be done to address the issue of obesity in Niagara.

Currently, the group has been looking at what to focus on as a community and has developed TREKZONE which is Niagara's Community Strategy to Address Obesity. Ms. Coppola distributed a one page overview of TREKZONE to RNBC members. The overview indicates that the three key areas of focus are physical activity, healthy eating and community design. Within each of these three areas initiatives were developed and are designed to work with the other two areas. From the RNBC's perspective the Community Design component is quite relevant as it involves:

- Active transportation plans
- Improved signage and infrastructure
- Extension and integration of a trail network

She explained that on the one-page overview that the areas in blue are considered the "glue" which holds everything together. These three areas are: "Leadership and Lead Organizations", "Social Marketing and Behaviour Change" and "Policy and Environmental Supports".

What will go forward at the end of the month are the broad parameters of the obesity strategy. These parameters will include a brief description, linkages to organizations to make them happen, short term outcomes and suggestions for possible implementation to move them forward. She said that there will be many more opportunities in the future for input from different levels like the RNBC.

## **7. Task Force Reports**

### **Encouragement**

Ms. Coppola reported that 15 team captains have registered for Bike-to-Work-Week. One of the goals this year is to try and get a sense of who is participating in Bike-to-Work-Week. So far, it appears that approximately 30% of the participants are newer, infrequent cyclists.

Attendance at this year's Bike-to-Work-Week launch was down compared to last year. Ms. Coppola said that the launch will be assessed in terms of what type of adjustments may need to be made to the launch, for example, a different venue. The St. Catharines Market Square was suggested as a possible location.

Ms. Coppola reminded the committee to provide any comments or suggestions on the Tips for Trekking on Niagara Trails brochure to Marian Landry by May 26<sup>th</sup>. The draft brochure was e-mailed to the committee previously.

### **Engineering**

The RNBC received feedback request forms on Class EA's for both O'Reilly's Bridge and Regional Rd. 101 (Mountain Rd./Portage Rd.) from Regional Rd. 70 (Taylor Rd.) to Regional Road 102 (Stanley Ave.) Both of these projects are still in the preliminary stages and public information sessions have not yet been held. Mr. Forgeron reported that the Planning Department likely will be commenting on both projects.

#### St. David's Rd. Pedestrian and Cycling Needs Study

Mr. Bergen reported that the consultant had just received the traffic count data and has not yet had a chance to analyze the information. This fall, the consultant will distribute to Brock University a transportation usage/travel characteristics survey. Councillor Baty suggested that Regional staff and staff at the new Thorold City Hall also be included in the survey. **(Action Item)**

#### **Policy**

Mr. Forgeron reported that a number of local municipalities are working on new Official Plan update. As reported at previous RNBC meetings, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has provisions in their proposed Zoning By-law for bicycle parking spaces. Both the Town of Fort Erie and the City of Port Colborne have sections in their proposed new Official Plans on bicycling policies.

Mr. Forgeron reported that the developers of Prudhommes in Lincoln have agreed to a lakeside waterfront trail which will run from Jordan Harbour to the Victoria Shores subdivision.

#### **Enforcement and Education**

Mr. Whittle announced that a number of bike rodeos were coming up. Also, he reported that he had received an additional 12 collision reports from Niagara Falls involving bicycles for 2005.

#### **8. New Business**

##### New Gas Tax Refund

This refund includes money that potentially may be used for active transportation and infrastructure projects, (eg. bike lanes). However, the decision on its use rests with Councils. Councillor Baty was able to report that due to the new gas tax refund, projects which had not been able to go forward due to lack of funding in the budget are now able to proceed.

##### Brownfield Remediation Fund

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has received \$550 million from the Federal government to award loans and grants to municipalities for the remediation of brownfield sites. They would also consider funding active and sustainable transportation projects.

##### Collier Rd. Richmond St. in Thorold

Both Paul Pattison and Ken Forgeron had contact with the design team and the preferred design will include bike lanes, but they have not presented the design to Thorold Council yet. The most difficult area will be the Highway 58/Collier Road underpass. A 4.3 metre shared use lane likely will be proposed.

#### Waterfront Trail Development

Paul Pattison, Ken Forgeron and Peter Warwick have agreed to assist in the Waterfront Trail sign audit this summer.

Mr. Pattison thanked Mr. Whittle for the opportunity to be at the Community Policing Week display at the St. Catharines Market Square on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 20 maps were distributed at this event.

It was announced that the official opening of the Greater Niagara Circle Route is on May 27<sup>th</sup>. All RNBC members were encouraged to attend to show the politicians that there is interest in completing the route and to offer encouragement for the work that has been done for it.

#### Annual Joint Meeting – Burlington/Hamilton/Niagara Cycling Committees

Some of the agenda items discussed were:

- Cycling in the country side and conflicts with farm vehicles – how should these conflicts be addressed.
- Recent developments on the Greater Niagara Circle Route
- Overpasses and ramps issues which are currently affecting cyclists in Halton. Halton has asked its Engineering Department to suggest some possible design options
- Development of the Niagara Bicycling Map.

Mr. Forgeron and Mr. Romanuk will distribute the meeting notes once they are finalized.

**(Action Item)**

#### Upper Canada Heritage Trail in NOTL

Mr. Somerwil mentioned that trees have been planted on the trail right-of-way. He is concerned that other property owners abutting the trail may do the same. Mr. Forgeron said that Mr. Flora reported that he would address the issue of trail encroachment when comments are provided on Niagara-on-the-Lake's Masterplan. **(Action Item)** In the meantime, Mr. Forgeron suggested that Mr. Somerwil contact the Town regarding the trees being planted and perhaps one of their by-law enforcement officers could be sent out to the area.

#### International Trails Day

Mr. Whittle said that there would be an opportunity for the RNBC to set-up their display and new bike map as the community policing trailer will be on site. Gregg Dame agreed to take this task on.

The Peace Bridge is undergoing construction; therefore, a lane will not be available this year for people to walk or ride across to the American side. All events will take place on the Canadian side. These events include displays, a number of different rides and a

barbecue. The RNBC has an opportunity to link our website to the International Trails Day website and vice versa. There is a section on the International Trails Day website where we could post any upcoming RNBC events, for example, Bike-to-Work Week.

Councillor Baty requested that when annual reports are prepared by Regional Public Works staff on reconstruction, rehabilitation or repair of roadways that the reports identify whether the roadway is on Council's approved Regional Bicycling Network.

**MOTION:**

***To request that when the annual Roads Rehabilitation and Reconstruction reports are prepared, that all roads in the reports which are also on the Regional Bicycling Network be identified with a symbol.***

***Moved by: Paul Pattison***

***Seconded by: Peter Davies***

***Carried***

**9. Items for Distribution**

- Article from CNN.com titled, "Gas prices fuel more bike commuters".
- Article from St. Catharines Standard regarding bike safety and Bike-to-Work Week.
- May 17<sup>th</sup>, Public Works report titled 2006 Roads Rehabilitation Program
- E-mail from Bob Romanuk re: RNBC website information
- Letter from Vince Goldsworthy to Mr. E. Nickel at Totten Sims Hubicki re: Class Environmental Assessment of Collier Road in the City of Thorold. Mr. Forgeron reported that the consultant will be recommending the installation of new bike facilities.
- Copy of the new distribution letter from Gary Hardy of Tourism Niagara to all of the map sponsors, supporters and distributors of the second edition Regional Niagara Bicycling map.
- Newspaper article from the St. Catharines Standard dated April 25, 2006 titled "Waterfront Trail has come a long way"
- Copies of cycling articles from the Regional newsletter
- Article from Niagara This Week dated April 28 re: "Cyclists Explore Niagara"
- Article from Niagara Economic Development Corporation's e-news magazine. Article is titled "Niagara becoming Canada's premier cycling destination."

**10. Items for Next Agenda**

None suggested.

**11. Next Meeting**

The next meeting and summer social will be held on June 22 at Paul Pattison's house beginning at 6:00 p.m. Further details to be provided.

**MOTION:**

***To adjourn the May 18, 2006 RNBC meeting.***

***Moved by: Paul Pattison***

***Seconded by: Brian Baty***

***Carried***

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:  
Julie Bittner  
RNBC Recording Secretary

Reviewed by:  
Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP  
Senior Planner