



REGIONAL NIAGARA

Bikeways Master Plan Newsletter

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This is the first in a series of newsletters

designed to inform you about the current study to develop the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan.

In October of 2001, Region of Niagara Council approved a staff recommendation to retain the services of one of the three consultant teams that submitted a proposal to assist Regional staff in the preparation of the Bikeways Master Plan. The consultant selected is the Marshall Macklin Monaghan Limited led team that also includes ESG International, Intus Road Safety Engineering Inc., Decima Research Inc., Paula Neice & Associates, and Steve Bauer Bike Tours Inc.

One of the first steps in developing the Bikeways Master Plan is to get input from stakeholders and the general public on what they think should be addressed in the study.

Why Undertake a Bikeways Master Plan?

The Bikeways Master Plan Study (BMPS) is being completed as one part of a multi-faceted effort to develop a Regional Niagara Transportation Strategy that will address all modes of transportation in Niagara Region and will serve to guide decision-makers over the next two decades. The BMPS is being undertaken within the context of a comprehensive public consultation strategy designed to support the purpose of the study. The rationale for the BMPS is to develop a long-term plan to guide the implementation of a system of bikeways in the Region of Niagara. The study will review the existing network plans and the status of the current system. The need for changes in the present system will also be reviewed, along with the current bikeways plan review, design and approval process. Design guidelines and a clear set of criteria on which to base priorities for implementation will also be established.

Many issues need to be considered in the preparation of a Bikeways Master Plan so that it can address the needs and desires of cyclists and other trail users. The Plan must also pay close attention to the realities that the Regional and Municipal governments face in providing their facilities.



How Can You Participate?

One of the first steps in developing the Bikeways Master Plan is to get input from stakeholders and the general public on what they think should be addressed in the study. Included in this newsletter is a list of study objectives and a proposed scope of work to achieve them. You can provide input at the start of this study by reviewing the information presented in this newsletter, completing the enclosed comment form and/or attending the first public consultation series. Written submissions should include your name and/or agency, a clear statement of the issues, facts and arguments and any recommendations or actions to address the issues.



The Regional Niagara Bikeways

Master Plan Study includes four Key Phases:

1. Understanding Cycling in the Niagara Region
2. Developing an Appropriate Bikeway Network
3. Establishing an Implementation Strategy
4. Draft and Final Report

Each of the first three phases will incorporate a series of public activities including a newsletter, focus groups, public meetings and meetings with the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee and other stakeholder groups and agencies.



All the information that emerges from Phase 1 will then be presented to a series of focus groups, followed by a public meeting in mid-December (2001) or early January (2002).

Study Objectives and Scope of Work

Study Objectives

Identify the magnitude and characteristics of the demand of cyclists for bikeways throughout the Region, including use for tourism, recreational, utilitarian, commuter and family cycling.

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Estimate future potential demand for bikeways.

Review the implementation history of the bikeways network.

Recommend changes to the bikeways networks and the Policy Plan to meet the full range of existing and future cycling needs in the Region.

Review jurisdictional roles with respect to specific funding mechanisms.

Review planning and design criteria and develop a comprehensive set of guidelines for implementing bikeways that meet the full range of expected conditions in Niagara.

Scope of Work Summary

- ➔ Conduct a public attitude survey to determine the type of users and to give an indication of the number of people in the Region who cycle for leisure, recreation or utilitarian purposes.
- ➔ Review data from the Traveller Activities and Motivation Survey (TAMS) completed by Tourism Ontario and the Canadian Tourism Commission to determine the extent of tourism demand.
- ➔ Undertake an intercept survey involving off-road and on-road locations.
- ➔ Meet with Regional Staff and review and assess the way things happen today.
- ➔ Review previous studies in the Region, particularly the 1995 Regional Bicycling Study and the 2001 Retrofitting Cycling Guide for the Niagara Region.
- ➔ Develop policies related to public education, safe cycling and bicycle tourism.
- ➔ Develop a regional bikeways network that is connected to local trail systems and supports bicycle tourism.
- ➔ Develop goals, objectives and route selection criteria.
- ➔ Develop a mechanism to formalize funding commitments at the Regional and local levels and introduce public/private sector partnerships.
- ➔ Comprehensive review of the Region's bikeways and trail design guidelines, including signage, trail and lane widths and pavement markings.
- ➔ Develop bikeways maintenance policies.

Study Objectives

Scope of Work Summary

Review the implementation status of the existing designated Regional system of bikeways routes and estimate the cost of improving the system to meet identified needs and standards.

- ➔ Update the inventory of existing and proposed facilities within the Region.
- ➔ Provide cost estimates for each new route that is identified in the Plan as well as modifications to existing facilities that will be included in the bikeways network.

Develop realistic targets on which the priorities for implementation of the bikeways system can be reviewed from time to time.

- ➔ Develop a network implementation schedule based on priority.

Identify a long-term implementation plan for acquiring, developing and maintaining a comprehensive bicycle path system throughout the Region.

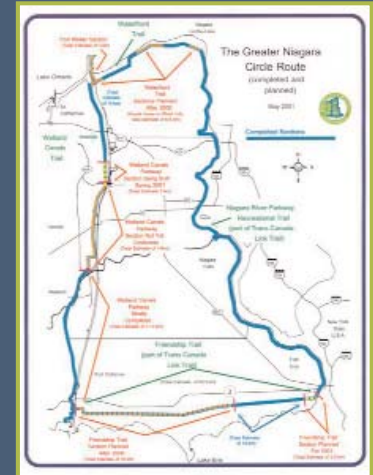
- ➔ Develop a clear implementation strategy to provide the Region with the tools necessary to implement the Plan. This includes a bikeways review and approval process that assigns responsibility and incorporates a checklist to guide staff.

Integration with road network and neighbourhood planning

- ➔ Develop an on-road and off-road network that is based on connecting communities and key destinations.

Improvements to the off-road path system, and co-ordination of work between local agencies involved

- ➔ Develop a mechanism to co-ordinate actions and ensure input from various Regional departments and outside agencies, including local municipalities, the Niagara Parks Commission and the Regional Niagara Cycling Committee.



For More Information:

To be added to our mailing list for this study or to submit your comments on the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan Study, please contact:

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Where Do We Go From Here?

The first phase of the study will near completion by mid-December, 2001. It will include a comprehensive public attitude survey of both cyclists and non-cyclists to gauge public opinion on issues that effect cycling, as well as to establish a clear profile of cyclists and cycling in Niagara Region. In addition, a survey of stakeholders in the cycling industry, including tour operators and bike shops will be undertaken to assess the level of bicycle tourism in the Region and what can be done to encourage it. While these surveys are underway, an inventory of existing conditions and bikeways facilities will also be completed to better understand what exists today. This will be followed by the development of draft planning, design and bikeways route selection criteria, including a discussion paper on safety. All the information that emerges from Phase 1 will then be presented to a series of focus groups, followed by a public meeting in mid-December (2001) or early January (2002).

Photos courtesy of Bob Romanuk.

We need your input and comments as we begin our study!

Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed comment sheet. We encourage you to offer any suggestions or identify any issues that you think should be addressed in this study. Also, please indicate if you would like to be added to our contact list to receive future newsletters and to be notified of upcoming meetings or events associated with the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan.

✓ Please check one or both of the following:

Yes, I would like to be added to the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan mailing list and be notified of upcoming events and meetings.

Name: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone/Fax/Email: _____

Yes, I would like the opportunity to participate in a focus group, public meeting and/or cycling tour (Summer 2002).



REGIONAL NIAGARA BIKEWAYS MASTER PLAN STUDY

Comment Sheet

1. What are your top three choices for improving cycling conditions in the Region of Niagara?

2. Do you consider yourself primarily a recreational (e.g. leisure, fitness, touring) or a utilitarian cyclist (e.g. occasional commuting to work/school, as well as trips for recreation/fitness, shopping and visiting friends)?

3. Where are some of the key barriers to cycling in the Region of Niagara (or in your particular community) and what do you think could be done to overcome these barriers?

4. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

