

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING
COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 30, 2008
Regional Headquarters – Campbell West
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.



In Attendance:

Brian Baty	-	Regional Councillor (Chair)
Barb Henderson	-	Regional Councillor (Vice Chair)
Eric Flora	-	Niagara Region Public Works
Ken Forgeron	-	Niagara Region Planning Services
Dave Hunt	-	Public-at-Large
Bob Romanuk	-	Public-at-Large/N.F.Trails & Bikeways
Pat Maloney	-	Public-at-Large
Paul Pattison	-	Public-at-Large
Tim Whittle	-	Niagara Region Police Service
Penny Pitt	-	Administrative Assistant, Clerk's Department

Regrets – Dianne Coppola, Dave Evans, Frank Pravitz, Peter Davies

Guests – Marian Landry, Niagara Region Public Health

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted with the addition of items under Business Arising, Engineering/ Network Task Force and Announcements.

2. Presentation – Niagara Kids CAN Bike Pilot Project

Councillor Baty introduced Marian Landry from Niagara Region Public Health. The Kids CAN Bike Pilot Project was a bike and leadership camp held for one week in July at Niagara Region Children's Safety Village in Welland (refer to the Executive Summary attached for details on the program goals, rationale, partners and lessons learned). Ms. Landry apprised the committee that a Niagara Kids CAN Bike Steering Committee will be established to explore opportunities for offering a Niagara Kids CAN Bike six weeks each summer for the next three to five summers. Ms. Landry answered a number of questions from committee members.

3. Encouragement Task Force Report

Ms. Landry announced the winners of the Bicycle Friendly Awards:

Educational Institution

Gold - Empire Public School, Welland. Award was presented at a school assembly on Oct 29th
Councillor Baty presented the award.

Workplace

Gold to Ontario Power Generation
Silver to the City of Welland

Awards will be presented at the Healthy Living Niagara Workplace Awards on Nov 19th by Councillor Baty.

4. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (September 18, 2008)

The Meeting Notes of September 18, 2008 were approved with a change in the wording of Agenda Item 4 – Presentation: St. David’s Road EA.

Motion:

To approve RNBC Meeting Notes of September 18, 2008. as revised.

Moved By: Pat Maloney

Seconded By: Bob Romanuk

Carried

5. Review of Previous Action Items

Action Item 16 – Police enforcement on the trails

A discussion was held amongst the committee members of how the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee could become involved with monitoring and enforcement. . Suggestions were made to develop a core of volunteers that would do the policing. A “vigilante” type role was not necessary, but the volunteers could contact the police with the best description possible. The following criteria should be considered if and when this core of volunteers would be developed:

- First Aid Training
- General training
- Background check
- Need to carry cell phone
- T shirts with “Trail Ambassador” emblem

Another idea suggested was to get community policing involved and the contact name of Cheryl Scott, Chair of Community Policing of Niagara, Beamsville and Lincoln was provided by a committee member. Partnering with “Crime Stoppers” was also suggested because of the concern of vandalism regarding the destruction of property signs. The location of emergency phones should be posted. It was also suggested to contact the Stanley Park Trail System in Vancouver to determine their methods of policing the trails. Ken Forgeron offered to pass on the information to Drew Semple, Co-coordinator of the GNCR Committee for their consideration and possible future involvement in participating. **ACTION ITEM**

Action Item 17 Proposed Bicycle/Transit Shelter

The proposed bicycle/transit shelter is still on the project list for 2009. The CAO and Corporate Management Team (CMT) were generally in favour of the shelter but the Commissioner of Corporate Services still has concerns about the costs/benefits of this project. To move this project forward, a list of benefits of this structure with the estimated costs and alternative ideas would need to be developed and again submitted to the Corporate Management Team. Councillor Baty advised that the project probably would not be built in 2009. More work on justification should occur in 2009. **ACTION ITEM**

Action Item 20 Bike Racks on Inter-City Buses

The following comments were received regarding the use and installation of bike racks on inter-city buses:

- Welland Transit do not plan to implement a bike rack policy as there is not any interest expressed to them for this policy.
- St. Catharines Transit Commission staff was preparing a report on bike racks to the Commission as part of their 2009 budget package and depending on their decision; it will then go to City Council to make the ultimate decision on funding.
- Niagara Transit's next order of buses to arrive (4 in January 2009) will be retrofitted with bike racks in the Spring. It is anticipated the all orders in the future being ordered with racks, but doubt that the entire fleet would be retrofitted at this time.

Action Item 23 – Improvements to Queenston-Lewiston Plaza

An email notification from the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission representative informed the RNBC that bicycling will not be permitted for seven weeks due to construction. The following notice is posted on the NFBC website regarding bike lanes.

"Cycling Across Lewiston/Queenston

Please be advised that effective Monday, October 27, 2008 due to construction staging activity at the Queenston Plaza over the next seven (7) weeks bicycle access across the Queenston/Lewiston Bridge is not permitted. Once a safe and secure pathway through the construction zone has been established and bicycle access across the Queenston Lewiston Bridge can recommence, the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission will advise by email/website posting. In addition, the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission will place a sign at the Niagara Parkway access indicating that bicycle access is prohibited. We are pleased to have been able to accommodate cyclists to this point in the year and thank everyone for their co-operation."

Action Item 26 – Niagara to GTA Corridor

In discussions with the Ministry of Transportation, Niagara to GTA Project Manager, once plans for PIC#2 are finalized, possibly late November, an appropriate date will be selected for the meeting with the RNBC.

Action Item 28 – Lamination of Bicycle Map

Ken Forgeron apprised the committee of the significant cost of laminating the bicycle map (about \$12/map) particularly if large numbers need to be ordered. A discussion followed regarding the cost of the lamination could be covered by the individual groups that would require the map. It was suggested that only a few maps could be done at this time and the possibility of funding could be explored. Chair Baty and Ken Forgeron will follow up with correspondence to the Ministry of Tourism, NEDC and the Conservation Authority with the suggestion that they absorb the cost of the lamination for their specific group.

ACTION ITEM

6. Items for Consideration

Ministry of Transportation – E Bike Survey

The Ministry of Transportation Road Safety Program Office sent a request to the RNBC to complete an E-Bike Survey. As part of a pilot project on e-bikes, information would be collected on the safety and utility of these vehicles, the appropriateness of the pilot's e-bike definition, regulations, and bicycles rules for e-bikers and their ability to integrate safely with other road users.

Dave Hunt and Pat Maloney completed and submitted the survey by the October 24th deadline and provided the committee with copies of the Power-Assisted Bicycles ("E-Bikes") evaluation. Throughout the survey, comments were given at several opportunities and a copy will be included with the meeting notes.

The RNBC thanked Dave and Pat for their work on this project and supported the comments provided.

7. RNBC Strategic Plan – Priority Actions

Eric Flora will be arranging a meeting within the next two weeks with his group to discuss Objective #1 of the RNBC Strategic Plan and will report at the December meeting.

ACTION ITEM

Ken Forgeron and Dave Hunt distributed a draft plan of their group's work on Objective #2 of the RNBC Strategic Plan which included priority ranking of a strategic action, key tasks, timeframe, estimate budget required and the key linkages/partners regarding policy matters.

Dianne Coppola's Objective #3 of the RNBC Strategic Plan was deferred to the January meeting. **ACTION ITEM**

8. Task Force Reports

Engineering/Network Task Force

Hwy 406 - Port Robinson Road to East Main Street Improvements

At the GNCR Committee meeting of Oct. 29, 2008 the Ministry of Transportation and project consultants gave a presentation regarding the Hwy 406 Improvements. RNBC members Frank Pravitz, Eric Flora, Paul Pattison, Ken Forgeron and Dave Hunt attended. Copies of the presentation will be included with the meeting notes. Highlights of the presentation, some which make provision for cycling, included:

- Twinning of Highway 406
- New flyover structures at Port Robinson Road and Welland River
- New interchange at Merritt Road
- New interchange at Woodlawn Road (candidate site for future carpool lot)
- New bridges over the Trillium Railway
- Improvements to existing East Main St. intersection, including a possible roundabout
- Suggestions were provided on accommodating a new pedestrian/cycling connection from Merritt Island to the GNCR in the vicinity of the highway bridge structure over the Old Welland River. Staff will follow up on this aspect of the project along with other cycling related provisions. **ACTION ITEM**

The first PIC was held on Tuesday, May 27, 2008, receiving support for the improvements planned for Hwy 406. One of the next steps to be taken is preparing the preliminary design which will be presented at a second PIC planned for later this year. An announcement will be made for those wishing to attend. The study is to be completed in Spring 2009. Committee members can make a formal submission to MTO directly to Peter Korpál, P. Eng., who is associated with active transportation initiatives. His contact information is:

Peter Korpál, P. Eng., peter.korpál@ontario.ca
Head – Planning and Design, Central Region
4th Floor Building D
1201 Wilson Avenue
Downsview, ON M3m 1J8

Bikeways Master Plan Mapping Update

A memo approved at the Transportation Strategy Steering Committee meeting of September 30, 2008 was distributed to the committee. A new GIS layer will be created for the approved Regional bike network allowing the integration of the Bikeways Master Plan Data with other road attribute data. This will help expedite the Bikeways Master Plan update process with greater accuracy, quicker data access, comparison and analysis.

PWP 40-2008 Transportation Project Activity Report

This report was distributed among the committee and will be included with the meeting notes. Eric Flora commented on the progress to date of several transportation-related studies throughout the Region.

- St. David's Road Pedestrian & Cycling Needs Study EA – Regional staff to meet with MTO representatives on November 5th to discuss additional alternatives and next steps
- Glendale Avenue/QEW (NOTL) interchange EA Study – commencement in 2009, subject to Regional Council budget approval
- Hwy 406/3rd Street (West St. Catharines) EA study – commencement in 2009, subject to Regional Council budget approval
- McLeod Road EA – officially commenced, RNBC has previously provided comments
- QEW widening – Mountain Road to Hwy 420 (MTO project) – study will examine improvements to the Thorold Stone Road interchange, including provisions for cycling facilities across the structure. PIC date is November 6th at Club Italia, 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Proposed Cycling and Policy Initiatives – City of St. Catharines

A report from the St. Catharines Transportation and Environmental Services Department regarding proposed policy and infrastructure initiatives related to cycling on city streets was provided to the committee. This report contained the recent improvements to the cycling infrastructure within the city, budgeting for the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), need for cycling policies and initiatives and the recommendation that the report be approved by the City of St. Catharines. Correspondence will be prepared to forward to Mayor Brian McMullan and Members of City Council informing them of the motion that the RNBC passed endorsing the staff report. **ACTION ITEM**

Motion:

That the RNBC endorses the report "Proposed Cycling and Policy Initiatives, Report General (Agenda Oct. 27 2008)" and that Chair Brian Baty write to the St. Catharines Mayor and Council congratulating them on promoting new Cycling Policy Initiatives.

Moved By: Paul Pattison

Seconded By: Pat Maloney

Carried

Thorold Bicycle Route Feasibility Study

Eric Flora commended the City of Thorold for their desire to initiate a master bicycle plan. He apprised the committee that the City of Thorold had received and accepted a proposal from Totten Sims Hubicki Associates, and they will proceed with a bicycle route feasibility study that will identify various routes within the city that, in conjunction with the identified Regional bicycle routes, will provide a connected, logical and safe on-street bicycle network for the City of Thorold. Eric provided the staff with a copy of the questionnaire to be included with the meeting notes. RNBC members should provide their respective comments directly to the consultant. **ACTION ITEM**

Twenty Mile Creek Bridge – Jordan Harbour – Bridge #039225

Ken Forgeron informed the committee on the progress of this construction project that affects part of the Waterfront Trail and Regional Bikeways Network. The jersey barriers that separate pedestrians and cyclists along the roadway from vehicles crossing the bridge over Jordan Harbour on the North Service Road will be removed. A dedicated paved shoulder space will be maintained over the bridge to allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross between the Beacon and Prudhommes. Previously the barriers were aligned such that you could not get over them at each end due to their placement.

9. Education and Enforcement Task Force

With Tim Whittle's announcing his retirement, he will undertake to send Pat Maloney any information he has in order to move forward with the Safety/Poster Brochure.

ACTION ITEM

10. Policy Task Force

Dave Hunt reported to the committee that discussion had taken place on revised Regional bicycling policies and mapping and the initial draft of a Regional Amendment will be ready for the January meeting. A report with the revised policies and mapping will for consideration by PPWC and then Council. This work will proceed under the provisions of the Planning Act.

11. Items for Information

The FCM application for Bikeways Signage and Wayfinding Program will not be going forward as a sustainability study must be done first and the Region does not meet the prerequisites for funding. **(ACTION ITEM 31)**

Information for Distribution

The following items were distributed at the meeting:

1. Transportation Association of Canada – “Bikeway traffic control guidelines being updated”
2. St. Catharines Standard – “Our city roads aren’t perfect”
3. Niagara Falls Review – “Toronto-Niagara bike train wins tourism award”
4. Welland Tribune – “Thorold studying bicycle route feasibility plan”
5. St. Catharines Standard – “Airport is key to our regional transportation system”
6. St. Catharines Standard – “Niagara’s economic growth is dependent on public transit”
7. NRPS Media Release – “Cyclist seriously injured in collision with transport truck”
8. Niagara This Week – “ Website brings Niagara’s cycling routes to world”

12. Items for Next Agenda

RNBC Strategic Plan – Priority Actions – 3 objectives
Regional Policy Plan Amendment for bicycling

13. Announcements

Ken Forgeron provided the committee a “Draft Only – Agenda” for the Ontario Bicycle Tourism Forum being held on January 22, 2009 at the Fairmount Royal York in Toronto. Chair Baty and Ken have been invited to make a joint presentation regarding Regional Niagara’s infrastructure, mapping and the Niagara Region Scenic Route website.

ACTION ITEM

14. Meeting Adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn:

Moved By: Dave Hunt

Seconded By: Tim Whittle

15. Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday, December 11, 2008 – (Christmas Meeting/Social)

Jimmy’s Red Onion

260 Lake Street

St. Catharines, Ontario

Meeting Notes Reviewed by: Eric Flora, Ken Forgeron, and Dianne Coppola

Meeting Notes Recorded by: Penny Pitt