

# REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, December 12, 2002  
Planning Services Board Room  
6:30 p.m.

## Present:

Brian McMullan	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
John Reep	- Public at Large
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large
David Hunt	- Public at Large
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Bill Crux	- Public at Large
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Dave McLaughlan	- Marshall Macklin Monaghan
Dave Richardson	- Marshall Macklin Monaghan
Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Doug Pease	- Regional Niagara Planning (co-op student)
Bob Johnson (Transportation)	- Regional Niagara Public Works
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

## 1. Adoption of Agenda

With the addition of one new agenda item discussed later in these meeting notes, the agenda was adopted, as revised.

### ***Motion:***

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

**Moved by: Bill Crux**

**Seconded by: Dave Hunt**

***Carried***

## 2. Review of Meeting Notes of November 14, 2002

K. Forgeron mentioned that attached to the meeting notes was a schedule of the 2003 Regional Niagara Bicycle Committee meeting dates.

### Bicycle Show

K. Forgeron spoke to G. Hardy in NETC in regards to the upcoming Toronto International Bicycle show. K. Forgeron reported that our booth is next to the cities of Hamilton and Burlington. At the January 9<sup>th</sup> RNBC meeting the Committee will need to discuss what materials we want to display in our booth and decide who will volunteer to staff the booth. NETC will provide the materials and will deliver them to the location.

***Motion:***

***To accept RNBC Meeting Notes of November 14, 2002.***

***Moved by: Dave Hunt***

***Seconded by: Bill Crux***

***Carried***

### Business Arising

There were two actions items that arose out of the last meeting.

#### Beaverdams Road in Niagara Falls

K. Forgeron reported that the City Engineering staff has proposed that they do not want bicycle lanes on that roadway. Their intent is to narrow the roadway for traffic calming purposes. However, information provided by Marshall Macklin Monaghan shows that bicycle lanes do serve to calm traffic. This information was passed on to Bob Bolibruck who hopes to convince their engineering staff to change their mind on the proposed road design and implement bikes lanes on Beaverdams Road.

#### Web Site Domain Name

Regional Councillor McMullan reported that Bob Diakow encouraged him not to pursue a separate web site domain.

### Regional Niagara Bicycle Master Plan: Draft Report

The written comments of each of the four RNBC Task Forces was distributed for information. In a meeting held earlier, the comments of each Task Force (except for the Engineering Task Force) was summarized for the consultants. All comments will be considered further before the report is finalized.

A Powerpoint presentation on the draft report was provided by Dave McLaughlin and Dave Richardson from Marshall Macklin Monaghan. A copy can be provided by contacting Julie Bittner in the Public Works Department.

A discussion was held on the cost of the plan. B. Johnson said that he could provide a comparison on the costs of the Region's initial plan as compared to the proposed new plan.

The consultants from MMM said that from a costing perspective this is a worst case scenario. They are erring on the side of caution when it comes to the cost.

Dave said that that the project was priced taking into consideration that the work wouldn't be done until a planned reconstruction or resurfacing job on the road is scheduled. Bike lanes can be added when there is a clearly defined need. Most jurisdictions do the work when a planned reconstruction job is scheduled.

In answer to T. Whittle's question, the consultants stated that the project was priced in 2002 dollars.

There was some discussion on the Sustainable Transportation Co-ordinator. This position was described as a person who could take charge of this project and facilitate its implementation. This individual should have a well defined interest in sustainable transportation projects and outstanding public relations skills. The report identifies some of the key roles of that individual.

B. Johnson believes that if we do not have the Sustainable Transportation Coordinator it will be more difficult to implement the study's recommendations. K. Forgeron asked if this workload is too much for one person. Responsibilities will involve bicycling, transit, pedestrians, etc. The consultants stated that at least one person is needed to get the ball rolling.

The report will be finalized in February/early March.

#### Engineering Task Group Comments Regarding the Draft Master Plan

F. Pravitz stated that these comments had been discussed with both the Engineering and Policy Task Force Groups.

F. Pravitz said that he looked firstly at the saleability of the plan to Council, staff and the community. One of his main concerns was the overall high cost of the plan. Not all of the costs are attributable completely to cycling (e.g. multi-use trail). For example, some roadways will require upgrading and signage at some point anyway. Also, there can be life-cycle cost savings.

The plan needs to emphasis both the tourism and health benefits as well as the natural cycling amenities in Niagara.

F. Pravitz thought that the plan may be too aggressive in some of the rural areas that are quiet and will not need upgrades. D. Hunt wanted to know what criteria was used to

determine paved shoulders in rural areas. MMM said that the integration would be when reconstruction is done on the roads. T. Whittle said, however, that today's "quiet country road" may be a thru-way in ten years time and we have to look at what the traffic flow will be 10, 20 years in the future. We don't want to go "cheap" now and be sorry down the road. B. Johnson said that it is possible to forecast future road traffic volumes and needs for the next 20 years.

Councillor McMullan said that while the study and its principles/policies may be approved, individual road projects may not necessarily be approved when the time comes to deal with capital budgets. Councillor McMullan also felt that there may be problems with the plan at the municipal level. It could be perceived that the Region is coming in with a plan that the municipalities cannot afford.

T. Whittle said that these roads are not being constructed at those standards only for cycling.

The plan should specify that this is a worst case scenario. Traffic volumes and pavement condition would be looked at as well as other factors in determining whether paved shoulders are necessary. If paved shoulders are not needed then the cost would be reduced.

F. Pravitz felt that alternative sources of funding are not discussed enough in the draft report. For example, the Service Road may be partially funded by SuperBuild and the Waterfront Trust. Other sources of private and public funding may be tapped to ensure that bicycle facilities are not completely funded by the Region or local government.

F. Pravitz said that his Task Force is supportive of the network that has been proposed, but they have some concerns about the urban areas as there seems to be a rural bias. He did not feel that St. Catharines was well addressed. There were some concerns that service roads are not included on the network. With future QEW widening there may be opportunities to create good east-west links. The retrofitting of existing space and additional bike lanes is potentially possible on Main Street in Welland and also on parts of St. Paul Street in St. Catharines. There was a concern that the plan does not address some of the difficult situations, for example, Glendale Avenue when it goes through the ravine at Twelve Mile Creek.

The consultants said that there are many challenging areas. The implementation process in the report is there to provide a structure for addressing specific issues. This study could not drill down too deep to address all the difficult areas. There is a comprehensive process in the plan that will be recommended to assist in implementation.

K. Forgeron commented that each of the Task Force chairs did a great job in assembling their groups and putting together written comments. Copies of all comments are available by contacting Julie Bittner.

J. Somerwil felt that utilitarian biking did not get much attention in the report. Dave McLaughlin agreed to reconsider the ideas on utilitarian cycling provided by the RNBC earlier this fall.

K. Forgeron suggested that a recommendation could be included that further work be carried on by the RNBC to facilitate utilitarian cycling.

Regional Councillor Brian McMullan said he would provide to the RNBC a copy of a handout on utilitarian cycling that was presented at the SmartGrowth Committee Meeting. **(Action Item)**

Considerable discussion took place on the proposed planning and design guidelines. It was emphasized that where optimal guidelines cannot be achieved (e.g. 1.5 m bike lane) under constrained conditions then flexibility to implement lesser widths (e.g. 1.2 m bike lanes) should be provided.

Ken Forgeron indicated that more and more cyclists in Niagara (including most RNBC members) are expressing concern about facilities in urban areas that require only "shared use curb lanes." The majority of cyclists prefer a white line on the roadway to separate vehicles from cyclists particularly on busy roads. The preference is for a travel lane (e.g. 3.5 m) for vehicles, a marked line and then any amount of curb space left over (e.g. 0.75 m – 1.2 m) for cyclists. In this way vehicles and bicycles drive in their space.

In Figure 4.7, while the rate of cycling fatalities is mathematically correct, the period of time does not correspond. The Ontario figures are for three years and the Niagara figures are for six years. T. Whittle said that the eight total fatalities mentioned in the report is incorrect. He suggested that perhaps this number may only represent fatalities on Regional roads.

The RNBC discussed whether to approve the MasterPlan in principle now or to wait until it is finalized in February.

The consultants from MMM said that the final document would be completed by the end of February or early March. The objective is to get the report finished before early spring. F. Pravitz agreed to provide his final comments on the network map by early January.

J. Somerwil suggested having speed limits on bicycles. Perhaps the bicycle speed limit could be 20 km per hour. The consultants said that the challenge would be in having posted speed limits for both cyclists and motorists.

T. Whittle reported that there is no speed limit for cyclists under the Highway Traffic Act.

F. Pravitz discussed the concept of destination and distance signage. The consultants said the proposal will be adjusted to recommend destination and distance signage in Phase 1.

The Committee had a discussion on whether to approve an additional \$40,000 to be charged against the RNBC account to complete the report. The \$40,000 was a "best estimate" as to what the cost would be to complete the revisions.

D. Hunt wanted to know if there were any other RNBC projects which may need the money. F. Pravitz said that there would be a map study down the road, but he felt that using the money to complete the MasterPlan was a good use of resources.

The RNBC deferred a possible motion to support the Bicycle Master Plan until it is completed in early 2003. MMM stressed the importance of broad bicycling community support prior to its consideration by Regional Council.

***Motion:***

**That up to a maximum of \$40,000 be charged against the RNBC account for the consultants to complete the Bicycle Master Plan.**

***Moved by: Bill Crux***

***Seconded by: Dave Hunt***

***Carried***

**Other Business**

K. Forgeron recognized the RNBC volunteers. As a thank you for their help, Regional Niagara water bottles were distributed.

**Next RNBC Meeting**

Thursday, January 9, 2003

Regional Headquarters – Committee Room 4 – 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:

Julie Bittner

Reviewed & Revised by Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner