

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, May 12, 2005
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Gregg Dame	- Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Bob Romanuk	- Niagara Falls Trails and Bikeways Committee
Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Bill Rashleigh	- Public at Large
Peter Davies	- Niagara Freewheelers
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Bill Dickson	- Public at Large
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Dave Hunt - Public at Large & Cycle Ontario Alliance

The meeting commenced at 7:03 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The order of the agenda was revised, and with the addition of the agenda items listed below, the agenda was adopted.

Ken Forgeron said that he had a few announcements to make.

Mr. Pattison requested to speak on the following:

- St. Catharines Downtown Street System Conversion Study
- West St. Catharines Transportation Study
- Queenston-Lewiston Bridge

Mr. Flora requested to speak on the following:

- QEW Widening through St. Catharines
- Lake St. in Grimsby Preliminary Design Study
- Ontario St. Class EA St. Catharines

Motion:

To accept the Agenda of May 12th as revised.

Moved by: Bill Dixon

Seconded by: Jan Somerwil

Carried

2. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (April 14, 2005)

The following corrections and revisions were requested to be made to the April 14th meeting notes:

Page 7, last paragraph, the word "report" should be added after the words "2005 Resurfacing Program."

Motion:

To accept and approve the meeting notes of April 14th as revised.

Moved by: Peter Davies

Seconded by: Brian Baty

Carried

3. Business Arising

The Committee was provided updates on a number of "Action Items" which arose out of the April 2005 meeting notes:

- Councillor Baty distributed a background information sheet on the Region's new three-week rotating schedule for various types of Committees. The new schedule suggests that sub-committees meet every six weeks. However, should an urgent issue arise, an extra meeting could be arranged. The new three-week schedule resulted in changes being made to the 2005 RNBC meeting schedule. Listed below are the revised RNBC meeting dates:
 - June 2
 - July 14
 - August 25
 - October 6
 - November 17

Motion:

To approve the revised 2005 RNBC meeting schedule.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Brian Baty

Carried

- Mr. Flora reported that the roundabout on Portage Rd. at Queenston Heights was installed by the Niagara Parks Commission and any design concerns would need to be addressed by them. However, the section of Portage Rd. from Stanley Ave./405 interchange to the roundabout will soon be under the Region's jurisdiction. At that

time, Regional staff will look into installing 'Share-the-Road' signage in advance of the roundabout. As well, the southerly approach from Queenston Village may also have similar signage installed.

- Mr. Pattison reported that he had spoken to representatives from the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission and they confirmed that signage advising cyclists as to what they need to do in order to cross the Queenston-Lewiston bridge during construction will be installed soon.
- Mr. Leavens reported that Patrick Gedge of the Niagara Economic Development Corporation (NEDC) agreed to meet with the RNBC at a future meeting to discuss promoting cycling. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Hunt was not in attendance for the meeting and therefore was unable to provide an update on any discussions held with the Ontario Cycling Alliance regarding contacting the Southern Ontario Gateway Council resource members. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Whittle reported that he had no new information to add, at this time, in terms of the Niagara Regional Police Service conducting an enforcement blitz aimed at cycling. More information will be provided at a later date when information is available. **(Future Action Item)**
- Mr. Flora reported that the RNBC draft Terms of Reference had been slightly revised by Joe Cousins of the Region's Public Works Dept. The one significant change is that there will be one non-voting representative from the Region's Transportation Division instead of two. The revised draft Terms of Reference will be sent to the Public Works & Utilities Committee (PWUC) on May 31 for approval and subsequently ratified by Regional Council on June 9. Eric agreed to e-mail the proposed changes to RNBC members. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Pattison reported that the RNBC had missed the deadline for submitting supportive comments to AMO regarding the *Line Fences Act*. Also, in his opinion, it would be better for individuals to write letters requesting that the *Line Fences Act* be amended. The RNBC shared Mr. Pattison's opinion on this issue and decided **not** to proceed with sending a memo from the RNBC to the PWUC expressing our support for proposed AMO amendments to the *Line Fences Act*, in particular, Section 20, which pertain to the sharing of costs between landowners and municipalities for any needed fencing along trails.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that NEDC has prepared a French translation supplement for their Seasons magazine and he is hoping that they will be able to assist us in preparing something similar for the 2nd edition of our bike map. This can be discussed at the upcoming meeting with Patrick Gedge. **(Action Item)**

- At the April RNBC meeting, Councillor Leavens reported that the Town of Pelham was interesting in obtaining an electronic copy of the Region's cycling map to assist in the development of a local map on trails and bikeways. It was reported that Town of Pelham staff had been in touch with Regional staff regarding this request and that the information could be provided.

4. Update/Progress on New Bike Map

Mr. Pravitz displayed an initial draft of the new bicycle map which shows the first set of edits and the three urban inset maps. He reported that about 150 edits had been made to the map to date and were being completed by regional staff utilizing the Region's GIS system with a new GIS roads layer. This means that no royalty fees will need to be paid to DMTI who previously owned the base layer. In the second set of edits some layout issues and other informational details will need to be looked at. Map notes still need to be included (ex. how to use the tunnel system, how to cross the international bridges) and the map needs to be updated to reflect any changes to be made to the trail and road system this year. Progress on the map is slower than anticipated due to some technical issues, but it is expected that the end product will be far more useful and easier to update in the future. However, web based applications are enhanced.

Mr. Forgeron asked if the Map Task Force could provide assistance. Mr. Pravitz said that help is needed in making sure that the information on the map is as up-to-date as possible. As well, help is needed in determining which roads are the best for cyclists to travel on when cycling through the areas shown on the inset maps.

Mr. Pravitz reported that detailed information will be included on the map showing which trails are paved, which have fine stone dust or which are more suitable for (i.e. dirt trails) mountain bikes.

Councillor Baty suggested that instead of having a date on the map, ex. 2005, the map could be referred to as the "2nd edition" with a print date shown on the legend. This would extend the life span of the map. The RNBC agreed with his suggestion.

5. Re-Visiting RNBC Meeting Schedule

Discussed under Action Items earlier.

6. Greater Niagara Circle Trek – Municipal Reporting

Ms. Landry reported that Thorold raised almost \$900, Niagara Falls raised over \$2,000. As the weather impacted the event, i.e. once the rain started in Niagara Falls, attendance dropped significantly, a suggestion was made to push the event back a month in the hope of having better weather and therefore a higher turnout for this annual event.

Mr. Dame reported that Port Colborne raised just over \$2,000.

7. Proposed Regional Road Rights-of-Way Policies and Schedules

Mr. Flora reported that the Region does not have a formal Right-of-Way road allowance policy or Council approved road widening requirements. At the April 19 PWUC and at the April 20 Planning Services Committee a report was brought forward recommending that the Region move ahead with a Regional Policy Plan Amendment which includes proposed rights-of-way widths along all Regional roads. The report received Regional Council approval. A direction came out of the PWUC to have staff review the public notification process to ensure everyone affected is aware of their opportunity to participate. Staff will report back at the May 31st PWUC. As well, three formal public meetings under the *Planning Act* will be held in September. Mr. Flora explained that unless there is sufficient right-of-way on Regional roads, the region may not be able to provide full bikeway facilities. The Region has constructed bikeway facilities on existing roadways, however, on several recently rehab projects, significant maintenance and property purchase issues have arisen. Mr. Flora told the RNBC that a presentation on the proposed right-of-way policy was made at the April 10th PWUC and he would bring copies of the presentation to the next RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Forgeron suggested that a task force be formed to look at how the proposed rights-of-way report may affect the existing Regional bike network. The task force could report back to the RNBC on their findings and a recommendation could be made to the PWUC. Mr. Flora and a representative from the Planning Department would participate in the task force, as well as RNBC member Peter Davies and possibly Frank Pravitz

Motion:

To form a task force to review how the proposed rights-of-way policies and suggested road allowances may affect the existing Regional bicycle network.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

8. NOTL Transportation Master Plan

Mr. Flora reported that the Transportation Master Plan has been finalized and was presented to the PWUC at its April 19th meeting and the Planning Services Committee at its April 20th meeting. The Executive Summary is available if anyone would like a copy. Figure E.1 illustrates the Recommended On-Road Cycling and Multi-Use Trails. Staff will be reporting back to the PWUC on the findings and recommendations.

9. 2005 Traffic Signal Rehabilitation Program

The 2005 Traffic Signal Rehabilitation Program has been approved. A copy of the report, which includes a list of new signal locations, was distributed to the RNBC. If

anyone wishes to look at the signal designs and provide any comments, please contact Brian Hughes, Associate Director Transportation Engineering.

A representative from the Public Works Department attended the June 2003 RNBC meeting to answer questions on the design and operation of signals within the Region. Specifically, members of the RNBC felt that the design and location of many of the signals were cyclist unfriendly. This leads to frustration and illegal crossings at times. Members want to know why the pole and push button could not be placed closer to the roadway. Then cyclists would not have to get off their bike in order to press the button. In 2003, it was explained that having the pole and push button too close to the road may pose a safety hazard. However, it appears that some other jurisdictions had the pole and push button designs that are closer to the road and asked why similar designs cannot be used in Niagara, particularly along the bicycle network. Mr. Flora said he would follow-up with Nick Rosati of the Public Works Department and provide an update to the RNBC at a future meeting. **(Future Action Item)**

10. 2005 Traffic Rehabilitation and Resurfacing Program

The 2005 Traffic Rehabilitation and Resurfacing Program report (PWA 66-2005) was approved by Council. An attachment to the report lists all of the priority roads to be completed as well as a list of provisional roads.

Mr. Flora reported that he will supply, at a later date, a list of reconstruction projects to be undertaken this year. However, he was able say that Glendale Avenue between Mountain St. to the CNR tracks has been deferred as per report PWA 87-2005 and instead, Carlton St. between Lake and Geneva will be reconstructed this year.

11. Model Urban Design Guidelines – Facilitating Bicycling

Mr. Forgeron reported that Model Urban Design Guidelines for use by local municipalities now have been approved by Regional Council. He asked if the RNBC was interested in having a Planning Department representative who was involved in this project make a presentation to committee on aspects that relate to bicycle transportation. The RNBC agreed to this suggestion.

12. Niagara Falls Tourism Task Force

Mr. Flora reported that this task force was recently formed and is in the process of completing their Committee's Terms of Reference. Although not a formal representative on the Committee, Mr. Flora said that if anyone has any questions for the task force to please let him know.

13. West St. Catharines Transportation Study

Mr. Flora reported that the study is moving along. The consultant has developed a traffic model of the area and is currently developing a range of alternatives to address the future transportation needs. Another focus group meeting and another PIC will be held at the end of June. At the PIC, the various alternatives will be presented and more details will be provided on how the project will move forward.

14. Millennium Trail (Phase II) – Results of Public Meeting

Mr. Romanuk reported that a public meeting was held April 27th. He estimated that approximately 400-500 people were in attendance and the ratio was 3:1 in favour of Niagara Falls Council approving the construction of Phase II of the trail. Council will vote on the issue at their May 30th meeting. Mr. Romanuk conveyed the Niagara Falls Trails and Bikeways Committee thanks for the support they have received on this issue. Mr. Forgeron also indicated that he had prepared a memo summarizing the points of the meeting. It is included as an Item for Distribution.

15. Task Force Reports

Education and Enforcement

No new information to be reported.

Encouragement

Ms. Landry provided an update on Bike-to-Work Week. Fifty-six team captains registered for the event and the team sizes varied from 2 to 20 people. Media coverage included articles in the Welland Tribune and Niagara This Week. Interviews were also given to both Cogeco and 1220 CHSC.

The cost of the April 1st launch was \$107.00. The Bike-to-Work Week shirts cost approximately \$2,500 and was covered by Healthy Living Niagara. The cost to have the Bike-to-Work week material printed was \$200.00 and was paid for by the Public Health Department. All prizes were free except for the Liberty Bike prize (gift certificate). The Public Health Department contributed \$300.00 towards this \$500.00 prize.

The Bicycle Friendly awards will take place in the fall and the cost will be around \$240.00 for the plaques. Due to the number of schools and workplaces participating in Bike-to-Work Week, Ms. Landry does not feel that it will be a challenge this year in getting applications from the schools and workplaces for the Bicycle Friendly Awards this year. In the past, receiving applications from these two groups has been a problem.

Both Councillor Leavens and Mr. Forgeron thanked Ms. Landry for her hard work and for the good job she and her team has done. Ms. Landry responded that she has good

volunteers and said that RNBC member Brenda Sidlar has been very helpful by organizing the library displays for Bike Month.

16. New Business

16 (a) St. Catharines Downtown Street Conversion Study

Mr. Pattison attended the May 11th St. Catharines public meeting on the two-way street conversion study in St. Catharines. He said that approximately 50 people were in attendance. Although it was not officially presented at the meeting, one of the proposals, which generated a lot interest, included the concept of a round-a-bout at St. Paul/Westchester/Ontario and St. Paul/Geneva/Niagara/Queenston. Mr. Pattison said that he has copies of the information package handed out at the meeting if anyone is interested. Mr. Flora said that one reason why the round-a-bout was included is because by offering various alternatives early in the process, it gets people thinking about the options. Also, at these locations there is a significant amount of room to build the facilities. The City of St. Catharines is quickly moving on this study and plans to have another PIC before the summer break.

16 (b) Announcements

- Mr. Forgeron reported that RNBC member Dave Arnott has resigned from the committee. He has thanked Dave for his participation and significant contributions to the RNBC's work over the years.
- The joint bicycling committee meeting with Hamilton/Burlington/Niagara will take place on May 28th. Details will be e-mailed to the committee once they are received from the host committee (i.e. Hamilton). Mr. Forgeron agreed to raise the issue of bicycle registration by police and/or municipalities to assist in recovering lost or stolen bikes.
- International Trails Day will be held on June 4. A notice on what is being planned for that day was distributed. Mr. Pattison reminded everyone that the event will take place from 9:00 to noon with the staging area being at Veteran's Way. Formal presentations will take place at 9:30 a.m.

16 (c) Public Health Brochure on Trail Etiquette

Ms. Landry distributed an existing RNBC brochure on trail etiquette. She explained that the Public Health Department is looking at producing various brochures including one on trail safety. She asked everyone to read over the brochure and provide any comments from a cycling perspective. This work should be co-ordinated with the work of the Education and Enforcement Task Force who had indicated it would consider revisions to this brochure in the fall.

16 (d) QEW Widening Through St. Catharines

Mr. Flora reported that discussions have taken place between Regional Public Works staff and City of St. Catharines staff regarding the provision of an additional fifth lane underneath the Geneva St. structure, as well as possible bicycle facilities and wider sidewalks. City and Regional staff are willing to discuss the possibility of cost sharing and a meeting has been scheduled next week to discuss this issue. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Flora reported that there may be a need to have an additional lane underneath the Welland Avenue structure. Costing issues for this work still need to be worked out as well.

The Lake St. structure will have a fifth lane added to the cross section, but no specific marked bike lanes are to be provided. However, there will be additional space available between the sidewalk and the lane for cyclists to use.

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has suggested a separate right-turn channelization lane for southbound traffic along Martindale Rd. (from the Toronto-bound exit ramp). There would be no traffic signals installed. However, neither the City nor the Region are in support of this suggestion. Mr. Flora left a copy of the preliminary design drawing for review and comment by the RNBC.

The MTO would like to have the detailed design finished by June 2006 and have work begin in 2007.

16 (e) Lake Street in Grimsby

Mr. Flora reported that the consulting firm of Totten Sims Hubicki was undertaking a road operations and safety assessment of Lake St. from Maple Avenue to the Town of Lincoln boundary in Grimsby. Traffic calming measures may be considered. Both Bill Rashleigh and Paul Pattison's names were given as RNBC contacts. Mr. Forgeron indicated that this roadway is part of the Waterfront Trail and should be considered.

16 (f) Ontario Street Class EA Between Carleton St. and the QEW

Mr. Flora said that he had received a notice in regards to a Class EA being initiated along Ontario St. between Carlton St. and the QEW. Although this area is not designated on the Region's bike network, the RNBC should provide comments and Mr. Pattison agreed to review the project.

17. Items for Distribution

Mr. Forgeron distributed the following information items:

- Region of Durham's plan to develop a new bike network
- Economic Value of Active Transportation fact sheet. A suggestion was made to send this information to Mayor Salci and Niagara Falls Council (**Action Item**)
- Summary of where bicycling map donations came from. Almost \$7,000 has been collected since October 2003.
- Study from Rutgers University titled, "Cycling Trends and Policies in Canadian Cities". Mr. Forgeron highlighted areas he thought may be of interest to the RNBC.
- Active Living Research Article. A suggestion was made to send this article to Mayor Salci and Niagara Falls Council. (**Action Item**)
- Article titled, "Future Isn't What It Used To Be" on the increasing importance and role that alternative forms of transportation (i.e. walking, bicycling, public transit) will play in future transportation planning.
- Memo from Ken Forgeron to the RNBC providing highlights of the April 27th public meeting on Phase II of the Millennium Trail in Niagara Falls.

18. Items for Next Agenda

None received.

19. Next Meeting: June 2, 2005

The next RNBC meeting will take place on Thursday, June 2, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in Committee Room #4 at Regional Headquarters. Upon discussion it was determined that the RNBC Annual Summer Social would take place July 14. Any suggestions for a meeting location would be appreciated.

MOTION:

To adjourn the May 12, 2005 RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Bill Dixon

Seconded by: Bill Rashleigh

Carried

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:
Julie Bittner

Reviewed by:
Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner

Eric Flora, P.Eng., C.E.T.
Acting Associate Director Transportation Systems