

# REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, November 17, 2005  
Committee Room #4  
7:00 p.m.

## Present:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Marlaine Koehler	- Waterfront Regeneration Trust (Guest)
Nikki Rendle	- Waterfront Regeneration Trust (Guest)
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Bill Dickson	- Public at Large
Gregg Dame	- Public at Large & Port Colborne Trails & Bikeways Committee
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large & Cycle Ontario Alliance
Dianne Coppola	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

## Regrets:

John Reep	- Public at Large
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large & Niagara Falls Trails & Bikeways Committee
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation

The meeting commenced at 7:07 p.m.

## 1. Adoption of Agenda

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

- QEW Widening through St. Catharines (Eric Flora)
- Niagara-GTA Corridor Terms of Reference (Eric Flora)
- Waterfront Trust Bikeways Workshop (Paul Pattison)
- Queenston-Lewiston Bridge Signing (Paul Pattison)
- Proposed bicycle route in St. Catharines and Thorold (Paul Pattison)

### ***Motion:***

***To accept the agenda of November 17<sup>th</sup> as revised.***

***Moved by: Bill Dickson***

***Seconded by: Gregg Dame***

***Carried***

## 2. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005)

The following corrections and revisions were requested to the October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting notes:

- At the bottom of page two, under item #4 (Proposed Regional Roads Right-of-Way and the Regional Bicycling Network) the wording “Mr. Nicholson indicated that in its report the Planning Department believes that all of these roadways should remain on the Regional Bikeways Network as approved by Regional Council,” should be added before the last sentence on that page.
- On page three, under the heading “Lakeshore Road,” the wording should read, “Planning does not support the widening of this road at this time, due to the following concerns...”
- On page three, under the heading “Lakeshore Road,” quotations should be added around the words “special study.”

Mr. Forgeron said that two Items for Distribution were not included in the meeting notes from the last meeting. Those two items were:

- Letter from Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Trails Council and the Ontario Good Roads Association to the Minister of Health Promotion requesting that the anticipated Provincial Trails Strategy deal with concerns over costs/liability with trails, as well as the *Line Fences Act*, all of which discourage municipalities from purchasing and/or developing trails.
- Letter from John Crossingham providing information on four items related to the Underground Railroad Route.

Mr. Hunt said that on page four, under item six (Bicycle Conference, Hamilton), it appears that the word “tour” was missing after the word “bike” and before the word “exploring.”

***Motion:***

***To accept and approve the meeting notes of October 6<sup>th</sup> as revised.***

***Moved by: Bill Dickson***

***Seconded by: Gregg Dame***

***Carried***

### **3. Business Arising**

The Committee was provided updates on a number of “Action Items” which arose out of the October 2005 meeting notes:

- Discussion on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for Regional Road 20 was deferred for a future meeting. **(Action Item by Councillor Leavens)**
- Mr. Forgeron reported that he had not written a memo to Patrick Gedge regarding RNBC priority items, but he had spoken to Gary Hardy. Mr. Forgeron reported that

the revised RNBC display has been completed. This issue can be discussed in January/2006 as part of the RNBC Strategic Planning Session.

- Mr. Forgeron reported that there is still work to be done involving the Federal government before the City of Welland can do anything to make the Greater Niagara Circle Route Trail over the rail crossing north of Ontario Road in Welland more accessible for people with disabilities.
- Mr. Hunt reported that the Canadian Cycling Association will receive \$65,000 to increase the number of CAN-BIKE courses across Canada.
- Councillor Leavens reported that he had spoken to Manfred Fast, of the Trillium Foundation, and arrangements will be made for him to speak at a future RNBC meeting after the Strategic Planning Session in January. **(Action Item – Councillor Leavens)**
- As Councillor Baty was not in attendance, this Action Item regarding contacting E. L. Crossley was deferred. This pertains to seeking the involvement of the school in Bike Month 2006. **(Action Item – Councillor Baty)**
- Discussion on the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge was deferred until later in the meeting as it is an agenda item.
- The Action Items on the registration of bicycles was deferred as Mr. Whittle was not in attendance for the meeting. **(Action Item – Tim Whittle)**

#### **4. Waterfront Regeneration Trust – Funding Request**

Marlaine Koehler and Nikki Rendle from the Waterfront Regeneration Trust made a presentation to the RNBC on some of the many accomplishments that have been done by the Trust over the past three years as well as some of the Trust's future plans.

- The Trust has been working on extending the trail from Brockville to Montreal. They have partnered with Velo Quebec and are working with them to advertise in Velo Quebec publications and are hoping to have some joint promotional activities. As well, portions of the Waterfront Trust website and various brochures will need to be translated into French.
- The Trust received substantial Superbuild grant approval for its submission to complete 51 projects across the Waterfront Trail. Fifteen of these projects were in the Niagara area. The only two projects not completed to date are St. Catharines Rotary Park and Charles Daley Park in Lincoln. **(Regional Niagara received almost \$500,000 in funding from the Trust.)**
- Between 2005 and 2007 the Trust will continue to develop their website. Since the website was first launched, there has been a large spike in visits to the

website. There were close to 1.5 million visits from May to October of 2005 alone. The website continues to report on the Annual Waterfront Trail Tour. In 2004, the Greater Niagara Circle Route tour was featured.

- The Waterfront Regeneration Trust is currently undergoing a major sign initiative including redesign of the trailhead signage. This signage now prominently displays the Waterfront Trail website and includes a legend showing, among other things, where landmarks, hospitals, local trail links and public transit can be located. The Waterfront Trust feels that it is key to include a sign at major staging areas. There will be 67 signs in place by March 2007. In addition to trailhead signage, directional signage will be installed. Feedback was received from trail users that a consistently signed route is needed.
- A sign audit needs to be completed in Niagara in the spring and summer of 2006. The RNBC can participate with the audit by identifying areas in the Niagara Region where directional signage is a critical need. Mr. Hunt suggested that the Niagara Freewheelers may be helpful in completing the audit in the Niagara area as they are familiar with the routes.

Ms. Koehler requested \$1500.00 in funding from the RNBC over the next three years. Ms. Koehler explained that it's helpful when approaching a large corporation for funding if they can show the corporation that municipal organizations and local service clubs are contributing as well.

Councillor Leavens explained that although he didn't foresee any problems with the funding request, he asked if the RNBC could discuss this later in the meeting after the item on a strategic planning session.

## **5. Bikeways Workshop**

Mr. Pattison attended the Bikeway Planning and Development Workshop on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The workshop was sponsored by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust and Velo Quebec. Topics covered at the workshop included:

- Basic design principles
- Planning issues
- Parking
- Geometric design of bikeways

A technical guide will be placed in the RNBC reference library for future use. **(Action Item – Paul Pattison & Ken Forgeron)**

## **6. Progress on 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Bike Map**

Mr. Forgeron reported that slow progress was being made on completing the bike map. Mr. Forgeron reported that a request had been received from the City of Port Colborne to be included in the urban insets. However, this is difficult given limited space on the

map. The purpose of the urban area insets is to show the more complex road patterns in the larger urban areas. A suggestion was made that if Port Colborne and others like Fort Erie wished to have portions of a map of their respective areas shown, they could purchase an advertising panel.

Mr. Forgeron explained that due to time constraints, information on U.S. trails would not be included in this edition. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the map is to be completed in time for the Toronto International Bike Show in March and there is not enough time to get something completed on the U.S. trails before this date.

Mr. Forgeron requested the RNBC's help in verifying the accuracy of the list of bike shops, wineries and cycling clubs which is to be included on the map. A matrix, which includes the locations of conservation areas and what facilities they offer (ex. restrooms, parking) needs to be checked for accuracy as well. Mr. Forgeron explained that he had collected lists of trail descriptions from various RNBC members. All of the lists need to be reviewed to make sure that abbreviations or wording used is consistent throughout the entire list of trail descriptions. Mr. Hunt volunteered to provide a draft and send it to Mr. Pattison to review. **(Action Item – Paul Pattison & Dave Hunt)**

## **7. Bicycle Conference Highlights**

Mr. Forgeron explained that there were approximately 75 people in attendance who came from right across Ontario.

Presentations were made by Councillor Baty (Greater Niagara Circle Route), Dr. Robin Williams, the keynote speaker who discussed the importance of bike transportation on health, and Terri Donia, from the Regional Niagara's Planning Department, who discussed the Urban Design Guidelines and how they facilitate walking and cycling. Mr. Forgeron moderated one panel discussion and was responsible for putting up several displays on behalf of the RNBC, the Planning Department and Cycling Ontario Alliance.

## **8. Bicycle Friendly Awards**

Ms. Coppola thanked the judges for their assistance in judging the 2005 Bicycle Friendly Awards. There were 11 nominations which was a modest increase over last year. However, some nomination forms did not include complete information. Ms. Coppola suggested the need to re-visit both the form and the submission requirements.

The judges thought that all submissions should be recognized, whether they won an award or not. Ms. Coppola suggested giving a Certificate of Merit to those who submitted an application, but did not win an award.

The judges recommended that the following nominees be awarded a 2005 Bicycle Friendly Award:

### Government Institutions

Gold – City of Niagara Falls (Parks & Rec)

### Workplaces

Gold – Pan Abrasives Inc.

Certificate of Merit – City of Thorold

Education

Gold – Niagara College-Welland Campus

Silver – Fort Erie Elementary School

Certificates of Merit

Clarkson Cycle

Rapid City Cycle

Market Café

Silver – Ministry of Transportation

Bronze – Oxy Vinyls Canada

Bronze – Niagara EMS (tie)

Business

Gold – Liberty! Bicycles

Silver – BIKEFIT

Mr. Forgeron noted that the City of Port Colborne had developed quite an extensive list of businesses in the City who were bicycle friendly. However, award nominations were not submitted on these establishments. Mr. Gregg Dame was requested to discuss this with his committee for possible action in 2006.

***Motion:***

**To accept the 2005 Bicycle Friendly Award winning nominees as presented.**

***Moved by: Dave Hunt***

***Seconded by: Gregg Dame***

***Carried***

The judges thought that all efforts should be recognized and suggested awarding a Certificate of Merit to all nominees who did not win an award.

***Motion:***

**To recognize the efforts of all Bicycle Friendly Award submissions by awarding a Certificate of Merit to those who did not win an award.**

***Moved by: Gregg Dame***

***Seconded by: Paul Pattison***

***Carried***

Ms. Coppola suggested that the awards be presented at the December 15<sup>th</sup> Regional Council meeting. Councillor Leavens will speak to the Regional Clerk about having the award presentation included on the agenda. **(Action Item)** Mr. Forgeron volunteered to take photos.

As done in the past, a small reception will be held that evening at Regional Headquarters for the award winners. The RNBC suggested that a motion be made authorizing funds of up to \$100.00 in order to have refreshments available at the reception.

***Motion:***

**To authorize the purchase of refreshments up to \$100.00 for the reception to be held when the Bicycle Friendly Awards are presented at Regional Council**

***Moved by: Paul Pattison***

***Seconded by: Dave Hunt***

***Carried***

**9. 2006 Bike to Work Week Initiatives**

Ms. Coppola said that the Public Health Department is willing to take the prime lead in coordinating the 2006 Bike to Work Week. She did request having RNBC members act as team leaders or to assist in promoting and encouraging others to become team leaders. Although materials promoting the 2005 campaign were distributed, she noted that word of mouth ended up being the best form of promotion for the campaign.

RNBC member support is also needed in terms of gathering prizes for 2006. Councillor Leavens volunteered to write letters of support if we could identify potential prize donors. **(Action Item)** He asked for the names of any possible prize donors to be forwarded to him so that any letters that are sent out could be personalized. **(Action Item)** Ms. Coppola explained that for the 2005 campaign there was one "major" prize, but there were smaller prizes as well, for example, bike bells. Mr. Forgeron again emphasized that the Freewheelers should be contacted and information put on their website. The Annual General Meeting in January 2006 would be a good time to discuss this with many Freewheelers. Mr. Forgeron would be happy to facilitate this if it is helpful.

#### **10. Merritt Street Bridge EA**

Mr. Pattison attended a second public information centre (PIC) on the Merritt Street Bridge EA. Mr. Pattison said that at the PIC he spoke to a City of St. Catharines official who indicated that the city was re-considering marking the shoulder side clearance on the Merritt Street Bridge for cycling purposes. Previously the city had indicated that they were not prepared to paint bike lanes or mark the shoulder side clearance on the bridge due to the fact that there would be no bike lanes painted beyond the bridge.

#### **11. Proposed Strategic Planning Session by RNBC (Jan. 2006)**

Councillor Leavens reported that a meeting was held with Councillor Baty, Dianne Coppola, Ken Forgeron, Eric Flora and himself. They discussed the idea of having a strategic planning session in the new year. The purpose of the session would be to map out what activities the RNBC wants to focus on during the next year. Councillor Leavens suggested hiring an outside facilitator in order to move things along quickly and keep everyone focused.

***Motion:***

***To move ahead with the planning of a full day RNBC strategic planning session.***

***Moved by: Bill Dickson***

***Seconded by: Gregg Dame***

***Carried***

Ms. Coppola volunteered to follow-up on finding a facilitator. Councillor Leavens suggested that the names of any possible facilitators should be forwarded to Ms. Coppola. Payment of fees associated with the work of the facilitator will require further discussion with Public Works staff. **(Action Item)**

The primary date for the session would be January 28.

***Motion:***

***To authorize Dianne Coppola, Ron Leavens and Gregg Dame to review, interview and hire a facilitator for the strategic planning session.***

***Moved by: Dave Hunt***

***Seconded by: Paul Pattison***

***Carried***

**12. Task Force Reports**

Education and Enforcement

Deferred as Tim Whittle was not in attendance.

Encouragement

See previous agenda items #8 and #9.

Policy

No items.

Engineering

Mr. Flora provided an update on the proposed QEW widening through St. Catharines. A PIC was held on November 16<sup>th</sup> to present the design alternatives and the preferred design for the proposed "footprint" changes. They would like to move forward with construction of the QEW widening in 2007. Mr. Flora reiterated that the MTO will not reconsider the addition of a pedestrian bridge for the Terry Fox Trail to the Fairview Mall.

Mr. Pattison asked for an update on information signing at the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge to facilitate bicycle crossing. Mr. Flora responded by indicating that signs will be in place by Spring 2006. **(Action Item)**

**13. New Business**

QEW Widening

Mr. Pattison asked for an update on plans to review the Martindale/QEW off-ramp that would protect cyclists and walkers along the Green Ribbon Trail. Mr. Flora noted that the Ministry of Transportation was concerned about vehicle stacking and queuing on the QEW and does not support traffic signals (channelized right-turn lane is preferred alternative for southbound traffic) at Martindale. Mr. Pattison agreed to draft a letter for RNBC signature to send to the Ministry discouraging the use of an unsignalized ramp. **(Action Item)**

### Niagara-GTA Corridor Project

Mr. Flora provided an update on the Niagara-GTA Corridor project. He indicated that the MTO had addressed, to a large extent, the RNBC comments on the proposed terms of reference. Phase 1 of the EA is to take, probably, 2-3 years to complete while Phase 2 will take another 2-3 years. The RNBC had expressed concerns about the Corridor's possible impact on the bicycle network particularly with respect to crossings of a roadway that might be built.

### Proposed New Bicycle Route

Mr. Pattison spoke about his proposal for the development of a new bicycle route in the St. Catharines-Thorold area. He suggested that it could be called the Old and New Canals Cycling Loop which would be a 35 kilometre bicycle ride. It would involve the Welland Canal Parkway and would take various roads through Thorold, involve the Merritt Trail, Martindale Road, the Green Ribbon Trail and the Waterfront Trail. The development of this route, while suggested by the RNBC, should be a joint initiative by the City of St. Catharines and the City of Thorold in terms of marketing and promotion. Signage could be installed at Charles Ansell park in Port Weller and, perhaps, at the information centre in Thorold near the Peter St. bridge. Mr. Pattison agreed to prepare letters to the mayors of both the City of St. Catharines and the City of Thorold on this potential initiative. **(Action Item)**

**MOTION:**

***That a letter be drafted for Councillor Leaven's signature suggesting to both the cities of St. Catharines and Thorold that an Old and New Canal Cycling Loop be developed as a joint municipal project with accompanying signage, promotion and marketing.***

***Moved by: Paul Pattison***

***Seconded by: Dave Hunt***

***Carried***

Ms. Coppola suggested that a copy of this letter should be sent to Regional Chair Peter Partington who is the Chair of the Leadership Round Table with respect to the Region's obesity initiative. Ms. Coppola offered to provide some comments for Mr. Pattison to include in his letter on this linkage. As well, the Chambers of Commerce in each municipality should be copied.

### Waterfront Trust's Request for Funding

Councillor Leavens re-introduced the discussion on the Waterfront Trust's request for funding. Most RNBC members have been quite impressed by the breadth of the work carried out by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust over the years on a number of fronts which was described by Trust staff earlier in the meeting. A summary of the Waterfront Trust 2005 accomplishments is attached to these meeting notes. Mr. Hunt indicated that he was supportive of the Trust funding request. The Trust has leveraged a lot of money for trail development, including substantial work in Niagara. Mr. Forgeron noted

that the Niagara Region itself received about \$500,000 for trail development. Across Niagara the Trust coordinated and distributed about \$1.5 million dollars in funding for region wide projects. There has been considerable value added in their work. The Waterfront Trust is a non-profit agency which continues to do excellent work to support communities along the waterfront. They have worked to extend and complete the Waterfront Trail and Greenway all the way to the Quebec border, to promote the trail and greenway and to foster public commitment to waterfront regeneration.

**MOTION:**

***That the RNBC agree to the request by the Waterfront Trust for a \$1500 donation (\$500 per year over the next three years) to facilitate the ongoing work of the Waterfront Trust which has brought substantial benefits to the Niagara Region.***

***Moved by: Dave Hunt***

***Seconded by: Paul Pattison***

***Carried***

**14. Items for Distribution**

- Letter and supporting documentation from the Waterfront Regeneration Trust Corporation requesting RNBC participation in the three-year collaborative communications and promotions program (\$1500 funding request)
- Article dated November 9, 2005 from the *St. Catharines Standard* series on the Ontario Greenbelt titled, "Take a Green Ride." This article highlights bicycling opportunities for residents and tourists including tour operators like Steve Bauer Tours through the Niagara Region. The Greater Niagara Circle Route and Trail System is featured.
- An article from the Department of Community Development at Cambridge, Massachusetts outlining the safety benefits of bike lanes. The article cites numerous studies that have shown that bicycle lanes improve safety and promote proper riding behaviour.
- A letter from a consultant from the Ministry of Transportation Ontario on the Niagara-GTA Terms of Reference with respect to the manner in which RNBC comments on the terms of reference have been addressed for the EA.
- An article titled, "Do New Urbanists Forget about Transit and Bicycling?" The article highlights the benefits to cyclists and for transit development when there are compact, denser, mixed use neighbourhoods that are designed. Such designs promote slower vehicle speeds which are safer for cyclists and pedestrians.
- An article dated October 21, 2005 from the *Toronto Star* titled, "Bike Activists Peddle Green Ideas." The article describes a workshop hosted by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust and Velo Quebec. The article provides highlights on a bikeway planning and development workshop held at Ontario Place for municipal planners and transportation engineers.

- An article from Newsweek magazine titled, "Designing Heart Healthy Communities." The article draws links between the way we design our communities and the incidents of diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and strokes. The more walkways and bike paths we introduce into our communities, and the less we have to drive, directly relates to the incidents of those diseases.
- A brochure on the QEW Widening from Highway 406 to the Garden City Skyway project. A PIC was held November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005 in St. Catharines. The study focuses on the Transportation Environmental Study report and the proposals affecting three bridge structures in St. Catharines including Lake St., Geneva St. and Martindale Road.

**15. Items for Next Agenda**

None suggested.

**16. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the RNBC will be held on December 8 in the Planning Department boardroom at 6:00 p.m. when the annual Christmas social will take place. Some discussion will take place on the new bike map as well as the proposed strategic planning session for January 2006.

***MOTION:***

***To adjourn the November 17, 2005 RNBC meeting.***

***Moved by: Gregg Dame***

***Seconded by: Bill Dixon***

***Carried***

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:  
Julie Bittner  
RNBC Recording Secretary

Reviewed by:  
Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP  
Senior Planner  
and  
Eric Flora, P.Eng., CET  
Acting Associate Director Transportation Systems