

**REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES**



**Meeting of Thursday, October 6, 2005
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.**

Present:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large & Cycle Ontario Alliance
Gregg Dame	- Port Colborne Trails & Bikeways Committee
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large
Bill Dickson	- Public at Large
Bill Rashleigh	- Public at Large
Dianne Coppola	- Regional Niagara Public Health
George Nicholson	- Regional Niagara Planning
Phil Bergen	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
John Reep	- Public at Large
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

The meeting commenced at 7:04 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

No additional agenda items were suggested and the agenda was adopted.

Motion:

To accept the agenda of October 6 as revised.

Moved by: Bill Dickson

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

2. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (August 25th, 2005)

Motion:

To accept and approve the meeting notes of August 25th.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Bill Dickson

Carried

3. Business Arising

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

- Discussion on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for Regional Road 20 was deferred until the November meeting. **(Action Item)**
- An update on the status of the memo to NEDC regarding RNBC priority items was deferred until the November meeting as Mr. Forgeron was not in attendance. **(Action Item)**
- As none of the members in attendance were aware as to whether a copy of a report by the Niagara Accessibility Committee on the accessibility of the Greater Niagara Circle Route Trail over the rail crossing north of Ontario Road in Welland was received, this item was deferred until the November meeting. **(Action Item)**
- The letter of support for a program grant for Can Bike development across Canada was deferred as Peter Davies was not in attendance at the meeting. **(Action Item)**
- Councillor Leavens requested that the RNBC defer the item: the discussion on Manfred Fast speaking at a future RNBC meeting until November. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Hunt reported that he did provide some suggestions to Terri Donia on other cycling related ideas to include in her presentation at the Cycle Ontario Alliance 2005 Conference.
- Councillor Baty reported that he had not contacted E. L. Crossley and asked that the issue be deferred until November's meeting. **(Action Item)**
- It was confirmed that City of St. Catharines, along with the City of Thorold and the Region, initiated a pedestrian and cycling needs studying for St. David's Road. The limits of the St. David's Road review will be from Glenridge Ave. to Burleigh Hill Drive. Proposals have gone out to selected consultants with a tentative closing date of October 20th.

4. Planning Comments on Proposed Right-of-Way & Regional Bicycle Network

Mr. Nicholson reported that the Planning Department reviewed seven road allowances that the Public Works Department had indicated would be insufficient to have a 20.1 metre width right-of-way to accommodate 1.5 metre bicycle lanes on both sides of the roadway. Mr. Nicholson indicated that in its report the planning department believes that all of these roadways should remain on Regional Bikeways Network as approved by Regional Council. The following roads were reviewed and conclusions were made:

Four Mile Creek Road (between Virgil and St. David's)

The existing road allowance has a 26.2 metre average width and more than half of this route has existing bicycle lanes. It was determined that the existing width would be maintained. The designation in the proposed Policy Plan Amendment for the non-urban area should be changed from 20.1 to 26.2 metres.

Fourth Avenue (between St. Catharines and Nineteenth Street in Lincoln)

Mr. Nicholson reported that this area is within the Provincial Greenbelt Area and is also subject to Regional policies with respect to Good Grape and Tender Fruit Areas. The Planning Department is not in favour of increasing this road allowance beyond what already exists.

Pelham/Twenty Road (St. Catharines to Victoria Avenue)

The Planning Department will support a wider road allowance in certain areas along this stretch of road as long as the area east of Rockway, along the Escarpment, receives special attention in order to maintain its scenic character.

Lakeshore Road (Courtleigh Road to Seventh Street in St. Catharines)

Planning does not support the widening of this road, at this time, due to the following concerns:

- possible changes to the scenic character of the road
- existing development would be impeded
- the investments in infrastructure which would be needed would be better utilized elsewhere in the Region.

Planning suggests that the proposed Policy Plan Amendment should identify this area for a "special study" to determine how improvements could be made to facilitate bicycling.

Creek Road (River Road to Canborough Road in Wainfleet)

As there is little traffic on Creek Road, there is no significant need to widen this road beyond a minimum of 20.1 metres. There is an alternative road north of the Welland River which cyclists could use.

Lakeshore Road (Lowbanks to Station Road in Wainfleet)

It was reported that should traffic volumes warrant, Planning would support a designated width of 26.2 metres in the proposed Policy Plan Amendment. If widening is not possible, Planning would support a modest paved shoulder.

Main St. West (Regional boundary to Casablanca Boulevard)

Mr. Nicholson reported that there is an existing on-road bicycle facility along this route. In view of this situation the existing width should be maintained. Therefore, the designation in the proposed Policy Plan Amendment should be changed from 20.1 to 26.2 metres from Main St. West between Oakes Rd. and Casablanca to match width proposed for the Regional Boundary to Oakes Road.

5. Progress on New Bike Map

Mr. Bergen provided three copies of the draft bike map for RNBC comments. He would like any comments by the next RNBC meeting. He will look into the possibility of having the draft bike map included on our website, thus, committee members would be able to access the map from a link included on the RNBC's website. However, there may be a problem with the map resolution which may prevent the map from being put on the website. If this is the case then members should contact Mr. Bergen directly to receive a copy of the map.

Mr. Bergen also announced that some bike trails just over the border in the U.S. may be able to be included on the map without compromising the Niagara part.

6. Registration for Bicycle Conference – Oct. 22 (Hamilton)

Mr. Hunt distributed a flyer for the 2005 Cycle Ontario Alliance Bicycle Conference. He explained that the conference will take place on October 22 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. An informal reception will be held on Friday evening, October 21. A bike tour exploring Hamilton will take place on October 23. He reported that Dr. Robin Williams, Medical Officer of Health for the Niagara Region will be the guest speaker at this event.

7. Utilitarian Cycling

Mr. Somerwil reported on an article in a Dutch paper which discussed bicycle transportation. Basically, this article explained how more attention should be paid to planning in terms of riding your bike to work-home, medical appointments, shopping, etc. Mr. Somerwil said that when he travels to Holland, once he arrives, he rents a bicycle and that is his main mode of transportation. He also explained that in Holland, for example, if the distance between a ferry location and a bus station is longer than a specific distance, a bike station will be set-up so that people can cycle to the bus station.

Councillor Leavens reported that a regional specialized transit system should be up and running sometime in the early part of 2006. The next step would be to look at the possibility of a regional transit system. Perhaps at that time the RNBC could start advocating to have bike racks installed on buses.

Mr. Hunt suggested having an incentive program set-up at the Region encouraging employees to ride their bicycles to work. He reported that he has heard of similar programs taking place in areas where there is quite a bit of congestion.

8. Queenston-Lewiston Bridge Crossing

Mr. Bergen reported, on behalf of Mr. Flora, that the issue of installation of signage along Portage Road will be addressed ASAP. **(Action Item)**

9. Proposed Trails & Bikeways Policies – Prudhommes: Town of Lincoln

Julie Bittner, on behalf of Ken Forgeron, distributed excerpts from the draft Prudhommes Secondary Plan. The RNBC was asked to review the document and provide comments by the next meeting.

10. Bicycling Facilities/Signage Along Regional Road 20

Deferred until the November meeting.

11. Bike to Work Week 2006

Dianne Coppola discussed Bike to Work Week 2006 and the need from RNBC support. She reported that a Health Promoter from the Public Health Department will be available as a resource, but more volunteers are needed to help out with the event.

Mr. Hunt explained that BTWW is a valued initiative, but many members do not have the time or energy for another project. The problem is where else can we go to receive help for the BTWW campaign.

12. Developing New Bicycling Brochures

This topic was deferred until the November meeting as Mr. Whittle was not in attendance. However, Mr. Romanuk reported that it was his understanding that what Mr. Whittle would like to do is review and update the brochures we currently distribute and look at whether there is a need for some additional brochures.

13. Bikeways Facilities Policies (Public Works Manual)

Mr. Bergen reported, on behalf of Mr. Flora, that this policy would form part of the overall Transportation Policy manual. Cycling will be referenced in the Region's Policy Plan and once a draft is prepared it will be circulated to the RNBC for comments. The policies will be drawn from Section 9 of the Bikeways Master Plan.

14. Task Force Reports

Education and Enforcement

No report.

Encouragement

Discussed under Agenda Item #11.

Policy

No report.

Engineering

No report.

15. New Business

Registration of Bicycles

Mr. Dickson reported that both Hamilton and Burlington have bicycle registration programs in place. He asked if the organization could look into making contact with Hamilton and Burlington and investigate how their programs are run.

Mr. Hunt thought that perhaps Mr. Whittle may have this information already. The RNBC will follow-up with Mr. Whittle as to whether he has any information on the Hamilton and Burlington programs. **(Action Item)**

Millennium Trail

Mr. Romanuk updated the Committee on the Niagara Falls Trails and Bikeways Committee. He announced that the Committee Chairperson was resigning and that a number of committee members are debating whether or not the committee has any real value. Another meeting will take place in two weeks time.

16. Items for Distribution

- Excerpt from Association of Pedestrian and Cycling Professionals Listserve regarding mapping information from Australia on multi-modal transportation choices.
- Article from the St. Catharines Standard titled, "*Size Matters When Cycling on St. Catharines Sidewalks.*" The article discusses the legal, safety and educational issues surrounding sidewalk cycling.

- Article from Homemakers.com titled, "*Wine and Bike: Pedal Your Way Through Three Charming Wine-Growing Regions in Canada.*" The article describes some of the interesting features of cycling in Niagara. A Niagara inspired menu, as well as guidelines for biking on trails, also is referenced.
- Article on utilitarian cycling titled, "*Municipal Policy on Council Transportation Expenses.*" This article discusses bicycling mileage allowances at different workplaces. It also includes a bicycle operating costs spreadsheet developed by Environment Canada's pacific division in order to justify their bicycle mileage allowance of \$0.116/kilometre
- Article titled "*Once You've Tried Biking, You'll Never Go Back*". This article is in celebration of International Car Free Day (September 22) extolling the benefits of cycling from utilitarian, economic, social, environmental and health standpoints.
- Article from the London Free Press titled, "*Safety Education Key to Bicycle Path.*" The article discusses the dangers of sidewalk cycling, riding at night without a light, in-boulevard bicycle paths, on-road bike lanes, the need for more cycling education/training and secure/safe bicycle parking as a condition of development approval.
- An article from Niagara This Week titled, "City Approves Millennium Trail Bridge," indicating that Niagara Falls Council did not support the construction of Phase 2 of the Trail on the east side of the Hydro Canal behind Redhaven and Ronnie Crescents.
- 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.

17. Items for Next Agenda

- Discussion on utilitarian cycling
- Cycle Ontario Alliance 2005 Bicycle Conference

18. Next Meeting: November 17, 2005

The next meeting will be held on November 17th in Committee Room #4 at 7:00 p.m.

MOTION:

To adjourn the October 6, 2005 RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Bill Dickson

Seconded by: Gregg Dame

Carried

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:
Julie Bittner

Reviewed by:
Phil Bergen, CET
Transportation Planning Technologist
Public Works Dept.