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BICYCLING COMMITTEE

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REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

**Thursday, September 20, 2007
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.**

Present:	Brian Baty	-	Regional Councillor (Chair)
	Eric Flora	-	Regional Public Works Department
	Ken Forgeron	-	Regional Planning Department
	Dianne Coppola	-	Regional Public Health Department
	Julie Bittner	-	Regional Public Works Department (meeting notes recorder)
	Tim Whittle	-	Niagara Region Police Service
	Paul Pattison	-	Public-at-Large
	Bob Romanuk	-	Public-at-Large
	Ted Higgins	-	Guest
	Peter Davies	-	Public-at-Large and Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club
	Dave Hunt	-	Public-at-Large/Cycle Ontario Alliance
	Jan Somerwil	-	Public-at-Large
	Frank Pravitz	-	Ministry of Transportation
	Renato Romanin	-	Niagara Economic Development Corporation (Guest)
	Betsy Foster	-	Niagara Economic Development Corporation (Guest)
Regrets:	Pal Maloney	-	Citizen

1) Adoption of Agenda

- Additional items were included:
 - i) 406 Crossing at the Fonthill Spur – Tim Whittle
 - ii) Crossings of Provincial Highways – Paul Pattison

Motion:

To accept the Agenda of September 20, 2007 as revised.

Moved By: Paul Pattison

Seconded By: Jan Somerwil

Carried

2) **Review of August 9, 2007 Meeting Notes**

Motion:

To accept and approve the meeting notes of August 9, 2007.

Moved By: Bob Romanuk

Seconded By: Dave Hunt

Carried

3) **Business Arising**

(a) No new items to report on at this time.

4) **Items for Consideration**

(a) **Niagara as a Cycling Destination**

- Renato Romanin and Betsy Foster from Niagara Economic Development Corporation were welcomed.
- Ted Higgins discussed the plan he developed and which had been previously distributed to the committee.
- The plan's objective is to make Niagara into a premier cycling destination.
- The plan's strategy is:
 - **To develop the product "Cycle Niagara" website**
 - Obtain use of the term: "Cycle Niagara"
 - Develop a series of self-guided loop rides and post on the website
 - Develop local programs making the area bike friendly
 - **Market the product**
 - Find advertisers for the website, for example, hotels, B & B's
 - Design a media plan to promote the website
 - Hire a public relations firm to write features and articles
 - **Support the product**
 - Create an organization to run the program
 - Find private sector sponsors, for example, Chamber of Commerce
 - Find public sponsors, for example, Province of Ontario
 - Develop a plan that continue to upgrade Regional Roads with 1.5 metre shoulders
- Betsy Foster explained that NEDC has assisted in the promotion of cycling in Niagara by attending various bicycle shows, assisting with the bike map in terms of finding advertisers, printing and storage and by including cycling in the visitor's guide (Seasons Magazine).

- Ken Forgeron suggested that if funds could be found, someone like Justin Lafontaine (Bike Train Initiative) might be hired to put together a business plan and/or a marketing/promotion campaign. This should be explored further. (Action Item for NEDC and RNBC).

Action Item:

The RNBC and NEDC explore further the possibility of hiring a person to put together a business plan and/or marketing/promotion campaign.

(b) Niagara-GTA Corridor EA – RNBC Letter

- D. Hunt drafted a letter to the Ministry of Transportation to be signed by Brian Baty.
- Five areas which should be emphasized include:
 - Bicycle Policy
 - Bicycle Route Infrastructure
 - Modal Integration Opportunities for Bicycles
 - Cycle Tourism
 - Cycling Impacts and Problems
- Suggested changes to the letter by the committee include:
 - Not identifying key cycling routes under **Bicycle Route Infrastructure**
 - Broaden the information contained in the **Modal Integration Opportunities for Bicycles**
 - Do not mention **Cycle Tourism**
 - Greater emphasis on the impacts under **Cycling Impacts and Problems**
 - Updating planning & design guidelines under **Cycling Impacts and Problems**
- Dave Hunt will make the revisions to the letter and submit to Brian Baty for signature
- A copy of this letter will be appended to the meeting notes for Council's information.

Action Item:

To append a copy of the Niagara-GTA Corridor EA-RNBC letter to the meeting minutes for Council's information.

(c) Waterfront Trail Signage through St. Catharines

- A request was made by Councillor Bruce Timms to Ken Forgeron to discuss having directional signage installed along the North Service Rd. directing cyclists going east to go directly to Seventh St. to connect with Lakeshore Rd. rather than turning north from the North Service Rd. onto Gregory Rd. and connecting to Lakeshore Rd.
- Reason for this request is due to the amount of traffic (cars, walkers, runners and cyclists) using this stretch of Lakeshore Road particularly on the weekends.
- Eric Flora said that at one point the 406 at the QEW will be closed while the highway is being widened and this will result in a substantial increase in traffic on redirected to Seventh St.
- A staff direction was made requesting that Ken Forgeron contact Councillor Timms to advise him that the committee considered his request, but advise against his suggestion due to potential safety concerns.

Action Item:

Ken Forgeron to contact Councillor Timms to advise him of the Committee's position regarding his request.

(d) Bicycling Advocacy in Canada

- Bob Romanuk received a request through the Bike/Walk Consortium requesting information on:
 - what is happening in local communities in terms of projects encouraging cycling, walking or other types of physical activity
 - any provincial/municipal issues communities are dealing with in terms of bike lanes
 - sharing of information – who do you share information with
- He is looking for volunteers to assist in preparing a response. Paul, Frank and Dianne volunteered.

Action Item:

For volunteers to assist in the preparation of response to the Bike/Walk Consortium.

(e) **Strategic Plan**

- Dianne Coppola reported to the committee about some changes made to the proposed strategic report:
 - **Page 10** – New section titled Committee, Council and Corporate Management Team Direction – highlights connections to other key stakeholders/committees with complementary interests.
 - **Top of Page 11** – some introductory paragraphs have been added preceding the lists titled “Advantages” and “Limitations”
 - **Page 13** – Under “Conclusion” key strategic directions have been reiterated
 - **Page 14** – List of Appendices include:
 - Summary notes of strategic planning sessions
 - Current RNBC Terms of Reference
 - Status of any recommendations which came out of the original Bikeways Master Plan
 - City of Hamilton report titled “On-Street Cycling Program (May 30, 2007) as this report addresses the city’s creation of a Alternative Transportation Coordinator
 - **Page 10** – under “Committee, Council and Corporate Management Team Direction” the words “Transportation Committee” should be changed to “Transportation Strategy Steering Committee”
 - The report needs to be updated to indicate that the Clean Air Report was released about a month ago. The report currently states that the report will be released.
- Dianne was thanked for providing staff support/leadership with respect to the draft report. Dave and Frank were also thanked for their contributions to the draft report.

5. **Task Force Reports**

Education and Enforcement

- T. Whittle reported that the “Caught You Using Your Head” campaign has ended for this year.
- The program is a positive ticketing campaign where children are given a reward if they are “caught” wearing their bicycle helmet.
- 200 rewards were handed out during this year’s campaign.

- If anyone knows of an organization who might be interested in being a sponsor for next year's campaign please speak to Tim or the Brain Injury Association of Niagara.
- Brain Injury Association provided 30 bike helmets to be distributed to needy children.

Engineering Task Force

406 crossing at Fonthill Spur

- Tim indicated that Holland Road is discontinuous at Highway 406.
- Rather than making a dangerous crossing of the highway here, perhaps a connection can be made via the tunnel under Highway 406 along the Thorold-Fonthill Spur.
- Tim Whittle explained that the new tunnel installed south of Holland Rd. is not paved, not signed and not very accessible to cyclists.
- Currently this section is gravel and is difficult to cycle on.
- Suggested that for a minimal amount of money this section could be completed.
- Eric Flora offered to look at the construction drawings to see what was proposed for signage.

Action Item:

Eric Flora to look at the construction drawings to determine what type of design, signage and trail linkage was proposed as part of the Highway 406 widening project.

Portage Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake:

- E. Flora to advise the RNBC when the Public Information Centre will be held for this project. Currently the Region is seeking a right-of-way of 86 feet through this area.

Action Item:

Eric to advise the RNBC when the Public Information Centre will be held for the Portage Road project in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

O'Reilly's Bridge Environmental Screening Report

- The staff report to file the Environmental Screening Report was approved by Regional Council. The Environmental Screen Report will now be filed.

Mountain Road Environmental Screening Report

- The Environmental Screening Report has been filed for this project.

Lakeport Rd. in St. Catharines

- The City will be installing designated bike lanes.

Bikeway Facility Funding Reports

- Reports have been submitted and approved by the Planning and Public Works Committee for funding to establish bike lanes on Fitch St. in Welland, East/West Line in Niagara-on-the-Lake and on Lake Street in Grimsby. This is a cost sharing arrangement with local municipalities to incorporate bike lanes on a local road on the Regional Bikeways Network.

Letter to the Ministry of Transportation re: City of Burlington Resolution

- RNBC was sent a letter from the City Clerk at the City of Burlington requesting approval of a resolution asking that the Ministry of Transportation review design standards at the QEW/403 interchanges to enhance cyclist and pedestrian safety.
- Regional staff has received copies of a letter sent to Minister of Transportation from the City of Burlington.
- The Regional Planning Department received a copy of a letter sent to the Town of Halton Hills requesting their support for their resolution
- Eric and Ken to draft a general response to the Ministry of Transportation requesting that they review their interchange design standards in order to enhance cyclist and pedestrian safety – not just for the QEW/403, but all interchanges.

Action Item:

Eric and Ken to draft a general response to the Ministry of Transportation requesting that the Ministry review their interchange design standards in order to enhance cyclist and pedestrian safety when crossing Provincial highways.

Encouragement Task Force

Bicycle Friendly Awards

- D. Coppola requested that a motion be made to accept the recommendations of the judging committee for the Bicycle Friendly Award recipients for 2007 and approval for monies to purchase the plaques and to have a small celebratory reception for the winners prior to Regional Council on October 18, 2007.

Motion:

To accept the 2007 Bicycle Friendly Award recommendations as put forward by the judging committee, and to approve monies (up to \$300) to purchase both the plaques for presentation to the recipients as well as refreshments for a celebratory reception for the winners.

Moved By: Paul Pattison

Seconded By: Bob Romanuk

Carried

- Ms. Coppola encouraged committee members to attend Regional Council on October 18th when the awards will be presented and to attend the pre-recognition celebration.
- Ms. Coppola explained that the final leg of the “Bike to Get There” campaign will run from September to the end of October. Also, the RNBC will need to discuss at a future meeting how much time and effort we wish to continue expending on this award program.

Policy Task Force

No new information to report.

6. Items for Information and Distribution

Information

ESRI Map Award

Ken Forgeron passed around the 2007 ESRI Map Book which contains the RNBC 2nd Edition Bicycle Map as an award winning piece. This book is international in scope and the inclusion of the RNBC map is quite a tribute.

Toronto Bike Train Initiative

- Ken Forgeron presented some statistics to the committee, which was provided to him by Justin Lafontaine, the co-ordinator of this initiative.
- Out of approximately 300 Bike Train Passengers:
 - 50% had never traveled to Niagara to cycle
 - 70% stayed overnight 1-3 nights
 - 54% used the Niagara River Recreation Trail
 - 20% used the Welland Canal
- Justin Lafontaine reported to Ken that many positive comments were received regarding the cycling volunteers at the Niagara Falls train station comprised of RNBC members and Niagara Freewheelers.

- Councillor Baty offered to prepare a letter to be sent to the bike train initiative organizers expressing our appreciation as well as suggesting that they consider stops at Grimsby and St. Catharines in the future. (Action Item)

Action Item:

Councillor Baty to prepare a letter to be sent to the Bike Train Initiative organizers expressing our appreciation as well as suggesting that they consider stops at Grimsby and St. Catharines in the future.

- Ken will try to have Justin make a presentation to the Planning and Public Works Committee later in the fall when he completes the final report.

Bike Racks at Regional Headquarters

- Ken gave an update on progress to provide bicycle parking facilities for members of the public and Regional staff.
- Several styles of new racks have been installed at the new entrance of Campbell East, which have contributed to design certification under the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Program.
- Regional staff may store bikes in the basement overnight near the new “Wellness Centre”.
- Discussions are underway involving Joe Gouthro (Public Works), Ken and several shelter manufacturers on possible designs for an outside, secure bicycle/transit shelter in the island opposite the new cafeteria.
- Funds to construct this facility are being assessed as part of the 2008 budgeting process.

Regional Bike Lanes Brochure

- Deferred until the November 1st meeting.

Distribution

- Toronto to Niagara Bike Train Brochure
- St. Catharines Standard article (July 17, 2007) – “Freewheelers offer camaraderie, exercise and fun”
- Article – “On the Right Path to Better Health” – Smart Growth has the potential to improve your health (Summer 2007 On Common Ground – by Heidi Johnson-Wright)
- Article - “Complete the Streets for Smart Growth” – Planners figure out the puzzle to pedestrian-friendly roadways (Summer 2007 On Common Ground – by Barbara McCann)
- Article – “Livin’ Large – Everything’s bigger in America.” (Smithsonian – by Jess Blumberg, Katy June-Friesen and David Sax)

- Waterfront Trail news release (September 11, 2007) – “Waterfront Regeneration Trust Celebrates 15 Years and 52 Completed Projects”
- Planning and Public Works Committee and Corporate Services Committee report (August 8, 2007) “Financial Information Requested on The Greater Niagara Circle Route Trails System”
- St. Catharines Standard article (September 15, 2007) – “Bicycle committee an important link in the chain”
- The Guardian article (September 17, 2007) – “Investment in cycling could save £520m government told”
- The Globe and Mail article (August 18, 2007) – “Babes and bike in Niagara’s vineyards”
- Toronto Star article (no date on article) – “Wheeler-dealer gets a Niagara bike train”
- Excerpt from the key findings of a joint report prepared by the New York City Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and the New York City Police Department – “Bicyclist Fatalities and Serious Injuries in New York City 1996-2005”

7. Items for Next Agenda

- Regional Bike Lanes Brochure

8. Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday, November 1st, 2007 in Committee Room #4 at 7:00 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion:

That the September 20th, 2007 meeting of the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee be adjourned.

Moved by: Bob Romanuk

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

The meeting adjourned at: 9:40 p.m.

Meeting Notes prepared by:

Julie Bittner, Regional Niagara Public Works Department

Reviewed by:

Eric Flora, P. Eng, CET, Associate Director Transportation Systems, Public Works Department

Ken Forgeron, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Department

Dianne Coppola, Manager – Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention Division, Public Health Department