

# Model Municipal Bicycle Transportation Policies

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Final  
August 24, 2010



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# Model Municipal Bicycle Transportation Policies

## Introduction

The *Model Municipal Bicycle Transportation Policies* contained within this document have been developed as a resource for municipalities to use, in full or in part, as part of their overall strategy for creating and fostering a healthy, sustainable bicycle-friendly community. The suggested policies were informed by an on-line scan of what other jurisdictions and levels of government were including within their own policy documents and cycling plans, and strive to reflect 'best practice' from what others were doing.

## Rationale

There are many reasons why municipalities should consider incorporating bicycle policies into their direction setting documents such as Official Plans, Strategic Plans or Transportation Master Plans. Increasingly, recognition is being given to "...the critical role that built environments play in shaping the physical, psychological and social health of individuals and their communities" (Planning by Design, 2009). Healthy, progressive communities understand the connections between quality of life, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, overall growth and vitality and recognize the significant health, social and economic benefits of establishing a bicycle-friendly community.

Well-planned and well-designed built environments (buildings, transportation networks, green spaces, public realms, natural systems and all other spaces that make up a community) supported by appropriate planning, design and development policies and programs can guide a municipality toward results that address numerous local priorities including:

- Effective use of lands, buildings and infrastructure fostering more "complete communities" including "complete streets"
- Reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and by extension reducing the severity of respiratory ailments that are exacerbated by poor air quality
- Managing traffic congestion and reducing noise pollution by increasing support for non-motorized transportation modes for commuting, utilitarian and recreational purposes
- Increasing street safety and vibrancy through traffic calming and route connectivity
- Preserving and improving the health of natural environments and ecosystems

- Creating economic opportunities through cycle tourism
- Increasing access to social, cultural and recreational facilities and establishing a “sense of place”
- Improving overall quality of life and health for all residents and visitors while addressing the unique circumstances of non-drivers and those who live in areas not served by public transit

(adapted from Planning by Design, 2009).

As well, various levels of government are incorporating policy directives that support and facilitate bicycle transportation in community planning such as the Planning Act (1990), the Places to Grow Plan (2006), the Provincial Policy Statement (2005), Niagara Region’s Sustainable Community Policies (Policy Plan Amendment 2-2009) and new Bicycle Transportation Policies (Policy Plan Amendment 5-2009). Municipalities are required to ensure conformity with Provincial and Regional policy directions and this can best be accomplished through cooperation and mutual support from all levels of government.

The *Model Municipal Bicycle Transportation Policies* contained in this documents were founded on the premise that in order to achieve a healthy, sustainable, liveable community, municipalities will need to adjust their transportation systems/networks to reduce reliance on the automobile and increase the modal share of more sustainable forms of transportation such as walking, cycling and where feasible, public transit. The *Model Municipal Bicycle Transportation Policies* affirm the importance of creating a bicycle-friendly community and encourage municipalities to ensure bicycle infrastructure is given priority consideration in planning documents, capital works programs and related operational processes and procedures.

## Organization

The *Model Municipal Transportation Policies* have been organized under three themes:

- Land Use & Transportation Planning
- Network & Facilities
- Implementation

Within each policy theme, the suggested policies have been further sorted into two categories of importance: core policies and supplementary policies. Core policies are deemed essential to ensuring bicycle transportation is considered as part of an overall strategy for transportation and land use management; environmental sustainability and energy conservation; active living and improved quality of life; economic development and tourism. Core policies ensure cycling is viewed and maintained

as a legitimate and viable form of transportation. Supplementary policies “go beyond the basics” to encourage a deeper commitment to fostering bicycle-friendly communities and demonstrate that the municipality is taking a more comprehensive and progressive approach to addressing the needs of cyclists in their community.

This organizational format allows each municipality to select the model policies that best reflect their local context while striving to move beyond the status quo.

## **Policies**

### **1.0 Land Use and Transportation Planning**

#### **Core**

##### **1.1 Priority and Integration Considerations**

The municipality considers bicycling an essential component of a balanced, multimodal transportation network<sup>1</sup> and will incorporate considerations for cyclists within an integrated land use and transportation planning and decision making process to ensure that land use patterns and transportation systems support and give greater priority to bicycling as a legitimate and environmentally sustainable form of transportation.

##### **1.2 Complete Streets**

The municipality will strive to design streets that are more “complete” by providing safe access for all roadway users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, people with disabilities, the elderly and motorists, to the extent appropriate to the function and context of the street.

##### **1.3 Land Use Intensification**

Emphasis will be given to the planning, design and development of compact, integrated land uses to provide greater accessibility for all users (including the needs of persons with disabilities and special needs), to provide mobility choice and to encourage a modal shift from private automobile travel to more active forms of transportation (e.g. walking, cycling and transit.)

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<sup>1</sup> The Victoria Transport Policy Network defines a multimodal transportation network as one that incorporates various modes (walking, cycling, automobile, public transit, etc.) and connections among modes so each can fill its optimal role in the overall transport system.

## **1.4 Access to Activity Centres and New Developments**

The municipality will ensure that wherever possible, bicycling facilities shall be provided to facilitate access within and between activity nodes (e.g. neighbourhoods, institutional, commercial, industrial and major recreational facilities); and that new developments are linked to the existing or planned network of recreational pathways and on-road bicycle routes which connect:

- community services and facilities,
- educational institutions,
- parks and other open spaces,
- transit stations and transit stops where applicable, and
- employment and retail centres.

## **Supplementary**

### **1.5 Transit Integration**

Local municipalities that provide public transit shall enhance the integration of their transit service with bicycling as part of an important multimodal Travel Demand Management tool by phasing in the following measures:

- allowing bicycles on transit vehicles during off-peak periods,
- equipping buses with bicycle racks,
- providing appropriate and sufficient sheltered/secure bicycle parking facilities at major transit nodes, public and institutional workplaces, and
- providing connections to rail and bus services.

## **2.0 Bicycling Network and Facilities**

### **Core**

#### **2.1 Master Plan Development and Contents**

The municipality is committed to developing a comprehensive municipal Bicycling Master Plan that encourages people of all ages and abilities to cycle for commuting, utilitarian, recreational and bicycle tourism purposes. The master plan should address the following components:

- Background & Rationale – vision statement, goals and objectives, local context, links to other planning documents
- Planning and Engineering – policies, route network, infrastructure supports, design and construction methods that support cycling
- Maintenance and Operations – bike friendly maintenance and operational programs
- Education – safe cycling education initiatives for cyclists, motorists and pedestrians
- Encouragement – promotion and encouragement of cycling
- Enforcement – enforcement of safe cycling practices
- Implementation Plan – allocation of funds and resources over time to implement Master Plan recommendations, and
- Evaluation and Monitoring – surveys and targets to monitor progress.

#### **2.2 Network Expansion, Continuity and Connectivity**

The municipality will ensure that efforts will be made, where feasible, to improve and expand upon the cycling network through opportunities to add missing links and develop off-road trails and on-road routes offered by unopened road allowances, utility rights-of-way, existing or abandoned rail corridors, open green space development and future roadway improvement. Amendments to the network shall ensure that continuity and connectivity is maintained.

## **2.3 Bicycle Parking and Storage**

The municipality supports the availability of adequate destination bicycle facilities, such as parking and storage that encourages bicycle usage through the development of a comprehensive bicycle parking management strategy. The strategy will clearly establish public and private sector responsibilities and opportunities for providing bicycle parking by incorporating the following measures:

- Requiring the land use planning approval process, including zoning by laws, to meet the needs, and set standards for bicycle parking that are adequate to meet growing demands.
- Ensuring that bicycle parking facilities are secure, lighted, highly visible, sheltered and in convenient locations.
- Leading by example through focusing bicycle parking facilities on municipally-owned and operated buildings and/or parking precincts.
- Ensuring that the location and design of bicycle parking minimize any impediments with other systems such as pedestrians and emergency vehicles.

## **Supplementary**

### **2.4 Trip End Facilities (Parking, Lockers, Showers)**

The municipality supports the continued expansion of adequate bicycle trip end facilities (including secure parking, lockers, and showers) at all cycling destinations wherever feasible.

## 3.0 Implementation

### Core

#### 3.1 Bicycle Program Implementation

The municipality will implement a comprehensive bicycle program that includes:

- Protection and maintenance of a Bicycling Network of high priority corridors identified through a bicycle master plan and shown on Schedule \_\_\_ of the Official Plan,
- Incorporation in the network of the approved Niagara Region Bicycle Network and inclusion of on-road routes and off-road multi-use pathways, both of which may be used for utilitarian and recreational trip purposes,
- Connections to the Regional Bicycle Network as well as the bicycle networks in adjacent municipalities,
- Integration and compatibility with other transportation systems and modes (e.g. bicycle parking at transit stations),
- Clear definition of cycling routes through the provision of traffic signage, pavement markings, and/or information/recreation signage,
- Supportive infrastructure (e.g. safe, secure bicycle parking),
- Operational support of cycling facilities (e.g. speed controls, and shoulder sweeping),
- Engage appropriate law enforcement agencies and community organizations in promoting and enforcing safe cycling regulations,
- Educational and promotional initiatives to encourage more safe cycling, and
- An evaluation and monitoring plan to chart progress and make changes in the plan where appropriate.

#### 3.2 Land Use Planning

The municipality, through its planning provisions and review processes, will ensure that land use developments support bicycling and other forms of active transportation by:

- i. Zoning By-law Provisions: Amending its zoning by-laws for land uses that generate demand for bicycling to include regulations for the provision of bicycle friendly infrastructure and facilities such as bicycle storage/parking;

- ii. Land Use Review Process: Considering the need for bicycle friendly infrastructure and cycling route connections when reviewing and approving development applications including plans of subdivision and site plans for commercial, industrial and institutional proposals;
- iii. Local Road Layout: Ensuring that when reviewing development applications, official plan amendments or concept plans, the roadway network in newly developing areas provides a local road layout minimizing cul-de-sac and crescents that increase travel distances for pedestrians, cyclists and transit vehicles. Modified grid patterns are suggested as a way of maximizing connectivity and permeability so that there are alternate vehicular and pedestrian routes to most destinations while discouraging the use of local streets by non-neighbourhood traffic;
- iv. Conveyance of Road Widening Allowances: Ensuring that road widening or easements sufficient to accommodate bicycling facilities in the most appropriate locations are conveyed to the municipality as part of the development approvals process; and
- v. Protection of Unopened Road Allowances: Not closing or selling unopened road allowances that have reasonable potential for use as bicycle routes.

### **3.3 Design, Construction and Maintenance of Bicycle Facilities**

The municipality will provide appropriate bicycle facilities in a timely manner by:

- i. Guidelines and Standards: Incorporating recognized and approved guidelines and standards (e.g. TAC) in the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operations of bicycle facilities to help ensure public safety, security and compatibility for all road users;
- ii. Roadway Improvements: Ensuring that any roadway construction or reconstruction projects under its review or authority include, where possible, provisions for facilities to meet the needs and safety of cyclists, such as surface treatment, paving roadway shoulders, signing and safe railway crossings, consistent with “complete streets” principles; and
- iii. Phased-in Construction: Ensuring that on-road cycling facility projects, including paved shoulders on rural roads and off-road shared-use pathways are phased in based on the requirements of local and Regional Bicycle Network plans. Such work may be undertaken in association with municipal Environmental Assessment studies for new or

reconstructed roadways, or for new developments, and may be implemented based on changing construction opportunities.

### **3.4 Cycle Tourism**

The municipality will support the promotion and delivery of cycling tourism to help achieve sustainable economic, environmental and social benefits, in a partnership approach with others in order to market this municipality and the Niagara Region as a premier bicycle tourism destination.

### **3.5 Funding Support**

The municipality will provide appropriate funding and resource support within associated capital works budgets to bicycle programs and initiatives in recognition of the many benefits and the priority placed on this environmentally friendly, sustainable and enjoyable mode of transportation.

## **Supplementary**

### **3.6 Network Co-ordination and Partnerships**

Inter-regional bicycling and cross-boundary connectivity will be supported through co-ordination and partnerships with other agencies, interest groups, municipalities and the private sector (e.g. Waterfront Trail, Greater Niagara Circle Route, TransCanada Trail, Go Transit, etc.)

### **3.7 Mutual Respect and Understanding**

The municipality will promote an environment of mutual respect, understanding and complementary community behaviour among cyclists, other road and trail users, and individuals in all adjacent land use activities including those in built up residential areas, at construction sites, near industrial activities and around agricultural operations and infrastructure.

### **3.8 Cycle Tourism Information**

The municipality will work with its tourism partners by offering supportive cycling information such as network route maps, brochures, tourism and web site information to promote multimodal travel options which include cycling for its visitors.

### **3.9 Welcome Cyclists Network**

The municipality will encourage local businesses and retail establishments to join the Welcome Cyclists Network whose members take extra steps (e.g. secure bike lock-ups, local cycling information) to become bicycle friendly and thereby attract cyclists and promote cycle tourism.

### **3.10 Leadership Role**

The municipality will demonstrate leadership for a bicycle friendly environment by implementing infrastructure and innovative programs that support, encourage, educate and enforce safe cycling through measures such as:

- Encouraging municipal employees to use bicycles to commute to work and for travel on municipal business,
- Providing secure parking with showers and locker facilities at municipally owned and operated buildings, and
- Encouraging employees that use bicycles to take an effective safe cycling course.

### **3.11 Education and Training**

The municipality shall support the promotion and delivery of educational opportunities (e.g. safe cycling courses) through partnerships that improve the knowledge and skills of key target audiences (cyclists, motorists and pedestrians) in order to create an environment where people of all ages and abilities adhere to safe cycling practices and can cycle on Niagara roads and pathways without fear of injury.

### **3.12 Local Bicycle Advisory Committee**

The municipality will establish, support and maintain a municipal Bicycle Advisory Committee as a forum for public and interest group input into local cycling issues and decision making such as the development of a Bicycle Master Plan, identification of a local bicycle network and appropriate bicycle parking and trip end facilities.

### **3.13 Monitor and Evaluate**

In order to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the municipality's bicycling plan and the effectiveness of bicycle promotion, the municipality will:

- establish a bicycle counting program that will create a base of information to assist in reviewing the success in achieving stated goals and objectives, as well as assisting in setting priorities for future projects;
- conduct surveys as necessary, in partnership with the Niagara Region, to identify changing needs and trends in bicycling;
- establish target modal splits for commuter trips, school-related trips and for inter-modal trips, and
- identify annual, five and ten year bicycling network implementation targets and plans.