



Terms of Reference

The Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee (RNBC)

Approved by
Niagara Region Bicycling Committee
August 6, 2009

Approved by
Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee
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1.0 Rationale

The 1995 Regional Bicycling Study concluded that in order to be successful in encouraging bicycling in Niagara, three things were needed:

- staff committed to bicycling initiatives;
- political support for bicycling initiatives; and
- an active bicycling Committee.

As such Regional Council established a bicycling advisory committee (the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee-RNBC), under the then Public Works and Utilities Committee, to direct the implementation of the study. At that time, it was felt that the Committee could play a useful, active role in providing input on a wide range of topics and issues related to bicycling (refer to Appendix I and II).

For more than a decade, the RNBC has successfully been working towards the implementation of Regional Council's long-term vision as outlined in the Regional Bikeways Master Plan and the Niagara Region Policy Plan to facilitate growth in environmentally-friendly active forms of transportation.

2.0 Mandate

The Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee (RNBC) is an advisory arm of Regional Council through the *Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee (ICCPW)* whose purpose is to provide input on cycling issues, projects, policies and programs that promote safe bicycling for all ages as a means of sustainable transportation, recreation, and tourism.

2.1 Vision

To establish and have the Niagara Region recognized as the premier bicycle-friendly community in Ontario, where cyclists of all ages and abilities can cycle in safe and enjoyable environments for transportation, recreation and tourism purposes.

2.2 Mission

The Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee (RNBC) is a public advisory committee to Regional Council whose purpose is to promote and encourage the development of safe cycling opportunities within Niagara through consultation, cooperation and partnerships. Members provide input and advice on cycling issues, projects, policies and programs that:

- support a comprehensive Regional Niagara Transportation Strategy and ensures smart land use;
- promotes and encourages cycling as part of a healthy lifestyle; and
- fosters environmental sustainability, tourism and economic opportunities throughout the Niagara Region.

2.3 Areas of Strategic Focus

There are three main areas of focus for the RNBC:

1. The RNBC will work towards the implementation of Council's approved Regional Bikeways Network to ensure dedicated space for cyclists, including the implementation of a bicycle signage plan.
2. The RNBC will assist Niagara municipalities and other stakeholders with the development and implementation of relevant planning documents, inclusive of land use and active sustainable transportation plans that support enhanced infrastructure (inter-connected, multi-modal pathways

and trails - both on and off-road, facilities such as bike storage/parking at destinations and on buses, etc) for walking and cycling.

3. The RNBC will maintain and expand its partnerships with other local, provincial and bi-national groups and communities to facilitate and promote cycling for transportation, recreation and tourism purposes through education, encouragement and outreach activities for cyclists of all ages and abilities.

These strategic directions are aligned with several Provincial and Regional policy papers including the Provincial Policy Statement released in 2005; the Provincial Growth Plan (June 2006); Ontario's Action Plan for Healthy Eating and Active Living (2007); Niagara Smart Growth principles (2001 Report), the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan (2005); Model Urban Design Guidelines and the Regional Chairman's Leadership Round Table Report on Obesity Prevention (2006); all of which highlight the importance of developing communities where it is easy to utilize alternate forms of transportation such as walking and cycling (RNBC Report on Strategic Planning Issues and Process, November 2007).

2.4 Work Plan

The RNBC and its task forces will develop an annual work plan identifying the specific initiatives and activities to be undertaken within each of the areas of focus, inclusive of budget needs, to further guide decision-making and resource management.

3.0 Committee Structure

To fulfill its mandate, the RNBC will establish task force and ad hoc working groups to deal with specific issues or projects. Task Force and Ad Hoc working groups will meet as needed to review specific issues referred to them by the RNBC and otherwise complete their assigned tasks.

Task Force and Ad Hoc working groups must be comprised of at least two RNBC members and may include community members and other individuals with relevant knowledge and expertise. Local municipal participation should be sought depending on the nature of the work being undertaken.

Task force and ad hoc working groups shall be chaired where possible by a voting member of the RNBC and shall provide regular updates to the RNBC regarding recommendations on assigned projects. Written reports shall be submitted upon request.

Further to Item 2.4, Task Force and Ad Hoc working groups are responsible for developing annual work plans and budget estimates for the consideration and approval of the RNBC and Regional Council through the Integrated Community Planning & Public Works Committee.

3.1 Task Forces

Task Forces are considered to be standing sub-committees of the RNBC in that they oversee projects and tasks that are ongoing or long-term in nature. The Task Forces created by the RNBC include:

- i. Network
- ii. Policy Planning
- iii. Education and Encouragement

3.2 Ad Hoc Working Groups

Ad Hoc working groups are considered to be time-limited, project specific sub-committees of the RNBC in that they are convened to accomplish a specific task or tasks in a narrowly defined time

period. These working groups may require highly specific expertise and/or representation from two or more of the RNBC Task Forces. Examples of Ad Hoc working groups could include, but are not limited to:

- i. Membership Recruitment/Selection
- ii. Terms of Reference Review
- iii. Bicycle Map Initiative

4.0 Membership

The RNBC membership is comprised of both voting and non-voting members from areas that include elected representatives, special interest groups (both cycling and others), the public-at-large, private sector enterprises, the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO), Regional staff (see Section 7.0) and others.

The RNBC shall consist of at least two Regional Councilors, one to be appointed as Chair with the other to be appointed Vice-Chair, preferably representing the following Committees of Council.

- Integrated Community Planning and Public Works (1)
- Public Health & Social Services (1)

The RNBC should strive for representation from diverse sectors as noted above, and inclusive of the expertise needed to advance the vision, mission and strategic areas of focus of the Committee, however the size of the committee should not exceed eighteen (18) voting members.

4.1 Voting Members

Voting members of the RNBC include those individuals appointed to the Committee by Regional Council and designated as voting members inclusive of Council representatives, special interest groups (e.g. municipal bicycle advisory committees, bicycle clubs/groups, university/college and school board representatives, cycling retailer/tour operators, provincial organizations, etc.) and the public-at-large. Organizations with representatives appointed to the RNBC shall have a single vote; and any individual appointed to the RNBC who has multiple affiliations shall also only be entitled to one vote.

4.2 Non-Voting Members

Non-voting members of the RNBC include Regional Staff appointed as resource support, the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) and invited guests to RNBC meetings inclusive of individuals, agencies and other government staff (regional or municipal, Niagara Parks Commission, Niagara Economic Development Corporation, etc.) that may attend meetings to offer expertise and assistance on matters under consideration by the Committee and/or for information-sharing purposes.

4.3 Term of Office

Where possible, members appointed to the RNBC shall serve a four-year term, concurrent with Regional Council's elected term of office. Current RNBC members shall indicate their desire to be reappointed to the Committee no later than the December meeting prior to the change in Council. Membership, inclusive of the Regional Council representatives, shall be approved by Regional Council at the January meeting and as required throughout the four-year term to ensure the effective functioning of the RNBC.

4.4 Roles & Responsibilities

All RNBC members have the responsibility to help achieve the Committee's Vision, Mission, Goals, Objectives and Strategic Priorities as defined within the most recent RNBC Strategic Planning document.

The following roles and responsibilities are assigned to specific RNBC member positions:

4.1.1 Chair

- Provides leadership, assigns responsibility and ensures the effective functioning of the Committee.
- Builds consensus through team management.
- Acts as the primary media designated spokesperson for the RNBC at public or official functions and represents RNBC interests at Regional Council and Committees of Council.
- Approves the agenda, meeting notes, meeting dates and any required reports and documentation.
- Ensures meeting notes document items discussed and recommendations made, and that these meeting notes, along with any supporting materials are distributed to the members in advance of each meeting.
- Ensures the terms of reference and strategic directions are reviewed, updated and approved at appropriate time periods.
- Performs any other duties usually pertaining to the role of Chair or as determined in consultation with RNBC members.

4.1.2 Vice-Chair

- Performs the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence.
- Performs any other duties delegated by the chair or as determined in consultation with RNBC members.

4.1.3 Task Force/Ad Hoc Working Group Chairs

Committee members who serve as Chairs for work groups such as those listed under section 3.1 and 3.2 will:

- Provide input to help identify future projects or strategic priorities for future years work
- Schedule meetings, set agendas, identify work activities, and ensure the smooth functioning of their work group.
- Provide regular verbal updates regarding the progress of working group initiatives to the RNBC
- Provide written summaries to the RNBC at key work stages as appropriate or requested, as well as for the two progress reports for Regional Council.

4.1.4 Committee Members

- Review meeting materials in advance of the meetings and arrive prepared to provide a broad perspective on the issues under consideration.
- Submit agenda items to the Chair and/or Administrative Assistant a minimum of one week prior to the meeting date whenever possible.
- Notify the Chair and/or Administrative Assistant of their inability to attend a meeting at least one day prior to the meeting date.
- Work diligently to complete assigned activities.
- Agree to describe, process and resolve issues in a professional and respectful manner.
- Will provide relevant information, resources, advice and consultation.
- Will serve on at least one (1) Task Force and one (1) Ad Hoc Working Group as required.

4.5 Absenteeism

Should an RNBC member or a Task Force/Ad Hoc Working Group member miss three consecutive meetings without notification and consent of the designated Chair, the member shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and will be notified of this in writing by the Committee Chair.

4.6 Recruitment Process

Regional staff shall, at the direction of the RNBC, solicit membership applications from participating Regional departments, the MTO, and other agencies. Nominations shall also be requested from identified special interest groups and the public-at-large who shall provide a letter of interest outlining their areas of expertise, bicycling experience and special project interests.

Members will be evaluated and appointed on the basis of experience, how their knowledge and skills complement the expertise of the RNBC, diversity of ages and gender, geographic/municipal representation and their availability to attend RNBC meetings and serve on task forces. The selection committee will be made up of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Task Force Chairs. Regional staff will assist and provide input upon request.

5.0 Meetings

5.1 Schedule

Meetings shall be held once every six weeks in accordance with Regional Council's approved schedule, with the specific dates to be determined and circulated to members in December of each year. Every effort will be made to ensure meeting dates do not conflict with Regional Council Meetings and/or Business Planning meetings and other advisory committees of Council (e.g. the Greater Niagara Circle Route committee). RNBC meetings will be open to the general public.

5.2 Meeting Chair

In the absence of the appointed Chair at an RNBC meeting, the Vice-Chair will assume responsibility for chairing the meeting. Should both the Chair and Vice-Chair be absent, another voting member will be asked to Chair the meeting.

5.3 Quorum and Voting

Achieving consensus should be the goal of the RNBC. If consensus can not be achieved, a vote may be required.

A quorum for RNBC meetings shall be determined by the Chair at the beginning of each meeting. Approval on any motion shall require 50% plus one of the voting members in attendance at the meeting.

5.4 Conflict of Interest

Voting members of the RNBC will be asked to declare any pecuniary conflict of interest at the start of each meeting. If any such conflicts, either actual or perceived are declared, the member will not take part in the discussion or voting related to the item(s) identified.

5.5 Record of Proceedings

The Administrative Assistant appointed to provide support to the RNBC shall record meeting notes of RNBC meetings and circulate them to the membership and a designated contact in each municipality (usually the Clerk) for broad, internal distribution. Copies of the meeting notes and materials shall be made available on the Region/RNBC Website and forwarded to others in the format of their choice (paper or electronic copy) upon request.

Resolutions and motions on particular issues shall be highlighted and recorded in the meeting notes for timely action and follow-up by appropriate individuals and staff.

Meeting notes of all RNBC meetings shall be included on Integrated Community Planning & Public Works Committee meeting agendas with specific notations against recommendations to be noted as “receive for information”, “refer to staff” or “approve”.

Documentation of Task Force/Ad Hoc Working Group meetings will be determined and executed according to the informational needs of the group on an “as required” basis with verbal summaries and updates given by the Task Force Chair to the RNBC at key project or activity stages as noted in 4.1.3 and 6.2.

6.0 Accountability

6.1 Lead Department

The Niagara Region Public Works Department, Transportation Services Division is the designated lead department regarding resource support for the RNBC; however the Committee also has access to the technical expertise of staff from Integrated Community Planning, Public Health, Police Service and Niagara Economic Development Corporation.

Duties and tasks carried out by staff within the Transportation Services Division include; completing action items, preparation of meeting agendas and meeting notes as well as responding to Councilor requests.

6.2 Reporting Mechanisms

Regional staff, with input from the RNBC Task Force Chairs, shall prepare two progress reports to summarize the work undertaken by the RNBC and set out the Committee’s strategic activities and objectives for the Term of Council. These reports shall be provided at the end of the second year of Council’s four-year term and again at the conclusion of the Term of Council. These reports shall also include budget summaries and estimates associated with RNBC led activities and special projects or studies and will be submitted to Regional Council through the Integrated Community Planning & Public Works Committee.

In addition to the two progress reports noted above, the RNBC may choose to prepare additional reports on particular issues throughout the year for consideration by the Integrated Community Planning & Public Works Committee on any matter affecting cycling in the Niagara Region, the implementation of the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan and/or the Niagara Region Policy Plan.

All reports, as well as meeting notes will be made available on the Region/RNBC website.

6.3 Funding

Niagara Region Public Works Department (Transportation Services Division) will identify appropriate support funding in its annual Capital/Current budgets to fund activities of the RNBC. Additional funding may be assigned, depending on the nature of the studies, projects or events proposed by the RNBC for a particular year. The management of the annual RNBC budget shall be the responsibility of the Public Works Department Transportation Services Division and any allocation is subject to Regional Council approval.

7.0 *Support Services for the RNBC*

7.1 Technical Support

The RNBC shall receive technical support from staff for tasks and projects initiated by the Committee. This expertise may include but is not limited to staff from Public Works, Integrated Community Planning, Public Health, Police Service and the Niagara Economic Development Corporation. However, it is recognized that staff time and the level of participation will be dependent on other departmental priorities as determined by senior management and/or Regional Council.

7.2 Administrative Support

Administrative support shall be provided by the Office of the Regional Clerk and shall include the organization of meetings, meeting rooms, preparation and distribution of agenda, meeting notes and other background information.

8.0 *Amendments to the Terms of Reference*

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed and refined at minimum every four years (the term suggested for the RNBC) to ensure that they remain current and meaningful.

Proposals to amend the Terms of Reference shall require the approval of a majority of the Committee members present. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Regional Council through the Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee for approval and shall take effect only upon the approval of Council.

The original Terms of Reference for the RNBC were approved by Regional Council on June 15, 1995, with subsequent approval on updated terms of reference in February 3, 2000 and June 2005.

Appendix I: Historical Context of the RNBC

As noted in Section 1.0 Rationale in this Terms of Reference, the 1995 Regional Bicycling Study concluded that in order to be successful in encouraging bicycling in Niagara, three things were needed:

i) staff committed to bicycling initiatives; ii) political support for bicycling initiatives; and, iii) an active Bicycling Committee.

As such Regional Council agreed to establish a bicycling advisory committee, under the then Public Works and Utilities Committee, to direct the implementation of the study. It was viewed that the Committee could play a useful, active role in providing input on a wide range of topics and issues related to bicycling.

In August 2003, the Region completed a final report on the *Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan*, as part of the Niagara Region Transportation Strategy. The plan built upon and updated the work done in the 1995 Bicycle Master Plan and outlined a 20-year strategy for identifying network priorities and setting out the implementation tools necessary to develop a Region-wide on and off-road bikeways network.

Ten principle objectives were developed for the Bikeways Master Plan:

1. Develop an understanding of the current and future demand for cycling in the Niagara region.
2. Provide a comprehensive review of the cycling network, including levels of safety of all users.
3. Develop an appropriate network to meet the full range of existing and future cycling needs in the Niagara region.
4. Review jurisdiction roles with respect to funding mechanisms.
5. Develop appropriate standards, facilities, programs and implementation methods/approaches.
6. Review the implementation status of the existing Regional bikeways system and estimate the financial costs associated with improving the system.
7. Define the implementation priorities.
8. Integrate long term roads and trails systems planning.
9. Improve co-ordination of work among local agencies, as it relates to on and off-road cycling facilities.
10. Deliver a Master Plan and Implementation Strategy that: clarifies the roles of Regional staff, the RNBC, local municipalities, the Niagara Parks Commission and other partners; provides a bikeways network development plan and implementation priorities; provides recommended planning and design guidelines for developing the network; and estimates the costs for implementing the Plan over the next twenty years.

The Plan provided a unique opportunity to promote a healthy lifestyle, tourism and economic opportunities throughout the Niagara region, and was based on a significant amount of municipal and public input.

Regional Council approved the *Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan* on January 20, 2005 (subject to further discussion with local municipalities on the bicycle network). Section 9.3 of the Plan set out a proposed list of amended general bicycling policies, one of which affirmed the provision of a forum for public and agency input into Regional cycling decisions through the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee. The RNBC was tasked to:

- provide input on cycling issues, projects, policies and programs on an ongoing basis;
- examine opportunities for cycling routes along abandoned railway right-of-ways, utility corridors, waterways and other linear corridors;
- monitor the implementation of the Regional Niagara Bicycling Network and support programs;
- participate as volunteers in bicycling initiatives and programs; and

- provide as part of an annual report, a list of recommended on and off-road bikeway network implementation priorities for the subsequent year, based on the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan or other route opportunities as they arise.

Appendix II: Consolidated Functions & Activities of RNBC

The functions and activities listed below have been consolidated from the 2003-2006 RNBC Terms of Reference (Section 3.3.1 Long-Term Goals and Section 3.3.2 Short-Term Objectives). These functions and activities helped to inform the strategic plan undertaken by the RNBC in November 2006 although were not captured in that document. They are retained here for ease of reference, and to provide some additional detail to the context within which the RNBC has, and continues, to operate.

The key themes have been retained with much of the same or similar wording, however the time horizon references (i.e. short- and long-term) have been removed along with some of the duplication. References to committee names have also been updated (e.g. Planning and Public Works Committee now referred to as Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee).

Primary Functions:

- (a) To advise the Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee (ICPPWC) on cycling issues and matters for any project or activity, public or private that may have implications on cycling in Niagara.
- (b) To promote and raise the profile of bicycle tourism in Niagara, as it builds on the beauty of the Region's fruit lands, wineries and other natural and man-made attractions, and contributes to the economic health of the community.
- (c) To co-ordinate the Niagara Region's efforts on bicycle promotion and facilitation with those of local municipalities, other levels of government, agencies, neighbouring jurisdictions and other groups both public and private, including bi-national.
- (d) To examine opportunities for bicycling along major off-road linear corridors.
- (e) To regularly monitor and review progress on the implementation of the *Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan* including the identification of route deficiencies for utilitarian and recreational cycling.
- (f) To encourage cycling amongst residents of Niagara:
 - as a health promoting activity with all the benefits that accrue with physical activity;
 - as an environmentally sustainable, quieter form of transportation that helps to reduce reliance on private automobile use;
 - as a method of reducing society's fossil fuel consumption and its inherent pollution of our environment;
 - as a financial tool in assisting municipalities to reduce their budgets for traditional municipal transportation services that require extensive ongoing and expensive infrastructure improvements;
- (g) To make recommendations regarding financial and policy programs that help increase utilitarian cycling participation as an alternative to the private automobile;
- (h) To encourage and support programs for bicycling education and the enforcement of existing legislation that addresses bicycling issues.
- (i) To develop expertise, be relevant and up-to-date on cycling matters in order to properly comment and advise on cycling issues in Niagara.

Primary Activities:

- (a) Provide input and comment on any cycling concerns including but not limited to the following:
- (i) bicycling issues as they affect the Niagara Region Policy Plan, Regional Capital Works programs, and the *Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan*;
 - (ii) development, implementation and updating of the Niagara Region Bicycle Network, and supportive infrastructure based on recognized and acceptable standards, in terms of:
 - planning and design,
 - on and off-road route priorities,
 - construction,
 - maintenance and operations (e.g. route signage, pavement markings) and,
 - trip end facilities;
 - (iii) modal integration with bike and ride transit systems and connectivity with other local or agency bicycling systems in Niagara like the Greater Niagara Circle Route, the Waterfront Trail, and the TransCanada Trail;
 - (iv) the promotion of safe bicycling for all trip purposes (e.g. utilitarian, recreational, touring);
 - (v) on long-range planning policies, zoning provisions or development matters that may have a bicycling component, and
 - (vi) on proposed Regional Roads projects and initiatives, as well as municipal, provincial, private or other agency undertakings that may have a bicycling component or implications.
- b) Undertake the following measures to support cycle tourism in Niagara:
- (i) Encourage and help facilitate region-wide bicycle programs, tours and where possible one bicycling event annually.
 - (ii) Assist in the preparation and updating of a detailed bicycling map suitable for broad public distribution and enhanced web site information on cycling.
 - (iii) Work with Niagara Economic Development Corporation (NEDC) and others to help facilitate cycle tourism initiatives and venues (e.g. Toronto International Bike Show and Toronto-Niagara Bike Train)
- (c) Participate with, build partnerships and assist local municipalities, the Province, other agencies or the private sector in the development of:
- (i) local bicycle studies and facilities that integrate well with the approved Regional network.
 - (ii) long-range planning policies, zoning provisions or development matters that may have a bicycling component.
- (d) Develop information products for circulation and display that outline the many benefits of cycling (e.g. health, environmental, economic, land use).
- (e) Facilitate and help develop bicycling education and enforcement initiatives through school programs, CAA promotional literature, CAN Bike courses, Regional Police Service initiatives and other means.

- (f) Meet on an annual or semi-annual basis with other local and/or Regional bicycling advisory committees to share information and provide advice on current bicycling issues.
- (g) Act as a central registry in Niagara for information on local bicycling clubs, events and bicycle planning initiatives.
- (h) Attend cycling seminars, conferences and courses to be informed and gain insights into new and innovative approaches to cycling.