



Advisory Committee

Industry Partnership Participant Updates Minutes from Web Conference Wednesday, June 21, 2023, 3:00pm - 4:30 pm

On-Line / In Attendance:

Lionel Kernerman – Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, Emily Van Straten - Oxford County, Susan Morin - Venture Niagara/Niagara Cycle Tourism Centre, Stephanie Mazhari – Halton Region, Jillian Page – Discover Brantford, Susan Cook-Scheerer - Explore Waterloo Region, Ally Anderson – Huron County, Sonya De Villis – City of Toronto, Anson Wong – York Region, Christin Wong - York Region, Danielle Culp - Durham Region, Brendan Matheson – Simcoe County Tourism/Cycle Simcoe, Diane Murenbeeld – Northumberland Tourism, Rob Plumley – Lennox & Addington Counties, Julia Thomson – Ottawa Tourism, Ryan Gilbertson – Ottawa Valley Tourism, April McClellan – Discovery Routes Trails Organization, Maja Mielonen – Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates, Ashley Whyte - Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates, Alana Kenopic – City of Sault Ste. Marie, Mike Wozny – Destination Northern Ontario, Kyle Perdue – Ministry of Transportation, Caitlin Vernon – Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Darlene Leskovar, Destination Ontario

Updates Provided with Regrets: Lori Newton– Bike Windsor Essex, Travis Anderson – City of Sault Ste. Marie

Ontario By Bike/Transportation Options: Louisa Mursell (Meeting Chair), Peter McMurtry (Meeting Admin), Kathy Stewart (Board of Directors/Transportation Options)

Note: RTO (Regional Tourism Organization) number is used for geographic location reference points only, unless otherwise stated. For more information on these geographical boundaries visit: www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/regions/regions.shtml

For a link to meeting minutes, recording and slides plus additional information on past meetings and the partnership visit: www.transportationoptions.org/obbip



REGIONAL UPDATES

Destination Northern Ontario (RTO 13) – Mike Wozny

- DNO was Destination Sponsor at Ontario By Bike Cycle Tourism Conference 2023, looking forward to participating in next conference
- Sault Ste Marie to Thunder Bay cycling route initiative, working with 11 communities, and working closely with Waterfront Regeneration Trust and Trans Canada Trail to complete cycling route
 - o This initiative won award from Economic Developers Council of Ontario – Tourism Attraction and Product Development Award for 2023
- Developed 5 new itineraries with Waterfront Regeneration Trust, across Northern Ontario
- Thunder Bay and Sault Ste Marie continuing to build new trails at rapid pace
- MTO completed \$16.5 million 20km paved shoulder resurfacing on Hwy 17b, through Garden River First Nation, just east of Sault Ste Marie

Sault Ste Marie (RTO 13b) – Travis Anderson and Alana Kenopic (notes provided)

- Some great news of late. We've received two grants:
- One from Infrastructure Canada - \$1.2 million to support two active transportation projects. Funding will be used to support
 - o Construction of the Hiawatha Highlands & Conservation Area Connector Trail. Linking downtown Sault Ste. Marie with the Hiawatha Highlands Conservation Area, Wishart Park and Kinsmen Park
 - o Upgrading about 1.4km of sidewalks to multi-use paths along and connecting to the John Roswell Hub Trail
 - o Funding from Canada's National Active Transportation Strategy
- Another from the Province for mountain bike trail development.
 - o City will receive \$600,000 to expand the Algoma Trail Network and a further \$23,500 to create a year-round mountain bike skills park at Kinsmen Park.
 - o The 30km trail extension will connect four lakes, various viewpoints and is expected to attract cycling tourists for multi-day stays.
- We've raised \$2.35 M in funding for mountain bike trail development since 2020. <https://www.saultstar.com/news/funding-for-bike-trail-network-creates-additional-30-km-of-trail>

Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates (MICA) (RTO13a) – Maja Mielonen

- Just finished the Manitoulin Passage Ride, Saturday very smoky
 - o Sold out at 250 attendees, event includes dinner and dance
- NOHFC grant to hire intern – Ashley White
- Worked over the winter on MODEM – Manitoulin Outdoor Digital Experience Museum - an app to provide interpretative tour, uses Driftscape software which links cycling itineraries and Strava with MODEM – includes 120 unique points of interest or stops, all over the island, read or listen in English and French, spots are geofenced and can be accessed by any transportation means. Working with a variety of community organizations across the island to use the app.
 - o Federal Tourism Recovery Fund enabled this, through Destination Ontario
- E-bike Share will be up and running in July and August, ebike supply chain issues slowed down rollout
- Covid was huge boost to tourism, visitors from all over Ontario including Ottawa and the GTA
- International visitors and general visitors from GTA are not back after Covid

- Cycling visit numbers are really increasing on the island compared to general visits. Incredible number of cyclists all over
- Hosted three Bike kitchen events - workshops on bike repair

Discovery Routes (RTO13a) – April McClellan

- Continuing to promote awareness of Voyageur Cycling Route, particularly Northeast section – North Bay to Mattawa
- 8 cycling experiences, this year they're enhancing the experiences to add other activities - hiking and cycling, and winter activities
- 2 multi-adventures, one summer, one winter on website
- Published new Adventure Trails Map which covers RTO13b, and parts of RTO12
- Ontario by Bike ride coming to South River and North Bay in August - 45 cyclists
- Discovery Routes in leader in new gravel race called the "Voyageur 200"
 - o 2 distances, 100 and 200km - September 9, 2023
 - o Hosting Provincial Road Cycling Championships for second year in a row

Ottawa Valley (RTO 11) - Ryan Gilbertson

- Recently Farm to Fork business/farm has collaborated with Ontario Highlands
 - o 3 nights, 4 days of gravel cycling on the new Lumberjack Cycling Loop

Ottawa Tourism (RTO10) – Julia Thomson

- Bikeshare feasibility study run by Envirocentre, Ottawa Tourism participated in consultations to give tourism perspective, align with Destination Stewardship Plan that came out in November.
- Major parkways closed to cars, open to active transport users, closed weekends until Thanksgiving
 - o George Etienne Cartier Parkway
 - o Sir John A MacDonald Parkway
 - o Queen Elizabeth Parkway along canal – closed 7 days a week during summer till September 4

Lennox and Addington (RTO9) – Rob Plumley

- This spring they launched their new Backroad Routes, 10 new paved, gravel and rail trail routes have been quite popular so far official launch was two weeks ago at L&A Gravel Ride
- 250 participants in L&A Gravel Ride, first year, sold out
- Discovery L&A Ride scheduled for fall, Sept 9 at Mackinnon Brothers Brewing
- 715% increase in visits to website cycling pages in last 8 weeks, tweaks to marketing to focus on cycling. They're seeing a lot more cyclists out on roadways since.

Northumberland County Tourism (RTO8) – Diane Murenbeeld

- In time for World Bicycle Day - Pilot program - bike repair stations at 5 locations throughout Northumberland County, small portion of the work that they're doing to keep advancing cycling agenda

Tourism Simcoe County (RTO7) – Brendan Matheson

- 10th anniversary of Cycle Simcoe, started with a Trillium Grant in 2013, Brendan was hired full time to develop a cycle tourism strategy
- Sept 9, celebrating 10 years of Cycle Simcoe with an event on the Simcoe County Loop, working with Humdinger Cycling Tours, they want to turn this into annual event
- New purple shirt colour for prize for completing Simcoe County Loop. Contest went viral and every year they change the colour of the shirt.

- 16 member municipal partners in Simcoe County for trail hub project. Got \$100,000 for trail hub equipment. Enhanced the trail hubs with local art, they've all been painted, all installed around county now.
 - o Each hub has a bike repair station, bench and bike rack, all painted in one theme. Launching those officially when Fed Dev gives permission.
- Bike rack program - transition style bike racks, encourage active transport at events
 - o Lending them out to event organizers (Turas Mor cycling event, music festival)
 - Enthusiastic response
 - o Handing them out to encourage active transportation
- Working on new cycling loops
 - o Heavy focus now on new multi-day loops, shift from previous approach of single day loops
 - Working with other regional partners on multi-regional loop around Lake Simcoe
 - o Angus to Collingwood Rail Trail, County purchased a new rail line, going to take a few years to develop trail
- Launched Great Lakes Waterfront Trail last year, huge success

Durham Region (RTO6) – Danielle Culp

- Durham Meadowway
 - o Signature project, in visioning study stage
 - o Transform over 30km of hydro corridor into one of Canada's largest urban greenways, transportation corridor
 - o Stitch together Pickering, Ajax, Whitby and Oshawa
- Cycling signage and way finding strategy
 - o Received Federal Active Transportation funds
 - o Create an intuitive signage program, distinctive to region, accessible to variety of users
- Smart Commute and Bike Month Events in partnership with municipalities
 - o Cycling Pledge, Bike Bingo, Region-wide cycling contest, Pedal for Patients charity ride with Lakeridge Health Foundation, raising money for cancer care
- Active and Sustainable Travel program
 - o 8 schools participating in program, program about how kids can get to school more safely by bike
- Walk and Roll Program for schools

York Region (RTO6) – Anson Wong

- Infrastructure based-updates
- South York Greenway - 50km east-west active transportation corridor
 - o Multi-use path
 - o Proceeding with a number of segments into detailed design, construction starting in 2024/2025
- Lake to Lake Route
 - o Currently in detailed design for final segments, additional 5km, construction next year
- Procured/purchased decommissioned 13km rail line - Zephyr Rail Line
 - o They're resurfacing the trail, redoing bridges

City of Toronto (RTO5) – Sonya De Vellis

- Bike to Work Day – first big ride since covid
- 2023 Bike Map is now available, at a variety of locations including libraries and community centres, bike shops, also Union Station/OTIC

- Cycling and Wayfinding Strategy with consultant
 - o Piloting 4 areas, first one in the east end, new signage guiding people to quiet routes and trail systems
 - o Next 3 years they're rolling out wayfinding projects, trying to make it easier to find places of interest
- Bike Infrastructure Upgrades
 - o College Street bike lanes upgraded to be raised in one section, protected in another section, previously they were painted bike lanes. So far very well received and well used.
 - o Council approved extension of Bloor St bikeway, extended to west end, connects to a lot of trails, once extended to the east it will be 30km corridor across city
 - o Trail improvements
 - Lower Don Trail in south end of city
 - Continue to work on improving trails and bike infrastructure in the Port Lands

Huron County (RTO4) – Ally Anderson

- Greeting, no updates from Huron County

Explore Waterloo Region (RTO4) – Susan Cook-Scheerer

- BT700 - Grand Depart bike packing event out of St. Jacobs, biggest weekend yet of years that it's been running
- Trail Updates
 - o Market trail is now open connecting Waterloo to St. Jacobs Farmers Market, being very well used
 - o Extension made to the Iron Horse Trail, just opened last week
- Region of Waterloo
 - o Partnership with Neuron Mobility – 500 e-bikes and 500 e-scooters that are available to rent, more active transportation options in the region
- FedDev project
 - o Linked up with local company Zeitspace to develop Cycling Guide app, hyper local
 - o New app shows featured cycling routes and directs cyclists to safe cycling infrastructure and experiences
 - o Shows bike parking, layering on bicycle friendly businesses
 - o Worked with Ontario by Bike to curate cycling routes/experiences
- Now up to 54 Bicycle Friendly Businesses in Waterloo Region, spring push to get new businesses with Ontario By Bike

Halton Region (RTO3) – Stephanie Mazhari

- Formally kicked off cycle tourism route analysis project
 - o Working on project with consultants including Ontario By Bike
 - o Currently have a map with 8 routes, in process of reviewing existing routes, incorporating new family friendly routes and others
 - o Hope to have new cycling map available next Spring

Discover Brantford (RTO3) – Jillian Page

- Jillian is new to committee and position, wanted to introduce herself
- Grand River Loop
 - o New signature loop. Trails signs are up and working with transportation to get road signs on the route. Next step will be promoting the loop
- They've been doing a push to get new bicycle friendly businesses

Niagara Region / Venture Niagara / Niagara Cycle Tourism Centre (RTO2) – Susan Morin

- Wanted to note to partners to check their website links, make sure they're all up to date
- Had a meeting with Metrolinx, Kelly Johnson new Tourism Manager, great contact, previously from Destination Ontario.
- City of Welland just recently banned e-bikes on all trails in the town, portion of Great Niagara Circle Route. Sue is in contact with town and working with Jamie Stuckless of Stuckless Consulting to reverse decision, would have to go back to council to be reversed.
- Aspiring Geopark in Niagara – trying to get designation through UNESCO
 - o One goal of the working group is to create a map that includes all trails in Niagara Region
- They did reprint their Niagara Cycling Map this year, but they might not continue with it and are trying to find a new home for the cycling map

Tourism Oxford (RTO1) – Emily Van Straten

- Emily Van Straten has been with Tourism Oxford for just under a year.
- 11 Road Cycling Routes, 9 gravel cycling routes in Oxford County
 - o They have gravel figured out but want to promote more
- Thinking of promotion going into 2024, always had brochure, but they want to simplify things for consumer, keep their website up to date. They have all their rides on Ride with GPS. They are trying to figure out if using a brochure is the best way to proceed.
- Hosted Ontario By Bike Ride - treated them to cheese boards and local offerings, coincided with Big Cheese Days event
- Hosted pre and post-ride for Paris to Ancaster riders, Rich from Gravelocity Tours led this, partnered with Hamilton Halton Brant/RTO3
 - o Not a great turnout but they're going to do a make-up ride as the weather wasn't great

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (RTO1) – Lionel Kernerman

City of Windsor

- New micro-mobility contract with Bird started in April, they continue to provide e-scooters and e-bikes. Approximately 2.8 km of bike infrastructure was added, with some additional trails ready for Summer 2023
- New park multi-use trails in Wilson Park, Willistead Park, Stodgell Park, Roseville Gardens Park & Little River Boulevard Park
- Painted bike lanes on North Talbot Road, Ducharme St
- Bike route: New Cycle Tracks (bike only trails) on Hawthorne Dr, from Roseville Park to Lauzon Pkwy combined with multi-use trail from Lauzon Rd. to Lauzon Pkwy.
- Bike Parking Policy is waiting for review and approval by City Council.
- Bike Windsor-Essex is hosting Ford Fireworks bicycle parking
- Coming in 2023/2024:
 - o Local street bikeways along Victoria Ave. & Kildare Rd.
 - o Fall Active School Travel Education

County of Essex/CWATS (County Wide Active Transportation System)

- The County of Essex contributed \$275,000 and joined other municipalities, including Lakeshore, Tecumseh and Essex, to help the Essex Region Conservation Authority purchase the abandoned CASO/Canada Southern Railway line that runs through Essex County. Converting the 47km corridor into an active transportation corridor would create a regional trail loop, linking up the Chrysler Canada Greenway, the Cypher Systems Greenway, the Leamington-Comber Greenway and the Trans Canada Trail in Chatham-Kent. This fantastic opportunity was envisioned in the original Master Plan for the County Wide Active Transportation System in 2012.

- The County of Essex has updated the Master Plan for the County Wide Active Transportation System, coming for approval to Essex County Council this summer.
 - o CWATS network to include more than 1,000 km of active transportation corridors, linking the County's seven municipalities together and with trail systems in Windsor and Chatham-Kent.
- The 2023 County of Essex Budget devotes \$5.2 million to its County Wide Active Transportation System and includes multiple paved shoulder projects and functional design studies for multi-use trails in key residential areas. Under the CWATS Municipal Partnership program, the County of Essex will work with the Town of Amherstburg to build out the Libro Centre as an end-of-use facility with the addition of 19 benches along a new 3-km greenway that travels past a new mountain biking facility with contoured, sloped trails for riders of all ages and skill levels. Additional bike shelters and lockers will also be installed across the County.

WindsorEats

- Currently running Friday Night Lights every Friday in Windsor.
- Wine Trail Rides are only taking private bookings this year.

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island

- Refreshed cycling map coming this fall both in print and digitally. Will focus on bike-friendly businesses and key trails throughout the destination.
- Will update website as well with listings/businesses.
- Ongoing social media support.
- Bloggers/writers – Travelling Mitch and Christina Palassio's story in Canadian Cycling Magazine.
- Newly launched group, Windsor Essex Bike Community, focusing on offroad trails in Amherstburg called Libro Centre Trails.

Bike Windsor-Essex - Lori Newton– Bike Windsor Essex (notes provided)

- Bike Windsor Essex launched 5 self-guided bike tours this month - the first for the region. Accessed at no cost via GPS My Ride, these turn-by-turn tours showcase the historical, cultural and natural features of the region. Two in the City of Windsor and three in the County, one being a wine route ride.
- We continue to offer one of the only Bike Rental services in the region.
- Continue to offer run the community Bike Kitchen, a DIY space where riders can rent a stand to repair a flat and do general maintenance on their bikes.
- All cyclists can drop by to get a tire pump, water, small bike adjustment, and maps and intelligence on the region. Also offer short term rentals of city bikes.

CROSS PROVINCIAL UPDATES

Ministry of Transportation – Kyle Perdue

- Province wide cycling network
 - o MTO has already built 2,100km to date, and continues to make progress and build network
 - o The network when complete will have 3,150km on MTO roads and 6,700km on non MTO roads

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport – Caitlin Vernon

- No updates

Destination Ontario – Darlene Leskovar

- Cycling continues to one of the top searches on their website
- They've written quite a few articles on cycling

- Just completed Spring/Summer campaign that included cycling

ONTARIO BY BIKE UPDATES

- Also see slide deck at www.transportationoptions.org/uploads/1/4/5/0/145035178/obbip_ac_-_june_21_2023_web_presentation_.pdf

Ontario By Bike Updates – Reaching and Engaging Cyclists

- Strong demand for Cycling in Ontario Guide 2023, maintaining distribution levels and expanding distribution points. Over 90% distributed. New this year was direct distribution to Rideau Lakes Tour participants. 36 print partners.
- Digital Partnerships – 27 digital partners for digital ads and sponsored blogs. Posted 10-blogs this year, 2 already with over 1000 reads.
- Strong interest in Ontario By Bike website, newsletter, and social media channels
- Strong attendance at Ontario in-person shows plus Quebec and Montreal Bike Show in Feb 2023, engaging and reaching thousands of cyclists at events, shows. 8 Ontario Show Partners and 2 Quebec partners.
- Digital Community – 5 consumer e-newsletters sent, reaching over 16k subscribers, social media campaigns running with good results
- Media Relations – Facilitated a number of requests via partners, biz awards, conference and Destination Ontario
- Successful start to season of Ontario By Bike Rides, rides sold out very quickly with destinations including Oxford County, Toronto Trails & Ravines, North Bay, and Collingwood-Georgian Bay. New this year Ontario By Bike / Transportation Options acquired TICO license to sell tours in-house. Ride itineraries posted after ride season always popular.
- New cycling jerseys, updated design
- Photo Contest – open till November, winning photo in Cycling in Ontario Guide

Ontario By Bike Updates – for Industry Partners

- Destination Renewal Partners for 2023 include Durham Region, Chatham Kent, Grey County, Peterborough & the Kawarthas, City of Kawartha Lakes, Haliburton Highlands. All renewal deliverables underway including hosting a number of workshops in spring and fall 2023.
- 2023 Business Awards – open to bicycle friendly businesses, winners this year were announced at Cycle Tourism Conference in March 2023.
- Cycle Tourism Conference 2023
 - o 30 speakers, 163 attendees, 5th edition of conference, 99% indicated conference provided information and takeaway tools that will be able to further develop cycle tourism product in their jurisdictions
 - o Next conference targeted for 2026
- Consulting projects
 - o Completed projects with Explore Waterloo Region; Perth County; Destination Toronto
 - o Actively working with: South Eastern Ontario/RTO9; Wellington County; also Halton Region & Huron County
- Destination Ontario partnership
- VIA Rail/Bike Train advocacy with Vélo Quebec

WEB POLL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Potential Fall Research & Your Input:

- Past primary research reports completed by Ontario By Bike available at: www.transportationoptions.org/ontarioresearch
- Also links to other research reports, Ontario/Canada/International at: www.transportationoptions.org/research

Web Poll Questions:

- What research, info, numbers would assist your region/organization in advancing cycle tourism?

Responses: (also see presentation slide deck [HERE](#))

- Economic Impact for cycle tourists
 - Economic Impact
 - All the regular tourism visitor statistics such as number of visitors, origin, length of stay, type of accommodations, expenditure figures, etc.
 - What tools do cycle tourists use to plan a cycling trip? What do they use for navigation on route (old school map? Strava? Map my Ride? Etc.)
 - Number of bike stations available by municipality or businesses etc. Number of trips made by bike, total spending by cyclists annually.
 - Secure Bicycle parking for small towns cities
 - Spend
 - Most popular routes by region/municipality and the corresponding number of bike trips on the top 5-10 routes
 - Number of people travelling for bike specific endeavors, number of users on trails
- What research, info, numbers would assist province as a whole in advancing cycle tourism?

Responses (also see presentation slide deck [HERE](#))

- All the regular tourism statistics such as number of cyclists, origin, length of stay, type of accommodation, destination, expenditure and economic figures, etc.

Responses/Discussion:

Comment from Mike Wozny – Destination Northern Ontario:

- more cycle tourism economic data
- Generally speaking he wants to rely on Northern Ontario or Ontario data for grants and project applications

Louisa Mursell – Ontario By Bike / Transportation Options

- New data out of Thunder Bay trails initiative