



Advisory Committee

Minutes of Discussion Section During Web Conference

Thursday, November 9, 2023, 3:00pm - 4:30 pm

On-Line / In Attendance:

Lionel Kernerman – Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, Emily Van Straten – Tourism Oxford, Sonya De Vellis – City of Toronto, Kristin Wong – York Region, Danielle Culp – Durham Region, Brendan Matheson, Travis MacIver – Tourism Simcoe County, Eleanor Cook – Visit The County, Julia Cosentino – Ottawa Tourism, Thom Lambert – County of Haliburton, Ryan Gilbertson – County of Renfrew/Ottawa Valley Tourist Association, Mike Wozny – Destination Northern Ontario, Paul Pepe – Tourism Thunder Bay, Kyle Perdue – Ministry of Transportation, Rachael Treadgold – Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Darlene Leskovar, Destination Ontario.

Regrets & Updates Provide in Note Form:

April McClellan – Discovery Routes Trails Organization, Lisa MacPherson – Destination Ontario

Ontario By Bike/Transportation Options: Louisa Mursell (Meeting Chair), Peter McMurtry (Meeting Admin)

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

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island – Lionel Kernerman

City of Windsor

Wrapping up 2023:

- May – helped host Bike to Work Day event
- April - Active Transportation booth - Earth Day/Malden Park, Mayor’s Walk & Open Strs
- Bird’s e-scooter/e-bike share program year-end was Oct. 31st , to resume in Spring 2024
- 2022 Active Transportation Master Plan update report, should go to Council on Nov.27th
- Bike facilities new this year:
 - o Matchette Rd. (EC Row to Broadway) – multi-use trail, connects to Malden Park;
 - o Lauzon Pkwy (Cantelon to EC Row overpass) – multi-use trail; Strabane Ave. (Riverside to Wyandotte) – bike lanes re-painted, with a buffer added for additional safety; Cabana Rd. (Mr. Royal Dr. to Herb Gray Pkwy) - bike lanes, will connect with the Herb Gray multi-use trail; Dominion Blvd. (Northwood to Ojibway) – bike lanes; Provincial Rd. (Cabana Rd to Legacy Park Blvd) – multi-use trail, connecting to bike lanes on Cabana

Coming in 2024 (so far):

- Planned bike facilities:
 - o For the Gordie Howe International Bridge, nearby Sandwich Street improvements including multi-use trails and on-road bike lanes
 - o Cabana Rd (Provincial to Walker Rd.) – bike lanes; Completion of Victoria and Kildare local street bikeways
- Promotion of Bird’s equity pricing program to low-income residents
- Participation in the State of the Strait Conference, hosted by U of W – The theme is cross-border cycling tourism

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

- CWATS is sponsoring Bike Windsor Essex’s Winter Wheels, which supports 25 aspiring winter riders with free equipment, workshops and seasonal fun and camaraderie.
- Updating printed CWATS map, which will be available in about a month

Share the Road Essex County

- 5th annual 2024 Essex Centurion Challenge will run from May to September, 2024
- New for 2024 will be the Kelly-Ann Way Grand Départ Ride, one-day event on Saturday, June 15, to honour Kelly-Ann Way’s outstanding achievements in cycling.
- The 2024 Oktoberfest Ride hosted by Kingsville Cycle is set for Saturday, October 5th.

Bike Windsor Essex

- Moved to a new location in the Old Walkerville area
- With Kingsville Parks & Recreation, offered leisurely bike rides in the quaint town, including during the Kingsville Migration Fall Festival

Oxford County (RTO1) – Emily Van Straten

- Not many updates since June and Ontario By Bike Ride to Oxford County
- Cycling map refresh
 - o Discussing/wondering if keeping with a paper brochure is the best way forward
 - o Considering digital options
- City of Woodstock
 - o City installed new bike racks, used local artist for unique designs
- Oxford County Transportation Master Plan
 - o In consultation phases

City of Toronto (RTO5) – Sonya De Vellis

- Updates to existing bike network
 - o Upgrading existing bike lanes to cycle tracks on College St and Wellington Street
 - Wellington will connect to new West Toronto Rail Path extension, which will be an excellent connection to the waterfront for west Toronto
 - o Extension of Bloor Street Bike lanes
- Street Art Toronto
 - o Local artists painting concrete barriers used for cycle lanes/tracks
- Trails
 - o Just recently opened 2km of Meadowway trail, on hydro corridor between downtown Toronto and Scarborough
 - o Once complete it will connect Toronto Waterfront to Rouge National Urban Park
- Conducting a Cycling Survey, now open
- Year-end review report
- Collecting data and input for 2025-2027 near-term cycling plan
 - o Hosting workshops, events at libraries and other locations
- Education campaign

York Region (RTO6) – Kristin Wong

- Working with Trans Canada Trail to add York region routes and trails to TCTrail
 - o Adding Lake to Lake Route (Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe) and South York Greenway (along hydro corridor near Highway 407)

Durham Region (RTO6) – Danielle Culp

- Expand Durham Meadowway visioning study
 - o Goal is to transform over 30km of hydrocorridor into trail
- Cycling wayfinding strategy underway
 - o Make it easier for visitors and locals to get around by bike
- Ebike program/incentives - investigating
- Developing in 2024 Bicycle Parking Guidelines
 - o Received funding through Federal Active Transportation Fund

Simcoe County Tourism (RTO7)– Brendan Matheson, Travis MacIver

- Travis will be taking over Brendan's role in future
- 10th Anniversary of Cycle Simcoe
- 10,000 x 4 maps printed this year, went through most copies of maps
- Trail Hub project
 - o 16 member municipalities got a trail hub, bike repair stand and bench
 - o They are going to build on this in 2024 – add more public bike art
- They celebrated 10th anniversary of Cycle Simcoe with a one-day event on the Simcoe County Loop trail with Humdinger Bike Tours, to celebrate all the member municipalities and 10 years of Cycle Simcoe
- Simcoe County Loop shirt contest – biggest year yet – 440 shirts shipped out to cyclists
 - o Sent to cyclists who tag Cycle Simcoe on social media and have completed the Simcoe County Loop Trail
- Annual Survey underway
 - o Survey to all bike friendly businesses
 - o Get bike friendly hotels to count and report

Visit the County, Prince Edward County (RTO9) – Eleanor Cook

- Visit the County is a brand new Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Prince Edward County

- They are currently in phase of strategy, planning, product development
- Interested in OBB presentation and interested to see results of survey
- 2023 – RTO9/South Eastern Ontario partnered with Ontario By Bike to develop new cycling itinerary
- Hosted Great Waterfront Trail Adventure through the County in August 2023
- A lot of product will focus on leisure, and partnering with other sector associations

RTO9 - OBB comment

- Prescott Russell has newly joined RTO9 – South Eastern Ontario Regional Tourism Organization. Previously with Ottawa and Countryside RTO

Ottawa Tourism – Julia Cosentino

- Chief William Commanda Bridge, close to downtown
 - o Brand new crossing over Ottawa River for pedestrians and cyclists
 - o Opened in August, previously used for trains and abandoned
 - o In first week of opening there were almost 30,000 crossings
 - o First weekend 7,500 people crossing, most people crossed as cyclists
- Winter Biking
 - o On multi-use Kichi Sibi trails near downtown, there were fat bikes available to rent from Fresh Air Experience. Expecting that service will be back this year.
- Rideau Canal – ice trikes available for rent, bicycle on ice.
- E-scooter pilot – will end soon, will produce a report and findings
- City - Active Transportation Plan – updates

County of Haliburton / Haliburton Highlands (RTO11) – Thom Lambert

- RidewithGPS – Believe that’s where lots of cyclists are getting their information
 - o Recommitted to Tourism Account
 - o Transferred gravel and road cycling routes to this account
- Huge increase in number of e-bikes seeing in region, about 50% of cyclists on ebikes. Previous year was about 20% on ebikes
- E-bikes can bring challenges – people can ride 50km but not consider extra supplies required or battery capacity

Discovery Routes (RTO13a) – April McClellan (notes provided)

- Voyageur Cycling Route Signage continues to be installed on various sections of the route and paved shoulders implemented
 - o Algonquin Trail, near Pembroke & North Bay and Callander upgrades and gaps filled
 - o Paved shoulders and trail signage installed this fall along Hwy 64 in West Nipissing (Sturgeon Falls – Noelville)
- Ontario by Bike Ride – North Bay & Lakes Tour, South River and North Bay in August - 46 cyclists – A+ rating!
- Discovery Routes partnered to host the “Voyageur 200”, a new gravel race in North Bay and Mattawa area. 48 registered. Next year’s race, is tentatively scheduled for Aug 24.
- Hosted the Provincial Road Cycling Championships for the second year in a row.
- Recycle Bikes Program completed for 2023 – 120 bikes donated
- Outdoor Adventure Industry Resource Guide (for 4-season non-motorized activities in the Near North - 1st draft end of 2023
 - o A tool for operators and organizations to share local and global expertise on outdoor adventurers’ needs and emerging trends, elaborate on the scope of existing operators, organizations, and market-ready trail assets AND provide

resources and recommendations around marketing partnerships, collaborations, and opportunities to grow non-motorized outdoor adventure visitation in the Near North

Destination Northern Ontario (RTO13) – Mike Wozny

- Working with Waterfront Regeneration Trust (WRT), implementing Lake Superior Waterfront Trail route
- Communities along the way are working on 'drive and ride' itineraries along the route
- Next week Northern Ontario Tourism Summit
 - o Cycle tourism presentations from DNO, WRT, Tourism Sault Ste. Marie
- Sault Ste. Marie
 - o Received \$625,000 for trail development, adding another 30km to local cycling trail network, adding onto 50km they added in 2020. Paved trails and mountain bike trails.
- Ebikes – they are trying to figure out which ebike classes to allow on trails – do they allow just class 1, or also class 2. But for paved routes, class two ebikes would likely be fine
 - o Class 1 ebike – pedal-assist ebikes, max speed 32km/hr
 - o Class 2 ebike – have throttle
- Great Waterfront Trail Adventure (week long group tour organized by Waterfront Regeneration Trust / Great Lakes Waterfront Trail) will be riding in Northern Ontario in 2024

Thunder Bay Tourism (RTO13c) – Paul Pepe

- Focus on mountain and fat biking scene as destination motivator. Fat Biking features in winter promotion.
 - o Tying winter experiences to food scene, encourage folks to 'play hard and then reward yourself'. Tie culinary into winter itineraries, seeing success with this approach
- Working with cycling club to map out gravel routes, working to get them digitally and in print map – 6-12 months timeline
- Investment of \$1.5 million in Trowbridge Forest mountain bike trails plus additional funds in Shuniah Mines, gives Thunder Bay world class mountain bike trails
 - o Part of funding through hotel taxes/MAT. Hotels are on board and see value.
- Canada Cup Cross County Marathon Mountain Bike Race – Thunder Bay hosted first ever mountain bike race - and opportunity due to investments in getting trail to meet standards
- Tim Banfield – photographer and blogger, covered mountain bike event, captured photo assets
- Big focus of future promotions will be on cycling
- A priority going forward is to do an asset inventory on road and gravel rides using routes currently being cycled by local riders
- No ebike restrictions for trails, this hasn't been flagged as an issue
- Thunder Bay continues to see the value buying into marketing with Ontario By Bike.

CROSS PROVINCIAL UPDATES

MTO / Ontario Ministry of Transportation – Kyle Perdue

- Continue to make progress on province wide cycling network



- Trying to develop mapping layer that is publicly accessible to show progress on and expansion of provincial cycling network
 - o Some limitations on data and coordinating with municipalities

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport – Rachael Treadgold

- No updates but enjoyed hearing all updates

Destination Ontario - Darlene Leskovar (with additional notes provided by Lisa MacPherson)

- Lots of great work happening across the province
- Visitor survey – 93% of visitors are interested in maps, at festivals and events, that is the number one thing that people are requesting, paper/print maps, popular too at OTIC's
- The photographer for the Ontario By Bike Ride and Discovery Routes shoot had so many positive comments about his experience. He was so happy to be part of the project and met so many nice people he raved about. Thinks this speaks to the cycling community and atmosphere OBB has created.
- Continuing to focus on cycling for the upcoming fiscal and happy to see the cycling portal on destinationontario.com and Ontario travel.net trending upwards in page views and engagements.

Additional Ontario By Bike Cross Provincial Updates – Louisa Mursell

- With many inquiries from cyclists and this flagged for discussion and outreach at previous meeting...
- VIA Rail – Currently testing 4 of total new 32 trains coming, along corridor
- All expected to be in active service at end of 2025
- VIA confirmed - New trains will have space for 6 bikes – 2 in business class, and 4 in economy class. No further info yet on costs or how reservations will be made.

ONTARIO BY BIKE UPDATES

Also see slide deck at – www.transportationoptions.org/uploads/1/4/5/0/145035178/obbip_ac_-_nov_9_2023_web_presentation.pdf

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Ontario By Bike Updates – Reaching and Engaging Cyclists

- 11th Annual Cycling in Ontario Guide
 - o Printed and distributed 40,000 copies in English and French. Demand exceeded supply, 70% distributed by April
- 2023 Readers Survey
 - o 94% found the guide 'useful' or 'very useful' when planning a cycling trip in 2023
 - o 71% of readers visited destinations or businesses featured in 2023
 - o 81% visited websites and used resources referenced in 2023 guide
- 2024 – 12th Annual Cycling in Ontario Guide
 - o Print sales close Nov 15
- Digital Partnerships 2024
 - o Available for digital ads and sponsored blog content
 - o Many months now sold out
- Active year promoting cycle tourism content, 19 blogs, targeted social media campaign June to Oct, popular e-newsletter engagement high
- Met with thousands of cyclists at 4 Ontario shows/events, 1 in Montreal
- Other promotions – new branded jerseys, annual photo contest – closes Nov 19
- Ontario By Bike Rides 2023 – 144 cyclists on 4 overnight weekend tours

- 4 destinations: Oxford Rural Road Ride; Toronto Trails & Ravines Tour; North Bay & Lakes Tour (new 2023 itinerary); Georgian Bay Collingwood Explorer (new 2023 itinerary)
- Legacy itineraries created and available online
- 2023 Rides presented in partnership with CAA

Ontario By Bike Updates – for Industry Partners

For Industry Partners & Ontario By Bike Certified Businesses

- 98 new certified bicycle friendly businesses, making total 1,687
- 6 webinars, 1 in person workshop, administered deliverables for Destination renewal partners with Ontario By Bike Network Haliburton Highlands, Durham Region, Chatham Kent, Grey County; Peterborough & the Kawarthas; Kawartha Lakes
- Received TICO license to sell ride packages, developed online booking system
- Completed several photo shoots with Destination Ontario, new photo assets and 2024 videos
- Completed a number of consulting projects
- Hosted Cycle Tourism Conference Canada in March 2023

2024 Looking Ahead – Ontario By Bike

- 2024 Marketing Partnerships – all now available and selling quickly
- OBB Cycling & Cycle Tourism Survey - Share Survey
 - Additional new research available & initial survey results (more below)
- Business Awards
 - Nominations for 2024 Bicycle Friendly Business Awards open in January

New Research – 2021 Stats Canada

In 2021, Visitor Numbers and Spend:

- **1.6 million cycling visits** in Ontario, representing 2% of total visits in Ontario
- **Spent \$537 million** accounting for 3.7% of total visitor spending in Ontario
- Largest spending categories (in order) are accommodations, food & beverage, transportation
- \$431/trip vs. \$332/trip (non-cyclists)
- Same-day visitors \$101/trip vs. \$88/trip (non-cyclists)
- 2.5 nights vs. 1 nights (non-cyclists)
- 70% of cycling visits were overnight visits (compared to 34% of total visits non-cyclists)
- Can't compare to previous years; no source market data

Note: 2021 data is domestic (Canadian visitor) results only; and due to a change in methodology, data for 2021 is not comparable to years before 2019. Source: Statistics Canada's National Travel Survey 2021; MTCS

See slides linked above for charts showing cycling visits compared to other activities, and regional distribution of cycling vs. non-cycling visits in Ontario

New Research - Trails Tourism & Sustainable Tourism

Trails are an important economic contributor to the tourism sector and local economies

- 72% of Canadians are trail users
- 35% spent money while using trails in the past 12 months



- \$179 average spend, with 25% of users spending more than \$200 per person

Thunder Bay - Study to assess the impacts of the proposed 13.5 km, multi-use, non-motorized waterfront trail in Thunder Bay estimates that it will contribute \$18.6 million to Thunder Bay's GDP over the 10-year period

Destination stewardship - Important for visitors and residents, in all destinations including Gateway Communities and Trail Towns

- 71% said they wanted to make more of an effort to travel sustainably in 2022, increased by 10% since 2021
- 78% of global travelers intend to stay in a sustainable property at least once in 2022

Sources: www.ised-isde.canada.ca/site/canadian-tourism-sector/en/canada-365-welcoming-world-every-day-federal-tourism-growth-strategy; & [Sustainable Travel Report 2022](#) completed by Booking.com

New Research - Case Study: Impact of Cycle Tours – Ontario By Bike Rides

North Bay & Lakes Tour (2023)

- South River – North Bay – Callander – Bonfield / 158km
- 2 overnights in North Bay
- Economic impact of \$533 pp and approx. \$24,535 total for 3 days/2 nights

Oxford Rural Road Ride (2023)

- Woodstock – Tavistock – Ingersoll – Tillsonburg – Otterville / 173km
- Overnight in Ingersoll
- Economic Impact of \$314pp and approx. \$12,554 total for 2 days/1 nights

New Research – OBB Survey & Full Report in 2024

- Cycling & Cycle Tourism Survey link: www.surveymonkey.com/r/2023CyclingSurvey
- Survey closes Nov. 15, communication text & graphic available for sharing
- 2023 survey will build on past data sets, update most recent past report (2021) and enable create a useful report for all

Initial Insight (N=830 as of Nov. 6)

- 44% increased the amount of cycling in 2023
- 83% increased or did the same amount of cycling in 2023 (similar to 2021 – 82%)
- 61% did one or more overnight trips that included cycling in 2023 (up from 48% in 2021)
- 69% did three or more day trips that included cycling in 2023 (up from 61% in 2021)
- 49% visited one or more Ontario By Bike certified business in past 2 years
- 48% participated in 2 or more cycling events in 2023

Information Sources Used While Planning and Riding

- Most used resources in order were: recommendations from friends/family; Ontario By Bike website; digital cycling maps; other websites followed by print cycling maps, events & tours
- During a cycling trip or outing print cycling maps and wayfinding signage were the most used resources for navigation, followed by GPS, Google maps and Apps

More to come including: spend by category; accommodation preferences; events; type of cycling...