



Advisory Committee

Minutes of Discussion Section During Web Conference

Thursday, November 28, 2024, 9:30am - 11:00 am

On-Line / In Attendance:

Lionel Kernerman – Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, Emma Rowley – Ontario’s Southwest (RTO1), Meredith Maywood – Oxford County, Terry Allison – Norfolk County, Lindsay Kalliokoski - Norfolk County, Blaire Sylvester – Norfolk County, Mohammad Halakoo – Niagara Region, Nicole Bronn – Tourism Partnership of Niagara (RTO2), Greg Higginbotham, City of Port Colborne, Bev Scott – Hamilton Halton Brant (RTO4), Callaway Johnson – City of Hamilton, Susan Cook-Scheerer – Explore Waterloo Region, Ivan J Balaban – Grand River Transportation (Waterloo Region), Sonya De Vellis – City of Toronto, Darryl Young – York Region, Anson Wong – York Region, Danielle Culp – Durham Region, Kristyn Chambers – Durham Tourism, Travis MacIver – Tourism Simcoe County, Rob Plumley – Lennox & Addington County, Cory Hagen – SDG Counties, Julia Cosentino – Ottawa Tourism, Thom Lambert – County of Haliburton, Kate Monk – Explorers’ Edge (RTO12), Mike Wozny & Stephanie Hopkin & Megan Boyd & Gord Knowles – Destination Northern Ontario (RTO13), Maja Mielonen – Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates, Ally Drombolis – Tourism Thunder Bay, Karen Martin – Tourism Thunder Bay, David Meyer – Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Mike Pearsall & Olu Olusanya – Ministry of Transportation (MTO), Jenn Irving & Liisa Sefton – Destination Ontario, Darren Winger – Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Gaming, Michael Bertuzzi – Transportation Options Board & Centennial College, Terrence Eta – Transportation Options Board & Toronto Bicycle Tours

Ontario By Bike (OBB)/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



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Also see: www.transportationoptions.org/uploads/1/4/5/0/145035178/obbip_ac_-_nov_28_2024_web_presentation.pdf

REGIONAL UPDATES

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (RTO1)– Lionel Kernerman

- In partnership with Trans Canada Trail and the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, we will work to profile Windsor Essex as a premier outdoor recreation and active tourism destination through the improvement of the region’s cycling infrastructure and position us as a premier destination for long-haul cyclists and international visitors. This joint project will focus on trail development including the opening of the Gordie Howe International Border Crossing, and stakeholder capacity, including:
 - o Working with partners to enhance cycling trails across the region to ensure they meet the standards required for attracting international cyclists. This includes surface improvements, safety measures, and connections between key trails.
 - o Working with local stakeholders - including tourism operators, municipal partners, and businesses - to equip them with the knowledge and tools needed to support long-haul cyclists. This capacity building will focus on trail maintenance, customer service, and the development of cycling-friendly businesses.
 - o Working with product experts, the focus will move to the creation of travel packages and experiences for the travel trade market.
- Working with Ontario By Bike on market-readiness opportunities for next year, including bike-friendly certifications.
- Participated in State of the Straight conference with international delegates, this fall.
- Will be in attendance for the 2025 Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show and Toronto Bike Show.

Oxford County / Tourism Oxford (RTO1) – Meredith Maywood

- Want to make sure the businesses are market ready
- Have to do a better job of working with and getting more certified bike friendly businesses, highlighting the opportunity to businesses
- Working with Ontario By Bike to update Cheese Trail Cycling resources

Norfolk County (RTO1) – Lindsay Kalliokoski & Blaire Sylvester

- Busy year, lot of marketing
- New mascot, ‘Scout’ who is a warbler bird
- App for Visit Norfolk, has local bike trails and bike companies, won award
- Promoting trails with RTO1
- Partners of Pathways For People Coalition – local bike enthusiasts who promote bicycle lanes and trails

- Hoping to get bike racks on public transportation buses, get them on new vehicles in the spring
- Successful Tour de Norfolk in 2024 and event will be back in 2025
- Working on Bronze Level accreditation, Bicycle Friendly Community

Niagara Region (RTO2) – Mohammed Halakoo

- Working on making sure they have connected bicycle routes
- Working on new master plan for the region, will keep everyone updated

City of Port Colborne (RTO2) - Greg Higginbotham

- Also contact for Niagara South Coast Tourism (DMO) – collective of destinations in Niagara south on Lake Erie, also includes centrally located municipalities
- Port Colborne – recently updated active transportation master plan
- Lots of opportunities with Great Lakes cruise ships, passengers getting off the ship and exploring region, including by bike
- As a region, they are looking to refresh existing cycling itineraries, renewing relationships with bike friendly businesses, pair this with agritourism experiences and indigenous experiences

Hamilton Halton Brant (RTO4) – Bev Scott

- This fall they completed Farm Fresh Tour in partnership with Great Lakes Waterfront Trail/WRT and Greenbelt
- Two new products – Rural on the Ridge, revamped from drive to cycle program, focuses on, HamBur Loop – incorporating heritage through cycling experiences
- New bike racks – Easterbrooks in Burlington and 4 businesses total
- Working on review of cycle tourism assets and resources – enhancements to website
- Working on a Cycle Tourism Strategy – looking at action items
- Exploring E-bikes
- Travel Trade – esp. Leveraging Hamilton airport
- They are doing a deep dive into OBB certified bicycle friendly businesses to make sure all are captured
- Completed certification for Green Step

City of Hamilton (RTO4) – Callaway Johnson

- In 2024 – installed over 117 bike racks, now total over 200 bike racks, ramping that up
- 2 major Hamilton Bike Share expansions
 - o East, expanding into 5 wards, almost all of lower city of Hamilton
 - o Onto campus McMaster University, offering special student pass, tripled daily rides since launch of this pass
- Accelerated Cycling Master Plan – Council voted to accelerate plan to 5 years, maybe impacted by Provincial Bill 212, but likely only a handful of projects to be impacted by new bill. 151km increased km of cycling facilities
- Launching wayfinding signage program, similar to Iron Horse Trail in Waterloo Region, wayfinding will be much more present and instructive, visible

Halton Region - Stephanie Mazhari, Margaret Gaskell (Regrets)

- Updates provided in advance:
 - o We have finalized our updated cycling map, with assistance from Ontario By Bike/ Transportation Options, have included bike-friendly certified businesses, and our new routes are now available on Ride With GPS.

Grand River Transportation (Waterloo Region, RTO3) – Ivan J Balaban

- They are developing transit supported active transportation
- New pedestrian / cycling bridge in Kitchener over Highway 7/8, lifted into place in August, at GRT they support cycling as much as they can, bike racks on buses, on ION LRT launched 5 years ago, bikes allowed on vehicles
- Big news this year, moving towards allowing e-bikes on buses, have always been allowed on ION LRT, but know they are trialling heavy duty bike racks on front of buses that can accommodate e-bikes
- New multi-use trail connecting to the GO/VIA station, they paved a pedestrian “desire path”, should be done in next two weeks
- New multi-use path connecting downtown Kitchener to Iron Horse Trail is now complete (as of May 2024), premier active transportation facility that connects Kitchener and Waterloo
- Shared Micromobility Program – partnered with Neuron Mobility to provide micromobility solutions (e-scooters and e-bikes), pilot was considered a success. MTO has extended the scooter pilot program for another 5 years, they expect to work with Neuron

Explore Waterloo Region (RTO3) - Susan Cook-Scheerer

- They have seen spike in visits to their cycling page this fall 2024 – two possible reasons:
 - o Member packaging program – most popular package from summer run was Pints and Pedals – River City Cycle would rent out bike or e-bikes, three different curated cycling itineraries
 - o Brought in cycling influencer this fall – Chris Mitchell, also created blog and itineraries
- Bike friendly businesses grew to 55

City of Toronto - Sonya De Velliss (Regrets)

- Updates provided in advance:
- Since the summer, we have completed several on-street bikeway projects, including:
 - o the first segment of Phase 1 of EglintonTOday Complete Street
 - o Neighbourhood greenway projects on quiet routes that guide people to existing trails and cycling infrastructure
 - o Continuing to build The Meadoway multi-use path
 - o Road reconstruction projects in north Toronto that include protected cycle tracks to encourage suburban cycling, including Sheppard Avenue Complete Street and Champagne-Alness Road Safety Improvements.
 - o Coming in the new year – the 2025 Toronto Cycling Year in Review, which will include results of the 2023 public survey, and an overview of the 2025-2027 near-term cycling plan.

York Region (RTO6) – Darryl Young

- Lake to Lake route joined Trans Canada Trail Network
- Working on wayfinding plan for Lake to Lake route
- Looking to update cycling map

Durham Region (RTO6) – Kristyn Chambers

- Wayfinding strategy was approved by council, developing new signage system across the region
- Winter commute month will be coming up, likely in month of February, effort to promote sustainable transportation all year long, and Coldest Ride of the Year event
- Worked on 13 on-road rural cycling loops, recreational loops in rural regions of Durham
 - o Main purpose was to help support bicycle friendly businesses

- Implementing on-road wayfinding signage, directional signage, drive people to their landmarks

Tourism Simcoe County (RTO7) – Travis MacIver

- Cycling tourism initiatives achieved significant milestones in 2024
- 40k cycling maps distributed across racks and direct mailouts
- Early digital campaign, lots of conversions
- 450 branded shirts mailed out to any visitor who completed the 160km Simcoe Loop Trail to 133 unique cities and towns
- 223,000 impressions on Quebec targeted campaign
- Pilot project – e-bike charging stations – Saris stations, this year they are installing 2 stations, one in Midland and one in Severn. Interest from other municipalities depending on funding
- Hosted an e-bike workshop in Penetanguishene, they brought in Jamie Stuckless, information for decision makers
- Barrie Collingwood Railway (BCRY) Trail – connects town of Angus to Collingwood-Clearview rail trail, hopefully eventually connecting that to the Simcoe Loop Trail
- International Trails Conference in Ottawa – cycled part of the Prescott Russell Recreational Trail, impressed with facilities
- Working with Georgian Bay Geopark on new cycling tour

Lennox & Addington County (RTO9) – Rob Plumley

- Infrastructure – installed 6 bike repair stations, 4 through healthy communities’ grant, 2 through Loyalist Parkway Association
- 12 paved road cycling routes, 10 backroads, gravel, paved, and rail trail routes
- Reopened L&A County Forest Mountain Bike Trails – 10km MTB network
 - o Will be open for fat biking this winter, purchased groomer
- Year round cycling opportunities
- Events – in June they had Naturally L&A Gravel Ride (sold 2 months early) upping registration to 500, annual Discover L&A Ride
- New 2025 – opening up new fall gravel, mountain biking ride event
- Website – cycling related visits – 47k views, about 6% of all traffic on destination marketing website
- All routes are in Ride with GPS
- People are coming from further afield to their events

SDG Counties (RTO9) – Cory Hagen

- Meeting with Resonance, who are working with RTO9, on Ontario and Quebec Corridor project, this corridor project will connect existing cycling routes between Ottawa, Montreal and Cornwall
 - o Site visit scheduled of the area
- Cornwall will be attending Montreal Bike Show, including SDG representation
- Attending Outdoor Adventure Shows
- Finishing visitor guide – will highlight cycling in their region, focus on visitors from upstate New York
- Working on Strategic Plan with Alphabet Creative

Ottawa Tourism (RTO10) – Julia Cosentino

- Tourism Accessibility Event – Accessible upgrades
 - o Projects that came out of this
 - Accessible cargo bike from Escape Bicycle Tours

- Opening visitor centre in downtown Ottawa, soft launch soon, official open in December before World Juniors hockey game, addressing a gap in visitor information, working with Canadian Heritage on staffing

Explorers Edge (RTO12) – Kate Monk

- EE has not participated in meetings previously because of staff capacity, that will change
- Product development has moved to the forefront
- They don't have a big budget, they have to be creative
- They have acquired TICO licence, they are launching regenerative travel agency
- Cycling is very important – they have a branded cycling website BikeCottageCountry.ca that needs updating. They will be leveraging international markets and interest in cycling.
 - o Anticipating results from US election will influence more international travellers to come to Canada
- Anticipating cycling to be one of the lead products they take to international sphere
- They are involved with more programs with Ontario By Bike
- Early 2025, cycling will be one of their lead products for conversion

Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates (RTO13) – Maja Mielonen

- Just finished attending DNO Northern Ontario summit
- Wants to move together in lobbying for train connectivity
- They received Tourism Innovator of the Year award for Driftscape MODEM app
 - o Created 100 points of interest in English and French, on Driftscape app
 - o They see it as a digital lure to come to destination
- Ministry of Northern Development – funding for Manitoulin to MICA, partnered with landowner to create 'channel view mountain bike adventure park', not just MTB, but other activities, along with existing chalet they can use.
 - o Going into segment of cycling that they have not explored so far
- Alvar Cycle Tours – they support efforts to reduce TICO's red tape to make it easier for them to organize tours
- Future vision of the North – lots of MTB areas being developed, people travelling between them
- Annual Manitoulin Passage Ride will happen June 7 and 8, 2025

Destination Northern Ontario (RTO13) – Mike Wozny

- Fat biking season has officially started in SSM
- DNO continuing efforts on Lake Huron north shore, connections in Blind River, Bruce Mines, Mississauga First Nation
- Connecting to work with Waterfront Regeneration Trust on the Sault Ste. Marie Lake Superior cycling route
- Tourism SSM – they have been doing extensive trail development, millions of dollars on trail development
- Cycling Events – Northern Ontario hosted Great Waterfront Trail Adventure, started in SSM, up to Chippewa Falls and then back east to and on Manitoulin, event was sold out, very successful event.
- Crank the Shield event in SSM.
- TBay – XCM Cdn MTB championships. Black Sheep MTB club in Thunder Bay extensive trail development
- Continuing partnership with Ontario By Bike on network and marketing

Tourism Thunder Bay (RTO13) – Ally Drombolis

- Not too many updates, but excited to meet people in network, get ideas
- Looking forward to working in the cycling area

- Thunder Bay hosted XCM Canada Cup, tremendously successful, bringing that back in 2025
- Looking to use MAT fund to help with events and to improve trails
- 2025 – looking to generate more content around Fat Biking, looking for content creators
- Also looking at developing mapping on gravel and road routes, looking forward to connecting with Ontario By Bike
- In 2024, they've had growth in views to mountain biking page

CROSS PROVINCIAL UPDATES

Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (Waterfront Regeneration Trust) – Dave Meyer

- Working on bi-national trail project with Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, completed wayfinding review in area, looking at refreshing wayfinding
- Other wayfinding projects – working with Trans Canada Trail in Greater Toronto Area, addressing wayfinding deficiencies. Looking at Mississauga, Oakville, Toronto
- North Shore Lake Superior – implemented Waterfront Trail in major communities, working with MTO on wayfinding signage
- Working on itineraries – Nipigon and Red Rock
 - o Drive and Ride – 5 published previously
- Expansion to Muskoka and RTO12 – looking promising from Muskoka to Parry Sound
- Working with Georgian Bay Geopark
- Great Waterfront Trail Adventure 2024 – SSM to Manitoulin Island, successful ride, survey results coming out – financial benefit to communities was in excess of \$200,000
- Greenbelt Cycling Route project - Bolton and Brampton expansions, Duffins Creek connection up to Uxbridge
- Last year they worked on connecting Greenbelt Route to Goderich to Guelph Rail Trail
- 2025 event/tour – Great Waterfront Tour Adventure - will link three great lakes Lake Ontario to Lake Huron and Lake Erie

Ministry of Transportation (MTO) - Mike Pearsall

- Continuing to promote province-wide cycling network
- Very close to having the cycling network completed on Provincial infrastructure
- Research – looking at ways at improving cycling and pedestrian crossings at interchanges, plans to improve this.
 - o Working with Region of Waterloo, looking at working group to look at results, looking at library of best practices on interchanges
 - o Looking at ways to improve designs for cyclists, active transportation facilities
 - o Wants to bring in solutions from around the world
 - o Updating cycling design guidelines – Book 18 - always looking to make things more consistent

Destination Ontario – Liisa Sefton

- Sitting in for Lisa McPherson
- OTIC – displays Ontario by bike guide, 18 smaller regional guides and maps, printed materials, call out for more partners. Email Liisa or corporate comms to engage this opportunity. Email: destinationontario@ontario.ca
 - o Roaming ambassadors – Via Italia, visiting events
 - o They have OBB cycling content video at centres
 - o Bike racks and repair kits
- Webpage – cycling and mountain biking
 - o Publishing articles that feature cycling

- Resulted in 12000 views and 4000 leads to businesses
- German journalists came over to cover Ontario cycling
 - E-bike to Niagara, Prince Edward County, Toronto Islands
- Capturing cycling images, most are uploaded to CrowdRiff image bank, there are a lot of cycling images that are available to everyone
- Fat Biking featured in marketing
- Northern Ontario cycling highlighted in Northern US Destination Ontario campaigns

ONTARIO BY BIKE UPDATES

Also see slide deck at: www.transportationoptions.org/uploads/1/4/5/0/145035178/obbip_ac_-_nov_28_2024_web_presentation.pdf

2024 & 2025 Reaching & Engaging Cyclists

- 2025 Cycling in Ontario / Le velo en Ontario
 - Marketing partnership ad sales closed Nov 14, many returning and new partners
- Annual Readers Survey show strong approval ratings for 2024 guide
- 2025 Digital and Show Partnerships still available
- 24 blogs published in 2024, added new blog page ride type filters
- Strong engagement from consumers online, in enewsletter and at in-person shows
- Successful season of Ontario By Bike Rides – 177 cyclists on 4 weekend tours
 - Hosted Rides in 1000 Islands, Kawarthas Northumberland, Elgin County, Saugeen Shores
 - Legacy Itineraries available online and with new Ride with GPS Tourism Account embedded map

2024 - For Industry Partners & Ontario By Bike Certified Businesses

- 90 new businesses certified as bicycle friendly in 2024, total to date 1680
- 11 webinars and 3 in person workshops for 445 attendees
- Consulting projects completed
- Completed destination renewals for number of partners
- Published new research study Ontario Cycle Tourism & Cycling Activity Report

2025 Looking Ahead - Ontario By Bike

- 2025 Marketing Partnerships
 - 33 print partners to be featured in 2025 Cycling in Ontario guide
- 2025 Cycling Events
 - Cycling Events Calendar – free promo opportunity for event organizers
- Destination Renewal Partners – 10 renewal partners for 2025
- 2025 Best Bicycle Friendly Business Awards
 - Nominations open in January 2025, winners from all 13 tourism regions
- Industry Enews – stay in touch, sent 2x annually
- Partner product development
 - Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Loop Project
 - Ontario Quebec Cycling Corridor Project
 - Ontario By Bike actively engaged on both projects
- Advocacy
 - Provided comments on Bill 212 & promoted petition re. importance of bike lanes
 - TICO letter of complaint, re. fees and other issues
 - VIA Rail – trying to get answer on when bike transportation will be returning

- Ontario By Bike Rides – Economic Impact
 - o \$320 is the average spent per person on a 2 day, 1 overnight cycling trip
 - o \$575 average spent per person on 3 day, 2 overnight cycling trip

Summary of June Web Poll and Survey Results

E-Bike Market:

1. Has your organization made any changes or upgrades to facilitate the growing e-bike market?

Or plans for the future? Promotions/Infrastructure/Other

- 47% - Yes
- 24% - No
- 29% - Still considering

OBBIP Advisory Committee – June Web Poll & Survey Results

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- N = 17



E-bike charging station pilot project	We are finalizing our new cycling master plan . Interestingly, the consultant working on it left ebikes out of the plan. We asked for additional content be added to the drsft regarding ebikes	Plans to add e-bikes to our fleet of bike share bikes
We have not made any plans or upgrades and don't have much information about this trend. Would be curious to see stats about the growing market.	Manitoulin Island	We have an e-bike bylaw and will be looking at e-bike parking when we initiate our bike parking guidelines.
Minimal required for us. Looking at creating resources referencing e-bike usage for the GLWT. For our bike tour .we have increasingly had to accommodate e-bike.in tandem with usage growth .	Cycle tourism strategy will explore this	The Region has increased the number of ebikes and scooters available to rent within WR. As well the Region is working our cities to expand the service area & no. Of Neuron rental stations
	Exploring opportunities x2	Not at this time. x3

E-bike Stats & Facts

- E-bikes are growing worldwide, market expected to reach 52.37 billion USD. Sales have grown in Europe and US, Canada as well but no stats
- From Ontario By Bike 2023 Survey
 - o 22% own one or more e-bikes in their household

- 17% are considering purchasing an e-bike in the future

How to be an E-bike Friendly Community

- Provide secure and safe e-bike charging stations
- Allow e-bike users to charge batteries at other public facilities or businesses
- Provide secure bicycle parking, for all types of bikes
- Include information about e-bikes, charging stations and any restrictions on cycling information resources for community & visitors
- Allow e-bikes on trails and paths, communicate any restrictions
- Offer e-bike rentals and trial loaners
- Promote e-bike friendly routes
- Welcome e-bike riders to community

E-bike Charging Stations

- An increasing number of communities and municipalities are installing or investigating e-bike charging stations
 - Eastern Townships and Monteregie regions investigating/installing: Velovoute systems
 - Other options – Saris Infrastructure

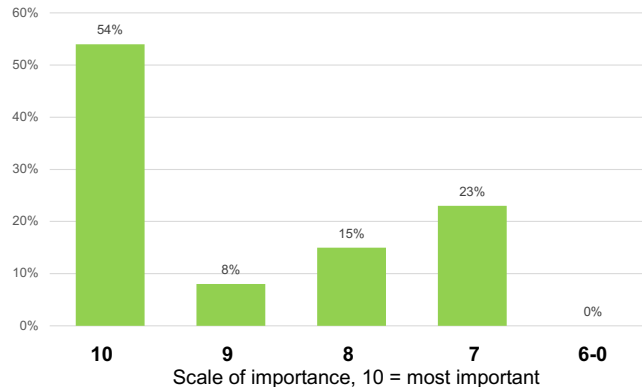
OBBIP Advisory Committee – June Web Poll & Survey Results

Provincial Cycling Network:

2. How would you/your organization rate the importance of having a designated provincial cycling network brought to market? (Scale of 1 to 10 = Important)

- 54% - 10 – Most Important; 8% - 9; 15% - 8; 23% - 7; 0% - 6-0
- N = 13

(Background: In 2018 MTO released the network plan, including identification of routes, in partnership with other Ministries and with extensive consultation. MTO has been working on improving infrastructure on MTO roads. There is currently no consumer facing information available.)



Value of Participating in OBBIP

- All who responded gave highest ranking – 10 – value in participating
- Frequency of OBBIP Meetings
 - All who responded said – yes – frequency of meetings (bi-annual) was sufficient

-End of meeting minutes-