



# Advisory Committee

## Minutes of Discussion Section During Web Conference Tuesday, June 22, 2021, 9:30am–11:00 am

**On-Line / In Attendance:** Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, Lionel Kernerman; Norfolk County, Mark Boerkamp; Oxford Tourism, Meredith Maywood, Jeanne Turner; Venture Niagara, Sue Morin; Hamilton Halton Brant, Adrienne Carter; City of Brantford, Sara Munroe; Halton Region, Margaret Gaskell; Waterloo Region, Kevan Marshall, Susan Cook-Scheerer; City of Toronto, Sonya De Vellis; York Region, Diana Kakamousias; Durham Region/Tourism, Anthony Caruso, Danielle Culp, Kristyn Chambers, Lisa MacKenzie; Simcoe County, Brendan Matheson; Cornwall Tourism, Kevin Lajoie, Amy Malyon; Ottawa Tourism, Kelly Haussler; Melissa Marquette, Ottawa Valley Tourism Association; Kalleen Turchet, Town of Bracebridge; Discovery Routes Trails Organization, Katrina Violeta; Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocacy (MICA), Maja Mielonen; Tourism Thunder Bay, Paul Pepe, John Cameron; Destination Northern Ontario, Mike Wozny; Ministry of Transportation, Kyle Perdue; Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, James Antler, Bob Freeman; Destination Ontario, Lisa McPherson; Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Marlaine Koehler

**Regrets:** Jennifer Burns, Huron Count; Eileen Lum; Northumberland County, Kate Monk; Explorer's Edge (RTO12);

**Ontario By Bike/Transportation Options:** Louisa Mursell (Meeting Chair), Simon Lutz (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](http://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](http://www.transportationoptions.org/obbip)



## REGIONAL UPDATES

### Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (RTO1) – Lionel Kernerman

- Have integrated cycle tourism into “Summer of the Staycation” and “Windsor Essex Road Trip” campaigns, including new imagery and itineraries.
- Updated existing Cycle Tourism Map, with consistent promotion in marketing efforts.
- Other initiatives include: Digital advertising targeted to enthusiasts using cycling bloggers and new cycling/outdoor adventure videos.

#### **CWATS (County Wide Active Transportation System):**

- Focus on infrastructure improvements and the CWATS Master Plan update.
- Planning a mode-shift challenge for people to do short distance bike rides.
- Bike Month CWATS Photo Contest ending June 30.
- Partnering with Bike Windsor Essex to do bike events in municipalities (focusing on teaching cycling skills and safety to all ages).
- CWATS is working with the Waterfront Regeneration Trust to update their Waterfront Trail mapping to reflect infrastructure improvements.

#### **Bike Windsor Essex:**

- Explore Your City Rides” & community rides in Kingsville. Wednesday morning ride for seniors starting in July 2021.
- Virtual ride challenge for Bike Month - using the “Curious Places to Ride to in Windsor” maps.
- Bike Windsor Essex, in partnership with CWATS, will be providing bike maintenance, encouragement and education pop-ups across the county.
- Bike Windsor Essex is testing a pilot to store bikes for people taking VIA Rail.
- Windsor Eats provides Wine Trail Rides and other tours in Windsor once provincial restrictions are lifted. Also bike rentals at Point Pelee National Park.
- Grove Bike Rental Co., offers rentals in Kingsville and Colchester Beach.

### Oxford Tourism (RTO1) – Jeanne Turner

- Ingersoll safe cycling committee is working with Ingersoll BIA on application criteria to certify the BIA as bicycle friendly with Ontario By Bike.
- Working with Gravelocity a new gravel road tour company in the county.
- Creating now photo and video assets around cycling in Oxford County plus marketing campaign that will launch in summer 2021.

### Norfolk County (RTO1) – Mark Boerkamp

- New council back in 2019 revealing financial discrepancies leading to a reorganisation of the council. Now stronger focus on reengaging with Ontario By Bike and pushing cycle tourism.
- Trails have been extremely busy and trails groups are strongly engaged. Lynn Valley Trail Association went from 120 to 350 members within a couple of months with a new president.
- Process of replacing the Queensway Bridge in Simcoe including trail upgrades.
- Working on new directional signage on the trail through ICIP funding.

### **Niagara Region (RTO2) - Sue Morin**

- Release of the fourth version of the Niagara region bike map (bilingual) in 2021, will include reference of Ontario By Bike on the map. Also plans to refresh the website.
- Inclusion on crossings to the United States on map in cooperation with American partners as many cross regional cyclists are interested in this information.
- Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee has been revitalized as an umbrella for the 12 municipalities in the area.
- Port Robinson Ferry has reopened.

### **Hamilton Halton Brant (RTO3) – Adrienne Carter**

- Working on City of Brantford & County of Brant Cycling Route Development for an expanded route from 48 to 56km with more rural routing. Including themes: Nature & Ecology; Indigenous; Military History; Industrial Heritages (name tbd)
- Soft launches of the route through Tourism Brantford's cycling itineraries in summer and fall 2021.
- Working with municipality of Brantford for signage and wayfinding.
- Guided and self-guided bike tours with Heron Head Bikes Brantford.
- Marketing for links between the Brant Route and Hambur Loop including map, ridewithGPS files and itineraries.
- Partnering with City of Hamilton to digitize the loop for a consumer friendly digital map.

### **City of Brantford (RTO3) Sara Munro – Provided Updates**

- Discover Brantford Visitor Guide fully digital this year, focused on local recommendations.
- Interviewed Brant Cycling Club member Duncan Ross, who provided his take on the best outdoor experiences in Brantford, including several area trails and the Brantford Rotary Bike Park.
- Working on developing cycling-specific itineraries, which will be shared on Tourism Brantford's digital platforms and shared with RTO3 and OBB.
- Continued work on the signature cycling loop project. Signage locations have been identified, key attractions along the routes are marked, and will receive updated signage for the launch in partnership with the County of Brant & RTO3.
- Brantford Visitor & Tourism Centre reopened on Monday, June 21.
- General marketing campaigns actively welcoming back regional visitors to participate in outdoor, covid-friendly activities, such as trails, paddling and cycling.

### **Waterloo Region (RTO4) – Kevan Marshall & Susan Cook-Sheerer**

- Major infrastructure project now under construction. Market Trail from LRT to St Jacobs Market (substantial completion by Fall 2021), connecting cities to township and realigned Trans-Canada Trail.
- Cycle tourism marketing campaigns include publication of new Region of Waterloo Bike Map, and distribution via OBB certified businesses.

- Additional marketing efforts in regards to cycle tourism with strong print campaigns through the Cycling in Ontario Guide and CAA magazine.
- Working with influencers to bring them into the region in the summer to check out some specific trails especially the GNR (Grand Nith Ramble) a popular bikepacking route starting out of the Waterloo region. Working together with the creator of the GNR Trail (Matthew Kadey).
- Letting businesses know about the importance of the OBB bike certification program to get more businesses to join OBB (seen uptick in numbers).

#### **Huron County (RTO4) – Jennifer Burns – Provided Updates**

- Working on developing and expanding cycling tourism assets over the next year in partnership with lower-tier municipalities and Cycling Advisory Committee.
- Currently having some challenges with concerns around increased liability as a result of local roads being promoted on a cycling map therefore working with the roads managers, solicitor and insurance group to try to resolve these new concerns.

#### **City of Toronto (RTO5) – Sonya De Vellis**

- Updated 2021 Cycling Network Map, which has been printed and will be available through libraries and bike shops.
- ActiveTO road closure has returned for the second year. Came into place in 2020 to ensure people get exercise during Covid times. To date in 2021, more than 20,000 people have enjoyed closures on weekends including Lakeshore Blvd East, River St. & Bayview Ave.
- Allen Rd. was closed for the first time as part of the program with more than 6,000 cyclists on it.
- New ActiveTO expansions this year include Midtown Yonge between Bloor St. and Davisville Rd., which will have cycle tracks included as well as temporary expanded patios and 24h on-street parking. The route can be used from River to Mill St. as a detour from the lower Don Trail during trail improvements.

#### **York Region (RTO6) – Diana Kakamousias**

- Increased demand for cycling resources has been seen in the number of requests for cycling maps and trail guides.
- At the end of 2020, 86% of the 121km Lake to Lake route from Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario were completed. Two significant parts in York Region were completed in 2020 (Aurora and Richmond Hill).
- Once the Lake to Lake route will be completed, focus will be shifted towards the development of an east to west active transportation route across York Region.
- Kick-started South York Greenway Pedestrian and Micro mobility Corridor. A feasibility study to better understand potential route alignment. Proposed route along the hydro corridor parallel to the 407 across York Region.
- Supporting local municipalities in York Region on Covid-friendly self-guided cycling events such as Cycle Aurora and Markham Cycling Weekend.
- Finalizing completion of the update on the 2018 York Region Cycling Map that should be available in summer 2021.
- Update on transportation master plan with emphasis on active transportation.

### **Durham Region (RTO6) – Lisa MacKenzie & Anthony Caruso**

- Durham Tourism is working towards updating the Durham Cycling Guide by the end of 2022.
- Encouraging businesses to get Ontario By Bike certified by providing guidance and resources.
- Created a series of cycle videos for Durham Tourism's Youtube page, showcasing cycling in the area [Link](#)
- Durham Tourism blog was focused on cycling for the month of June and Bike Month.
- Supporting the Waterfront Regeneration Trust on their ride in Durham Region in the fall.
- Regional Cycling Plan has been updated and the draft will go to Council in the fall of 2021 for approval. Expansion of the existing cycling network proposed as well as educational programs and physical activities.
- Working on e-mobility bylaws how to permit the use of e-bikes on regional roads and facilities.
- Bike and Buy contest as part of Bike Month to encourage people to buy from local bike shops and submit photos of the trips to the store to win prizes.
- Undertaking work on the Durham Meadoway, a proposed new cycling route of 25km through a hydro corridor.

### **Simcoe County (RTO7) - Brendan Matheson**

- Slow down on marketing efforts at the moment using the available budget for route development one of them being the expansion of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail along Georgian Bay. Signs are getting installed summer 2021 and route will be marketed for 2022 when things are open again.
- Working on multiple signage projects including trailhead signage for mountain biking to deal with difficult parking situation during Covid.
- New trails are currently developed including the last gap on Highway 12.
- Marketing preparations for 2022. Trying to get a lot of organic traffic like previously with 'I rode Simcoe County Loop' t-shirts and social media handles.
- Recovery plan: Encourage overnight stays in 2022. Creating overnight packages with local cycling tour operators such as Humdinger Bicycle Tours to get people to stay longer
- Successful virtual event hosted, Buttertart Ride. Getting creative with more self-guided and virtual events in the meantime to cover period until in person events are possible again.

### **Northumberland Tourism (RTO8) – Eileen Lum – Provided Updates**

- Working more closely with Northumberland Hills Cycling Club to highlight 2-3 NHCC curated cycling routes.
- Working with the Greenbelt and Waterfront Trust on a cycling event featuring Farm Fresh markets in fall 2021.



### **Cornwall Tourism (RTO9) - Kevin Lajoie & Amy Malyon**

- Working on updating print materials and maps as well as plans to update signage in the area.
- Received recent designation as Silver with Share the Road Coalition.
- Focus on Waterfront Trail and cycling along the river but also off trail cycling opportunities including a new mountain bike system in Guindon Park (full season operation).
- Working with influencers to visit the city and help with story telling aspects.
- Working with neighbours in Stormont Dundas and Glengarry to brand the Waterfront Trail section from Cornwall to Upper Canada Village as the Riverside Trail.
- Promoting Cornwall as a cycling hub by offering free parking, shower facilities and more.

### **Ottawa Tourism – Kelly Haussler**

- New active transportation branch has been established in Ottawa to work on updating the active transportation plan.
- Bike parking strategy was approved by council in April 2021 and will allow to implement secure bike-parking options across the city including temporary options for festivals and events.
- Marketing efforts for cycling are strong and biking is featured in all summer marketing campaigns and the popular visitor tear off map is still available.
- No bike share program anymore, focusing more on e-scooter rental but lots of great tour operators and bike rentals across the city.
- NTC Bike Days are back expanded to full weekend road closures for cyclists due to extreme popularity in previous years with over 650,000 people participating last year.

### **Explorers Edge (RTO12) – Kate Monk - provided updates**

- Explorers' Edge is rebranding for consumer facing audiences; using the 'Great Canadian Wilderness Just North of Toronto' on core online and social assets to attract more mountain bikers, fat bikers, and on-road.
- New website launches end of June with more touring itineraries and packages for purchase.
- More content promo for cycling in the region again via the Bike Cottage Country website/assets. Considering contracting a product writer to keep the sight humming with info.
- Obtained TICO qualifications and are now in the process of setting up Inbound Travel Agency division (requires financial logistics, etc). This allows to 1) take payment for cycling packages and 2) a portion of the sales will be redirected back into community and environmental projects.
- Movement to restart Ontario Northland train service Toronto to Cochrane.

### **Discovery Routes Trails Organization (RTO13a) Katrina Violeta**

- Promoting the Voyager Cycling Route from Sudbury to Mattawa through the development of multiple cycling experiences and trail itineraries to encourage cyclists to get out on this route.
- Marketing campaign to promote the experiences and encourage trail users to share their experiences via social media.

### **Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates (MICA) (RTO13a) - Maja Mielonen**

- Alvar Tours are running well this summer with 5 tours.
- MICA received a federal grant for 20 ebikes and charging station to establish an ebike rental on the island. Launch will be early 2022.
- Lots of self supported cyclists visiting Manitoulin Island at the moment with strong demand for maps.

### **Tourism Thunder Bay (RTO13C) - John Cameron**

- MAT - Accommodation Tax funding will support part of the development of 20km of new mountain bike trails (\$250k of \$1.5million total). Construction started in May 2021 and trails will be cut over the summer into the fall.
- Working on the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail expansion from Sault Ste. Marie to Thunder Bay.
- Plans to further develop the Trans Canada Land Trail (currently a water route) to connect Thunder Bay, Kakabeka Falls and Pigeon River and Nipigon.

## **CROSS PROVINCIAL UPDATES**

### **Waterfront Regeneration Trust – Marlaine Koehler**

- Working on expanding the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail along Lake Superior. Meetings with municipalities have been going well. Economic rational for the expansion is a key driver for the expansion
- Great Watertrail is available along Lake Superior but not really connected in a cross-regional cycling product. Work will involve paving shoulders in partnership with MTO on Highway 17.
- Partnership with the Greenbelt Foundation to create a 1,200km network of north south connectors between the Greenbelt route and the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail on Lake Ontario to get Ontario cyclists to explore both of those routes.
- To promote the routes a programmatic campaign is running and two organized day rides will be held (Durham & Northumberland).
- Based on Survey results with Ontario By Bike to identify importance of bike parking, WRT will be working with businesses along the Highland Hustle Route to install bike racks in 5 locations.
- Waterfront Trail was voted top 5 of 100 bike trails worldwide [Link](#).

### **Destination Ontario – Lisa McPherson – Updates provided**

- Destination Ontario has the new website online, which will still be updated with new content and functionalities over the coming weeks.



- Focusing on ways to grow and connect with partners in the North to learn more about new and existing cycling routes and events!

### **Ministry of Transportation (MTO) - Kyle Perdue**

- Progressing with work on the Provincial cycling network that was released in spring 2018, which included 3,200km of routes on MTO Roadways and 6,700km off MTO Infrastructure.
- Remainder of the outstanding network is expected to be built within the next 5 years.

## **ONTARIO BY BIKE UPDATES**

Also see slide deck at [www.transportationoptions.org/obbip-ac-jun-22-2021](http://www.transportationoptions.org/obbip-ac-jun-22-2021)

### **Ontario By Bike Network - [www.OntarioByBike.ca](http://www.OntarioByBike.ca)**

- Extension of the Ontario By Bike Bicycle Friendly Business Program into the Regions of Huron County and Perth County, St. Marys & Stratford
- 1,558 + business and locations certified as bicycle-friendly
- 2021 renewal partners: Explorer's Edge(RTO12), Northern Ontario(RTO13BC), York Region, Simcoe County, Halton Region, Lanark County, Renfrew County/OVTA, Northumberland County, Halton Region, Hamilton, Bruce County, Oxford, Elgin & Middlesex

### **Ontario By Bike Rides**

- Strong early demand and sales for rides as announced in February and sold out faster than ever before
- Added second Niagara ride in August due to increased demand • Cancellation of June Niagara Ride due to Covid-19
- Legacy itineraries online, cyclists making use of them

### **2021 Marketing Partnerships**

#### **Cycling in Ontario / Le vélo en Ontario Guide:**

- Printed 25,000 in English and 10,000 in French
- Distribution across Ontario, Quebec, smaller quantities to USA
- 48-pages, driving traffic to businesses, partner websites & OntarioByBike.ca
- Strong demand for 2021 Cycling in Ontario Guide
- 70% of 35,000 Cycling in Ontario Guides distributed between Feb & Apr 2021
- Over 9,000 digital views and downloads to date
- New distribution channels in 2021 incl. Canadian Cycling Magazine insert

#### **2021 Destination Ontario Marketing Partnership:**

- Digital marketing campaign - Social Media & Google Display Net. Jun 7 – Jul 5
- New photo and video assets
- Influencers for Ontario By Bike Rides





- Assisting with distribution of Cycling in Ontario Guide
- Ontario By Bike Website upgrades

### **Other Ontario By Bike Info & Activities**

- 2021 Business Awards well received with strong media coverage from local and provincial news outlets
- Webstats showed significant growth YOY in comparison to already strong 2020
- Ongoing Google ad campaign through Google Grants
- Assisted media with numerous articles and interviews
- Consulting Projects: Smiths Falls Cycle Tourism Assessment; South York Greenway Feasibility Study (with WSP)

### **Industry Affiliations & Advocacy**

- Continued participation in numerous tourism industry groups and committees, regionally and provincially
- Tracking recovery across Canada and in US

*Meeting hosted by and minutes prepared by:*

# Transportation Options

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For more information on web conference, advisory committee or the Ontario By Bike Industry Partnership please contact:

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