



Advisory Committee

Ontario By Bike Industry Partnership Advisory Committee(OBBIP AC)

Minutes of Discussion Section & Updates

Web Conference: Tuesday, November 10, 2020, 10:00am–12:00 noon

On-Line / In Attendance: Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island RTO1, Lionel Kernerman; Hamilton Halton Brant RTO3, Brent Kinnard – City of Hamilton, Daryl Bender – Margaret Gaskell, Halton Region; Waterloo Region RTO4, Kevan Marshall; City of Toronto, Becky Katz; York Region RTO6, Diana Kakamousias; Durham Tourism RTO6, Anthony Caruso, Lisa MacKenzie, Kristyn Chambers; Northumberland County RTO8, Eileen Lum; Cornwall Tourism RTO9, Kevin Lajoie; Lennox & Addington RTO9, Rob Plumey; Ottawa Tourism, Kelly Haussler; Haliburton RTO11, Thom Lambert; Riding in Mississippi Mills RTO11, Jeff Mills; Explorers' Edge RTO12, Erin Smit; Discovery Routes Trails Organization, Jennifer McCourt; Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocacy (MICA), Maja Mielonen; City of Thunder Bay / RTO13C, John Cameron; Ontario Trails Council, Patrick Conner; Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Marlaine Koehler; Ministry of Transportation, Kyle Perdue; Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Asia Pineau; Destination Ontario, Claude Aumont & Lisa McPherson.

Ontario By Bike (OBB) / Transportation Options: Louisa Mursell (Meeting Chair), Simon Lutz (Meeting Admin), Michael Bertuzzi (Transportation Options Board Vice Chair)

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



Collective Actions and Discussion from Web Conference

- Challenge that needs to be addressed is to get fresh new content on cycling, more content be acquired, developed and distributed that is relevant to cyclists.
 - Close connections to cycling clubs or cyclists who visit the region used as content creators
 - Messaging needs to change to reflect new challenges
 - Freshen up content to give people a reason to come back
- How to best get new published content to cyclists.
 - Content needs to be easily available and easy to find to get it to target market
 - Cycling as an activity needs to be more prominently displayed on tourism and municipal websites and information needs to be upfront available
 - Programmatic advertising has delivered great results for some partner regions to draw attention on cycling in the region and measure the ROI of digital advertising
- Promote the Ontario By Bike network to businesses to increase the number of bicycle friendly businesses in regions.
- Work together as an industry to support conservation areas and Ontario parks to help with surge in people management & funding and policies.
 - Important staging areas for cyclists and cycle tourists
 - Distribute information about facilities available at sites, openings and other available cycling and visitor amenities
- The production of marketing materials in other languages than English with growing number of new Canadians interested in cycling should be considered for future campaigns
 - Having French information due to Canada bilingual status is a good starting point, but add other languages
 - Modern online plugins (Google translate) allow for translation of websites to a certain degree
- There would be a use for a document and directions on how to restart cycling events with appropriate health and safety precautions in place for 2021.
- Mandated policy from provincial government for the inclusion of paved shoulders on county roads would be useful to increase safety for cyclists on shared roads
 - Advocacy work together with Share the Road, partner organization that focuses on cycling safety advocacy
 - Studies have shown that paved shoulders save communities money, are safer and provide added benefits for cycle tourism

REGIONAL UPDATES

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (RTO1) – Lionel Kernerman

- Tourism Windsor Essex is creating more cycling imagery and content moving into 2021 including new itineraries for the shoulder season and promotion of the trail map.
- Digital advertising has been targeted to cyclists including utilizing cycling bloggers.
- City of Windsor: 2020 infrastructure projects adding 11km of new cycling infrastructure including dedicated cycling facilities along the Waterfront Trail and Windsor Loop. In 2021 there will be additional cycling infrastructure including improvements to key cycling tourism routes.
- New bike and scooter share option will roll out in spring 2021.
- New bicycle and complete streets policy underway according to transportation master plan.
- County of Essex: 15km of infrastructure have been built in 2020 including key connections around the county and expansion in Kingsville. 14km of paved shoulder between Kingsville and Essex.
- 50% match funding for supportive active transportation initiatives in Tecumseth, Ambersburg, Lakeshore and Essex for bike repair station installations, CWATS (County Wide Active Transportation System) route maps, bike racks, signage and bike rodeos.
- Bike locker pilot project to secure bikes from thieves in 7 local municipalities.
- Approval for four paved shoulders in the county to be completed in 2021 (12 additional kilometres).

Oxford Tourism (RTO1) – Absent, OBB provided updates

- Launched new gravel cycling routes in spring 2020.

Niagara Region (RTO2) - Absent – OBB provided updates

- OBB recently conducted a survey among OBB bicycle friendly businesses to measure importance of cycle tourism in the area. Survey was sent to 159 businesses.
- 86% attributed some business from cyclists, 51% said that cyclists are a core regular part of their business. 65% indicated that they have seen an increase from cyclists over the past 3 years, 53% thought that cycling is not adequately promoted for the Niagara Region.

Hamilton Halton Brant (RTO3) - Brent Kinnard

- Development of a new signature cycling loop experience in Brant in cooperation with County of Brant and City of Brantford. The 56km route between Paris and Brantford will be primarily along the Grand River featuring 4 Major themes; “Early Industry along the Grand River; History; Natural Environment; Indigenous History”. Linkage of route to Hamilton and Brantford through the existing rail trail.
- Summer 2020 focusing on increasing the number of bicycle friendly businesses in the region of Brant.

- Events held in 2020 Bike for Mike in a virtual form still over 100 participants. Plans for next year's Paris to Ancaster Ride are ongoing.

Waterloo Region (RTO4) – Kevan Marshall

- Canadian Infrastructure Funding is being used for the development of a new trail segment connecting northern Waterloo to the St. Jacobs Farmers Market in 2021.
- Preparing for permanent bike share program in 2021.
- Complete graphical overhaul of the region wide print cycling map plus new distribution plan. Map will include cultural resources and historic bridges, public art locations and OBB bike friendly businesses.

City of Toronto (RTO5) – Becky Katz

- Historic year for cycling infrastructure and related programs. Launch of multiple programs to encourage physical distancing including ActiveTO. Major roads closed for cars but open for pedestrians and cyclists to get physically active. Closures between May and end of October. Recommendations for next year to continue, but will also depend on events and other potential road closures in city.
- Accelerated 25km of new cycling infrastructure plus additional 16km (more infrastructure than in the last 6 years combined).
- Every implemented corridor has seen a rise in volumes both pre-Covid and pre-construction numbers between March and May when infrastructure was not there. Volumes have risen between 30% to 150% most significant rise on the Danforth completed streets project.
- 5km near in completion on new trail links including a new section on the East Don trail and a section in Upper Highland Creek.
- Partnership with Cycle Toronto to do safety and how-to webinars in multiple languages.
- All websites and cycling maps are getting updated and routes are filmed for VR experience.

York Region (RTO6) – Diana Kakamousias - provided updates

- Currently in the process of updating the York Region Cycling Map. The last iteration was a 2017/2018 version. Have been getting lots of requests for an update.
- City of Markham did implement Covid 19 various initiatives such as one involving closing Enterprise Boulevard, a local road in Markham on Sundays to promote active travel.
- Significant headway on Lake to Lake Cycling and Walking Route in York Region a 121km north south route spanning from Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario. Two substantial segments that will be completed at the end of this year in the Town of Aurora and the City of Richmond Hill.
- An RFP has been posted to retain a consultant to complete a feasibility study of for the South York Greenway Cycling, Pedestrian and Micro-Mobility Corridor. The feasibility study will explore potential route alignments for an active transportation corridor in the vicinity of the 407 Hydro Corridor lands.

Durham Region (RT06) – Anthony Caruso

- Durham Tourism is in conversation with Toronto Algonquin Greenway (TAG) to connect local trails and amenities cross-regionally.
- Significant increase of trail usage due to Covid-19 including some negative impacts on parking issues and washroom closures. Trip numbers this year have been up to 135,000 trips from 69,000 trips in 2019 according to Strava data.
- The region is in process of updating the regional cycling master plan to better integrate cycling infrastructure. Council approval planned in early 2021.
- Hosted the largest number events ever during bike month with over 200 people participating in several webinars and pledges.
- 2021 undertaking background work in planning a new potential trail through Durham, extending Toronto's Meadoway Trail through the hydro corridor in Scarborough and through Durham for approximately 25km from Pickering to Oshawa.

Simcoe County (RT07) - Brendan Matheson

- No paid advertising this year but re-launch of Simcoe County Loop Trail Campaign. Almost 400 people who rode the loop and tagged their ride in comparison to 80 contributions in 2019(all organic growth).
- Georgian Bay Cycling route expansion through Simcoe County in 2021 in partnership with Waterfront Regeneration Trust.
- Installing 10 outdoor repair stations, all locally built.
- Annual survey (results outstanding) to measure YoY growth in cycling visits at Ontario By Bike bicycle friendly businesses.

Northumberland Tourism (RT08) – Eileen Lum

- Focus on hyper local tourism through a campaign called “Just Down The Road” one pillar being cycling and hiking including culinary experiences.
- Creating a strategy that included programmatic ad strategy and social media to drive traffic to the cycling webpages. Increase of engagement on cycling by 43% on social media and 53% on unique page views on website.
- Used programmatic advertising to find out whether people who were served these ads actually physically came to Northumberland. Sample size of 25% and it identified that at least 3,000 people who were served these ads visited some of the cycling locations showcased.

Lennox and Addington County (RT09) – Rob Plumey

- Continuing to do local promotion of 600km county trails and road cycling network consisting of 12 loops.
- More locals and visitors from out of the region were seen this year.
- Updating video and image content for the region.
- New website coming up featuring a more prominent cycling component.
- Building new off-road trails in the county forests. About 10km built so far in Flinton.
- Road cycling event L&A Ride was cancelled but planned for next year.

Cornwall Tourism (RTO9) - Kevin Lajoie

- Print and digital content has been updated during the year including new photography and video content.
- New routes have been developed with the neighbouring counties of SDG. New adventure themed routes were published.
- Focus on day trips. Packaging new day trip ideas along the Waterfront Trail and promotion of this route. The region has seen an increase in trail usage from personal observations.
- Priority for next year is partnership with Ontario By Bike to get more certified businesses and become a safer community with Share the Road.
- Big emphasis on working with different tour operators in the community to come up with new cycling products to improve the overall offerings.

Ottawa Tourism – Kelly Haussler

- The National Capital Commission parkways were closed for cars during most of the day to allow residents to get outdoors in a more physical distancing way. Due to popularity, the closures were extended until Labour Day.
- Undertook a rural cycling campaign in partnership with the City of Ottawa, which ran during the transition of phase two and three restrictions. The concept was to encourage residents to explore Ottawa’s rural areas by bike. The campaign ended having over 1.1 million Facebook impressions and the second highest video count with over 41,000 views.
- 2021, continuing to promote cycling as a safe social distancing activity for visitors revamping the current counter top map.
- Making sure adequate bike parking solutions will be available throughout the city.

Explorers Edge (RTO12) - Erin Smit – OBB provided updates

- Summer 2020 campaign for Bracebridge called Bike The Bridge. Videos were produced to showcase the cycling infrastructure in the area.

Discovery Routes Trails Organization (RTO13a) - Jennifer McCourt

- Received funding approval to hire a marketing manager on a two-year contract to implement the Voyager Cycling Route as one of the main tasks.
- Tweaking marketing strategy to align more with the current situation around Covid 19 and provincial “Staycation” focus.
- Adventure Trails Map was released in February 2020 including over 20 on road cycling routes and lots of mountain biking trails.
- New study conducted by the Conference Board of Canada and Trans Canada Trail called “Trekking our Trails” reports on how trails and cycling will help in the recovery of rebuilding tourism and the economy. Access overview [HERE](#).

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

- Manitoulin Island has seen a great increase in the number of cyclists this year.
- Destination Ontario is supporting all of Northern Ontario to continuing running the Ontario By Bike Bicycle Friendly Business Program in northern Ontario.
- Preparation of Passage Ride to be held in 2021.

- All-inclusive Alvar Tours were held in September. Plans to add shorter day trips from 30-40km to bring the tours up to 6 offers are in process.
- 5th edition of Manitoulin Cycling map was printed in spring 2020.
- Ontario By Bike Bicycle Friendly Business Winner Twin Peaks B&B mentioned 20% of annual income is due to cycle tourism.

Tourism Thunder Bay (RTO13C) - John Cameron

- Ontario By Bike expanding to northwest Ontario.
- The first workshop to launch program and certify bicycle friendly businesses will be held on November 25, in partnership with Destination Northern Ontario.
- Formalize bike trails and lanes within the city of Thunder Bay as well as having a formalized cycle tourism-marketing plan for the area is in discussion.
- Development of mountain biking infrastructure including a master plan for the Ridge Forest as a mountain biking destination working with the Black Sheep Mountain Biking club.
- \$1.5 million in funding received to create this master plan over 3 years.

CROSS PROVINCIAL UPDATES

Share the Road – Absent – OBB provided updates

- Currently working on preparations to host Ontario Bike Summit December 1 to 3, in a new virtual format.

Waterfront Regeneration Trust – Marlaine Koehler

- Working on expansion of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (GLWT) along Georgian Bay.
- Starting to have preliminary discussions to expand the trail along Lake Superior.
- Working in Northern Ontario along the Lake Huron North Channel section to resurface the section by obtaining funds to improve that trail section.
- In partnership with Greenbelt Foundation and Ontario By Bike. The Lake Ontario Watershed Network (combination of GLWT and Greenbelt Route signed North-South Connections) has been created with new fully signed named loops between those two trails have been developed.
- Experimenting with programmatic advertising has delivered outstanding results.

Destination Ontario – Claude Aumont

- Complete marketing program to promote summer and fall to southern Ontario.
- Partnership resources available for content creation, photography and video assets.
- Media familiarization tour program and resources available to invite media contacts.
- Influencer and traditional media program on hold for now.
- Seen growth in organic reach 178% YoY in organic reach.

- Lisa McPherson introduced as the new outdoor experience partnership coordinator for Destination Ontario.

Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries - Asia Pineau

- Tourism budget released November 5th. Budget speaks to the importance of the tourism industry and economy Government supports tourism by providing Ontario residents with up to 20% of eligible Ontario tourism expenses to encourage Ontarians to travel within the province. Government is setting aside \$150 million for this initiative.
- Budget has committed \$100 million for two years to a community-building fund including tourism. Funding available for NFP organizations and municipalities, delivered by Trillium Foundation through two streams.

Ministry of Transportation (MTO) - Kyle Perdue - Updates provided

- Province wide cycling network status update: The network includes over 9,800km of cycling routes about half of them already exist. The status updates indicates that about 32% of the route network is located on MTO owned roadways while the remaining 68% is controlled by municipalities and private trails organizations.
- By the spring of 2020 approximately 1020km of the MTO's network have been completed and an additional 546km are forecasted to be completed by the end of 2020.

ONTARIO BY BIKE UPDATES

Also see slide deck at www.transportationoptions.org/obbip-ac-nov-10-2020

2020: COVID-19 Impact on Cycling & Cycle Tourism

- November 2020, recent report highlights presented from October survey of over 900 cyclists and building on similar May survey. See slide deck for more info and full report also available at: bit.ly/36zbuL1
- Research - www.TransportationOptions.org/Research

Ontario By Bike Network - www.OntarioByBike.ca

- Extension of the Ontario By Bike Bicycle Friendly Business Program into the Regions of Northwest Ontario/RTO13C and Huron County/RTO4
- 1,505 + 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

Marketing & Promotions

- **Ontario By Bike Rides:** Reduced to 3 tours in 2020. Fully sold out. New tours will be released in February. Case studies and economic impact on research page.



- **2021 Marketing Partnerships** - Digital ads, content partnerships, print and shows now available: www.ontarioByBike.ca/2021marketing
- **2020 Marketing Partnerships**
Cycling in Ontario / Le vélo en Ontario Guide
 - Close to 40,000 copies of 2020 distributed despite supply channel disruptions. 25,000 digital views & downloads
 - 2021 content and advertising efforts are currently underway
 - New print & digital version will be available end of February
 - Need partners news for editorial and photos for consideration

Other Ontario By Bike Info & Activities

- 2020 Business Awards well received and promotions for recipients
- Webstats showed significant growth YOY and 2020 summer months
- Ongoing Google ad campaign

Other Marketing Partnerships & Activities

- Partnered with Destination Ontario for spring & fall cycling digital campaign
- Assisted media with numerous articles and interviews

Industry Affiliations & Advocacy

- Participant as industry sector association with Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO). Cycle Tourism presentation at virtual Ontario Tourism Summit
- Ongoing connections with US Bicycle Tour Network, cycling event and tourism representatives
- Participant in numerous web conferences and industry meetings

Meeting hosted by and minutes prepared by:



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

Louisa Mursell, Executive Director, Ontario By Bike / Transportation Options
 Email: lmursell@transportationoptions.org

Simon Lutz, Project Coordinator, Ontario By Bike
 Email: simonlutz@transportationoptions.org

416-827-2774 / 1-866-701-2774



www.transportationoptions.org/obbip