



Advisory Committee

Minutes of Discussion Section During Web Conference Wednesday, October 16, 2019, 10:00am–11:30 am

On-Line / In Attendance: Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, Lionel Kernerman; Haldimand County, Jaymie Nelson; Venture Niagara, Sue Morin; Hamilton Halton Brant RTO3, Brent Kinnard; Huron County, Jennifer Burns; Waterloo Region Tourism Marketing Corporation, Mallory Manchur; City of Toronto, Adam Sweanor; York Region, Diana Kakamousias; Durham Tourism, Lori Talling; Northumberland County, Cori Arthur; County of Prince Edward, Rebecca Lamb; Ottawa Tourism, Catherine Callary & Kelly Haussler; Explorers' Edge RTO12, Erin Smit; Discovery Routes Trails Organization, Jennifer McCourt; Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocacy (MICA), Maja Mielonen; Lake Huron North Channel Cycling Route, Mike Wozny; City of Thunder Bay / RTO13a, Nicki Schiewe; Share the Road, Erica Townson; Dominique Facinato, Ministry of Transportation; Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport, Emma Pietropaolo; Destination Ontario, Claude Aumont.

Regrets: Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Marlaine Koehler; Simcoe County, Brenda Matheson; Oxford Tourism, Meredith Maywood; Brockville Tourism, Katherine Hobbs; Mississippi Mills Bicycle Month (RIMM), Jeff Mills

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



REGIONAL UPDATES

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (RTO1) – Lionel Kernerman

- Hosted a 2019 Ontario By Bike Cycling workshop with positive impact including over 10 new businesses signing up to the program.
- Reprint of the very successful cycling map, releasing in 2020 incorporating new bicycle friendly businesses.
- Creating more digital amenities focused on routes and itineraries including water and repair stations that can be personalized online.
- Maintaining strong partnership with the City of Windsor which is still committed to recreational trail maps.
- Release of a new more of a facility/functional map from the County of Essex to help people to navigate and look at different trails on a county wide scale. Complementing offer to the map materials of Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island.

Haldimand County & Ontario`s Southwest Partners (RTO1) – Jaymie Nelson

- Milestone noted, the entire region of south west Ontario is part of the Ontario By Bike (OBB) network.
- Sarnia Lambton: 2019 Bluewater Grand Fondo has been a major success with over 800 participants in 2019. Shorter distances have been added to address to all levels of cyclists. Documentary about the event will be released in 2020
- Elgin County remained a very popular cycling location with lots of cyclists visiting the beaches around Lake Erie. People park their cars and bring bikes to cycle the region. Lots of cyclist in August. Bike Share pilot had 295 trips by 150 unique users.
- Haldimand County: 5th anniversary of event Dunville Tour in Haldimand County was celebrated this year with a weekend long celebration and 9 rides attracting over 800 cyclists.
- Waterfront and river trails/routes are demand generators, creating a lot of positive impact especially for the communities of Dunnville and Cayuga.
- Haldimand is continuing to invest in cycling infrastructure such as bike racks, repair stations and wayfinding initiatives.
- Haldimand County is working on rebranding existing cycling material and the creation of a new website with a focus on promoting specifically the cycling tourism aspect.

Oxford Tourism (RTO1) – Meredith Maywood - Absent, provided updates

- Trans Canada Trail construction completed. Resulted in an increase in cycling traffic out of Tillsonburg. Moving forward there is discussion about converting a parallel abandoned rail line to trail in 2020-2021, which will also provide some exciting opportunities.
- Marketing wise new photography assets of the Trans Canada Trail have been gathered and also itineraries for recreational cyclists that involve biking and visiting nearby attractions are in production. One example is Makkinks Flower Farm which has access to their flower farm directly from the TC trail.



- Thrilled to host Ontario By Bike for one of their annual group tour rides. Receiving great feedback from the riders to help further improve routes and services.

Huron County (RTO4) – Jennifer Burns

- Updating existing cycling route maps with new logos and graphics.
- Currently working on cycling strategy and looking into opportunities getting on board with Ontario By Bike.

Venture Niagara (RTO2) – Sue Morin

- Canada/US relations are going well. US are getting more involved with cycling tourism through Niagara River Greenway Commission in the States in partnership with Niagara Parks Commission in Canada. They established a cycling connection on the Peace Bridge connecting cycling trails in the States and Canada. A lot of interest from Americans coming over to cycle in Canada. Evaluating more bridge connections and improvements for cyclists.
- Greater Niagara Circle route remains the biggest product. Regional cycling committee was disbanded a few years ago, which has caused problems for signage and regional regulations. Reinstating the committee now which will be of assistance.
- Ongoing discussions about e-bike regulations based on the situation that e-bikes are allowed for certain municipalities but others prohibit the use on the trails. Needs to be unanimous regulations put in place which could be assisted by the Niagara Cycling Committee.
- Port Robinson ferry remains a very popular mode of transportation for cyclists to shorten the distance of the Greater Niagara Route.

Hamilton Halton Brant (RTO3) - Brent Kinnard, on conference, but provided written updates

- HamBur Loop -Officially launched in late March at the Sustainable Transit Conference at Royal Botanical Gardens. The Mayor's of Hamilton and Burlington were on hand to participate in the launch and each received a route sign for their offices. The route is now 100% fully signed - cobranded with HamBur Loop & Great Lakes Waterfront Trail logos. The route is being actively marketed via RTO3 communication vehicles. The route was included with Bike for Mike, the annual ride that takes place each May.
- Phase II - We have mapped a route that includes parts of County of Brant and City of Brantford - a 50km route that was developed in partnership with the Brant Cycling Club. The route has been presented to City of Brantford Council in February, and received a majority adoption by Council to include the route in the cycling network and receive city resources for further developing to market readiness. In parallel, we are working with County of Brant Council to have the route adopted. Currently, we are conducting a sign and way finding audit of the route and working with council to identify any routing challenges.
- Rides in the region that have taken place are Epic Tour Halton, Bike for Mike and Share The Road Greg's Ride.

- We are working with the Milton Velodrome, Cycling Canada and Halton Region to promote the 2020 World Cup races and have a tourism presence at the event. This will also include offers to visitors and spectators.

Waterloo Region Tourism (RTO4) – Mallory Manchur

- Grand launch of new Light Rail Transit line this summer, it allows cyclists to bring their bikes onto the train and also buses are equipped with bike racks.
- Oct 20 to 23: Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) host Sustainability Summit in Waterloo with a focus on alternative sustainable transportation modes and local cycling structure.
- Bike share pilot launched in Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo on an application based platform in cooperation with a Dropbike.
- St Jacob's farmers market, one of Waterloo's biggest tourist attractions has been connected to the new LRT Station to make it more accessible for visitors.
- Development of new cycling itineraries and routes as ongoing.
- Steep increase, around 420%, in requests for cycling related materials and online content about cycling.
- Continuing to add more bicycle friendly businesses to the region.
- Waterloo Hydrocut Trail system continues to be a strong asset in the field of mountain biking with over 40,000 visitors a year and an upcoming documentary about the trail system (Riven of Dirt).
- Working on a refresh of the regional cycling map will be released in 2020 in partnership with the region of Waterloo.

City of Toronto (RTO5) – Adam Sweanor

- Finishing the trail connector at Tommy Thompson Park connecting to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.
- East Don Trail revitalised in two phases. South Phase in 2019 and North of Science Centre in 2020.
- Lower Don Trails revitalised in 2020.
- New on-street routes and infrastructure based on the recently approved bicycle network plan.
- Bike Share expansion from current 5000 bikes and 465 stations planned to increase up to 600 stations and 6000 bikes in 2020.
- Complete Cycling Map redesign in 2019 in alignment with the TO360 overall wayfinding strategy. 130,000 copies have been printed, with continuing plans for at least the next three years.

York Region (RTO6) – Diana Kakamousias

- Lake to Lake connector cycling and walking route is currently at 81% complete. 23km left to be built. Website updates to showcase the current status of the route
- Portions under construction in Aurora and Richmond Hill planned to be finished in 2019 (Aurora) and 2020 (Richmond Hill).
- New Staff initiative in initial stages for a proposed east to west greenways cycling route through 407 hydro corridor from Vaughn to Markham.

- Pedestrian and cycling guidelines will be published online in the near future to provide an element of consistency for the planning of sustainable infrastructure.
- Preparing to update the 2017/18 cycling map for a release date in 2020.

Durham Tourism (RTO6) – Lori Talling

- Creating a new interactive cycling route through the Greenbelt called Farm Fresh with the goal to create a map featuring OBB certified Farms on the map.
- Outreach to bring more farms on to the OBB bicycle friendly business program.
- Cycling map update planned for 2020.
- Potentially planning of a OBB workshop in the Durham region with relevant industry partners.
- Hosting other cycling events, Uxcycle back in 2020, United Way Ride growing.
- Regional cycling plan update following Council approval in October.
- Clarington Connector trail to the Bowmanville Waterfront Trail completed in 2020.
- Valley's 2000/Bomanville Valley promoting trails in Bowmanville installing digital wayfinding stations
- Uxbridge mountain biking trails having infrastructure updates and also looking for potential funding improved trail head infrastructure, parking and washrooms etc.

Bruce Grey Simcoe County (RTO7) – Absent, provided updates

Grey County

- Working on a Cycling & Trails Master Plan – with a lot of community interest, participation and just finalizing a draft network/facilities/phasing.
www.grey.ca/programs-initiatives/grey-county-cycling-and-trails-master-plan
Draft plan will be finished over the next month and submitted to County Council, allowing for a public comment period.
- Increase of paved shoulders as Grey County continues to pave shoulders on roads that are reconstructed. Most recently, Grey Road 40, major east-west artery and longest County project to date received paved shoulders.
- Working with Brendan at Simcoe County, the Town of the Blue Mountains, OPP, Share the Road on a regional safety and awareness campaign. There is widespread recognition that the # of cyclists is growing and safety and education of both motorists and cyclists is needed. Visible concern by local residents/agriculture community over the volume of cyclists and a perceived lack of courtesy/following rules of the road, and there are still many examples from cyclists of close calls and not observing safe passing by motorists. Miraculously, there does not seem to be an increase in reported traffic violations/incidents involving cyclists.
- Definitely seeing an increase in cycle tourism related to the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (GLWT). Comparing STRAVA data for Grey County, 25% increase in activities and a 22% increase in cyclists for Q3 2019 compared to 2018. Looking along the GLWT route, increases along the route as well.
- First meeting with municipalities and partners along the route to plan the 2020 GLWT, GWTA event, along the shores of southern and western Georgian Bay and eastern Lake Huron, tentatively scheduled from Aug. 1 – 7.
- Seeing increase in gravel riding.

Simcoe County

- Continuing to promote the Simcoe County Loop Trail – 160 km off road loop on multi-use rail trail. Significant growth in interest in the loop through map downloads and map mail outs. Waiting for annual survey results of OBB businesses back from consultant, RMCG, looking for a significant increase in cycling visits in towns along the route.
- Working with the Waterfront Regeneration Trust on the GLWT – Georgian Bay Route next year. Plan is to have the Simcoe section signed by fall 2020.
- In 2019, visible increase in organized multi day cycling tours – Humdinger Cycling Tours launched a Pedal, Pints and Pubs tour, as well as their Georgian Bay Cycling Tour. Planned to expand multi day tours in 2020.
- At a municipal level, several towns in Simcoe County are developing a Cycling Strategy specific to their communities, with the goal of incorporating cycling infrastructure in to their downtown reconstruction projects. Midland and Penetanguishene are a great example of this. Should result in better connections from the trails to the down town cores.

Northumberland Tourism (RTO8) – Cori Arthur

- Q3 marketing stats – Seeing doubling of unique page views to cycling routes webpage.

Brockville Tourism/Chamber of Commerce (RTO9) – Katherine Hobbs, Absent, provided updates

- Active Transportation Plan drafted in September: Brockville has a compact urban form - all destinations are not more than 8km away, however only around 1% of people bike to work and 11% walk. So important to better connect with a low stress network of cycling facilities to change these statistics.
- Draft Active Transportation Plan - Nov 5 will be presented at a public meeting. Hoping for better cycling infrastructure in the City itself as a result if Council approve.
- Visitor guide this year (2020) will have a pull out map section on the back cover so it covers the cycling network along the Seaway including the 1000 Islands Parkway so people can find the route more easily.

Ottawa Tourism –Kelly Haussler & Catherine Callary

- Sunday bike days are continuing to be very popular within the city of Ottawa. Final numbers are expected soon. There are a number of other signature bike events in city.
- Continuous upgrades to a variety of cycling resources such as inclusion of new routes through the city on to the countertop map.
- Interested in and investigating the conflict potential between cyclists and e-scooters, seeing best practice examples from other destinations such as Helsinki in Finland and looking for more from Ontario, if anyone can get in touch directly.
- Looking at east end of the city of Ottawa, connecting to the Prescott Russell Trail which continues to be a very popular cycling asset and has seen more than 19,000 users within the last year.

- Looking for potential funding for new bike projects with more information at a later stage.
- Ottawa bike share not currently operating.

Lanark County / Mississippi Mills Bicycle Month / Riding in Mississippi Mills (RIMM) – Jeff Mills – Absent, provided updates

- Chris George and Jeff Mills have been working away on creating the loop route with Ottawa. Held meetings with the mayors of the different partner municipalities and all are in favour. Working with the city of Ottawa staff a route has been determined.
- After the election will be over, it is planned to gear up efforts for this approximately 200k loop with through Mississippi Mills and the city of Ottawa.

Discovery Routes Trails Organization (RTO13a) Jennifer McCourt - Absent, provided updates

- 18 km section of HWY 17 west of North Bay is in design stage for rehabilitation – stakeholders in region are requesting cycling infrastructure be included in design as the section is part of the Voyageur Cycling Route and identified as primary corridor in Province-wide Cycling Network.
- Mobile Workshop in June along eastern expansion of Voyageur Cycling Route from Petawawa to Ottawa – great media attention and participation in daily workshops by elected officials, local cycling advocates and regional stakeholders. Route through Lanark County is complete. Renfrew County Council endorsement of route received, working on improvements to sections of the route.
- Working closely with Renfrew County and Township of Papineau-Cameron to secure infrastructure funding to complete the northern end of the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail as part of the Voyageur Cycling Route connection between Northern Ontario and Eastern Ontario.
- Next step for Voyageur Cycling Route through Eastern Ontario is a signage plan that is consistent with signage present along northern section.
- Working on an Outdoor Adventure Map for parts of Northeastern Ontario and Almaguin Highlands that will include Voyageur Cycling Route and a number of road cycling itineraries as well as trails suitable for mountain bike and winter bikes.

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

- 2020 will mark 10th anniversary of Manitoulin Passage Ride, cycling event.
- Highway-540 received a paved shoulder going towards inland Manitoulin Island. Now 3 out of 4 highways on Manitoulin Island have paved shoulders.
- All-inclusive bike tour packages that are offered 4 times a year are making use of these newly paved shoulders.
- Looking for potential partners to advertise the Lake Huron Loop for the US market to get the loop established as a lucrative route to connect the south with the north.
- 5th edition of cycling map should come for new year and will be showcased at the Outdoor Adventure Show in February and bike show in March, both in Toronto.

- Recruiting a bike mechanic who would be willing to work in the summer with a mobile station. Continuous investigations since it seems to be hard to find a suitable candidate.
- Further investments being made in cycling infrastructure such as cycling racks and bike fix stations at the different trail heads.

Lake Huron North Channel Cycling Route (RTO13b) - Mike Wozny

- Last 50km stretch of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail between Sault St Marie and Sudbury, following the Trans Canada Highway have completed paved shoulders.
- Trail completion was celebrated with an event, GWTA (Great Waterfront Trail Adventure) which had around 150 participants mostly from Ontario but some also from the US.
- Crank the Shield mountain bike event took place again this year north of Sault Saint Marie and was a great success with around 170 riders.
- Looking at creating 2 to 3 day drive and ride packages for tourists.
- Continuing to add more bike lanes in Sault Saint Marie and find funding to do so.

Destination Northern Ontario (RTO13c) – Nicki Schiewe

- Sault Saint Marie is currently expanding its mountain biking trail network which is a very popular tourism product in the region
- Cycling events continue to be very important for the region. Rack card was produced to promote events and showcase at shows, as well as a dedicated webpage solely for cycling events.
- Gravel Ride in Thunder Bay went very well also charity ride focusing on food and local farms and businesses.
- Worked together with the City of Thunder Bay to produce sustainable signage solutions that can be used for repeating events
- Fat Tire biking is a popular activity due to the fact that the region gets snow quite early and winters can be fairly long.

CROSS PROVINCIAL UPDATES

Share the Road – Erika Townson

- Greg's Ride in the Hamilton Region this year received a much higher number of participants
- In August at AMO annual conference for municipal staff, Share the Road Coalition offered a tour on the cycling infrastructure in Ottawa.
- The annual Ontario Bike Summit was successful in 2019. The 2020 conference will be held in Toronto on April 6 & 7.

Waterfront Regeneration Trust – Marlaire Koehler – Absent, provided updates

- The Lake Huron North Channel Cycling Route, a part of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, was very well received at event, GWTA.
- 83% of participants felt comfortable on the improved widened, shoulders of HWY 17; 13% felt somewhat comfortable. For a small percentage (5.8%) the shoulder were a notable highlight.
- All three First Nations on the route participate in the event. In fact having opportunities to connect/share with First Nations was most often identified as “what stood out” for people. Thrilled to have 54 politicians participate in the ride by riding and/or meeting the group at rest stops.
- Trail Expansions—continue to work with communities to expand the Trail from Collingwood to Sudbury with an interim terminus, potentially at Grundy Lake Provincial Park. Meeting with MTO took place on October 9th
- Greenbelt Route—the WRT continues work on adding more north/south connections between the Waterfront Trail and Greenbelt to create a Watershed Cycling Network. Currently 12 such routes available.

Destination Ontario – Claude Aumont

- Destination Ontario maintains an influencer program, assisting with product and FAM tours.
- www.northernontario.travel - Web portal for Destination Ontario with a sub portal for cycling currently focus' on Northern Ontario but not limited to this area. Open to all RTO's for inclusion of info.
- Continuing on existing marketing programs and moving ahead with a number of other programs.

Ontario By Bike Network / Transportation Options, Louisa Mursell & Simon Lutz

- Also see slide deck at www.transportationoptions.org/obbip-ac-oct-16-2019

Ontario By Bike Network - www.OntarioByBike.ca

- Most regions now participating in the Ontario By Bike Bicycle Friendly Business Program
- 1,568 + business and locations certified as bicycle-friendly
- 2020 renewal partners: South Eastern Ontario; Manitoulin Island and LeCloche Foothills; Peterborough & City of Kawartha Lakes; Haldimand & Norfolk Counties; Haliburton Highlands; Grey County; Niagara Region; Durham Region; Chatham Kent; Prescott Russell

Marketing & Promotions

- Leaderboard, Skyscraper, Event Banners, Enewsletter Banners –generated exposure and leads for partners.
- Content development with blog postings reached large audience, up to 1,600 reads each
- **Fall / Winter Events:** A number attended in Fall, e.g. Toronto Fall Blowout Sale
- February includes Montreal/Toronto Bicycle Shows and Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show
- **Ontario By Bike Rides:** 4 weekend tours in 2019. 2020 schedule will be out in February. Case studies and economic impact on research page www.ontariobybike.ca/rides

2020 Marketing Partnerships

- Now available info at: www.ontariobybike.ca/2020marketing
- **Cycling in Ontario / Le vélo en Ontario Guide**
 - Close to 40,000 copies of 2019 distributed early
 - Almost 16,000 digital views & downloads
 - 2020 content and advertising efforts are currently undergoing
 - New print & digital version will be available end of February
 - Need partners news for editorial and photos for consideration
- **Event Partnerships:** Ontario & Quebec Shows
- **Digital Partnerships:** Limited space available for digital ads on website and e-newsletter, content partnerships in 2020

Research

- Number of new primary and secondary research reports available:
Best Practices Research for Businesses (Int'l)
- Cycle Tourism in Ontario: A Report on the State of Ontario's Cycle Tourism Sector (2019)
- Developing Cycling Itineraries for the Cycle Tourism Market (2019)
- Best Practices for Cycle Tourism Wayfinding (2019)
- Currently completing Cycling Events Report, based on survey issued in Summer 2019
- www.TransportationOptions.org/Research



Meeting hosted by and minutes prepared by:

Transportation Options



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

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