



# Advisory Committee

## Minutes of Discussion Section During Web Conference

Thursday, November 18, 2021, 3:00pm - 4:30 pm

**On-Line / In Attendance:** Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, Lionel Kernerman; Norfolk County, Mark Boerkamp; Venture Niagara, Sue Morin; Tourism Brantford, Sara Munroe; Halton Region, Margaret Gaskell; Hamilton, Halton, Brant, Adrienne Carter; Waterloo Region, Kevan Marshall & Explore Waterloo, Susan Cook-Scheerer; Huron County, Rick Sickinger; York Region, Anson Wong; Simcoe County, Brendan Matheson; Durham Region, Danielle Culp, Lisa MacKenzie; Ottawa Tourism, Kelly Haussler; Lanark County, Ryan Gilbertson; County of Haliburton, Thom Lambert; Ottawa Valley Tourism Association, Melissa Marquardt; Town of Bracebridge, Kalleen Turchet; MICA, Maja Mielonen; Tourism Thunder Bay, John Cameron; Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Dave Meyer; Share the Road Cycling Coalition, Subha Ramanathan; Ontario Trails Council, Patrick Connor; Ministry of Transportation, Kyle Purdue; Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Rachael Treadgold, Gabrielle Bernier, Bob Freeman.

**Regrets:** Meredith Maywood, Oxford County; Sonya De Vellis, City of Toronto; Eileen Lum, Northumberland County.

**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](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

- 2021 saw lots of visitors and cyclists to area, trails, parks, wine country, municipal areas
- Updating bicycle friendly businesses with Ontario By Bike, will include businesses on new cycling map
- Moving towards updating cycle tourism map – later next year, including group riding events, outdoor adventure, fat biking
- City of Windsor – moving ahead with bike parking stations, water stations, guidelines for short and long term parking, pop up protected planters, pilot project on e-bikes, cycling facilities will be on Gordie Howe bridge, expected to open 2024, able to cross into Detroit
- County Wide Active Transportation system – CWATS – bike month event in June 2022, re-think your drive challenge, cycling education classes
- New pop-up events at farms with migrant workers
- New CWATS map that will promote bike facilities
- Two suppliers in the region
  - Windsor Eats – moving ahead with wine trail rides, and Friday night lights
  - Grove Bike Company – continue offering bike rentals, including e-bikes

### Norfolk County (RTO1) – Mark Boerkamp

- Very busy season, two main partner trails:
  - Lynn Valley Trail Association, making upgrades to wooden bridges
  - Great Lakes Waterfront Trail
- Received some funding for directional signage, more durable aluminum signs
- Waterford continues to grow with their trail system – bridges filling gaps in infrastructure
  - Bridge the gap campaign – local citizens raised money to buy a bridge

### Niagara Region (RTO2) - Sue Morin

- Venture Niagara – found a partner to renew Ontario By Bike programming, and over 160 bicycle friendly businesses
- Ontario By Bike webinar stimulated discussion at the Region
- Niagara Cycle Tourism Map by Venture Niagara - Niagara Region is going to help fund print map, map updates

### Hamilton, Halton, Brant (RTO3) - Adrienne

- Beginning to work with Paris to Ancaster Bike Race, event in April has not been on for a couple years
  - Building week long tours for European cyclists before and after to explore the region
- Halton Cycling Summit – December 8 at 1:30pm

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

- Work closely with Explore Waterloo
- Expansion of light rail line to St. Jacob's farmer's market, paved connecting trail to market, this is part 1, launching in January, will be winter maintained, will have lighting, access points. Stage 2 expands to City of Waterloo through city trails. This will complete Trans Canada Trail connection between both ends of Kitchener and Waterloo, this will be transformative for local tourism
- Explore Waterloo Update
  - Surge in cycling in the region, saw an uptick in bike friendly businesses and they are excited to grow this network

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

- ActiveTO Midtown Complete Streets Pilot on Yonge Street between Davisville Avenue and Charles Street East
  - CaféTO has expanded into the space
- ActiveTO Bayview from River Street to Mill Street, making permanent bike lanes along Bayview in preparation for upgrades to Don Trail
- City staff continue to monitor the impact on people cycling, walking and driving, and will present the findings to Council in early 2022 to determine the future of both ActiveTO pilots.
- Permanent Cycling Network Projects 2021
  - New contraflow bicycle lanes on Winona Drive
  - New contraflow bicycle lanes on Monarch Park-Woodfield
  - The Esplanade & Mill Street Cycling Connection
  - New bikeways on Bay Street and Davenport Road
  - New sidewalk and multi-use paths – Eglinton Ave West, improvements in York University and Downsview area

### **York Region (RTO6) – Anson Wong**

- Updates focused on transportation infrastructure
- Lake to Lake trail – wrapping up missing link sections in northern municipalities – East Gwillimbury, Georgina
- South York Greenway – 52km trail going to East to West, covering the entire region from Durham to Peel
  - Going to public consultation in December
- New Cycling Map – out to public in Q1 2022
- Working on Transportation Master Plan Update, ongoing project

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

- Transportation Planning
  - Regional cycling plan 2021 was approved by council
    - Build out primary cycling network by 2000km
    - New staff member for active transportation
    - Promotion of the plan through cycling videos, social media and events
  - Durham Meadoway – 27km – extension of the Toronto/Scarborough Meadoway
    - Tender is out to conceptualize the plan
- Durham Tourism
  - Continuing to promote cycling though through COVID weren't attracting as many visitors but promoted active transportation and cycling to local residents
    - 6 videos released promoting different types of cycling, Durham Cycling Stories
  - Considering applying for Fed Dev funding for rural cycling infrastructure
  - Planning to update cycling guide, digital component
  - Town of Ajax
    - Pickering Village designated as Bike Friendly Business Area
    - New apparel line with cycling

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

- 2020/2021 was time for product development
- GLWT signs are all installed along Simcoe sections of the route, this route will be added to 2022 cycling maps
- Borrowed idea from Sudbury of adding bike rack and bike repair stations to their Tourism, Culture and Sport grant, big success, over 30 bike racks across county

- Simcoe County Loop Trail, 160 kms long– if you tagged Simcoe County while riding the Simcoe County Loop trail, they would send rider a t-shirt, very popular, 400 t-shirts given out
- Butter Tart Festival in Midland was cancelled due to COVID but they did a self guided tour – if you rode butter tart route or went to butter tart business they would ship a t-shirt
- Hosted events again, two day gravel ride – The Weekender
  - 75 riders for two day event, no issues, riders were welcomed with open arms
  - 25 anniversary Hardwood Ski and Bike - Mountain Bike Racing
    - Story telling campaign about history of mountain bike racing in area and celebrate it
- Bike Art installation
  - Ask to group: if they have experience with art installations with a bike focus, looking for advice, art installations along trails

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

- Having audio issues so few updates
- Wrapped up another successful NCC weekend bike days (road closures for cycling) – expanded to two days, still waiting for stats to share, last year they had 650,000 riders out

### **Haliburton Tourism (RTO11) – Thom Lambert**

- 2021 was a record-breaking summer in terms of tourism
- Huge numbers of cyclists
  - Big growth in gravel riding – different than southern gravel riding, more adventure focused
- Mapped out over 1000km of gravel and adventure routes in Haliburton County
  - All on Ride with GPS, focusing on this platform
  - Pursuing a Tourism account with Ride with GPS
- Looking at doing a gravel festival next Fall – they’ve been doing a virtual festival through social media, 2022 they want to formalize this, talking to experienced providers

### **Ottawa Valley Tourism / Renfrew County (RTO11) – Melissa Marquardt**

- Looking at online map with bike friendly businesses overlaid, similar to Ride the Highlands motorcycle map, adding in road and gravel routes
- Want to work with Ontario By Bike
- Onboard some more bike friendly businesses through map product development
- New event in development across Renfrew County– Dirt and Water Festival – over two weekends, land and water activities – paddling, cycling, mountain biking, might pull in Tour de Bonnechere.

### **Lanark County (RTO11) – Ryan Gilbertson**

- Developing trails map – digital and print with QR codes, linked to website so they update more frequently
- Working with other destinations in Ontario’s Highlands to create a storyline on cycling and what’s happening in the area

### **Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates (MICA) (RTO13) - Maja Mielonen**

- Lot of cyclists this past summer, ever increasing
- Working with all 6 municipalities on e-bike rental platform locations and connections, bi-lingual app, available early Spring 2022, 5-10% of visitors are Francophone
- Partnered with Société Économique de l’Ontario (SÉO) and Ontario By Bike
- 6<sup>th</sup> edition of road cycling map, will include e-bike rental locations and app

- Offered 6 all-inclusive vacations last year, offered some in extended shoulder seasons, these were sold out
- Tapping into provincial tourism grant to offer staycations
- Hoping that Chi-Cheemaun will get back to full capacity, working with serious restrictions for last two years
- Congratulations to Waterfront Regeneration Trust on award for completing their expansion west into western Ontario, Georgian Bay area

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

- Trying to come out of COVID recovery, planning for tourism coming back full force next year
- Expansion of mountain bike trails at mines at Trowbridge Forest & Kinsmen Park with Black Sheep Mountain Club
- Brand new skills park opened in October and 10km of brand new cut trail
- Lots of people traveling across the country stopping to ride the new trails, folks extending their stays once they saw what was available
- New master plan for Black Sheep Mountain Bike Club, want to get to level where they can host national level competitive events
- Road cycling - feasibility study for GLWT expansion, results end of 2021
- Workshops with Ontario By Bike and partnering on marketing 2022

## **CROSS PROVINCIAL UPDATES**

### **Share the Road Cycling Coalition – Subha Ramanathan**

- Been with Share the Road for about a year, first time joining call
- Bicycle Friendly Communities Program - Want to highlight Ontario By Bike and capture partnership better in the application form
- Working on two events - Greg Cycle for Kids, moving Ontario Bike Summit to Spring – hybrid event with in person and virtual. Dates haven't been finalized but likely in June.

### **Waterfront Regeneration Trust – Dave Meyer**

- Over last year they have been launching the Huron-Espanola expansion of route, Bruce County, Grey County up to Espanola, GLWT signage in Simcoe now installed
- Working on feasibility and marketing study, identify for GLWT and Trans Canada Trail, between Sault Ste. Marie to Thunder Bay, want to link in with US Bike Route
- Working in Durham, on signed cycling trails between Greenbelt Route and GLWT, have 14 linkages, working on 6 more in other areas
- Next year – GLWT Adventure 2022
- Piloting two new programs – promoting cycling hubs, putting out 10 branded bike racks, focusing on Durham route, but expanding to other areas
- Farm Fresh Tours – Highland Hustle route, focuses on engaging businesses, sample stops
- Migrating some routes to Ride with GPS, creating loops including the GLWT

### **Patrick Connor – Ontario Trails Council**

- Have relationships with RTOs, want to continue building relationships
- Deals with 220 organizations promoting the use of trails, physical activity, trail tourism aspects
- Trails tourism committee ongoing
- From the beginning of the pandemic they have 2.2 million visitors to their website, this translates into a lot of trail visits, pandemic surge in trail use is real

- They've been trying to make better trail users, trying to make trail etiquette better
- They've developed trail classification system
  - Trail management plan outline
  - Trail signage outline
  - Trail ability scale – trying to get people to assess trails based on their own physical abilities
- Results of Poll – finding public commentary on trails is high

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

- Progressing with work on the Provincial cycling network that was released in spring 2018, which included 32% of routes on MTO Roadways and 68% of off MTO Infrastructure.
- Since the plan was released, MTO has installed 1500km of active transportation facilities along network, additional 400km has been forecasted to be completed by end of this construction season
- Remainder of the outstanding network is expected to be built within the next 5
- MTO provided support for updates to Ontario Traffic Manual for cycling facilities, Book 18

### **Destination Ontario – No updates provided**

- Note from Louisa Mursell of Ontario By Bike - Sign into Destination Ontario portal and make sure you are signed up for industry updates

### **Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture – Gabrielle Bernier and Bob Freeman, Rachael Treadgold**

- No updates, but thanked everyone for including them on the call

## **ONTARIO BY BIKE UPDATES**

Also see slide deck at - [www.transportationoptions.org/obbip-ac-nov-18-2021](http://www.transportationoptions.org/obbip-ac-nov-18-2021)

### **Ontario By Bike Updates - 2021 review and 2022 programs and marketing activities**

- Strong demand and growth of Cycling in Ontario Guide 2021, increasing distribution and number of copies printed for 2022. Print sales closed November 15<sup>th</sup>, but digital remains open until all spots filled
- Strong interest and growth in Ontario By Bike website, newsletter, and social media channels
- Successful season of Ontario By Bike Rides, rides sold out very quickly with destinations including Sarnia Lambton, Niagara South, 1000 Islands/St. Lawrence River, Napanee & Kingston

### **Marketing Partnership with Destination Ontario**

- Social Media and Influencer Campaign, distribution of Cycling in Ontario Guide
- New photos for Destination Ontario Photo Image Bank from Ontario By Bike Rides
- New website, this has made it easier for businesses to register, new events calendar

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

- 19 webinars/550 participants and new businesses certified
- Worked with Destination partners on renewals
- Lots ahead for 2022, events, 2022 Destination Partner Renewals, marketing
- Data Collection
  - OBB looking for more ways to gather data, new survey
  - Ask to the group if anyone has any metrics they can share
- Need to link more trail users to where they can spend their dollars, signage is important

## Web Conference Poll Results

OBBIP AC Meeting – November 18, 2021

### Review & Discussion of Potential Strategic Actions

*Frame of reference: The global bike boom continues (sales, interest in cycling & cycle tourism) plus more local travel*

Question:

#### What can OBB & OBBIP do to advance cycling & cycle tourism in Ontario?

- i) Province wide - suggestions & ideas on initiatives for collective action
- ii) Initiatives we can support for your organization/region
- Example may include: Promotions and marketing; Product development; Capturing data and impact metrics; Advocacy and other efforts

**How can OBB & OBBIP support your recovery?**

**What can we share with our community on your behalf?**

# What can OBB & OBBIP do to advance cycling & cycle tourism in Ontario?

Mentimeter

Getting more buy-in from Destination Ontario to promote cycling at various related consumer shows in and outside of the province.

Data capture is critical in product development - perhaps looking at obtaining the advanced platform for Strava (heat maps) will assist.

Metrics - have had requests for more specific metrics on economic return, specifically stats/metrics that capture ROI for each dollar spent on cycling infrastructure. The more regional the data the better (i.e. RTO, municipality).

Continued emphasis on data collection - return on investment in cycling infrastructure to promote cycling tourism. If there are ROI data from Bicycle Friendly Communities, Share the Road can include in Feedback Reports, websites, e-newsletters, etc.

Promotion/Advocacy for product development. WRT needs funding for signs on the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail expansion north of Simcoe County to Sudbury. Will enhance cross-regional and provincial cycling, benefitting local communities and businesses.

Continue to promote cycling events.

FedDev has a few grants that will support infrastructure projects that support green initiatives and sustainable tourism. Building out cycle infrastructure (trails, bike racks, secure bike storage, bike shelters, water stations, etc).

FedDev will also support bike share programs in municipalities.

Product development with deliberate links to accommodations, culinary and cultural tourism (\$\$). Our trail use is up 200% but cyclists are not necessarily spending.