

CITY OF HAMILTON

***PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Operations & Maintenance Division***

Report to: Chair and Members Public Works, Infrastructure & Environment Committee	Submitted by: Scott Stewart, C.E.T. General Manager Public Works Department
Date: January 23, 2006	Prepared by: Brian Applebee Extension 2558

SUBJECT: Update on Cycling Infrastructure Initiatives (PW03072b) - (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That a cycling facility be implemented on, and parallel to, the North Service Road between Grays Road and the Region of Niagara border (on Baseline Road), to be comprised of a combination of dedicated shoulder bicycle lanes, signed minor road on-street routes and off-road multi-use pathways, at an estimated cost of \$500,000 to be funded from Capital Account 4030417124.
- (b) That an update of the City's "Shifting Gears - A New Cycling Plan for Hamilton-Wentworth" document be undertaken at an estimated cost of \$80,000 to be funded from Capital Account 4030517124.

Scott Stewart, C.E.T.
General Manager
Public Works

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The following report outlines the progress made on cycling infrastructure initiatives as identified in the May 21, 2004 report to the Public Works, Infrastructure & Environment Committee, and recommends two new cycling initiatives.

Most projects identified in the May, 2004 report have been implemented. These include painted, reserved bike lanes on Sterling Street, Longwood Road North, King Street East and Stone Church Road. Also completed were printing of an updated Bikeways, Trails & Parks map and installation of bike racks in BIAs. Significant progress has been made on the planning and design for cycling facilities on York Boulevard, the crossing of the

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Beach Boulevard at the Lift Bridge and the CP Rail Trail parallel to Main Street West. The Hunter Street and King Street West Environmental Assessments have not yet been undertaken at this time. As directed by Council, the Southcote Road new bicycle shoulders have been put on hold until the reconstruction of Southcote Road is initiated through residential development in the area.

With the majority of the projects identified above completed, in planning stages or on hold due to external constraints, and with the CP Rail Trail project having an implementation date of 2007 at the earliest, the opportunity exists to add new projects to the cycling program. Staff have identified two new projects which have great potential and can be initiated in 2006. These projects are:

1. A cycling route along the North Service Road between Grays Road and the Region of Niagara border (on Baseline Road), and
2. An update to the "Shifting Gears" document.

The Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail runs along the shores of Lake Ontario from the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to the City of Brockville, a total distance of approximately 740 km. Within Hamilton an important section of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail remains undesignated and unimproved, that being between the eastern limits of Confederation Park (at Grays Road) and the Region of Niagara border (on Baseline Road at Fifty Point Conservation Area).

Staff recommend that construction be undertaken to complete the missing section of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail through the creation a cycling route along, and parallel to, the North Service Road. This route would be comprised of new and existing paved bicycle shoulders, new and existing off-road multi-use pathways and the designation of some local roads as bicycle routes.

The proposed facility would connect to a) Confederation Park and the Beach Trail; b) existing bike lanes on Millen Road, which provide access to neighbourhoods to the south of the QEW; c) new and existing residential development on the north side of the North Service Road; and d) Fifty Point Conservation area and the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail easterly into Niagara Region.

A number of requests to create a cycling facility within the North Service Road corridor have been received from residents of the Stoney Creek area.

The second project proposed is an update of the 1999 "Shifting Gears" document, which is the strategic plan for on-street cycling. Recent expanded growth within the City has created a potential for new cycling infrastructure opportunities that did not exist in 1999 when Shifting Gears was written. Most of the recommendations in Shifting Gears have either been completed or are not feasible at this time due to physical, staffing and/or financial constraints. As well, staff have identified the need to revisit some of the recommendations from the original report based on the cycling network and trip patterns as they exist today.

BACKGROUND:

The information/recommendations contained within the report have City wide implications.

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1. **Update on Cycling Infrastructure Initiatives report #PW03072a** – The following is an update on the progress made on cycling infrastructure initiatives that were identified in the May 21, 2004 report to the Public Works, Infrastructure & Environment Committee:
 - (a) York Boulevard: An Environmental Assessment (EA) is underway for cycling facilities on York Boulevard between Dundurn Street and the City of Burlington border. The Public Information Centre has been held and the project file is being finalized to be submitted for public review. Implementation will likely occur in 2006.
 - (b) Sterling Street: On-street reserved bicycle lanes have been installed between King Street West and Forsyth Avenue.
 - (c) Bike Racks in BIAs: Installation of bike racks within BIAs is on-going. Westdale, Concession Street, Locke Street, Ottawa Street and Dundas have all received new bike racks. Furthermore, G.R. Allen School and Victoria Park have also received bike racks.
 - (d) Longwood Road North: On-street reserved bicycle lanes have been installed between Franklin Avenue and the Royal Botanical Gardens Princess Point entrance.
 - (e) Bikeways, Trails & Parks map: Maps were revised for 2005 and have been printed and distributed.
 - (f) King Street East: On-street reserved bicycle lanes have been installed between Nash Road North and Pottruff Road.
 - (g) Stone Church Road: On-street reserved bicycle lanes have been installed between Upper Wellington Street and Pritchard Road.
 - (h) Canal Lift Bridge: A three-way agreement has been signed between Public Works Canada, the City of Burlington and the City of Hamilton for grade-separated crossings of Beach Boulevard adjacent to the Canal Lift Bridge. A plan has been created. Work has commenced and completion is scheduled for spring of 2006.
 - (i) King Street West: An EA has been planned for King Street West contra-flow bicycle lanes between Macklin Road and Paradise Road North. Work on the EA has not begun as the Traffic Engineering & Operations section is still examining possible alternatives which may negate the need for a full EA.
 - (j) Southcote Road: As per the Council directive, the construction of new bicycle shoulders is on hold until the reconstruction of portions of Southcote Road is initiated through residential development in the area.
 - (k) Canadian Pacific (CP) Rail Trail: A plan for the CP Rail Trail in the west end of Hamilton has been prepared. Talks are on-going between the City and CP, and a meeting has been scheduled for February 20, 2006, to discuss the possibility for the installation of a bike system along existing CP rail lines and through their operations yard. The earliest date for installation, if a deal can be negotiated, would be during 2007. Therefore,

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other projects have been identified for 2006 to continue creating and improving cycling facilities within the City.

2. **Cycling route along the North Service Road between Grays Road and the Region of Niagara border (on Baseline Road)** – The Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail runs along the shores of Lake Ontario from the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to the City of Brockville, a total distance of approximately 740 km. The Trail is comprised of sections of off-road multi-use pathways and on-road routes.

Within Hamilton an important section of the Trail remains undesignated and unimproved, that being between the eastern limits of Confederation Park (at Grays Road) and the Region of Niagara border (on Baseline Road at Fifty Point Conservation Area). The Traffic Engineering & Operations Section of the Public Works Department has recently received a number of requests from residents of the Stoney Creek area regarding the need for cycling infrastructure along the North Service Road, confirming the value of the facility.

The proposed facility would connect to a) Confederation Park and the Beach Trail; b) existing bike lanes on Millen Road, which connect to neighbourhoods to the south of the QEW; c) new and existing residential development on the north side of the North Service Road; and d) Fifty Point Conservation area and the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail easterly into Niagara Region.

The Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail is heavily used by both recreational and commuter cyclists within Hamilton, especially the section between Confederation Park and Spencer Smith Park in Burlington, also referred to as the Beach Trail. Other regular users of the Trail include the “touring” type cyclist, which the Niagara Region section, in particular, has an abundance of. The completion of the missing portion of the Trail from Niagara Region into Hamilton could potentially attract a higher number of these users to Hamilton.

New residential development along the north side of the North Service Road between Fruitland Road and the Region of Niagara border has and will continue to generate increased demand for cycling infrastructure along this corridor. Through subdivision development applications, the Planning & Economic Development Department has been able to ensure that several areas along this section of the North Service Road will be provided with an off-road multi-use pathway on the north side of the road. The facility proposed in this report will take advantage of existing and future off-road multi-use pathways constructed in conjunction with development in the area and combine those with new facilities to be constructed or designated by the City.

Design Details:

The cycling route will be comprised of a combination of dedicated shoulder bicycle lanes, designated on-street bike lanes, signed minor road on-street routes and off-road multi-use pathways. The following list details each of these design elements.

DEDICATED SHOULDER BIKE LANES

- Approximately 4.0 km of new 1.5 m to 2.0 m wide paved shoulder bike lanes will be constructed on the north and south sides of the North Service Road between:

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- Millen Road and Dewitt Road
- McNeilly Road and Bella Vista Gate
- Baseline Road (west of Fifty Road) and Baseline Road (east of Fifty Road)
- A short portion of the paved shoulder on the north side will not be completed in the final condition until 2007, due to the planned provision of a sanitary sewer in the area. Temporary surfacing will be provided in the interim.
- Approximately 1.0 km of paved shoulder suitable for cycling is already in place along the route

SIGNED MINOR ROAD ON-STREET ROUTES

- Low volume local roadways will be designated as bicycle routes and be outfitted with the green “bicycle route” signs. A short portion of on-street designated bike route will be provided. No physical alteration of the roadway will be needed. The route will include approximately 0.9 km of painted on-street bike lanes and 3.8 centreline km of signed routes. The roads included are:
 - Francis Avenue between Grays Road and Green Road
 - Dewitt Road/Lakeview Drive between the North Service Road and Fruitland Road
 - Bella Vista Gate/Riviera Ridge/Lido Drive between the North Service Road and Winona Road
 - Baseline Road (west of Fifty Road) between Winona Road and the North Service Road
 - Baseline Road (east of Fifty Road) between North Service Road and the Region of Niagara border

OFF-ROAD MULTI-USE PATHWAYS

- The facility will utilize the 3.0 m to 4.0 m off-road multi-use pathways along the north side of the North Service Road. There will be approximately 1.9 km of new and 1.7 km of existing path used. The paths are between:
 - Francis Avenue and Millen Road (existing)
 - Fruitland Road and Jones Road (existing, to be rehabilitated)
 - Jones Road and McNeilly Road (new construction through adjacent development)

3. **Update of the “Shifting Gears” document** – The report entitled “Shifting Gears – A New Cycling Plan for Hamilton-Wentworth” was written and adopted by Council in 1999. This report was prepared as an update to the 1992 Regional “Bicycle Network Study” with its purpose to provide guidance to the former Region when installing new or updating existing cycling facilities. The report focused mainly on the urban centres within the City with less emphasis on outlying areas. Many of the recommendations from the “Shifting Gears” report have been fulfilled; and most of the remaining recommendations are not feasible or are very difficult or expensive to implement. Several others are on hold pending external changes, such as development.

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Expanded growth within the City has created a potential for new cycling infrastructure opportunities that did not exist in 1999 when the original report was written. As well, staff have identified the need to revisit some of the recommendations in the 1999 report based on the cycling network and traffic patterns as they exist today.

As such, it is recommended that a consultant be hired to carry out the review of the 1999 document.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Providing cycling facilities to residents of the City will increase opportunities for exercise, therefore helping to improve the quality of personal health and the quality of life. Furthermore, cycling for personal transportation helps to reduce motorized vehicle trips, thereby reducing air pollution and helping to create a sustainable transportation system within the City.

The potential to attract visitors from neighbouring communities is increased by creating a continuous cycling network that would connect Hamilton to the City of Burlington/Region of Halton and the Town of Grimsby/Region of Niagara. There are several opportunities for informal scenic views of Lake Ontario and the City along the proposed North Service Road facility, which enhances the route's attractiveness.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

Council may elect not to support the expenditure of cycling capital funds for cycling facilities along the North Service Road. However, there is an excellent opportunity to create cycling facilities along the North Service Road that will connect residents with two conservation areas, as well as help to complete a vital missing link of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail. Therefore, staff do not support this alternative.

Council may also elect not to support the expenditure of cycling capital funds on an update to the "Shifting Gears" report. However, the original document is nearing the end of its useful life and new opportunities for cycling infrastructure will be missed without the proper guidance that "Shifting Gears" could provide. Therefore, staff do not support this alternative.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial

Sufficient cycling capital funds for the North Service Road project and the Shifting Gears update are available in capital accounts 4030417124 and 4030517124. Following implementation of these two projects, sufficient funding will still remain to commence, although not fully implement, work on the CP Rail Trail project in 2007, should approval be received from CP later this year.

The current budget implications of maintaining the new bike facility will primarily be for additional edge line and bike stencil painting, and will be about \$1000 per year. This cost will be accommodated within the Traffic Section's pavement marking current budget. Any increased costs for road maintenance, such as more frequent sweeping,

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will likely be offset by reduced costs associated with lower maintenance requirements for repairing the gravel shoulders.

Staffing

Internal staff from Capital Planning & Implementation and Traffic Engineering & Operations will be responsible for the design, implementation and project management of the overall route and the bike shoulders and for the Shifting Gears update. Staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department are responsible for the off-road multi-use pathways which will be built in conjunction with local development.

Legal Implications

N/A

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

N/A

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Ward Councillors, the Capital Planning & Implementation Division of the Public Works Department, and the Planning and Economic Development Department

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “**Triple Bottom Line**”, (community, environment, and economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. Yes No

Providing cycling facilities to residents can increase opportunities for exercise, therefore helping to improve the quality of personal health and the quality of life.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. Yes No

Cycling for personal transportation helps to reduce motorized vehicle trips, therefore reducing air pollution.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. Yes No

The potential to attract visitors from neighbouring communities is increased by creating a continuous cycling network.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?

Yes No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?

Yes No