 Committee Minutes

# Transportation Master Plan Steering CommitteeNovember 5, 2013 – 1:40 p.m.

The Transportation Master Plan Steering Committee met on the above date at the County Administration Building with the following members in attendance:

**Present: Chair Bob Pringle; Councillors Brian Milne, Arlene Wright, Dwight Burley; and Warden Duncan McKinlay.**

**Staff**

**Present: Lance Thurston, CAO, Randy Scherzer, Director of Planning and Development; Michael Kelly, Director of Transportation; Pat Hoy, Manager of Construction; Bryan Plumstead Manager, Economic Development and Tourism; Scott Taylor, Senior Planer, Jason Weppler, Grey Bruce Health Unit and Barb Heerschap, Recording Secretary.**

## Call to Order

Chair Pringle called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

## Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were none.

## Overview of Process to date

Randy Scherzer presented a power point presentation on the revised discussion papers.

## Summary of draft recommendations and revisions to discussion papers

*Transit discussion paper*

Mr. Scherzer indicated a number of transit services exist throughout Grey County, most of which are private operators and provide niche services. Several recommendations as outlined in the discussion paper were reviewed. He advised that a project has been proposed in the 2014 budget to explore transit options further as directed by a motion that has been approved by Council from the Social Services Committee. This project will identify the existing services being provided with the purpose of recommending a more efficient coordinated system that will provide the public with a better service without increasing the overall cost.

Mr. Scherzer reviewed the revisions made to the discussion paper as directed by the TMP Steering Committee which include statistics on segments of the population in Grey County that may not have access to a vehicle and may not be able to drive. He noted that 21% of the population are 65 years or older and as the population ages the number of individuals requiring transportation assistance will increase.

Warden McKinlay advised that the Town of Collingwood have negotiated with the Town of the Blue Mountains to offer transit service to and from the Blue Mountain Village. This is a six month pilot project.

Councillor Burley indicated the information in the discussion paper is inaccurate with regard to the Wiarton/Keppel airport. Staff will contact the Airport Manager for the correct information.

Councillor Wright advised that SWEA is holding a meeting to talk about transportation. Councillor Wright advised that transportation outside of Owen Sound is not enough service to warrant operating a transit service. Bus service is proposed to be cut back to a three (3) route system in the City of Owen Sound. Councillor Wright raised concerns with respect to new development not complying with the Provincial Policy Statement when it comes to providing transit services to new developments. It was noted that there are no transit services from Bruce County to Grey County therefore ambulances are being called to transport individuals to medical appointments.

*Active Transportation*

There were no revisions made to this discussion paper. Mr. Scherzer highlighted the recommendations and strategies which include continuing to work with various stakeholders, including local municipalities, to explore opportunities to connect existing trails, paved shoulders, bike routes, etc. to develop an active transportation network. It was recommended that Grey County improve signage to promote active transportation opportunities. Also, the County should explore opportunities for providing access to trails/bike routes (e.g. parking areas). It was identified that the consultant will need to provide some recommendations as to where ATV use is appropriate.

*Goods Movement Strategy*

Revisions were highlighted and a section was added to recognize that the County does have an active agricultural industry and to note that there are agricultural related transportation movements throughout the County. Another section was added in the discussion paper to indicate that small scale industrial operations add to the commercial goods movement occurring in the rural areas of Grey County.

*Connecting Links*

Connecting links were discussed at the June TMP Steering Committee and based on the discussion, the consultant has prepared a draft discussion paper. The discussion paper identifies criteria that could be considered when identifying potential connecting link candidates which are as follows: road rationalization score; settlement designation in County Official Plan; length of road designation; “Main Street” status; County roads in Owen Sound; and by-pass/alternative route within a reasonable distance.

This discussion paper identifies options that could be considered for cost sharing for any maintenance and construction on connecting links and discusses items that could be considered for connecting link agreements.

Connecting links allow municipalities to have control over County road sections going through urban areas including entrances, signs, and setbacks from the County road. Based on the connecting link definition/criteria the following road sections have been identified for consideration as connecting links:

* Grey Road 1 within Owen Sound;
* Grey Road 4 through Hanover;
* Grey Road 4 through Durham;
* Grey Road 4 through Flesherton;
* Grey Road 9 through Dundalk;
* Grey Road 10 through Neustadt;
* Grey Road 12 through Markdale;
* Grey Road 13 through Thornbury; and,
* Grey Road 19 through Blue Mountain Village.

*Bridge Rationalization*

Mr. Scherzer reviewed the revisions to this discussion paper. Based on the discussion from the TMP Steering Committee in June, the consultant has revised the discussion paper recommending that if a bridge is on a local road it should be the responsibility of the local municipality and that a bridge on a County road should be a County responsibility. It was recommended that County bridges on local roads that form municipal boundaries be transferred to the local municipalities.

It is recognized that transferring roads and bridges to a local municipality could have financial impacts. As a result the timing of the transfers should be coordinated with that of any potential road transfers as recommended in the road rationalization to ensure that one municipality is not burdened beyond what is considered reasonable with excessive consecutive transfers. The Committee discussed the concept of the County and local municipalities sharing the cost of transferring bridges.

The Committee agreed that this paper should be further discussed as it is an important component of the Plan.

The Committee discussed options with regard to transferring of bridges. The system needs to be clarified as to what the dollars are and the value of the bridge needs to be clarified.

The Committee agreed that the consultant frame the issues for the Committee and come up with a process for discussion. Staff was directed to investigate a scoring system. It was noted that the lower tiers be involved and suggest solutions to this paper.

It is recognized that there may be merit to eliminating bridges on local roads if there are reasonable alternatives readily available. As a result the Committee suggested the determination of criteria to determine if a bridge should be retained.

*Road Rationalization*

Mr. Scherzer reviewed the revisions recommended to this paper.

The County road principles identified in the discussion paper were reviewed. It was noted that County roads should provide appropriate service within all areas of the County extending north to south and east to west, with an emphasis on those serving established settlement areas. County roads should also compliment the Provincial Highway system which includes Highway 6, 9, 10, 21, 26 and 89.

All roads were assessed using both the rating system and the defined principles and it was noted all roads there were recommended to be County Roads had to meet the defined principles.

Mr. Scherzer indicated that County roads should be a direct and intuitive road system benefiting County residents, commercial traffic and visitors. County roads are transportation corridors and should provide a high level of service to move people and goods safely and efficiently without duplication. County roads should also be constructed and maintained to an acceptable standard. County roads should be along the shortest and most efficient practical route along existing streets and roads.

*Criteria Revisions*

Mr. Scherzer outlined the criteria revisions made in the discussion paper with regard to the following; Urban Centre Connector; Resort/Recreation Criterion and Urban Arterial Extension. He advised that the road rationalization criteria have been revised to capture the importance of recreation areas in Grey County. The revisions address comments with regard to tourism in our area. Staff worked with Tourism/Economic Development staff and the consultant to draft proposed revisions to the criteria. Further discussion on the criteria with the local municipalities needs to occur.

As recommended by the Tourism Advisory Committee and as discussed with the TMP Steering Committee in June, traffic counts were collected on Grey Roads 1, 13 and 119 which took place during a week-end period in the summer. The traffic counts did show an increase compared to week-day traffic and the traffic numbers were included in the road rationalization chart.

Possible discrepancies were identified in the draft road rationalization chart, specifically as it relates to Grey Road 1. Staff will look into these discrepancies further.

Several recommended changes include:

* Grey Road 1 between Wiarton and Oxenden and section of Grey Road 31 between 124 and soon to be closed Simcoe Road 91 be recommended for transfer to the local municipality;
* Grey Road 4 and Grey Road 10 through Hanover be kept as a County road.

In summary, additional justification has been included in the revised discussion paper outlining why some roads that meet the criteria are recommended to be transferred based on the overall County Road network principles and the road rationalization criteria. The road rationalization chart has been revised to reflect the revised criteria and the potential improvement costs have been updated.

A lengthy discussion took place with regard to road rationalization options.

## Next Steps

The Committee agreed that this plan is important for the future success of the County. The Committee noted that discussions and communications should move forward but questioned how to proceed with any and all initiatives.

Several suggestions were put on the table with regard to costs of roads and bridges to be potentially transferred.

It is recognized that any transfer would result in additional cost to the local municipality. However, the transfer may result in an overall savings to the taxpayer.

The Committee agreed that the original scope as set out at the beginning of the project should be re-visited to understand the first principles of the recommendations now before Committee. It was noted that direction must be provided to the Consultant.

The Committee discussed the importance of having the same members of this Committee remain through the completion of this project. The Committee directed staff to bring forward the Terms of Reference for the TMP Steering Committee to the Planning and Development Committee for discussion.

The Committee indicated that County Council be updated on the Transportation Master Plan process and requested that this Committee bring forward information as part of the November 26th Council session to discuss and review the concepts at a high level and collaborate to develop an implementation plan.

Chair Pringle will discuss the hosting of a workshop following Council with the CAO and the Clerks office.

The meeting adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

Bob Pringle, Chair