
Transportation Master Plan Public Meeting
Grey County Administration Building, Owen Sound

Friday, March 6, 2015 6:00 p.m.

Present: Warden Kevin Eccles, Randy Scherzer, Director of Planning, Mike Kelly,
Director of Transportation and Monica Scribner, Recording Secretary

Opening Remarks

Warden Eccles called the public meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending. He gave a brief overview of the evening's events and mentioned that there is a two month window for staff to receive comments from the public. He then introduced staff.

Mr. Scherzer and Mr. Kelly provided the Transportation Master Plan presentation.

Comments received on the following:

Transit

Warden Eccles commented that with 22 individual transit service providers in our area, the biggest hurdle is that some providers have a clear funding model and others don't. Trying to co-ordinate them all would be difficult. The intent of Grey County is to have all of the service providers coordinated to maximize the ridership while improving the service provided.

Active Transportation

Peter French from Grey Highlands commented there is often conflict between cyclists and motorists. At a meeting with Grey County, the cyclists verified that they prefer to go on low volume roads with paved shoulders vs. higher volume roads, roads with hills, curves and truck traffic. Grey County is considering the creation of a map with layers to

show which roads are paved, have paved shoulders, hills and curves; which would help cyclists determine their best route.

From a drivers point of view he felt some cyclists refuse to move over to a single lane. He feels it's important to set up some rules of the roads e.g. pairs or single row. Providing education for both cyclists and drivers of rules of the roads may create better communication for all. To create a give and take situation and promote fairness to all, recommendations to compare the rules currently set out for the snowmobile clubs and consider a similar set of rules.

Another suggestion is to make sure the OPP are aware of what the rules are. The cyclist group he belongs to is willing to make pamphlets to help educate the public.

Community Traffic

Peter French from Grey Highlands asked if the setbacks and the safety zone are universal. Mr. Kelly confirmed that 75 feet from the centre line is the standard setback and if it's less than 75 feet then it has to be brought to the Transportation Committee for approval.

Mr. French then asked if adding more crosswalk signs is a possibility and Mr. Kelly stated that crosswalks should only be installed when the warrants are met to ensure safety.

Mr. French commented that the exterior signage in Ontario is terrible and believes it's time for it to be changed. There are lots of white and grey coloured signs that don't stand out and are difficult to see, especially with all the snow we receive in our area. If signs were brighter colours, people would pay more attention. E.g. fire trucks are red but yellow would catch more attention.

Mr. Kelly stated that regulated signs such as speed limit and stop signs are legal signs and must conform to the Highway Traffic Act. We need to look at the big picture that there is consistency through the province. Mr. French asked if Grey County could be the ones to raise the issue to the Province. He and a few others are considering discussing it with the local MPP.

Keith Ellison from Grey Highlands asked if there have been any community traffic calming tools added to the 'toolbox' since the process started. Mr. Scherzer responded that it's a policy toolbox and if County Council provides direction to pursue this component of the TMP, policies would be developed in a consistent manner.

Don Fobert from Georgian Bluffs remarked that there have been lots of changes to signs over the years. He is unsure of why so many people miss stopping at stop signs now that the signs are reflective. He is concerned that from one county to the next the

speed limits are different and feels if the speed limits were raised, there would be fewer accidents. He complimented Grey County's roads stating they are in good shape and feels that on a straight county road the speeds should be increased from 80km to 90 kms.

Stephanie Needham from Grey Highlands asked if placing flashing lights in their community, like Bognor has, would help their community traffic issue. Mr. Kelly stated that he has talked previously with his Area Foreman who monitors that area who feels that the flashing lights seem to have made no difference to the speeds people travel through Bognor. Ray MacDonald from Grey Highlands inquired if there were any responses from the Bognor residents. Mr. Kelly confirmed he was unsure.

Keith Ellison asked if speed reduction is limited only to school areas, where there are lights and signs posted. Mr. Kelly clarified that yes, it is limited only to school areas.

Road Rationalization

Brian McCulloch from Grey Highlands mentioned that he mainly uses Grey Road 13 since it is usually the safest road in that area in the winter. County Road 7 is often closed and if Grey Road 13 became municipally maintained, that it would limit transportation in the area. He is concerned whose responsibility the snow maintenance would be, how you make sure it's all looked after and that everyone is working together. Mr. Kelly indicated that if the county or local municipality owned Grey Road 13, the same minimum maintenance standards would apply.

Mr. McCulloch also indicated that safety should be the first priority and that the topography (i.e. hills and valleys) should be taken into consideration prior to considering transferring the roads.

Keith Ellison remarked that an option might be for the physical work on the roads to be the responsibility of the county and the maintenance be completed by the municipality.

He also stated that safety has to be number one no matter who is looking after the roads. Mr. Kelly agreed that there are minimum safety standards that have to be met no matter what and small community safety is a must.

There was discussion that Kimberley has a long hill that you pick up speed entering into and this is one of the factors as to why some drivers speed through Kimberley. As indicated in the presentation, vehicle operators drive at the speed they are comfortable with.

Peter French remarked that no one wants the roads passed off to them, questioned if other counties are doing road trades and wondered how the municipalities feel about this.

Mr. Kelly and Warden Eccles identified that back in the day you would have a county road coming into your village. Today, we are struggling with the infrastructure and large trucks that are now coming into Owen Sound instead of the smaller communities like Desboro. There are a lot of changes proposed and there will be a great deal of discussion before any decisions are made.

Brian McCulloch mentioned that weather patterns such as drifting snow in our area are of big concern. People will often take Grey Road 13 vs. Grey Road 7 depending on the weather. Most people want a direct path and don't want to stop or slow down in the small towns.

John Savec from Town of Blue Mountains asked how it will be decided which roads could be downloaded and how that would be reflected in the taxes if they were. Mr. Scherzer provided clarity that it's a concept for now. We are identifying the choices and ideas to help the Councillors with decision making. Things won't change overnight, but we are looking at all the facts including if the municipalities have the resources to maintain the roads if transferred.

Bob Knapp from Georgian Bluffs feels Grey Road 1 should have received a bike lane when it was re-done. With the truck traffic on that road it makes it difficult for cycling. Mr. Scherzer responded that we are looking at a new policy and procedure for paved shoulder locations.

Goods Movement

There were no comments.

Bridge Rationalization

Peter French suggested that since each municipality doesn't normally have a Bridge Engineer on staff, the County should keep all the bridges. Each of the municipalities could contribute funding to pay for the engineer and this could eliminate a redundancy of staff.

Mr. Kelly replied that the municipal owned bridges are the responsibility of the municipality and hiring a bridge engineer to share between everyone is a possibility for the future.

Connecting Link

Keith Ellison asked if the Province would download large future developments, like the Markdale Hospital, to the County. If connecting links were to be implemented, setbacks, signage, entrance permits, maintenance, etc. from a County road running

through a settlement area would be dealt with by the municipality instead of shared between the County and the Municipality. He felt it would be a win for the County, the Municipality and the community if financial concessions were provided for the maintenance and construction of the connecting links and the rest would be under local municipal control.

Other Implementation Strategies

There were no comments

Next Steps

Mr. Scherzer concluded that staff will summarize today's comments as well as past and future comments and provide the comments to Grey County Council for their consideration.

Further Comments from the Public

Sharron Colter from Bruce County, member of the Flight #68 group, stated she is an advocate for partnering with the airports in Bruce and Grey County. She feels that keeping the Warton Keppel International Airport open is essential and that we should look at the overall operational financial needs for our area. The Air Ambulance (ORNGE), Search and Rescue planes and the Warton weather station is not providing enough funding for the Warton Keppel Airport to remain viable. She stated that both counties should work together since we all benefit from the local airports and that all the municipalities should pay for the facility. Currently Collingwood gives 1% of total revenues to the Collingwood Airport. Last year the cost in South Bruce Peninsula was \$20.84 per household per year towards the Warton Keppel Airport which has now changed to \$10.42/year for 2015.

Warden Eccles identified that our area has changed so much and with technology changing so fast, we are unsure where technology will take us in the next 10 years; drones may be a possibility.

Keith Ellison asked if the afternoon presentation at Grey Roots was comparable to this presentation. Mr. Scherzer and Mr. Kelly clarified that the presentation was exactly the same, many of the comments were similar and that the minutes from the afternoon session will be posted on our website as soon as they are available.

Keith Ellison extended his thanks to the staff and stated "this has been wonderful and appreciated".

Mayor Eccles reminded the audience of the comment forms available, due before May 6, 2015 for anyone interested as well as the sign-up sheet for future notifications. There were no further comments so he thanked the public for their attendance and adjourned the meeting.