



Committee Report

To:	Warden McQueen and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	October 22, 2020
Subject / Report No:	EDTC-CW-16-20
Title:	Grey County Cycling and Trails Master Plan
Prepared by:	Bryan Plumstead, Pat Hoy, Randy Scherzer
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove, CAO
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee as amended per Resolution CW183-20; Endorsed by County Council November 12, 2020 per Resolution CC87-20;

Recommendation

- 1. That Report EDTC-CW-16-20 outlining priority recommendations be received; and**
- 2. That the Grey County Cycling and Trails Master Plan be approved as presented; and**
- 3. That staff be directed to implement the recommendations/action items identified in the Plan within the timeframes indicated, subject to annual budget approval.**

Executive Summary

The Grey County Cycling & Trails Master Plan (Plan) has been developed with input and involvement from County staff, member municipal staff, elected officials, stakeholders, tourism representatives, public health officials, and residents. The Plan outlines a cycling and trails network, and its components are identified, costed and phased for implementation. Phasing and costing for capital projects are divided into Phase 1 – Short Term for 2020-2029 and Phase 2 – Long Term for 2030 and beyond. Phase 1 projects total \$3.5 M with \$3.1 M already included in the County's 10-year capital plan, and \$403,000 identified as additional projects that would require additional or external funding commitments to complete. In addition to infrastructure costs, the

plan provides suggestions for programming, partnerships and implementation management.

The final version of the Plan has a greater focus on trails, compared to previous versions of the Plan where the focus was predominantly on road cycling. The Plan makes recommendations for 2 separate working groups to be formed to represent both road and trail cycling users. As the working groups have not yet been formed, staff have highlighted 6 of the 23 recommendations to focus on during the 2021 budget process.

Background and Discussion

A Draft Grey County Cycling & Trails Master Plan was brought to County Council on February 27, 2020. This initiated a comment period in which input, and feedback were sought from the public, stakeholders and member municipalities. A public information session was hosted on March 12, and an on-line survey and map-based information gathering tool were also created and publicized. The 30-day comment period was extended due to COVID-19 and ended on August 14, 2020. Several written submissions, emails and on-line comments were collected, and staff made three presentations. All comments and feedback were reviewed by the consultant and staff and incorporated into the final plan.

Summary of feedback to the Plan

- Trails organizations including the Bruce Trail Conservancy clubs and Kolapore Wilderness Trails Association provided extensive comments relating to the focus on on-road cycling and comparatively less detail for off-road trails in the draft plan.
- Some edits to correct maps and cycling facilities were suggested.
- Comments were received regarding the importance of safety and education within the plan, and separating cycling from roads with high truck traffic.
- Issues around liability when a cycling route is designated and signed were raised.
- Ensuring accessibility is considered for trail development was raised.

Preparation of Final Plan

WSP summarized all comments and met with the Steering Committee to review comments and updates to the plan. A foreword was added at the beginning of the plan to clarify that the plan does focus on on-road cycling and off-road trails where cycling is permitted. The importance of off-road trails and networks such as the Bruce Trail was noted and that county staff will continue to work with partners to implement off-road trails. One significant change was the recommendation to have 2 separate working

groups, one for on-road cycling and one for off-road trails to support implementation of the Plan.

Grey County Cycling & Trails Master Plan

At a high-level, the Cycling and Trails Master Plan is intended to reflect the guiding principles and objectives found in policies at all levels of government that support enhanced mobility, increased quality of life and healthy communities.

The master plan has been developed with input and involvement from County staff, member municipal staff, elected officials, stakeholders, tourism representatives, public health officials, and residents.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter one provides background for the plan, who it is for, how the plan was developed and how the public and stakeholders were involved. Existing initiatives and facilities and routes are detailed, results of the public survey summarized, and the plan principles, vision and objectives outlined.

Grey County’s Vision for Cycling & Trails

“Grey County with its nine member municipalities, surrounding regions and agency partners together support the development of a plan that identifies a complete, continuous and connected network of high-quality cycling and trail routes to accommodate varying user types of all ages and abilities (walkers, hikers, cyclists, skiers, equestrians, etc.), and opportunities to explore the County’s natural landscape in a safe and enjoyable way all year-round.

The Cycling and Trails Master Plan aims to enhance the quality of life for County residents by providing low-cost access and options to engage in physical activity to improve health and social well-being. The plan is also intended to improve opportunities for economic development and tourism by situating Grey County as a leader of cycling and trails in Ontario by connecting member municipalities, key destinations and surrounding regions.”

Chapter 2 – The Network

Four steps were undertaken to create the draft network; existing conditions including routes & trails were catalogued, gaps and candidate routes were evaluated according to a set of criteria, field investigations were done with photography linked to google mapping, and a selection of network routes and facilities was made using Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18. This resulted in a network map with recommended facilities ranging from signage to paved shoulders and other facilities.

Chapter 3 – Network Components

This chapter provides resources on planning, design and implementation of the network and its facilities. This includes facility design, travel lane widths, trail crossings, signage and wayfinding, user types and user trips (eg. commuter, recreational or tourism) and network considerations (partial paved shoulders, road surface and risk management and liability.)

Chapter 4 – Implementing the Plan

Implementation of the Cycling and Trails Master Plan require strategic recommendations that are realistic, consistent with the County’s existing processes and flexible enough to respond to future opportunities. These recommendations are not intended to be prescriptive nor commit the County and its member municipalities to future funding or a schedule of projects. Phasing and costing for capital projects are divided into Phase 1 – Short Term for 2020-2029 and Phase 2 – Long Term for 2030 and beyond. Phase 1 projects total \$3.468 M with just over \$3M included in the County’s 10 year capital plan, and \$403,000 identified as additional projects that would require funding commitments to complete. In addition to infrastructure costs, the plan provides suggestions for programming, partnerships and implementation management.

Next Steps

Approval of the Grey County Cycling & Trails Master Plan provides a vision and objectives and a blueprint for implementation to work towards for Grey County over the next decade and beyond. The Plan includes 23 recommendations, which are attached to this report. Staff have reviewed these recommendations and have highlighted six priority recommendations for immediate and short-term action. Many of the other recommendations are suggested approaches and tools to be incorporated into on-going work by county staff and will be shared with municipal partners and stakeholders.

No.	Recommendation	Timeframe
2	The proposed cycling and trails network illustrated on Maps 2a and 2b should be adopted by County Council to guide future design and implementation.	Immediate
11.	County staff should develop a wayfinding strategy for the cycling and trails network. Building upon a wayfinding strategy, a pilot project can be implemented to test the functionality of the wayfinding system and get feedback from users (refer to section 3.1.4).	Short-Term
12	The County should review and adopt the appropriate risk management and liability prevention strategies into day-to-day	Immediate

	decision making related to cycling and trails planning, design and maintenance.	
13.	The phasing plan illustrated in Maps 3a and 3b should be adopted by County Council and staff as a guide for the implementation of the cycling and trails network and to inform annual decision-making related to capital and operating budgets.	Immediate
18.	It is recommended that the County establish two working groups: a Cycling Working group and an Off-Road Trails Working group. Each working group could include representation from all member municipalities, partners and stakeholder groups to help facilitate a coordinated and collaborative effort for the on-going support of the Cycling and Trails Master Plan.	Immediate
22.	County staff should continue to explore external funding sources and partnerships to help fund implementation of the Cycling and Trails Master Plan.	Immediate

Subject to approval of this Plan by Council, staff from Transportation Services, Planning and Economic Development, Tourism and Culture are building these recommendations into their work plans and budgets for 2021. The recommendation for a Cycling Working group and an Off-Road Trails Working group are being suggested by staff to be working groups, which would be less formal and would focus more on networking with partners to work on common issues, projects and sharing information, with periodic reporting back to council. Applications for funding for some of the infrastructure components such as paved shoulders and signage are being prepared subject to council approval of the plan.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The development of the County’s Cycling and Trails Master Plan is consistent with Master Plan Approach #1 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process, which considers Phases 1 and 2.

Financial and Resource Implications

Cost of this plan was \$53,000 and was funded by Grey County (\$27,000), Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program (\$16,000) and Regional Tourism Organization 7 (\$10,000). Staff from the tourism department, planning, transportation services, and GIS staff in IT all contributed significantly to work with the consultants, and to be available for public consultation and communicate with stakeholders and the public.

Recommendations in this plan are subject to existing staffing resources. Any financial implications of the plan will be included in future budgets for consideration and the availability of senior level government funding.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, Planning, Transportation Services, IT
- External Grey Bruce Health Unit (Stakeholders, agencies, member municipalities and interested members of the public have been consulted throughout the preparation of this plan)

Appendices and Attachments

[Final Draft Grey County Cycling and Trails Master Plan](#)

[Appendix A – Policy Summary](#)

[Appendix B – Consultation Summary](#)

[Appendix C – Signage Considerations](#)

[Appendix D – Network Database](#)

[Appendix E – City of Owen Sound Official Plan Schedule D](#)

Recommendations Identified in Grey County Cycling & Trails Master Plan (attached)

Recommendations – Grey County Cycling & Trails Master Plan

No.	Recommendation	Timeframe
Chapter 2 – The Network		
1	The route selection criteria identified in step 2 should be used beyond the lifespan of the plan when new routes are being considered to determine how best to integrate these routes with the cycling and trails network.	On-going
2	The proposed cycling and trails network illustrated on Maps 2a and 2b should be adopted by County Council to guide future design and implementation.	Immediate
3	It is recommended that the County continue to work with its partners to identify future opportunities to improve connections to off-road single-track, wilderness trails (e.g. links to /from wilderness trail systems such as Kolapore Wilderness Trails, Bruce Trail, etc. and connections between wilderness trails and community destinations / services.)	On-going
4.	Incorporate the cycling and trails network as a Schedule in the County's Official Plan when next updated.	Medium-Term
5.	The updated OTM Book 18 three-step facility selection process should be referred to by County staff and its partners as the network is implemented over time to review and confirm facility types before moving into the design and construction stages.	On-going
6.	The proposed cycling and trails network should be flexible enough to provide for change in routing and/or facility types based on new information, Council policy and data as it becomes available. There may be opportunities for additional or alternate connections to be made in the future. These connections should be considered, and the mapping and database updated if a change is warranted.	On-going
7.	It is recommended that the County leverage future opportunities to upgrade existing partial paved shoulders, where possible / feasible, when the respective roads are next scheduled for reconstruction or resurfacing to fully paved shoulders and greater separation from motor vehicle traffic.	On-going

No.	Recommendation	Timeframe
Chapter 3 – Network Components		
8.	It is recommended that County staff and its partners reference the guidelines and standards identified in section 3.1 when moving forward with the planning, design and implementation of cycling and trails infrastructure.	On-going
9.	It is recommended that consideration be given to the travel lane widths consistent with the Transportation Association of Canada Geometric Design Guide for Canadian Roads (see section 3.1.2) when roads identified on the County’s cycling and trails network, are next scheduled for resurfacing / reconstruction to implement paved shoulders (desired width of 1.5 metres) if and where possible.	On-going
10.	The County should identify significant trail crossings and explore options for implementing crossings and structures that reflect the design of the trail to provide a greater sense of connectivity.	On-going
11.	County staff should develop a wayfinding strategy for the cycling and trails network. Building upon a wayfinding strategy, a pilot project can be implemented to test the functionality of the wayfinding system and get feedback from users (refer to section 3.1.4).	Short-Term
12	The County should review and adopt the appropriate risk management and liability prevention strategies into day-to-day decision making related to cycling and trails planning, design and maintenance.	Immediate

Chapter 4 – Implementing the Plan		
13.	The phasing plan illustrated in Maps 3a and 3b should be adopted by County Council and staff as a guide for the implementation of the cycling and trails network and to inform annual decision-making related to capital and operating budgets.	Immediate
14.	County staff should explore opportunities to advance long-term projects into the short-term as part of planned capital roadway/infrastructure projects, should any opportunities arise in the future.	On-going

No.	Recommendation	Timeframe
Chapter 4 – Implementing the Plan (cont'd)		
16.	County staff should refer to the proposed cost estimates (section 4.2) to identify opportunities to build the costs for cycling and / or trail facilities into the budgets of large-scale capital projects, where possible.	On-going
17.	It is recommended that County staff report back to Council on an annual basis to provide an update on the implementation of new infrastructure and to provide Council with an outlook for anticipated cycling and trail projects to be completed in the following year.	On-going
18.	It is recommended that the County establish two working groups: Cycling Working group and Off-Road Trails Working group. Each working group could include representation from all member municipalities, partners and stakeholder groups to help facilitate a coordinated and collaborative effort for the on-going support of the Cycling and Trails Master Plan.	Immediate
19.	County staff should work with its partners (including but not limited to the Bruce Trail Conservancy) to increase user education of trail etiquette and permitted trail uses on the various trails located within Grey County include off-road multi-use trails (where cycling is permitted) and off-road single-track, wilderness trails.	Immediate
20.	County staff should review and consider undertaking the action items identified in Table 11, Table 12 and Table 14 to support the delivery of programs and initiatives in Grey County.	Short-term
21	The County should reach out to partners identified in Table 15 and continue to work together to coordinate the implementation of the Cycling and Trails Master Plan. The Cycling Working group and Off-Road Trails Working group (see recommendation #18) can also serve as champions to facilitate coordination and efforts between the County and its partners.	Short-term
22.	County staff should continue to explore external funding sources and partnerships to help fund implementation of the Cycling and Trails Master Plan.	Immediate
23.	County staff should review and consider utilizing the tools and strategies identified in sections 4.6.2, 4.6.3 and 4.6.4 to support on- going implementation, management and monitoring of the proposed infrastructure and programs contained in the Cycling and Trails Master Plan.	On-going

