

Transportation Master Plan Municipal Information
Session

Grey Roots Museum, Owen Sound

Friday, March 6, 2015 1:30 p.m.

Opening Remarks

Warden Eccles welcomed everyone and introduced Mr. Scherzer and Mr. Kelly. He stated that the purpose of today is to share information and to collect comments to assist County council with information to help them decide how best to proceed.

Mr. Scherzer and Mr. Kelly provided the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) presentation.

Comments, concerns and suggestions received on the following:

Suggestion to add the word 'visit' to our major purpose page so it would state: 'Ensure the transportation system is designed to attract people to live, visit and work in Grey County.'

Transit

There were no concerns expressed.

Active Transportation

- County and municipalities must co-ordinate together regarding cyclist routes
- There are legislation changes to the Highway Traffic Act regarding bicycling being considered.

- Concern that paved shoulders could add additional liabilities; would paved shoulders create more maintenance?
- ATV groups looking for more access on Grey roads
- Possible to co-ordinate TMP with the signage program that Tourism/Economic Development is working on?
- Possibility that an 'App' could be created to show trails that would show the length of the trail, degree of difficulty, etc.
- Has legislation regarding cyclists to ride single file on roads come into effect? Would paved shoulders be any safer and cause less conflict between motorists and cyclists?

Community Traffic

- Important to work with the snowmobile clubs to find new ways to attract more snowmobiling enthusiasts to our area. Capitalizing on the economic development benefits of snowmobiles would help ensure they don't by-pass our stores, eateries, etc. The CP Rail Trail is our most used trail for snowmobilers.
- Essential to look at sharing trail use in a safe fashion.
- Suggestion that the Georgian Trail should allow snowmobiles which could provide better trail linkages and could boost tourism, etc.

Road Rationalization

- Concerns expressed with regard to transferring roads:
 - municipal standards vs. county standards
 - would funding go along with any transferred roads?
 - would the County budget be reduced if the transfers occurred and thereby reduce County operating costs?
(e.g. if the County had ½ the roads, would the County need ½ the trucks, etc.)
- Crucial point that must be kept in mind is that the TMP is a huge project and the suggestions will help the council with how best to proceed. Some parts of the TMP may be within the next two years, some may need to be on a more long term basis (e.g. 20 to 30 years)
- Is eliminating or closing roads an option?
- Some felt that with all the work and public meetings so far, postponing the transfers for another 2 years would be unsuitable; let's keep moving forward.
- Need to add the importance of the work, live and visit to the County roads principles section.

- The Provincial Government downloaded many roads in 1996. Since then, the traffic rate is much higher than it was 20 years ago. Our area, especially the Town of Blue Mountains, has grown tremendously over those years. We only have a few Provincial Highways in our area and with the expectation of further development, tourism and aging baby boomers coming our way to live, we should consider advocating to the Province to upload them back.
- Suggestion to look at the last Road Rationalization Study and see if any of the information would be helpful.
- People want short, practical and direct routes. We need to keep in mind that the principle of calming roads is important and although some of our highways have scenic routes and twists and turns, is that better than a 400 series highway?
- Some of the attendees felt confused as to why the road transfers are even being considered. Mr. Scherzer stated that it is important to look at the road network as a whole and look at what function the road is serving. (i.e. local function vs. County/Regional function). Construction and maintenance standards can then be developed based on the function of the road.
- Warden Eccles commented that when roads are reconstructed they can alter the usage of many roads in the vicinity. We need to look at future development.
- Suggestion to consider moving forward on downloading roads for one or two municipalities (those that want to) and postponing the rest. The other municipalities agreed with postponing any transfers.

Goods Movement

There was a suggestion to work towards the obvious roads like Grey Road 9 that would better accommodate truck traffic.

General Comments:

- This has been a great exercise to get all of us together to share thoughts. Working together as a team is important to save the taxpayers money, keep moving forward and look at all the opportunities available.

Bridge Rationalization

- Ask the Conservation Authorities for input regarding potential bridge closures.
- Municipal asset management plans should be used as an information resource when investigating whether a bridge should remain open or not.

Connecting Link

Items to consider in the agreements if we change ownership of some roads:

- cost sharing
- what about just amending County sign/setback policies instead
- development charges
- expenses such as civic addressing, signs, etc.
- guidance from the County with budgeting

Other Implementation Strategies

- There are two designations for airports; registered and certified (Warton). It is crucial to keep the standards up for the Warton Airport and make sure Bruce County is involved.
- Drones should be a consideration when exploring options for airports
- Since we have lost some rail trails in the past, keeping the CP Rail Trail is important
- Check to see if the rail corridors have been looked at for good connectivity

Next Steps

- Suggestion to have one of the municipalities do a pilot project for implementing the TMP recommendations (e.g. connecting links)
- Suggestion to have a public meeting at each municipality to get their local ideas
- To contact the agricultural farm groups for their input regarding bridges and roads
- Since Simcoe County has just finished their TMP review, we should look at theirs for ideas
- To group and share public comments from each municipality

There was a discussion on road maintenance costs. It is important that we compare apples to apples for road maintenance costs when comparing municipal and county roads. The county roads have higher traffic rates so they are at a higher maintained level of service which would cost more. In 2014 the County spent approximately \$5,600 per centre line of road for winter maintenance and \$2,870 for summer maintenance. It should be noted that the summer maintenance includes several items that some municipalities would consider a capital cost or several items that other municipalities do not undertake. Mr. Kelly will send a copy of the breakdown to the municipal road departments.

Mr. Kelly and Mr. Scherzer reminded that comments are due before May 6, 2015. They stated the presentation will be posted on the County website and to let staff or the public know that they can contact them for further information. They look forward to receiving further comments from the municipalities and thanked everyone for attending.