

COMMITTEE REPORT



TO **Community Development and Environmental Services
Committee**

SERVICE AREA Community Design and Development Services
DATE May 09, 2008

SUBJECT Bicycle-Friendly Guelph Project
REPORT NUMBER 08-55

RECOMMENDATION

"THAT the Community Design and Development Report 08-55, dated May 9, 2008, on the 'Bicycle-Friendly Guelph Project' be received;

AND THAT Council authorize staff to proceed with developing a bicycle transportation plan, including financing plan and implementation strategy, to make Guelph a bicycle-friendly city and achieve a target cycling modal share of 3% of all daily trips in ten years;

AND THAT Council approve the establishment of a Bicycle Transportation Advisory Committee to facilitate the development of Guelph's bicycle transportation plan."

BACKGROUND

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is an important component of Guelph's Transportation Strategy, approved by Council in 2001, and the Guelph-Wellington Transportation Study, approved by Council in 2005. TDM is also part of Guelph's Growth Strategy to address the transportation implications of the City's projected growth to 2031.

TDM encourages alternative modes such as walking, cycling, carpooling and public transit to reduce the use of single-occupancy vehicles. The short-term and long-term benefits of TDM measures are well recognized and include: reducing roadway traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions and transportation infrastructure investments, as well as contributing to healthy communities.

Walking and cycling are two active modes of transportation that contribute to a healthy, physically active community. Encouraging active transportation has positive impacts on the social and physical well-being of individuals in the community, and can lower healthcare costs associated with unhealthy and unfit lifestyles.

Walking accounts for an impressive 6.3% (or 15,000 trips) of all daily trips in Guelph at present, while cycling accounts for 1% (2,400) of them. The low cycling modal share is not consistent with the popularity of cycling in Guelph, and the purpose of the proposed bicycle transportation plan is to work with the cycling community and put in place a comprehensive infrastructure of cycling network and supporting programs with the goal of tripling the cycling modal share in ten years.

Guelph's TDM program is currently focused on two major initiatives: promoting walk-to-school among children and transit use among employees. These initiatives supplement the City's existing infrastructure for walking and the allocation of resources to enhance transit use. The proposed initiative is aimed at improving Guelph's cycling infrastructure to make Guelph a bicycle-friendly city and increase its cycling modal share.

Bicycle Transportation Plan

The proposal to develop a bicycle transportation plan for Guelph is based on a review of the best practices in bicycle friendly cities across North America and Europe. The review was undertaken by staff with consulting assistance provided by Mpower Business Guides. A summary of the review is attached to this report (Annex 1).

The best practices review indicates that a high modal share of cycling and the perception of safety and convenience in cycling is the direct result of integrating the practices of engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. The review also notes the role of the Bicycle Transportation Advisory Committee comprising municipal, stakeholder and industry representatives in the development and implementation of a bicycle transportation plan.

Based on this review and the need for community consultation, staff are recommending the establishment of a Bicycle Transportation Advisory Committee (BTAC) in Guelph to assist with developing and implementing the proposed bicycle transportation plan. The membership of the proposed BTAC will include:

- City staff (from Engineering, Traffic, Planning and Transit)
- Representatives from bicycle user groups or stakeholders
- Representatives from bicycle industry group
- Community representatives
- Representatives from environmental groups / stakeholders
- Representatives from health and education sectors
- Police Services

The purpose of the Bicycle Transportation Advisory Committee is to:

- represent the views of various user groups in the community
- assist in identifying weaknesses and gaps in the existing network, facilities, and implementation program
- provide input to developing Guelph's bicycle transportation plan and supporting programs
- assist in implementing the programs and initiatives from the final plan

The development of the bicycle plan will include the following principal tasks:

- Inventory and base mapping of existing physical infrastructure and facilities
- Survey of public and user perceptions of cycling in Guelph
- Identify specific user groups and their needs
- Identify spatial desire lines for cycling based on land use distribution
- Review/update the City's bicycle network plan comprising both on-road and off-road facilities corresponding to user needs and cycling desire lines
- Identify supportive programs based on user needs, e.g. workplace amenities, bicycle parking, bike racks on buses etc.
- Establish design and safety standards for facilities and users
- Develop education and outreach programs targeting users, community, institutions and employers
- Establish cycling modal share targets, where possible by areas and user groups
- Develop an implementation and monitoring plan

The development of the bicycle transportation plan will be completed within one year and presented to Council for approval in April 2009.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1: An attractive, well-functioning and sustainable city.

Goal 2: A healthy and safe community where life can be lived to the fullest.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The work on the Bicycle Transportation Plan will be carried out by City Staff with limited outside consulting services. The amount of \$25,000 is included in the approved 2008-2010 Capital Project RD0118 (Transportation Strategy Implementation).

DEPARTMENTAL CONSULTATION

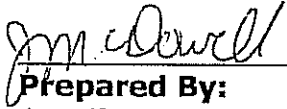
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COMMUNICATIONS

N/A


ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Bicycle Friendly City Project: International best practices review



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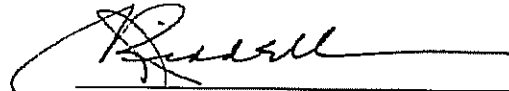
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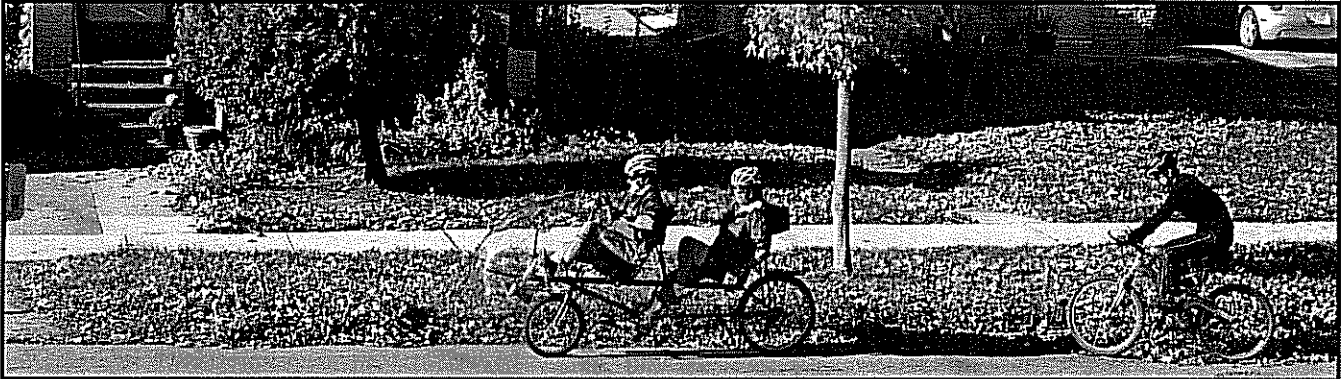
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Bicycle Friendly City Project

Phase One: International Best Practices Review

April 2008

Introduction

The City of Guelph has a strong potential for becoming a leading bicycle-friendly city in Canada. The combination of demographics, urban landscape, and new policy objectives for energy conservation and urban intensification are conducive to developing a stronger bicycling culture. The Bicycle Friendly City Project can address several challenges in Guelph, including the growing population pressures on road infrastructure, and the greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. The objective of the Bicycle Friendly City Project is to create an infrastructure framework to increase the modal share of cyclists from the existing 1.0% of daily trips, to 3% in 10 years. This will translate to increasing the daily bicycle trips from 2,500 at present, to about 8,000 in 2018. Recreational trips are not included in these figures.

Phase one in the Bicycle Friendly City Project involves research into determining the best bicycling practices in North America and Europe. This information will help the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program establish a plan that sets out objectives and recommendations required to create a safe, comfortable, and integrated bicycle network for the City of Guelph. The following report summarizes the measures that have resulted in high modal shifts toward cycling in the top twenty bicycle-friendly cities.

Best Bicycle Practices – The *Five Es*

Research was conducted on twenty leading bicycle friendly cities in North America and Europe, including two local Ontario cities with population sizes comparable to Guelph. Our findings indicate that the top bicycling cities followed the best bicycle practices within five categories, which we have termed the 'Five Es'. The Five Es represent Engineering, Enforcement, Encouragement, Evaluation, and Education, and govern the decisions of the top cities to develop, implement, and manage their bicycle system plans. The Five Es have been adopted by the League of American Bicyclists, the Alternative Transportation Canada 'Go for Green', and the European Local Transportation Information Services (ELTIS). The twenty cities implemented the Five Es within a framework of community involvement, often achieved through a Bicycle Transportation Advisory Committee.

Engineering includes the identification of standards, design guidelines, and classifications for provision of bicycle transportation infrastructure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- bicycle infrastructure (lanes, bridges, route signage, safety signals)
- frequent road maintenance
- bike-friendly traffic calming
- end-use facilities *i.e.* bike racks, parking
- integrating cycling with other modes, *e.g.* bus bike racks on busses and trains
- bicycle-supportive infrastructure policies for engineers and planners

Education involves the development of marketing and public information programs and materials to expand public knowledge on the availability of cycling facilities, and benefits of cycling. This includes, but is not limited to:

- educating motorists to share the road
- safety programs for children and adults
- safety material inserts included in mandatory mail-outs (*i.e.* tax renewal, drivers licensing and testing, or inserts with utility bills each month)
- bicycle ambassador program
- bicycle instructors
- bicycle route maps
- bicycle public forums
- bicycle website
- government partnerships to promote safe cycling

Encouragement involves the development of incentives to enhance the use of cycling and walking as alternative transportation methods. This includes, but is not limited to:

- community incentive programs, *i.e.* awards, discounts, or recognition programs
- community partnerships with non-governmental organizations
- marketing, *e.g.* advertisement and public relations
- bicycle events, *i.e.* National Bike Month, Annual Bike Tours, Bike to Work week, mountain bike races, etc
- on-line trip planning
- Safe routes to schools, commercial centers, employment areas

Enforcement involves establishing rules for both cyclists and motorists on all types of routes. This includes, but is not limited to:

- full time bicycle coordinator
- policies for supporting cycling
- local police department liaison
- police enforcement of traffic laws that apply to cyclists
- Police enforcement to encourage motorists to share the road and drive safely near cyclists
- public safety employees on bikes
- mandatory helmet law

Evaluation establishes clear measurement tools to evaluate cycling infrastructure and programs under the Five Es to assist with future planning. This includes, but is not limited to:

- percentage change in modal share
- number of accidents, injuries, thefts
- public feedback system
- external funding opportunities for infrastructure, education, encouragement, etc.
- number of kilometers of bicycle paths, signed routes, and lanes in the network
- comprehensive bicycle master plan
- evaluation of bike routes that connect with each other to provide seamless transportation options

Conclusion and Recommendations

The review of the best bicycling practices clearly indicates that a cycling plan must address each of the Five Es in order to successfully increase the modal share of cycling. Implementing the Five Es guides municipalities through a comprehensive approach to providing all types of cyclists with the infrastructure and education required to create a safe and practical cycling environment. The multitude of options within each category provides enough flexibility to tailor a cycling network to the needs and characteristics of any city.

The following recommendations have been put forth to determine the next steps to continue with phase two of the Bicycle Friendly City Project.

Recommendation:

Develop a Bicycle Transportation Plan for the City of Guelph based on the Five Es best bicycling practices review from the leading North American and European cities. Specific objectives are:

- To complete a comprehensive bicycle transportation inventory of existing resources, infrastructure, facilities, user groups, and public perceptions to develop a clear baseline for future planning. This phase will include a S.W.O. T. (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) analysis with public surveys, focus groups, and workshops guided by the Five Es.
- To establish a "Bicycle Transportation Advisory Board" to provide on-going input, monitoring and involvement on cycling-related matters in the city.
- To develop Bicycle Transportation Plan with input the Bicycle Transportation Advisory Board.
- To begin implementation the Bicycle Transportation Plan with clear measurable goals and objectives.

Benefits: This approach ensures a comprehensive, inclusive approach to creating a safe and enviable bicycle network in Guelph. It can lead to a significant increase in the modal share of cyclists, if implemented effectively. This approach also provides many opportunities for community involvement, giving meaning to the project as more than just an infrastructure initiative. It has a strong likelihood of leading Guelph toward being a best bicycle friendly city in Canada.

Challenges: Time and effort will need to be invested into community consultation and partnerships. There will need to be community commitment to making Guelph a bicycle-friendly city.

Appendices

- a. Website Addresses: *League of American Bicyclist*, *Alternative Transportation Canada 'Go for Green'*, and the *'ELTIS - European's Local Transportation Information Services*.
- b. Best Bicycle Practices Spreadsheet

Appendix A

Website Addresses

League of American Bicyclist	http://www.bikeleague.org
Alternative Transportation Canada 'Go for Green'	http://www.goforgreen.ca
ELTIS - European's Local Transportation Information Services	http://www.eltis.org