

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Public Works

2021 Oxford County Cycling Master Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Oxford County Council adopt the 2021 Draft Oxford County Cycling Master Plan as attached to Report No. PW 2022-34;
2. And further, that County Council direct Staff to file a Notice of Completion and commence the 30-day public review period as required under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The purpose of this report is to seek Oxford County Council approval to file a Notice of Completion and 30-day review period for the 2021 Draft Cycling Master Plan (CMP) in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process.
- The 2021 CMP has identified a long term cycling infrastructure implementation plan that will ultimately provide 190km of primary cycling routes on the County road network with connectivity between urban/settlement areas, neighbouring municipalities, local cycling/trail networks, tourist destinations and employment areas.
- High level costing for implementation of the primary cycling network identified in the 2021 CMP is estimated at approximately \$28 million over the next 10 to 20 year horizon with anticipated funding sources to include provincial and federal grant programs, development charges and capital reserves.

Implementation Points

Upon Council approval, staff will proceed to issue and file a Notice of Completion for the draft CMP. Copies of the final draft of the CMP study report will be available at the Area Municipal Offices and the Oxford County Administration Building, as well as on the *Speak Up, Oxford!* CMP webpage.

Following the 30-day public review period and subject to comments received, the CMP Class Environmental Assessment Study Report can be finalized and filed with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Financial Impact

The approved budget for the CMP was included in the 2020 Business Plan and Budget and was partially funded through the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program.

High level costing for implementation of cycling infrastructure on the primary network identified in the CMP is estimated to be approximately \$28 million over 10 - 20 years. Funding sources are anticipated to include provincial and federal grant funding, development charges and capital roads reserve.

This past January, Infrastructure Canada launched the Active Transportation (AT) Fund for new projects that improve community active transportation networks, with up to 60% grant funding available for eligible projects. Staff submitted a funding application (Report [PW 2022-16](#)) for AT projects including implementation of separated bike lanes (buffered paved shoulders) on various County roads identified as initial priorities in the draft CMP and identified as part of the province-wide cycling network within Oxford County.

The CMP recommendations will be utilized as an input to the 2024 update to the Oxford County Transportation Master Plan (TMP) that was initiated earlier this year in 2022. Cycling infrastructure implementation projects in the CMP will be taken into consideration for coordination with road network improvements identified in the 2024 TMP update.







Completion of the 2024 TMP update by Q4 2023 will further inform the next County development charges (DC) background study that is scheduled for 2024, with a comprehensive list of DC eligible transportation projects including on-road cycling infrastructure.

Funding for individual CMP implementation projects will be subject to County Council approval through annual budget and business plan submissions.

Communications

A copy of Report No. PW 2022-34 will be distributed to Area Municipalities and will be included on the Oxford County website and the *Speak Up, Oxford!* CMP webpage. Subsequent to the 30-day review period, the County will develop a communication plan to promote highlights from the Cycling Master Plan and show how it was informed by public feedback.

Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

					
WORKS WELL TOGETHER	WELL CONNECTED	SHAPES THE FUTURE	INFORMS & ENGAGES	PERFORMS & DELIVERS	POSITIVE IMPACT
1.ii.	2.i.	3.iii.			

DISCUSSION

Background

WSP Canada Group Limited (WSP) was retained by the County to develop the 2021 County-wide CMP. This undertaking commenced in April 2020 with a project team consisting of staff from Public Works and external project management support.

The development of a County-wide CMP was identified as part of the Active Transportation (AT) Strategy in the Oxford County 2019 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) adopted on April 24, 2019 (Report [PW 2019-16](#)). The AT Strategy was one of several key strategies identified in the 2019 TMP to promote multi-modal mobility and long term sustainability of the overall County transportation network. The need for multi-modal transportation options beyond that of single occupant motor vehicles is also identified as a key strategic direction within Oxford County's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan to help ensure that the County is well connected.

In 2018, the provincial government identified a province-wide cycling network and announced the development of a long term network implementation plan as part of the Ontario Cycling Strategy (Report No. [PW 2018-12](#)). The province-wide cycling network includes an east-west link within Oxford County primarily along County rural roads extending from east of Drumbo, through Woodstock, and continuing west of Ingersoll.

CMP Vision and Key Objectives

The CMP is a planning document that outlines a 20-year implementation plan for cycling infrastructure on the County road network and defines the vision for the future of cycling in Oxford County as follows:

To create an integrated and connected cycling network that promotes active transportation, tourism, and low carbon travel options as part of a sustainable multi-modal transportation network.

The CMP vision is supported by the following key objectives:

- On-road connectivity between communities and local cycling and trail networks;
- Alignment with provincial cycling initiatives and connectivity to province-wide cycling routes;
- Formation of a continuous network of cycling routes throughout Oxford County (on County roads and trails) which supports connectivity to community areas of significance, key destinations and attractions, etc. (i.e. high priority routes);
- Intermodal integration with public/inter-regional transit, car pool lots, passenger rail, etc.;
- Commuter cycling and tourism opportunities; and
- Affording cycling program education (and related initiatives) on the County's website or at public venues.

2021 CMP Methodology

The undertaking to prepare the CMP included the following methodology:

- Compliance to the MCEA Master Plan process;
- Inventory of existing and future cycling infrastructure including off road trails;
- Review of existing and planned cycling facilities and trail networks in each Area Municipality and neighbouring municipality;
- Recommendations for a future County-wide cycling network and multi-year implementation plan with high-level costing and financial strategy;
- Application of best practice design standards for cycling infrastructure within the road allowance; and
- Recommendations for programs and policies to promote cycling.

Consultation and Engagement Strategy

An extensive consultation and engagement strategy was developed as part of the CMP in order to seek community and stakeholder input. Due to COVID restrictions, consultation was conducted virtually.

A Notice of Commencement was issued at the start of the project and was distributed to Review Agencies, Indigenous Communities, Community Members, Area and Neighbouring Municipalities, public interest groups and businesses, and other various stakeholders. The Notice was also posted on *Speak Up, Oxford!* (SUO) and advertised in local newspapers (Oxford Review, Tillsonburg News, Ayr News).

Internal and external technical advisory committees (INTAC/EXTAC) were established and included key stakeholders and agencies. The INTAC consisted of internal County staff from Public Works, Community Planning, Strategic Initiatives, Strategic Communications and Engagement, and Tourism Oxford. The EXTAC consisted of representatives from Area and Boundary Municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Public Health, Ministry of Transportation, Oxford County Cycling Advisory Committee, and public interest groups and businesses.

Stakeholder (INTAC/EXTAC) engagement was undertaken in two distinct phases through virtual workshops and stakeholder interviews. The first round focused on confirming existing cycling conditions including routes and facilities, as well as identifying opportunities and challenges related to infrastructure, design, policy and programming. The second round focused on reviewing the proposed cycling network and identifying priorities, phasing and programming.

Public consultation was undertaken through an online engagement tool held from July 7 to August 31, 2020 that included three interactive activities:

- Identification of priorities and objectives to help inform cycling network recommendations;
- Mapping tool to identify destinations, barriers, missing links and design improvements; and,
- Online survey/questionnaire.

A total of 274 survey responses were received that resulted in the following key responses as summarized below:

- **Reasons not to Cycle**
 - Too many barriers.
 - Cycling network not accessible.
 - Cycling network lacks connectivity.
- **Reason to Cycle**
 - Health and quality of life.
 - Connection to natural areas.
- **Cycling Improvements**
 - Shoulders or shoulder paving.
 - Destinations: natural areas, shops.
 - Major Barriers: highways and lack of shoulders.

A Public Information Centre (PIC) was held on February 25, 2021 through a live virtual webinar that was recorded and posted on the County's website for viewing by those unable to attend the live presentation. The PIC presented an overview of the project and proposed recommendations and implementation plan of a County-wide cycling network. Input and feedback received through the PIC was used to make further adjustments to network routing and finalize CMP recommendations.

Historical Cycling Policy Implementation

In addition to the development of a County-wide CMP, the AT Strategy in the 2019 TMP includes provisions for infrastructure and policies to support AT (walking, cycling, etc.) that are in part a continuation of cycling initiatives originally adopted in 2012 as part of the amended Cycling Policies in the 2009 Oxford County TMP (Report No. [PW 2012-63](#)).

Since 2012, the following ongoing measures of the amended Cycling Policies have been implemented to accommodate cycling on the County road network and provide incremental safety improvements for both cyclists and motorists:

- Ongoing placement of 8.7m wide asphalt (where road width permits) with white edge/fog line to delineate a 1.0m wide paved shoulder as part of regular road resurfacing on County rural roads;
- Implementation of cycling infrastructure (bike lanes) as part of capital road reconstruction projects in urban areas;
- Installation of Share the Road (STR) signage; and
- Facilitation of an Oxford County Cycling Advisory Committee (OCCAC).

Collaboration with municipal and community partners has been facilitated through the OCCAC that has been active since 2013 and has provided input and feedback on implementation of cycling initiatives, including identification of preferred roads for cycling and associated STR sign installation and tourism oriented cycling routes. The OCCAC was also involved as a stakeholder for development of the 2019 TMP and 2021 CMP.

The OCCAC will be replaced with the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) for the next Council term (2023-2026) with a similar mandate and broader focus on AT and low carbon travel options (Report No. [CS 2022-21](#)).

Ongoing implementation of the cycling policies as part of scheduled capital road improvements since being adopted in 2012 has provided cycling improvements that include 8.7m wide asphalt (1.0m wide paved shoulders) and dedicated bicycle lanes in urban areas. As of 2021, this has resulted in:

- 1.0m paved shoulders on approximately 20% of the County road network;
- Designated bike lanes on approximately 4km (centreline) of urban County roads; and
- Installation of approximately 500 STR signs on County roads.

It is anticipated that implementation of 8.7m wide asphalt (1.0m wide paved shoulders) will continue on rural roads that are not part of the CMP cycling network. The wider asphalt platform reduces asphalt edge cracking caused by heavy vehicles and minimizes shoulder drop-offs that can result in vehicle loss of control.

Existing Shoulder Conditions

The road right-of-way (ROW) pertaining to the County arterial road network varies in width from 20 – 30 metres (m) resulting in varying road platform and shoulder conditions. County rural roads with a 20m ROW typically have narrow or no shoulders whereas roads with 30m ROW have wider shoulders. County road cross sections also vary in rural versus urbanized areas.

Shoulder surfaces on rural County roads are typically gravel and/or partially paved, and through urban, urban villages and settlement areas, vary from gravel to fully paved (with/without curbing). Fully urbanized roads (curbing, sidewalks) typically have paved/grassed boulevards and can range from single to multi-lane.

An inventory of existing of County-road shoulder conditions was completed as part of the 2021 CMP in order to analyze the degree of capital investment required to provide on-road cycling infrastructure and further inform route selection based on feasibility and connectivity objectives.

Comments

The final draft of the 2021 Oxford County CMP (refer to Attachment 1) represents a culmination of the different phases of plan development and technical reports completed to detail the outcome of each phase of the project.

The objective of the initial project phase was to establish a strong understanding of existing cycling infrastructure conditions and programs/policies, define CMP vision and goals, and identify potential opportunities. The second phase of the project involved developing a connected and continuous cycling network with supportive implementation and financial strategies. In the final phase of the project, the recommendations were confirmed and revised accordingly based on stakeholder and public feedback received following the outcomes of the second phase.

The CMP has identified approximately 190km of primary cycling routes on the County road network with a prioritized implementation and high-level costing plan in order to achieve the vision and key objectives established in the draft CMP. Additional recommendations are also included in the plan on programs and policies for consideration to further promote cycling and ongoing collaboration with municipal partners.

The draft CMP is not intended to be prescriptive in nature, but rather a guidance document to support the County's AT strategy and decision making on cycling infrastructure implementation based on location, facility type and financial strategy.

Primary and Secondary Cycling Network

Implementation of a primary cycling network is the general focus of the draft CMP; however, secondary cycling routes have also been identified to demonstrate future expansion and additional connectivity of the County-wide cycling network and to provide guidance for cycling infrastructure accommodation when planning future capital road improvements.

A map of the primary (red routes) and secondary (blue routes) cycling routes is included as Attachment 2 and shows inter-regional connections to existing/future on-road cycling routes in neighbouring municipalities, as well as, key off-road connections (Trans Canada Trail, Hickson Trail, Pittock Park South Shore) and MTO carpool locations.

The primary cycling routes were established using various criteria that considered connectivity, implementation feasibility, key destination linkages and populated areas. The primary network also incorporates the section of the province-wide cycling network within Oxford County.

Existing road platform and shoulder conditions were considered as part of the primary network development to ensure implementation could be achieved without significant capital intervention (i.e. road widening, property acquisition), whereas secondary routes may require more extensive road improvements to accommodate cycling infrastructure.

Facility Design Selection

The draft CMP provides high level guidance pertaining to facility types within the primary network based on provincial and federal standards/best practices that will be further assessed as part of detailed design during implementation. Facility design selection will also be subject to various existing conditions and coordination with other capital road works.

However, it is anticipated that cycling infrastructure on rural roads will generally consist of a separated/buffered paved shoulder - 2.0 – 2.5m wide to provide 1.5m bi-directional bike lanes and 0.5 to 1.0m buffer zones with rumble strips and or pavement markings (refer to Attachment 3). Buffered paved shoulders have also been implemented in other municipal jurisdictions such as Essex and Grey Counties with arterial road networks similar to Oxford County.

Buffered paved shoulders can be accommodated throughout most of the primary cycling network in rural areas based on existing shoulder conditions and/or where roads have been previously identified for future improvement. Buffered paved shoulders can also be accommodated without impacting movement of agricultural equipment or requiring additional efforts for winter road maintenance.

Cycling facilities in urban areas are expected to initially consist of 1.5m wide standard bike lanes which in some cases have already been incorporated (e.g. North Street, Tillsonburg) or are part of current capital works (e.g. Huron Street, Woodstock). The Town of Ingersoll is also currently extending the multi-use path on Ingersoll Street/Oxford Road 10 that will be linked as part of the primary network. In-boulevard multi-use paths, such as that on Ingersoll Street, and/or protected bike lanes may need to be considered in some specific urban areas or as part of future cycling infrastructure improvements.

Implementation and Costing Plan

Implementation of the primary network over the next 10-20 years has been prioritized based on overall network significance and with a systematic approach to avoid disconnected/stranded facilities. In some cases, the implementation timing may be adjusted to coincide with other planned capital roadworks and/or grant funding opportunities.

Cycling infrastructure on rural roads consisting of buffered paved shoulders could be completed as stand-alone projects or incorporated as part of other road resurfacing work. On urban arterial roads, cycling facilities may be accommodated as part of full road reconstruction or may simply involve the repurposing of existing lanes with revised line painting/pavement markings.

High level costing for primary network implementation has been included in the draft CMP, as noted in the Financial Impact section of this report, for planning purposes. Opportunities where on-road cycling facilities can be implemented as part of scheduled road reconstruction will allow for optimization of resources and reduce budgetary impacts.

The draft CMP identifies potential grant funding opportunities that could be leveraged to fund cycling infrastructure projects including tourism, recreation and culture, and AT oriented funding streams. Prioritization of climate change strategies by provincial and federal governments are anticipated to include grant funding opportunities for active transportation projects (e.g. Active Transportation Fund – Infrastructure Canada) that promote reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and low carbon travel options.

Cycling Programs and Initiatives

The social strategy in the draft CMP has included a series of programs and initiatives targeted at fostering a stronger cycling culture for consideration to further support and promote cycling by leveraging and expanding on existing initiatives and partnerships.

A variety of organizations that support cycling and active transportation were identified through the CMP consultation and engagement process; however, collaboration efforts and partnerships may not be as strong as they could be. Facilitation of stronger partnerships will increase support for cycling and AT throughout the County and promote a more connected network.

Conclusions

Previous amended cycling policies originally adopted in 2012 as part of the AT strategy in 2009 has resulted in incremental safety improvements on the County road network for both cyclists and motorists. The recommendations in the draft 2021 CMP provides a focused approach to cycling infrastructure implementation on a defined network that will provide a continuous AT network with due consideration given to economic impacts and road user safety.

SIGNATURES

Report Author:

Original signed by:

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Departmental Approval:

Original signed by:

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Approved for submission:

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Oxford CMP - Master Plan Report June 2022
Attachment 2: Primary and Secondary Cycling Networks Map
Attachment 3: Buffered Paved Shoulder Drawing