

April, 2021

Volume 1, Issue 3

Advocating
for
safe
cycling
throughout
Durham
Region

A Message from our President - Bruce MacDonald:

Who would have thought that we would still be having to manage our lives around COVID-19 with no clear end date in sight? As cyclists we were, in some small way, able to enjoy the outdoors albeit riding solo or maintaining a safe distance in small groups.

This coming season all our clubs are planning a riding calendar with certain restrictions to ensure everyone's safety. However, with the latest provincial lockdown coming into effect some clubs may defer organized rides.

We continue to push for safer cycling across the region, submitting letters where we see improvements can be made. In addition, we have taken part in a number of virtual meetings with various entities.

Finally, I'd like to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable cycling season.

UPDATES

Pringle Creek Bridge Reconstruction, Brock Road S

Our formal request to the Region to include bike lanes on the new bridge was rejected primarily because Brock Road South is not a designated cycle route. We followed up by reiterating that the Waterfront Trail MUP component be no less than 4.0 m wide. We also suggested that a separate bridge for the MUP would negate the need to close the trail during construction of the main bridge. There are many examples of steel bridges on the Waterfront Trail and savings from a narrower concrete bridge would offset part of a steel bridge cost.

If any of our suggestions make it to the final design remains to be seen.

New Website

Work continues on the relaunch of our DRCC Website and we are now in the final stages working with a local Durham based website designer. The end result should provide a user-friendly experience for all site visitor including those viewing from a mobility devise.

Stay tuned for our relaunch coming soon.

Ontario Shores



The offending gate is still there despite further requests to the Town of Whitby to modify it. We will contact the Town for a definitive answer on whether or not they intend to do something.

Durham Region's Cycling Plan Update

The Durham Regional Cycling Plan Update (RCPU) is now in its third and final phase.

The public consultation process has been completed and we, along with municipal Active Transportation Committees and others, have submitted a response. Overall, the plan seems well put together and addresses many of the concerns for safe cycling although we did suggest a more aggressive rollout schedule for cycling cross rides at intersections interfacing with Municipal MUP's.

Unfortunately, the main issue remains in that the timing for implementing the much-needed improvements is too far in the future and always dependent on annual, council approved budgets

It is anticipated that a report and presentation will be going to Regional Council in late Spring 2021.

Town of Ajax - Safe Schools Program

In the latter part of last year, we attended several sessions run by Green Communities Canada reviewing the travel modes of children at three Ajax schools. The goal was to reduce the number of short driving trips by parents and encourage children to walk or use two wheels for their way to school. While our focus was on the cycling component it was enlightening to find that small changes in travel modes can result in healthier children and an improved climate.

Vehicles Blocking Cycling Lanes

Following our letter expressing our concerns regarding construction signs and equipment blocking cycling lanes, our Corporate Secretary, Ron Lalonde, attended an on-site meeting with one of the VPs from Elexicon.

The result was the relocation of the offending equipment and an acknowledgement that due consideration will be given to cycling infrastructure on future projects.

With a new cycling season now upon us, we continue to monitor roads across the region. If you see construction activity blocking cycle lanes or MUP's send us a picture with the details including location and company name.



Conlin Road Improvements

The City of Oshawa will be reconstructing Conlin Road from the City's western limit to 250 m west of Ritson Road in 2021. The work will include bike lanes and MUPs that will fill the missing link in the cycling infrastructure along Conlin Road.

We wrote concerning the safety of pedestrians and cyclists at the existing Thornton Road roundabout to which the City responded that the roundabout was a non-controlled intersection meaning cyclists and pedestrians cross when traffic permits. We followed up by suggesting the inclusion of a Single Lane Pedestrian Priority PXO per Book 18. We are encouraged with the positive dialogue thus far with city officials and remain optimistic our comments will be included in the final design. We also received assurance from the city that safe cycling lanes would be maintained during the construction period.

E-Bikes

For most of us e-bikes are regular looking bicycles fitted with a small electric motor to provide the occasional boost to power. The definition of e-bikes in the Highway Traffic Act includes: must be fitted with pedals, have a motor not larger than 500 kW and a maximum speed of 32 km/h. E-bikes are available with larger power units and higher maximum speeds in which case a driver's license and insurance is mandatory.



The Waterfront Trail and MUPs are seeing an increase in E-bikes use. Many of these riders are in the upper age group and are enjoying the extra distance and energy savings e-bikes offer. For all trail and MUP riders it is important to remember proper etiquette when passing, i.e., ring your bell or call "On your left" as well as riding at a speed respectful of others.

Whitby Bridge and Culvert Replacement Master Plan

The Town of Whitby issued an Environmental Study Report for the future replacement of bridges and culverts within the Town. We provided a response to the Town suggesting that new bridges consider adequate cycling infrastructure as well as MUPs during the preliminary design to avoid missed opportunities in the future. We also suggested new culverts be wide enough to include for stream bank walking and cycling paths.

Whitby Active Transportation Plan

The Town of Whitby released a draft of their Active Transportation Plan for public review. We submitted a letter with our comments which in essence complimented the Town on a well constructed plan. One of our leading comments was that the timing of some important infrastructure improvements should be brought forward and completed within 5 years with a focus on closing the gaps within the core spine network.

Columbus Road, New Bridge



The Town of Whitby intends to replace the existing Whites bridge (approximately 1.8 km east of Lake Ridge Rd) and gave notice of a Filing of Addendum to Municipal Class E/A for public comment. The bridge, as designed, would be two lanes with a clear zone on either side and one sidewalk. Since Columbus is a popular cycling route we suggested that consideration be given to widening the clear zones to full bike lane width and replacing the sidewalk with an MUP.

We received a polite rejection to our proposal to which we replied but, as yet, have received no further feedback.

Ajax/Whitby Waterfront Trail Closures

Earlier this year the Town of Ajax closed the waterfront trail at Duffins Creek for construction of a new boardwalk effectively blocking all east-west trips. No signs were posted suggesting alternate routes. Also, the Town of Whitby is closing the waterfront trail this spring from South Blair St to Intrepid Park for complete reconstruction without considering alternate routes for cyclists.

Although the construction is a welcome improvement, we did write to both towns expressing our concerns over the closures without providing cyclists with sign posted alternate routes.

Durham Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit

Metrolinx, the provinces transportation agency, is proposing a complete reconstruction of Hwy 2 from Oshawa to the Scarborough border including exclusive bus lanes in the centre, two vehicle lanes each side and various cycling infrastructure at the curbs.

We attended various open houses and made several suggestions for improving the cycling infrastructure. This was followed up with an exclusive Zoom meeting in early December. One of our principal concerns related to the Rouge River bridge where the cycling infrastructure dead ends leaving cyclists vulnerable to fast moving traffic. Similar situations in Europe were solved by the addition of a cantilever cycle path added to the side of the bridge structure. Whether or not Metrolinx will entertain such a solution remains to be seen.

A similar situation arises at the bridge over Duffins Creek in Pickering Village although in this instance it is prosed to divert cyclists to an existing trail to the north of the highway.

In February this year we had a video meeting with members of Toronto East Cyclists to discuss ways to extend the DSBRT cycling route to the Scarborough Town Center. A route is possible but will require some local political support to bear fruit. Toronto East Cyclists will be following up.

Township of Scugog: Active Transportation Plan and Transportation Master Plan

The Township of Scugog is developing a long-term strategy to strengthen and support the transportation network within the municipality with a focus on fostering the use of more active travel modes such as walking and cycling. As registered stakeholders we submitted feedback late last fall and a draft report is expected to be submitted to council in the first half of 2021.

If council approves the draft, we expect there will be one further issue for public and stakeholder comment before the final version goes to council for approval.

Township of Uxbridge: Transportation Master Plan

A draft copy of the Transportation Master Plan was submitted to council earlier this year. We will be on the lookout for the next release and the opportunity to add further comment.

Envision Durham

We continue to monitor the Region's comprehensive strategic review process including the recently released Major Transit Station Area study paper. DRCC completed an extensive review of the proposals and submitted detailed feedback in support of safe cycling.



Contact Information:

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DRCC Membership

If you belong to one of our six supporting clubs you are a DRCC *Affiliate Member*.

We also welcome non-cycling club cyclists looking to support our advocacy work.

You can join DRCC as an *Associate Member* for the low annual fee of \$10.00. Simply send an e-mail to: durhamrcc@gmail.com and we will provide an application form.

Comments, suggestions, something to add or would like to volunteer your services? Please contact us at durhamrcc@gmail.com.