Grey County Cycling & Trails Master Plan

Transportation Committee
Town of the Blue Mountains

July 21, 2020

Bryan Plumstead
Manager of Tourism - Grey County
Overview

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About the Cycling and Trails Master Plan

The development of the County’s Cycling and Trails Master Plan has been guided by past initiatives and projects undertaken at the Provincial and County level.

Collectively, the support and recommended actions from past initiatives have set the foundation for the County to move forward with projects that enhance opportunities for cycling, trails and active lifestyles.
About the Cycling and Trails Master Plan

In 2018, the County received funding from the Province’s Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling (OMCC) Program. As part of the OMCC Program, Grey County received $530,652 to:

- Develop a Cycling and Trails Master Plan
- Implement 22 km of paved shoulders on County roads
- Purchase 5 bike counters

In addition to this funding, Grey County partnered with Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) 7: BruceGreySimoce to help fund and support the development of the Cycling and Trails Master Plan.
About the Cycling and Trails Master Plan

There are many assumptions about what a master plan is meant to be. Some of these assumptions are accurate and others are beyond the intent and purpose of the document:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the plan is:</th>
<th>What the plan is not:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A long-range blueprint;</td>
<td>A schedule of capital projects;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A tool to facilitate implementation;</td>
<td>A feasibility study for specific projects;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A communications tool; and</td>
<td>A prescriptive policy document;</td>
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<tr>
<td>A guide for future policies.</td>
<td>A commitment to costs and funding.</td>
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</table>
The Cycling and Trails Master Plan was developed in three phases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish the context</td>
<td>Develop the network</td>
<td>Finalize the master plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review polices at all levels of government</td>
<td>• Identify candidate routes</td>
<td>• Draft the master plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collect data</td>
<td>• Undertake field work</td>
<td>• Revise master plan based on input from County staff and member municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Map of existing conditions</td>
<td>• Confirm routes and facilities</td>
<td>• Deliver Council presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Launch engagement strategy</td>
<td>• Developing an implementation plan</td>
<td>• Finalize master plan</td>
</tr>
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</table>

On-going consultation and engagement

The development of the Cycling and Trails Master Plan is consistent with Master Plan Approach #1 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process, which takes into account a minimum of two points of engagement / consultation during the study process.
What we heard

A key component of the study process was to provide meaningful opportunities for residents, decision makers, member municipalities and County staff to engage with the study team and provide their input.

4 study meetings
in-person with the County’s project team

3 in-person events
with residents, stakeholders and member municipalities

online activity
an interactive tool to supplement in-person activities

staff from:
- Tourism
- Transportation Services
- Planning and Development
- Grey Bruce Health Unit

30+ attendees
stakeholder workshop

50 attendees
public open house

20+ attendees
municipal staff workshop

496 participants
11,325 data points collected

Regular calls were also scheduled with the County’s project team and consultant team to discuss completed work, deliverables and next steps.
The Principles

Collectively, County staff, member municipalities and stakeholders created a vision for the plan at the first Stakeholder Workshop in December 2018.

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.
The Principles

The vision is supported by a set of objectives:

1. Design continuous and connected routes that are considered comfortable and safe for users of varying ages and abilities.
2. Improve accessibility and inclusivity within the County’s member municipalities and communities.
3. Provide recreational, commuting and touring opportunities within the County, its local municipalities and to surrounding regions.
4. Connect to areas of natural and cultural significance.
5. Support the increased use of active modes of travel and recreation by connecting to major destinations, key services and surrounding regions.
6. Identify tools, policies and programs to support year-round use of cycling and trails.
7. Support local economic development and tourism initiatives.
8. Support the development of clear, consistent and branded communications to enhance promotion and safety.
9. Provide tools and strategies to guide future planning, design, implementation and operations of safe and comfortable infrastructure and meaningful programming.
Developing the Cycling and Trails Network

The process used to develop the preferred cycling and trails network for Grey County consisted of four steps:

**step 1**
review and map existing conditions

**step 2**
identify gaps and map candidate routes

**step 3**
undertake field investigations

**step 4**
confirm network and select facilities

The process was iterative and each step was informed by input collected from members of the public, stakeholders, member municipalities and County staff over the course of the study.
Key Design Considerations

**OTM Book 18 Facility Selection Process**

**Route Considerations**

- Function of the street
- Vehicle mix
- Available space (road width)
- Anticipated construction cost
- Implementation level of effort
- Anticipated users
- Function of the route within the network
- Planned roadway improvements
- On-street parking
- Slope / grade
- Geometry at crossings

Input from County staff, member municipalities, decision makers and residents
The proposed network

- paved shoulders: 304 km
- signed routes: 459 km
- off-road trails: 1.7 km
- edge lines: 5.3 km
- bike lanes (including buffers): 4.8 km
- buffered paved shoulders: 60.5 km
- in-boulevard pathways: 1.4 km

836 km
proposed facilities
Network philosophy

The preferred cycling and trails network is not intended to be prescriptive. It is meant to inform future decision-making that can help improve opportunities for cycling and trail projects in the County.

The focus of the cycling and trails network within the next 10 years is to align with the County’s capital plan and achieve efficiencies where possible.

Coordination with capital projects
• Coordination with large scale infrastructure projects identified in the County’s current capital plan (2020-2029).

Quick wins
• Quick wins (such as signed routes) to enhance connectivity and complete a gap between two existing routes.

Enhancing the County’s cycling loops
• Low investment projects that enhance one or more of the County’s promoted cycling loops.
Implementing the plan

The proposed phasing plan is meant to be flexible and adapt to future changes, new opportunities and available resources at the time of implementation. The phasing plan does not imply a commitment to monies or schedule of projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>Short Term 2020-2029</th>
<th>Long Term 2030 and beyond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paved Shoulders</td>
<td>120.3</td>
<td>116.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed Routes</td>
<td>248.3</td>
<td>175.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Road Trails</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge Lines</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike Lanes</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffered Bike Lanes</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffered Paved Shoulders</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-boulevard Pathways</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>373.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>359.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

County staff are encouraged to seek opportunities (where feasible) to advance long-term projects as part of scheduled capital works through future annual budget reviews to achieve cost savings.

The phasing breakdown is intended to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains relevant, aligns with planned capital projects and County priorities.
Implementing the plan

The focus for implementation is the short term (first 10 years):

$3.5 \text{ million}$ for 373.5 km over 10 years

$3.1 \text{ million}$ for projects that align with the County’s current capital plan in the short term.

$400,000$ for other projects identified through the study process for the short term.

It is important for the County to seek a diverse range of funding sources. External funding is an effective way to reduce the County’s costs and can be an opportunity to strengthen partnerships for the implementation of the plan.

- Provincial and federal grants
- Development charges
- External sources such as service clubs, corporate funds and private donations
Enhancing a culture of change

A concerted effort to encourage behavior change, create community awareness and promote tourism assets is meant to supplement the recommended infrastructure and help the County achieve its vision for cycling and trails. Examples of suggested actions contained in the plan include:

- Create a Grey County and Trails Committee
- Establish active school travel programs
- Create experience-oriented route maps

The suggested actions are intended to reflect best practices and leverage existing initiatives being undertaken by the County’s partners to support a culture of active living, enhanced recreation and economic / tourism development.
# Supporting Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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</table>
| It is recommended the County establish a **Cycling and Trails Committee** which could include representatives from all member municipalities. The committee could meet on a regular basis to discuss projects, initiatives and to overall keep momentum for implementation of the plan. | *Partners are essential to share ideas and resources for infrastructure and programing.*  
- County departments  
- Member municipalities  
- Conservation authorities  
- Public Health Unit  
- County committees  
- RTO7  
- Province of Ontario  
- School boards  
- OPP  
- Local businesses  
- Local clubs  
- Advocacy groups | *Adequate funding to ensure cycling and trails projects can be implemented in a fiscally responsible manner or constructed in conjunction with other large-scale infrastructure projects.* |
Supporting Implementation

Developing this plan was a collaborative effort between the County, its member municipalities, Grey Bruce Health Unit, key stakeholder groups and residents. Through commitment to the plan, the County can continue to enhance opportunities for recreation, tourism and active living in Grey County.

Key Actions & Next Steps

1. Formally adopt the Cycling and Trails Master Plan as a policy document;

2. Identify projects as part of the County’s annual budget review process for implementation of infrastructure and programming;

3. Continue to engage in consultation and engagement with member municipalities, stakeholders and residents to confirm short-term infrastructure and programming priorities; and

4. Reach out to key stakeholders to formalize partnerships and to facilitate implementation.
Thank you!

Questions?

Grey County Cycling and Trails Master Plan