

Appendix A - Policy Summary

Grey County Cycling and Trails Master Plan

Draft October 2020



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TECHNICAL APPENDIX A: POLICY SUMMARY

A Cycling and Trails Master Plan is shaped and informed by existing policies at the federal, provincial and local levels. Policies at all levels of government provide the direction and rationale for future growth and development as well as community change. Where possible, cycling and trails master plans should be supported by policies and plans from other levels of government. Cycling and trails have been integrated into a number of policies and plans at the federal, provincial, and local levels of government which have a direct impact on decision making in Grey County and its local municipalities. In order to understand how to influence future policy changes, it is important to understand the existing policies.

The following is a summary of cycling and recreation supportive policies at the federal, provincial, regional, and local municipal level that have been reviewed as part of this project to provide the team with the necessary policy context.

1.1 FEDERAL POLICIES

1.1.1 TRANSPORT CANADA

The Strategies for Sustainable Transportation Planning: a review of practices and options, released by Transport Canada in 2005, identifies guidelines for consideration when incorporating sustainable transportation into municipal policies. The report includes principles that support the promotion of active transportation as a mode of sustainable transportation at the federal level and the promotion of active transportation as a viable form of transportation. Supportive strategies and principles identified in the Transport Canada guidelines include:

Land Use Planning Integration

- Encourage desirable land use form and design (e.g. compact, mixed-use, pedestrian / bike friendly) through supportive transportation plan policies that also help achieve transportation objectives (e.g. modal shifts).

Environment & Health

- Mitigate air quality and noise impacts of transportation activities.
- Set goals and objectives for reducing the need to travel, improving transit mobility, and preserving minimum levels of service on roadways.
- Address the transportation needs of persons of all ages and abilities, notably public transit service and barrier-free design in public rights-of-way.
- Establish goals and objectives for multimodal road safety and recognize the impact of transportation related death and injury on the environmental and social health, quality of life, and the economy.

Modal Sustainability

- Increase walking, cycling, other active transportation, transit, ridesharing and teleworking.
- Recognize synergies and conflicts among different modes (e.g. potential for multimodal cycling-transit trips, potential for modal shift from transit to ridesharing).
- Make transit operations more sustainable through the development and integration of supportive policies, strategies, objectives, facilities and services.

The strategies identified in Transport Canada’s report, demonstrate the federal government’s commitment to developing national standards and practices which can be used to help enhance conditions for walking and cycling.

1.1.2 FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) fosters the development of sustainable communities that enjoy a high quality of life by promoting strong, effective and accountable municipal government.

FCM’s Communities in Motion: Bringing Active Transportation to Life Initiative, is a key resource for all Canadian municipalities. It sets out goals for promoting active transportation and eliminating barrier to difficult travel modes. The strategy outlines active transportation considerations for community design including travel times and distance, lighting on trails, wayfinding, cycling amenities and a varied experience to accommodate recreational, utilitarian and tourism trip types.

The design and development of walking and cycling facilities is reinforced and promoted through this policy. Local municipalities are encouraged to use the recommendations and design considerations outlined in this policy to help guide the development of individual routes, systems and linkages.

1.1.3 24 HOUR MOVEMENT GUIDELINES

The Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology has established guidelines to encourage healthy growth and development, and active lifestyles for people of all ages. The guidelines recommend the number of hours people of varying ages should be active, sleeping and sedentary in order to achieve healthy development and overall well-being. The guidelines provide information that has been targeted for specific demographics and provide details on the types of activities, intensity and duration of physical activity individuals should be achieving.

Health units and community agencies throughout Ontario use these guidelines as their physical activity recommendations for the public. These guidelines reinforce the importance of increasing physical activity and its role in helping people of all ages and abilities achieve healthier lifestyles and decrease risk factors related to chronic diseases.

1.2 PROVINCIAL POLICIES

1.2.1 PLANNING ACT

The Planning Act (The Act) sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario and describes requirements for planning processes, how land uses may be controlled, and who may control them. The Act considers both the provincial and municipal roles in decision making. The Act provides the basis for management of resources, preparing plans for future development, regulating and controlling land uses through zoning by-laws and minor variances.

Section 2 of The Act addresses matters of provincial interest that must be considered in any planning decision. Section 2q is of relevance to active transportation policy, and calls for the promotion of development that is sustainable, supports public transit and is oriented to pedestrians.

1.2.2 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT

The 2014 update to the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) set the foundation for regulating land use planning and development within the Province of Ontario while supporting provincial goals and objectives. The PPS sets out guidelines for sustainable development and the protection of resources of provincial interest. The PPS promotes transportation choices that facilitate pedestrian and cycling mobility and other modes of travel. “Transportation systems” as defined in the PPS are systems that consist of corridors and rights-of-way used for the movement of people and goods as well as associated transportation facilities, including cycling lanes and park’n’ride lots. Policies pertaining to alternative modes of transportation are dispersed throughout the PPS. Policies which specifically address the development of active transportation infrastructure and programs include sections 1.1.3.2, 1.4.3, 1.5.1, 1.6.5, 1.6.7.4 and 1.8.1.

1.2.3 MUNICIPAL ACT

The Municipal Act gives municipalities flexibility and responsibility when dealing with issues which influence municipal development. It also requires municipalities to react quickly to economic, environmental or social changes. It recognizes that municipal governments are responsible and accountable when addressing matters within their jurisdictions and sets out policies pertaining to municipal jurisdiction over municipal highways and the maintenance of those highways which, in turn, has significant impact on the design and development of cycling facilities identified within the road right-of-way. Section 44 of the Municipal Act sets out the duty of a municipality with respect to road maintenance, and requires that a municipality keeps the road in a state of repair.

1.2.4 BILL 51 PLANNING ACT REFORM MUNICIPAL ACT

Bill 51 was approved in January of 2007 and reforms the Planning Act. The Planning Act provides the legislative framework and is the guiding document for land use planning in Ontario. The document outlines changes to the planning process intended to support intensification, sustainable development, and the protection of green space. This is facilitated by increasing municipalities' power and flexibility and providing them with the tools to efficiently use land, resources, and infrastructure. Bill 51 is consistent with Ontario's recent policy shift towards sustainable land use development and planning. For instance, Bill 51 allows municipalities to require environmentally sustainable design for individual buildings as well as entire neighbourhoods. It has also identified sustainable development as a provincial goal and objective as part of the Provincial Policy Statement.

1.2.5 REG. 239/02: MINIMUM MAINTENANCE STANDARDS FOR MUNICIPAL HIGHWAYS

The Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highway (MMS) sets out minimum standards for road and highway maintenance for all municipalities. MMS regulations pertain to various elements of road repair and maintenance, such as the frequency of road inspections, weather monitoring, ice formation on roadways, snow accumulation, and sidewalk trip ledges. Under the MMS, roads and highways throughout the province are classified based on their average annual daily traffic and posted speed limits, and based on the classification of a road/highway, there are required minimum levels of inspection and repair. The highest standards of maintenance are required for 'class 1' roads, which are highways that experience a large volume of traffic and higher posted speed limits.

Recent updates to the MMS came into effect in May 2018 and include updated definitions of bicycle facilities and lanes, standards and regulations for addressing snow accumulation on bicycle lanes and clearance during extreme weather events. While the number of hours in which a roadway and bicycle lane must be cleared are not the same, the fact that standards for cycling facilities are now clearly prescribed and included, is a considerable advancement for cyclist safety on roadways.

1.2.6 HIGHWAY TRAFFIC ACT

Bicycles are recognized as a vehicle under the Highway Traffic Act (HTA). They can operate on public roadways with the same rights and responsibilities as a motor vehicle. However, bicycles are not permitted on controlled access freeways such as the 400 series highways or any roadway restricted for cycling by a municipal by-law.

The HTA contains several cycling related policies including bicycle lanes on municipal roadways, vehicles interacting with bicycles, bicycles being overtaken, and regulating or prohibiting bicycles on highways. An amendment to the Highway Traffic Act was passed in 2015 – Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act (Bill 31) which provides further clarifications and regulations related to cycling and pedestrian activities.

These changes to legislation respond to municipal requests, stakeholder input and recommendations from the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario to promote cycling as active transportation and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists by:

- Requiring drivers to yield the whole roadway to pedestrians at school crossings and pedestrian crossovers.
- Allowing for new pedestrian crossing devices on low-speed and low-volume roads as requested by municipalities.
- Allowing cyclists to use the paved shoulders on unrestricted provincial highways to promote safer opportunities to cycle.
- Supporting cycling in urban areas by allowing municipalities to create contra-flow bicycle lanes to provide more direct routes and connectivity for cyclists.
- Increasing the fine range for convictions of dooring of cyclists from \$60 - \$500 to \$300 - \$1,000 and raising the demerit points from two to three.
- Requiring all drivers to maintain one metre when passing cyclists.
- Increasing the maximum fine from \$20 to a set fine amount that falls in the range of \$60 to \$500 for not using required bicycle lights and other reflectors/reflective material; and permit the use of flashing red lights as a safety feature on bicycles.

These changes to the Highway Traffic Act, acknowledge the importance of road safety for all road users, with more consideration given to cycling and cyclist safety. It also provides further direction and penalties for distracted driving and cycling. It also includes stricter penalties for drivers that engage in:

- “Dooring” or a “door prize” commonly refers to someone who opens a parked motor vehicle door into the path of a cyclist or other traffic; or
- Passing too close to cyclists. Drivers must keep a one-metre (3 feet) distance when passing cyclists.

Fines are now given for both offences in addition to demerit points, for “dooring.” Cyclists are also held responsible for ensuring their safety. Under Bill 31 cyclists are now required to have proper lights, reflective materials and reflectors with a fine being given for those who have improper lighting.

1.2.7 ONTARIO TRAFFIC MANUAL BOOK 18: CYCLING FACILITIES (2013, CURRENTLY BEING UPDATED)

The Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) provides a series of traffic engineering and control reference manuals produced by the Ministry of Transportation to be used by Ontario municipalities. Twenty-two books are proposed with nine being completed as of 2013. OTM Book 18 is one of the existing books that is currently being updated. The purpose of book 18 is to provide guidance on the design, planning and operation of on and off-road cycling facilities in Ontario and is intended to be used by traffic engineers, planners and other transportation practitioners. The guidelines provided in OTM Book 18 are consistent with the Highway Traffic Act (HTA). OTM Book 18 establishes a basis for municipalities to update or generate their own guidelines and standards, that are reflective of their unique needs and environments.

1.2.8 ONTARIO TRAFFIC MANUAL BOOK 15: PEDESTRIAN CROSSING TREATMENTS (2016)

The Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 15 was recently updated in 2016 in response to concerns regarding the cost of on-going maintenance of standard pedestrian crossover (PXO) and traffic control signals. The update provides guidelines for Justification, Treatment System Selection and Treatment System Design for the new PXOs. The purpose of OTM Book 15 is to provide practical guidance and application information on the planning, design, and operation of pedestrian roadway crossings treatments for transportation practitioners and to promote uniformity of approaches across Ontario. OTM Book 15 It covers a variety of considerations regarding planning for pedestrian crossings and includes best practices in Ontario to help offer guidance and examples of facilities and systems to support pedestrians. Like OTM Book 18, it is consistent with the Highway Traffic Act (HTA). OTM Book 18 establishes a basis for municipalities to update or generate their own guidelines and standards, that are reflective of their unique needs and environments.

1.2.9 ONTARIO TRAILS STRATEGY

The Ontario Trails Strategy was developed in response to the increasing interest in trail use throughout Ontario. Growing demand for trails has amplified the need for government leadership, protection of provincial investment and the mitigation of significant trail issues or challenges. The strategy is a long-term plan that establishes a Provincial direction to develop a healthier and more prosperous province through the planning, management, promotion and use of trails.

The strategy supports continued cooperation between the government, not-for-profit and private sectors. There are five strategic directions that are outlined in the Trails Strategy including improving collaboration among stakeholders; enhancing the sustainability of Ontario's trails; enhancing the trail experience; educating Ontarians about trails; and fostering better health and a strong economy through trails.

More specifically the Strategy recommends that trail organizations develop common standards to guide the development and use of trails and establish more effective tools and better ways of distributing information to Ontarians.

1.2.10 ONTARIO TRAILS ACT

The Ontario Trails Act was developed by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport in June of 2016 to provide legislation to improve, sustain existing and future proposed urban, suburban and rural trails in Ontario. The Act supports a number existing initiatives and strategies such as the Ontario Trails Strategy (2005) and sets out to address long-term direction for the development, promotion and management of new and existing trails in Ontario.

The Act sets out to achieve the vision for trails in Ontario, viewing them as “a world-class system of diversified trails, planned and used in an environmentally responsible manner that enhances the health and prosperity of all Ontarians.” The act identifies four key purposes:

1. To increase awareness about and encourage the use of trails.
2. To enhance trails and the trail experience.
3. To protect trails for today’s generation and future generations.
4. To recognize the contribution that trails make to quality of life in Ontario.

1.2.11 #CYCLEON & ACTION PLAN

In November 2012 the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) published the Draft Cycling Strategy. The strategy acknowledges the importance of developing cycling infrastructure to help reduce GHG emissions, ease gridlock, enhance the economy, increase tourism and increase quality of life for Ontario residents. The strategy was developed based on increasing demand from local municipalities for direction from the province on the development of cycling facilities and responds to recommendations in the Coroner’s report published in 2012.

The province’s vision is to ultimately “develop a safe cycling network that connects the province, for collision rates and injuries to continue to drop, and for everyone from the occasional user to the daily commuter to feel safe when they get a bicycle in Ontario”. The strategy outlines recommended cycling infrastructure, legislation changes and enhancements including a set of proposed changes to The Highway Traffic Act.

The Ontario Cycling Strategy – #CycleON was released by the MTO along with a clear set of actions. These actions are a strong basis for strategic municipal plans as they address both soft and hard infrastructure as well as the importance of short-term actions and priorities to demonstrate early success. Many of the actions and directions outlined in the strategy align with goals set out by local municipalities.

#CycleON Action Plan 2.0 sets five Strategic Directions:

- Design healthy, active and prosperous communities;
- Improve cycling infrastructure;
- Make highways and streets safer;
- Promote cycling awareness and behavioural shifts; and
- Increase cycling tourism opportunities.

1.2.12 ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (A.O.D.A.) was passed on June 13, 2005. The policy calls on the business community, public and not-for-profit sector and people with disabilities to develop, implement and enforce mandatory standards. The policy makes Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards applied to both private and public sectors. These guidelines provide directives on how businesses in Ontario can identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. The Built Environment is the most relevant standard that can be applied to trail planning, design and construction.

Recently a revision and update of the Built Environment Standard was undertaken and released in early 2013. “The goal of the Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment is to remove barriers in public spaces and buildings. This will make it easier for all Ontarians — including people with disabilities, seniors and families — to access the places where they work, travel, shop and play”. The standard applies to new construction and redevelopment of existing facilities. The standards for public spaces cover: Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes, Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas, Outdoor Play Spaces, Exterior Paths of Travel, Accessible Parking and Obtaining Services.

Some highlights of the technical requirements for recreational trails under the new regulation 80.8(1) include a minimum clear width of 1,000 mm; a clear height that provides a minimum head room clearance of 2,100 mm above the trail; a firm and stable surface type; and where trail is constructed adjacent to water or a drop-off, it must have edge protection that constitutes an elevated barrier that runs along the edge of the; a top edge of at least 50 mm above the trail surface; a protection barrier that does not impede the drainage of the trail surface; a clear opening of between 850 mm and 1,000 mm, whether the entrance includes a gate, bollard or other entrance design; and trail head signage that provides relevant accessibility information (the length of trail; the type of surface of which the trail is constructed; the average and the minimum trail width; the average and maximum running slope and cross slope and the location of amenities, where provided).

1.2.13 ONTARIO ENVIRONMENT PLAN

The Ontario Environment Plan was proposed by the Government of Ontario in 2018 and plans to balance the needs of addressing climate action and improving economic prosperity for residents Ontario. It acknowledges the importance of protecting the environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The proposed plan seeks to address four key environmental challenges of:

1. Protecting our lakes and rivers;
2. Addressing climate change;
3. Reducing litter and waste in our communities and keeping our land and soil clean
4. Conserving land and greenspace

The fourth challenge area, conserving land and greenspace speaks to the importance of preserving natural areas and the importance of healthy natural spaces for people to enjoy. By supporting the growth and development of active transportation infrastructure it can help address this challenge in a positive way.

Further the plan identifies actions that will help achieve its goals. A key action identified in the proposed plan is to establish a public education and awareness program to make people more aware of the environmental, financial and health impacts of their transportation choices. While the nature of this action is to better support and encourage people to take public transportation and expand commuter choices, active transportation can help achieve get to his goal by offering healthy and environmentally conscious ways of completing their first and last mile and supporting multi-modal transportation. Another key action that responds to the importance of active transportation is to support the of new trails across the province and expanding access to park space. Overall, this proposed plan identifies the importance of reducing harmful effects of climate change such as greenhouse gasses and provides some recommendations and actions of how active transportation and related infrastructure can play a key role in helping to achieve the goals and actions of this proposed plan.

1.2.14 ONTARIO'S CYCLING TOURISM PLAN

The Government of Ontario recently established Ontario's Cycling Tourism Plan in 2017. This plan sets out to promote bicycle tourism in Ontario and establish bicycle friendly economy and business that enhance cycling tourism across the region. Further, it's mission is to help Ontario emerge as a leader in the development of cycling tourism. It recognizes the role that cycling tourism plays in fostering a strong economy and its ability to attract visitors that stay longer and spend more within the province. It identifies key actions necessary to help expand achieve the goals of the plan and expand the impacts of cycling tourism across the region. These include:

1. Identify, attract and support signature cycling tourism festivals and events through the Celebrate Ontario program and/or Sport Hosting program.
2. Make funding available through Tourism Development Fund (TDF) to develop and enhance products and experiences that support cycling tourism.
3. Support ministry agencies and attractions to be bike-friendly and accessible by bike.
4. Collaborate with cycling organizations to promote cycling safety and bike-friendly activities.

It further identifies roles and partnerships to help increase support walking and cycling as part of an active lifestyle and key goals of positioning Ontario as a premier destination for cycling tourism; creating healthy, active and economically prosperous communities; and working collaboratively to develop and promote cycling tourism products that will enable Ontario to meet or exceed global growth over the coming years.

1.2.15 ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH STANDARDS: POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care regularly updates and publishes standards that outline the minimum expectations for public health programs and services that are delivered by boards of health across the Province. The Public Health Standards Policy Framework for Public Health Programs and Services is a subsection of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability (Standards) which identifies and highlights the core functions of public health. These standards inform and shape the various health programs rolled out across Ontario that aim to achieve health outcomes and reduce preventable disease, injury and death and health inequities for the people of Ontario. The Ontario Public Health Standards also share insights into the frameworks used to achieve health outcomes. Ontario public health's framework approach is rooted in a coordinated approach to support implementation and recognize the relationship between social and ecological determinants of health to assess more than health status including income, education, and employment.

Boards of health are established across the province to support and protect the physical and mental health and well-being, resiliency and social connectedness of the health unit population, and focus on addressing the risk factors associated with health outcomes. Health units are the areas of jurisdiction in which the boards of health operate. A joint health unit has been established for the Counties of Grey and Bruce, known as the Grey Bruce Health Unit. They play a critical role in supporting and achieving healthy outcomes for communities and are responsible for delivering updated health information and programs to these communities. To shed light and provide direction to how to address specific issues pertaining to health, many standards/priorities have been identified through Public Health. Three key priorities are identified that relate to active transportation: chronic disease prevention and wellbeing; healthy environments; and healthy growth and development. These initiatives support physical activity, active transportation in community design and highlight the importance of encouraging children to run, walk and cycle from a young age to stay healthy. To help achieve these specific goals and initiatives, specific guidelines such as Ontario Public Health Chronic Disease Prevention guidelines have been established.

1.2.16 ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH: CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION GUIDELINES

The Province of Ontario released a Chronic Disease Prevention Guideline in 2018 that recommends health promotion approaches and interventions to address risk factors and social determinants of health related to chronic diseases. One of the key environmental contributors to chronic disease and health identified in this guide is the built environment. It notes that the correlation between health and the built environment and its influence on employment, social support networks, as well as physical and social environments. It notes that the design of the built form can affect to obesity, cardiovascular disease, respiratory diseases, mental illness, and affect food accessibility and affordability. It advocates support for designing well connected communities and mixed-use built form that makes it easier to live, work and play in the same community. It recommends promoting and supporting more sustainable modes of transportation such as walking or cycling.

These guidelines reaffirm the importance of active transportation in community design to ensure healthier and more equitable outcomes for people of all ages and abilities. It also reaffirms the need to collaborate with local health organizations to provide community supports that promote active transportation and other related programs / activities.

1.3 GREY COUNTY

1.3.1 GREY COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

The Grey County Official Plan was adopted by Council in October 2018 and approved by the Province in June 2019. The purpose of the plan is to identify goals, objectives and policies to manage and direct physical or land use change and monitor its effects on the cultural, social, economic and natural environment within the regional community. The Plan also acts as a guide for infrastructure planning to support and accommodate population and economic growth consistent with the Growth Management Strategy. The County's Official Plan includes several policies that support the development of County-wide cycling facilities and trails use.

The Official Plan supports healthy community design including public health and safety needs embedded within residential intensification, redevelopment, and new residential development and encourages new development to include cycling infrastructure, such as bike lanes, paved shoulders, bicycle parking, and signage. One of the key objectives of this Plan is to improve and maintain the complete streets approach to transportation in the County by providing efficient car, truck, and transit routes as well as cycling and pedestrian routes / trails which connect the rural areas with settlement areas and other key locations throughout the County. It also specifically notes the importance of active transportation and identifies six key policies that support and encourage active transportation in the County. This includes:

- Pursuing the connection of existing and future trails, sidewalks, and paved shoulders throughout the County that integrates with the complete transportation system.
- New developments will need to be designed to be walkable and bike friendly by including for example trails, sidewalks, and/or paved shoulders where appropriate.
- Design an active transportation system that connects settlement areas and built up areas to encourage travel between these areas as well as connect between community facilities such as beaches, open spaces, schools tourist attractions etc.
- Tourism and recreational developments that support active transportation will be encouraged.
- The Official Plan also encourages and supports the conversion of abandoned railway corridors for trails and cycling routes.
- Active transportation system will be designed to connect settlement areas and built-up areas to allow residents and tourists to travel between these areas. The active transportation system will also be designed to connect between community facilities, public beaches/shorelines, open space areas, schools, recreational areas, tourist attractions, and parks.

1.3.2 GREY COUNTY TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

In 2014, the County completed the Grey County Transportation Master Plan which addresses the transportation needs of the County over the next 25 years. The study identifies several goals to support long-term sustainable transportation including: creating “a vision for all modes of transportation in Grey County, with a particular focus on encouraging active transportation options (cycling, walking/running)”. It also identifies the importance of providing an equitable transportation network so that the most vulnerable populations have access to a variety of transportation options including access to facilities to bike and walk. The plan recognizes opportunities for incorporating cycling facilities throughout the County. It also recommends establishing a network of inter-connected routes including connections between municipal centres, links to adjacent counties and cycling “loop routes” to accommodate recreational cycling including cycling organizations and tourist cycling activities.

1.3.3 GREY COUNTY RECREATIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The Grey County Recreational Trails Master Plan identifies a vision, goals and objectives, for a recreational trail network. A key goal of the Recreational Trails Master Plan is to direct usage to help ensure the protection of natural areas while offering safe and enjoyable recreational opportunities by creating a sustainable multi-use trail system. The Recreation Trails Master Plan identifies goals and benefits of a well-designed trail network, provides an overview of trails in the County and forests, trail classes, design considerations, and recommendations for the short, medium and long-term for the trails in the County. The Recreational Trails Master Plan identifies and supports active transportation by encouraging recreational activities within the recreational trails and forest network including hiking / walking, birding, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. It also identifies key trails and infrastructure where recreation is encouraged and embraced such as the Grey County CP Rail Trail and the activities each supports including active transportation uses. The Recreational Trails Master Plan also notes the importance of wayfinding signage as well as offering trails to meet a variety of interest and ability levels to encourage more people to use trails for recreational purposes.

1.3.4 GREY COUNTY NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM STUDY “GREEN IN GREY”

The County’s Natural Heritage System Study (or “Green in Grey”) was completed in 2017 to delineate a Natural Heritage System within the County that integrates ecological aspects with planning and policy in order to provide a balanced approach for the County. The study addresses the importance of and how best to protect the natural and wildlife features and ecosystems within the County. It identifies the importance providing recreational areas and uses for hiking and walking and provides recommendations of how support recreational tourism in the area while preserving the natural landscape for future generations. The study identifies key linkages and core areas and different strategies to help mitigate potential impacts on the natural features within the County.

1.3.5 COMPLETE STREETS POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR GREY BRUCE

In 2015 a Complete Streets Policy and Implementation Guide was developed for Grey-Bruce Health Unit to help showcase Complete Streets examples and how best to implement a complete streets approach to planning based on needs, opportunities, and specific concerns of the region. The document provides best practices for complete streets as well as context sensitive examples of complete streets for urban and rural areas. It shares findings on the economic benefits of complete streets noting how providing streets that people can walk and bike along can improve business, enhance tourism and economic benefits of investing in cycling, pedestrians and trail infrastructure. It also notes the opportunities that complete streets play in enhancing connectivity between and within the County and its local municipalities.

1.4 LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

CITY OF OWEN SOUND

1.4.1 OWEN SOUND OFFICIAL PLAN

The City of Owen Sound Official Plan was adopted in 2006 and was updated in 2012 as part of a five-year review. The Plan provides policies, goals and objectives to guide the development and redevelopment of lands within the City for a 20+ year period. The Plan supports and encourages the development of multi-modal transportation options including cycling and pedestrian infrastructure to improve efficiency, accessibility and safety of people and goods. It also promotes the development of linear trail systems for walking, biking and cross-country skiing within lands designated as Open Space in the Official Plan. It also encourages development applications to provide opportunities for walking and cycling facilities within the development and supports support the integration of pedestrian and cycling facilities into existing and new development areas.

1.4.2 OWEN SOUND TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The City of Owen Sound completed their Transportation Master Plan in 2010 to provide an outlook on transportation investments, policies, and actions to the year 2026 and beyond. The objective of the plan was to ensure that the city's transportation network continues to operate efficiently to provide a competitive position to attract business and enhance economic vitality. The plan encourages multi-modal transportation including public transit, walking and cycling by supporting intensification and development along the on the City's primary transit corridors. It also recommends a number of road network improvements to meet the TMP's objectives and provide adequate level of service for cyclists and pedestrians on the City's road network. The plan also identified a network of cycling routes intended to facilitate opportunities for commuter cycling along continuous corridors and to provide connections key municipal destinations.

MUNICIPALITY OF GREY HIGHLANDS

1.4.3 MUNICIPALITY OF GREY HIGHLANDS OFFICIAL PLAN

The Municipality of Grey Highlands Official Plan was approved in September of 2017. The Plan identifies policies to help guide economic, environmental and community building. One of the key themes identified in the Plan is “Building Healthy Communities,” which addresses the need to develop sustainable communities that support active transportation. Another key theme identified in the Plan includes “Sustainable Natural Environment/Protection of Natural Heritage” which promotes energy conservation and environmental sustainability and supports the use of active transportation and compact development. It also notes that new development areas are to be convenient and accessible and areas where pedestrian and cycling opportunities are made available as further means of transportation. It also identifies support for active and passive recreational uses in Open Space lands.

1.4.4 MUNICIPALITY OF GREY HIGHLANDS STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan was adopted in 2013. The Strategic Plan guides the future of the Community for 2013 through to 2018. This plan outlines five strategic priorities for Grey Highlands:

1. Communications
2. Community and Economic Development
3. Sustainable and Principled Growth
4. Fiscal and Asset Management
5. Operational Excellence

Of these five priorities, Sustainable and Principled Growth speaks to the need of balancing growth in the urban and rural areas through promoting the community through its heritage, culture, tourism, recreation, the natural environment and municipal investment in building communities. Within this, it highlights the importance of recreation and tourism in the growth of the community. It also identifies the various measures of success, some of which include tracking the number of kilometres of trails and sidewalks which demonstrates its support for trails and cycling within the community.

MUNICIPALITY OF MEAFORD

1.4.5 MUNICIPALITY OF MEAFORD OFFICIAL PLAN

The Municipality of Meaford Official Plan, approved in November 2014, functions as a guide to direct growth and land use within the Municipality of Meaford over the next twenty years. Several objectives, goals and policies are outlined to support active and healthy living. The plan also contains several strategic objectives, one of which includes to “encourage the establishment of an integrated transportation system that safely and efficiently accommodates various modes of transportation including walking, cycling, other human-powered modes, automobiles and trucks.” The plan also identifies areas where it supports and promotes passive recreational uses, such as walking trails and nature interpretation centres as well, demonstrating support for cycling and trail use. It also notes that parkland should be connected, wherever possible, to trail systems, cycling routes and natural heritage corridors, further advocating for enhanced opportunities for people to engage in cycling and walking for recreational purposes.

1.4.6 MUNICIPALITY OF MEAFORD RECREATION AND CULTURE STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

The Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan offers a multi-year framework of short, medium and long-term opportunities for development of the key cultural assets of Meaford. It identifies key principles and goals for recreation including:

1. Ensure Responsive & Long-Term Planning for Infrastructure
2. Promote Health, Wellness and Active Living
3. Maximize Access to Recreational Opportunities, Programs and Services
4. Enhance the Operations of the Community Services
5. Target Children and Youth through Recreation
6. Prioritize and Enhance Passive Recreation Opportunities and Event Hosting through Trail, Open Space and Waterfront Development.

All of these goals support trail use, recreation and active forms of transportation for people of all ages and abilities. Within the plan a number of recommendations are provided to further support passive recreational opportunities as well as the use of trails, cycling and other active transportation facilities and community assets. The Plan also identifies key trails and recreational areas that support recreational cycling, walking and hiking while also providing recommendations of how to support recreation and cultural assets, including the recommendation to encourage appropriate development in active transportation linkages between planned recreation nodes as investment occurs over time. The Strategic Plan reinforces the Municipality’s commitment to integrating active transportation options such as cycling and trail development into the community, further emphasizing its incorporation in future growth and development.

MUNICIPALITY OF WEST GREY

1.4.7 MUNICIPALITY OF WEST GREY OFFICIAL PLAN

The Official Plan for the Municipality of West Grey was approved in February of 2012. The purpose of this Official Plan is to provide a long-term strategy for managing growth and development within the municipality and its key communities including Durham and Neustadt to the year 2026. The Official Plan identifies a set of goals and objectives to guide development and growth for the municipality. Many sections of the plan identify and support walking, cycling and other forms of active transportation and recreation within the community. This includes its goal to “strive to contribute to the quality of life in the Municipality by providing opportunities for active and recreation activities and outdoor venues for social, cultural and other activities and community events, and by protecting and preserving the natural environment and adding to the aesthetics of Durham and Neustadt.” The plan demonstrates support for active transportation use such as walking and cycling within the community which is captured in objective D 8.2.1 which advocates for the promotion of “healthy, active lifestyles for the residents of West Grey.” It also supports the development of active and passive recreational opportunities to promote tourism within the community. General policies are also included which support cycling and walking, including D 8.4.6 which notes that “trail systems for walking, cycling and cross-country skiing should be promoted throughout Durham and Neustadt, and such trails provide connectivity to commercial, residential, institutional and other open space uses within the urban centres.”

TOWN OF HANOVER

1.4.8 TOWN OF HANOVER OFFICIAL PLAN

The Town of Hanover Official Plan was adopted by Council in August 2014 and approved in February 2016. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a long-term strategy for managing growth and development within the Town of Hanover within the planning horizon of the County of Grey Official Plan. It identifies a variety of goals and objectives to achieve the outcomes of the Official Plan. A key goal that supports trails and recreation opportunities within the plan includes the goal of “lifestyle” which strives to provide the best quality of life possible for the residents of the Town. To support this goal, a number of objectives (section C2.5.2) identify support for walking and cycling facilities. These include the following:

1. To ensure the provision of a full range of recreation areas and facilities within the Town and their effective utilization.
2. To encourage barrier-free access through community and building design and in the provision of public facilities, streets, parks, trails and other public places.
3. To promote a healthy and active environment for all residents, and encourage active transportation such as walking and cycling.

4. To provide infrastructure that supports safe walking and cycling within the Town.
5. To support year-round recreation opportunities.

Another key section of the Official Plan that specifically speaks to the importance of walking, cycling and recreation is section C2.6 Services and Transportation which identifies the goal to ensure that all municipal services meet the needs of present and future residents and businesses in an efficient and environmentally sensitive manner and is supported by objectives that advocate for a well-planned, accessible and interconnected transportation network that promotes the safe, active and efficient movement of people throughout the Town, as well as a transportation network that promotes alternative forms of transportation including cycling and walking and promote a decrease in the reliance on automobiles.

TOWN OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

1.4.9 TOWN OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS OFFICIAL PLAN

The Town of the Blue Mountains Official Plan was completed in June 2016. It outlines key goals and objectives for directing and managing growth for the Town. The vision for the Official Plan emphasizes the unique character of the Town and its rich recreational and tourism resources. The plan recognizes the Town as a four seasons recreational area, noting its appeal for skiing, hiking, cycling, golf and other recreational activities. To help implement the vision of the Town, guiding principles are identified that speak to the importance of the Town as a healthy and complete community. Some guiding principles and objectives that speak to and support cycling, recreation and active transportation include:

- To establish an integrated transportation system that safely and efficiently accommodates various modes of transportation including walking, cycling, automobiles and trucks.
- Encourage reductions in the use of private automobiles by promoting active transportation and the use of Transportation
- Encourage the *development* of neighbourhoods which are: compact; provide for an integrated network of pedestrian-oriented streets, pathways and cycling facilities; and provide an appropriate mix of housing types, community facilities, commercial and service uses, and open spaces.
- Encourage the establishment of an integrated transportation system that safely and efficiently accommodates various modes of transportation including cycling, walking, automobiles and trucks, and public transit where feasible.

The Plan also promotes pedestrian, cycling, cross-country skiing and/or snow *shoeing* connections to provide for connectivity to the existing community and the Georgian Trail. It also recognizes the need for safe places to walk and cycle by ensuring that safe active transportation options are considered when evaluating all new development applications. There is clearly strong support within the Town's Official Plan for active transportation facilities for both recreation and utilitarian purposes.

1.4.10 TOWN OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2015 the Town of The Blue Mountains initiated the development of a new Strategic Plan. The plan sets out to provide direction and guide the Town through to the year 2020. The Strategic Plan identifies strategic goals and key areas of focus for the Plan which set out actions to help implement the Plan. Two of the five Strategic Goals support active transportation and recreation opportunities specifically. These include:

1. Support Healthy Lifestyles
2. Ensure our infrastructure is sustainable.

There are a variety of key actions identified in the plan that support cycling, trails and active transportation such as the call to invest in more opportunities for cycling and the Town's trail network and to include cycling lanes in the Town's road standards and provide for maintenance. The Strategic Plan is a useful document that can help demonstrate and support the need to enhance cycling and trails facilities within the Town and County more broadly.

TOWNSHIP OF GEORGIAN BLUFFS

1.4.12 TOWNSHIP OF GEORGIAN BLUFFS OFFICIAL PLAN

The Township of Georgian Bluffs Official Plan was adopted in August 2012 and approved in 2014 by the Ontario Municipal Board. The Plan is meant to be used to shape the social, physical and economic development of the Township. The Official Plan provides a strong set of policies, objectives and goals that support cycling and walking within the Township. This includes support for utilization of the waterfront and natural features and important tourism and recreation assets by focusing on the outdoor environmental aspects of recreation including cycling, hiking etc. It also emphasizes the development of passive recreation and leisure opportunities such as developing a linked trail system. The plan also advocates for safe movement of goods and people and one of the main transportation objectives is to support active transportation modes such as walking and cycling and minimize conflict between pedestrians and cyclists and vehicular traffic. It also supports recreational uses through the encouragement of integrating public facilities like trails and open space systems.

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTHGATE

1.4.13 TOWNSHIP OF SOUTHGATE OFFICIAL PLAN

The Township of Southgate Official Plan identifies goals, objectives as well as land use and transportation policies that direct the physical growth and development of the township. It references the importance of open space that provides opportunities for passive and active recreational uses, demonstrating its support for recreation and active modes of transportation. The Official Plan also discusses active transportation in relation to recreational uses. A number of existing parks, roadways and trails have been identified as areas to expand existing trails and linkages for walking and cycling. This reference to active transportation and recreation reaffirms how the Township is addressing Provincial and County-wide initiatives of multi-modal transportation and prioritization of active transportation within the community.