



Council in Committee Report
January 20, 2015

GREENBELT CYCLING ROUTE (T00)

Report prepared by: Director, Planning and Development Services

RECOMMENDATION:

The Director, Planning and Development Services recommends:

- 1) **THAT Council endorse the proposed Greenbelt Cycling Route in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville as follows:**
 - a) **St John's Sideroad from Town of Aurora boundary east to McCowan Road**
 - b) **McCowan Road from St. John's Sideroad south to Aurora Road**
 - c) **Aurora Road from McCowan Road East to Ninth Line**
 - d) **Ninth Line from Aurora Road South to Bayberry Street**
 - e) **Various local roads and off road trails through York Durham Line and Hoover Park Drive.**

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the proposed Waterfront Regeneration Trust – Greenbelt Cycling Route and seek endorsement of the portion of the route which passes through the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Greenbelt Route is a 460 kilometre provincial cycling route connecting Northumberland County to Niagara Region.

The 27-kilometre Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville portion of the Greenbelt Route passes through the community of Ballantrae, around Musselman's Lake and through the downtown core of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The Greenbelt Route has been formally endorsed by the Councils of York Region, King Township and Town of Aurora. It is anticipated that The Greenbelt Route will be launched with a fully supported recreational bike tour of the entire route in the summer of 2015.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the sections of the proposed route within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

3. BACKGROUND:

The Greenbelt Route is a 460 kilometre provincial cycling route connecting Northumberland County to Niagara Region. The route will showcase and provide links to urban centres along the Greenbelt. The route will also have several north-south connections to the 1,400 kilometre Waterfront Trail, including York Region's proposed future Lake to Lake Route that connects Lake Ontario with Lake Simcoe. The proposed Greenbelt Route from Niagara to Northumberland County is shown in Attachment 1.

The route through Whitchurch-Stouffville includes a segment of St. John's Sideroad from the Aurora/Stouffville boundary to McCowan Road, McCowan Road from St. Johns Sideroad to Aurora Road, Aurora Road from McCowan Road to Ninth Line, Ninth Line from Aurora Road to Bayberry Street, various local roads and off-road trails from Ninth Line and Bayberry Street through to the intersection of York-Durham Line and Hoover Park Drive. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville portion of the Greenbelt Route is shown in Attachment 2.

The proposed route has been endorsed by the Councils of York Region, Township of King and Town of Aurora. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is the only remaining municipality within York Region along the route that has not endorsed the proposed alignment.

4. ANALYSIS & OPTIONS:

4.1 Description of the Proposed Route

The Greenbelt Cycling Route is 460 kilometers in length connecting Niagara Region with Northumberland County through Ontario's Greenbelt. The proposed route primarily uses existing low volume, low speed roadways to build the required connections. Where possible, the route uses existing off-road trails and paths to provide the most comfortable and safe cycling experience possible for all users.

In Whitchurch-Stouffville the proposed route starts at the intersection of St. Johns Sideroad and Woodbine Avenue and proceeds easterly to McCowan Road. Cyclists turn right and proceed south on McCowan Road towards Aurora Road. At Aurora Road cyclists are directed left and proceed easterly on a wide paved shoulder on Aurora Road through the community of Ballantrae and beyond to the intersection at Ninth Line. At Aurora Road and Ninth Line, cyclists turn right and proceed south around the east side of Musselman's Lake followed by a steep uphill grade towards Bloomington Road. The route continues south beyond Bloomington downhill towards Bayberry Street.

The route continues through Whitchurch-Stouffville along Bayberry Street towards Millard Street. Cyclists turn left onto Millard and then right onto an off-road trail that connects to Mill Street. Cyclists continue south along Mill Street, crossing Main Street and continuing on Market Street towards Stouffville Memorial Park. The route takes a left turn at Burkholder Street and proceeds east through the park to Park Drive. Cyclists turn right onto Park Drive and proceed south to Hoover Park Drive where they will turn left. The route continues along Hoover Park Drive to the east and crosses into Durham Region at York-Durham Line.

The entire route will be signed with wayfinding directional signs to assist cyclists along the route. Waterfront Regeneration Trust will be producing a website, paper maps and other promotional material regarding the proposed route.

A test ride of the portion of the route through Whitchurch-Stouffville was completed on Thursday, May 8, 2014. The test group included approximately 50 cyclists of varying ages and abilities. The current Director, Planning and Development participated in the test ride of the route.

Comments/highlights from test ride participants included an interest in the rolling terrain, interest around the community of Musselman's Lake, comfortable riding conditions on Aurora Road with wide paved shoulders and general scenic surroundings. The significant uphill grade travelling southbound on Ninth Line towards Bloomington was also a frequent topic of discussion. The entire group of 50 riders stopped in Whitchurch-Stouffville at a local pub/restaurant on Main Street for lunch and visited the local Farmers Market demonstrating the purchasing power of the cycling community and just one of the many benefits of the proposed route through Whitchurch-Stouffville.

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Involved Agencies

Waterfront Regeneration Trust (WRT) is taking prime ownership of the proposed Greenbelt Route and will be taking responsibility for design, wayfinding signs, promotion and events. Waterfront Regeneration Trust would welcome any partnership/co-branding with the Town, however, it is not a requirement.

WRT is in the final stages of route design including sign installation plans and mapping. WRT will cover the cost of sign design and manufacturing and will deliver all of the signs to representatives at York Region. York Region will install all of the signs on any Regional Road or trail facility. York Region will distribute the remaining signs to each local municipality as necessary for installation on local roads and trails.

The signs will be provided by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust. It is expected the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville public works staff will install and maintain the signs at no cost to Waterfront Regeneration Trust. The cost of the sign installation and maintenance work is expected to be minimal and can be accommodated within the existing Operating Budget.

A sample of the proposed Greenbelt Route directional sign is provided in Attachment 3.

4.3 Expected Benefits for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

According to the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, in 2010, two million Canadian visitors went cycling while traveling in Ontario and spent \$391 million. According to the League of American Cyclists, American cyclists spent \$47 billion annually while cycle touring across the United States. The Chair of Tourism at Université du Québec à Montréal in a Vélo Québec sponsored study estimated that vacationing cyclists in Quebec spend \$134 million annually. Building on this success, the Greenbelt Cycling Route is intended to encourage Ontarians and visitors to connect to the communities in the Greenbelt by routing and exploring on a bicycle.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Council endorsement of the Greenbelt Cycling Route will have minimal impact on Operating or Capital Budgets. Waterfront Regeneration Trust is the project lead on the proposed Greenbelt Cycling Route. The Greenbelt Foundation is providing funding to Waterfront Regeneration Trust to cover the costs of the production and delivery of necessary signs to delineate the proposed route.

6. ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:

This report is aligned with the Town's Strategic Plan in the following manner:

1. Community Prosperity and Sustainability
Balanced growth, environmental protection, economic development, tourism, community character and identity
 - 1.1 *Preserve and enhance community rural/urban character, beauty and heritage*
 - 1.5 *Tourism development*
3. Service Excellence & Community Engagement
High quality, citizen-centred services, responsive to the needs of informed and involved citizens
 - 3.6 *Advance customer/client service excellence*
 - 3.7 *Enhance communication with and engagement of residents and businesses*
4. Quality of Life
Encompasses community safety, diversity, promoting healthy lifestyles, leisure and culture; complements community prosperity and sustainability

4.3 *Leisure and cultural development*

4.5 *Cultivate healthier lifestyles and greener communities*

For further information on this report, please contact Steven D. Kemp, Director – Planning and Development Services at 905-640-1910 or 1-855-642-8697 ext. 2359 or via email at steven.kemp@townofws.ca

7. ATTACHMENTS:

1. Greenbelt Cycling Route – Full Route from Niagara Region to Northumberland County
2. Greenbelt Cycling Route – Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
3. Greenbelt Cycling Route – Proposed directional sign