

# APPENDIX E COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES - COMMENTS



## **Cycling Master Plan Open House Public Comments**

### **Public Comments – provided verbally**

#### **Programs and Promotion**

Create a map that includes destinations, amenities and accommodations, and a brochure that really showcases the area

Suggest getting a booth at the Home Show to get cottager input; could sell maps there also

Form cycling club at high school and public school

Find a way to connect with youth to get their input

#### **Bike Racks**

Need for bike racks in town (2 comments)

New library – automatic for bike rack (maybe come up with a list of obvious locations for bike racks)

Need bike racks in town if they want bike business in town

#### **Signage**

Info re: share the road on the road rather than signage

Share the road signs of limited value; consider sharrows or painted bike lane

Would like to see signage to remind people it's a cycling route

#### **Awareness and Advocacy**

Major concern of councillors in Highlands East was the road ride last year (Tour for Kids) – cyclists did not move over for motorists etc – many complaints from residents.

Get people of influence to advocate i.e. cottagers who cycle

#### **On-road Cycling**

Need paved shoulders

Would like to see paved shoulders, especially on busy roads such as CR 21; would cycle more if there were paved shoulders

Paved shoulders on highways being rehabilitated

Biked years ago – need paved routes. Good non-paved roads around Ingoldsby.

Like to cycle on cottage roads, quieter roads – don't like riding in traffic. Like winding roads – more interesting – don't like rail trail – too flat, boring

Suggest drawing lines along cottage roads e.g. Deep Bay Road, to show where to ride – a message for both cyclists and drivers

#### **Off-road Cycling**

What about off-road cycling planning?

Feel there's a bias towards road cycling in this plan. What about mountain biking? Trails? Rail Trail? Need to make mention in the plan of other kinds of cycling other than roads.

Many off-trails that could be used by mountain bikers

#### **Rail Trails**

Need for family route – suggest Rail Trail, if improved

IB & O trail is a good ride from Gooderham to Wilberforce

I avoid main roads because of traffic, especially trucks – prefer quieter back roads – quieter, more scenic, less traffic; would choose Rail Trail over County Road 1

Paved shoulders are great, but sometimes you want somewhere scenic, quiet

Our routes don't accommodate families with young children

Rail Trail can't be overlooked as a resource

Wish Rail Trail was in better shape for riding

Like riding on trails (e.g. Head Lake Trail, Glebe Park trails)– feel like a “moving target” on roads; Like less travelled roads

Rail Trail needs harder surface – limestone screening that packs down

Need for cycling representation (e.g. HHCC) on Rail Trail Committee

How does Rail Trail fit in to this plan? RT committee needs to be identified as potential partner in cycling planning

County is going to transport extra asphalt from CR21 work over to the Rail trail – this could act as foundation for additional screenings that would compact, or could be sealed itself to act as a surface.

It's too hilly here for me

### **Specific Areas of Concern**

Highlands East: Loop Road between Earl's Road and S. Wilbermere Road – destination is Wilbermere Lake and there is virtually no space to walk/bike. Kids bike there for swimming lessons.

The county is redoing County Road through town – would like to see road in town to Legion with paved shoulder for walking/cycling, and also to Foodland (Essonville Line). We are promoting ourselves as a tourist area and need to address the need to walk.

Problem areas – 503 between Tory Hill and Gooderham needs improvement – road is rough and narrow, especially rough at road edge, so you have to ride more into the lane, higher traffic volume

Section of highway 35 between Buckslide and Boshkung Roads would really benefit from paved shoulder because it is a connecting loop

Good route from town to SSFC (Head lake Trail)

Rough section on HLT for cycling (between Pine and Harmony Road), especially for kids

**Public Comments**  
**Provided on Comment Form (13 completed)**

**1. If you have comments on any of the route alternatives shown on the map please identify below.**

- Cant (sp?) Lake Road
- Good start. I would like to see more routes identified so cars know cyclists would be there.
- I strongly believe that county rail trail should be included in the master plan as a route (once surface is adequate to promote cycling)
- Not a road biker. Nor are many of the 60% of residents who are older than 44 years of age, and almost half of whom are of low or intermediate skill level.

**2. Are there any specific problems on the roads you cycle that need to be addressed?**

- More paved shoulders needed (10)
- Lack of respect from drivers
- Rail Trail needs to have a firmer base
- More shoulders and signage
- Shoulders and intersections and side roads swept earlier
- Uneven edges of surface treated (i.e. not asphalt)
- Road surfaces
- The main problem is the lack of wide roads with paved shoulders. This is a problem from a cyclists and motorists perspective
- Driver awareness (slow down, cycling route)

**3. Does the direction of the Cycling Master Plan described at this Open House fit with your vision for cycling and living in Haliburton County?**

- Yes, well overdue
- Yes (5)
- A great starting point but the Rail Trail needs to be part of the vision
- Yes, make it a destination attraction
- For good start we need to get the road biking looked at first then off roading
- No; mountain biking and the two Rail Trails at least deserved mention before stating the Master plan focuses on road cycling, when in fact it only focused on road cycling
- Definitely. It is well thought out and achievable. Amazing job.
- Yes, but more quality off road cycling trails are necessary

**4. General Comments/suggestions?**

- Good start – try to get some of the road with wider shoulders
- Glad to see the efforts being put into this
- Great information and connections
- Great work, keep it up
- Great work! One more attraction making Haliburton County an amazing place to live, visit, and enjoy quiet, healthy, recreational activities.
- Be sure to mention in the report that the potential for cycling on the two rail trails and for mountain biking is great within Haliburton County. As this report will be

used as a planning tool, it is important government realizes this master plan is but a portion of cycling opportunities here.

- Rail Trail biking requires safe parking areas
- We need government to create mountain biking trails.
- County and municipalities should routinely create marked bike shoulders on every road they touch in the future.

## **Public Comments Received via email**

I am a new member of the Haliburton area having bought a cottage in 2007 and have cycled only one summer in the area. That being said, I am however no stranger to the county having cottaged on Mountain Lake from 1958 to 1983 so the terrain and beauty of the Highlands are well known to me. I also have done a lot of cycling over the past 10 years in Ontario, Quebec, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and most recently in Austria. Each of these locales offer great off road cycling trails, scenery, history and facilities.

Fortunately Haliburton is blessed with good tourist services, accommodations and scenery, which are all important for cycling. I would suggest enhancements such as additional paved shoulders, when new road construction permits, and the provision of a trail linking Haliburton to Sir Sandford Fleming College (beside the lake) would be great assets to the overall bike network. However, in order to create a long term vision for cycling as a tourist draw the county needs an " anchor" much like the Thousand Island Bike Trail between Brockville and Gananoque or Le Petit Train du Nord in the Laurentians.

The cycling anchor for Haliburton could be the Haliburton County Rail Trail, which currently is an off road multi use trail dominated by ATV usage in the summer. This situation is a major deterrent to the majority of cyclists and is counter to the philosophy of the two trails mentioned above where motorized summer vehicles are banned. Due to ATV disturbance the current surface of the Rail Trail is unsuitable for all but the most serious mountain biker. If the Master Plan is to be successful in promoting the County as a cycling destination the resurfacing of the rail trail combined with the elimination of summer motorized vehicles is essential to create a more viable and tourist friendly cycling network.

This would provide a wonderful addition to the cycling network and a draw for tourists and residents alike.

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I am delighted to see that Haliburton is finally recognizing its potential as a fabulous cycling destination. When we have city visitors, they always bring their bikes and a cycling trip is always part of their visit. Unfortunately, many of our guests are 'occasional' cyclists who would prefer the safety of quiet country roads or trails. If the rail trail could be re-surfaced to accommodate bicycles, this would open the cycling experience to so many more participants. I am an avid 'road rider' but I would love to take the grand children on the rail trail. In its present condition the rail trail is a safety hazard for most bicycles. Let's make Haliburton a cycling destination for everyone!

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My wife and I continue to be avid cyclists...From our experience, trails which are not paved and which allow ATV's, dirt bikes and horses, quickly become unsuitable and unsafe for the recreational cyclist. A ride from the Village of Haliburton to Kinmount, however, is an unhappy experience. Deep ruts, loose gravel, water holes with a slick of creosote skimming the surface, all combine for a "white knuckle" experience and not a pleasant cycle. Encountering ATV's on

this route, we are overwhelmed with noxious exhaust, often excessive speed, and noise. It is no wonder that we see so little wildlife when we cycle on the rail trails. By contrast, cycling on the PPG trail across the river from Pembroke, Ontario, is well worth driving the distance to get there. The trail is not paved but well maintained and dirt bikes and ATV's are not allowed. It is quiet, refreshing and wildlife abounds. This type of cycling could be possible in Haliburton, but in our opinion, the present multi-use approach to the rail trail prevents this from ever being possible.

Presently, we prefer to ride on the roads in Haliburton as we find the rail trails completely unsuitable and unsafe for cycling. Why would we drive an hour each way each week to ride on Haliburton rail trails that are in such unsatisfactory conditions? We stay off the busier highways and choose to ride mid-week when traffic is lighter. We do not shy away from hills, enjoying the challenge; we have yet to find a hill in Haliburton that we couldn't walk up! We do look forward to our weekly rides in Haliburton.

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Our home in Haliburton gives us access to a very large number of excellent, flat riding routes, only 1 of which is in Haliburton County. The rest of the routes all require us to drive an hour or so to access them. We leave the Haliburton area to ride and take our money with us. Meals, fuel, and in some cases accommodation, are all purchased outside of Haliburton because we have no rail trail we can use.

Where is the courage and foresight among our elected officials to invest a little to gain a large tourism benefit? Fix and maintain the rail trail to cyclists' standards and all users will benefit. A check with civic leaders in Collingwood, Meaford, Peterborough, Lakefield, Granby PQ, City of Toronto, or Petewawa, will quickly show Haliburton County the benefits of a rail trail that cyclists can use.

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A quick note about a good route that warrants official recognition and management as a cycling/walking/running route, is Kashagawigamog Lake Road, because it connects to Gelert Rd 1 and #121, an effective and quiet "circular route", and as the road was just widened and is currently used for these purposes in any case so that demarking a cycling/walking lane would increase safety and promote this already occurring use as well as increase tourism and cycling and appreciation etc.

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...it is evident the scope of the Master Plan is to focus on cycle route planning and improvements that are limited to roadways. This was a particular disappointment to me since the Haliburton County Rail Trail and the Central Ontario Loop Trail represent a huge and unique cycling opportunity to the County. I was also interested in the public survey data, which indicated that the top item for improving the system was to develop " more trails and pathways" and the number two barrier to increased cycling was "traffic". There is a clear linkage between these two findings.

Near the end of the Storyboard presentation the five purposes of the Cycling Master Plan are listed, however, there are two of them that are somewhat incompatible. Number 1 " Provide a network of road route options for cyclists of all types and ages" and number 3 " Position and

market Haliburton County as a cycling destination". The two worthwhile goals of providing a network that would create a cycling destination while at the same time offering only " on road " routes will be prone to mediocre success, at best.

In support of my argument I would refer to the previously mentioned survey data which demonstrates a strong preference for safe "off road" trail and pathway development. If the Cycling Master Plan is serious about tourism potential then surely these two rail trails should be referenced in the Master Plan, even if their development is in the long term and will require funding from other levels of government.

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The Haliburton Highlands Cycling Coalition is a misnomer unless it changes its name to the H H Road Cycling Coalition as it appears right now as a result of this Cycling Plan. Both Sue and Angela state that the Coalition does not intend to disregard the existence of or potential for other modes of cycling. If this is true, then we who choose to cycle on the two rail trails or on mountain trails should remain with the Coalition and work together to ensure all biking interests and needs in the County are addressed.

The Cycling Master Plan is a misnomer unless it includes, in its opening remarks, something akin to the following. "This report focuses solely on road biking, which in itself is not intended to be a statement of its importance over other modes of bicycling. Haliburton County has two rail trails that need attention to be effective locales for bicyclists, and the potential for mountain cycling in this County has barely been touched. However, to be effective and thorough, this study will only focus upon Road Biking Trails. Cycling on the Rail Trails and the identification and development of cycling trails for mountain bike cyclists will still need to be explored."

I don't know what the Road Cycling Master Plan will state in summation about the demographics of cyclists in the County, but care should be taken to ensure that the age and ability of cyclists is recognized and highlighted. Specifically, 61 per cent of respondents were over the age of 44 years, and 39 per cent were of a mere basic ability. Looking at these two factors alone should be enough to demonstrate that the need for off road biking opportunities is in everyone's best interest, for safety and to ensure that biking opportunities exist for people even if they are not extremely fit or willing to risk biking with vehicular traffic.

It is important that the tourism potential for the two Rail Trails and for mountain cyclists be addressed. The number of baby boomers who are retiring is going to increase, and they will be looking for healthful and safe recreational opportunities. The Rail Trails need support and mention, otherwise they will be lost to ATV and snowmobile use. Mountain cycling is a healthful, fun alternative to motorbiking and ATV driving, and is much less damaging to the environment while providing a challenging adventure outdoors.

I look forward to the final report. As it is a document that will be used by local governments in their decision making projects, I urge you to please ensure the other two styles of cycling, and to please be more inclusive in your future work for bicyclists.

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I think the km's of " family friendly " riding is sorely lacking, and the rail trail could be a bike ride than anyone, young or old, could do. I think it has everything a good " non motorized use trail" should have except in fact a focus on developing it for that purpose. I think that the current master plan under review is a great first kick at the cat, but I hope that in the future the coalition can be an advocate for all types of cyclists, and that the feed back we get at the open houses will give us some data that could be used to perhaps re-examine the use of the rail trail in the future.