3.0

DEVELOPING & DESIGNING THE TRAILS NETWORK

3.1 THE NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Chapter 3 is an overview of the steps used to develop the County of Oxford's Trail Network. The network development process includes eight-steps which are built on a set of route selection criteria. A description of the approach and the information gathered and used to inform the development of the network is provided in this section.

3.1.1 DEVELOPING THE NETWORK: AN EIGHT-STEP PROCESS

The steps included in this process are identified in **Table 3.1**. It is important to note that public and stakeholder consultation was a key element in the development of the proposed trails network. The consultation tools and the information that was gathered are documented in **Appendix B**.

Table 3.1 – Eight-Step Trails Network Development Process

1. Collect & Assemble Background Information
Consolidate and digitally map previously planned trail facilities, secondary plans and new development areas in Oxford County. Available base information was provided by Oxford County and its partners including local municipalities, conservation authorities and key stakeholders such as the Oxford County Trails Council.

2. Develop Route Selection Principles
A set of qualitative principles were developed to guide the selection of off and on-road routes. The principles were reviewed with the study team, steering committee as well as members of the public at a study open house.

3. Select Candidate Routes / Route Alignment
Candidate routes were identified and mapped for consideration by the study team. Once presented and reviewed the routes were refined based on the following information:

- Consolidated base mapping;
- Route Selection Principles;
- Consultation with the steering committee;
- Expertise of the study team;
- Consultation with the public; and
- Desktop analysis using the County's GIS database and aerial imagery.

4. Undertake Field Investigation
The study team examined each of the candidate routes in the field and collected additional information including photographs and measurements that helped to inform the development of the trails network concept. Due to the size of the County field investigation also occurred once the routes had been confirmed to inform the selection of potential facility types.

5. Prepare Draft Routing (select alignments and differentiate between on and off-road facilities)
The route network concept was further refined using the Route Selection Principles and information collected in the field. The mapping was also refined based on the technical expertise of the study team as well as input from the public, stakeholders and public agencies as well as members of the steering committee.

Table 3.1 – Eight-Step Trails Network Development Process

6. Confirm and Determine Facility Types
For each route, an appropriate facility type was suggested by considering a number of factors such as: • Geographic location (urban vs. rural); • Facility types recommended in other previously completed plans and studies conducted within the County, and local Municipalities; and • Roadway characteristics (for on-road routes) such as cross section, traffic volume and speed, commercial vehicle volumes (where data was provided), sight lines etc. Observations made by the study team were then balanced by comments received from the steering committee and the public.

7. Determine Network Priorities (Implementation Plan)
The Implementation Plan was developed to respond to priorities identified by the steering committee and the public. Note that as part of the implementation of individual routes in the future, a more detailed assessment should be undertaken to confirm the route alignment and facility type (refer to the 5-step implementation process outlined in **Chapter 4**).

8. Apply Unit Costing
The recommended network and facility types were used at the master plan level to develop an order to magnitude cost estimate for the implementation of the network. Costing was prepared for full build-out of the network, and has also been organized based on short, medium and long-term phased investments consistent with the implementation schedule.

3.2 BUILDING ON WHAT HAS BEEN DONE: A SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing trails and active transportation facilities formed the basis of the proposed trails network for the County. It is important to understand the infrastructure which is currently 'on the ground' to ensure that the master plan builds on what has been done and highlights the previous successes of the County, its local municipalities, Conservation Authorities, the Oxford County Trails Council other local organizations and interest groups.

As noted in the network development process, documentation of existing conditions was the first step in establishing the County-wide trails network. Using the County's GIS database and information gathered from local municipalities and stakeholders the study team undertook a review of existing and previously planned routes. **Map 3.1** illustrates the existing and previously planned conditions documented as part of the network development process.

The following sections provide an overview of the existing on and off-road connections found within Oxford County. As is the case with many County or Regional plans there are a number of jurisdictions who are involved in the design, approval, development and implementation of trails. It is important to gather a base understanding of these groups and their jurisdictions in order to move forward with strategic planning and implementation initiatives and recommendations. As such, existing conditions have been organized based on the jurisdiction under which they fall.

3.2.1 OXFORD COUNTY

Existing on and off-road trail and cycling routes that fall under the County's jurisdiction include:

- Existing off-road trails on County owned forest tracts and former railway corridors owned by the County;
- County roads with existing paved shoulders;
- County roads which have been identified as part of the County's "Share the Road" campaign where Share the Roads warning signs are to be installed to inform motorists and cyclists (please see additional details regarding the application of Share the Road signs in section 3.3); and
- Cycling routes endorsed by the County's Cycling Advisory Committee as preferred on-road recreational cycling and touring linkages.

3.2.2 EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

Within the County there are a number of existing regionally / nationally significant and recognized routes. For some of these routes planned extensions have been identified but have not been included in the existing conditions mapping. These trails include:

- The Avon Trail;
- Trans Canada Trail;
- Hickson Trail;
- Oxford Thames River Trail;
- Trans Canada Trail; and
- Carroll Trail.

Some of the external organizations / agencies that have a role in facilitating, and in many cases designing and implementing these trails include the Trans Canada Trail Association, Local Municipalities (also see section 3.2.4), the Avon Trail Association, Local Service Clubs, and the Oxford County Trails Council, among others.

3.2.3 CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

Map 3.1 also illustrates off-road routes found within the conservation areas managed by:

- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority;
- Long Point Region Conservation Authority;
- Grand River Conservation Authority; and
- Catfish Creek Conservation Authority.

Many of the conservation authorities are responsible for the design, development and maintenance of off-road trails on lands under their jurisdiction. A few of these include:

- Pittock Conservation Area;
- Embro Pond Conservation Area;
- Wildwood Conservation Area; and
- Tillsonburg Conservation Area.

3.2.4 LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

Each local municipality is responsible for the design, approval, development and implementation of trails on lands within their jurisdiction including local municipal parks and open spaces. In some cases a municipality may also engage in an agreement with the County or conservation authority to help manage or maintain trails in County or conservation area owned parks and open spaces (e.g. City of Woodstock and Pittock Lake Conservation Area). Trails illustrated on the maps which are under the jurisdiction of the local municipalities include:

- Existing multi-use trails including those in parks and open spaces;
- Existing on-road cycling facilities (e.g. bike lanes, signed-routes and paved shoulders) on local municipal roadways; and
- Previously proposed on and off-road routes identified in local municipal plans and policies adopted by local municipal Councils (e.g. City of Woodstock Cycling Master Plan, Draft Innerkip Trail Map etc.).

3.2.5   SURROUNDING MUNICIPALITIES

The existing conditions mapping developed for the master plan also illustrate potential connections to surrounding municipalities. One of the key objectives of the Trails Master Plan was to provide connections for residents and visitors within the County and to bordering areas. This study objective was addressed by reviewing trail and active transportation related policies and plans from the County's bordering municipalities to identify key linkages and connection points which would provide direct access to existing or previously planned routes. The following is a list of the policies and plans which were reviewed from these municipalities:

- **Regional Municipality of Waterloo:**
  - Region of Waterloo Official Plan; and
  - Region of Waterloo Active Transportation Master Plan.
- **Perth County:**
  - Creating Walkable and Bikeable Community – MovingON Community Planning Guide.
- **Brant County:**
  - County of Brant Transportation Master Plan.
- **Middlesex County:**
  - County of Middlesex Official Plan, Dorchester Trails Master Plan and Thames Centre Official Plan.
- **Elgin County**:
  - Elgin County Active Transportation Initiative;
  - Town of Bayham Official Plan; and
  - Township of Malahide Official Plan.
- **Norfolk County:**
  - Norfolk County Trails Master Plan; and
  - Norfolk County Official Plan.

3.3   ESTABLISHING A SET OF CANDIDATE ROUTES

Following the documentation of existing on and off-road trail and active transportation conditions, the study team undertook an exercise to identify potential routes which could form part of the trails network. Candidate routes were developed based on a number of project objectives, assumptions and principles including:

- Off-road linkages which highlight areas of natural and cultural significance;
- Missing links in the existing off-road and on-road system;
- Direct north-south and east-west connections through the County to bordering municipalities;
- Direct connections through the County to connect local municipalities and key community destinations;
- Routes which are endorsed by the County's Cycling Advisory Committee and are consistent with the County's "Share the Road" program;
- On-road connections which provide linkages to existing destination trails; and
- "Desired" connections that were identified as conceptual routes at the time the Master Plan was prepared, and require further investigation to determine their potential as a future long term connection.

Key Consideration:

Candidate routes / desired connections on privately owned lands were not investigated in the field as part of the master plan's development. Should the opportunity arise in the future, a desired connection should be investigated further through discussions between the County / local municipality and the land owner, with the goal to engage in an access agreement with the landowner.

Recommendation(s):

3-1 As part of the plan's implementation, proposed and desired connections on privately owned lands should be more thoroughly investigated through discussions between the County / local municipalities and the landowner.

3.4 SELECTING THE PREFERRED ROUTES

As noted in the eight-step network development process, one of the key inputs into the development of the recommended trails network was the Route Selection Principles. The principles were developed by the study team and reviewed with County staff, members of the Steering Committee, and members of the public.

Table 3.2 outlines the Route Selection Principles established to inform the development of Oxford County's network.

Table 3.2 – Oxford County Trail Route Selection Criteria

Criteria	Description
Connected	Trails should be connected to form a continuous, linked network throughout the County. Connections will be provided between population centres, public lands, important destinations and neighbouring municipalities. Where possible the off-road network will be connected through existing public open space (e.g. parks, utility corridors, unopened road allowances, County forest tracts etc.).
Linked	The off-road trail network will be seamlessly connected to a complementary network of on-road cycling routes. Where it is not possible to provide off-road connections in the trail network, on-road links will serve as the main connectors. Trails may be located on public lands, but may also include private lands where a mutually acceptable agreement can be reached between the owner and the County / Municipality / Trail Partner.
Visible	Trails should be a visible component of the County's recreation and transportation system and clearly identified through signage.
Convenient	Trails should be easy to access from all areas throughout the County. They should be supported by trail amenities (e.g. parking, bike racks, signage, etc.).

Table 3.2 – Oxford County Trail Route Selection Criteria

Criteria	Description
Accessible	To the extent that is possible and practical, trails will be designed to be accessible for residents of Oxford County, and for users of varying physical ability. Where possible, trail facilities should be designed to be consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Trailhead signs should communicate the level of accessibility so users can make informed decisions about using various trails.
Sustainable and Well Designed	Sustainability will be a key consideration in the alignment, design and selection of materials for the trail system. Supportive facilities such as benches, garbage receptacles, information signs and bicycle parking should be located at trail nodes and key destinations where they can be easily serviced.
Context-Sensitive	Trails should provide opportunities for users to experience and learn more about Oxford County's natural and cultural heritage assets. Trails should be appropriately located when associated with natural heritage features. Each site's characteristics will be carefully considered when the alignment is refined and design details are being developed.
Diverse	The trail system should appeal to a range of user abilities and interests. As such, the network should consist of a hierarchy of route types in a variety of locations throughout the County to accommodate a variety of trail experiences.

Criteria	Description
Responsive to Safety Concerns	Reducing risks to users and providing comfortable facilities creates user confidence, and acceptance of the network can be instilled in users by reducing real and perceived risk. Public safety will not be compromised in the interest of minimizing the cost to create or maintain trails.
Cost-Effective	The cost to implement and maintain the trail network facilities and supporting programs will be affordable and appropriately scaled for Oxford County. To assist in offsetting costs, opportunities for funding programs and partnerships with other agencies and organizations will be considered.
Expandable	The network will be strategically planned to allow for future opportunities and to provide linkages to surrounding municipalities, regional, provincial and national trails. In areas of new development, planning for on and off-road trail facilities will be incorporated into the land use planning and site plan development process.

The County and its partners are encouraged to use the Route Selection Principles when undertaking detailed route feasibility assessments for trail linkages identified as part of the trails network or when network routing changes are being considered.

3.5 DEFINING THE TRAILS NETWORK IN OXFORD COUNTY

The proposed trail network is a system of on and off-road routes which are intended to connect local residents and visitors with community destinations and major existing and planned trail systems. As the candidate network was refined, a network concept was created and a hierarchy of routes was identified.

Maps 3.2 and **3.3** illustrates the Route Network Concept which was created for the County's trails network. The hierarchy which was developed establishes a better understanding of route objectives and was used by the study team when identifying potential facility types for future consideration. The hierarchy consists of

- Off-Road Connections;
- On-Road Connections; and
- Desire Lines.

A description of each is presented in the tables below.

OFF-ROAD CONNECTIONS

Definition
Off-road connections are the primary focus of the Trails Master Plan. They typically consist of routes found within local parks and open spaces, conservation areas, abandoned rail corridors or other publicly owned lands.

Objectives
The routes highlight areas of natural and cultural significance. They are considered the primary focus of the network and are intended to provide residents and visitors with community destinations with a recreational focus. In some cases, within the urban areas, these off-road links may provide local connections to community destinations.

Users
Intended to be used primarily by recreational and touring trail and Active Transportation users such as hikers and pedestrians and cyclists. In some locations, portions of off-road trails may be used by equestrians and other seasonal trail users. There may also be some instances where portions of off-road trails overlap with existing snowmobile or ATV routes. For these linkages appropriate signage and messaging will need to be included to inform users of the presence of other user groups.

Application & Facility Types
Abandoned railway lines, lands in public ownership such as conservation areas or County forests. Facility types could include: - Off-road Multi-use and Single-track trails   - Rails with Trails   - Multi-use trails on abandoned railway lines and unopened road allowances

Example of Potential Application

Tillsonburg Trails – Source: MMM Group

ON-ROAD CONNECTIONS

Definition
On-road connections have been identified to complement the off-road network and may be used as a more direct route alternative. In locations where off road links are not currently available, on-road routes are used for network connectivity.

Objectives
The routes are intended to be used as direct north-south and east-west linkages to key destinations within and outside of the County. In some cases they may form utilitarian routes within the urban areas or be part of cycle touring routes in rural areas.

Users
The routes are intended to be used primarily by utilitarian and touring cyclists and pedestrians. On County roads pedestrians and cyclists will be encouraged to use the same space (e.g. paved shoulders). On local roads cyclists will use the on-road facilities with the pedestrians using the sidewalk (where available) or shoulder.

Application & Facility Types
County owned or municipally owned roadways. Facility types could include:

- Paved Shoulders;
- Bike Lanes;
- Signed-only Cycling Routes;
- Sharrows; and
- Multi-use Trails in place of a sidewalk.

Example of Potential Application

Clark Road Bike Lane with Adjacent Sidewalk, Ingersoll, ON – Source: MMM Group

DESIRE LINES

Definition
Desire lines indicate routes which are proposed to be explored in the future as trail development occurs throughout the County. These routes would typically include extensions to the off-road connections or new off-road connections linking urban areas.

Objectives
The routes would provide an extension to the on and off-road connections in the future to facilitate movement into and out of new development areas, conservation areas, between urban centres or access to local parks and public open spaces.

Users
Intended for use by utilitarian as well as recreational cyclists and pedestrians. The users will be based on the confirmed route alignment and proposed facility type as it is developed.

Application & Facility Types
Abandoned or existing railway rights-of-way, conservation areas, private lands, urban public open spaces, rural public open spaces. Facility types would be determined through future investigation.

Example of Potential Application

Potential Off-road Linkage in Burgessville, ON – Source: MMM Group

3.6   THE COUNTY-WIDE TRAILS NETWORK

The proposed trails network for Oxford County is illustrated on **Maps 3.4** to **3.12**. The network includes proposed route alignments as well as facility types. **Table 3.3** provides a summary of existing and proposed network routes.

Table 3.3 – Trails Network Summary

Facility Type	Existing (km)	Proposed (km)	Total (km)
Off-road Trail Connections	136.2	63.7	199.9
On-Road Cycling Links	18.5	685.9	704.4
Desired Connections	0.0	80.7	80.7
Total	**154.7**	**830.3**	**985**

The on-road facilities identified as part of the trails master plan are intended to form direct connections to the off-road trails where the land is currently not available to establish the off-road connection. Primarily used by cyclists, these facilities could include:

• Signed-only Cycling Routes
• Signed Routes with Paved Shoulders
• Sharrows
• Bicycle Lanes
• Edgelines

The proposed system of on-road facilities was informed by the Cycling component of the County's Transportation Master Plan, the County's existing Share the Road Cycling Program as well as discussions with the County's Cycling Advisory Committee.

The proposed linkages are intended to be used as a flexible tool to guide future decision making and next steps by the County's Cycling Advisory Committee as well as future municipal initiatives pertaining to the development of on-road cycling facilities. Proposed on-road connections should complement the off-road system of trails and should be a collaborative effort between the County and local municipalities.

Though a County-wide network has been identified, it is important to note that it is not intended to be prescriptive. With time, the network will grow and evolve. Additional opportunities may be identified, connections to surrounding communities may be highlighted, revised route alignments may be proposed or connections on private lands may arise. When this occurs, the network is intended to be adapted and should continue to be used as a blueprint for future trail development.

3.6.1   WHAT WILL THE NETWORK LOOK LIKE?

When designing the off-road trails and on-road linkages proposed as part of the Trails Network, the County and its partners should use a consistent set of design guidelines and concepts as a reference.

A set of design guidelines has been prepared for the County's Trails Master Plan. The guidelines have been summarized and included as an appendix to the master plan report – **Appendix C**. The facilities presented are consistent with the proposed cycling design treatments identified in the County's Transportation Master Plan as well as best practices for off-road trail design and on-road facilities.

3.6.2 INTERPRETING & UNDERSTANDING THE MAPPING

The network mapping prepared for the Trails Master Plan is intended to be used as a tool when moving forward with master plan implementation. The facility types mapping can also be used as a communication tool for future trail promotion, education and outreach (please see additional details regarding potential promotion and outreach initiatives in **Chapter 4.0**). When interpreting the network maps the following points should be kept in mind.

Key Considerations:

1. **Context:** The County's Transportation Master Plan identified the installation of "Share the Road" warning signage along County Roads in appropriate locations as a key priority. As a result the County has developed and initiated a program for the installation of "Share the Road" signage along a number of County roads. In 2013, the County budgeted and planned for the implementation of "Share the Road" warning signs on Oxford Road 33, Oxford Road 9 (Beachville Road), Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 20.

   Mapping Interpretation: The facility types map reflects the routes identified as part of the County's "Share the Road" program. However, consistent with typical design guidelines (e.g. Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18-Cycling Facilities) and typical standards, Share the Road signage should not be used as the route marker for a formal cycling route. Instead, routes identified as "signed bicycle routes" should have the green bike route marker applied at appropriate intervals – in rural at least every 2km and in urban areas every 400 – 800m. Share the Road signage is intended to be used as a warning sign at locations along signed bike routes which indicate potential sightline issues, higher than normal traffic volumes, narrow areas such as bridges and underpasses or a

Key Considerations:

change in cycling conditions. As such, for future signed routes, the County should consistently apply the green bike route markers and supplement them in appropriate locations, with Share the Road signage where warning signs are necessary. For those routes where Share the Road signs have already been implemented the County is encouraged to replace them with green bike route signs if they are not currently being used to mark a hazard and maintain the Share the Road signs at hazard locations.

2. **Context:** In many of the built up areas of the County such as the Towns of Ingersoll and Tillsonburg and the City of Woodstock off-road connections are limited. In these areas on-road linkages may be the most realistic to implement. Some proposed on-road linkages within these urban areas are identified on roads where there is existing on-street parking, and the level of parking demand / use varies.

   Mapping Interpretation: Where a route is identified on a road with an urban cross section which includes on-street parking, a signed bike route has been identified for short-term implementation. In these locations, if there are few to no cars parked on the road the lane may function similar to a bike lane. Over time, the municipality may consider converting the signed route into a formal bike lane should demand for parking decrease and demand for cycling increase.

   In core retail areas where on-street parking is critical for retail business, parking should be retained and the signed cycling route can be supplemented with sharrows to provide guidance to cyclists and motorists.

3. **Context:** Many roads in the rural area are gravel surfaced, and some on-road linkages within the County-wide trails network have been identified on these roads in order to achieve network connectivity and continuity.

   Mapping Interpretation: For routes on gravel surfaced roads the County and local municipalities should (a) consider upgrading to a hard surface e.g. chip-seal when a route is being implemented or (b) clearly indicate that these roads are gravel surfaced on mapping and promotional materials so users can plan their route and equipment (e.g. select type of bicycle/tires). Master Plan costing for these linkages includes the cost to upgrade from gravel to hard surface.

4. **Context:** Through the cycling component of the Transportation Master Plan the County adopted an updated approach to the implementation of paved shoulders on County roads. County policy states that a paved shoulder is to be implemented along a road which is scheduled for reconstruction where the existing platform accommodates the additional asphalt.

   Mapping Interpretation: The trails network identifies a number of on-road connections on County roads within the rural area. Many of these roads are identified for future paved shoulders. In most cases, the existing platform width accommodates implementation; however, there are sections of the network where the cross section does not have the platform width available. For these linkages the County is encouraged to consider widening the roadway to facilitate route connectivity and continuity. The costing proposed in the master plan reflects a paved shoulder with a minimum width of 1.2 m.

5. **Context:** Several of the urban municipalities in the County have developed their own plans and policy directives to guide the development of future on and off-road linkages. These plans were used to inform the development of linkages to the County-wide network.

   Mapping Interpretation: It is assumed that linkages and proposed facility types found in local municipal plans and policies will be the primary reference for the proposed facility types and phasing for implementation. Local plans and policies (where they exist) should be consulted in concert with the Oxford County Trails Master Plan.

Recommendation(s):

3-2 When developing and printing trail mapping for public use, map developers should consider including the interpretation details to assist users in understanding the map(s).

3.7 IDENTIFYING FUTURE PRIORITIES

The development of the County-wide network will be achieved through a collaborative effort between the County and other trail and cycling stakeholders. Once the master plan has been approved, the County and its partners should review the priorities identified or adapt these as part of moving forward to implementation.

Although an ultimate build-out scenario for the network was prepared during the development of the study, a decision was made to have the master plan focus on priorities that might be accomplished during the short term. These are illustrated on **Map 3.13**.

The approach used to identify key linkages and route priorities was based on 7 main strategies:

1. Where applicable, implementation of routes should be scheduled to be part of major infrastructure development or improvement projects at the County and local municipal level (e.g. road widening and resurfacing, installation of utilities, including pedestrian / cycling facilities with bridge reconstruction etc.).

2. Consider project team, steering committee and public opinions regarding priorities and route selection.

3. Construct routes in areas of new development as planning, design and construction of these areas progresses. Typically new development areas are located within existing urban areas or on the urban fringe - e.g. Woodstock).

4. Close gaps in the existing network.

5. Provide spine connections between major urban centres and destination trails.

6. Build where user demand is anticipated to be highest.

7. Build where local interest is strong, where funding is available and /or where partnerships have already been established.

8. Consider an equitable distribution of routes / facilities among the County's urban areas and rural centres and create loops within each of the centres that improve access to key destinations such as recreation complexes, arenas, schools, parks, natural areas where public access is permitted etc..

The first strategy is fundamental to implementation and is based on known and / or documented forecasts. These forecasts are expected to change and will require ongoing discussions and prioritization from Council at the County and local municipal level. Therefore, it is important that those responsible for monitoring and scheduling the network implementation monitor and communicate with each other about capital forecasts on a regular basis so that opportunities are not overlooked.

For example, the most cost effective way to implement new on-road infrastructure which requires physical road modifications is to implement these changes at the time the road is being resurfaced or reconstructed. Typically the incremental cost to add trail / cycling facilities to a major capital project is much less than the cost to implement the facility as a stand-alone project.

3.7.1   IMMEDIATE PRIORITY PROJECTS

Immediate priority projects are proposed linkages that have been identified by the County's Cycling Advisory Committee as part of the County's Share the Road Program, as part of County or local municipal capital works budgets, are currently underway by local groups such as the Oxford County Trails Council, are underway as part of local municipal or conservation authority initiatives, or are studies / initiatives where the County has already engaged in discussions with external partners to achieve.

> **Priority Project #1 - Tillsonburg-Norwich Multi-use Trail**
>
> Proposed multi-use trail on the abandoned rail corridor that connects Tillsonburg to Norwich. The County has recently installed a water main along this corridor and the service access road is being considered for a multi-use trail.

Priority Project #2- Hickson Trail Extension

From the current terminus of Hickson Trail at Braemar Sideroad to Oxford Road 8. The Oxford County Trails Council is leading the initiative to develop this trail extension.

Proposed Facility Type:

• Multi-Use Trail

Priority Project #3 - Oxford Road 33

From 37th Line to Blanford Street. This project is part of Oxford County's capital road improvement program and is scheduled in the short term.

Proposed Facility Type:

• Paved Shoulder

Priority Project #4 - Tavistock Connection to the Hickson Trail

13th Line / William Street from Oxford Road 8 to the Tavistock urban area.

Proposed Facility Type:

• Signed Route – 13th Line

• Note – 13th Line from Maplewood Sideroad to Oxford Road 8 is currently gravel surfaced. Mapping and promotional materials should communicate this surface type. Consideration should be given by the Township in the mid-term to adding a hard surface (e.g. chip seal) to the granular surface section.

Priority Project #5 - Beachville Road

From the Woodstock urban boundary to the Ingersoll urban boundary. This project is part of Oxford County's capital road improvement program and is scheduled in the short term.

Proposed Facility Type:

• Paved Shoulder – Woodstock Boundary to existing paved shoulder and Ingersoll Boundary to existing paved shoulder

Priority Project #6 - Oxford Thames River Trail to Beachville Road

Planning, design and implementation for the proposed off-road connection along the abandoned rail corridor / Domtar Line. This initiative is being led by the Oxford County Trails Council.

Proposed Facility Type:

• Off-road Trail

Priority Project #7 - Burgess and Standard Tube Parks

Proposed off-road connections and upgrades throughout the park being led by the Upper Thames Valley Conservation Authority (UTRCA) in partnership with the City of Woodstock.

Proposed Facility Type:

• Multi-Use Trail

Priority Project #8 - Oxford Road 4

Township Road 3 to Oxford Road 17.

This project is part of Oxford County's capital road improvement program and is scheduled in the short term.

Proposed Facility Type:

- Paved Shoulder – Oxford Road 4 to bridge over Thames River and Township Road 3 to bridge over Thames River

- Signed Route with Share the road signs– Bridge over Thames River

Priority Project #9 - Sweaburg Swamp

Study and planning related to establishing / formalizing a trail loop(s) within the Sweaburg Swamp property. This project is being led by the UTRCA.

Priority Project #10- Trans Canada Trail

Tillsonburg to Oxford-Norfolk Boundary

Planning and feasibility study related to the use of the abandoned rail corridor from Tillsonburg to Waterford as the official Trans Canada Trail route. Partners include the County of Oxford, Township of Norwich, Town of Tillsonburg and Norfolk County.

Proposed Facility Type:

- Multi-use Trail

Priority Project #11 - North Street Tillsonburg

From Tillson Avenue to Broadway Street / Plank Line. This project is part of Oxford County's capital road improvement program and is scheduled in the short term.

Proposed Facility Type:

- Bike Lane – Broadway Street to existing edgelines

- Paved Shoulder – Broadway Street to Tillson Avenue.

Priority Project #12 - Mill Street Woodstock

From Dundas Street to Hwy. 401. This Environmental Assessment is currently being conducted by the County of Oxford, in partnership with the City of Woodstock.

Proposed Facility Type:

- Signed Route, Bike Lane and Paved Shoulder segments, consistent with the Woodstock Cycling Master Plan recommendations.

- The Environmental Assessment will make final recommendations regarding facility type, implementation costs and timing for detailed design and construction.

Priority Project #13 - Abandoned Rail Line -Tillsonburg

Study currently underway to determine the feasibility of acquiring the abandoned rail line parallel to North Street in Tillsonburg. Partners include Oxford County and the Town of Tillsonburg. This segment is the entire section of the abandoned line within the Town of Tillsonburg boundary, and would be the continuation of the same line east and west of Tillsonburg, both of which are already owned by Oxford County.

Priority Project #14 - Brownsville Road

From Dereham Line to Woodland Crescent in Tillsonburg. This link has been identified for the installation of Share the Road signage under the Oxford County Share the Road initiative.

Proposed Facility Type:

- Signed Route.

Priority Project #15 - Ingersoll Street

From King Street to Culloden Road

Proposed Facility Type:

- Signed Route with Sharrow markings and Share the Road Signs

This project is part of Oxford County's Share the Road program and is scheduled in the short term.

3.7.2   SECONDARY PRIORITY LINKS

Secondary Priority Links are proposed for future consideration by the County and its partners as the Trails Master Plan is implemented. The majority of these links enhance connections between communities, extend existing off-road trails and provide links to surrounding communities surrounding Oxford County.

When complete and added to the accomplishments from the Immediate Priority Project phase, north - south and east - west spines will be created and most of the urban areas within the County will be linked by the network.

Secondary Priority Link #1 - Connection to Waterloo Region

Oxford Road 8, Oxford Road 22 and Blenheim Road

Proposed Facility Type:

- Signed Route – from the north terminus of the Hickson Trail to the east urban limit in Hickson

- Paved Shoulder – Oxford Road 8 from the east urban limit in Hickson to Oxford Road 22); Oxford Road 22 (Oxford Road 8 to Township Road 13); Oxford Road 8 (Oxford Road 22 to Hume Street); Oxford Road 8 (Fennel Street to Blenheim Road); Blenheim Road (Oxford Road 8 to Waterloo Road 13)

- Signed Route with Sharrow – Oxford Road 8 (Hume Street to York Street in Plattsville)

- Bike Lane – Oxford Road 8 (York Street to Fennel Street in Plattsville)

Secondary Priority Link #2 - Road 74

From 35th Line to County Boundary

Proposed Facility Type:

- Signed Route

Secondary Priority Link #3 - Abandoned Rail Corridor – Tillsonburg to Oxford – Elgin Boundary

Proposed Facility Type:

- Multi-use Trail

Secondary Priority Link #4 - Oxford Thames River Trail to Woodstock

Proposed Facility Type:

Off-road Trail

Planning, negotiations for a trail connection from the east end of the current Thames River Trail into Woodstock. This project is one of the Oxford County Trails Council's initiatives that and may include hiking-only trail in some or all locations, may include multi-use in some locations.

Secondary Priority Link #5 - Oxford Road 60 and Victoria Street Ingersoll

Proposed Facility Type:

- Signed Route from Thames Street in Ingersoll to Hunt Road (Oxford – Thames Centre Boundary)

Secondary Priority Link #6 - Ingersoll Cross Town Link

Proposed Facility Types:

- Signed Route with Sharrow – Thames Street (Victoria Street to Charles Street) and Charles Street (Thames Street to existing bike lane)

- Signed Route – Harris Street (Charles Street to Plank Line)

Secondary Priority Link #7 - Plank Line - Ingersoll to Salford

Proposed Facility Type:

- Paved Shoulder on Plank Line from south Ingersoll Limit to Salford Road Dereham Road. This project also involves a crossing of Highway 401 and will require consultation / negotiation with MTO.

Secondary Priority Link #8 - Dereham Line

From Salford to Brownsville Road

Proposed Facility Type:

- Signed Route

Secondary Priority Link #9 - Commissioner Street to South Embro Trail

Proposed Facility Type:

- Paved Shoulder – Oxford Road 6 / 37th Line (Rail corridor to south urban limit in Embro)

- Signed Route – from south urban limit in Embro to Commissioner Street

Secondary Priority Link #10 – Embro to the Avon Trail

Proposed Facility Type:

- Signed Route – 35th Line (Commisioner Street to Road 84) and 31st Line (Road 84 to the Avon Trail)

- Paved Shoulder – Road 84 (31st Line to 35th Line)

Secondary Priority Link #11 - Embro Link

Proposed Facility Type:

- Signed Route on 35th Line from Oxford Road 74 to Oxford Road 16 / Road 84, and on road link along Commissioner Street from Oxford Road 6 / 37th Line to 35th Line. When complete these will link the urban area of Embro with the Embro West Zorra Community Centre and the Embro Pond Conservation Area. Consideration should also be given to a multi-use trail on the east side of 35th Line from Commissioner Street to the Community Centre to encourage more pedestrian use.

3.7.3   PRIORITY ZONES

Priority Zones are considered key areas for the development of off-road trails and on-road linkages in the future. One of the primary objectives of the Trails Master Plan was to establish a set of inter-municipal connections to facilitate recreational as well as utilitarian travel by non-motorized users. The Priority Zones generally coincide with urban nodes in the County. For these areas, the majority of trail and cycling facility development will be the responsibility of the Local Municipality(ies), several of whom are actively engaged today in implementing local trail and active transportation plans.

Local Municipalities are encouraged to use the Oxford County Trails Master Plan as well as their own trails or active transportation related master plans as a guide for future development.

Additional future Priority Zones for trail development in the County should also include consideration of County Forest tracts, woodlots or other natural areas that are publicly owned (e.g. by Oxford County, local municipalities, conservation authorities etc.).   Many of these locations are identified on Map 3.2. Through consultation with their respective land owner(s) further investigation should be conducted at each of these locations to clarify existing permitted uses, examine potential uses and develop a management plan to address existing or enhanced trail use. The Oxford County Trails Council could be a partner in the development of management plans by assisting with tasks such as trail inventory, user profile and user needs etc..

Recommendation(s):

3-3:   The implementation of the trails network should be coordinated with capital works plans at the County and local municipal levels so that opportunities to include network links are not overlooked, and cost efficiencies can be realized.

3.8   USING & ADAPTING THE MASTER PLAN

The master plan is not intended to be a static document. Though the strategy has been developed as a blueprint / guide for future planning and development, it must be recognized that priorities change over time and additional or alternate opportunities may arise. The master plan is intended to be flexible. The timing and details related to the network's implementation should evolve through ongoing community consultation, discussions with private landowners, County and local municipal Council's decisions on priorities and detailed design studies.

As network changes or additions arise the overall intent and direction of the plan should be respected. To help facilitate this, the following should be considered when additional opportunities or changes arise:

• The validity of each route should be confirmed when it is being considered for implementation. Where it is determined that a particular route is no longer valid, or is impossible to achieve, a parallel route performing the same network function should be selected.

• Where applicable, trail routes, trail crossings and in particular on-road cycling connections are considered as part of the Environmental Assessment process for municipal infrastructure studies.

• Input should be gathered from various County departments and partners e.g. local municipalities, conservation authorities, Oxford County Trails Council and Oxford Cycling Advisory Committee etc. through a coordinated communication process to ensure that all needs are being considered and balanced.

• Performance of the facilities should be regularly monitored so that improvement in trail routing, design and maintenance can evolve as new information and new opportunities arise.

• The Oxford County Trails Master Plan is updated on a regular basis, at least every five years.

Recommendation(s):

3-4: The Oxford County Trails Master Plan should be formally updated through a public process at least every five years.