

Brampton Cycling Advisory Committee

Zoom Subcommittee Meeting 2.0

2021.03.30

Present: Polly Thornham, Dayle Laing, Eric Lister, Alina Grzejszczak, Barry Lavallee, Kevin Montgomery, Steve Laidlaw, Nelson Cadete, Henrik Zbogar, Councillor Santos

Meeting was brought to order by Dayle, until Polly was able to get in and read the Land Acknowledgement.

1. ATMP Annual Report

Henrik Zbogar took the floor, to present a preview to the Annual Report of the Active Transportation Master Plan, to be submitted to Council Wednesday, March 31, 2021. To review, he said that the ATMP was endorsed by Council in 2019, but the lockdown for COVID required much redirection and adaptation by the Active Transportation team at the City of Brampton. They consulted with BCAC, as well as other departments, taking advantage of road resurfacing.

The purpose of the Annual Report is to evaluate and measure the progress and implementation of the ATMP in the previous year (2020). The contents of the report have been shared and the feedback has been incorporated into plans for this year.

Some priorities are to design AT infrastructure for the comfort of users, and to create year-round maintenance plans, to make sure the infrastructure is usable in all four seasons.

Henrik listed several accomplishments in 2020, shown on a map with various types of construction, such as about 20 km of new bike lanes, multi-use paths and urban shoulders. This is greater than in any previous year in Brampton. AT infrastructure is included in the work of several different departments.

The priority of the ATMP for 2021 will be filling gaps in the 40-km B-Loop, and extending the priority east-west network. AT projects are being planned and executed by various different organizations, such as TRCA, the Bramalea SNAP program, and the AT Fixit program, which will fill gaps in AT connectivity with such amenities as cross-rides, both signalized and uncontrolled.

Such signs and as “Streets for People” have been developed, to encourage people to understand that AT is inclusive, necessary and desirable. Trail User Safety Rules are also being produced, to educate users about safe use of the infrastructure. The insert on AT safety in this year's tax bills was very helpful.

These were developed in 2020, and are being carried forward into 2021. Interactive GIS mapping tools are expected to be produced within the next year.

New crossing standards are being developed, as well as consistency in the use of green-painted markings for cyclists, to make sure they are all standardized across the city. The new Ontario Book 18 will be used for this. Standardized bike racks are being researched, for safety and security. These are essential in promoting cycling, especially for utilitarian purposes.

Bike Month and Bike the Creek are still being planned, though the adjustments for COVID are being worked out.

It was suggested that financial issues, such as federal funding, be included in the report, along with usage data, such as the counting of AT users on Vodden and Howden. The counter on Francescini Bridge is also a good example of how a rise in use occurs as the public awareness of a new facility grows.

It was pointed out that such useful connections as AT infrastructure connecting the two campuses of Sheridan College should not require data to prove their usefulness. However, it is hoped to gradually add counters to various AT locations, to build up a database.

2. The Two Bridge Project

Steve Laidlaw shared with the committee his personal research project on winter maintenance of park multi-use path bridges.

Steve's observations in cycling in winter was that bridges have not been generally cleared of snow to the same level as the paths themselves, and that the approaches to the bridges have been used as snow storage. He found the freeze-thaw cycles and pedestrian use made some bridges virtually impassable.

His project was to inform the people at 311 of his plan to adopt two bridges for the winter, following the "Adopt a Park" principle of the City of Brampton, and clear them himself, to see how difficult it was. He found that he could clear fresh snow in about 15 minutes per bridge, by pushing the snow into the creeks. The remaining snow would melt, once the bridge surface was exposed to the sun.

He surmised that for him to call 311, and for someone to come for snow removal, would take much longer to complete the task, than for the contracted worker to just do it when there.

Steve's question to himself was whether or not a higher standard of winter maintenance would result in a higher level of use. His conversations with pedestrians while he shovelled the bridges revealed that they were using the paths, they were concerned about the safety of using the bridges, and that they appreciated their clearance.

As for the cost of shovelling the bridges, the time is short, and the snow events are relatively few per winter, so the extra cost should not be high.

Lisa commented that she had called 311 to ask for bridge snow removal, and was told that there was no policy against it. She found out that it is policy to clear them, and concluded that perhaps all that is needed is closer City supervision of the work of the contracted workers.

3. Winter Maintenance

Nelson Cadete presented an update on his research on winter maintenance of cycling infrastructure in the City of Brampton.

He began by having conversations with people in the various departments responsible for snow removal at the different facilities: streets, sidewalks, multi-use paths in parks, city buildings, etc., to go over the current practices.

There are different levels of on-street snow clearance, depending on the class of the street. The arterial roads are ploughed bare, collector streets, bare to track-bare or sometimes, wheel-track bare. Unfortunately, many of the bike lanes are on collector streets, meaning that the bike lanes are often not cleared. Similarly, boulevard paths, like the one on Dixie Road, which are 3 metres wide, are ploughed once by 1.5-metre wide sidewalk ploughs, with the rest of the path left

snow-covered. Where there are two separate, parallel facilities, only one is ploughed.

In the case of multi-use paths, such as Etobicoke Creek, the distance of ploughing is the issue. The northern and southern extremities are not maintained, making it impossible to ride to/from Caledon or Mississauga. This forces cyclists who commute between municipalities to ride on the roads, which are dangerous in good weather, and much worse in winter conditions. Nelson reached out to Mississauga and Caledon to propose that they collaborate to make this path available year-round.

The proposed plan in future is to maintain the priority network and B-Loop to the highest standard.

The “Winter Wonderland” program showed that daily inspection of the paths is necessary. It was suggested that all AT users need to be remembered in winter maintenance, and that the most problematic areas are where there are transitions from street to trail, etc., where different crews are working. They need to collaborate. Underpasses need to be maintained as well, and ridges of snow at intersections must be avoided.

A question was asked regarding the possible re-use of sand, by street sweepers collecting it in the spring. Often glass is swept up in it, which is bad for tires and pets.

A resolution will be drawn up, to be presented at the next BCAC meeting, to the effect that it is the opinion of BCAC that the Council have staff study best practices and costs, in winter maintenance in general, and AT infrastructure in particular.

4. Polly Thornham brought up the Share the Road Wheels of Change awards, and suggested that the committee nominate some candidates for the three categories. The information on this year's awards is expected in June.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.