Where Do We Go From Here?

The first phase of the CWATS is to establish an understanding of the existing context for active transportation in the County of Essex. This includes reviewing existing policies and initiatives, mapping existing and previously proposed AT routes as well as design guidelines. We will also complete an environmental scan and document the results in the form of a benchmarking report, which will be posted on the County’s CWATS webpage.

With the existing context established, we can begin to move forward and build the Master Plan. We will meet with stakeholders and the public to confirm the proposed Vision for a County level Active Transportation strategy as well as a set of draft route selection principles that the team will then use to select and assess potential routes for the formal AT plan.

Network barriers, opportunities as well as key attractions and destinations will be identified and reviewed with the public, stakeholders and the steering committee and then a candidate route map will be prepared and presented for public comment. Once the public have had an opportunity to comment on the candidate route network the team will refine it and then investigate each of the candidate routes in the field in the spring and early summer of 2010. Following the field investigations the team will refine the route network and prepare a recommended draft route network. In addition, the team will prepare a set of policy recommendations and an implementation strategy, including a cost estimate and phasing plan for the next 30 years. All of this information will be assembled and documented in the form of a CWATS Master Plan Report which will then be presented to the public at a second public open house, expect to be scheduled for the fall of 2010.

We need your input and suggestions as we begin this study!

Complete the survey or take a few minutes to review the following questions and then Email or Mail in your responses and any other ideas you have that you would like the study team to consider.

1. What are your top three suggestions for improving pedestrian and cycling conditions in the County of Essex?
2. Do you consider yourself primarily:
   - Recreational walker (e.g. for leisure)
   - Recreational cyclist (e.g. for fitness)
   - Utilitarian walker (e.g. to go shopping)
   - Utilitarian cyclist (e.g. to go to work)
   - Both of the above
   - Both of the above
3. Where are some of the key barriers to walking and cycling in the County of Essex or your local municipality and what do you think could be done to overcome these barriers?
4. In your opinion, what could the County, Local Municipalities and the Essex Region Conservation Authority do to encourage you and your family to try active transportation or active recreation more often and reduce your use of your motor vehicle?
5. Do you have any other comments for the Study Team?

Please note that all information submitted to the study team, with the exception of personal information, will form part of the public record of this study. Materials and publications produced for this study can be made available in an alternative format upon request. This newsletter has been designed using a variety of graphics design software and has been published in Adobe’s Portable Document Format (PDF) for ease of public access. This newsletter is also available in a text only MSWord format for use with text to speech (TTS) voice synthesizing software.
The following proposed network development approach involves a set of iterative steps to establish a recommended active transportation network for the County of Essex. The pedestrian system and cycling network development approach includes:

- An inventory of existing conditions: which compiles and digitally maps existing or previously planned active transportation facilities (pedestrian and cycling) in the local municipalities, the County of Essex and the Windsor-Essex Region, made up of both on and off-road facilities to determine the current level of development and capacity of existing facilities.
- A route selection process: which includes a set of principles and supporting qualitative and quantitative criteria for determining the preferred route and facility type; and
- Selecting Candidate Routes and Finalizing Active Transportation System Improvements and the network: which involves identifying missing links in the current municipal and County sidewalk system, selecting a set of on and off-road pedestrian and cycling routes and evaluating each for feasibility and for inclusion as a part of the County’s or local area’s improved active transportation system.

The proposed County Active Transportation Network will be a key outcome of this study, and is expected to consist of on-road and off-road pedestrian and cycling facilities which include, but are not limited to, multi-use trails, bike lanes, signed bike routes, paved shoulders with edge lines and sidewalks.

The County of Essex and its seven local area municipalities support active transportation (walking and cycling) and in association with the Essex Region Conservation Authority, City of Windsor and Municipality of Chatham-Kent and other partners, are working together to foster a safer, comfortable and bicycle and pedestrian friendly environment by encouraging people of all ages and abilities to engage in non-motorized activities for everyday transportation and recreation. Residents and visitors are able to travel and experience the urban and rural areas of the County by way of a connected network of on and off-road pedestrian and cycling facilities.

The proposed County Active Transportation Network will be a key outcome of this study, and is expected to consist of on-road and off-road pedestrian and cycling facilities which include, but are not limited to, multi-use trails, bike lanes, signed bike routes, paved shoulders with edge lines and sidewalks.

Route Selection Principles

The following is a preliminary list of guiding principles that are proposed to be used to develop the network component of the County Wide Active Transportation Study. These principles will be reviewed and refined and then confirmed by the study team based on observations of existing conditions, public consultation and the review of background documents.

- Safety: Reducing risks to users and providing comfortable facilities will be key considerations when selecting routes for the network. The confidence and acceptance of the network can be instilled in users by reducing real and perceived risk.
- Visible: The active transportation (pedestrian, cycling etc.) routes should be a visible component of the transportation system.