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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2024-INFO-77
Date: November 22, 2024

Subject:

Durham Tourism Rural Recreational Cycle Loops Project

Recommendation:

Receive for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a brief overview of the Durham Tourism Rural Recreational Cycle Loops project which included the recent launch of 13 [rural on-road cycling loops](#).

2. Background

2.1 Durham Tourism works with industry stakeholders and local organizations to support the growth of Durham's tourist attractions, arts, recreation, and cultural assets, and markets Durham Region as a four-season tourist destination.

2.2 An action in the [Durham Tourism Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028](#), that supports tourism in specifically the rural areas of Durham, is tourism wayfinding and rural recreational cycling route creation and promotion.

2.3 The purpose of this project was to develop and implement primarily rural on-road recreational cycling loops that offer cyclists a superior recreational cycling experience with connections to tourism destinations along the way. These new loops will strengthen Durham's position as a cycling destination and will attract more

local and domestic visitors. These visitors will in turn support the Region's vibrant independently owned tourism industry businesses, creating and sustaining jobs in the rural economy.

- 2.4 The loops are in the municipalities of Brock, Scugog, Uxbridge, and Clarington. They were drafted in consultation with Regional staff from Departments of Planning and Economic Development and Works, as well as area municipalities, and local cycling organizations and associations. Safety was considered throughout the process. The level of difficulty and terrain are described on the website so cyclists can plan for rides best suited to them.
- 2.5 In locations where these recreational loops intersect or coincide with the Regional Cycling Plan's Primary Cycling Network, opportunities will be explored to coordinate signage. Wayfinding signage for the rural recreational loops will consider the Region's proposed Cycling Wayfinding and Signage Strategy.

3. Project Objectives and Target Outcomes

- 3.1 The following were identified objectives of the project:
 - a. Create a network of safe rural recreational cycling loops that maximize the enjoyment experienced by recreational cyclists.
 - b. Design on-road rural cycling loops that go past or pass near local tourism-related businesses and amenities.
 - c. Encourage residents and attract visitors to explore experiential recreational cycling loops geared to all skill levels (leisure, intermediate and advanced).
 - d. Provide cyclists with the options to plan their ride through various leading GPS platforms, include 'Ride with GPS' and 'Strava'.
 - e. Promote tourism businesses that are certified with Ontario By Bike as bicycle-friendly, offering all of the necessary amenities for cyclists, as well as work to attract increased Ontario By Bike participation from tourism industry operators, historical locations, and businesses.
 - f. Implement tourism wayfinding signage in conjunction with the recreational cycling loops by the end of 2025 within the townships of Brock, Scugog, and Uxbridge.
- 3.2 The following are target outcomes of the initiative:
 - a. Increased economic prosperity to rural tourism businesses.
 - b. Further development of partnerships with local and provincial cycling organizations.

- c. Improved wayfinding to local tourism attractions and amenities.
- d. Provide safe, accessible, and excellent experiences to riders of varying skill levels.
- e. Reduce emissions through the promotion of a sustainable and active tourism activities.
- f. Improved health and well-being for both residents and visitors.

4. Relationship to Strategic Plan

4.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Goal 1: Environmental Sustainability
 - Goal 1.5 – Expand sustainable and active transportation.
- b. Goal 2: Community Vitality
 - Goal 2.2 – Enhance community safety and well-being.
- c. Goal 3: Economic Prosperity
 - Goal 3.2 – Leverage Durham’s prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth.
 - Goal 3.3 – Enhance communication and transportation networks to better connect people and move goods effectively.
- d. Goal 5: Service Excellence
 - Goal 5.1 – Optimize resources and partnerships to deliver exceptional quality services and value.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The rural recreational cycle loops project delivers experiential experiences for on-road cycle tourists, and will increase visitation, support business growth, foster active living and community engagement and will introduce improved tourism wayfinding in 2025.

5.2 Rural tourism cycling loops present tremendous potential to improve the overall quality of place of the Region, improving desirability by talented workforce demographics, and can bring resident and visitor spending to rural tourism industry operators that are equipped to welcome cyclists.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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