

Town of The Blue Mountains Transportation Master Plan Virtual Public Information Centre 3 (PIC 3) – September 29, 2022

Public Information Centre 3 for the Town of The Blue Mountains Transportation Master Plan was held virtually via Microsoft Teams on September 29, 2022 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The purpose of PIC 3 was to present and gather feedback on the draft TMP Report, which includes existing conditions, evaluation of alternatives, network and policy recommendations, implementation strategies, and costing. A copy of the presentation was posted on the TMP project website (<https://www.thebluemountains.ca/planning-building-construction/current-projects/strategic-projects-initiatives/transportation>). A formal presentation was provided followed by a moderated question and answer period. There were a total of 18 people in attendance, five members of the project team, and the remainder were members of the public and Town Councillors.

Summary of Questions, Comments and Responses during PIC 3:

1.

- a. **Comment:** Happy to see the emphasis put on Active Transportation (especially for pedestrians). The Town has evolved and people are doing much more walking in the town and it's a cycling mecca. Suggests an education program for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians (online or in-person) as part of the implementation strategy in the TMP report. Paved shoulders help everyone – drivers and cyclists alike – both types of users are provided an extra level of safety. Suggested additional signalized pedestrian crossings on Highway 26 at Thornbury locations to improve safety. I don't think bypasses are the answer but calming Highway 26 would improve safety for everyone. Very happy with progress with the TMP and that it is focused on AT.
- b. **Response:** Action 12.3 of the TMP Report could be expanded on to include all users and generally educate for mutual respect of the road and highlight it better in the report. The project team has received lots of comments on pedestrian safety at Highway 26 and crossing roads and have highlighted various locations on Highway 26 for pedestrian safety improvements including geometric design changes and signals. Traffic signals are not the only tools but other options like rapid-flashing beacons may be options as well.

2.

- a. **Comment:** It would be good for Stantec to recommend that the Town make a policy that when they rebuild a minor collector or collector road that there should be paved shoulders added to the road. Grey County has a similar policy.
- b. **Response:** As the Town looks at capital planning, staff will look at TMP and aligning with developments and make recommendations but it will depend on funding and when the work is planned.

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3.

- a. **Comment:** I'm curious about the Thornbury Bypass option - is it intended that the road from Bruce Street from County to Town and 10th Line from Town to County will mean that 10th line becomes a higher speed county road? Will this route together with the existing Grey Road 44 form an interim bypass?
- b. **Response:** Alternate Highway 26 routes were identified in the 2015 MTO study. The different areas are to be investigated at the provincial level. This information is included in the TMP report and our modelling has identified a bottleneck at Thornbury Bridge. The province had modelled a number of different alternatives for a corridor around Stayner and Collingwood. Alternate routes around Thornbury should have a design speed to provide a competitive travel time compared to going through Thornbury. In our TMP we theorized alternatives of where a potential pathway could go and one of the alternatives may consider using 10th line as a corridor. We have provided options for consideration but further refinements will have to take place during later studies with the MTO and County. The TMP helps facilitate further discussions with the MTO.

4.

- a. **Comment:** I'm the accessibility co-ordinator for Grey County. I have a question regarding accessibility consultation and what was completed as part of this plan. I see a lot of opportunities where the TMP could meld with accessibility requirements.
- b. **Response:** Our TMP incorporates all ages / all abilities within it's framework. Additional efforts with accessibility organizations cannot be commented on at this time, but we welcome feedback from the County on ways that we could expand on accessibility in the report. Implementation into action comes with resources and budget during design phases of projects. The team suggests working closely with the Grey County Accessibility Committee during later study stages or design stages for projects.

5.

- a. **Comment:** A bypass will be very costly (e.g, land acquisition, construction etc.,) and that money could be better spent on AT infrastructure. If a bypass route is not faster no one will take it. Faster roads bring on a whole new set of problems, people may not stop at businesses, safety, cost.
- b. **Response:** Our TMP Map with alternatives simply mirrors what alternatives the MTO has developed. The MTO has to look at modelling, the bottleneck at Thornbury bridge and ongoing capacity issues and determine at what point these options need to be brought forward for additional investigations. Will need to look for MTO leadership and provincial funding and we need a detailed assessment of alternative routes which would be covered in additional/later studies.

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6.

- a. **Comment:** Stated there has been vast opposition to the widening of Highway 26, the TMP is an opportunity for the Town to implement a policy to oppose widening and to further study alternate routes. Opportunity for Council to voice opposition to widening of 26 and support for other bypass options in future studies. Whatever is decided, it needs to be tourist oriented.
- b. **Response:** We have consulted with MTO central and southwest regional managers and they have visited local council and staff and toured the areas to talk about MTO's leadership role in regional solutions to transportation networks in the area. MTO has been receptive to taking on a leadership role regionally and the Town needs to know what is happening with major corridors before any sort of plan can be established. The plan must be established at a regional level. We will continue to work with the MTO and other municipalities.

7.

- a. **Comment:** Stated that transit and the bypass are regional issues. As a member of TAC, I am in agreement that that education for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists is very important.
- b. **Response:** Agreed that transit, the bypass and AT are all regional issues and connectivity is key. Assured that Town has been and will continue to work with neighbouring municipalities.

8.

- a. **Comment:** In the draft TMP report and plan, the roads end at the borders on some maps. We need seamless connections with all of the south Georgian bay area and must look at this plan in a regional context. This needs to be reflected in the report. Cyclists don't care about borders and just want to ride and active transportation efforts need to align with other municipalities and county efforts. I would like to see east-west and north-south spines and routes going off of those spines and I'm not sure we have achieved that yet with the TMP plan. Use 'Spine' term rather than 'core' within the report. Noted 4th line comes to a dead end in the AT network and this should be addressed. Grey Road 40 has an alternative route and Grey Road 2 has alternative north at 10th Line. South of 119 there is no AT alternative and doesn't connect to anything in Grey Highlands. We also have to think about utilitarian routes when we look in Meaford. Maybe the Georgian Trail is ok. A lot of people that work at Blue Mountains might ride their e-bikes if there was an appropriate connection.
- b. **Response:** The TMP process has allowed us to have conversations about AT networks with our neighbouring municipalities. The challenge that we have is we don't know where Collingwood wants to connect in – they are still working through that. Continued conversations will need to take place. Four-laning of Mountain Road in Collingwood and County's plans for roundabout at the 6th

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Street or Poplar Side road may be used....additional studies will be completed for Mountain Road and where four-laning will take place. We have productive conversations but it's a challenge to complete this plan. It will be a live plan based on those decisions by neighbouring municipalities so we can integrate the two. Draft TMP Report includes traffic data, 20% of traffic has an origin or destination in Collingwood and that shows the relationship with the two municipalities. Putting that in the TMP report helps continue the conversation and better understand the connections. The east-west connections that exist including Monterra, Grey Road 19, Poplar Side Road, and Pretty River Road have been tagged as an external network connection and this will change based on Collingwood's future connections/plans. 6th Street/County Road 32 in Collingwood has potential plans at the County level and we have recognized connections to the resort area and existing roundabout.

9.

- a. **Comment:** At all-candidates meeting tonight and transportation issues are being discussed. Agree with previous comments on maps and the AT network. If we pave the Georgian Trail we will have to plow it and cross-country skiing won't be possible. Widening the Georgian Trail would impact land and create conflicts. We should be adopting better signage, wider bike paths, better demarcation for our AT network. We have a lot of cyclists and we have to accommodate them. Discussion about bypasses should be looked at from a regional level and from a local level. There is not just one type of bypass.
- b. **Response:** Where there is opportunity for a better AT network and connectivity we will identify and create those connections and are trying to be AT leaders in rural and urban areas. We will continue to work with the County on the AT network. The benefits of having a TMP plan and AT network plan is to be ready for funding and grant opportunities.

10.

- a. **Comment:** The TMP could be stronger in terms of health benefits of AT network and documenting how AT can help maintain and improve health and might be connected to the educational component of the TMP. Public Health focus and make recommendations stronger with identified health benefits.
- b. **Response:** The TMP does reference health in terms of Vision Zero and Complete Streets, but we will look at incorporating and improving that aspect of the report before it's finalized.

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11.

- a. **Comment:** The east-west connections in the AT network are good but the north-south are lacking. We need spines. Connections for long routes and gravel paths. I cycle west of the Town because it's less busy. In town I try to use my bike for groceries. In town, the AT network is more utilitarian when compared to rural areas where it's more recreational.
- b. **Response:** We did look at Strava and there is activity everywhere which is challenging because it doesn't indicate which routes are more desirable for cyclists to review and improve upon. There aren't that many north-south connections in the existing road network. Grey Road 2 has been identified for paved shoulders. The project team will review and consider integrating the existing and proposed networks a bit better to identify links.

12.

- a. **Comment:** In the Blue Mountain village area, people seem to park and walk around the area. Local people and tourists walk to the village for amenities. There are no pedestrian routes in and around the village and there are large residential areas being built around the village. County Road 19 is used by pedestrians walking and it's not safe so pedestrian routes should be provided/or supported. Grey County discourages pedestrians on County Road 19. We should look at this in the TMP.
- b. **Response:** Pedestrian considerations must be made in and around the village. When we look at the proposed network in the TMP, we do identify Grey Road 19 and Jozo Weider but we will have to continue working with the County during design stages to confirm pedestrian access. We also have to consider what role does development play in this and how to address the network missing links. There are sections in the TMP that call out fragments in the network that we hope to see fulfilled for a complete network with pedestrian connections.