The ‘County Trails’ – The County of Lennox and Addington’s Experience

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Presentation to the 5th Annual
Eastern Ontario Active Transportation Summit
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Presentation Topics

1. Overview of ‘County Trails’ System
2. Network Development
   - Background and Objectives
   - Implementation
3. Challenges and Obstacles, Lessons Learned and Positive Outcomes

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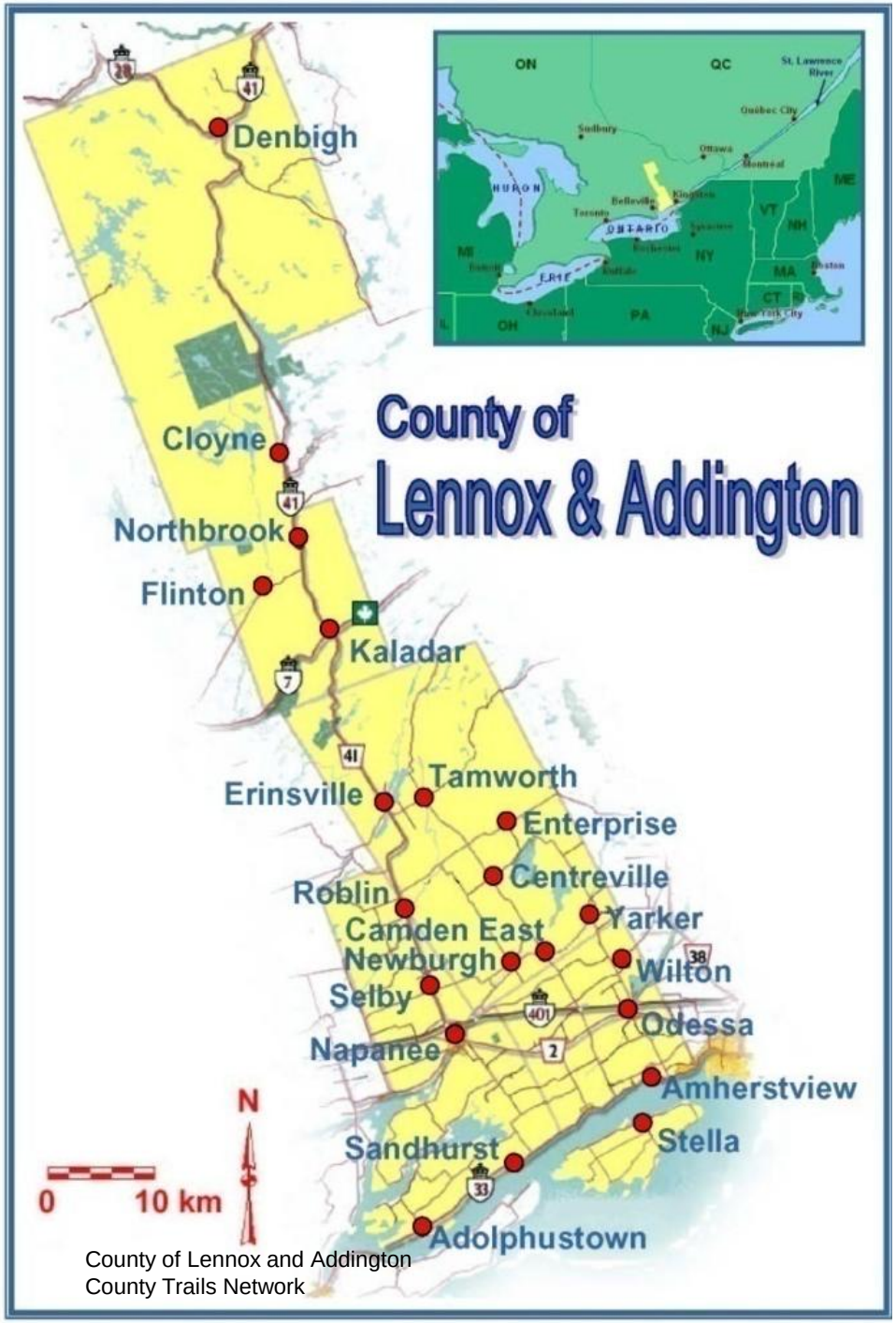
County Trails



County of Lennox and Addington
County Trails Network

County Trails – Overview

- Located in Eastern Ontario, primarily a rural community with several urban centres
- Transportation Master Plan (TMP) in 2001 recommended network of paved shoulders as best fit based on population density and terrain as safety initiative and to promote tourism, economic development, recreation and healthy lifestyle activities

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Network Description

- County wide multi-use network using paved shoulders as stable roadside facility to improve safety and comfort for users
- Promoted as touring routes, not specifically as cycling routes
- 12 distinct routes, 576 km in total length with degrees of difficulty
- Each route includes attractions and points of interest; unique geography; and connections to regional trails
- Routes include a trailhead site located at public facility with parking available (parks, halls, points of interest)

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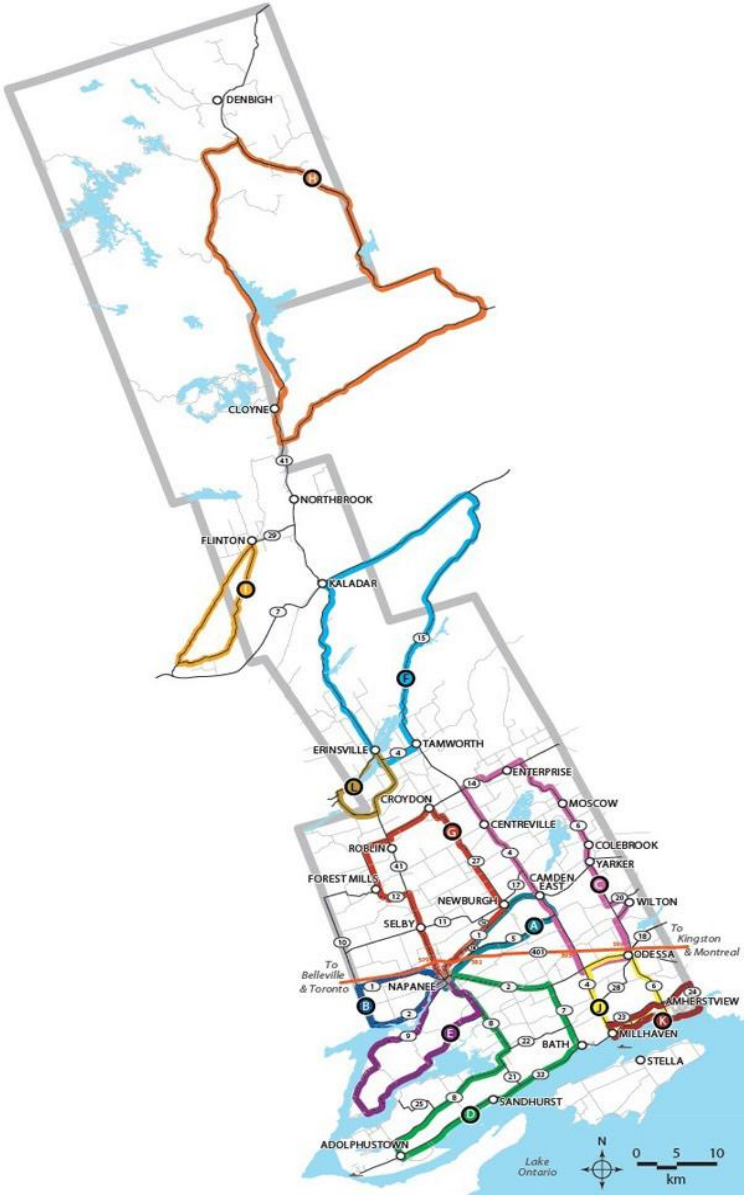
Network Description - Website

E: Hay Bay Route
Length: 44 km, Easy
Route Info Google Map
Upload to GPS

Most of this route is along the shore of Hay Bay and the Bay of Quinte. This loop takes you past farmland, cottages and campgrounds that overlook some of the best walleye fishing waters you'll find anywhere. It's not the fishing that will impress you however; it's the breathtaking blend of rural settings that overlook the beautiful waterways that make this route so memorable.



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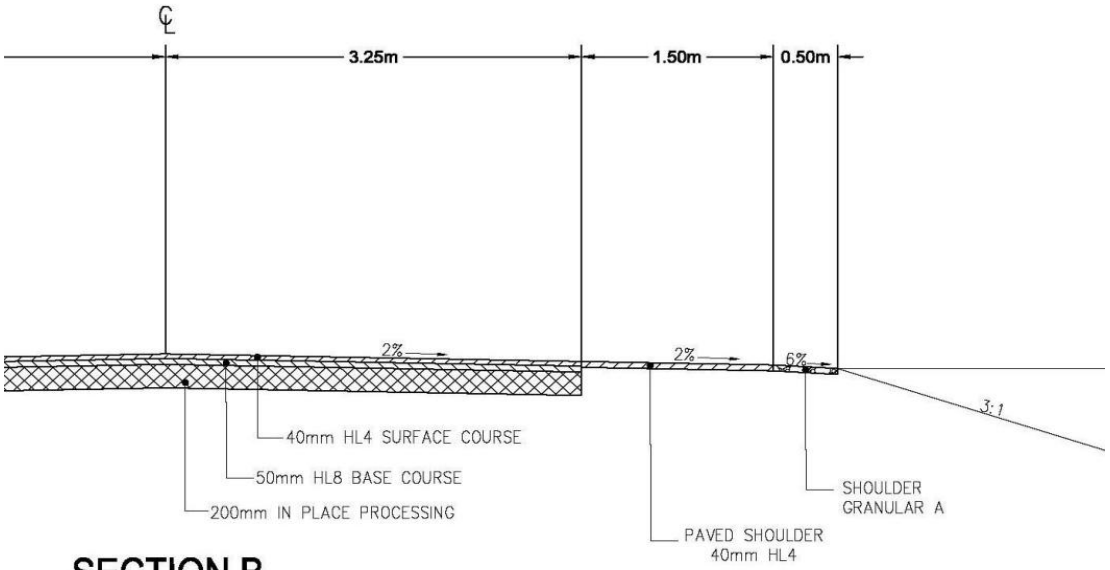
Network Description



SECTION B
COUNTY ROAD 5

- Trail users guided from trailheads by roadside route marker signs
- Route marker logo signs use colour coded/labeled arrows to direct users along route
- Route signs placed at changes in direction, intersections and interim locations on continuous lengths
- Built to 1.2 m, 1.5 m or 2.0 m widths based on traffic volumes, % of trucks and road platform width available

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Background to Development

- Paved shoulder construction began mid-1990's to use surplus milled asphalt from resurfacing/rehabilitation projects on shoulder to stabilize shoulder
- Maintenance and operations benefits quickly recognized (less edge breakup and shoulder grading and gravelling maintenance required)

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Objectives

2001 TMP Proposed Paved Shoulders to:

- provide facility to better accommodate wider vehicles, pavement preservation
- improve safety with recovery area for errant vehicles to regain control
- develop County road paved shoulder network to provide roadside facility for multi-modal and recreational users such as pedestrians, cyclists, joggers
- use as tool to enhance tourism/recreation opportunities and encourage economic growth

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Objectives

2001 TMP considered:

- different types of facility users
- economic (tourism), social, environmental and healthy lifestyle benefits
- design criteria, suitability of routes (interest, difficulty, services)
- connectivity with established trail networks in region was emphasized

Trans Canada Trail
Sentier Transcanadien

Waterfront Trail

Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance

Cataraqui Trail

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Implementation

- In 2002, Technical Steering Committee (TSC) to develop ‘County Road Multi-Use On-Road Facility’ (paved shoulder) network and policy
- Important to include partner members and representatives from: each local municipality; area recreational trail and points of interest/cultural/social destinations; and key stakeholders contributing to and benefitting from network
- Consider regional network development and interconnection

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Objectives

Network Criteria

- Construct paved shoulders and network to appropriate, accepted design standards and guidelines
- Consider traffic volumes, truck %, operating and posted speeds
- Construction scope: granular base preparation; 80-100 mm of asphalt (now); outer shoulder rounding/embankment materials and grading; and white edge of travelled lane line painting
- Consider limitations of road platform width, narrow bridges, close embankments and curbs
- Obtain insurer’s input
- Identify non-County roads required for connectivity
- Financial evaluation (cost to construct vs. reduced maintenance cost, pursue funding opportunities, construct with major roadwork)

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Implementation Strategy

- Early County/local municipality Council awareness and support was essential, strategy accepted by Council as policy
- Acknowledged that network will develop over time in coordination with scheduled road platform/bridge deck widening rehabilitations
- Implementation recognized signage as critical component to succeed
  - determine locations of primary directional signs, secondary interim signs and trailhead signs at route points of entry/interest
  - secondary Sign Steering Committee (SSC) created to engage marketing consultant to develop/design promotional materials, signage, website and implementation strategies; and to procure sign supplier
  - preliminary route trial reviews by area cycling clubs
- Actively promoted with giveaways (posters, water bottles, lanyards, T-shirts etc.) to schools, youth groups, on municipal websites, in local media, concept quickly embraced by cycling community
- 3½ years after initial Technical Steering Committee meeting, ribbon cutting event was held in May, 2006, concept quickly embraced by cycling community

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Challenges and Obstacles

- Important to maintain partner interest and financial commitment
- Extending routes on roads and trails into neighbouring municipalities and non-County roads
- Anticipated conflicts with permitted ATV use of shoulders (*didn't materialize*)
- French translation of materials required by Federal funding agency
- New capital cost in future road work must be budgeted

-2017 costs: weighted average based on 1.2 m/1.5 m/2.0 m widths was $72,000/km (both sides)

- Emphasis that paved shoulders are not designated specifically as cycling facilities

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Lessons Learned

- Obtain legal opinion on how facility is referred to, is it compliant with standards if called a cycling facility?
- Surface treated (tar and chip) roads widened to provide paved shoulder tend to remain gravel covered from float (surplus stone) and can be damaged if swept to clear stone
- Place thicker asphalt on all paved shoulders, especially at inside of curves (traffic tends to cut into curve so more asphalt strength required)
- Ensure all partners and related municipal Councils are kept well informed and recognized in all promotional materials
- Municipal “champions” are critical to success
- Worthwhile to have trial runs by cycling enthusiasts to confirm degree of difficulty, if route is interesting and of adequate length
- Routes should have access to services and parking at trailheads

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Positive Outcomes

Maintenance and Operations

- Better accommodates roadside drainage, improved snow clearing
- Enhanced safety with more stable vehicle pull-over area, less gravel dust, wider vehicles can travel off-road more easily
- Estimated average cost savings of $10,000/km (both sides) per routine gravelling and grading operation and local maintenance, can be cost neutral in <10 years
- Reduced maintenance to remove grit/mud and gravel tracked onto the travelled roadway from gravel shoulders increases compliance with Minimum Maintenance Standard for debris removal
- Removed need for awkward grading and vegetation growth control adjacent to guide rails
- Edge of paved road preservation, extended life of road

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Positive Outcomes

Sustainable Transportation

- To date, approximately 60% of network routes have paved shoulders on County roads, paved shoulders now included in all County road and bridge projects (unless physically not feasible)
- More secure area for use by pedestrians, recreational users etc. with white edge of travelled road line painting, improved stable roadside for traffic and shoulder users
- Economic benefits related to increased tourism and increased use of trails by residents, County has evidence of increased tourism from formal events and extent of inquiries
- Network typically attracts minimum of 15 groups of 50+ cyclists annually providing economic benefits to County and communities
- Key component of sustainability plan required for Federal Gas Tax reporting and promotion of healthy lifestyles through active transportation
- Concept is strong, effective leveraging model for infrastructure and active transportation funding initiative applications (current $93M Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program)

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Positive Outcomes

Successes and Accomplishments

- County Trails website interest continues to grow, brochures distributed to travel centres, effective marketing tool
- Promotional network cycling events such as annul ‘Discover L&A Ride’ (300 riders in 2017), custom itineraries, spin-offs like ‘L&A Rides’ motorcycle and driving tours
- Overwhelmingly positive feedback from County Trail users and County visitors, positive follow-ups from attendance at industry shows and conferences
- Won the Ontario Trails Council 2007 ‘Trail Builder Award’
- Ongoing recognition in Waterfront Regeneration Trust communications, network routes included in Great Lakes Waterfront Trail Adventure tour (160 cyclists confirmed for 2018)
- High profile maintained by recognition in provincial, regional and trail association maps and events

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Thank You

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www.lennox-addington.on.ca/explore/county-trails

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