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Region reviewing road standards for rural cyclists

By TIM FORAN
Metroland Media Group

While planners across Halton's four communities try to figure out ways to get residents out of their cars and onto their feet or a bike seat, Regional officials have a different problem in the rural areas—how to safely accommodate the number of cyclists spinning along country backroads.

"I am concerned about the safety of curb lanes (for cyclists) on Regional roads," Mitch Zamojc, Halton's Works Commissioner, admitted last week.

Currently, most Regional roads in the rural area have just over a half-metre of paved shoulder. However, those are too narrow and not meant to be designated cycling areas, according to the Region's 2004 Cycling and Pedestrian Infrastructure Plan. The only alternative for many cyclists has been to ride within the actual lane along with vehicle traffic.

"Hugging the curb and like walking or cycling to get keeping out of the way of automobiles is a dangerous cycling strategy," the plan noted.

Since that plan was released, Halton has had a pole on rural Regional shoulder when it comes time to upgrade them, the purpose being to give cyclists a place to ride and to keep maintenance costs down.

However, Zamojc, who took over as commissioner in 2008, said he's concerned that shoulder width might not be enough to satisfy safety concerns.

"Maybe it (the paved shoulder) has to be a metre and a half, or two metres, or maybe (the line) has to be painted more broadly," he said.

The Region is currently in the midst of reviewing cycling infrastructure on its new roads as it develops its new transportation master plan. The plan will lay out more than \$2 billion in roads projects over the next two decades as well as devising a strategy to increase the amount of Halton residents using both transit and "active transportation" like walking or cycling to get

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Get out the golf clubs this weekend

Okay, it isn't quite Augusta National, home of the Masters golf tournament, but Owen Pollard, 4, enjoyed whacking away at the ball on the lawn in front of his home. The holiday weekend forecast is calling for downright balmy temperatures Friday and Saturday as the mercury climbs to 25C before dropping to 14C and the possibility of rain on Sunday.

Photo by Ted Brown

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