

HALTON HILLS RESIDENTS CALL FOR BETTER BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

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Local biking enthusiasts made it loud and clear that there's a need for improved, safer cycling routes throughout the municipality at the inaugural Halton Hills Cycling Summit.

The event, hosted recently by the Town of Halton Hills bike it committee at MoldMasters Sportsplex, drew dozens of local residents looking to share their thoughts on how to make cycling a better experience in the community.

From the need for more bicycle lanes to a call for improved road conditions in the rural area, participants put together a long list of suggestions to foster a vision for cycling in Halton Hills.

"What's really important to me is getting from one end of town to the other," said local cyclist Jayne Bell, noting she would like to see better connectivity going north/south and east/west through the community. "Having these bike lanes in different sections and not linking

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CYCLING SAFETY IN HALTON HILLS
LOCAL IMPACT:
RESIDENTS SEEK INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND MORE BIKE LANES

them up doesn't make sense to me."

Coun. Jane Fogal, who's also the chair of the bike it committee, explained that bike lanes are being added gradually throughout the municipality as roads are reconstructed.

Town transportation planner Rob Stribbell spoke to some of the projects that are underway or on the horizon, including the bike lanes being finished on Armstrong Avenue this year or next, and the potential road widening on Eighth Line between Maple and Steeles avenues that would include separate bike lane infrastructure. The latter is currently at the environmental as-

essment stage.

Stribbell said there will also be public consultations within the next couple of months regarding the town's first active transportation master plan, which will address cycling needs throughout the community.

The municipality is looking to advance cycling-based tourism as well, noted economic development officer Cassandra Baccardax.

"Cycle tourism in Ontario is experiencing rapid growth and is increasingly recognized by the tourism industry as a powerful economic driver," she said. "Halton Hills has committed to developing cycling tourism in our area."

As part of the initiative, Baccardax said the town's economic development, innovation and culture division recently joined the Ontario By Bike Network, which certifies and promotes bicycle-friendly businesses and cycling tourism.

Halton Hills was awarded the bronze Bicycle Friendly Community status by the Share the Road Coalition in 2014. Fogal told the crowd that



Melanie Hennessey/Metroland

Councillor and Bike It Committee chair Jane Fogal and Town transportation planner Rob Stribbell were on hand to hear from local residents at the inaugural Halton Hills Cycling Summit at MoldMasters Sportsplex.

a recent reapplication didn't achieve the silver status the bike it committee was hoping for.

"Our group wants to go to the next level," she said, adding that input received during the summit would help form a game plan to reach silver.

Participants worked in small groups to go over maps of the community and make route-specific suggestions for cycling infrastructure improvements.

Those in attendance also shared their general thoughts on ways to bolster cycling locally, including better connectivity by bike between

Georgetown and Acton, the promotion of children cycling to school and more parking for bicycles.

The feedback and maps, along with results of an online survey, were turned over to the bike it committee to analyze and prepare a report to share with the active transportation advisory committee and council, said Fogal.

The input will also be given to the consultants working on the active

transportation master plan.

"I was very pleased, both with the turnout and the quality of the input we got from the attendees," she said. "There is no doubt that the people (at the summit) want better, safer bicycle infrastructure."

For more information visit haltonhills.ca/cycling. Survey results and further details from the summit will also be posted soon at letstalkhaltonhills.ca.

STORY BEHIND THE STORY:

Input from the inaugural Halton Hills Cycling Summit will help shape the Town's first active transportation plan.



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