

# 4.0

## FACILITATING & COORDINATING IMPLEMENTATION



## 4.1 NEXT STEPS: TOOLS TO FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the Trails Network for Oxford County will require structural and non-structural initiatives. A network which is designed, implemented and maintained by a number of partners requires a set of tools and strategies which can be consistently applied to ensure a unified approach to implementation is used. Each of the tools has been summarized in **Table 4.1**. The County and its partners are encouraged to review these tools and refine them as necessary and considered as the preferred approach for implementation.

**Table 4.1 – Summary of Master Plan Implementation Tools**

Implementation Tool	Description	Page #
<b>Network Management</b>	The use of the GIS database and mapping information to track and document the network development and implementation process.	4-3
<b>Land Securement &amp; Acquisition</b>	A set of potential land securement and acquisition strategies for reference and use by the County and its partners.	4-16 App.D
<b>Staging Area Design</b>	A hierarchy of amenities and design types for consideration by the County when designing end-of-trip facilities and staging areas.	4-22
<b>Maintenance</b>	A set of proposed maintenance practices for year round on and off-road route maintenance.	4-24

**Table 4.1 – Summary of Master Plan Implementation Tools**

Implementation Tool	Description	Page #
<b>Public Outreach &amp; Promotion</b>	An overview of potential target audiences, suggested programs and initiatives for consideration by the County and its partners.	4-28
<b>Network Costing</b>	A set of unit cost assumptions used to establish the estimated cost to implement the network, and benchmark costs for promotion and outreach initiatives.	4-22 App.F
<b>Partnership Framework</b>	A list of potential partners to be engaged throughout the implementation process on a project by project basis.	4-4
<b>Network Funding</b>	Potential funding sources which could be explored by the County and its partners when implementing the plan.	4-34
<b>Performance Measurements</b>	A set of potential performance measures which can be selected from and adapted to monitor the progress of the plan's implementation.	4-35 App.G



**Recommendation(s):**

**4-1:** The County should revise as necessary and adopt the tools identified in the implementation plan. The tools should be used by those responsible for the plan’s implementation as a guide for future decision making.

**4.1.1 A COORDINATED APPROACH**

The planning, design, construction and management of a County-wide trails network require on-going coordination and communication between the County and its partners.

Champions and partnerships are cornerstones of the Master Plan’s implementation. The challenges and opportunities associated with participation have been reviewed as part of the master plan process in order to develop a realistic and feasible approach to reporting. Specific roles and responsibilities for those who will be directly involved in trail implementation will help to ensure that the decision-making process is both efficient and well managed.

**Figure 4.1** illustrates the coordinated approach between key partners throughout the county which is intended to be the basis for the plan’s implementation. The approach is to be reviewed by the County and its partners and confirmed, once confirmed, it should be adopted by the County and its partners as the guide for decision making. Collaboration and coordination between these groups / individuals will help to ensure that opportunities, challenges and issues related to the trails network are considered. It is important to note that the implementation of the master plan revolves around the efforts of the County as a coordinator of the Trail.

**Trail Partnership:** The Trail Partnership will be responsible for guiding the plan’s implementation and the selection / prioritization of trail projects. The Partnership will build on those individuals who were involved as part of the Master Plan Steering Committee. To ensure ongoing communication



**Figure 4.1 – Trails Master Plan Coordination Approach**

between key community stakeholder and partners the Partnership should ensure membership from each local municipality, local conservation authorities, and representation from all potential trail user groups, the Oxford Trails Council, the Oxford Cycling Advisory Committee, local stakeholders and interest groups. The group would meet on a regular basis (e.g. quarterly or semi-annually) to review and discuss trail projects and opportunities as they become available. The partnership would be coordinated / facilitated by a staff member from the County who would also provide updates to Council (e.g. on a project by project basis, semi-annual or annual basis –to be determined).



### **Recommendation(s):**

- 4-2:** The proposed organization structure including the roles and responsibilities should be adopted as a guide for the implementation of the master plan and select priority projects as they arise.
- 4-3:** Identify an existing County staff member who will oversee the transition between the finalization of the master plan and coordination of the Trail Partnership. This individual will provide updates to Council, where appropriate.
- 4-4:** Once the master plan has been approved a Trail Partnership should be established, which includes representatives from the Study's Trails Steering Committee as well as other representatives from key interest groups.
- 4-5:** One of the first roles of the Trail Partnership should be to develop a Terms of Reference which includes details regarding composition of the Group, members' roles and a reporting structure.



### **4.1.2 A NETWORK MANAGEMENT TOOL**

The GIS database provided by the County has been updated to reflect the proposed Trails network. The updated GIS database can be used to track the implementation of the plan and to document municipal assets. It can also be overlaid on Google Earth (digital aerial photography) in a KML format so all staff and the public can view network routing.

The Trail Partnership and local stakeholders and interest groups are encouraged to use the tool to help confirm routing, facility type and phasing. Keeping the database up to date may significantly reduce the cost of future Master Plan updates.

In addition to being a network management and tracking tool the GIS database, with some supplementary formatting, could be used to develop a County-wide active transportation and recreation map or to update existing Tourism mapping that has already been developed by Oxford Tourism. The information and mapping developed as part of the Trails Master Plan should also be used when the County next updates the cycling map.

Accessible formats should be explored for future updates—both hard copy and electronic – to facilitate the distribution of information County-wide to people of all ages and abilities.



### **Recommendation(s):**

- 4-6:** The GIS database developed during the preparation of the Master Plan should be integrated with the County and local municipalities' existing GIS databases and regularly updated as part of the network tracking, management and budgeting process. This will reduce the cost of future updates to the Master Plan.
- 4-7:** The updated GIS database should be used to develop an active transportation and recreation map geared towards tourism / community branding for the County and local municipalities.
- 4-8:** The updated GIS database should be provided to local municipalities for any local tourism and marketing / promotional mapping and information which are developed in support of the network.

## **4.2 PLANNING, BUILDING AND MAINTAINING THE NETWORK**

### **4.2.1 PLANNING FOR TRAILS IN OXFORD COUNTY**

#### **4.2.1.1 Creating New Trails in Established Neighbourhoods**

Developing trails in established neighbourhoods can be challenging when it comes to implementation, even if the intent to implement a trail has been clearly documented in strategic planning documents. Public opinion related to specific trail segments can be hard to attain at the master planning stage. Sometimes it is not until a project reaches the implementation stage that residents who perceive themselves as being directly affected become more involved and vocal. Real and perceived concerns over increased traffic / access to their rear yards, invasion of privacy, the increased potential for vandalism and theft are often cited as key concerns.

To overcome this challenge, the County and its partners are encouraged to engage residents in an open consultation process in the earliest possible stages of the project. In some cases, the most vocal opponent can become the greatest supporter if the process provides an effective avenue to address concerns. Some keys to success include:

- Notifying adjacent landowners early in the process and taking the time to understand and respond to their concerns. This should include an invitation to provide their input into the process (i.e. participation in design workshops, site tours and "kitchen table" meetings to understand options for alignment, understand specific concerns, to design materials and privacy features).
- Emphasizing the benefits of trails for their neighbourhood and community, including themselves and their children.



**Cycling in Urban Area of Oxford County –  
Source: MMM Group**



- Emphasizing successful examples and effective solutions where similar problems were overcome.

As part of the detailed design process, it is recommended that the County and those responsible for the plan's implementation consider further consultation with key stakeholders, agencies and adjacent landowners when major trail routes identified in the master plan network are being considered for implementation.

#### 4.2.1.2 Trails in New Development Areas

Planning the trail system is seen as a critical component of the land development process. Trails are an integral part of the urban and rural fabric and are a key component of the recreation asset base and transportation system. New developments must be planned for the efficient movement of people for recreation and utilitarian purposes. Developers should be expected to work through an iterative process with County and local municipal staff, beginning early in the planning stages to create a trails network within their development area that reflects the intent of the Oxford County Trails Master Plan.

The County and its local municipalities should provide developers with information about the network, desired connections and design expectations as part of building a positive working relationship. Ideally, trails in new development areas should be constructed prior to or concurrently with the construction of other infrastructure and buildings. Where trail construction is not implemented until a later date, there can often be conflict as residents may claim that they were not aware of plans for trail construction even if this intention has been clearly indicated in municipal planning documents. Developers and builders should be required to be proactive about notifying prospective buyers where trails are to be located at the time they are selling lots.

Providing information at sales offices, including information in sales packages and erecting signs in locations where trails

are to be constructed may help to alleviate difficulties at a later date. A mandatory requirement for developers and builders to be forthcoming with information regarding future trails could be included as a condition of approval in subdivision and/or site plan agreements.

It is expected that proposals for new development areas will contain routes that reflect the density, hierarchy and character that is consistent with rest of the network proposed in this master plan. Specifically this implies the planning, design and implementation of off-road trails and on-road links that:

- Overcome physical barriers;
- Make appropriate connections to important destinations;
- Enhance connections to the existing or planned system of trails surrounding the subject development area; and
- Are sensitive to, and/or highlight inherent qualities of the natural and cultural landscape features within the development area.

A careful examination of a variety of factors including topography and drainage, slopes, soil conditions, plant and animal communities, microclimate and human comfort, historic/cultural resources, public education opportunities, significant views and vistas should be part of the process to integrate trails in new areas of development throughout the County.



Cycling in Rural Oxford County – Source: MMM Group



#### 4.2.1.3 Trails in Utility Corridors and Abandoned Railways Rights of Way and Unopened Road Allowances

Pipeline and hydro corridors, municipal water, storm and sanitary sewer lines are examples of linear corridors that provide excellent opportunities for trail development and should be considered for the development of trails in Oxford County. Utility lines often have a substantial easement, and in many cases are informally used for trail access as they tend to provide direct, uninterrupted connections to a variety of destinations over a long distance. In rural areas the ability to provide trails in utility corridors is usually more limited as the easement may be much narrower.

For example the City of London now provides emergency service access to sanitary sewer lines running through their valley lands, and these routes are also used as main or trunk trails throughout the city. Bridges over waterways are designed to accommodate pedestrian traffic and in some cases lightweight service vehicles.

In the case of hydro corridors, the easement may be limited to an area around the base of the towers.

Abandoned railways and unopened road allowances are potentially valuable municipal assets and present an opportunity for trail development. Within Oxford County there are a number of significant abandoned railway opportunities. Abandoned railway corridors and unopened road allowances also provide opportunities for future transportation links (roads, future rail, light rail and transit). Furthermore, easements can be leased to utility companies for underground transmission lines thus helping to offset the cost of owning, operating and maintaining a multi-use trail on the abandoned rail bed.

#### 4.2.1.4 Trails in the Official Plan

The development of a balanced trails network which can be used for recreational and utilitarian purposes should not only include roads and sidewalks, but also trails that make connections between neighbourhood destinations and the broader County-wide trail network. To achieve this objective, appropriate policies should be considered for County Official Plan.

County Planning staff should review the Official Plan with a view towards developing appropriate policy/wording that can be included in a future Official Plan Amendment. Once adopted, the Trails Master Plan should be the guide for future trails development in the County. As such, when the Official Plan is next updated, the County should consider incorporating appropriate references to the policies and recommendations found within the master plan report and the need to include any related trails mapping.

Local municipal development is also guided by the County's Official Plan as the blueprint for future growth and development. Therefore, trail development in local municipalities should be guided by the County's Official Plan, the County's Trails Master Plan and local municipal cycling and trail plans.



### **Recommendation(s):**

**4-9:** As part of the next Official Plan update, the County should consider including any policies and/or schedules necessary to assist in the effective implementation of the County Trails Master Plan.

#### 4.2.1.5 Trails and the Development Charges By-Law

By-law 5077-2009 pertains to Development Charges in Oxford County. The Development Charges By-law enables the County to collect fees from a development proponent, based on a set amount per new development unit. The County and some of its local municipalities have established Development Charges By-laws to facilitate financial support for community development.

The fees that are collected are used to offset the cost of providing public infrastructure to meet the needs of the County and its communities as they grow. The County has a County wide Development Charges By-law and a number of Area Specific Development Charges By-laws. The area specific by-laws currently apply to development in most of the fully serviced settlement areas in the County (e.g. the large urban centres and serviced villages). Development Charge funds can be applied to projects in areas of the County provided that it can be clearly demonstrated that the project(s) are for new public infrastructure that is required for community growth.

Currently, the wording of the County and local municipal Development Charges by-laws does not speak specifically to the development of trails or recreation related infrastructure despite the fact that many are now engaging in planning, design and development of active transportation and recreation facilities.

Both entities are encouraged to update the Development Charges Bylaws to establish a new service category which speaks to the allocating monies to the development of off-road trail facilities.

### **Recommendation(s):**

**4-10:** The County should consider updating their Development Charges by-law include a new services section which speaks to the allocation of monies to the development of off-road trails.

#### 4.2.1.6 Risk Management & Liability

Liability concerns are becoming a key consideration due to the potential for lawsuits. Adhering to widely accepted design, construction and maintenance are one of a number of strategies to manage risk. Aside from proper design, signage and operation of on and off-road active transportation and recreation facilities, the Trails Partnership should take steps to address potential hazards including accidents, theft, vandalism, and other problems. For those on-road routes identified as part of the County-wide Trails Network, the County and its partners should consider them to be included in the same liability category as roadways and sidewalks, meaning that the County may be held partially liable if the facility is improperly designed and is not adequately maintained. **Table 4.2** summarizes some general strategies which could be used to reduce risk and to help minimize the liability associated with providing designated trail facilities.





**Table 4.2** – Summary of Potential Risk Management Strategies

**Proposed strategies to reduce risk and minimize liability:**

- Improve the physical environment, increase public awareness of the right and obligations of users and improve access to educational programs.
- Select, design, sign and designate facilities in compliance with prevailing standards. Regulatory signage included in MTO Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices should be used.
- Design concept(s) should comply with all applicable laws and regulations (e.g. Ontario highway Traffic Act, current local municipal and County by-laws, etc.).
- Maintenance operations should conform to accepted standards.
- If hazards cannot be immediately removed, they should be isolated with a barrier or identified with warning signs.
- Monitor on and off-road facilities on a regular basis to document the physical conditions and operations of the route. All reports of hazardous conditions received should be promptly and thoroughly investigated.
- Written records of all monitoring and maintenance activities should be documented and maintained.
- Avoid using descriptions such as “safe” or “safer” when describing trails or cycling routes when promoting their use. Identify practices that enable users to assess their own capabilities or level of comfort and make their choices accordingly.
- Maintain proper insurance coverage as a safeguard against having to draw payments for damages from the public treasury.

When considering on-road network segments for implementation or when proposing modifications to the network, the assessment undertaken to select the preferred route should be properly documented using the Facility Selection tool identified in OTM Book 18. By documenting the process as well as the findings, the likelihood of issues as they relate to legal challenges may decrease.

Following the approval of the Master Plan the County should undertake an assessment of their risk management, liability and insurance practices / processes as they related to trail use and active transportation (walking, cycling, etc.) on County roads.

**Recommendation(s):**

**4-11:** The proposed risk management and liability prevention strategies should be reviewed and incorporated into day-to-day decision making processes when implementing the Trails Master Plan at the County and local municipal level where applicable.



**Entrance to Chesney Conservation Area & Trails – Source: MMM Group**



#### 4.2.1.7 Land Acquisition & Securement Strategies

Although the majority of the recommended trail linkages are identified on road and lands that are currently in public ownership, there are some areas of the County where an important trail connection is desired across land not currently in public ownership. Some of these connections are located along natural areas and corridors on lands that are within the County's rural areas. Some of these tracts may become part of the urban fabric and at that time these corridors would be set aside along with a suitable buffer for the development of trails and the preservation of natural features. However, the majority of these lands will remain in predominantly rural areas. To realize the full build-out of the network and complete the connections across these lands the County may require permission for access or in some cases a strategy to secure ownership.

A range of strategies are available to accomplish this, from "handshake" access agreements, to purchase of these lands by the County or those responsible for the plan's implementation. **Appendix D** is a summary of some of the land securement techniques that could be considered by Oxford County to acquire lands to facilitate route connectivity for the County-wide Trails Network.

Following the adoption of the Trails Master Plan, the County and the Trail Partnership, in collaboration with the Oxford County Trails Council should review these potential strategies and use them as a starting point for developing an access/acquisition policy for key trail links.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

**4-12:** The County and the Trail Partnership should develop a securement strategy for future trail routes on lands not in public ownership.

#### 4.2.2 END OF TRIP FACILITIES

Network continuity, connectivity and feasibility are further enhanced through the implementation of network amenities. In some cases, amenities can be a determining factor for trail users. Network amenities can reinforce the commitment to promoting active transportation and recreation and may include lighting, seating / rest areas, parking areas, signage, bicycle parking, loading / unloading areas, garbage receptacles, washroom and amenity buildings and gates / access barriers.

Network amenities can be implemented individually or as a grouping of amenities commonly referred to as a staging area. Network amenities, staging areas and end-of-trip facilities meet a critical need for trail users and are also significant opportunities for trail developers and coordinators to engage in partnerships with local organizations, services and businesses.

In the urban areas of Oxford County, staging areas could be integrated into many of the existing park spaces and tourist destinations. In the rural areas, staging areas play a key role in the marketing package for trail use and cycling tourism. Once the master plan has been approved, the Trail Partnership should make the implementation of network amenities a priority. As a first step, they should undertake an inventory of existing staging areas and network amenities and come up with a set of strategic priorities for future additions or improvements.

Should the partnership select to move forward with the selection of future staging areas, a common approach should be used. A four level hierarchy has been developed as a guide. **Figure 4.2** illustrates the hierarchy and **Table 4.3** provides additional details regarding the amenities which could be included at each of the levels in the hierarchy.



**Figure 4.2 – Hierarchy of Staging Areas**

When reviewing the end of trip / staging areas selection tool, the County and its partners should determine the intensity of design treatment based on area and surrounding characteristics based on the features outlined in **Table 4.3**.

**Table 4.3 – Program Elements in the Staging Area Hierarchy**

Staging Area Amenities	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Additional Considerations
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	
Parking	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Rest Area		✓	✓		✓		✓		
Lighting		✓		✓	✓		✓		
Signage	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Drop Off Area		✓		✓		✓	✓		
Garbage	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Washrooms		✓	✓		✓		✓		Portable seasonal washrooms for Level 3, in place from May to October
Gates / Barriers		✓		✓	✓		✓		
Loading Zones		✓		✓		✓	✓		
Shelter		✓		✓		✓	✓		
Potable Water		✓					✓		



### **Recommendation(s):**

**4-13:** The Trail Partnership should review and refine the staging area hierarchy as a first step in selecting locations and developing staging areas throughout the trail network.

## **4.2.3 TRAIL MAINTENANCE**

### **4.2.3.1 A Maintenance Plan for Oxford Trails**

Many jurisdictions have formalized programs to plan and construct trail systems, however the number that have programs for trail maintenance is much lower. In 2004, telephone interviews were conducted with approximately a dozen southern Ontario municipalities to determine the overall scope of their trail maintenance, to learn about significant issues and priorities and to gain an understanding of basic costs for trail maintenance<sup>i</sup>. Although these findings are approximately 10 years old, some of the practices and issues have evolved based on new maintenance practices and emerging trends. The following are some highlights:

- Very few maintain their trails in winter. Of those that do, none reported maintaining all of their trails in winter. Generally winter maintained trails included only asphalt trails and those that are heavily used, or are main connections serving utilitarian purposes such as connections to schools and main bicycle/pedestrian commuter routes.
- Several reported having defined maintenance standards for trails, based on trail type. Many of those that did not currently have standards reported that they were working towards them.

- In most cases, respondents felt that they could do a better job at trail maintenance, but were limited by resources (staff resources/budget and time).
- Most reported conducting an annual safety audit, in most cases this was included as part of their annual safety and security audit for parks, playgrounds and recreation facilities.
- Many noted that proactive or preventative maintenance, especially with regard to trail surface condition, signing, trash and vandalism was a key success factor.
- Most use trail patrols or supervisors conducted a regular (i.e. as often as weekly) review to assess conditions, prioritize maintenance tasks and monitor known problem areas.
- Some use maintenance logbooks to set out a schedule of tasks, priorities, standards to be achieved and method of tracking that the work has been completed. This method of tracking was also noted as useful for being able to predict which locations would require the highest level of maintenance.
- In most cases, parks crews performed trail maintenance as part of their regular park maintenance role. Where extensive maintenance programs were reported, additional seasonal labour was added to the workforce (often summer students). For some cases volunteer “adopt-a-trail” programs were identified as useful for basic trail cleanup and monitoring.
- Trail maintenance in urban areas is handled under Parks Operations budgets, sometimes tracked as a separate trail maintenance budget, but most often grouped in with other parks maintenance budgets.

<sup>i</sup> Municipal Trail Maintenance Survey. Telephone interviews conducted by Stantec, 2004



- Trail maintenance costs range depending on the type of trail and location. They could include:
  - Maintenance costs for on-road facilities – estimated at \$1,000.00 - \$5,000.00 per km, per year depending on the facility types (paved shoulder with edgelines / signs, bike lanes, painted lines, etc.)
  - Annual maintenance including line and stencil reapplication, replacement of bike lanes and bike route signs, minor asphalt repair (pothole patching and crack sealing), sweeping, snow plowing and replacement of older style catch basin grates with bicycle friendly grates).
  - Maintenance of off-road multi-use trails in rural areas – estimated at \$300.00 - \$800.00 per km per year.
  - Maintenance of off-road multi-use trails in urban areas – estimated at \$4,000.00 to \$6,000.00 per km per year of trail (3.0m width) depending on level of service standard set out by the County and the municipality.
  - Annual maintenance of off-road multi-use trail facilities in urban areas include drainage and storm channel maintenance, sweeping, clearing of debris, trash removal, weed control and vegetation management, moving of grass along shoulders, minor surface repairs, repairs to trail fixtures and staging areas and other general repairs.

Specific maintenance considerations and timing that should be considered by the County and its partners include:

- Asphalt surfaces on trails have a life span of approximately 15-20 years.
- Trails that were installed in the 1980's and earlier are now having to be reconstructed and in the process are generally being widened to meet higher levels of demand today. Wider trails are also better for preventing damage to trail edges by municipal service vehicles, as vehicle wheels are less likely to roll over and break trail edges and less likely to create ruts in the soil beside the trail.
- Trails that were properly constructed at initial installation had the fewest maintenance issues. Proper subgrade excavation, adequate base and proper drainage were noted as keys to trail longevity.
- Many reported that erosion is a big challenge and that "trail hardening" with asphalt on sloped trails is the best way to prevent further erosion. Some reported trying other soil bonding compounds for trails on slopes and reported only moderate success with these alternative materials.
- Mowing grass along edges of trails is performed on a regular basis. Depending on trail location this may be weekly, biweekly, monthly or infrequently throughout the growing season. The width of the mown swath generally varies from 0.5m to 2.0m depending on the municipality and location. Mowing helps to keep clear zone open and can also help with the invasion of weeds into granular trail surfaces.
- Several have trained their operators to be more observant while mowing and to take note of problem areas along the trails.



- Garbage pickup is performed on a regular basis (i.e. 10 day cycle), with receptacles located at the ends of trail segments where they can be easily accessed for service vehicles.
- Tasks performed on a seasonal basis include culvert cleanout and trail side pruning.
- Grading/grooming the surface of granular trails is generally performed once per year or as required after heavy storm events in areas prone to erosion.
- Tasks performed every 3 to 5 year cycle include refurbishment of signs, cleaning and refurbishment of site furnishings.
- Tasks performed on an as-required basis include moving or marking obvious hazards within 24 hours of their identification, inspection/monitoring of trail areas prone to damage following heavy storms, repairs to vandalized items, and minor repairs to structural elements such as bridges, trail surfaces, railings, benches, gates and signs.
- Major renovation or replacement of large items such as bridges, kiosks, gates, parking lots, and asphalt trail surfaces was generally described as a 10-20 year replacement item.



Maintaining Off-road Cycling Trails  
Source: cmbcyukon.ca

#### 4.4.3.2 Maintenance Plan Template

The general objectives of a trail monitoring and maintenance plan are to:

- Provide users with safe, dependable and affordable levels of service;
- Preserve infrastructure assets;
- Protect the natural environment;
- Enhance the appearance and health of the community;
- Provide a reference framework against which to measure performance;
- Provide the basis of a peer review that is comparable with other municipalities; and
- Provide citizens and Councils with a reference for expectations.

The first step in implementing a maintenance and management program is to determine its scope. Trail plans, maps, inventories, trail logs, traffic count information and condition surveys are all valuable sources of information for developing maintenance management systems. Typical trail and on-road facility maintenance activities that should be considered by the Trail Partnership have been outlined in **Appendix E**.

The maintenance program template was established based on current best practices and tasks have been grouped according to the frequency with which they would typically be performed:

- Immediately (within 24 to 48 hours);
- Regularly (weekly/biweekly/monthly);
- Seasonally;
- Annually;



- Every 3 to 5 years; and
- Every 10 to 20 years.

Although it may represent some additional time or cost, it has often been demonstrated that simply reorganizing existing maintenance priorities can contribute significantly to an effective maintenance program, particularly for an on-road cycling network.

#### 4.2.3.3 Winter Maintenance Approach

Very few municipalities maintain their off-road trails during winter months. For those municipalities that do offer winter maintenance services on trails, generally only certain routes are maintained, and these tend to be primary routes that serve a commuter function to key destinations such as routes to schools or are highly used by tourists and visitors. The following are some criteria that are being used in other jurisdictions and could be useful in determining the need for winter maintenance of portions of the off-road trail network.

##### Trail Function & Location:

- The trail's role in the overall transportation network and community connectivity (primary vs. secondary function). For example the trail does not provide an alternate route to an existing winter maintained sidewalk/trail.
- The trail provides direct pedestrian access to residential/commercial/recreation areas.
- Determine if the trail is integral to the overall network in that it provides a primary link for the community to schools, public facilities such as recreational centres and to other pedestrian generators such as senior's homes, shopping and commercial establishments.
- The trail does not provide an alternative to parallel or comparable facility(ies) already receiving winter maintenance such as a sidewalk network.

- The trail is not solely a convenient short cut. Consideration needs to be given to the length of the detour required if the trail is not available for use. Although each case should be considered on an individual basis, 500m can be considered as a threshold guideline.
- The trail connects dead end streets or cul-de-sacs where alternative routes do not exist.
- Consideration for neighbouring land use(s) and how this relates to pedestrian origins, destinations and pedestrian generators.
- Consideration given to sidewalks/trails that have historically received winter maintenance, but which have not yet been formalized.

##### Trail Design & Considerations:

- Adequate surface drainage to prevent ponding of water on the trail surface.
- Minimum width (e.g. no less than 3.0m for multi-use trails).
- The trail has an asphalt surface (this factor may not apply if a snowblower is used instead of a plow).
- Adequate access for maintenance equipment (snowplow and sweeper).
- There should be no danger adjacent to the trail, such as a steep drop off.



### **Recommendation(s):**

- 4-14:** Using the Maintenance Plan Template as a starting point an appropriate trail maintenance plan should be developed that is based on an appropriate budget and building on the existing successful maintenance practices already being undertaken.
- 4-15:** Regular (annual) reviews of physical infrastructure conditions should be conducted with input from facility users. The findings should be reported to the Trail Partnership as part of the process for establishing priorities for on-going route maintenance.
- 4-16:** Annual maintenance budgets should be refined to accommodate the maintenance of trail and cycling facilities. This budget should increase over time to correspond with the increase in the number / length of facilities that have been implemented.

## **4.3 INCREASING TRAIL AWARENESS: COUNTY-WIDE PROMOTION & OUTREACH**

A “complete” system of trails and the culture to support of trail use will not only require the implementation of new facility types, it will also require communication, promotion, outreach and marketing initiatives to educate the public including County residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

### **4.3.1 USING A “FIVE-E” APPROACH**

Developing promotion, outreach and marketing materials that educate and inform trail users should be guided by the “five-e’s” – Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation and Enforcement.

- **Engineering:** The way trails and amenities are planned, designed and constructed. For the purposes of the Master Plan the County and Trail Partnership should refer to the guidelines / standards included in Appendix A of the Master Plan report and the County’s Transportation Master Plan. These references should be complemented by existing provincial bikeway design standards – OTM Book 18 - where necessary and could be used by those involved in the development of promotion and outreach materials to educate and inform existing and potential users of the different design alternatives and standards.
- **Education:** Providing different user groups with the information they need on where to safely and comfortably use off-road trails and on-road linkages. It can also include information for how to safely and confidently interact with other users.
- **Encouragement:** Means of promoting the use of the trails and on-road linkages identified as part of the network for recreational and day to day activities.
- **Enforcement:** Monitoring the success of a trail or on-road linkages and programs which have been developed to complement the infrastructure. The concept of enforcement also takes into consideration the necessary adjustment and improvement which may need to be made to increase facility use.
- **Evaluation:** A means of assessing whether the users of the network understand and adhere to the rules and regulations as set out by the Province, the County and its local municipalities.





The County and Trail Partnership should strive to prepare and implement initiatives related to trail development and use for each of these five areas of communication. A robust promotion and outreach program will rely on engagement with local stakeholders, interest groups and the public to support these five areas. As an initial outcome of the master plan, the Trail Partnership should consider identifying pilot projects or initiatives from the “Five E Approach”. **Table 4.4** provides a list of potential initiatives related to common communication and outreach goals related to trail and active transportation / recreation use. These are to be considered by the Trail Partnership and should be the basis from which some initial trail related outreach and promotion initiatives are developed.



**Table 4.4** - Proposed Communication & Outreach Initiatives for Oxford County

Goal	Initiative(s)
<b>Education</b>	
<p><b>Making on and off-road cycling information easily available</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with representatives from Oxford Tourism, Oxford Public Health and local school boards and create a strategy to provide active transportation and recreation information seasonally.</li> <li>Engage local trail, snowmobile, active transportation and recreation and equestrian clubs and interest groups to distribute information about the network. Should aim to distribute information quarterly throughout the year.</li> <li>Distribute educational information (brochures, pamphlets, etc.) in a number of different accessible formats that are consistent with the County’s accessibility requirements. Enhance the existing Oxford County Trails Council webpage to include additional information regarding trail and trail use for all user groups and adapt information to be consistent with the trails master plan report.</li> <li>Ensure that hard-copy information (pamphlets, brochures, newsletters, etc.) are made available (consistently) at community destinations and areas of high-traffic including community centres, arenas, libraries, museums etc.).</li> <li>Consider including trail and active transportation related information in County-wide mail-outs (e.g. newsletters, resident information, mailings, etc.) and distribute at County or local municipal events.</li> </ul>



**Table 4.4 - Proposed Communication & Outreach Initiatives for Oxford County**

Goal	Initiative(s)
<b>Prevent Disconnect between the Creators and Users of Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all promotional and outreach materials are developed with wording that is appropriate and engaging for the audience that it is being developed for.</li> <li>• Select topics related to active transportation and recreation that typically are not known by the general public e.g. maintenance, and develop promotional materials which aim to make this information easy to understand and more accessible.</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure Mobility Needs of Harder to Reach Populations are accommodated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trail promotion and outreach messaging should be tailored for differing target audiences e.g. youth, seniors, pedestrians, cyclists, off-season trail users, etc. when developing future educational materials.</li> <li>• Initiate education programs and safe trail use programs for different age groups. For example with CANBike or local clubs to develop locally based initiatives e.g. Take to the Trails, Learn to: Bike Tune Up, Learn to: Hike Safe etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Enhance opportunities to Promote Active Transportation and Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with the Trail Partnership to establish forums and educational opportunities for the public to learn about active transportation and recreation.</li> <li>• Provide a forum where local active transportation and recreation clubs can gather and educate the public about opportunities available.</li> <li>• Engage with local school boards to provide educational information and forums at local schools or have youth engage in trail walks.</li> </ul>
<b>Encouragement</b>	
<b>Overcoming Barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage County residents using an online forum to provide their issues / barriers to trail use, request specific information regarding trails, etc.</li> <li>• Provide safety specific information to those residents who may be more hesitant about trail use or cycling e.g. safety information to parents and children.</li> <li>• Engage in community based social marketing initiatives to better understand the barriers to creating a cultural shift towards more active forms of transportation and recreation in the County and establish initiatives based on the findings. Consider updating existing mapping to ensure that the most up to date information is included. The mapping should be designed to include key trails, active recreation and active transportation related information and messaging.</li> <li>• Explore the development of a wayfinding strategy for on and off-road routes throughout the County. The strategy would help users navigate the network and inform them about key destinations County-wide.</li> </ul>



**Table 4.4 - Proposed Communication & Outreach Initiatives for Oxford County**

Goal	Initiative(s)
<b>Personalize Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop simple but effective promotion and encouragement tools like lawn signs - “I support trails in my community” or “I like to cycle in my community” - where people are able to encourage their neighbours, friends and family to get involved.</li> <li>• Work with local employers, schools, businesses to engage in developing their own personalized trail or cycling related amenities such as a “design a bike rack” competition or a “design a trail sign” competition to encourage personalized branding and outreach.</li> </ul>
<b>Enforcement</b>	
<b>Partnerships with Enforcement Officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create patrols and safety blitzes along routes and trails enforcing safe operating procedures for pedestrians, cyclists and other on-road facilities and trail user groups.</li> <li>• Use the information gathered regarding collision rates etc. to target areas throughout the County and in local municipalities where additional enforcement and / or design modifications are required.</li> </ul>
<b>Communicate and Promote Safety and Comfort</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an online method or accessible method to document and report collisions on trails and provide clear information about the process of how to address conflicts when they occur.</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>	
<b>Gather Baseline Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage a local student or members of the Trail Partnership to gather existing information regarding trail use including seasonal trail counts of cyclists, pedestrians, hikers, equestrians, etc.</li> <li>• Develop a specific method of gathering information regarding trail and recreational opportunities for harder to reach populations e.g. a youth friendly survey or senior friendly survey.</li> <li>• Collect accurate trail and cycling collision data to help identify any potential program areas as well as problem areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Assess Existing Trail and Cycling Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine routes being used by children to ensure that they are safe and useable.</li> <li>• Undertake a review of existing maintenance programs to ensure that they are up to date and make the necessary adaptations.</li> <li>• Establish “pop-up” consultation initiatives on trails where volunteers gather input from trail users annually or bi-annually.</li> </ul>



**Table 4.4** - Proposed Communication & Outreach Initiatives for Oxford County

Goal	Initiative(s)
<b>Assess Master Plan Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with County, local municipal staff and those responsible for the plan’s implementation to provide bi-annual updates to Council regarding implementation progress.</li> <li>• Gather input and feedback in an accessible manner and provide the results as an update about local and County successes (e.g. post the information online, using local media, posters).</li> </ul>

**Recommendation(s):**

**4-17:** The Trail Partnership should review the proposed education and outreach initiatives proposed and select those that could be implemented as potential pilot initiatives.

## 4.4 ESTABLISHING A PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

The successful implementation of the Master Plan will require significant coordination and collaboration between those responsible for the plan’s implementation and members of the public. Potential partners who could be involved in the implementation of the plan have been identified.

These groups are to be consulted on an on-going basis, where necessary, to provide input on the selection of future priorities, initiatives, projects and strategies. Different partners are consulted / engaged based on the project that is being implemented.

**Table 4.5** provides guidance regarding the range of partners that may be involved depending on the project being discussed. Some groups may be directly involved through their members as part of the Trail Partnership whereas others may be engaged on a project by project basis.



School Group Trail Hikes  
Source:  
[www.southshorenaturalsciencecentre.org](http://www.southshorenaturalsciencecentre.org)



**Table 4.5 – Oxford County Partnership Framework**

Primary Partners
• Oxford County
• Local Municipalities
• Conservation Authorities
• Province of Ontario
• Oxford Tourism
• Local and County Police Service
• Oxford County Trails Council
• Oxford Public Health & Board of Health
• Local Municipal Cycling and Trail Committees & Interest Groups
• Local Businesses
• Service Clubs
• Public Representatives
• School Boards
• Neighbouring Municipalities

Partnerships with agencies, including some of those that are identified in Table 4.5, can help to inform and jointly produce promotional or educational literature in magazines, materials distributed through offices, materials on or links to corporate/agency websites. They can also include co-participation in annual events related to trail use. Events such as the Terry Fox Run and other fundraisers, and events such as Ride to Work Week, the Clean Air Campaign and Earth Day are natural matches.

Allowing time for key staff to contribute to the organization of these events that use the trails is a simple, cost effective way to spread the word about using the trail system. The Manulife Ride for Heart in Waterloo and the Tour de Grande in Cambridge for example, attract thousands of cyclists to one-day fundraisers that use trails extensively, providing visibility through extensive media coverage at essentially no cost to the owners of the trail.

#### 4.4.1 ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES & INTEREST GROUPS

It is very important to recognize the efforts of private businesses that could partner with the County on initiatives related to the development and use of the trail system. Recognition through the media for efforts that encourage more trail use is a very positive way of showing partners that their contribution is greatly appreciated. Furthermore, media recognition is a simple and cost-effective way to raise awareness and encourage use.

Where contributions are made that improve conditions of the trail, such as the provision of trail amenities and creation of links across private properties, the Partnership should consider recognition of the effort. This can be done with donor signs and plaques that are tastefully designed and carefully located.

Private and public partnerships have already been explored through the extensive work completed by the Oxford County Trails Council and the work that they have done to promote and develop trails throughout the County. Future initiatives should build upon these existing relationships and explore additional opportunities.



In addition to recognizing those individuals and businesses that make a contribution to the development of actual trail routes, some municipalities have developed incentive programs to recognize businesses that, through their actions indirectly encourage more user participation on trails.

**Recommendation(s):**

**4-18:** Partnerships should be explored by the Trail Partnership (e.g. Police Service, School Boards, and local clubs and interest groups etc.) and businesses to develop and implement a communication, promotion and outreach strategy including elements of education, encouragement, evaluation and enforcement.

## 4.5 PUTTING DOLLARS TO THE NETWORK

The benefits of investing in trails as outlined in Chapter 2 justify why the County should continue to make active transportation and recreation a priority. They are clearly a means of increasing the quality of life of residents while increasing the longevity of municipal infrastructure, sustainability of natural and cultural areas of significance and enhancing tourism opportunities. Investing in the County is investing in the future of residents.

Costs associated with trail implementation, maintenance and promotion can be justified by developing connections, continuous and sustainable system of recreational and utilitarian transportation opportunities and benefits which can be realized at an individual and community-level.

The cost of implementing the trail network should be assessed on a project by project basis as opportunities arise and as the County and its partners select to proceed with key linkages as identified in the master plan.

**Appendix F** lists unit costs for the construction of various elements which have been identified as part of the network (in 2014 dollars).

These have been developed based on the following assumptions:

- The unit costs assume typical or normal / average conditions for construction;
- Estimates do not include the cost of property acquisition, utility relocation, driveway / entrance restorations, permits or approvals for construction;
- Annual inflation, which includes increased cost of labour, materials, fuel, etc., is not included;
- Professional services and / or staff time for detailed design have not been included; and
- Applicable taxes are not included.

**Touring Cyclist on County Road – Source: MMM Group**



### 4.5.1 WHERE WILL THE MONEY COME FROM?

When establishing costing for network priorities the County and its partners are encouraged to explore potential savings and reductions through:

- Infrastructure funding programs such as future federal and provincial infrastructure programming;



- Routes that are developed with funding or partial funding available through various subsidies and grant programs;
- Partnership with outside organizations and agencies;
- Partnerships with local municipalities, Oxford County Public Health, Oxford Tourism, Oxford County Trails Council, Conservation Authorities and the Trans Canada Trails Association;
- Routes developed by others that could be used for trail facilities (e.g. service access roads along utility corridors, etc.);
- Facilities designed and constructed by developers and / or through the use of Development Charge funds; and
- Routes that are built by developers through the land development approvals process.

External funding opportunities could include a number of potential avenues for financial support and commitment for network implementation. Some of these include:

- Federal / Provincial Gas Tax;
- Transport Canada's MOST (Moving of Sustainable Transportation) and Eco Mobility (TDM) grant programs;
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Municipal Fund;
- Ontario Ministry of Health grant programs and partnership streams such as the Healthy Communities Fund and promotional initiatives related to health / active living / active transportation;
- Ontario Ministry of Environment Community GO Green Fund (CGGF);
- Ontario Ministry of Transportation Demand Management Municipal Grant Program;

- Trans Canada Trail funding and the recent Federal Government announcement to match funds;
- Various Federal and Provincial Infrastructure / stimulus programs that are offered;
- The Ontario Trillium Foundation;
- Human Resources Development Canada program that enables personnel positions to be made available to various groups and organizations;
- Corporate Environmental Funds such as Shell and Mountain Equipment Co-op that tend to fund small, labour intensive projects where materials or logistical support is required;
- Corporate donations which may consist of money or services in-kind, and have been contributed by a number of large and small corporations over the years;
- Potential future funding that might emerge from the Province in rolling out the Ontario Trails Strategy as well as the recently released Ontario Cycling Strategy;
- Service clubs such as the Lions, Rotary, and Optimists who often assist with high visibility projects at the community level; and
- Private citizen donations / bequeaths - this can also include tax receipt(s) for the donor where appropriate.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

**4-19:** In addition to capital funding, the County and the Trail Partnership should consider and explore other outside funding sources and cost-sharing opportunities to support the implementation of the trails network, outreach and promotion opportunities.



## 4.6 MONITORING & EVALUATING THE PLAN

Implementation of the master plan is intended to commence in 2014 / 2015. Collecting data to evaluate the different and changing aspects of user behaviour will assist in evaluating the effectiveness and overall contribution of various activities to achieve the vision, goals and objectives of this plan. Over time, performance monitoring should examine user preference for facilities, levels of use and other key factors. This data will inform staff when making adjustments to infrastructure prioritization and programming and to adjust them to meet local needs. Results from on-going data collection may be used to determine the success of implementing various types of facilities. However, caution must be used when relying on an immediate response to a given improvement. An extended timeframe should be established to ensure that awareness and communication initiatives are in place to assist in changing travel patterns and habits. This information should be collected every two to three years (maximum every 5 years) and at the same time / season each time.

Data collection through evaluation / monitoring programs and on-going public consultation (e.g. user surveys and public attitudes surveys conducted every 5-years), will inform and assist in preparing a list of annual priorities while measuring the success of the plan. A component of measuring implementation successes and objectives is to establish a set of performance measures and targets.

**Appendix G** has been prepared as a set of preliminary performance measures which could be reviewed and confirmed based on input from the Trail Partnership. The collection and analysis of data, development of relevant recommendations and adjustments to performance targets could be part of a scope of work for members of the Trail Partnership of seasonal staff and / or students from post-secondary institutions who are studying community design, public health, transportation planning or engineering.

Results of any such work should be reported to Council as part of an annual information report so they can remain informed about the progress being made on the Master Plan, including new links developed, the status of education and encouragement campaigns, challenges or barriers, priority projects for the coming year.

### Recommendation(s):

**4-20:** Using the list of potential performance measures described in Appendix G, the Trail Partnership should develop a set of measures to evaluate the success of the Plan and to monitor trends in usage.

## 4.7 PLAN SUMMARY

The Oxford County Trails Master Plan has been developed as a flexible and adaptable strategy for long-term trail development. The plan is intended to be used to facilitate and coordinate existing efforts and provide the County and the Trail Partnership with a blueprint for future design, development and implementation.

The recommendations and action items identified in the master plan have been designed to provide direction on how to move forward with the facilitation / coordination of the development of the trails network and some immediate trail priorities. The contents of the master plan were strategically developed to reflect the goals and ambitions of Oxford County, local municipalities and the many trail development partners who have contributed to the development of this Master Plan.