



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Promoting Cycling Tourism in Toronto

Date:	September 28, 2016
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	AFS: 23686

SUMMARY

This report responds to a motion at the Economic Development Committee held on April 12, 2016 that requests the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to report to its November 28, 2016 meeting on an inventory of cycling tourism products in Toronto; and to identify what packages and products would help increase the economic impact of cycling tourism; and on a plan to better package and promote cycle-based tourism opportunities in Toronto.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of cycling-related programs and services provided by the City of Toronto; cycling-related programs and services provided by other organizations; the visitor services provided by Tourism Services at the City of Toronto; and cycling tourism destination marketing programs and services provided by Tourism Toronto.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. The Economic Development Committee receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact arising from the adoption of this report.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of April 12, 2016, the Economic Development Committee requested that the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture report back to its November 28, 2016 meeting on an inventory of cycling tourism products in Toronto; to identify what packages and products would help increase the economic impact of cycling tourism; and on a plan to better package and promote cycle-based tourism opportunities in Toronto.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.ED11.11>

COMMENTS

Cycling tourism is increasingly recognized as a way to attract visitors and their dollars to a city or region. The benefits of cycling tourism is recognized by the Province of Ontario in its *#CycleOn: Ontario's Cycling Strategy*. Released in 2013, this strategy identifies "Increasing Cycling Tourism Opportunities" as one of its five strategic directions. The strategy notes: "Bike tourism is booming. Research by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) shows that, in 2010, two million Canadian visitors participated in cycling activities in Ontario and spent \$391 million. This represents an increase of 25 per cent in the number of visitors and 18 percent in spending over 2009" (p. 33). The Province's strategy identifies the following action areas to achieve this strategic direction:

- Promote Ontario as a premier cycling tourism destination.
- Identify a province-wide cycling network and use it to prioritize future infrastructure investment on provincial highways.
- Improve cycling tourism experiences in Ontario and inter-modal cycling connections by working with our partners to provide end-of-trip facilities, maps of existing cycling routes and way-finding applications (p. 35).

In support of these strategic directions, the Government of Ontario's Tourism Ontario website (<https://www.ontariotravel.net>) provides visitors with a searchable database of resources for tourists to Ontario that includes cycling-related tourism information offered throughout the province, including Toronto.

Toronto, as Ontario's largest city and a destination of choice for tourists of all kinds, combined with its robust cycling infrastructure, is well positioned to attract cycle tourists to the region. The most recent data available on cycle tourism in Ontario was published by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport in 2013. The data includes information on cycle tourism in Ontario as a whole; Tourism Region 5: Greater Toronto Area (GTA) which includes the cities of Toronto, Mississauga and Brampton; and the City of Toronto show that cycling is an attractor for tourists who visit the province, region and city. The table below provides data for these three geographies.

In 2013, 153,700 person visits to the City of Toronto participated in cycling activities, representing less than one percent (0.8%) of the 19,141,500 of all person visits to Toronto. Of the person visits to the City of Toronto who participated in cycling, a large majority (129,900) originated from within Ontario. In terms of length of stay, 89,600 were same-day visits while 64,200 were overnight visits. The vast majority (113,800) of these cycling-related person visits to the City of Toronto were for pleasure, followed by 35,900 visiting friends or relatives.

Person Visits Participating in Cycling by Geography, 2013				
		Province of Ontario	Brampton, Mississauga and Toronto (RTO 5)	City of Toronto
Total Person Visits Participating in Cycling		1,553,500	199,300	153,700
Origin of Visit	Ontario	1,349,800	130,700	129,900
	Other Canada	114,400	23,800	23,800
	US	45,800	14,400	-
	Overseas	43,500	30,400	-
Length of Stay	Overnight	1,336,600	102,900	64,200
	Same Day	221,000	96,300	89,600
Main Purpose of Trip	Pleasure	1,145,600	140,500	113,800
	Visiting Friends or Relatives	388,200	51,100	35,900
	Shopping	1,400	1,400	1,400
	Conventions	5,300	-	1,000
	Business	7,400	3,900	1,600
	Other	5,500	2,400	-

Note: Figures may not add up due to rounding.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

Delivery of Tourism Destination Marketing and Visitor Services in Toronto

Destination marketing promotes economic development by attracting visitors to a region which in turn generates revenue for local businesses like hotels, restaurants and attractions. This is in contrast to visitor services, which provides information and services to visitors once they have arrived. In Toronto, the not-for-profit agency Tourism Toronto is Toronto's official destination marketing organization, while visitor services are provided by the City of Toronto's Tourism Services unit within Economic Development and Culture (EDC).

Tourism Toronto

Tourism Toronto is Toronto's official destination marketing partnership with financial and other in-kind support from: the Greater Toronto Hotel Association, the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto, the City of Mississauga, the City of Brampton, VIA Rail, Air Canada, and Porter. A partnership involving both the private and public sectors, Tourism Toronto is a not-for profit agency with over 1,100 members. Its mandate is to promote and sell the greater Toronto region as a destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travellers. Tourism Toronto has an independent Board consisting of representatives of the hotel industry and other industry stakeholders (restaurants, attractions, etc.).

Since 2010, Tourism Toronto has been designated Regional Tourism Organization 5, with funding by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, representing the cities of Toronto, Mississauga and Brampton. In 2013 the Greater Toronto Hotel Association (GTHA) and Tourism Toronto implemented a voluntary destination marketing program (DMP) in which the GTHA makes arrangements with some of its members for a voluntary contribution to a fund, most of which is then turned over to Tourism Toronto to deliver a destination marketing program. It is estimated the DMP generated \$17.6 million in 2014.

The Province of Ontario provides annual sustainable funding to Regional Tourism Organizations (RTO) across the province to promote tourism in specific geographic areas. As the designated RTO for the Greater Toronto Area, Tourism Toronto serves the destination marketing needs of the cities of Mississauga, Brampton and Toronto. According to the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, in 2014-2015, the province's RTO funding allocation to Tourism Toronto was \$9.905 million.

Tourism Toronto has a robust cycling tourism marketing page on its website (<http://www.seetorontonow.com/cycle-toronto/>), much of which is provided by the non-profit organization Ontario by Bike. The page promotes:

- Toronto neighbourhoods that tourists may wish to visit by bike: Kensington Market; Cabbagetown, Yorkville, Chinatown, and the Distillery Historic District.
- A of variety city bikeways and park trails, including:
 - Toronto Islands (with a link to bicycle rentals)
 - the Waterfront Trail
 - the Don River Valley
 - Tommy Thompson Park.
- Links to the City of Toronto's cycling map; Ontario By Bike's Toronto Ride Guide; Bike Share Toronto; Toronto Bicycle Tours; VIA Rail and GO Transit's Bike Train.

- Arriving in Toronto via the Waterfront Trail.
- Bike-friendly hotels and bed and breakfasts.

When consulted about the return on investment that would be associated with increasing destination marketing efforts to attract cyclists to visit Toronto, Tourism Toronto reported that its intelligence shows that cycling is not a trip motivator for visitors to the city. As a result, Tourism Toronto does not consider cycling tourists as a target market and does not include the activity of cycling in its intercept surveys. However, as noted above, Tourism Toronto maintains an up-to-date web page providing cycling tourism marketing material for visitors to Toronto.

Tourism Services Unit at the City of Toronto

The Tourism Services unit operates within the Film and Entertainment Industries section of the Economic Development and Culture (EDC) division at the City of Toronto. The unit is focused on providing services to the visitor once they have arrived in Toronto. Destination marketing is outside its scope and mandate.

The Tourism Services unit stimulates Toronto's visitor economy by:

- Providing front desk and in-person concierge-like services through the Union Station Visitor Information Centre and the INFOTOGO Mobile unit
- Through the Toronto Greeters program, volunteer Toronto residents are matched with visitors to share what they love about their hometown
- Maintain the City's Festival and Event Calendar
- Deliver the We've Been Expecting You (WBEY) customer service training program
- Providing a number of information tools including free visitor and cycling maps of Toronto and an online festival and event calendar help to encourage visitors and residents alike to enjoy Toronto

Tourism Toronto transfers funds to the City of Toronto for visitor services expenses and to assist with major events such as Nuit Blanche, wayfinding and other support for the tourism sector.

Cycling Infrastructure and Programs Unit at the City of Toronto

The Cycling Infrastructure and Programs unit in Transportation Services at the City of Toronto focuses specifically on cycling as a mode of transportation in the City. Promoting the City as a destination for cycling-related tourism activities falls outside the unit's core focus and mandate. However, the unit does plan, develop and implement

major cycling infrastructure in the City of Toronto including dedicated bike lanes, bike paths, bike routes, and bike parking. Building and maintaining cycling infrastructure is key to promoting cycling tourism – without the cycling infrastructure, there would be nothing here to attract visitors to come to Toronto to ride their bikes. Examples of cycling-related plans, programs and infrastructure this unit provides include:

- Approximately 250 lane kilometres of existing, dedicated on-street cycling infrastructure.
- A *Cycling Network Ten Year Plan* that was approved by City Council on June 7, 2016 to connect, grow and renew infrastructure for Toronto’s cycling routes over the next ten years. The plan identifies approximately 525 centreline kilometres (km) of new infrastructure (if counted in each lane direction, more than 1000 lane km). This proposed new network includes:
 - 280 centreline km of bicycle lanes or cycle tracks on “Fast, Busy Streets” (such as arterial and major collector roadways)
 - 55 centreline km of sidewalk-level boulevard trails along Fast, Busy Streets
 - 190 centreline km of cycling routes along “Quiet Streets” (such as local roads)
- The *Bikeway Trails Implementation Plan* that was adopted by Council in 2012 which builds on the existing network of bikeway trails and calls for the implementation of 77 new kilometers of trail.
- The annual production and distribution over 100,000 cycling maps, including information on bike specialty shops and bike rentals. These maps are distributed through libraries, bike shops, civic centres and other locations, as well as through Economic Development and Culture’s mobile visitor information units (INFOTOGO).
- The maintenance of a web page on the City’s web site (www.toronto.ca/cycling) that includes:
 - a downloadable version of the annual cycling map
 - a directory of 84 Toronto bicycle specialty shops (including ten that provide bike rentals)
 - a directory of ride clubs and cycling organizations
- Partnerships with various organizations to produce cycling programs and events such as Bike Month and the Bicycle Friendly Business Awards.

- An electronic newsletter that reports on cycling infrastructure projects and programs to raise awareness of cycling in Toronto and encourage people to ride their bikes more often
<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=a9a4970aa08c1410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>).
- The creation and maintenance of bicycle parking throughout the City. The comprehensive bicycle parking programs are intended to provide public bicycle parking facilities at destinations that are regularly frequented by cyclists. Post and ring bicycle stands are installed on street for ‘short term’ parking (run through the Street Furniture Management of the Public Realm unit of Transportation Services) while bicycle lockers and the bicycle stations at Union Station and Victoria Park Subway Station are designed for ‘long term’, recurring bicycle parking needs. Over 230 bicycle lockers have been installed at the following locations:
 - Bayview Subway Station (12)
 - City Hall (26)
 - Downsview Subway Station (36)
 - Eglinton GO (6)
 - Etobicoke Civic Centre (6)
 - Exhibition Place (6)
 - Finch GO (12)
 - Finch Subway Station (12)
 - Guildwood GO Station (6)
 - Kennedy Subway Station (6)
 - Long Branch GO Station (4)
 - Metro Hall (40)
 - Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) (10)
 - Rouge Hill GO (6)
 - Scarborough Civic Centre (6)
 - Scarborough GO Station (6)
 - St Lawrence Market (4)
 - Toronto Island Ferry Docks (20)
 - University of Toronto Schools (UTS) (6)
 - Yorkdale Subway (2)
 - North York Civic Centre (6)
- The design and installation of cycling route wayfinding signage on routes to help cyclists navigate from one neighborhood to another. TO360 Cycling Wayfinding is being developed to complement the more general Toronto 360 Wayfinding initiative and will be rolled out over the next couple of years. A pilot of the cycle wayfinding system has been implemented along Wellesley and Harbord streets, linking the Pan Am Path to the University of Toronto Campus.
- The provision of guided rides for conference delegates showcasing cycling infrastructure and routes in Toronto.

- Partnering with Waterfront Toronto and the Province of Ontario as well as with the Parks, Forestry and Recreation division at the City of Toronto to plan, build and maintain the Martin Goodman Trail / Waterfront Trail, a combination of paved multi-use trails and quiet on-street routes along Toronto’s waterfront that runs from the Etobicoke Creek in the west to the Rouge River in the east. The Martin Goodman Trail / Waterfront Trail is part of the 730-kilometre Waterfront Trail that connects 41 communities from Niagara to Quebec along the Canadian Shores of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.
(http://www.waterfronttoronto.ca/explore_projects2/the_wider_waterfront/martin_goodman_trail)

Other Cycling-Related City Services at the City of Toronto

In addition to the infrastructure programs and services provided by the Cycling Infrastructure and Programs unit, the City of Toronto also supports a number of other initiatives with the goal of promoting cycling in Toronto. A sample of these include:

- **Bike Share Toronto:** Bike share is an innovative mode of transportation that allows users to make trips using publicly available bikes by accessing a network of over 2,000 bikes at 200 bike stations around Toronto. Bike Share Toronto is a project of the City’s Toronto Parking Authority (www.bikesharetoronto.com).
- **Bikes on the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC):** Bicycles are allowed on TTC vehicles during weekday non-peak hours, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. to 6:30 a.m., and anytime on Saturday and Sunday at the discretion of vehicle operators. All TTC buses are now equipped with bike racks. The racks hold two bikes each, and can be used at any time (https://www.ttc.ca/Riding_the_TTC/Bikes/Bike_access_and_amenities.jsp).
- **TTC Bike Repair Stops:** New self-service bicycle repair stops are being installed at 20 subway stations across the TTC in addition to an initial 9 stations installed in 2015. These allow customers to complete minor bicycle repairs while commuting in Toronto. Repair equipment is secured by steel cables and includes wrenches, Allen keys, screw drivers, a bicycle pump and a wheel chock. All bicycle repair stops will also receive periodic maintenance.
- **TTC Easier access:** “Easier access fare gates” help cyclists enter and exit TTC subway stations and bicycle stair channels have been installed as part of the Pape and Dufferin Station Modernization projects. New stations will include bicycle stair channels and the feasibility of retrofitting existing stations is being evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- **Bikes on Toronto Island Ferries:** The City of Toronto operates ferries to the Islands and since 2008, bicycles are permitted on all ferries all year long.

Other Organizations that Promote Cycling in Toronto

There are a number of public, private and non-profit organizations that promote cycling in Toronto. Some of these include:

- **Bikes on GO Transit:** GO Transit is also working to make it easier to combine biking and transit travel across the Toronto region by offering new amenities and services like:
 - Reserved bicycle parking at Burlington and Hamilton GO stations
 - Bike racks on buses
 - Bikes on trains
 - Bike shelters and lockers
 - Bicycle Station at Union Station
 - Bike security
 - Paths and routes
 - Cycling rules of the road

(<http://www.gotransit.com/public/en/travelling/leaveyourcar.aspx#cycling>).
- **Bike Train:** The Bike Train is a non-profit initiative to connect cyclists in Toronto with tourist attractions in the Niagara region by providing bike racks onboard select VIA Rail departures from Union Station to Niagara Falls. Regular VIA Rail departures may also accommodate bicycles (<http://www.biketrain.ca/>).
- **Ontario By Bike:** A project of Transportation Options, a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering sustainable mobility and tourism solutions across Ontario, Ontario By Bike offers a variety of information on cycling in Ontario, inspiring visitors and residents to explore more by bike (<http://www.ontariobybike.ca/>). The organization has a web page of Toronto-specific bicycle programs and services (<http://www.ontariobybike.ca/great-places-to-cycle/toronto>), including various guided tours and routes around the city, searchable listings for bike shops and bike rentals with close to 100 independent bike shops across the city.
- **Cycle Toronto:** A diverse member-supported organization that advocates for a healthy, safe, cycling-friendly city for all. Programs and services include: Bike Valet (a coat check for bicycles); Street Smarts Workshops; Street Smarts Education and Outreach; The Bike to School Project; Bike Host Mentorship Program for Newcomers; and Toronto Bike Awards (<https://www.cycleto.ca/>).

CONCLUSION

Tourism Toronto is the official destination marketing organization for Toronto's tourism industry. Tourism Toronto offers visitors a number of cycling tourism resources and information specifically targeted at visitors to Toronto. Tourism Toronto assisted with

and has been informed of this report. Any marketing programs to attract bicycle-based tourism will be the responsibility of Tourism Toronto.

Destination marketing is not within the mandate of the Economic Development and Culture division. The Cycling Infrastructure and Programs unit of Transportation Services unit builds and promotes bicycle lanes, cycling paths, networks and bicycle parking and provides cycling-related information and material on the City of Toronto's website of value to both residents and visitors. The City of Toronto also provides a number of other cycling-related initiatives like Bike Share Toronto and Bikes on the TTC to promote cycling activities by residents and visitors. Toronto is also fortunate to have a number of other public, private and non-profit programs and services aimed at cyclists that make Toronto a cycling-friendly city. The City will continue to foster increased bike usage by residents and visitors alike.

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