



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2014 January 16

MIDDLESEX LONDON HEALTH UNIT SUPPORTS CONTINUED FUNDING FOR BIKE LANES

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report 008-14 re Middlesex-London Health Unit Supports Continued Funding for Bike Lanes be received for information.

Key Points

- The City of London recognizes that bicycling is a mode of active transportation which plays a critical role in the development of an environmentally stable, economically viable and healthy and active city.
- The Bike Lane Program capital project funding was reduced in 2013 and the City of London's 2014 budget report includes further reductions, putting the future of the program in jeopardy.
- The reductions to the Bike Lane Program funding are inconsistent with a commitment to developing active transportation options for the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles

Background

Active transportation such as cycling should be the preferred mode of transportation for the City of London. A rapidly growing body of research indicates that increased rates of active transportation provide numerous environmental, economic, and health benefits to society at large. Middlesex-London Health Unit has been advocating for several years for infrastructure changes that would support an increase in active transportation. In September 2012, the Board of Health reviewed [Report No. 103-12](#) re BeCause Injuries Are Predictable and Preventable Campaign and accompanying [Healthy City/Active London Video](#) to the Rethink London process for amending the City's Official Plan.

The City of London has acknowledged the benefits of active transportation by introducing a [Bicycle Master Plan](#) (2005) and a [Transportation Master Plan](#) (2004) that recognize active transportation "...should be aggressively promoted." This is further reinforced in the [London 2030 Transportation Master Plan](#). As well, on June 27th, 2012, City Council endorsed the international [Toronto Charter for Physical Activity](#), demonstrating a commitment to policies, services and action that prioritize physical activity such as cycling.

City of London Budget Reductions

Capital budget reductions contained in the City of London's 2014 Budget Report include reductions to the City's Bike Lane Program. The future of the Bike Lane Program will depend upon one-time year-end operating surpluses and future property tax increases to restore capital funding to the original plan. This is described in Civic Administration's recommended solution to redress capital funding cuts contained in the Business Cases appended to the City of London 2014 Budget Report. The recommendation states:

"In the short term, Civic Administration recommends that available 2013 year end operational savings be used to reduce or eliminate the capital funding reduction in the 2014 budget, up to \$3.6 million. In the

long term, Civic Administration recommends increasing the tax levy by 0.8% to generate \$3.6 million of capital funding to permanently restore the original capital plan that was reduced during 2013 budget deliberations.”

Should the Board wish to urge City Council to make no 2014 reductions to the capital funding of the Bike Lane Program, there is an opportunity to make a written submission to the public participation meeting of the City of London’s budget process to be held on February 10, 2014 (written submissions due February 3, 2014).

Conclusion

Bike lanes in the City of London have been identified as a key factor in promoting a more active lifestyle as they provide active transportation options for all citizens. The development of a successful bike lane infrastructure in the City is still in the early stages and a continued commitment of financial support is needed. Maintaining that commitment will achieve a sustainable transportation system as identified in the Transportation Master Plan and will help Londoners to develop and maintain healthy and active lifestyles.

This report was prepared by Ms. Marylou Albanese, Manager of the Healthy Communities Injury Prevention Team and Mr. Wally Adams, Director of Environmental Health and Chronic Disease Prevention Services.



Christopher Mackie, MDCM, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

<p>This report addresses the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Chronic Diseases and Injuries Program Standards - Chronic Disease Prevention; Prevention of Injury. And the 2012 – 2014 MLHU Strategic Direction: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for all.</p>
--