Cycling in a Small Town:
Recommendations for the Promotion of Cycling in Renfrew, Ontario

~David VanderBerg
Executive

In response to these developments, many cities, such as

Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Ottawa, have implemented cycling plans

designed to promote cycling as a mode of transportation. However, small towns have

generally not implemented cycling plans.

Despite the absence of plans for small towns, many small towns possess

characteristics that could cause cycling to flourish. The objective of this report is to

examine how small towns can promote cycling

2. Climate: The cold winters in Renfrew limit the potential for cycling during the winters.

3. Lack of Existing Bicycle Facilities: Bike racks are the only type of bicycle facility in Renfrew and there are few of those. Furthermore, many locations where a bike rack could be expected, such as most stores, do not have one. The existing bike racks are often of poor quality and poorly located.
4. Street Barriers: Some streets have features that make them difficult and dangerous for cycling, such as narrow lanes, many parked cars, large number of turning cars, or
sharp turns. When these streets also serve as important connectors, they act as a
barrier to the mobility of cyclists. There are a number of such barriers in Renfrew: Bridge Road, Raglan Street South, O'Brien Road, and the Canadian Pacific Railroad Line.

5. Motorist Awareness: The most frequently mentioned problem for cyclists in Renfrew is a lack of awareness on the part of motorists. Six cyclists surveyed listed it as one
of the most serious problems facing cyclists. When asked how motorists treat
cyclists, the most common response was that there was a lack of respect on the part of the motorists.

6. Institutional Barriers: Transportation planning in Renfrew has traditionally emphasized the automobile and improving the road system for the automobile. No formal or informal mechanisms exist in Renfrew to ensure that cycling is considered
in transportation planning decisions.
The final product of this report is a set of recommendations based on the literature review and background research. They describe how Renfrew can exploit its strengths

v

high number of people. Therefore, Renfrew should act to improve the access to these destinations.
5. Remove Barriers: In the survey, several physical barriers were identified: Bridge Road, Railway Crossings, O'Brien Road, and Raglan Street South. Reducing the barrier effect of these places would increase cyclists' mobility in Renfrew.
The recommendations described here are intended to improve the physical cycling conditions in Renfrew. They are meant to be part of a larger program Renfrew may implement to promote cycling along with encouragement, enforcement and education components. In doing the research for this report, I found several areas in which more research should be done if Renfrew were to implement a program to promote cycling. First, research should be done to find effective programs to encourage cycling and to educate drivers. Second, further surveys of the general population should be performed to determine what the public thinks of cycling, what the potential is for people to start cycling, and what would increase the number of their cycling trips. Performing this further work along with the recommendations in this report would lay the groundwork for Renfrew to increase the number of cyclists and cycling trips made there.

vii