



## **Administrative Report**

### **Office of the Director, Infrastructure & Planning Services**

**To:** Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

**From:** Jerry Behl, P.Eng.  
Manager, Transportation Planning and Development

**Date:** Wednesday, November 15, 2023

**Subject:** 2023 CWATS Master Plan Update

**Report #:** 2023-1115-IPS-R23-JB

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#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide County Council with an update on the County Wide Active Transportation System Master Plan.

#### **Background**

In 2012, the County adopted its first County Wide Active Transportation System Master Plan. The Master Plan was developed to guide the County and local municipalities to develop an active transportation network and supportive active transportation policies and initiatives. The Master Plan included planning, design, and operation guidelines to enhance the culture of healthy active living and improve conditions for walking, cycling and active transportation.

The Master Plan identified key roles to ensure the success of implementing an active transportation network. This included hiring an Active Transportation Coordinator and assembling a CWATS Committee. Partnerships with agencies and stakeholders were also considered as critical components of the plan.

## **Discussion**

### **CWATS Master Plan Update**

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About ten years have passed since the CWATS Master Plan was adopted, and there have been a number of changes, which provide additional direction on the planning and design of active transportation infrastructure, including:

- Emerging guidelines and best practices;
- Equity as a transportation and social factor; and
- New trends and technology in active transportation.

With changes and updates to municipal, provincial, and other bodies, plans and policies, a review was undertaken to ensure that the Master Plan update was in line with these documents.

Feedback from stakeholders and the public has shown that 91% of people responding to surveys agreed that the County and its local municipalities should continue to invest in active transportation improvements.

CWATS was established in 2012 and from the County's on-going monitoring program we note that walking and cycling have increased.

The update process has provided an opportunity to review and revise the network and implementation strategy to ensure that what is being implemented achieves the desired outcomes of the County, its local municipalities and partners over the next 20+ years.

The following steps were taken to review and update the CWATS network:

1. Identify existing routes including facilities that have been recently constructed.
2. Review the route selection criteria from the 2012 plan to help assess and refine routes.
3. Identify potential new routes to be investigated and that could form part of the CWATS network.
4. Undertake field work to investigate existing routes and locations for potential new routes.
5. Review and confirm the facility types and confirm the CWATS network.

All new routes considered during the network development process were assessed using the following route selection criteria:

- Safety
- Visible
- Direct / Connected
- Destinations
- Modal integration
- Attractive / Scenic
- Diverse Experience
- Easily Accessible
- Cost Effective
- Supportive Services

Through this process and work with representatives from all municipalities and stakeholders, the proposed CWATS network has been updated.

The 2012 Master Plan had 556 km of infrastructure, with 340 km constructed to date. The updated Master Plan has 510 km of new routes proposed, making a total of 1066 km of existing and proposed CWATS facilities.

In the updated Plan, 88 previously proposed routes (137 km) were reviewed and modified to better reflect current data and updated design guidelines.

Eighty-three (83) new routes (153 km) were identified in locations where there were no facilities proposed in 2012. These new routes were identified based on updated design guidelines, current data, and input from Local and County Staff, Council and other stakeholders.

The implementation strategy for CWATS projects remains unchanged in the update relying on three major programs:

## **1 Core infrastructure Program**

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The core infrastructure program exists to complete the design and construction of sections of bike lanes, trails or other infrastructure identified in the Master Plan. Applications for projects are received by the County early in the fall and the Committee deliberates and votes on the projects. The cost share between the County and the Municipalities is based on the cost sharing formula, shown in Table 1. The annual budget for the core infrastructure program is \$1,500,000.

**Table 1 Cost sharing formula**

Facility Type	County of Essex Share	Local Municipality Share	ERCA Share
<b>On Street Bike Lanes / Paved Shoulder / Context Sensitive Solution</b> - on a County Road in a Rural Area	100%	0%	0%
<b>On Street Bike Lanes / Paved Shoulder / Multi-use Trail with or without separation/ Context Sensitive Solution</b> - on a County Road in an Urban Area	40%	60%	0%
<b>On Street Bike Lanes / Paved Shoulder / Multi-use Trail with or without separation/ Context Sensitive Solution</b> - on a Local Road anywhere.	0%	100%	0%
<b>Signed Routes</b> - anywhere on the AT Network	100%	0%	0%
<b>Sidewalks</b> - anywhere on the AT Network	0%	100%	0%
<b>Multi-Use Trails</b> - outside of County and/or Local Right-of-way	0%	0%	100%
<b>Multi-Use Trails</b> - outside of County and/or Local Right-of-way and owned by Municipality	0%	100%	0%

## **2 Paved Shoulder Program**

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Where possible the County aligns the annual road rehabilitation program with proposed paved shoulder facilities, as identified in the Master Plan to produce a list of candidate projects. Discussions between the County and Municipalities on priority and available budgets take place in the fall. The costs of paved shoulders are shared between the County and the Municipality based on the CWATS Cost-Sharing Formula, shown in Table 1. The annual budget for the paved shoulder program is \$2,800,000.

## **3 Municipal Partnership Program (MPP)**

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This program is for active transportation supportive programs and non-infrastructure facilities such as bike repair stations, bike racks, wayfinding signage, social media campaigns, positive cycling reinforcement initiatives, cycling education and celebrations. Applications for projects are received by the County early in the year and the Committee deliberates and votes on the projects. The cost share between the County and the Municipalities is 50:50. The annual budget for the MPP is \$100,000.

In addition to these three implementation programs, the County has a monitoring and evaluation program.

## **CWATS Monitoring and Evaluation Program**

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The County of Essex has an existing program to monitor active transportation. The manual count program was initiated in 2015 and is conducted on an annual basis during the summer months, typically May to August, by summer students and the Active Transportation Coordinator. The count program surveys active transportation users and looks at various factors including facility type, facility usage, meteorological conditions, and behavioural and demographic information (i.e. age, gender, helmet usage, etc.).

The County also has automated counting equipment, which allow AT facilities to be monitored at all hours of the day throughout the year. Four automated counters have been installed at varying CWATS locations around the region. Six more automated counters will be installed this year and mobile counters have also been purchased. The annual budget for monitoring and evaluation is \$100,000.

The cost share between the County and municipalities for the design and construction of CWATS Core Infrastructure remains unchanged.

## **Maintenance Considerations**

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With respect to maintenance, the Master Plan recommends that local municipalities, and the County develop maintenance strategies and establish best practices specific to each facility type. Generally, local municipalities and the County should follow Ontario Regulation 366/18, the Provincial Minimum Maintenance Standards (MMS), which were amended in 2018.

The updated MMS contains provisions for both winter and non-winter maintenance of walking and cycling facilities, specifically:

- Winter maintenance standards for bicycle lanes;
- Winter maintenance standards including patrol obligations for sidewalks;
- The ability for municipalities to declare a significant weather event; and
- Inspection standards for areas adjacent to sidewalks.

Maintenance, operation and asset management of the CWATS network is evolving to ensure that the network is maintained and rehabilitated to a state of good repair. The Master Plan recommended that agreements or charters between the County of Essex and local municipalities are created to define roles and responsibilities of each level of government. The Master

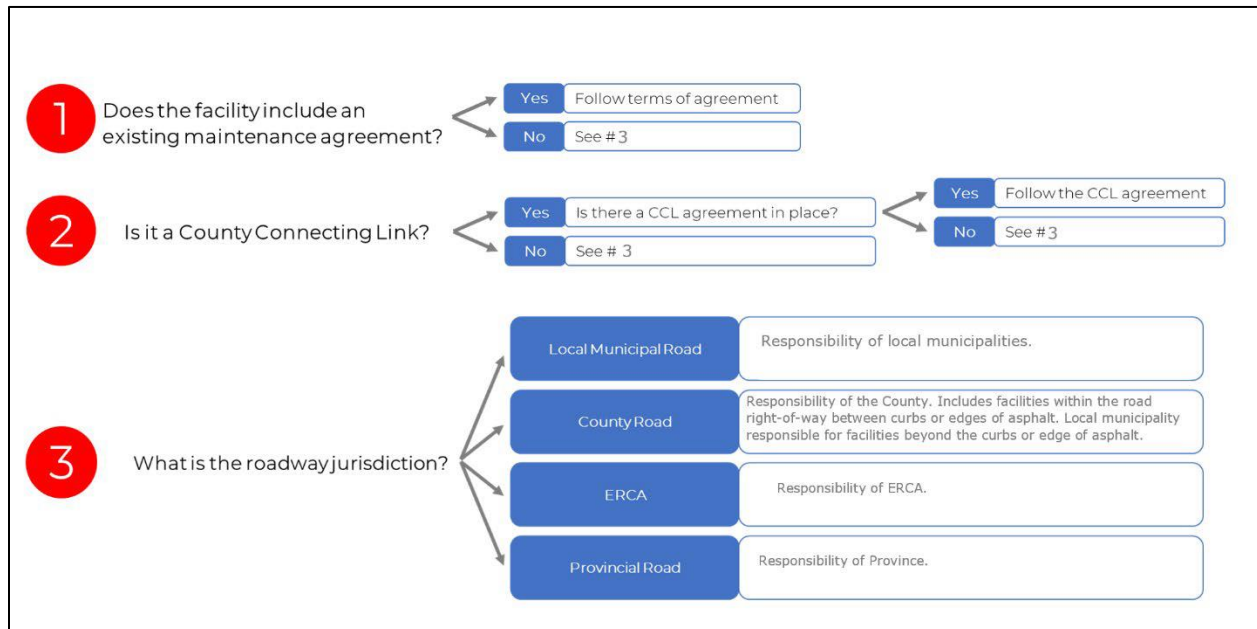
Plan provides guidance on establishing “who does what” with typical practices from other Ontario municipalities.

Senior Management recommends that responsibility for replacement should be determined.

County staff sent information on responsibility for maintenance including replacement to the municipal CWATS Committee Members, Directors of Engineering and Asset Managers.

Chapter 8 Maintenance and Operations is attached as Appendix C-11.

County staff proposed an approach to maintenance as shown on Figure 1.



**Figure 1**

The proposed approach was that the County take full responsibility for the day to day replacement for all active transportation infrastructure on a County Road between the curbs or edges of asphalt. The local municipality would be responsible for facilities beyond the curbs or edge of asphalt. The County has the equipment to maintain infrastructure between the curbs or edge of asphalt in a cost-effective manner. Local municipalities are better placed to deal with sidewalks, bike lanes and multi-use paths that are beyond the curbs.

Administration received responses from municipalities and worked through the comments with a view to coming to an agreement on the ownership, responsibility for day to day maintenance and responsibility for replacement.

Administration revised the proposal in consideration of the feedback. The revised proposal is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Infrastructure Responsibility Matrix**

Facility Type	Ownership	Day to Day Maintenance	Replacement Cost
On Street Bike Lanes / Paved Shoulder - on a County Road in a Rural Area	County	County	County
Multi Use Path/ Context Sensitive Solution - on a County Road in a Rural Area	County	Local Municipality	County
Separated Bike Lane - on a County Road in a Rural Area	County	Local Municipality	County
On Street Bike Lanes / Paved Shoulder - on a County Road in an Urban Area	County	County	County 40% Local Municipality 60 %
Multi Use Path/ Context Sensitive Solution - on a County Road in an Urban Area	County	Local Municipality	County 40% Local Municipality 60 %
Separated Bike Lane - on a County Road in an Urban Area	County	Local Municipality	County 40% Local Municipality 60 %
On Street Bike Lanes / Paved Shoulder / Multi-use Trail with or without separation/ Context Sensitive Solution - on a Local Road anywhere.	Local Municipality	Local Municipality	Local Municipality
Sidewalks - anywhere on the AT Network	Local Municipality	Local Municipality	Local Municipality
Multi-Use Trails - outside of County and/or Local Right-of-way	ERCA	ERCA	ERCA
Multi-Use Trails - outside of County and/or Local Right-of-way and owned by Municipality	Local Municipality	Local Municipality	Local Municipality

## **Next steps for the Master Plan Update**

The County has received the draft Master Plan document, which includes the proposed network with implementation strategy. The report has been reviewed by the CWATS Committee and presented to Municipal Councils.

County Administration continues to work with Administration from our Local Municipal Partners on agreement on Asset management. Asset management would include ownership and renewal/rehabilitation.

Administration will return to Council at a later date to adopt the CWATS Master Plan update, complete with an asset management plan.

## **Financial Implications**

### **Current Budget Year**

The approved 2023 CWATS budget is \$4,900,000 made up of \$2,800,000 for paved shoulders and \$2,100,000 for infrastructure including core infrastructure projects, municipal partnership program and monitoring and evaluation.

### **Future Budget Years**

The anticipated investment in new infrastructure to continue the Plan over the next twenty years, is broken down by municipality and is shown below in Table 3 using 2023 construction dollars.

**Table 3 – CWATS 20 Year Plan Cost Implementation Summary by Jurisdiction and Cost Share Arrangement**

Jurisdiction	County of Essex TOTAL	Local Municipal Total	Provincial Total	ERCA Total	TOTAL	% of Total Network
Amherstburg	\$9,864,330	\$5,302,499	\$0	\$0	\$15,166,829	10%
Essex	\$10,392,159	\$5,570,216	\$453,693	\$3,200	\$16,419,268	11%
Kingsville	\$10,915,211	\$3,297,276	\$0	\$0	\$14,212,487	10%
Lakeshore	\$20,607,432	\$8,664,109	\$0	\$10,795,465	\$40,067,006	28%
LaSalle	\$5,881,368	\$10,525,454	\$0	\$0	\$16,406,822	11%
Leamington	\$8,465,735	\$9,568,104	\$1,738,861	\$0	\$19,772,700	14%
Tecumseh	\$10,992,409	\$9,861,908	\$0	\$2,029,442	\$22,883,759	16%
<b>TOTAL-Network</b>	<b>\$77,118,644</b>	<b>\$52,789,566</b>	<b>\$2,192,554</b>	<b>\$12,828,107</b>	<b>\$144,928,871</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Notes:**

The ERCA levy will not contain any funding component that relates to the purchase of land or capital upgrades for those trails or bicycle lanes/paths identified in the CWATS report.

Local Municipal Shares of Segments along Common Municipal Boundaries have been included in Local Municipal Totals, where applicable.

Estimated Annual cost per year per Municipality is calculated by splitting the total municipal cost equally over 20 years.

Includes projects that are cost-shared based on the 2022 cost share arrangement (40% County of Essex and 60% local municipality). These cost sharing agreements have also been applied to the lengths.

**Table 4 Implementation by Phase**

Facility Type	Total (KM)	Total (\$)
Multi-Use Trail	63.9	\$20,180,938
Multi-Use Path	65.7	\$33,083,697
Separated Bike Lane	16.1	\$3,420,783
Cycle Track	2.3	\$1,251,729
Buffered Paved Shoulder	77.6	\$26,022,883
Paved Shoulder	215.6	\$58,357,206
Bike Lane	8.5	\$2,459,634
Signed Route	60.5	\$152,001
Total	510.2	\$144,928,871

**Notes:**

Includes projects that are cost-shared based on the 2022 cost share arrangement (40% County of Essex and 60% local municipality). These cost sharing agreements have also been applied to the lengths.

For segments along common municipal boundaries, it is assumed that 50% of the distance would be attributed to each of the local municipalities

## Consultations

Information presented in this report follows consultation with the CWATS Active Transportation Committee, and Allan Botham, Director, Infrastructure & Planning Services.

## Recommendation

That Essex County Council receive report 2023-1115-IPS-R23-JB 2023 CWATS Master Plan Update for information.

## Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jerry Behl*

Jerry Behl, P.Eng., Manager, Transportation Planning and Development

Concurred With,

*Allan Botham*

Allan Botham, P.Eng., Director, Infrastructure and Planning Services

Concurred With,

*Sandra Zwiers*

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

<b>Appendix Number</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix A	CWATS Council Presentation July 19, 2023
Appendix B	CWATS Master Plan Update - Executive Summary
Appendix C-1_C-13	CWATS Master Plan Update – Full Report