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STRATEGY #1: POLICY



Building upon the 2012 Master Plan and lessons learned to strengthen policy that can support, strengthen and help build-out CWATS.

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CHAPTER 5 | STRATEGY #1: POLICY

Policies form part of the basis from which long-term goals and aspirations are founded upon. Policies can take on the form of guidelines, laws and regulations which are typically adopted by a governing body such as the County and its local municipalities. Simply put, policies guide actions and future decision-making.

Policy is a critical component to the update of the CWATS Master Plan. The way in which active transportation is acknowledged and framed in policy documents can directly impact the implementation of CWATS beyond the lifespan of the master plan. Since completion of the 2012 plan, there have been a number of changes to policy at the Provincial, County and local municipal level including revisions to existing policies and adoption of new policies. Additionally, there have been many new funding announcements available to CWATS, including the federal government's million-dollar National Active Transportation Strategy. It is important to develop an understanding of policies at all levels of government and how policy changes can help to inform new and enhanced recommendations that better reflect the current and future needs of the County, its local municipalities and residents.

This chapter provides a summary of the successes from the 2012 plan, new policies that have been developed since this time and proposed policy recommendations to guide the County, its local municipalities and partners in moving forward with CWATS. The information contained in this chapter builds upon a detailed policy review that was completed to understand what has changed and been adopted since completion of the original 2012 plan.



5.1 SUCCESSES OF 2012 CWATS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2012 CWATS Master Plan included 48 supportive recommendations to guide future planning and decision-making to improve active transportation policy, infrastructure and programs in the County and its local municipalities. Since this time existing policies have been amended and a number of new policies have been established based on the recommendations contained in the 2012 plan.

The following section provides examples of some of the policy recommendations that have been adopted and implemented since the completion of the 2012 CWATS Master Plan. The examples below are intended to demonstrate how policies have had a significant impact and contributed towards the successes of CWATS since the completion of the original plan.

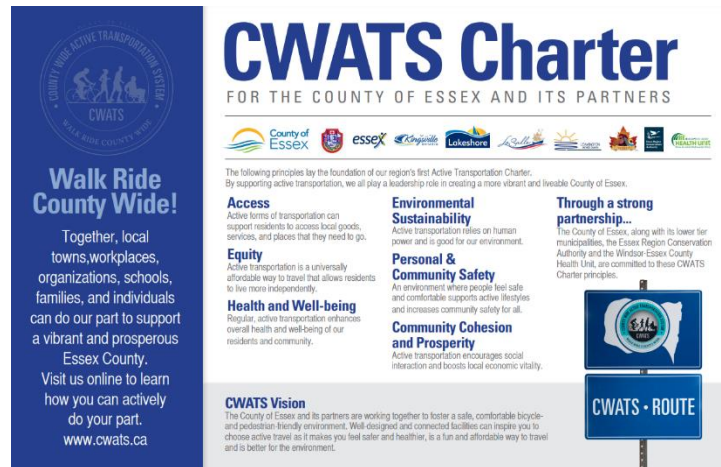


Figure 51: CWATS Charter
Source: County of Essex

CWATS CHARTER

Recommendation 7-20 in the 2012 CWATS Master Plan proposed the development of a pedestrian charter to promote and facilitate walkable and pedestrian friendly environments throughout the County and its local municipalities. The County, its local municipalities, ERCA and Windsor-Essex County Health Unit took this recommendation further and in 2015 adopted the **CWATS Charter**, which outlines **the commitment to active transportation, community building, safety and environmental sustainability**.

The adoption of recommendation 7-20 from the 2012 plan has helped guide and support the on-going implementation of CWATS including proposed active transportation infrastructure and programs. Over 556 kilometres of the CWATS network including on and off-road routes has been implemented to date. Since 2012, annual CWATS celebrations are undertaken across the County and its local municipalities, and numerous programs have been rolled out to educate, encourage and increase awareness of active transportation and CWATS.

AT

ORIENTED PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation 7-21 in the 2012 CWATS Master Plan proposed the development of high-density, mixed land uses, especially in close proximity to schools. An integrated approach to land use and transportation planning will help to decrease time spent travelling and increase the likelihood of walking and cycling to key destinations throughout the community.

The County updated its Official Plan in 2014 with support for new developments to include active transportation. Section 2.84 of the Official Plan states that “during the review of development applications, local municipalities will require the **integration of pedestrian and cycling linkages to commercial, transit, schools, trails, parks and municipal facilities, where feasible and appropriate.** In addition, the designs of new local roads shall have shorter block lengths that are generally less than 250 metres to encourage walking and cycling.”



SUSTAINABLE ENERGY POLICY

The County and its local municipalities developed a **Regional Community Energy Plan** which aims to **mitigate climate change, create economic efficiencies and improve energy performance.** The Plan strives to define community priorities around energy while exploring innovative and reliable energy systems contributing to the enhanced quality of life of residents and businesses.

The CWATS Master Plan will support the County’s goals for mitigating climate change through proposed policies, infrastructure and programs that promote human-powered transportation to reduce the carbon footprint in the County and its local municipalities.

Significant progress has been made in implementing various policy recommendations from the 2012 CWATS Master Plan. Building upon these successes, this plan will recommend new policies as well as modifications to recommendations identified in 2012 to support the on-going implementation of CWATS and to assist the County in achieving its vision and goals for active transportation. An overview of policies that have been developed since 2012 as well as key findings from these policies and how they were used to shape policy recommendations is provided in the following sections.

5.2 PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL POLICY CHANGES SINCE 2012

Since the completion of the 2012 CWATS Master Plan, a number of existing policies have been updated and new policies have been adopted at the Provincial, County and local municipal level. For example, a number of local municipalities within the County of Essex have developed and/or updated plans including Active Transportation Master Plans, Official Plans, Strategic Plans and Transportation Master Plans that support and provide direction on how to incorporate active transportation with land use and transportation planning in their respective municipalities.

A policy review was undertaken to better understand how these policies influence the planning, design, implementation and operations of active transportation within the County of Essex. Findings from this review provided context for proposed recommendations contained in this plan and insight on potential opportunities for future implementation, partnerships and funding of CWATS.

The section below provides an overview of the policies that have been updated or developed since 2012. A detailed summary of all policies reviewed is provided in **Technical Appendix B**.

PROVINCIAL POLICIES

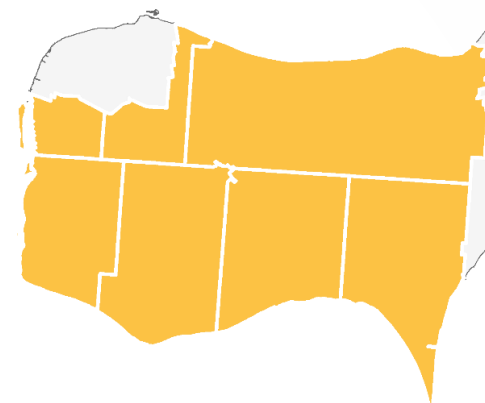


- Planning Act (2014)
- Provincial Policy Statement (2020)
- Municipal Act (2001)
- Ontario's Cycling Tourism Plan (2012)
- Accessibility for Ontarian with Disabilities Act (2005)

COUNTY POLICY



- County of Essex Official Plan (2014)
- Essex-Windsor Regional Transportation Master Plan (2005)
- Regional Transit Study (2011)
- Regional Community Energy Plan (2021)



LOCAL POLICY

Since 2012, all local municipalities within the County of Essex have updated and / or adopted new policies that support and provide direction on active transportation. Below is a summary of local policies that have been amended or developed since the completion of the 2012 plan.



TOWN OF LASALLE

- Official Plan (2018)
- Transportation Master Plan (2020)



TOWN OF TECUMSEH

- Official Plan (2015)
- Transportation Master Plan (2017)



MUNICIPALITY OF LAKESHORE

- Official Plan (Draft 2021)
- Transportation Master Plan (2008)



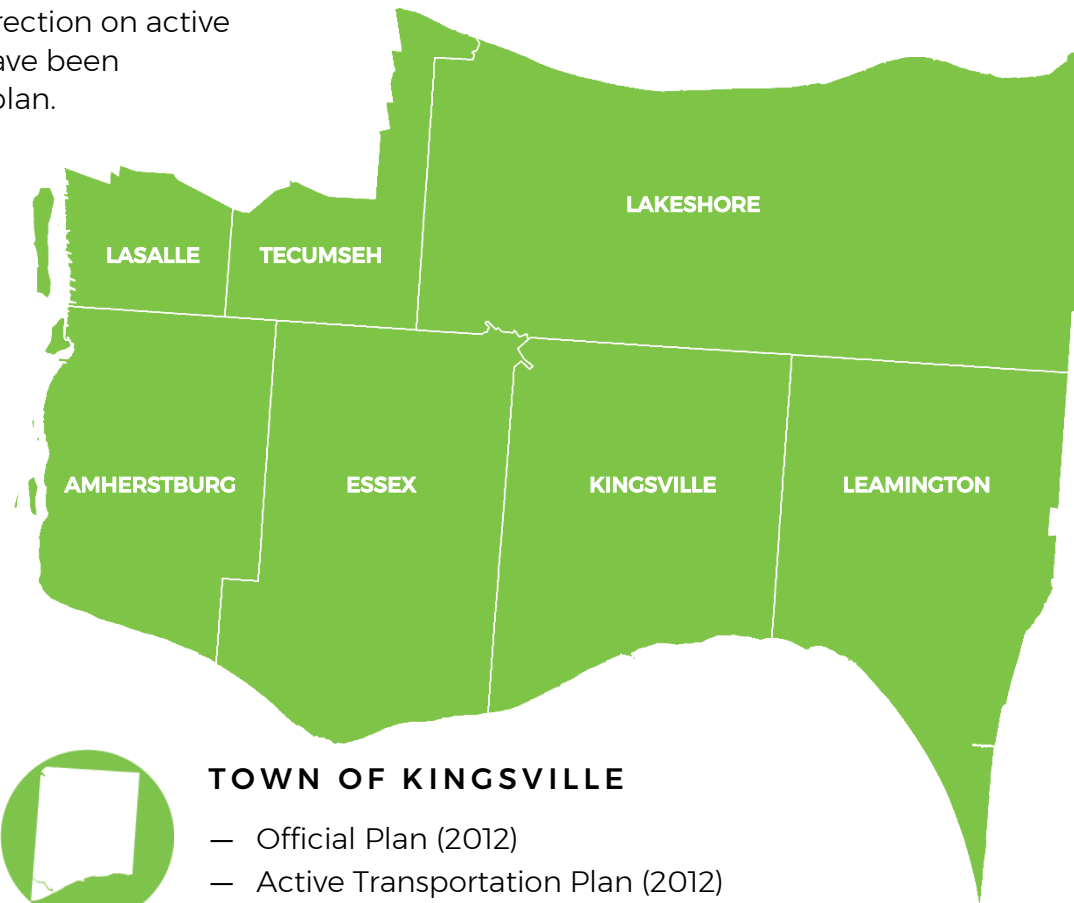
TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

- Official Plan (2009)



TOWN OF ESSEX

- Official Plan (amended 2017)



TOWN OF KINGSVILLE

- Official Plan (2012)
- Active Transportation Plan (2012)
- Transportation Master Plan (2022)



MUNICIPALITY OF LEAMINGTON

- Draft Official Plan (2021)
- Active Transportation Plan & Implementation Strategy (2016)

Table 2 outlines local municipal policies and plans that have embraced CWATS objectives.

Table 2: Comparison of Local Policies and CWATS Objectives

Municipal Plan / Policy	CWATS Objectives ¹				
	#1 Improve AT Conditions	#2 Coordination with the County	#3 Practical Implementation	#4 Encourage Use of AT	#5 Roles and Responsibilities
Town of LaSalle - Official Plan - Transportation Master Plan	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported
Town of Tecumseh - Official Plan - Transportation Master Plan	Supported	Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
Municipality of Lakeshore - Official Plan - Transportation Master Plan	Supported	Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
Town of Amherstburg - Official Plan	Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
Town of Essex - Official Plan	Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
Town of Kingsville - Official Plan - Active Transportation Plan - Transportation Master Plan	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported	Not Supported
Municipality of Leamington - Active Transportation Plan & Implementation Strategy	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported

Note:

1. Refer to Section 1.2 for a detailed description of all CWATS objectives.

 Objective is supported  Objective not supported

Nine key topics emerged from the review of existing local policies, which informed new and potential modifications to recommendations identified in the 2012 CWATS Master Plan. This process ensures the CWATS Master Plan remains consistent and strongly aligns with local themes and directives. A summary of the key policy topics is presented below.

- i. SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:** Sustainability is identified in several policies to address the environmental, economic and social needs (current and future), specifically as it relates to transportation. These policies note the importance of designing communities to support active lifestyle options.
- ii. ALL AGES AND ABILITIES:** Existing policies identify the need to provide a range of transportation options for people of all ages and abilities as a means to improve access, safety, comfort and equity for all users.
- iii. TRIP PURPOSE:** Existing policies identify the need to plan, design and implement an active transportation network that supports varying trip purposes including recreational trips and commuter / utilitarian trips.
- iv. SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE:** active transportation-supportive infrastructures, such as traffic calming measures, are identified in existing policies to help to encourage more people to engage in active forms of travel and enhance the overall experience for active transportation users.
- v. MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION:** Provisions for multi-modal transportation are identified in local policies to support objectives for sustainable modes of transportation and better integrate varying travel modes to get people to / from their origin and destination.
- vi. COMPLETE COMMUNITIES:** Complete communities are areas that enable people to live, work and play in the same area. An integrated approach towards land use and transportation planning is intended to enhance overall experience for pedestrians, cyclists and all other AT users and is referenced in many local level policies.
- vii. CONNECTIONS TO URBAN AREAS:** Active transportation routes, including on-road links and off-road trails, should facilitate travel within urban areas and provide opportunities to connect to the County-wide network.
- viii. PARTNERSHIPS & COORDINATION:** Developing partnerships and coordination with other municipalities, agencies and stakeholders is emphasized as essential to implementing and funding future active transportation initiatives.

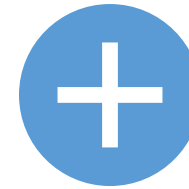
- ix. **COUNTY-WIDE CONNECTIVITY:** Achieving County-wide connectivity that help develop active transportation as a more viable option to motor vehicles and will support other policy objectives including multi-modal transportation, accommodating varying trip purposes and partnerships.

5.3 CWATS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A key component of updating the CWATS Master Plan policy included a review of previous policy related recommendations and developing new policies to help achieve the County's vision and objectives. **Table 3** outlines the proposed policy-related recommendations as part of this 2023 Update and previously proposed recommendations from the 2012 Plan that have been re-confirmed and are to be implemented as part of this update. Recommendations from the 2012 Plan that have been implemented and/or are on-going form part of this master plan. These recommendations should continue to be supported throughout the lifecycle of this update.








Previously recommended in the 2012 Plan (re-confirmed and to be implemented as part of the 2023 Update)



New recommendation in the 2023 Update

A full summary of the recommendations in this plan, including the previously proposed recommendations that have been implemented, is provided in **Technical Appendix A**.

Table 3: Summary of Policy Recommendations

-  **5.1** A comprehensive approach should be put in place by the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit / local municipalities to encourage students and employees to walk or cycle to school or work, and to combine these modes with transit (where available) for longer distance trips.
-  **5.2** Local municipalities should review their Development Charges (DC) By-Law and if it doesn't already exist, provide a line item that permits the use of DC funds for providing and improving active transportation facilities.
-  **5.3** The County should explore the development of a County Development Charges By-law in order to allocate funds towards the development, improvement and maintenance of active transportation facilities. A County Development Charge By-Law could be used to secure funding along County roads where a CWATS route is currently proposed and development is planned along the corridor. Should the recommendation be formally adopted by County Council, it is recommended that a background study be completed first to investigate the feasibility of the by-law.
-  **5.4** Provisions should be given to enhance the “first and last mile” connections of a trip that are typically made on foot to access other travel modes such as transit.
-  **5.5** The implementation of active transportation infrastructure including on and off-road routes should be included as part of development proposals and the park development process for new development areas.

5.4 NEXT STEPS FOR POLICY

Though existing policies address improvements for active transportation, it is recommended that the County and its partners seek opportunities to strengthen provisions which influence the way in which active transportation is planned, designed, implemented and operated. The recommendations contained in this chapter are meant to be incorporated into other planning documents when they are next updated, to support on-going implementation of the CWATS Update.

The following is a list of next steps which should be considered by the County and its partners to advance the proposed policy recommendations:

1. The County of Essex and the CWATS Committee should **review and confirm the proposed policy recommendations** identified in **Table 3** in **Section 5.3** for the CWATS Master Plan Update.
2. **Create a database of existing County and local policies** that contain recommendations related specifically to active transportation. The database should be developed collectively with County staff, local municipal staff and other partners involved in the implementation of the CWATS Update.
3. Using the database of existing policies, County staff should work with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit to **track upcoming policies that are anticipated to be updated** to help manage available resources e.g. staff to be engaged in the study process.
4. **Undertake policy reviews** when plans are being updated to ensure active transportation is addressed and supports the CWATS vision and objectives.

The information and recommendations contained in this chapter are intended to demonstrate the importance of policy to guide future decision-making related to the proposed CWATS network (**Chapter 6**) and programs (**Chapter 7**). It is recommended that the County and its partners review and consider the policy recommendations outlined in **Table 3** to support the on-going implementation of the CWATS Master Plan.