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Shelburne Council approves pilot project to install bicycle lanes on three town streets

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Shelburne Council spent a considerable amount of time on Monday evening discussing how to go about implementing a bicycle lane system in the community.

Director of Operations and Development, Jim Moss presented his report on bicycle lanes in Shelburne and where and how they could be installed. Jim noted that jointly administrated roads, such as Provincial and County roads, present numerous problems for bike lanes, such as traffic and approvals, however the town has numerous collector roads which have adequate space for cyclists.

The building of dedicated bike lanes is a costly and potentially disruptive process, but Jim suggested that Council could take a page from the Town of Orangeville's book and institute a Share the Road program.

Although this does not provide actual bike lanes, it does mark the affected roads with signage and road markings, alerting drivers to the fact that they must share the road with cyclists.

One of the advantages of cycling routes is the potential to reduce traffic around town, while also the connecting various trail systems with roadways, thus allowing better access to the trails. To this end, Mr. Moss was proposing a pilot project on three streets in town, Fiddle Park Lane, Greenwood St. and Simon St. These streets would improve connectivity to the trails as well as being a relatively safe place to start a Share the Road plan.

The cost would be very minimal, approximately $1,500 for all the signage and the road painting, and could be completed during the Spring repainting schedule .

While Staff were evaluating the success of the pilot program, Jim indicated that further study would be ongoing and that cycling would become part of a future Master Transportation Plan. This plan would delve into all facets of bike lanes, including the construction and costs thereof, on larger traffic volume roadways, separation solutions and feasibility of all projects.

As the construction costs would be substantial , this would require their addition to future budget considerations by Council.

Coun. Kyle Fegen asked about what the road markings would be made from, as he had heard that those in Orangeville were a laminate which became very slippery when wet. Jim Moss replied that Shelburne would be using approved roadway paint, just the same as lane markings.

Councillor Walter Benotto wondered how Toronto accomplished this, with their much higher traffic volumes and greater number of cyclists. He also questioned removing on-street parking to provide a potential source of bike lane space. All of these issues, would be a part of the further study plans.

CAO Denyse Morrissey noted that an interim solution was an excellent first step and would allow staff to collect valuable data to implement a permanent solution. Council voted to adopt the report and to implement the interim approach outlined in it, for the three streets mentioned. So although not actual bike lanes, yet, Shelburne has taken the first steps towards a greener transportation strategy in the future.