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File No.
Planner:

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FROM:	JOHN M. FLEMING DIRECTOR, LAND USE PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER
SUBJECT:	BMX BICYCLE SPORTS STRATEGY MEETING ON FEBRUARY 6, 2012

RECOMMENDATION

That on the recommendation of the Director of Land Use Planning with the concurrence of the Director of Neighbourhood and Children Services and the Director Parks and Recreation:

- a) This report **BE RECEIVED** as background to the issues of unauthorized BMX bicycle riding in the City's Environmentally Significant Areas, Parks and Open Space Network, **and**;
- b) Staff **BE DIRECTED** to develop a BMX Bicycle Sports Strategy to address the demonstrated recreational need and the issues of environmental degradation by BMX cycling.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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None

BACKGROUND

The City of London is witnessing a growing demand for unstructured self-scheduled recreation activities, including off-road mountain biking (Trail Cross Country, Trail-Downhill, Freestyle skills /trails, Freestyle/Urban and BMX riding (urban riding, Dirt Jumping and Racing-Tracks, Racing - Pumps), see Appendix A. BMX riding has been formalized with its inclusion in the Olympic and Pan American Games. It is also easily accommodated in a variety of terrains and is popular across a wide range of users. The Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan, 2009, identified the need for the development of a BMX Park to begin to address this recreation need.

Due to the current lack of City BMX facilities, many informal or "rogue" facilities are being built in the City's parks, Open Space Network and ESAs. These unauthorized or "rogue" features are often poorly constructed and/or conflict with other park users and raise concerns for public safety, liability and environmental integrity of sites.

The environmental impacts from intense BMX use include soil compaction; increased surface runoff, sedimentation of water courses, loss of native vegetation, establishment of non-native plants, fragmentation of habitat, and disturbance of wildlife.

On an annual basis, Parks Operations and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority spend approximately \$20,000.00 and \$10,000.00, respectively, removing unauthorized BMX bike facilities and remediating damaged sites.

Past attempts to remove these facilities without providing alternative authorized areas have only displaced the construction of such facilities to other unauthorized locations. City facilities should be provided to capture this increasingly popular recreational activity in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner.

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While planning for mountain bike trail riding, it was demonstrated that by providing approved facilities, negative impacts to natural areas was much improved. Prior to the introduction of mountain biking at Fanshawe Lake Conservation Area, the UTRCA spent over \$15,000.00 in Bylaw enforcement re bike trail riding in ESAs. Pay for use trails provided in the Conservation Area have greatly reduced bike trail riding in unauthorized areas.

STRATEGY TO ADDRESS

A city-wide BMX Bicycle Sports Strategy is needed to balance environmental protection while providing for sustainable BMX recreational use. A planned approach to the provision of BMX opportunities would address a number of management issues including: increased user safety; decreased liability; enhanced by-law enforcement; reduced operational costs, and minimized disturbance to the natural environment.

A BMX Bicycle Sports Strategy would:

- Define the needs of London's BMX Community,
- Research best practices in other communities,
- Establish levels of service delivery,
- Define site selection criteria,
- Provide a comprehensive operational plan,
- Suggest layout guidelines,
- Identify stewardship and partnership opportunities, and
- Frame the costs for development and maintenance

CONCLUSION

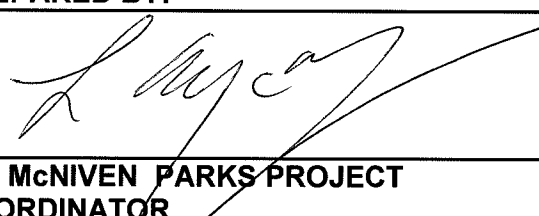
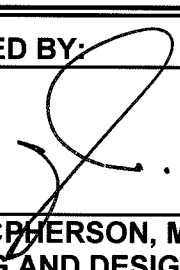



Staff in the Planning Division and in the Community and Neighbourhood Service Division are ready to move forward with the development of a BMX Bicycle Sports Strategy to accommodate the sport of BMX cycling. The strategy will allow for the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan recommendation for the development of a BMX Dirt-Jumping Park to protect our Environmentally Significant Areas.

The Parks Planning and Design Section recommend that staff be directed to proceed with the development of a strategy and to present back to committee later this year.

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This report was prepared by Parks Planning and Design with the assistance of Neighbourhood and Children's Services, Park Operations, and the Upper Thames Conservation Authority.

PREPARED BY:	SUBMITTED BY:
	
L.J. McNIVEN PARKS PROJECT COORDINATOR	A. W. MACPHERSON, MANAGER - PARKS PLANNING AND DESIGN
RECOMMENDED BY:	CONCURRED BY:
	
J. FLEMING, DIRECTOR OF LANDUSE PLANNING	L. LIVINGSTONE, DIRECTOR - NEIGHBOURHOOD AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CONCURRED BY:	
	
B. COXHEAD, DIRECTOR - PARKS AND RECREATION	

LM/lm

Friday, January 20, 2012








Appendix A – Bike Recreation Trends.

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APPENDIX A – Bike Recreation Sports

	<p>BMX-Dirt Jumping Performed on trails or in specially designated parks consisting of a variety of jumps from which riders perform stunts. Less terrain-dependant and hence available in a wider range of landscapes.</p>
	<p>BMX- Racing - Pumps A pumps course typically consist of combination of jumps placed close together on a track to force riders to pump, manual or jump smoothly through the section.</p>
	<p>BMX- Racing - Tracks Track racing consists of riders competing on a 350 meter dirt track consisting of a variety of dirt jumps, banked corners and rhythm sections. Formalized sport venue. Sites for organized events would require a formal agreement for use with organizations.</p>
	<p>Trail – Cross Country Focus is on distance covered; requires substantial trail lengths and variable terrain, although loop trails are common in urban and rural areas. Currently, trail-riding is not permitted under the Parks Bylaw. Fanshawe Lake Conservation Area is an existing site with payment required for day use.</p>
	<p>Trail – Downhill Pursuit is to ride down steep and technical gradients as fast as possible. Currently, trail-riding is not permitted under the Parks Bylaw. Boler Mountain is a recommended site.</p>
	<p>Freestyle – Skills/Trails Maneuvering the bike by hopping, riding or jumping on natural or man-made obstacles. Skills parks are easy to develop in small spaces, and embrace a variety of skill levels and bike types.</p>
	<p>Freestyle- Skills/Urban Acrobatics in concrete urban areas, urban furnishings and structures are used to perform various stunts. These amenities can be easily integrated with skate parks or the urban environment. Growing among urban riders who do not have access to open spaces and variable terrain but is limited by the need for specialized equipment and a relatively high level of skill. Skateboard Parks provide a suitable substitute in London</p>