

Hit the trails for inaugural Bike Aurora Day

By Brock Weir

Whether you're looking for a little peace and solitude to clear your mind, an opportunity to get a bit closer to nature, or a chance to hit the road less travelled, Aurora's trails system offers something for everyone.

But this Saturday, however, is your chance to put on your helmet, hop on your bike and explore everything Aurora's trails have to offer, all alongside like-minded individuals, at the inaugural Bike Aurora Day.

A brainchild of the Town's Trails & Active Transportation Committee, Bike Aurora Day is a chance to meet up in local parks ? Ada Johnson Park, Copland Park, and Evans Park ? and hit the trails network with fellow cyclists all keen on exploring the system and getting a bit of exercise.

Bike Aurora Day will also offer free bike clinics at the Aurora Seniors' Centre, demonstrations of e-bikes, prizes, and more, for cyclists of all ages.

?This event is a celebration of Aurora's trails, cycling and bringing more awareness to the trails system of this amazing Town,? says Committee member Laura Lueloff. ?Bike Aurora is also timed to join other municipalities participating in the Province's Bike Month which will run until the end of June. We're inviting cyclists of all ages and experience to come out and ride the scenic trails of Aurora together and meet at the end of their rides in the parking lot of the Seniors' Centre where they will have a comprehensive hub of activity.

?Participants will be able to have their bikes checked by bike experts through bike shops that we have organized to participate as well. Activate Aurora will be there and participants can take part in the Activate Aurora challenge, try out the latest in e-bikes, helmets and equipment, and enjoy some giveaways from our sponsors. There will also be a barbeque available at a nominal fee through the Optimist Club.?

Bike Aurora was formally launched at last week's Council meeting. Ms. Lueloff was joined at the podium by fellow Committee member Richard Doust who thanked Council for their support ? particularly Councillors Sandra Humfries and Tom Mrakas ? and Town Staff in getting their vision for Bike Aurora Day off the ground.

?Bike Aurora is a testament to the fact that trails and active transportation are a natural fit for Aurorans,? said Mr. Doust. ?Looking ahead, we believe that active transportation on our trails can play a large role in meeting Aurora's goal of being the fittest Canadian Community by 2020.?

In a column written for The Auroran earlier this month, Mr. Doust said trails ?invite action,? a benefit well-known to Aurora residents who continually name the trails system as one of the Town's biggest selling features.

?When I first took this up in Toronto I lived where there were limited off-road trails,? he wrote. ?No more. I have enjoyed every kilometre of the network in Aurora. Every trail has its own identity, and it pays to stop and pay attention when the unexpected happens. There was that pileated woodpecker just a few trees away, having lunch; or that broad-winged hawk you saw snacking on, well, something. Or the Northern Oriole resting, a show-stopper in living colour.

?Biking is a celebration of motion and balance, of instinct and planning, of the spontaneous and the deliberate. The bike is an extension of the body, and of the mind. It is part of us. In fact, we can almost forget it is there when we coast down a hill. When we go along a trail there's a sense of pioneering, of a courier de bois on wheels, that is, I think, exhilarating. Bottom line: we need our trails. And our trails need us.?

Bike Aurora day received the broad support of Council last week with some members pledging their commitment to put the pedal to the proverbial metal ? well, as much as they could, anyway.

?You have done exceptional work in putting this bike event together,? said Councillor Mrakas. ?I am looking forward to it. I will try and make it out, but I can't guarantee it because I don't really ride a bike very well, but I will try to be out there and supportive! I know this will be the first of what I expect to be an annual event and it can only get better with the strength behind the committee as well.?