



## **Statement by the Share the Road Cycling Coalition on the Release of the Ontario Cycling Strategy**

### **Ontario's New Cycling Strategy Creates Framework for the Future**

The Share the Road Cycling Coalition helped launch #CycleON, Ontario's Cycling Strategy in Toronto on August 30th with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and long-time partner the Canadian Automobile Association.

As Ontario's cycling advocacy and policy organization, the Coalition spearheaded the renewal of the Ontario Cycling Strategy, and this past summer participated in the Cycling Strategy Working Group formed by Minister of Transportation Glen Murray to provide advice and direction on its development.

"When our organization was in its infancy in 2008, we met with provincial officials and discerned that there had not been an update to the Ontario Bicycle Policy since 1992. Clearly, this needed to change. Ontario, unlike BC and Quebec had no policy for managing government resources, no mechanism for providing direction and a coherent vision for our province - no articulation of the broad-based benefits of cycling and no road map to harness those benefits. There was no plan for funding and no plan to improve the safety of our roads and pathways in order to protect the lives of current cyclists and enhance the lives of those who are not riding today. The message was clear -- we needed to get to work on a new bicycle policy for Ontario," said Eleanor McMahon CEO and Founder, Share the Road Cycling Coalition.

"Our first Ontario Bike Summit in 2009 provided the framework for our work to make the case for a new Ontario Cycling Policy. Defining a role for our provincial government and creating an overarching, integrated vision for our province were job one. In 2010 further to significant consultations, we published our Green Paper on Bicycling in Ontario: When Ontario Bikes, Ontario Benefits, which outlined a role for the province in the evolving cycling landscape, and provided the government -- and all stakeholders in Ontario -- with an evidenced-based framework for investment," McMahon noted.

"Our goal was a bicycling strategy that provided a vision and a roadmap for the province in the years to come. Finally, we wanted a strategy that committed the government to action in priority areas: infrastructure funding, legislative updates -- a modernized Highway Traffic Act, and education and awareness programs, all of which are outlined in our research and recommended in the 2012 Coroner's Review of Cycling Deaths in Ontario," McMahon noted.

"In our view, this Strategy meets those goals and objectives, and it is a critical step forward for all agencies in government as a stated commitment to cycling -- and to cyclists -- in Ontario," McMahon added.

As outlined in the strategy document, #CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy, will be implemented through ongoing, multi-year action plans.

"At its core, the Strategy provides for action plans to actualize the Vision and Strategic Directions articulated in the document. We look forward to the release of the first of these Action Plans in the next few months, and to working with the Minister and our partners to develop these plans. We also look forward to the opportunity to deliver on a key strategic directions captured in the Strategy in the Ontario Legislature -- including legislation that will modernize the Highway Traffic Act and the possibility of infrastructure funding for municipalities," McMahon added. "In particular we look forward to working with the Co-Chairs of our All Party Bike Caucus: MPPs Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence), Catherine Fife (Kitchener-Waterloo) and Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka). Their leadership and support for cycling will be critical in moving the cycling agenda forward in Ontario and ensuring that in a minority Parliament, cycling enjoys the support and commitment of all parties in the legislature," she noted.

A 20-year plan, #CycleON outlines actions to increase cycling across Ontario. The strategy's vision is that cycling in Ontario is recognized, respected and valued as a core mode of transportation that provides individuals and communities with health, economic, environmental, social and other benefits. It commits to action in the following areas:

- Design healthy, active and prosperous communities
- Improve cycling infrastructure
- Make highways and streets safer
- Promote cycling awareness and behavioural shifts
- Increase cycling tourism in Ontario

"We look forward to continuing our work on the Ontario Cycling Strategy with the Minister and government officials, the Chairs of the All Party Cycling Caucus, municipal politicians and officials, and our cycling partners and stakeholder colleagues across Ontario. The development of the Strategy, an initiative that was 5 years in the making, was a critical step in the process. Now the real work begins -- ensuring that we achieve the vision which the Strategy outlines, a vision that will see Ontario as the most bicycle friendly province in our country. Working together we can achieve that bold vision. This is something that the people of Ontario have clearly demonstrated that they want -- and it is a vision whose time has come. Share the Road has been and will remain one of the key partners working with the Ministry to ensure that #CycleON is implemented," McMahon added.