



**BICYCLE FRIENDLY
COMMUNITY**



Canada's Capital City Wins Bicycle Friendly Gold – Share the Road Cycling Coalition Announces Honour at Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference

Ottawa receives Ontario's first Gold Bicycle Friendly Community Award

(Ottawa, Ontario – August 20, 2012) – The City of Ottawa today received Ontario's first ever Gold Bicycle Friendly Community Award from the Share the Road Cycling Coalition (The Coalition) at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference.

The annual AMO conference is a gathering of Ontario's municipal leaders and staff from 444 member municipalities.

"We are very honoured to be receiving this award and title," said Mayor Jim Watson. "Our commitment will remain strong and we will be moving forward to make our city even more cycling friendly in the years to come."

"The Bicycle Friendly Communities Award judging panel chose to recognize Ottawa with a Gold award for its year over year commitment to cycling -- a commitment that includes funding for infrastructure, a network of on and off-road bike lanes that connect people to places they want and need to go, thoughtfully integrated transportation plans and innovative approaches to improving cyclist safety and convenience," said Eleanor McMahon, CEO and Founder of the Share the Road Cycling Coalition. The Coalition manages the provincial program which currently has honoured 22 cities with the designation, representing 53 per cent of the population of Ontario.

"Ottawa's commitment to bicycling is clear. It starts with a great plan that prioritizes bicycling as a mode of transportation for the thousands of citizens in Ottawa who ride their bicycles daily for transportation and or recreation. Beyond that, political support for cycling is key and the Mayor and Council have made -- and continue to make - decisions that prioritize the safety and well-being of citizens who cycle -- in a way that encourages new people to consider biking. And finally in support of that, leadership in terms of investment. By the end of 2014, Ottawa will have invested over a seven year period, over \$27 million in cycling initiatives, \$18 M of that between 2012-2014. The entire municipality benefits from that investment in terms of strengthened community cohesion, cleaner air, less congestion -- and a community that has a strong network of cycling facilities further connecting citizens to transit," McMahon noted. "We are very proud to present the first Gold in the Bicycle Friendly Community program to the City of Ottawa in recognition of their commitment to make cycling a real transportation and recreation option for all," added McMahon.



The Coalition brought the Bicycle Friendly Communities Program to Ontario in 2010 in partnership with the Washington-based League of American Bicyclists, the largest cycling advocacy organization in the U.S. and with the support of the Trek Bicycle Corporation. The League runs the U.S.-based program where there are over 500 designated municipalities. Central to the program's premise is continued improvement, and an opportunity to share best practices between municipalities.

Cities are judged on their progress in categories known as the 5 "Es": Engineering, Environment, Enforcement, Education, Evaluation and Planning. The program provides a roadmap, hands-on assistance and recognition for municipalities to make bicycling a real transportation and recreation option for all people. A community must demonstrate achievements in each of the five categories in order to be considered for an award. Communities with more significant achievements in these areas receive superior awards. The Award categories are: Honourable Mention, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

"The rise in Bicycle Friendly Communities is indicative of the burgeoning popularity of cycling in Ontario, and indeed North America," McMahon noted. "Our latest poll of Ontarians in May 2013 revealed that 600,000 cyclists are cycling daily, while the percentage of those bicycling at least monthly has risen by nearly 30 per cent, from 28.2 per cent in 2012 to 36 per cent in 2013," McMahon said.

The survey also showed that a majority of Ontarians – 68 per cent -- would prefer to cycle more often and that an impressive 70 per cent of Ontarians believe that cyclists need more bike lanes or paved shoulders. Seventy-eight per cent, believed that more people would cycle if there was more and better cycling infrastructure.

The poll was conducted by Strategic Communications Inc. of Toronto with a representative sample of 1523 adult Ontario residents over the period of May 14 to 17th, 2013.

"Bicycling is daily transit for a growing number of Ontarians, and the positive response to the Bicycle Friendly Communities Program both here at AMO and through our work in communities across the province is evidence of that. We are delighted with the growth of the program as it demonstrates both the growing numbers of Ontarians cycling -- and the appetite in the municipal sector for information on best practices," McMahon noted.

This round of Bicycle Friendly Community applicants also include the Town of Caledon and the City of Brampton who both received Honorable Mentions and the City of Markham which retains its Bronze Bicycle Friendly Community status. "We look forward to working with all of these communities on their journey to enhance the opportunities for their citizens to bicycle more often," McMahon said.



About the Share the Road Cycling Coalition

The Share the Road Cycling Coalition is a provincial cycling advocacy and policy organization created to unite cycling organizations from across Ontario, work with and on behalf of municipalities to enhance their ability to make their communities more bicycle-friendly and advocate for an enhanced provincial role. Core to the organization's mission and mandate are safety, education and awareness campaigns.

Since its inception, the Coalition has focused on outreach work across Ontario and has built partnerships with active transportation stakeholders notably: cycling advocates, local cycling clubs, municipal advisory groups, municipal and provincial leaders and officials, law enforcement, planners, public health professionals, and funders.

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