



Cycling advocates across Ontario want post-June 12 government to support active communities and reintroduce cycling measures

Ontario Cycling Advocacy Network members call on MPP candidates across the province to join Ontarians in signing the "Active Communities Pledge"

(TORONTO – May 22, 2014) – Bicycling stakeholders across Ontario, including members of the Ontario Cycling Advocacy Network (Ontario CAN) are calling on nominated candidates in Ontario's 107 ridings to publicly demonstrate their commitment to supporting active communities before election day, June 12.

Share the Road launched today the Active Communities Pledge website www.activecommunitiespledge.ca which houses the pledge for candidates and individual Ontarians to sign as a mechanism for highlighting the growing support for cycling in communities across Ontario. Signing the pledge also demonstrates the important contribution that bike and walk friendly communities make to the health and well-being of Ontarians - as well as the economic vitality of their communities.

"There is broad-based and growing support for cycling and other active transportation investments from citizens province-wide. There is also excellent support from all parties in the legislature, and the Green Party as well. This election provides an important opportunity for all candidates in the election to publicly support the important contributions cycling can make to enhancing our environment, lowering health care costs, and enhancing economic development through bicycle travel and tourism," said Judith Hull, Chair of the Board of the Share the Road Cycling Coalition.

"We are at a critical juncture in Ontario when it comes to investing in cycling infrastructure, improving education, positioning Ontario in a growing bicycling tourism market and giving Ontarians the opportunity to cycle and walk to where they want to go safely. Our polling data has demonstrated that Ontarians value transportation choices, and increasingly that means riding their bicycle as their primary mode of transportation on a daily basis," Hull noted.

The Ontario CAN was established by the Share the Road Cycling Coalition -- Ontario's bicycling advocacy and policy organization -- in 2012 as a mechanism for advancing the bicycling agenda in communities across the province. In partnership with and supported by Share the Road, stakeholders meet with local and provincial politicians on a regular basis to brief them on issues and developments of interest and concern in their communities and at Queen's Park.

The Active Communities Pledge to give nominated candidates an opportunity to indicate if they will:

- Promote active transportation, including bicycling and walking, in their riding;
- Support the diversion of \$25 million of the annual Ontario transportation budget toward community bicycling infrastructure;

- Support municipalities in their constituency applying for Municipal Cycling Infrastructure funding and encourage them to apply for a Bicycle-Friendly Community designation through Share the Road as a means of improving their overall approach to bicycling
- Support and contribute to the implementation of the multi-stakeholder developed Ontario Cycling Strategy #CycleON, that encourages infrastructure investment, enhances safety, drives tourism, provides economic spinoffs and promotes overall health in the province;
- Support the multi-stakeholder developed amendments to the Highway Traffic Act that include a one-metre passing law, increased fines for “dooring”, the ability for Ontarians to cycle on paved shoulders and allowing municipalities to install contraflow bike lanes;
- Continue to implement the Ontario Coroner’s 14 recommendations laid out in the Cycling Death Review to make our roads safer;
- Support Active and Safe Routes to School programs in Ontario’s communities, enhancing safety and daily physical activity opportunities for children

All Ontarians are also invited to take the pledge as a way of demonstrating their support for healthy, safe, active, connected communities.

“We know that Ontarians support investments in bicycling and other active transportation measures thanks to our annual polling data,” said Hull. “We also know that citizens are more likely to vote for a candidate if they support such measures. In fact, in 2013, 42 per cent of Ontarians indicated that they were more likely to vote for a local or provincial political candidate if they make a strong public commitment to fund new cycling infrastructure such as separated bike lanes paved shoulders and bike only traffic signals.”

"We would encourage all candidates for the 2014 election to sign the pledge, and join us -- and their constituents -- in our efforts to make Ontario more bicycle friendly," Hull added.

The 2013 poll also found that 71 per cent of Torontonians agree that walking and cycling infrastructure should be included in Metrolinx’s \$30 billion Big Move; 66.9 per cent of all Ontarians share this view.

Data compiled through a 2014 poll conducted by Strategic Communications Inc., of Toronto found that support for walking and cycling infrastructure and education is widespread. The data below is based on representative sample of 1007 adult Ontario residents over the period of April 3 -7, 2014.

- Close to half (45 per cent) favour a greater variety of transportation choices and opportunities for getting to work and school and half (50 per cent) would like more choice for shopping and errands.
- 68 per cent agree that transportation costs are a major financial burden and that if someone’s only or best way to get to work or to go shopping is a bike, they should have the option to ride a bike and to ride it safely
- More bike lanes and trails (68 per cent) and better infrastructure (67 per cent) are key measures to encourage more frequent cycling, especially in Toronto and among people aged 18-34 years of age.
- A majority (53 per cent) would be more likely to ride more often if there was a one meter law (62 per cent) in Toronto and (61 per cent) for those 18-34 years of age.

It is also clear that there is strong support for action from the provincial government on cycling and that there is strong support for bicycle tourism:

- 56 per cent believe that the provincial government should provide tax breaks to employers who build cycling facilities for their employees
- 62 per cent agree that a portion of road spending should be earmarked to meet the needs of cyclists who also use Ontario's roads
- 68 per cent would like to see increased investment in infrastructure so more people can ride a bike more often
- 60 per cent would like to see the government invest in a new cycling education program
- 70 per cent of respondents think that walking and cycling infrastructure should be included in Ontario's long-term plan to invest \$50 billion to improve transportation
- 55 per cent agree that investment in the Pan Am Games should include more bike lanes and paths and serve as a permanent "legacy" or public benefit resulting from the games.
- 70 per cent of respondents agree that Ontario should do more to promote cycling tourism
- 61 per cent agree that Ontario should provide more financial support to municipal and regional bike tourism initiatives

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About the Share the Road Cycling Coalition

The Share the Road Cycling Coalition is Ontario's cycling advocacy and policy organization created to unite cycling organizations from across the province, 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.

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