



## Share the Road Announces Bicycle Friendly Community Awards

Five Ontario Communities Receive Awards at Annual Ontario Bike Summit

**Toronto, Ontario – April 1, 2015** – The Share the Road Cycling Coalition (Share the Road) announced last night the latest Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) awards for Ontario.

The following communities were awarded Bicycle Friendly status: **Newmarket – Bronze (new in 2015), Thunder Bay – Bronze (new in 2015), Blue Mountains – Silver (moved up from Bronze), Peterborough – Silver (moved up from Bronze) and Toronto – Gold (moved up from Silver)**. Honourable Mentions were given to Barrie, Cobourg, Cambridge and Ingersoll.

"Share the Road is proud to recognize municipalities that are choosing to invest in cycling," said Jamie Stuckless, Executive Director of Share the Road. "We know from our research that 54% of Ontarians want to cycle more. This is a call to action being answered in bicycle friendly communities. We congratulate them on their progress and look forward to working with staff and community stakeholders to continue building safe, healthy and connected communities."

The BFC program is now in its fifth year in Ontario and 28 communities have been designated as bicycle friendly. The program continues to grow and this year the designation was given to a Northern Ontario community for the first time. "The work being done in Thunder Bay to encourage cycling is remarkable and they are emerging as a leader in the North when it comes to active transportation" noted Stuckless.

Awarding the first BFC designation in Northern Ontario is not the only milestone for the program in 2015. "This year, we are delighted to announce our second Gold-level municipality [after Ottawa in 2013]. Toronto has moved up to Gold because of the City's investments in cycling infrastructure, significant growth in cycling in the city core, robust data collection efforts as well as Cycle Toronto's program initiatives and the partnerships both the City and Cycle Toronto have developed with community groups and the cycling community working to encourage cycling" said Stuckless.

"The Bicycle Friendly Community Awards celebrate the investments made by municipalities as well as partnerships with the community," said Stuckless. "The communities that are receiving awards today benefit from the investments and programs underway at the municipal level as well as from the complimentary efforts of community stakeholders and cycling advocates. Notable examples include the successful education program delivered in Peterborough by BIKE Peterborough and GreenUP and the work of Cycle Toronto to make the *Toronto Cycling Guide* available in 17 languages."

Stuckless also noted that there are some clear gaps to be addressed before any Ontario municipalities will be recognized as Platinum or Diamond: "We regularly see municipalities struggling with investments in infrastructure and in delivering comprehensive cycling skills training for their residents. These are clearly priority areas for Ontarians with 68% of residents supporting increased funding for cycling infrastructure and 60% in support of the province investing in cycling skills training. The province's #CycleON Strategy is aimed at a number of initiatives including helping municipalities address both infrastructure funding and cycling skills training. Share the Road is looking forward to seeing the progress made on these files and positive community impacts over the next year."

## About the Bicycle Friendly Community Awards and Share the Road

The Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFC) Program, an initiative of the Washington, DC-based League of American Bicyclists, was launched in Ontario in 2010 by Share the Road. The program provides incentives, hands-on assistance and award-recognition for communities that actively support bicycling. Municipalities are judged in five categories often referred to as the Five “E’s” of being bicycle friendly: Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement and Evaluation & Planning. A community must demonstrate achievements in each of the five categories in order to be considered for an award. **The Award categories are: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond.**

Share the Road is a provincial non-profit organization working to build a bicycle friendly Ontario. We work in partnership with municipal, provincial and federal governments, the business community, road safety organizations and other non-profits to:

- Enhance access for bicyclists on roads and trails
- Improve safety for all bicyclists
- Educate citizens on the value and importance of safe bicycling for healthy lifestyles and healthy communities.

**For information:** Jamie Stuckless, Executive Director (905) 233-2273 ext. 100 [jamie@sharetheroad.ca](mailto:jamie@sharetheroad.ca)

Justin Jones, Bicycle Friendly Community Program Manager (905) 233-2273 ext. 110 [justin@sharetheroad.ca](mailto:justin@sharetheroad.ca)