



Share the Road Announces Bicycle Friendly Community Awards

Five New Communities Receive Designations, Three Communities Renew Their Status in Largest Application Round to Date.

Ontario – February 14, 2017 – The Share the Road Cycling Coalition (Share the Road) announced today the latest Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) awards for Ontario.

The following communities were awarded new Bicycle Friendly status, all at the **Bronze level: The City of Cambridge, The Town of Collingwood, The City of Cornwall, The City of Temiskaming Shores and The Town of Whitby.** Kingston, London and Markham were all renewed at the Bronze level designation, with Honourable Mentions being given to The City of Belleville, the Town of Essex, The Town of Midland and Norfolk County.

"Share the Road is thrilled to recognize this new group of Bicycle Friendly Communities," said Jamie Stuckless, Executive Director of Share the Road. "The continued expansion of the Bicycle Friendly Communities Program is indicative of the growing interest in cycling across the province. With 66% of Ontario residents agreeing that investing in cycling benefits everyone, not just people who bike, the case is clear for communities of all shapes and sizes to invest in providing their residents with the option to choose cycling."

This round saw applications from a diverse group of communities in terms of size and geography. Applicants ranged from smaller than 10,000 residents to more than 366,000 residents and represented Northern, Southern, Eastern and Central Ontario. With 15 applications, this was also the largest round of the Bicycle Friendly Communities Program since the program was launched in Ontario in 2010. "Demand for support through the BFC program continues to grow well into its sixth year of operation and participating communities represent a cross section of Ontario's 444 municipalities" says Stuckless. "There is no community too big or too small to benefit from strategic investment in the five E's of bicycling – Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation & Planning".

Many of the communities recognized this round benefited from the work of an engaged group of residents working hand in hand with the municipality to build a strong cycling culture. The South Temiskaming Active Transportation Organization (STATO) is an excellent example. In 2010, STATO helped to kick start the construction of a multi-purpose trail along the shore of Lake Timiskaming with a fundraising campaign. The initial link connected two of the communities 3 main centres. In 2016, the trail received provincial funding through the Ontario Municipal Cycling Infrastructure Program (OMCIP) to complete the connection between all 3 centres. "This type of partnership demonstrates how passionate residents can initiate real change in their communities" said Stuckless.

Stuckless is enthusiastic about the progress being made in communities across Ontario, but is careful to note that we are still in the early stages of progress towards provincial goals of making Ontario the best jurisdiction for cycling in North America to ride a bike. "Twenty-seven of Ontario's thirty-six BFCs are at the Bronze level and no community has yet achieved a Platinum or Diamond designation. The conversation about building great places to cycle is underway and with the potentially transformative investment of \$150-225 million in cycling through Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan, we hope to see many communities move up the rankings in the near future."

About the Bicycle Friendly Community Awards and Share the Road

The Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFC) Program, an initiative of the Washington-based League of American Bicyclists, was launched in Ontario in 2010 by Share the Road with support from the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) South Central Ontario. 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.

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