



Share the Road Announces Bicycle Friendly Community Awards

Three Ontario Communities Receive Awards at Annual Ontario Bike Summit

Toronto, Ontario – The Share the Road Cycling Coalition (Share the Road) has announced the latest Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) awards for Ontario.

The following communities were awarded Bicycle Friendly status: **Burlington – Silver (moved up from Bronze), Niagara Falls – Bronze (New in 2016) and Mississippi Mills – Bronze (New in 2016)**. Oakville, Oshawa, Richmond Hill and Welland were renewed at their Bronze designation levels, while Hamilton was renewed with a Silver designation. An Honourable Mention was given to North Bay.

"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 70% of Ontarians agree that more people would bike if there was more and better cycling infrastructure in their community. The growing list of Bicycle Friendly Communities are heeding that call, providing their residents with safer, better connected streets that accommodate all road users."

The BFC Program is about much more than building bike lanes and trails. Effective partnerships that educate road users about their rights and responsibilities and encourage residents to think about new forms of transportation are crucial to building bicycle-friendly communities. "Burlington, Niagara Falls and Mississippi Mills all exemplify the importance of fostering a culture of cycling through programming that complements new infrastructure investments" says Stuckless. "In Mississippi Mills we see municipal politicians and staff working with bike clubs, public health and community groups to organize an annual Bike Month that has been a catalyst for change over the past 8 years. In Burlington, the Mayor launched a *Think Outside the Car Challenge* to promote cycling with support from local businesses, schools and non-profit organizations, and in Niagara Falls the municipality works closely with the regional tourism association, the Niagara Parks Commission and local businesses to encourage residents and visitors to explore the City's natural and cultural assets by bike."

Stuckless noted that the BFC program is now in its sixth year in Ontario and that 30 communities have been designated as bicycle friendly. "We are pleased that the program continues to grow in communities of all shapes and sizes across Ontario. No matter how big or small a community is, embracing the 5 Es of the BFC Program – Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation and Planning – makes sense and helps to build healthier, more prosperous and accessible places to live.

Stuckless is enthusiastic about the progress being made in communities across Ontario. "The work being done to invest in new cycling infrastructure and programming is exciting," she said. "We hope to see Diamond and Platinum BFC designations in the near future as more resources continue to become available, and community commitment continues to grow."

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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