



Share the Road Announces Bicycle Friendly Community Awards

Nine communities to be recognized with Bronze awards at the 9th Annual Ontario Bike Summit

Toronto, Ontario – April 11, 2017 – The Share the Road Cycling Coalition (Share the Road) announced today the latest Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) awards for Ontario.

The following communities will be recognized with Bronze Bicycle Friendly status during an awards ceremony at the Ontario Bike Summit: **the City of Belleville, the City of Brampton, the City of Cambridge, the Town of Collingwood, the City of Cornwall, the Town of Ingersoll, the City of Temiskaming Shores, the City of St. Thomas and the Town of Whitby.** Municipal and provincial representatives will be at the awards ceremony this evening.

"The ongoing growth of the Bicycle Friendly Communities Program is reflective of the increasing interest in cycling among municipalities in Ontario," said Jamie Stuckless, Executive Director of Share the Road. "Our research tells us that 70% of Ontario residents want to see more cycling infrastructure like bike lanes and trails where they live, and municipal and provincial leaders are responding to this demand."

With Brampton earning a BFC designation this round, all 5 of Ontario's largest cities are now recognized as Bicycle Friendly, but the potential for cycling goes beyond big cities. In this recent round of awards, communities ranging in size from nearly 600,000 residents to just under 11,000 are being recognized. "We see demand for cycling in communities of all shapes and sizes," said Stuckless. "Whether it's a large urban area or a small rural town, people want to live in vibrant communities that allow them to be active and have safe transportation choices."

Heading into its seventh year of operation in Ontario, the BFC Program has seen applications from 59 of Ontario's 444 municipalities, resulting in a total of 39 designations – 2 Gold, 7 Silver and 30 Bronze. No Ontario community has yet achieved Platinum or Diamond status. "Each community that applies to the program has its own unique character, and the BFC Program is designed to recognize the individuality of each community that applies," said Stuckless, "At the same time, we see some common elements that are shared by most BFCs, including the development of an Active Transportation Plan, having an Active Transportation Advisory Committee and staff resources dedicated to cycling, and participating in Bike Month celebrations." These represent a great place to start for communities that want to make cycling safer and more accessible.

Stuckless is optimistic about the future of cycling in Ontario, but is careful to note that the high number of communities attaining Bronze status is an indicator of the current progress for cycling in Ontario. "A Bronze designation indicates that a community has taken the first steps in their journey to become a great place to ride a bike," said Stuckless. "We are making progress towards the provincial goal of becoming the best jurisdiction to ride a bike in Canada and we are hopeful that a planned investment of \$150-225 million in cycling through the Climate Change Action Plan will be transformative for the province and help more communities achieve Bicycle Friendly status."

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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