



Share the Road Announces Bicycle Friendly Community Awards

44 Communities in Ontario now recognized as Bicycle Friendly

Toronto – April 1, 2019 – The Share the Road Cycling Coalition (Share the Road) announced today the latest Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) awards for Ontario. The most recent application round resulted in three (3) new Bicycle Friendly Community Awards at the **bronze designation level**:

- Town of Essex
- Norfolk County
- Town of Saugeen Shores

The newest recipients continue the trend of smaller and rural Ontario communities recognizing the value that cycling brings to their communities. An emphasis on building trails links all three of the newest bronze communities.

The City of Brantford and Haliburton County both received honourable mentions for their first applications. Renewing their designations are the City of Hamilton (Silver), the City of Guelph (Silver), the Town of Halton Hills (Bronze), and the City of St. Catharine's (Bronze).

"Each one of our new 2019 Bicycle Friendly Communities has applied to the program in the past and received an Honourable Mention," said Jamie Stuckless, Executive Director of Share the Road. "Those communities took the feedback provided by our expert panel of judges, took action on key areas and have now joined the ranks of BFCs in Ontario. Their success is illustrative of the value of the program, even for communities that aren't quite ready for an award yet. The process of applying and the feedback received can help any community, regardless of size or context, develop a stronger culture of cycling."

As a part of Essex County's County Wide Active Transportation Strategy (CWATS) partnership, the Town of Essex has been moving forward with new infrastructure and programming at an impressive pace. In Norfolk County, the Rail Trail connects three of the County's urban areas and in Saugeen Shores the Rail Trail and Waterfront Trail provide a connection for riders of all ages and abilities to Southampton and Port Elgin. Another highlight from Saugeen Shores is their new part-time "Bicycle Community Connector" who helps to coordinate cycling events and community engagement activities.

Stuckless noted that Share the Road is seeing an increasing number of smaller and rural communities realize the significant benefits of improving and promoting cycling, including applying for the BFC designation. "For communities that want to attract talent, investment, jobs and tourism dollars, being a great place to ride a bike is a strong indicator of a place that offers a high quality of life and is a great place to live, work and play," she said. "No matter how large or small your community is, we know that getting more people on bikes brings benefits."

Stuckless expressed optimism about the future of cycling in Ontario. "When we see communities applying multiple times, we're almost always seeing growth from one application to the next," she said. "Even in many of the communities that didn't see their award designation change, there was still substantial improvements made. We know that our network of BFCs want to continue to improve, and it is that desire to improve that makes us optimistic that we will see a community reach the Platinum, and even Diamond level, in Ontario in the future."

Share the Road is recognizing this year's winners at their annual Ontario Bike Summit awards dinner along with BFC sponsor CAA South Central Ontario. "CAA has been a proud sponsor of the Bicycle Friendly Communities program since 2010. This program supports communities in making cycling a safer, more accessible mode of transportation and a fun physical activity for all ages. We support the work of Share the Road to ensure that every community gets the most out of this program" Teresa Di Felice, assistant vice president of government and community relations at CAA SCO.

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 important of safe bicycling for healthy lifestyles and healthy communities.

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