

#CycleON Action Plan 1.0; Ontario's Cycling Strategy

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) released #CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy (Strategy) in 2013. The Strategy provides a 20 year vision to encourage the growth of cycling and improve the safety of people who cycle in Ontario. The Strategy establishes ambitious aspirational goals and commits MTO to develop a series of detailed Action Plans and associated performance metrics that will contribute to achieving the goals. A summary of the Strategy can be found in Appendix A and the complete Strategy can be viewed at <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/pubs/cycling-guide/pdfs/MTO-CycleON-EN.pdf>.

In 2014 MTO released #CycleON Action Plan 1.0 (Action Plan), the first multi-year plan for delivering the Strategy. The Action Plan, which is attached as Appendix B, includes 34 initiatives which are all underway and a couple that have already been delivered. While MTO is the #CycleON lead, it is working in partnership with other ministries, municipalities, cycling stakeholder organizations and the public. In fact, many of the commitments in the Action Plan are being delivered by other ministries and agencies of the provincial government.

1. Development and Enhancement of Sustainable Urban Transportation.

The Strategy vision for 2033 is "Cycling in Ontario is recognized, respected, and valued as a core mode of transportation that provides individuals and communities with health, economic, environmental, social and other benefits". Cycling generates a wide range of health, economic, environmental, social and other benefits including:

Social

- Improved personal health and productivity.
- Reduced health care costs as a result of lower rates of chronic conditions through active living.

Economic

- Reduced traffic congestion.
- Cycling is affordable to all.
- Minimizes transportation land use.

Environmental

- Cleaner environment when bike trips replace motor vehicle trips.
- Reduced emissions of greenhouse gases and other air contaminants.
- Reduced impacts on climate change.
- Cycling consumes few non-renewable resources.
- Cycling is essentially noise free.

The Strategy and Action Plan directly support the TAC sustainability goals for social, economic and environmental stewardship.

Social

Significant advances in safety, access and connectivity of the cycling networks throughout Ontario will provide significant social benefits by enabling more people to cycle. The following are the items identified in the Action Plan which are currently underway or delivered supporting social sustainability:

- Release new cycling infrastructure design guidelines to accommodate the cycling needs for cyclists of all ages and abilities:
 - MTO released Ontario Traffic Manual, Book 18, Cycling Facilities, providing guidance to municipalities on planning, design and operation of cycling facilities.
 - MTO released the Bikeways Design Manual providing updated guidance on planning, design, construction and operation of cycling facilities on provincial highways and bridges.
- Identify a province-wide cycling network:
 - MTO is preparing an assignment to identify a province-wide cycling network. The network will connect municipal cycling routes and places of interest for cyclists of all ages and abilities across Ontario.
- Introduce legislative and regulatory amendments to promote cycling safety:
 - MTO currently has a Bill before the Legislature which, if approved, will modify the Highway Traffic Act to:
 - Require drivers of motor vehicles to maintain a minimum distance of one metre when passing cyclists on highways, where practical.
 - Permit cyclists to ride on the paved shoulders of all unrestricted highways.
 - Permit contra-flow bicycle lanes on one-way highways.
 - Authorize the use of bicycle signal heads on traffic control signal systems.
 - Increase the penalties for persons who improperly open or leave motor vehicles doors open on highways, which can cause “dooring” collisions with cyclists.
 - Increase the fines for non-compliance with the bicycle light, reflector and reflective material requirements.
 - Permit cyclists to use intermittent red flashing lights.
- Cycling skills training:
 - MTO is investing up to \$400,000 for curriculum development, training for additional instructors and the delivery of cycling education programs.
- Add more cycling content to driver testing materials.

Economic

Infrastructure investments are underway to increase the safety and connectivity of the infrastructure:

- Increasing investment in cycling infrastructure:
 - MTO is investing \$15 million over the next three years in cycling infrastructure on the provincial highway network increasing safety and connectivity to other bike routes, points of interest, transit and other intermodal infrastructure.
 - MTO is investing \$10 million in municipal cycling infrastructure over the next three years in a cost sharing program with municipalities.
- Focused investment in cycling infrastructure:
 - Identification of the province-wide cycling network will help set priorities for future investment and maximize the public benefit in infrastructure investments.
- Continued sustainability of cycling infrastructure investments:
 - Financial strategies will be assessed to identify fiscally responsible and sustainable opportunities for the implementation and operation of the province-wide cycling network.
- Significant economic benefits are expected from the delivery of the Action Plan. The Canadian Medical Association states “a 10 percent increase in physical activity could reduce direct health-care expenditures by \$150 million a year. This does not include indirect costs such as lost productivity due to illness, premature death or a range of other factors, including mental illness and poor quality of health.”

Environmental

These significant advances in cycling network development, connectivity and safety are expected to increase cycling in Ontario yielding a positive environmental impact:

- Cycling is not fuelled with non-renewable resources.
- Cycling does not produce any significant greenhouse gases or other air pollutants.
- Cycling is virtually noise and vibration free.

2. Degree of Innovation

The Strategy is a province wide initiative and the #CycleON Action Plan 1.0 demonstrates innovation in process, technical commitment and financing for MTO.

Process Innovation

The Action Plan was developed and is being delivered in a very consultative fashion. A Minister's working group of municipal staff, road user groups (cycling, motoring and trucking) and others were involved in the development of the Action Plan. Implementation of the Action Plan is being coordinated by a working group of 12 ministries and agencies. Consultations with municipalities, trail associations, cycling enthusiasts, other stakeholders and the public are being undertaken to support the delivery of Action Plan action items. Specific examples include:

- Municipal, stakeholder and public input on the municipal infrastructure fund was solicited through the Environmental Registry, a website that is accessible to all free-of-charge.
- Municipal, stakeholder and public input was also solicited through the Environmental Registry for support for cycling skills training .
- The identification of the province-wide cycling network will involve extensive consultations with municipalities, trail associations, other cycling stakeholders and the public. Social media is expected to be used in the identification of the province-wide cycling network to expand the outreach and reduce the costs.

Milestones and performance measures are currently being established to evaluate the effectiveness of the Action Plan and undertake modifications in future action plans as necessary.

Financial Innovation

In conjunction with the Action Plan, MTO announced financial investments in both provincial and municipal infrastructure. MTO is investing \$15 million in infrastructure improvements on the provincial highway network over the next three years. MTO is currently in the process of selecting locations for the investment considering safety, connectivity, usage, cost, attractions etc. in order to build infrastructure that will provide the most benefit to the people of Ontario. This is the first time a dedicated funding program has been established for cycling at MTO.

MTO is also investing \$10 million in cost sharing infrastructure improvements for municipal cycling infrastructures over the next three years. MTO has received input from municipalities, stakeholders and the public on the best way to build a municipal infrastructure funding program and is now in the final stages of designing the program. The program is expected to launch later this spring. This is the first time MTO has implemented a dedicated cost sharing program for municipal cycling infrastructure.

MTO is also providing stakeholder partners with up to \$400,000 to develop or enhance for curriculum development, training for additional instructors and delivery of cycling education programs.

As part of the province-wide cycling network identification project, MTO will explore financing strategies to build, operate and maintain the network in a financially responsible and sustainable manner.

Technical Innovation

The Action Plan includes commitments to establish a number of new cycling design guidelines and a community of interest forum for municipal staff who work on cycling:

- New cycling infrastructure design guidelines to accommodate the cycling needs for cyclists of all ages and abilities:
 - MTO released Ontario Traffic Manual, Book 18, Cycling Facilities, in 2014 providing guidance to municipalities on planning, design and operation of cycling facilities with the newest methods and techniques.
 - MTO released the Bikeways Design Manual in 2014 providing updated guidance on planning, design, construction and operation of cycling facilities on provincial highways and bridges.
 - MTO will be creating a community of interest forum for cycling. This program will encourage innovation by the sharing of pilot projects and lessons learned which is expected to further refine best practices, knowledge transfer and guidelines for cycling.
 - Pilot projects to test innovations may be funded under the new municipal infrastructure program.

3. Transferability to Other Canadian Communities and Organizations

#CycleON is an Ontario-wide Action Plan developed with input from a broad range of stakeholders. The Action Plan will meet the needs of a broad range of urban and rural communities. As such, products resulting from the Action Plan initiatives, such as design guidelines, training programs, legislative changes, pilot projects, community of interest forum and funding initiatives are expected to be of interest and offer transferable lessons to jurisdictions across Canada:

- The Ontario Traffic Manual, Book 18, Cycling Facilities was developed with extensive input from organizations across Ontario, Canada, North America and Europe and includes the most current cycling guidelines available. This manual is beneficial to all road authorities and is currently available free-of-charge to the public.
- MTO released the Bikeways Design Manual providing guidance on planning, design, construction and operation of cycling facilities on provincial highways and bridges. This manual is of significant interest to provincial organizations and is currently available free-of-charge to the public.

- Other jurisdictions looking to initiate or update cycling skills training programs could be interested in cycling skills training products that are developed by stakeholder partners using the limited time funding provided by MTO.
- Amendments to the Highway Traffic Act to increase cyclist safety and provide more design and traffic control options will be of interest to all road authorities, particularly as the impacts of these amendments are studied.
- The municipal infrastructure fund program includes opportunities to fund innovative pilot projects. The findings from these pilot projects will be of interest to other road authorities across Canada taking advantage of the data collected, lessons learned and developing future cycling guidelines.
- The community of interest forum will provide an opportunity for knowledge transfer and lessons learned from the Ontario experience. This knowledge will also be beneficial to other road authorities.
- The funding for these provincial, municipal and training programs will be of interest to other organizations considering investing in cycling with respect to the design, delivery, continued sustainability and outcomes of each of the initiatives.

4. Added Value

The Strategy and the Action Plan are visually engaging and accessible documents and represent exciting steps forward for cycling in Ontario. The vision and aspirational goals provide a clear direction for the next 20 years while the first Action Plan outlines the specific work that will move Ontario toward the goals. The development of the Strategy and the Action Plan has been accomplished through an extensive communication and partnership across provincial ministries, municipalities, cycling associations and other road user groups, tourism organizations, health promotion agencies, engineers, planners and the public. Delivery of the Action Plan will include continued communication with these partners.

- A Minister's Working Group of 24 external stakeholders provided input on the Strategy and prioritization on the Action Plan. When final approvals are received, MTO will post Decision Notices about the municipal cycling infrastructure and cycling skills training initiatives on the online Environmental Registry, which is accessible to all free-of-charge. The notices will summarize the stakeholder feedback received and how it influenced the design of the initiatives.
- Information about the initiatives to provide financial support for municipal cycling infrastructure and cycling skills training will be posted on the MTO website, along with links to applications for each initiative.
- Identification of the province-wide cycling network will involve significant stakeholder consultation with provincial ministries, municipalities, cycling trail associations and the public which is expected to be achieved through the Environmental Registry and

social media opportunities. Implementation of the network will be through partnerships between the ministry, municipalities and trail associations.

- The community of interest forum will provide another partnership opportunity for knowledge transfer and lessons learned.

Summary of Ontario's Cycling Strategy

Vision 2033 → Cycling in Ontario is recognized, respected, and valued as a core mode of transportation that provides individuals and communities with health, economic, environmental, social and other benefits.

Guiding Principles → **Safety** + **Accessibility and Connectivity** + **Partnership**

Aspirational Goals for 2033

1	2	3	4	5
Ontario is recognized as the best Canadian province for cycling and ranked among the top 10 jurisdictions worldwide for cycling. At least one Ontario city is ranked among the 10 most bike-friendly cities in the world.	The built environment in most Ontario communities supports and promotes cycling for all trips under 5 km.	Ontario's cycling environment is safe for people of all ages, striving to achieve a record of zero fatalities and few serious injuries.	Ontario's cities and towns will have interconnected networks of safe cycling routes enabling people to cycle to work, school, home and key destinations.	Ontario has an integrated province-wide network of cycling routes.

Strategic Directions

Healthy, Active and Prosperous Communities

- Enhance cycling provisions when planning policies, guidelines and legislation are reviewed
- Partner with municipalities to implement Complete Streets policies and develop cycling or active transportation plans as applicable
- Partner with municipalities and transit agencies to integrate cycling with transit
- Ensure that bicycles are better accommodated in institutional, residential and commercial buildings

Cycling Infrastructure

- Develop a funding partnership with municipalities and the federal government to build provincial and municipal cycling routes
- Make adherence to design guidelines conditional to receiving funding
- Fund provincial and municipal cycling infrastructure pilot projects to test new ideas and gather data
- Remove barriers and streamline approval processes to implement cycling infrastructure

Safer Highways and Streets

- Review and recommend cycling-related legislation based on the latest research
- Continue to better educate all road users on the rules of the road and build cycling skills
- Work with police services to build consistency of enforcement of existing traffic laws to improve cycling safety

Awareness and Behavioural Shift

- Lead province-wide campaigns to encourage more people to cycle more often
- Develop and share relevant cycling best practices, research and data
- Encourage more cycling education in schools and at the community level

Cycling Tourism

- Promote Ontario as a premier cycling tourism destination
- Identify a province-wide cycling network and use it to prioritize future infrastructure investments on provincial highways
- Improve cycling tourism experiences in Ontario and inter-modal cycling connections by working with our partners to provide end-of-trip facilities, maps of existing cycling routes and way-finding applications

Future Action Plans