



Uniting Ontario

to become a leading cycling province.

We share a common mission:

to change Canadian culture by positioning cycling as the pre-eminent form of transportation & recreation





Bikes Belong in Ontario!

Background

About 2% of all commuter trips in Southern Ontario cities and towns are by bike. Contrast this with a number of European urban jurisdictions of similar climate where 30% of all commuter trips are by bike.

If Ontarians are not riding their bikes, some are on public transport but the majority, are driving their cars. Cars contribute to smog and climate change. Moreover when people drive instead of ride, they are not building their strength and fitness and are not “burning” calories. The result is weight gain and poorer health which inevitably burdens our healthcare system. This is especially a problem with children and youth - a segment of the population where obesity and diabetes is a growing concern.

It is true that cycling is not the “silver bullet” to all Canadian environmental, human health and transportation problems. However, it is an important component to an overall solution. That is why we feel it is important to do something about Ontario’s dismal 2% bike commuter statistic. It is not only in the bicycle industry’s interests - it’s in society’s broader interest.

There are clear reasons why Ontarians in urban and suburban areas do not ride as much as their European counterparts. Bikes Belong in Ontario is a policy platform based on a survey of a number of jurisdictions where more people ride more often. We identified the critical factors that can tip a largely non-riding society like Ontario to one where more people ride their bikes more often because bike commuting is safe, convenient, economical and FUN, and where they ride knowing the by-product is a cleaner and healthier Ontario.



17 Main St. North
Newmarket, ON L3Y 3Z6
Tel: 1.866.528.2822
Fax: 905.853.7632
Email: info@btac.org

www.btac.org



Some compelling facts as to why *Bikes Belong in Ontario!*

The bicycle is the most efficient machine devised by man to date - "*pound for pound, a person on a bicycle expends less energy than any creature or machine covering the same distance.*" (Source: Sightline Institute)

"...under most combinations of assumptions, bicycles can cover a given distance using one-thousandth of the fuel that automobiles use."

Komanoff, Charles. 2004. *Bicycling*. Encyclopedia of Energy Volume 1. Elsevier Inc. New York, New York.

"...the bicycle shows the best overall performance, and can therefore be regarded as the best transport systems on short distances."

Bouwman, Mirjan E., 2000. *An Environmental Assessment of the Bicycle and Other Transport Systems*. University of Groningen, Faculty of Spatial Sciences. The Netherlands.

The *Bikes Belong in Ontario!* strategy in a nutshell

What gets someone to even think about riding to work? By answering that question and building a plan around the answer we have developed *Bikes Belong in Ontario!* .

Almost universally cyclists want:

1. To be safe and to feel safe when they ride. To do so they need,
 - a. Dedicated bike lanes, routes and paved shoulders to ride on;
 - b. To be well equipped (with well built and maintained bikes and safety equipment such as helmets),
 - c. To be well trained as cyclists; and
 - d. To know that drivers on the road are also well trained;
2. To be able to take their bike on the bus, subway or streetcar if they have to;
3. To know that they have a secure place to store their bike when they stop; and if commuting,
4. To be able to take a shower and change when they get to work;

While getting people to ride requires a steady investment in cycling infrastructure it also requires marketing of the idea in a compelling way.

Government communications and financial incentive programs to encourage the use of energy efficient appliances, more fuel efficient cars and light bulbs are just a few that not only provide a financial boost to "do-the-right-thing," but they help educate and build awareness. The real value of these programs is education on what individuals can do to solve our collective problems.

Accordingly, eliminating provincial sales taxes on bicycles, bicycle helmets, locks, shoes and clothing, luggage and other cycling specific equipment sends a powerful message about what transportation we as a society want to encourage and why.



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Seven key elements of *Bikes Belong in Ontario!*

1) Direct and dedicated funding to Ontario municipalities for increased bicycle infrastructure (i.e. bike lanes, paths and paved shoulders on select Ontario roads, secure bike parking, inter-modal capacity on subways and buses etc.):

- *BTAC strongly supports the Liberal Party of Ontario commitment to specifically dedicate a portion of the \$60 billion to be spent on critical infrastructure over the next 10 years to cycling specific infrastructure;*
-

2) Direct financial incentives to increase bicycle use

- *BTAC strongly supports the Liberal Party of Ontario commitment to eliminate PST on bicycles and bicycle helmets as sound public policy. Eliminating the PST on bicycles and bicycle helmets will promote participation in cycling (especially with potential cycle commuters and with parents as they buy*
- *bicycles and helmets for their children and youth) and cycling safety by encouraging the use of bicycle helmets.*

British Columbia eliminated provincial sales taxes on bicycles and bicycle parts, clothing, shoes and accessories (including helmets) in 1981.

3) Provincial tax incentives for private sector employers to install bicycle parking, showers and other cycling specific amenities necessary for employees to cycle to work. The province should also encourage Ontario Public Service employees to cycle to work by providing similar access to cycling specific amenities.

4) Direct and dedicated provincial funding for youth cycling training (i.e. CAN-BIKE) and incorporation of cyclist awareness training in driver training and driver licensing qualification.

"The Canadian Cycling Association's CAN-BIKE program is a series of courses on all aspects of cycling safely and enjoyably on the road; it is oriented toward recreational and utilitarian cycling. The CAN-BIKE cycling safety program provides a nationally standardized set of courses that can be taught through a variety of organizations who are interested in education, safety and health." (See: www.canbike.net)



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- 5) Seed funding for the establishment of a not-for-profit organization (similar to Quebec's *Vélo Québec*) to assist the province, Ontario municipalities and private sector employers in:
 - a) Developing and implementing cycling policies and plans specifically related to increasing cycling transportation and recreational cycling in Ontario;
 - b) Identifying cycling infrastructure priorities across Ontario and making suggestion about where infrastructure resources should be allocated; and
 - c) Coordinating cycling transport related programs and activities across the province and across multiple stakeholder groups.

- 6) Direct and dedicated funding for municipal and NGO cycling promotion and communication and increased inclusion of cycling in provincial government marketing communications on health, environment, transportation, recreation and tourism

- 7) Sustained access for bicycles to all non-wilderness class Ontario Parks. Support for the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA see: <http://www.imba.com/canada/welcome.html>) for the construction and maintenance of a system of environmentally sustainable mountain bike trails in select non-wilderness class Ontario Parks and key mountain bike centers across Ontario.

Mountain biking brings all the intended benefits of cycling plus, it allows cyclists to enjoy and invest themselves in Ontario's parks and green spaces. Those who enjoy our parks and green spaces become steward-advocates for their preservation and protection - something which benefits us all.

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