

Climate Change Action Plan: Transportation Sector

Discussion Paper: Cycling

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1. Minister of Transportation's message

Climate change is one of the largest threats facing our world and our province.

With a growing population and expanding urban regions, transportation emissions pose one of our province's greatest challenges in achieving our greenhouse gas pollution reduction targets.

In fact, emissions from transportation account for more emissions than from industries such as iron, steel, cement and chemicals combined.

Our government has a plan to change all that.

Ontario's five-year [Climate Change Action Plan](#) aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to 15 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, 37 per cent by 2030 and 80 per cent by 2050.

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is ready to do its part to support the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP).

In fact MTO has already implemented a number of initiatives that support reductions to transportation emissions.

Through the Moving Ontario Forward plan we will invest \$31.5 billion over 10 years for transit, transportation and other priority infrastructure projects across the province, including approximately \$16 billion for priority transit projects inside the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

We have identified GO Regional Express Rail (RER) as a top priority for investment in the GTHA. This service will provide faster and more frequent service on the GO Rail network with electrification in core areas.

MTO has also introduced provincial initiatives, such as CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy and related programs, long combination vehicles, and high occupancy vehicle lanes, which are helping to reduce emissions while providing other benefits for Ontarians.

In addition, sharing of provincial gas tax revenues with municipalities through the Gas Tax Program contributes to local public transit improvements, helping to get people out of their cars and onto public transit, easing traffic congestion while keeping our air clean.

The new Electric Vehicle Chargers Ontario (EVCO) program and the modernized Electric Vehicle Incentive Program (EVIP) will also help Ontario achieve greenhouse gas pollution reductions from vehicles.

MTO has also made the HOV pilot program for single-occupant electric vehicles with green licence plates permanent, to encourage the use of cleaner, more sustainable vehicle technology.

Through this discussion paper, MTO is proposing a plan to implement actions identified in the Climate Change Action Plan to promote cycling across the province. The Action Plan commits to improving commuter cycling networks by accelerating and enhancing the implementation of [#CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy](#) and its related [Action Plan](#). The actions are intended to be funded by proceeds from the province's cap and trade program.

MTO is requesting feedback from the public on its proposed approach to help ensure that we meet the goals of the Climate Change Action Plan.

I look forward to receiving your input on this exciting initiative.

2. Introduction

One of the actions under the Transportation Action Area of Ontario's [Climate Change Action Plan](#) (CCAP) is "Support Cycling and Walking." This action focuses on improving commuter cycling networks and supports enhancing [#CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy](#) and its related [Action Plan](#). By creating more opportunities for Ontarians to choose cycling and walking over driving, these investments can reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while at the same time improving public health and increasing the vibrancy of Ontario communities.

The purpose of this discussion paper is to consult on MTO's proposed approach to implementing the actions in the CCAP. The following actions are noted in the CCAP, as is an intended investment of \$150 million to \$225 million from cap and trade proceeds to support them:

Creating better cycling networks:

- Commuter cycling networks will be established across Ontario, targeting routes with high-commuting volume such as between residential communities, major transit stations and employment areas. Cycling routes will be established on or near municipal roads and, where it is safe and feasible to do so, on provincial highways and bridges that are currently barriers to local cycling networks.

Making cycling safer:

- There will be more cycling facilities in urban areas, including grade-separated routes and cycling signals.

Making cycling convenient:

- There will be more bike parking at transit stations and provincially owned, publicly accessible facilities.

This paper identifies key challenges to increased cycling in Ontario and how the province proposes to address them. MTO is asking for comments on this proposal. Throughout the paper there are discussion questions to help guide feedback on the proposed approach. The questions are also summarized at the end of the paper. We invite you to review them and provide us with your comments.

3. Sector Overview and Support for Cycling Infrastructure in Ontario

Sector Overview

Cycling has been increasing in urban centres across the country and Ontario is no exception. A 2013 survey commissioned by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) found that 1.2 million adults in Ontario (over 10 per cent of the adult population) ride a bicycle daily during the spring, summer and fall, and 2.8 million (more than 25 per cent) ride at least once a week.

There has also been an increase in support for recreational and tourism cycling. Since 2010, the Ontario by Bike Network has certified 435 bicycle-friendly accommodation locations and 650 other bicycle-friendly locations across Ontario. The multi-use Great Lakes Waterfront Trail is now over 1,600 kilometres long and spans from the Quebec border to Lake Huron.

Cycling is increasingly seen as an option for commuters as well. Many commuter trips currently made by passenger vehicles can be made by bike. One third of Ontarians have a daily, one way commute of less than five kilometers¹ – a distance that an average adult can cycle in 30 minutes or less – so increasing and supporting cycling can help reduce GHG emissions and manage congestion. In addition, there is a growing opportunity for Ontarians to cycle instead of drive from home or work to public transit, as well as to other destinations travelled to on a frequent basis such as shopping areas or recreational facilities.

54 per cent of Ontario residents say they want to cycle more than they currently do and, of these, 42 per cent would consider cycling more to work or school.² In Ontario, the barriers to cycling are similar to those in other jurisdictions, including safety concerns, infrastructure needs, climate, lifestyle choices and long distances.

We have heard from the cycling community that they would like to see more and continued investment in cycling infrastructure. What's more, 67 per cent of Ontario residents say they

¹ Statistics Canada. National Household Survey 2011.

² Stratcom. Share the Road Public Opinion Survey 2014.

would be more likely to ride a bike if their community had more and better cycling infrastructure, such as physically separated bike lanes and paved shoulders.³

Municipalities are also keen to realize the benefits of active transportation, including cycling. 52 per cent of Ontario municipalities now have active transportation policies incorporated in their Official Plans and increasingly communities across the province – small and large, urban and rural, northern and southern – are developing plans for cycling routes. At least six Ontario municipalities already have a physically separated bike lane or cycle track. Cities like Ottawa and Toronto are beginning to maintain cycling facilities for winter riding, and 28 communities have received a Bicycle Friendly Community Award from Share the Road Cycling Coalition since 2010. In addition, a number of municipalities have implemented bike share systems. These systems allow the public to access a fleet of bicycles across a community at their convenience. Expanding cycling infrastructure can support the growth of bike share systems.

Support for Cycling Infrastructure in Ontario

MTO has undertaken a number of actions and policies to support cycling in Ontario. In August 2013, MTO released [#CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy](#), a 20-year vision to encourage the growth of cycling and improve safety for cyclists across the province. The strategy was developed in consultation with a Minister's Cycling Working Group (Working Group) that included municipal staff and representatives of road user groups, law enforcement agencies, the health sector, engineers and planners, the tourism industry and others. Investment in infrastructure was among the priorities identified by the Working Group for action.

In 2014, MTO released [#CycleON Action Plan 1.0](#), the first of a series of multi-year action plans for implementing the Cycling Strategy. The Ontario government also announced it was moving forward on key actions in the plan by investing \$25 million over three years to build cycling infrastructure. This includes \$15 million for new provincial cycling infrastructure and the \$10 million Ontario Municipal Cycling Infrastructure Program.

On April 1, 2015 the Ministry of Transportation announced the details of the \$15 million investment in provincial cycling infrastructure. The investment is supporting the implementation of key cycling related projects on:

- Highway 33 west of Kingston, which is part of the Waterfront Trail;

³ Stratcom. Share the Road Public Opinion Survey 2014.

- Thousand Islands Parkway structure over Highway 137, which is part of the Waterfront Trail;
- Highway 6 on Manitoulin Island and south of Highway 17 at Espanola, which is part of the Georgian Bay Cycling Route; and,
- Highway 17B and Highway 17 between Sault Ste. Marie and Espanola, which is part of the Lake Huron North Channel Cycling Route.

Design work on many of these locations is underway and construction on some projects has been initiated. Key factors for project selection included locations that are on major regional cycling routes and routes captured under the current provincial highway rehabilitation program. A focus on existing, major cycling routes will help ensure alignment with the future province-wide cycling network, which the Ministry is working to identify to help guide future investments on provincial highways and support municipalities when planning their own cycling infrastructure investments.

The Ontario Municipal Cycling Infrastructure Program was launched on July 3, 2015 to help municipalities build new or improve existing cycling infrastructure. There was a great deal of interest from across the province, with almost 150 municipalities submitting expressions of interest. In April 2016, MTO announced 37 successful applicants, selected for funding based on how closely their proposed projects aligned with program objectives, including developing better cycling networks and promoting safety.

MTO is also undertaking work to identify a province-wide cycling network and provincial barriers to local cycling networks. Outreach to municipalities, First Nations and Métis communities, and key stakeholders occurred in summer 2016 to gather data on existing and planned cycling routes, destinations and provincial barriers. The data gathered is being used to inform development of the cycling network plan.

Metrolinx⁴ is committed to improving walking and cycling facilities and connections around GO Stations. Most stations have covered bicycle storage areas and several stations have secured bicycle parking enclosures or bike lockers. Metrolinx is also investing \$4.9 million to help expand Bike Share Toronto. In addition, Metrolinx has supported cycling infrastructure development through *The Big Move* Regional Transportation Plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (2008), which proposed a suite of actions and policies to enhance and expand

⁴ Metrolinx is an agency of the Government of Ontario. It was created in 2006 to provide leadership in the coordination, planning, financing, development and implementation of an integrated, multi-modal transportation network in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

active transportation. Metrolinx is currently updating the multimodal Regional Transportation Plan, and active transportation will remain a priority in the next Plan. Strategies will address active transportation plans and infrastructure, active transportation-supportive land use planning and design, and other aspects of active transportation. These initiatives help maximize the impact of cycling infrastructure investments.

Another strategic plan that supports cycling infrastructure development is the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006). One of its key aims is to create compact, vibrant and complete communities that support cycling and walking. Furthermore, the Growth Plan requires that municipalities ensure that safe and convenient active transportation networks are integrated into transportation planning. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMA) is currently reviewing the Growth Plan. As part of this review, MMA has consulted on a set of strengthened and clarified policies relating to active transportation. The updated Growth Plan is expected to be released in early 2017.

For more information on actions to support cycling infrastructure, visit these web sites:

- <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/publications/ontario-cycling-strategy.shtml>
- <http://www.gotransit.com/public/en/travelling/leaveyourcar.aspx#cycling>
- http://www.metrolinx.com/en/aboutus/mediarelations/news/20150706_Bike_Share_To_onto.aspx
- <http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/rtp/>
- <https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php>

4. Program Design Proposal

The Ontario government's goal is to enable more Ontarians living in urban areas to cycle for day-to-day trips instead of driving a car. Ontarians travel to many destinations on a regular basis, including work, school, public transportation facilities, the grocery store and recreational facilities. Funding could focus on infrastructure that supports trips made on a daily basis, like the commute to work, or it could support infrastructure that enables a broader range of frequent trips.

Funding could also support infrastructure in different types of communities. Many larger municipalities are working toward building comprehensive cycling networks to support

demand. However, it is important to note that in smaller towns, cycling can often account for a higher percentage of trips taken due to the short distance between destinations.

Support for cycling can take several forms:

- Implementing cycling facilities such as on-road cycling lanes and off-road cycling and walking paths to enable Ontarians to cycle to and from destinations.
- Constructing cycling infrastructure on municipal roads and on provincial infrastructure. Municipal roads support many day-to-day cycling trips, but in some areas provincial highways and bridges may also support these trips.
- Removing barriers to local cycling networks. For example, high-traffic provincial highways and bridges or private land ownership can reduce cycling levels.
- Implementing cycling-specific traffic signals, signage and bike storage facilities.

Discussion Questions:

- What infrastructure should be prioritized to make cycling in Ontario safer and more convenient to support commuter cycling between residential communities, major transit stations, employment areas and other destinations travelled to on a frequent basis?
- What evidence can demonstrate the impact of cycling infrastructure investments on the number of cyclists and on GHG emissions?

Proposed Components

As mentioned previously, the CCAP commits to improving commuter cycling networks in Ontario. Getting people out of their cars and onto bikes and transit for their daily commutes and day-to-day trips helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions while also improving public health.

Key to achieving this objective is the availability of cycling infrastructure and facilities, including grade-separated bike lanes, bike parking and cycling signals, on routes that connect residential communities, major transit stations, employment areas and other destinations travelled to on a frequent basis. This can help increase the safety and convenience of cycling and the attractiveness of cycling as a mode of transportation for Ontarians.

As part of implementing the province's CCAP commitments, MTO is proposing a multi-component program to invest in cycling infrastructure. The program would build on initiatives in CycleON Action Plan 1.0 and would enable us to work with our partners – municipalities, transit agencies and other organizations – to support cycling for commuting and other frequent trips. The proposed program components are:

Local Cycling Infrastructure

Most cycling takes place on municipal roads, and MTO is committed to supporting projects that improve local cycling networks. The proposed Local Cycling Infrastructure component would make investments in local commuter cycling networks across Ontario, targeting routes with high-commuting volumes. This component would be focused on creating the conditions that improve safety in urban areas and support cycling for commuting and other frequent trips between residential communities, major transit stations, employment areas and other destinations.

Various types of infrastructure that support cycling in urban areas would be eligible for funding under this component, including on- and off-road cycling facilities such as painted bike lanes, paved shoulders, cycling lanes separated by a curb, off-road multi-use paths and associated infrastructure (e.g., cycling signals, signs).

Evaluation criteria would be aligned with the overall objectives of the CCAP to ensure that projects with the greatest potential to reduce GHG emissions and support cycling for commuting and other frequent trips (by transferring trips from cars to bicycles and enabling cycling to and from transit) are preferred.

Discussion Question:

- For local cycling networks, what types of cycling infrastructure would best support commuter cycling between residential communities, major transit stations, employment areas and other destinations travelled to on a frequent basis?

Provincial Cycling Infrastructure

In addition to supporting the construction of cycling infrastructure on or near municipal roads, it is also important to provide key connections on or over provincial highways. Busy provincial highways and bridges can act as barriers to local cycling networks, preventing people from cycling from one place to another. Provincial highways can also be important linkages between destinations within communities.

The proposed Provincial Cycling Infrastructure component would fund initiatives that address provincial barriers that impact local cycling networks. Additionally, the government would make direct investments in provincial highways in urban areas to create the conditions to increase cycling for commuting and other frequent trips, where safe and feasible to do so. Removing barriers and investing in provincial highways would support the shift from cars through the increased use of local cycling networks for commuter cycling.

Infrastructure funded under this component could include on- and off-road cycling facilities (e.g., painted bike lanes, paved shoulders, cycling lanes separated by a curb, off-road multi-use paths), active transportation bridges and associated infrastructure (e.g., cycling signals, signs) that support cycling in urban areas where provincial infrastructure exists.

The funding could be aligned with MTO's current capital investment program and activities.

Discussion Question:

- What types of cycling infrastructure on provincial highways would best support commuter cycling between residential communities, major transit stations, employment areas and other destinations travelled to on a frequent basis?

Bicycle Parking

The availability of safe and secure bicycle parking facilities at destinations can play a key role in encouraging people to choose cycling over driving. In addition to having cycling routes connecting residential communities, major transit stations, employment areas and other destinations travelled to on a frequent basis, it is important to ensure that cyclists can safely park their bikes once they reach these destinations.

The proposed Bicycle Parking component would support cycling by helping increase bicycle parking at destinations where cycling for commuting and other frequent trips is reasonable, including government-owned, publicly accessible facilities and potentially private facilities such as workplaces and condominiums. This component would also support the installation of bike parking at transit facilities (such as GO Stations, LRT stations and bus terminals) to encourage the use of bicycles to connect to transit for longer trips and commuting.

It is proposed that eligible infrastructure for this component would include bike racks, bike shelters, bike lockers and bike enclosures.

Discussion Questions:

- What types of bike parking facilities (e.g., bike racks, lockers, fee-based enclosures) are needed to support cycling for commuting and other frequent trips?
- What types of government-owned, publicly accessible facilities should have bike parking?
- What types of transit or transportation stations should have bike parking to support improved cyclist access (e.g., GO Stations, LRT stations, bus terminals)?
- What types of private facilities could potentially be eligible to receive provincial funding for bicycle parking facilities?

When finalizing the details of the three components, MTO will look for opportunities to align with other provincial cycling objectives.

5. How to Get Involved

The public can provide comments on this [Environmental Registry](#) posting (EBR Registry Number: 012-8772). Comments can be submitted through the Environmental Registry until November 30, 2016.

In addition, Ontarians can provide feedback to an organization that is engaged in active transportation and is planning to submit comments on the proposal. Key stakeholders and industry may be consulted on the proposed program to support improved and safer cycling infrastructure in Ontario.

6. Next Steps and Closing

MTO anticipates that this cycling program will be launched in 2017. A Decision Notice outlining the results of the consultation will be posted on the Environmental Registry when the program is launched.

MTO has already received feedback from stakeholders, applicants to previous programs, current partners, as well as the general public, regarding areas of strength in the existing

cycling programs. These comments will be considered during the design of the proposed new program.

7. Summary of Discussion Questions

MTO is seeking feedback on its proposed plan to support commuter cycling networks, urban cycling facilities and bicycle parking in Ontario communities. The input received will help guide the program design and ensure that investments in commuter cycling networks lead to a shift from motor vehicle trips to cycling trips.

The discussion questions noted throughout the paper are listed below. They are also included in the Environmental Registry posting. Comments can be provided through the Environmental Registry or written comments can be submitted to the Ministry EBR Coordinator using the contact information provided in the Environmental Registry posting.

Plan to Improve Commuter Cycling Networks

- What infrastructure should be prioritized to make cycling in Ontario safer and more convenient to support commuter cycling between residential communities, major transit stations, employment areas and other destinations travelled to on a frequent basis?
- What evidence can demonstrate the impact of cycling infrastructure investments on the number of cyclists and on GHG emissions?

Local Cycling Infrastructure

- For local cycling networks, what types of cycling infrastructure would best support commuter cycling between residential communities, major transit stations, employment areas and other destinations travelled to on a frequent basis?

Provincial Cycling Infrastructure

- What types of cycling infrastructure on provincial highways would best support commuter cycling between residential communities, major transit stations, employment areas and other destinations travelled to on a frequent basis?

Bicycle Parking

- What types of bike parking facilities (e.g., bike racks, lockers, fee-based enclosures) are needed to support cycling for commuting and other frequent trips?
- What types of government-owned, publicly accessible facilities should have bike parking?
- What types of transit or transportation stations should have bike parking to support improved cyclist access (e.g., GO Stations, LRT stations, bus terminals)?
- What types of private facilities could potentially be eligible to receive provincial funding for bicycle parking facilities?

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