

**Recommendations for the Ontario Ministry of Transportation Draft Cycling Strategy from the Middlesex-London Health Unit – January 2013**

The Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) Board of Health commends the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (the Ministry) for developing the draft Cycling Strategy and distributing it for public consultation. The MLHU appreciates that the draft strategy recognizes that the encouragement and support of cycling is a shared responsibility between the provincial government, municipalities, not-for-profit organizations and cycling associations.

Middlesex-London Health Unit supports and agrees with the following comments in the draft Cycling Strategy:

1. The overall direction of the Cycling Strategy as it pertains to enhancing infrastructure, increasing cycling safety through education and legislation, and ensuring relevancy through monitoring, research and coordination.
2. The Cycling Strategy as part of a sustainable, multi-modal policy approach with its numerous health and environmental benefits.
3. Cross ministerial support for the cycling strategy with strong provincial leadership. We particularly encourage collaboration between the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport; the Ministry of Education; and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, as they are key for implementing successful cycling strategies.
4. The recognition that safe cycling is a shared responsibility and the plan to support local municipalities both through guidelines and funding.
5. Cycling infrastructure being eligible for funding under the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Initiative, as well as other provincial funding programs. We also encourage the funding to support the development of “complete streets”.
6. Addressing the areas infrastructure, education and legislation as they correspond well with the three E’s of the Canadian Injury Prevention and Control Curriculum (education, engineering and enforcement).
7. The inclusion of “Share the Road” concepts through the New Beginner Driver Education curriculum standards and drivers’ examinations. We encourage the ongoing stakeholder consultation, participation and revision of the Driver Handbooks, and support the planned additions of information and illustrations on bike lanes, road markings and right-of-way in future copies of the handbooks.
8. The updating of the Ontario Traffic Manual Books. These documents will be very helpful for local municipal planners, engineers and designers, to assist in creating the safest infrastructure for cyclists across Ontario. We encourage regular updating of these documents.
9. The recommendations from the Chief Coroner of Ontario’s “Cycling Death Review”, particularly the:
  - adoption of a “complete streets” approach;
  - mandatory helmets for all ages; and
  - a minimum one-metre passing rule for vehicles passing cyclists.

To further enhance the draft Cycling Strategy, Middlesex-London Health Unit recommends the following:

1. Strengthen the message of “complete streets” within the Cycling Strategy to provide increased guidance for local municipalities.
2. The Province require local municipalities to invite public health units to participate in municipal planning review processes due to the strong link between land use, transportation and health.
3. A provincially lead safety campaign in partnership with municipalities, school boards, not-for-profit organizations, etc. in order to have a broad impact that reaches a larger population and contains a consistent message.
4. Monitoring and researching areas outside of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area to make the results generalizable to more of the Province. Middlesex County is primarily rural and the City of London is a mid-sized city. We believe that broadening studies to include a variety of geographical areas will allow the results to be more applicable to, and therefore have a greater impact across the Province as a whole.

We congratulate the Ministry in creating the draft Cycling Strategy and requesting public input. We recognize Provincial leadership is integral to the enhancement of cycling within Ontario. Through improved safe cycling infrastructure, education and legislation, as well as ongoing monitoring and coordination guided by the Cycling Strategy, the cycling rates within Ontario have the potential to increase, and ultimately lead to health and safety benefits for Ontario residents.