

Share The Road Signage Pilot Project

Background

The Share The Road Signage [Pilot Project Evaluation Report](#) provides details of a recent multi-partner initiative. Collaborators in this project recognized that cycling is an excellent form of exercise and an increasingly popular activity for both recreational and / or utilitarian purposes. However, cyclists are considered vulnerable road users and as such, local and provincial statistics and reports indicate there is a need to address safety issues related to cycling. Local injury data indicate that the average yearly rate of emergency room (ER) visits between 2009 and 2013 for bicycle related traffic collisions was higher in Middlesex-London at 27.8 per 100,000 compared to 18.8 per 100,000 in Ontario. This amounted to 128 ER visits per year in Middlesex-London (Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 2014). Additionally, collision data gathered between 2008 and 2013 in London indicate there were 779 Motor Vehicle Collisions (MVC) involving cyclists, and of those incidents, cyclists were at fault 502 times and drivers were at fault 273 times (Human Environments Analysis Lab, 2014).

Roads on the west side of London and within the municipality of Middlesex Centre in Middlesex County are used regularly by local cycling club members as well as recreational cyclists. In response to expressed safety concerns by cyclists using the roads in this area, several community partners (Report, p.11) collaborated to develop and implement the Share The Road Signage Pilot Project (STRSPP) to help address these concerns.

Goals of the project were to:

- 1) Improve safe driving and cycling practices when sharing the road,
- 2) Increase physical activity levels, and
- 3) Increase collaboration among stakeholders on Share the Road initiatives.

The following project-specific objectives were developed as a means of working toward achieving the goals:

- To educate drivers and cyclists about sharing the road, and
- To install Share the Road signage on the west side of London and within Middlesex Centre / Middlesex County where appropriate.

Implementation/Results

There were multiple components to the STRSPP including presentations to municipal committees to inform and receive endorsement to proceed with the pilot project. A multi-faceted education campaign targeting drivers and cyclists 16 years of age and older was created and comprised a variety of communication channels (Report pages 4-6). Evidence of campaign reach was seen through the enthusiastic community discussion that was generated using Facebook where over 91,000 individuals saw the ads and 380 visitor comments were posted. An online survey on the MLHU Share the Road webpage, also provided evidence of reach with 367 respondents completing the survey and providing 216 comments. These forms of community engagement provided MLHU staff with opportunities to provide specific and targeted educational messages using Facebook and Twitter.

Along with the education campaign, two types of road signage were installed in London and Middlesex County: 1) Four (4 x 8') signs with the message "1 metre (3 feet) is a safe passing distance" and 2) Ontario Traffic Manual – Book 18, "Share the Road" signs were installed respectively within the City of London (16) and within Middlesex County (8).

The two project objectives of educating drivers and cyclists and the installation of Share the Road signage were largely achieved. With 600 comments and opinions gathered in response to both the Facebook ads and the online survey, three common themes emerged that provide direction for future efforts to improve the safety of the cycling environment within London and Middlesex County:

1. The need to **educate both** cyclists and drivers about the rules of the road.
2. The need to improve the **infrastructure** in order to provide a safer cycling environment.
3. The need to **enforce** the rules of the road for both cyclists and drivers.

Conclusion/Next Steps

Given local and provincial statistics, there is a need to continue evidence-based interventions that will increase cycling safety on London and Middlesex County roads. The possibility of future expansion of the STRSPP is yet to be deliberated and will be based on a review of the current initiative within the context of other strategies / projects currently underway. Future local projects should build on previous endeavours, coordinate efforts and capitalize on provincial initiatives in order to improve the cycling environment within London and Middlesex County.