

**Government of Ontario - Environmental Registry, EBR 013-1837**  
**Policy Proposal Notice: #CycleON: Action Plan 2.0**  
**Comment Period: February 5 to March 7, 2018**

**Recommendations for the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture, and Sport (MTCS) from the Middlesex-London Health Unit.**

The Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) commends the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture, and Sport (MTCS) for continued efforts in advancing cycling in Ontario through #CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy. We support Action Plan 2.0 proposed actions that continue investments in cycling infrastructure, increased education and awareness of cycling issues, and the development of policies and programs that support cycling. The strategies and listed actions support the expansion of cycling initiatives in the province which will generate a range of health, economic, environmental and social benefits.

The MLHU articulated its support and provided recommendations for the initiation of the Ontario Cycling Strategy through the EBR consultation process in 2013. Since then, MLHU has been engaged in numerous City of London and Middlesex County cycling specific and active transportation focused initiatives. Many of these initiatives, such as the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program and Province-wide Cycling Network Study, have been possible as a result of implementing #CycleON Action Plan 1.0. We anticipate that continued momentum from Action Plan 2.0 will result in health and safety benefits for residents in the Middlesex-London area as well as throughout the province of Ontario.

Since 2013, the City of London, Middlesex County and its' eight municipalities have made progress in creating cycling friendly environments on several fronts. The City of London's new official plan, called [The London Plan](#), provides strong policy support for active mobility choices, including cycling. The City of London is actively engaged in the implementation of its new [Cycling Master Plan - London ON Bikes](#) and Middlesex County is currently developing the [Middlesex County Cycling Strategy](#). Implementation of the [London Road Safety Strategy](#) has resulted in numerous traffic safety improvements including those that support safer cycling. The MLHU has worked in partnership to move local policy efforts forward that provide for enhanced safety for all road users in our area. Initiatives by the London Middlesex Road Safety Committee and the [Active & Safe Routes to School](#) partnership include education campaigns focused on pedestrian and cyclist safety. Additional partnership efforts have included awareness raising campaigns such as the Share the Road Signage Project and Give Active Transportation a GO. In short, we are pleased to see the cycling environment in London-Middlesex being transformed in positive ways.

Despite the progress in supporting cycling friendly environments, we realize there is still much work to be done. Only 10% of children and youth and 20% of adults meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines when physical activity levels are measured directly (Statistics Canada, 2013). Statistics Canada Census Data also indicates that there has been essentially no increase in cycling (1.2%) as a mode of commuting to work between 2006 and 2016 in the city of London. Within the Thames Valley region, among School Travel Planning Schools (2014 – 2016), the number of children using active school travel remains at low levels (42% walking, 3% cycling) due largely to safety concerns related to traffic speed and volume.

The Middlesex-London Health Unit agrees with and supports the #CycleON Action Plan 2.0 strategies and offers the following comments pertaining to the action items:

**1. Design Healthy, Active and Prosperous Communities**

We support the listed action items and would like to reinforce the importance of the following; that active transportation policies are included in official plans, that active school travel is supported by developing

guidelines and tools for cycling infrastructure around schools, that awareness-raising communications about cycling as a means of getting to and from school be developed and delivered, and that multi-modal transportation system access and complete street design be an integral part of community land development projects and processes.

## **2. Improve Cycling Infrastructure**

We acknowledge the need for ongoing improvements in cycling infrastructure as it relates to safety and the need to efficiently get people to places they need to go. Key comments gathered in the development of [London's Cycling Master Plan](#) included; the need for improved cycling safety and comfort, separation between cyclists and motorists, improved crossings for cyclists, more bicycle parking at key locations, connectivity between facilities, linkages to neighbourhoods and balancing budgets with improvements. The development of a plan for a province-wide cycling network will further support current local efforts to create regional cycling linkages. The proposed updating of the 2013 Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18: Cycling Facilities will provide transportation practitioners with a current guide for developing predictable road environments through consistent and appropriate application of traffic control devices that support improved road safety for cyclists.

## **3. Make Safer Highways and Streets**

There is a need for broadened public education efforts directed to drivers and cyclists about sharing the road in a safe and respectable manner as per the Highway Traffic Act. This is best provided using a multi-pronged approach that includes the listed provincial and local actions with particular emphasis on; improved Beginner Driver Education, enhanced promotion and distribution of the Cycling Skills Guide and the Young Cyclists' Guide, regional and province wide campaigns as well as knowledge exchange events. Locally, in 2013, London and Middlesex County partners developed and delivered the [Share The Road Signage Pilot Project](#) which focused on educating drivers and cyclists about sharing the road. This was subsequently reinforced by the passing of Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act in 2015 which included strong measures to enhance cyclist safety.

## **4. Promote Cycling Awareness and Behavioural Shifts**

Currently motor vehicle use continues to be the preferred choice for even short trips where using a bicycle is possible. With up to 80% of the Canadian population now living in urban centres, increased motor vehicle volume is contributing to traffic congestion, increased travel times, negative health, safety and environmental impacts as well as expensive road widening projects. The need to shift attitudes and behaviours toward the use of cycling can be accomplished through complementary education and awareness raising actions as outlined the Action Plan 2.0. The development of a province-wide standardized cycling education curriculum including certification for course delivery will support an increased and consistent level of skill among those who cycle. The creation of an Ontario Cycling Coordination Committee holds merit in terms of facilitating synergistic cycle-friendly processes across regions as well responsibility for monitoring and tracking cycling behaviours including changes in policy and infrastructure. This will enable a best practice approach to ongoing cycling enhancement efforts.

## **5. Increase Cycling Tourism Opportunities**

We support further development of a province wide cycling tourism strategy that includes the City of London and Middlesex County. Through our community partnerships, we have participated in consultations in this regard and look forward to ongoing development through the actions that are listed.

### **Working towards Ontario's goals for cycling**

We strongly support the actions listed under the five strategies. We expect that significant progress will be made in making Ontario and its' local jurisdictions cycle-friendly through implementation of the Action Plan

2.0. In addition to supporting the action items, we offer the following considerations related to anticipated challenges and additional actions:

**Anticipated challenges**

1. Changing attitudes and behaviours from being car-centric will require concerted multi-pronged efforts using the 4 E's – Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Empathy / Encouragement. This will necessitate the coordinated efforts and actions of several provincial Ministries that have responsibility for transportation, safety, culture and tourism, health, municipal affairs, etc.
2. The development of standardized information for drivers and cyclists about the rules of the road as they relate to cycling is imperative. Integrating this information into existing education mechanisms as well into newly developed opportunities for dissemination will require provincial leadership, consultation and coordination among several Ministries and organizations that currently provide cycling education, e.g. MTO, MTCS, Ontario Can-Bike, Can-Bike Canada, Ontario Cycling Association, Canadian Cycling Association, etc.

**Additional actions that Ontario should consider taking in the next 5 years**

1. In order for cycling to be an integral component of land use planning, updating the policies contained within Ontario's 2014 [Provincial Policy Statement](#) (PPS) should be reviewed. Specific policy direction, that requires cycling networks to be an integral component of the design or re-design of Transportation Systems will strengthen the PPS vision that, "land use patterns promote a mix of housing, including affordable housing, employment, recreation, parks and open spaces and transportation choices that increase the use of active transportation and transit before other modes of travel."
2. Engage in consultations with the Ministry of Education about including cycling education within the curriculum for specific grades and at key points in time.

We applaud the MTO and MTCS for continued commitment to making Ontario the number one province for cycling in Canada. Provincial leadership in providing actions under the five strategies is essential as we continue to work together to carry out the vision of a cycle-friendly Ontario where health, safety, environmental and economic benefits can be realized.

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