



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Bryna Warshawsky, Acting Medical Officer of Health

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ONTARIO MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION'S DRAFT CYCLING STRATEGY

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board of Health submit a written communication to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation to convey the following:

- a) Board of Health endorsement for developing a provincial Cycling Strategy (Appendix A);*
- b) Middlesex-London Health Unit comments/recommendations pertaining to the draft Cycling Strategy (Appendix B); and*
- c) Board of Health support for the City of London comments/recommendations pertaining to the draft Cycling Strategy.*

Key Points

- The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is developing a provincial Cycling Strategy to increase cycling opportunities and to make cycling safer, and is inviting comments from all stakeholders.
- Cycling helps to prevent the development of chronic diseases and is environmentally friendly, and safer cycling helps prevent injuries.
- Given that the MTO Cycling Strategy aligns with the goals of the Ontario Public Health Standards, the Health Unit supports its development, offers constructive comments/recommendations, and supports the comments/recommendations submitted by the City of London.

Background

Cycling is increasing in popularity for exercise, recreation, and as a mode of transportation. Cycling is an important means of active transportation, allowing individuals to purposely travel between destinations. In addition, it has shown to have a positive effect on the environment and human health. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has prepared a draft Cycling Strategy ([Appendix A](#)) to increase the number of people cycling in Ontario and improve the safety of all road users through a three-pronged approach aimed at:

1. Enhancing the cycling infrastructure in the province,
2. Enhancing cycling safety through education and legislation, and
3. Ensuring relevancy through monitoring, researching and coordination.

The Cycling Strategy

Cycling is encouraged as a means of increasing daily levels of physical activity, which in turn is an important component in preventing obesity, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis. Increased cycling also reduces reliance on the automobile resulting in a positive impact on the environment. In order to prevent injuries, an increase in cycling must be accompanied by an increased emphasis on cycling safety. The draft Cycling Strategy recognizes the shared responsibility between provincial and municipal governments to create environments supportive of cycling, and identifies the need for leadership, education, and funding to assist local municipalities. Key elements of the Strategy are outlined below.

Cycling Infrastructure: The draft Cycling Strategy will enhance cycling infrastructure by supporting municipalities in the development of local cycling networks. It will assist with infrastructure design, provide guidance documents, and increase available options for cycling infrastructure funding.

Enhancing Safety Through Education and Legislation: The draft Cycling Strategy includes the provision of public education for cyclists and drivers through the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) published guides, and through partnerships between the MTO and local road safety organizations for the development and implementation of cycling safety initiatives. In addition, the draft Cycling Strategy includes a commitment by the MTO to review the current *Highway Traffic Act* and to research other relevant transportation legislation with the goal of improving cycling safety.

Monitoring, Researching, and Coordination: The draft Cycling Strategy includes a commitment by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to monitor the strategy's implementation, as well as similar strategies in other jurisdictions. In addition, MTO will continue to gather and analyze data on cycling collisions, monitor and support research aimed at improved cycling safety, and encourage municipalities to collect and share local cycling-related data. And finally, under the draft Cycling Strategy, MTO will continue to coordinate local cycling initiatives through their Active Transportation Working Group and to liaise with cycling stakeholders and organizations across the province.

Comments on the Draft Cycling Strategy

The Ministry has invited comments on the draft Cycling Strategy, and in response, Health Unit staff members have prepared recommendations to be submitted by January 29, 2013. The comments/recommendations can be found in [Appendix B](#). Further, Health Unit staff members support the comments made by the City of London – Environmental Programs & Solid Waste and Roads & Transportation Departments in response to the draft Cycling Strategy, contained within the report submitted to the Civic Works Committee on December 17, 2012 ([Appendix C](#)).

Other Related Health Unit initiatives

One of the Health Unit's strategic directions is to improve health outcomes by increasing physical activity levels among all population groups. As part of delivering the Ontario Public Health Standards, the Healthy Communities and Injury Prevention and Chronic Disease Prevention & Tobacco Control Teams have provided leadership in working with local, regional, provincial and national partners / stakeholders in developing, implementing and supporting numerous policy-focused initiatives that encourage improved health and safety through physical activity, active transportation, injury prevention, and the built environment. [Appendix D](#) provides a list of some of these initiatives. The draft Cycling Strategy is consistent with these initiatives.

Conclusion

The Ministry's draft Cycling Strategy is a positive step towards creating supportive environments for healthy, safe and active lives. The Health Unit supports the recommendations in the draft Cycling Strategy and the comments provided by the City of London, and provides some additional comments for consideration by the Ministry of Transportation.

This report was prepared by Ms. Joyce Castanza, Ms. Emily Hill, and Ms. Bernadette McCall, Public Health Nurses, and Ms. Mary Lou Albanese, Manager, Healthy Communities and Injury Prevention Team.



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<p>This report addresses the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Chronic Disease Prevention Requirements: 6, 7, 11 and Prevention of Injury and Substance Misuse Requirements: 2, 4, 5 and Area of Focus: Improved Health Outcomes</p>
