

Share the Road Cycling Coalition

Advocacy Toolkit

April 2018

Building Bicycle Safe Communities



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JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Making cycling safer in Ontario

As the number of cyclists in our province continues to grow, it's time for Ontario political parties to agree to set aside new money each year to invest in cycling infrastructure and safety.

The Share the Road Cycling Coalition is Ontario's cycling advocacy organization. We advocate on behalf of the cycling community to secure support, funding and policies that enhance safety and encourage cycling.

With provincial and municipal elections coming in 2018, we will help mobilize local volunteers to meet with candidates and discuss cycling in the community. These meetings can start important relationships that will last long after the election, as budgets and safety laws are set for the coming years.

The most important requirement of a cycling advocate is a willingness to learn, listen and build relationships. An advocate actively supports a cause, and tries to get others to support it as well by sharing the key reasons why the issue is important. If you have never met with a politician, it can seem intimidating - but most learn soon enough that meeting with local representatives is fun and rewarding.

This kit contains all the information you will need to get involved in the work of Share the Road to make Ontario safer for cyclists across the province.

Background

Share the Road was launched in 2008 by Eleanor McMahon - following the death of her husband, OPP Sergeant Greg Stobbart who was killed while cycling in Milton.

In 2009, "Greg's Law" was passed. It amended the Highway Traffic Act and increased penalties for driving while under suspension.

In 2012, the Share the Road Cycling Coalition participated in the Office of the Ontario Coroner's Cycling Death Review, which presented 14 recommendations to make cycling safer in Ontario.

Share the Road also played a huge role in the Province releasing its first update to Ontario's Cycling Strategy in 20 years in 2012.

In 2017, the momentum for cycling continued as the Government of Ontario invested \$93 million from its Climate Change Action Plan to help municipalities build safe spaces for people who bike. The funding was used to provide safe and low-cost commuting options for residents by enabling people to ride their bicycles. For more information on the plan, you can visit www.ontario.ca/page/climate-change-action-plan.

By engaging in dialogue, advocates can show Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) and other elected officials that when Ontario bikes, Ontario benefits. Increased governmental support for cycling in the province will make our roads safer, our people healthier and our communities stronger.

Mission

- To mobilize volunteers across Ontario to meet with their local candidates and elected officials in order to engage in a constructive dialogue about road and cycling safety and the need for increased resources to ensure that Ontarians can share the road

Vision

- To improve road safety in Ontario, by increasing government support for cycling infrastructure, education and awareness

Goals

- Ontario can commit to an annual investment of \$75 million in cycling infrastructure. Funds can be set aside each year to build and maintain cycling infrastructure in partnership with municipalities and to provide safe spaces for people who bike on provincial roads and bridges and take their bicycles onto public transit.

- MPPs and local officials must adopt the Vision Zero principle that no loss of life is acceptable on our roads. The emphasis of Vision Zero is on making smart design decisions that will save lives and working towards zero traffic deaths.

- Roadways can be realigned to increase capacity and safety with designs that give people more opportunities for cycling, walking and public transit.

Five steps to become an effective advocate

1.

Educate yourself on the Share the Road Campaign

- Familiarize yourself with the key messages and facts in this kit that have been crafted by Share the Road Cycling to make the case for increased funding and education for cycling in Ontario.
- Take a moment to review the website - www.sharetheroad.ca. From the homepage you can click on the "About Us" and "Programs" links.

2.

Know your audience

Research your local candidates for the Legislature and Council. Each one will have a website. There, you can learn who they are, what topics they have been engaged on and how they have been involved within the community. You can also search online to learn about some of the issues they are tackling in the news. Knowing their background and their priorities will allow you to relate to them and show them that you have an interest in their work.

3.

Know what your "ask" is

Get to the point. It is important that you can be clear about what you are specifically looking to accomplish by meeting with your candidates and elected officials. Here are three questions you can ask.

- Do you support setting aside money each year to build and maintain cycling infrastructure and provide safe spaces for people who bike on streets, roads and bridges?
- Do you agree that we must work towards zero traffic deaths?
- Will you support improved roadways and increasing safety with new designs that give people more opportunities for cycling, walking and public transit?

4.

Always Remain Non-Partisan

To be most effective in presenting your message, you must stick to the issue and avoid being partisan - don't mention who you voted for or your political affiliation. This is not an issue of political party support, you are advocating for the greater public interest.

5.

Follow up

One meeting is not enough to achieve the goals that you seek to accomplish. It is crucial to use your first meeting with a candidate or elected official as a springboard to build a relationship. A good way to do this is to send a follow up email within a week of your meeting to summarize the discussion and offer to keep them informed of cycling news and events in the riding. Of course, you can also give a personal invitation to your next local cycling event.

ENGAGING WITH OFFICIALS

A year-long plan

Two elections in 2018 will select the decision makers who will determine if Ontario's cycling infrastructure continues to grow.

The provincial election will take place on Thursday, June 7. The MPPs who will be elected that day take responsibility for our transportation infrastructure, highway safety laws and passing a provincial budget.

Then, on Monday, October 22 Ontarians will again go to the polls - this time to elect the Mayors and municipal councillors who will decide on local transportation plans.

Elections provide many great opportunities to get out and meet the candidates. In fact, as you can see on the next page, your best bet is to be proactive and ask for a meeting.

As you speak to the candidates, always remember that advocacy is a year-round activity. Engagement with public officials means staying in touch, building long-term relationships and finding new ways to follow up.

For example, if you are talking to provincial candidates during the election, you might want to invite them to go for a bike ride over the summer. On the day after the election, you can make the invitation more formal by putting it in writing as part of a congratulatory letter.

Many local cycling organizations have organized successful "Ride the Riding" bike tours with MPPs.

While biking with your MPP, you can mention that Share the Road will be hosting a breakfast at Queen's Park in the fall. This is one more occasion at which to remind them of the value in cycling infrastructure.

Don't forget to send thank you notes and make sure to schedule another meeting afterwards.

As well, the municipal election campaign will provide an opportunity to start the process again with your local officials!



MEET YOUR CANDIDATES

Everything you

need to know

How to book meeting with a candidate or MPP

1. Send a meeting request to the candidates' campaign offices. You might have to use a search engine to find a list of candidates for your riding or municipality. If you do not know your provincial riding, you can go to www.elections.on.ca, enter your postal code and find it.

2. Follow up two days after sending the meeting request with a phone call to the campaign office. Explain that you sent an email meeting request and ask to speak to the person who schedules meetings.

Make sure to note the names of everyone you speak with. They will likely ask what you'd like to discuss, and who will be attending.

3. Prepare for the meeting by working out all details in advance.

- Decide who will attend and how many representatives will be attending this meeting. Usually, no more than two people are necessary.
- Assign each person attending the meeting a particular role or a specific message.
- Prepare an agenda of how the meeting will be structured and the order of what/when you will cover during your time with the MPP.
- Research the MPP you will be meeting. What party do they belong to, what is their role and what have been some of his/her recent political activities?
- Organize all of your supporting materials (a leave behind fact sheet that could include some key messages from this booklet, business cards and contact information)
- Be prepared and polished. Practice, practice, practice! Read the key messages until you can say them without notes and with your own language. Proofread written correspondence.

Attending a meeting

1. **Arrive early** so you are not rushed. Introduce yourself to the receptionist and others in the office. Give them your card and spend some time trying to get to know them while you wait.

2. **Value their time.** Candidates, MPPs and Councillors rarely allot more than 30 minutes to 1 hour for face-to-face meetings. Keep track of time and stay on point.

3. **Introduce yourself** and inform the candidate or elected official where you are from, what association you are with and something interesting about yourself. This will establish credibility and give them a sense of your connection to the cycling community.

4. **Give out your business card** to everyone in the room. Be sure to have an appropriate business card that has offers a professional representation of Share the Road or your local cycling organization. Most meetings will include at least one assistant, so make sure you note the names of all the participants in attendance at the meeting.

5. **Discuss Share the Road** and give key messages that align with provincial cycling advocacy. Note that some will sit and listen, while others will want to interrupt and ask questions. Each candidate will have a slightly different engagement style. Some may be more formal or casual, detail-oriented or big picture, introverted or extroverted. Be prepared for a range of styles.

6. **Engage the candidate** on the specifics of cycling in the community. They will be interested in your perspective as a constituent and an advocate. In preparing for the meeting be ready to tell the candidate about cycling groups that are active in your community and what they are up to. Act as a resource who knows cycling in the constituency.

7. **Ask questions!** Make a note in advance of the questions you would like to ask the MPP and jot down any that come to mind during the meeting so you don't forget. You can use the next section of this guide for inspiration.

8. **Provide a summary** of the discussion and reiterate your most important points.

9. **Thank the candidate,** MPP or Councillor for their time and reinforce that you look forward to working with them on making the community a safe place to share the road.

Post Meeting Follow Up

1. **Send a brief thank you note** that summarizes the discussion and reinforces your intention to work together in the months ahead. Such a letter can also serve as a way to provide the latest news about the issue, cover any points missed during the meeting, or to answer any question that required further research on your part.

2. **Communicate regularly** by acting as a resource. Make a point to send them a monthly or bimonthly update on things that are going on in the community related to cycling. You want your issue to stay top of mind.

A new vision for cycling in Ontario

We want Ontario's towns and cities to be bike-friendly communities

1. Ontarians have spoken

People across Ontario are demanding investments in cycling infrastructure.

An April 2018 study by Nanos Research found the following:

- 42 per cent of Ontarians are more likely to vote for a candidate if they make a public commitment to fund new cycling infrastructure;
- 61 per cent agree that the Government of Ontario should invest in a new cycling education program - much like swimming lessons;
- 67 per cent agree that the provincial government should invest in cycling infrastructure;
- 70 per cent support making it more convenient to take their bikes on buses; and
- Nine out of 10 do not believe municipalities do a "very good" job at investing in adequate infrastructure for cycling.

2. Stable, annual funding for cycling infrastructure

- Ontario's provincial government must commit to stable, annual funding in order for our cycling infrastructure to keep up with growing demand.
- \$75 million per year from the Ministry of Transportation could build and maintain cycling infrastructure in partnership with municipalities and provide safe space for people who bike on provincial roads and bridges.
- A sustainable and predictable funding commitment will support the momentum of the Province's CycleOn strategy towards becoming the most bicycle friendly jurisdiction in Canada. It will also build upon provincial investments in commuter cycling through the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) and help to reduce greenhouse gases.
- The \$75 million in annual funding would be in addition to what is invested under the CCAP.
- When the Government of Ontario invests in cycling, municipalities step up and invest as well.
- As it stands today, the Province includes the design of safe spaces to cycle on roads and bridge construction projects, but will only build cycling facilities if the municipality provides the funding. This results in a transportation system that only works for people in motor vehicles and creates dangerous and unnecessary gaps in local cycling networks.
- Past provincial investments have been well received by cycling stakeholders and it is now time for a long-term funding plan. This annual investment is the next step.

3. Vision Zero

- Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.
- Approved by the Swedish parliament in 1997, Vision Zero is based on the principle that no loss of life is acceptable on our roads.
- The Vision Zero approach understands that humans make mistakes, but that we should design our roads to expect those mistakes and prevent them from becoming fatal collisions. The emphasis of Vision Zero is on making design decisions that will save lives.
- Action from our leaders can include making a clear public commitment to Vision Zero principles, forming a Vision Zero Working Group, identifying priority areas and actions through data collection and evaluation, and developing a plan for implementation.
- Our leaders must commit to Vision Zero and agree that our goal is to get Ontario to zero traffic deaths.

4. Better, safer road designs

- MPPs and other decision makers must understand that our transportation system is meant to move people - not just cars and trucks. We can move people around more efficiently and safely when we design safe spaces for everyone.
- Roads have a greater capacity to move people who are travelling by foot, bike and transit than people travelling in cars because these three modes take up less space.
- Our roads are not meeting increased demand because they typically follow the old designs that were used when there were fewer people using them.
- The City of Vancouver is increasing roadway capacity and improving mobility for residents by dedicating more space for transit, bikes and pedestrians - without increasing the width of roadways.
- Giving people more options for how they get around can ease congestion.

5. A decade of momentum

- Since Share the Road was founded in 2008, Ontario had made steady progress towards our objective of building a more bicycle-friendly Ontario.
- Communities across Ontario are hard at work building new cycling infrastructure as part of the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program, which saw a \$93 million investment in 2017-18.
- Municipalities are building separated bike lanes and cycle tracks. Several have conducted new research into the safety and economic impact of bike lanes. To date, 42 municipalities have been designated through the Bicycle Friendly Community Program which provides incentives, hands-on assistance and award recognition for communities that actively support bicycling.
- Ontario now has a provincial cycling strategy, a 1 metre safe passing law and record infrastructure investments, but there is still more to do. Sustainable and predictable funding will ensure that this momentum keeps up with growing demand for new cycling infrastructure.



UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

Ontario's political system

In the June 7, 2018 election, 124 seats will be contested in ridings across Ontario.

Following a redistribution of riding boundaries to match current census data and the addition of seats in Northern Ontario, the size of the Legislature will increase from the 107 seats in the 2014 election which saw MPPs elected from three parties.

Ontario Liberal Party

The Ontario Liberal Party currently forms government under the leadership of Premier Kathleen Wynne. For more information visit www.ontarioliberal.ca.

Ontario PC Party

The Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario is currently the Official Opposition. It is led by Doug Ford. For more information visit www.ontariopc.com.

Ontario NDP

The Ontario New Democratic Party is led by Andrea Horwath. For more information visit ontariondp.com.

Legislative role of an MPP

Each MPP represents their party and a riding in Ontario. They have duties in their constituencies (ridings) and at Queen's Park (the Legislature).

As a legislator, a Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) attends meetings at the Legislature, participates in question period and debates and votes to pass Bills into law. An MPP will also take part in meetings of legislative committees where draft legislation will be studied in detail, and where the public, interests groups and other stakeholders can participate to have an input into legislative proposals. An MPP may have additional duties as a cabinet minister, parliamentary assistant, house leader or whip. For more information on the Ontario Legislature visit: <http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/home.do>.

Constituency role of an MPP

As a representative of his/her riding, an MPP meets with people who live in the riding to discuss issues of importance and serves as an access point to the provincial government. They often help people with problems they are experiencing that are related to the provincial government.

MPPs are usually in their constituencies one day a week, which is typically a Friday. They also attend community events and present issues to the Legislature that affect members of their riding.





Prepared by

