

New cycling strategy for Ontario

In a bid to encourage safe cycling and get more people to ride their bikes as an alternative to driving their cars, the Ontario government has released a new cycling strategy.

According to a recent government release, the hope is that more people will be able to safely ride their bikes to work, school and recreation destinations.

By collecting information and input from the public and cycling stakeholders such as Share the Road Cycling Coalition, the Canadian Automobile Association and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the government is attempting what it needs to do to make Ontario a better province for cyclers.

In collecting this information and feedback, the government is hoping to release the next steps to implement their strategy by the spring of 2014.

'CycleON is a strong and integrated, made-in-Ontario strategy,' said Minister of Transportation and Minister of Infrastructure, Glen Murray in a release. 'It has been developed with input from the public, cyclists and advocates. Our goal is to make Ontario the premier cycling province in Canada - a place that promotes safe and healthy travel alternatives connecting people to their jobs, schools, parks and places of interest right across the province.'

The government is also hoping that an improved cycling strategy will be a boon to the economy as well.

In 2010, the government said two million Canadian visitors spent \$391 million while cycling in Ontario, which was reportedly an 18 per cent increase over the previous year.

According to the Canadian Medical Association, a 10 per cent increase in physical activity could reduce direct health care expenditures by \$150 million a year.

Some of the main points of the cycling strategy include enhancing cycling provisions, improving cycling routes, better educate all road users on the rules of the road, encourage more cycling education in schools and in the community, continue to collect data on cycling and its needs and promote Ontario as a premier cycling destination.

For more information on the strategy, visit www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/pubs/cycling/index.shtml

By Jeff Doner