

Local Bike Month scavenger hunt looks to help lower GHGs

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The month of June marks the start of Bike Month and to encourage climate awareness, Climate Action in Dufferin has partnered with Sustainable Orangeville, and Cycling Elements for a county-wide scavenger hunt initiative.

The month-long initiative is looking to help reduce greenhouse gas emission in the community while also encouraging Dufferin residents to get outdoors and be active.

‘We didn’t come up with Bike Month, a lot of groups have picked up on it over the years because it’s a great way to get people out on their bikes, and reminding them that bikes are a great option for transportation,’ said Sara Wicks, manager of climate and energy for Dufferin County.

Dufferin County residents are able to participate in the local initiative by going out to explore bicycle-friendly spaces and locating a number of items on the scavenger hunt list. Items on the scavenger hunt list include a piece of public art or history; bicycle trail or bike share; tree/flower/plant discovered; a trip by bike instead of vehicle; a favourite place to bike; bike rack or lock; local or repair stand; wildlife seen while biking; public bench or picnic table; and entrance sign to public trail. Participants can take a photo or give a brief description if they don’t have a camera and submit it to the Bike Month Scavenger Hunt page on the Join in Dufferin website: <https://joinindufferin.com/>

‘We wanted to try to make this something that was really easily accessible to as many people as possible, like wildlife you saw or a picture of your bike. We tried to make it as applicable to our rural residents as well, understanding that it’s a little bit harder for them,’ said Wicks. ‘Of course, you don’t have to get all 10 of those, it just means you get 10 entries in the draw.’

Dufferin County Council adopted a Climate Action Plan in March, which outlined ways to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in the community by 2050 while also building resiliency to the impact of climate change. One of the priority actions in the plan was based on low-carbon transportation, including biking.

‘In Dufferin County almost 50% of our emissions come from transportation, and the majority of personal trips under five kilometers contribute to the most vehicle kilometers travelled,’ said Wicks. ‘If you can replace a car trip with a bike trip that can have a really big impact and five kilometers is a very reasonable amount of distance for people to either walk or take their bikes. It’s a very simple and easy thing that residents can actually do to help support our emission reduction goals.’

To support low-carbon transportation emissions, Climate Action in Dufferin will be installing a 24-hour electric vehicle charging station network across the county in the future.

‘We understand that you can’t bike everywhere so we’re really trying to encourage people, if they can, to adopt electric vehicles, and the county is helping to support that,’ noted Wicks.

Since starting the initiative, Wicks said there has been great community response especially with bike groups promoting similar messaging.

‘We really hope to make this an annual thing,’ said Wicks.

At the end of the month, one winner will be selected from a draw to receive a bike prize, which includes bells, lights and a \$50 gift card for Cycling Elements.