



## **Cycling Coalition Welcomes Launch of Ontario Bicycling Strategy**

### **Applauds first provincial bicycling policy update in 20 years**

(Ottawa – November 30, 2012) – The Share the Road Cycling Coalition, a provincial cycling policy and advocacy organization, was on hand in Ottawa today to support the release of Ontario’s first cycling policy update in 20 years. The Coalition had called for a new provincial cycling policy since its inception in 2008 and in 2010 launched an evidenced-based research report on cycling in Ontario “When Ontario Bikes, Ontario Benefits” which made the case for an enhanced provincial role in cycling.

Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Municipal Affairs and Housing Bob Chiarelli and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance Yasir Naqvi made the announcement at Ottawa cycling retailer Bushtukah.

“Governments around the world have, in recognition of cycling’s many benefits, developed policy frameworks which enable them to embrace the opportunities that cycling provides to lower congestion, provide citizens with a choice of active and healthy transportation and enhance economic development through the development of bicycle travel and tourism networks,” said Eleanor McMahon, CEO Share the Road Cycling Coalition. McMahon founded the organization when her husband OPP Sgt. Greg Stobbart was killed while cycling in 2006.

“We applaud the government for launching the strategy and for providing Ontarians with an important opportunity to shape a comprehensive cycling vision and strategy for our province. Both the Quebec and B.C. governments have strong cycling cultures and a critical component of that has been the role that governments there have played. Both have bicycle strategies that include investments in infrastructure, legislation that enhances clarity for road users and recognizes the vulnerability of cyclists, and education and awareness programs for cyclists and motorists,” McMahon noted.

In 2010, the Share the Road Cycling Coalition’s Green Paper on Bicycling in Ontario included the results of a comprehensive survey of 1200 stakeholders and provided clear advice and priorities to the Ontario government as to how it can and should play a role in making Ontario more bicycle friendly. In 2012, the Coalition sat on the panel for the Coroner’s Review of Cycling Deaths in the province, which further reinforced the need for cycling infrastructure and education investments in Ontario.

“The Ontario Coroner’s Review called for the development of an Ontario Cycling Plan in order to establish an overarching vision for cycling in Ontario. Today’s announcement outlining improvements to infrastructure, public education and legislation is a welcome step in that direction. Now the real work begins as we establish how we can realize our common vision for safe, healthy, connected communities,” McMahon said.

“We look forward to working with Minister Chiarelli, his officials and colleagues in the legislature as together we reflect the aspirations and priorities of Ontarians for safe places to ride now and for the generations that follow,” McMahon noted.



“Today’s announcement is an important step and represents the contributions of cycling stakeholders from across Ontario. Through our outreach work, our surveys and polling and our Ontario and regional bike summits over the past few years, we have had the opportunity to secure input and share with the Ontario government the priorities of a wide variety of partners and participants who, on a daily basis, are working on creating bicycle friendly communities in Ontario,” McMahon added.

“We now encourage those same stakeholders – cyclists and advocates, municipal leaders and staff, public health, law enforcement, bicycle industry retailers, members of the business community to [participate in this important consultation process.](#)”

### **Quick Facts: Cycling in Ontario**

Share the Road polls Ontarians yearly. Highlights from their April 2012 poll of 1400 Ontarians found:

- Among Ontarians roughly three in ten (29%) report riding their bikes on a regular basis: Weekly or monthly (25%), Every day or nearly every day (4%)
  
- 58 per cent of Ontarians would prefer to cycle more often – up from 53 per cent in 2011.
  
- Safer roads for bicyclists (39 per cent) tops the list of measures that are most likely to encourage Ontarians to bicycle more often, with Infrastructure support a key to unlocking the pent up demand for bicycling
  
- The majority of Ontarians (70%) agree that the Ontario government should actively support cycling. Six in 10 say their communities need more bike lanes or paved shoulders
  
- While majorities agree that cycling offers a variety of health, social, economic and environmental benefits to justify government support, the most persuasive arguments in favor of government action to promote cycling are:
  - o To get kids back to cycling/create a ‘next generation’ of cyclists (73%)
  - o As a way to combat heart disease (72%)
  - o To encourage more people to cycle (by addressing safety concerns/creating more bike lanes/trails) (71%)
  - o To get people out of their cars, cut back on transit congestion and increase transit choices (70%).

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