

Caledon strives to become a Bicycle Friendly Community



Last week, I attended the National Bike Summit in Washington D.C., an annual event dedicated to encouraging safe bicycling across North America and throughout the world.

This event was attended by more than 800 advocates, staff from all levels of government and cycling enthusiasts who came together to advocate for the many benefits of bicycling. In pure economic terms, bicycling pours millions of dollars into the provincial economy, it creates jobs and helps build local economies ? especially in communities such as our own.

Caledon is well known and much loved as a destination for cyclists. We have some of the finest cycling roads and trail ways in the Greater Toronto Area and we annually enjoy a number of world-class bicycle races and rallies. Caledon has all of the natural, raw character to become a leading ?bicycle-friendly? community. I am pleased to report that, working in conjunction with the Share the Road Cycling Coalition (www.sharetheroad.ca) program, Caledon's Parks and Recreation Department is actively working to obtain accreditation as a Canadian Bicycle Friendly Community for our Town.

The Bicycle Friendly Community Program was launched by the Share the Road Cycling Coalition in Canada in August 2010 in partnership with the Washington-based League of American Bicyclists. The Bicycle Friendly Community Program provides incentives, hands-on assistance and award recognition for communities that actively support bicycling. Communities complete a thorough application and are judged in five categories: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation and Planning. A community must demonstrate achievements in each of the five categories in order to be considered for an award. Even the process of applying for Bicycle Friendly Community certification is a great self-assessment tool, as communities learn what they can do to improve their efforts toward bicycle-friendliness.

A report from our Parks and Recreation Department will be coming forward shortly and will review what we've already accomplished in the Town of Caledon ? and there has been quite a bit already accomplished I can assure you ? and it will identify where we still have shortfalls or gaps in achieving our objective of becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community under the Share the Road Cycling Coalition's guidelines.

I am pleased and flattered to have been asked to attend the National Bicycle Summit by the Share the Road Cycling Coalition. It is testament to the commitment our community has to active transportation generally and bicycling more specifically. This is another opportunity to learn about what works and to bring those international lessons back to Caledon to help us achieve the status as Bicycle Friendly Community.