

Mayor enthused about making Caledon more bicycle friendly

By Bill Rea

There are a number of ways to make a community more bicycle friendly, as well as benefits.

Mayor Marolyn Morrison spent part of last week in Washington, D.C. hearing about it at the National Bike Summit.

"It was a wonderful opportunity to network," she remarked, adding there are some outstanding success stories about what communities have been able to do to help bikes and cars co-exist.

"It's something we could look at once the BAR (Bolton Arterial Road) is built," she said, adding there are ways to improve cycling and parking provisions in the community. "There are some fantastic things we could do."

An example she cited, which could be studied in some areas is to have parking on one side of the street and two-way cycling on the other, with dividers in place to separate the bikes from cars.

Morrison also said there are interesting things being tried in other municipalities.

She also said the Summit included a day-long session devoted to women's cycling issues.

"Bikes are made with men in mind," she observed. "Women should have a bike that's specific to women."

Morrison stressed there are advantages to making the community more bicycle friendly, and she has been working to get a committee on active transportation off the ground.

She added a Bicycle Friendly Community Program was launched by the Share the Road Cycling Coalition in 2010, and it offers recognition and designation to communities that actively support cycling. Morrison said there is no cost involved in seeking this recognition. The advantage is it gives the community a chance to have the work that it's done so far peer reviewed, as well as offering ideas on how to improve things, such as when roads are reconstructed.

"Sometimes, we don't see the trees for the forest," she remarked. "It's an opportunity to bring fresh eyes into it."

She added it provides the chance to get suggestions without having to spend a lot of money.

The Summit included representation from throughout Canada and the U.S. Morrison said there were officials there from Oakville, Ajax, Niagara, Kitchener, etc.

"They're all starting to really realize how important cycling is going to be in the future," she observed.

She also cited the example of Indianapolis, where they have established cycling and walking areas separate from the roads.

"People come now, not just because of the Indy 500," she observed, adding they come to take advantage of the cycling amenities.

Morrison added tourism business has improved a lot over the last couple of years.

She also pointed out the amenities in Indianapolis are attracting young people to the city, and companies are eyeing the area too to avail themselves of that talent pool.

One of the speakers at the Summit was Howard Chang, president and CEO of Top Drawer Creative Inc. of Toronto. Morrison said he told about how he pays his employees \$5 bonuses per day to cycle to work.

"That's forward thinking," she said.