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Media Release

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust and partners start the party with *Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike*

Ontario cycling leaders celebrate 2017 with a program that inspires love of the province, and love of cycling.

April 12, 2017 In 1967, it was singing “Ontari ari ari-o” and celebrating Expo. Fifty years later, if Ontario’s cycling leaders have their way, Ontario will celebrate the country’s special year on their bikes through *Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike*.

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Ontario By Bike, the Greenbelt Foundation, and Share the Road Coalition will present *Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike* to inspire Ontarians to discover some of the best cycling in the world, in their own backyard - from the Great Lakes to the Greenbelt and the Great North.

Eleanor McMahon, Ontario Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, announced the province’s support of *Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike* as part of a line-up of Ontario 150 celebrations and events taking place across the province in 2017.

“Ontario’s 150th anniversary is an opportunity for people to come together and to experience the incredible resources our province offers,” says Minister McMahon. “*Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike* will showcase incredible cycling opportunities and enable people of all ages to connect with their communities by bike.”

For years, communities and non-government organizations (NGOs) have been collaborating and investing to make Ontario a premier cycling destination and to make our communities bike and pedestrian friendly. Today, the province boasts thousands of kilometers of existing cycling tourism routes and events that are world-class:

- The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail is a 2000 km, signed, provincial cycling route showcasing 100 community and First Nations from Quebec to Sault Ste. Marie.
- The Greenbelt Route is a popular 380 km cycling route that connects 27 communities in Ontario’s protected countryside.

- The Great Waterfront Trail Adventure (August 6 to 12) is one of Ontario's signature annual cycling holidays that showcases a section of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail and other major cycling routes each year. <http://www.waterfronttrail.org/cycle-tour/route-2017>.
- Ontario By Bike organizes annual weekend long tours throughout Ontario. The 2017 rides will be held in Georgian Bay, the St. Lawrence River and Peterborough. <http://www.ontariobybike.ca/events/ontario-by-bike-tours>

"After 25 years of investment by over 100 communities the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail has much to offer cyclists", says Marlaine Koehler, Executive Director of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust. *Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike* is part of a special year and a once-in-a-generation opportunity to showcase Ontario's iconic cycling experiences such as the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail and the Greenbelt Route. "

"We are proud to be part the Ontario 150 celebrations, encouraging Ontarians to get on their bikes and enjoy active recreation, delicious local food, and inspiring green spaces in Ontario's protected Greenbelt and across the province," says Burkhard Mausberg, CEO of Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation.

Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike will make cycling easier in three ways: 15 community events that complement existing, popular cycling routes and events; digital communication initiatives to build a legacy of cycle touring within the province; and a comprehensive youth education program that will teach Ontario youths safe cycling practices, fostering Ontario's cycling culture.

Celebrations will include the Waterfront Regeneration Trust's launch of Ontario's first northern cycling route on June 9th, with an event that involves cycling and canoeing from Gros Cap on Lake Superior to Sault St. Marie on newest section of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail and Trans Canada Trail.

The second piece of *Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike* is designed to make planning a cycling trip easier by implementing online and digital communication strategies. Already online are itineraries from the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Greenbelt Foundation, Niagara Cycle Centre and Many Regional Tourism Organizations. Planned are online itineraries for the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure and Ontario by Bike Tours and Community Celebrations.

"We are looking forward to getting wheels spinning with a series of cycling oriented Ontario 150 community celebrations in top ride destinations across Ontario. Combining these celebrations and the development of legacy cycling itineraries is certain to inspire more Canadians to get out and celebrate by bike in 2017," says Louisa Mursell, Executive Director, Transportation Options.

The third component for *Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike* is a Legacy-Cycling Education Program that will teach 4,000 10-year olds how to cycle safely and follow the rules. Share the Road Coalition has secured the participation of Canadian Tire Jumpstart Foundation whose funding will train up to 1,000 youths and Hurontario Heritage Partnership, which will train counsellors to deliver cycling courses to summer camp students.

"*Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike* is the ideal opportunity to enhance cycling education in the province. Our work with the partnership will be to help build a safe cycling culture, where Ontario families

feel confident exploring all this province has to offer by bike," says Jamie Stuckless, executive director of the Share the Road Coalition.

It is the aim of *Ontario 150: Celebrate by Bike* to make it very easy for people to plan a cycling holiday and reconnect to the Province's iconic landscapes: the Great Lakes, the protected Greenbelt and the Great North.

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About Ontario 150

2017 is the 150th anniversary of Ontario as a province. To recognize this historically significant year, the government has launched Ontario 150, a year-long commemoration that is honouring the province's past, showcasing the present and inspiring future generations. Through the Ontario 150 grant programs and a series of signature initiatives, Ontario is engaging youth, encouraging cultural expression, promoting participation in sport and recreation, and creating economic opportunities across the province.

Waterfront Regeneration Trust

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust is a charity leading the movement to protect, connect and celebrate the largest group of freshwater lakes on earth by completing the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. After 25 years of investment with 100+ communities, First Nations and conservation authority partners, the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail is a, signed 2,100 km route using paths and roadways, connecting the eastern border of Ontario to Grand Bend and Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie and Lake Superior. It is one of Canada's iconic cycling experiences.

www.waterfronttrail.org.

Greenbelt Foundation

Ontario's Greenbelt is the solution for fresh air, clean water, and a thriving economy with healthy local food and active outdoor recreation. At 2 million acres, it's the world's largest permanently protected greenbelt, keeping our farmlands, forests, and wetlands safe and secure. The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation works to help keep farmers successful, strengthen local economies, protect natural features, and promote sustainable growth. Learn more at greenbelt.ca.

Ontario By Bike

[Ontario By Bike](http://OntarioByBike.com)TM works with a variety of partners to develop and promote cycling and cycle tourism across Ontario. Administering a Network of over 1,250 certified bicycle friendly businesses and providing a comprehensive portal of information, Ontario By Bike is inspiring visitors and residents to explore more of the province by bike. Ontario By Bike is a program of [Transportation Options](http://TransportationOptions.com), a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering sustainable transportation and tourism solutions in Ontario. Ontario By Bike – www.ontariobybike.ca

Share the Road Coalition

Share the Road Coalition is a provincial non-profit organization working to build a bicycle friendly Ontario. We work in partnership with municipal, provincial and federal governments, the business community, road safety organizations and other non-profits to: Enhance access for bicyclists on roads and trails; improve safety for all bicyclists; and educate citizens on the value and importance of safe bicycling for healthy lifestyles and healthy communities. Share the Road Coalition programs include convening annual Ontario Bike Summit for the province's cycling leaders, administering the Bike-Friendly Community Programs, hosting Greg's Ride, an annual advocacy ride. www.sharetheroad.ca