

Appendix IX. Cycling Promotion and Education Best Practices

While implementing safe and comfortable cycling infrastructure is important for increasing cycling rates, many cities have used promotion and education strategies to leverage those investments. Through research and public consultation during the Cycling Master Plan (CMP) update process, several relevant issues have emerged:

- The public would like to have better ongoing communication with the city regarding cycling issues, such as route planning, reporting problems, and requesting new infrastructure.
- The public wants to be better informed on the construction and opening of new cycling infrastructure.
- Cycling events like the Tour de Mississauga and MCAC Community Rides are popular and important for fostering a cycling culture, and should continue.
- Many would like to see education opportunities and campaigns for cyclists and drivers about how to better interact with each other safely.

The 2010 CMP identified awareness and accessibility as the main themes that encourage people to ride their bicycles, and these are reflected in the issues above. People want to be aware of what is happening in regards to cycling infrastructure, and they want infrastructure to be accessible to them, in terms of knowing how to comfortably ride a bike on the various facilities, and how to get around, whether for their commute or for recreation.

The 2018 CMP promotion and education strategy focuses on promoting cycling to motivate more Mississauga residents to cycle more often, help to improve cycling safety, and foster a culture of cycling in the city.

Background

The Active Transportation Office has a cycling promotion and education program led by a full-time staff member. They create partnerships, operate events, and distribute safety and educational material as per the 2010 CMP recommendations. In particular, the 2010 CMP proposed seven recommendations for the promotion and education of cycling. These 2010 recommendations, listed below, are consistent with comments received at the 2018 CMP public consultations. Below is a summary of progress made toward achieving the goals articulated in 2010.

1. Promote cycling to schools

Mississauga has heavily relied on the Region of Peel to promote cycling to schools. Mississauga supports the programs listed below, but does not have an active role in planning or operating them:

- School Travel Planning program;
- School bike rack program; and
- Bike to School Week.

The programs listed above are focused on promoting cycling to elementary school students and parents. They do not target secondary and post-secondary education institutions, and do not include a cycling safety and skills education focus. Mississauga reaches school aged children and parents through its overall promotion and education programs, but does not specifically promote cycling to students.

2. Increase awareness of cycling to the general population

Mississauga has made significant progress in increasing awareness of cycling among city residents. The efforts of the Active Transportation Office, Mississauga Cycling Advisory Committee (MCAC), Region of Peel and other stakeholders have created an annual promotion program that promotes cycling to residents. This program includes:

- Bike Month;
- Bike to School Week;
- MCAC Community Rides;
- Tour de Mississauga;
- Mississauga Bike Challenge;
- Mississauga Bikes website; and
- Mississauga Bike Ambassador program.

The 2010 CMP also recommended establishing and implementing a communication plan as an action item. A formal communication plan was never developed. Some communication tactics such as the cycling report card and cycling safety guidebook were developed after adoption of the 2010 CMP, but they have not been continually updated. The increased awareness of cycling in the city was mainly achieved through individual projects, events and programming.



Figure IX-1:
2017 Mississauga
cycling map cover

The city's current cycling promotion program also includes the creation and/or distribution of published materials. In particular, the city uses a bike map to promote the cycling network. The bike map is planned to be updated annually, and distributed to residents through the city's website, community centres, libraries, bike shops and at community events throughout the year.

3. Foster community cycling events

Mississauga has developed a strong community event portfolio that provides residents with the opportunity to cycle in the city. MCAC launched the Tour de Mississauga in 2007, and the community rides series in 2012. The Active Transportation Office took over responsibility for the management of the Tour de Mississauga in 2017, however this was intended to be temporary, as it is outside the scope of Transportation and Works to operate events. The Active Transportation Office also supports the Mississauga Cycling Advisory Committee with organizing and operating community rides. Combined, the events host an average of 4,000 participants annually.

4. Develop a comprehensive network of organizations and agencies to implement the Cycling Master Plan

The city has collaborated with a number of organizations to implement the 2010 Cycling Master Plan, and in particular, to share promotional resources. Some of the organizations the city has partnered with are:

- Region of Peel;
- City of Brampton;
- Share the Road;
- Smart Commute/SustainMobility;

- Metrolinx/GO Transit; and
- Waterfront Regeneration Trust.

For example, Share the Road and the Region of Peel now produce free cycling guides and provide safety equipment, such as bike lights and bells, which the Active Transportation Office helps to distribute. As well, GO Transit and the Waterfront Regeneration Trust worked with the Active Transportation Office to include Mississauga in the “Trail-to-GO” program, providing wayfinding for cyclists and pedestrians between the Waterfront Trail and GO Transit stations along the Lakeshore GO Rail line. These partnerships have been important to promoting safe cycling in Mississauga.

5. Establish a tourism plan focused on cycling

Mississauga has not developed a tourism plan focused on cycling. Instead, the Active Transportation Office has focused its efforts on reaching out to people who live and work in Mississauga.

The City of Mississauga is currently developing a tourism master plan that will include cycling. Cycling is listed as an activity in the Mississauga tourism guide and its activity map includes several key recreational trails in the city.

6. Develop a stronger working relationship with Peel Regional Police

Collaboration with Peel Regional Police has been limited. They have recently developed a bicycle registration program and distribute some anti bike theft publications. They also run the Peel Children’s Safety Village which provides bicycle safety education.

7. Establish an educational plan for motorists and cyclists

Mississauga has improved cycling education opportunities and offers several resources and programs for residents to learn more about cycling including:

- Peel Region Cyclists Handbook;
- Cycling safety content on Mississaugabikes.ca website;
- CAN-BIKE cycling education program;
- Peel Police Children’s Safety Village;
- MCAC Community Rides;
- Ad hoc clinics and workshops; and
- Bicycle Ambassador program.

Many of the resources and publications have been distributed by the Active Transportation Office. The Cycling Ambassador program also helps to distribute a large amount of this material during the summer.

Best Practices

Motivating more Mississauga residents to cycle more often, and increasing the number of cycling trips in the city requires residents to change their transportation habits. Cultural practices, social influence, emotions and attitude all come into play in the decision to start cycling or cycle more.¹

The City of Sydney Cycling Enablement Strategy did a review of global best practices in cycling behavior change initiatives. The review included 92 case studies from 26 cities, across 14 countries, in 4 continents. They concluded that the decision to cycle is rarely made in a private bubble; it is shaped by external influences, such as individual desires and abilities, social influences and the physical environment.

These other factors should be addressed in cycling plans, in addition to the infrastructure.²

The City of York (population 200,000) used a combined cycling infrastructure and promotional strategy under the framework of the UK Cycling City and Towns Program. The program was initiated with an investment of £4.65 million (\$8.72 million CAD) and took place over the course of four years (2008 to 2011). Between 40% and 50% of the total project budget was allocated entirely towards promotional programs. Results from the program indicate that the cycling mode share doubled from 10% to 20% over the four years. The City of York now holds the distinction of having the 3rd highest cycling rates in the UK.³

Promotion and education programs can maximize the use of existing infrastructure, provide education and awareness of travel alternatives, promote safer and more respectful behavior between road users, and help to precipitate a positive change in societal and cultural attitudes towards active transportation.

Branding

A number of cities have branding for their bike programs and/or infrastructure. This branding can be put onto city websites, social media, and physical assets such as signage and bike racks. The branding helps to identify a unified and cohesive program, and



Figure IX-2: “Bike Vancouver” branded bike rack. Photo by the City of Vancouver.

promote communication channels for public interaction. It can also contribute to a shared identity that encourages residents to start cycling or cycle more. In addition, from an economic development perspective, it can help promote the city as a healthy, vibrant, and enjoyable destination for those visiting or considering visiting. A strong cycling identity can act as a major attractor for businesses who want to locate in cities that offer a high level of transportation choice to their employees.

Copenhagen’s “I Bike CPH” is a recognized international brand and has become synonymous with active transportation and livability.

The brand has been used to market Copenhagen as a modern and healthy metropolis, attracting international conferences, highly educated new residents, and guests by highlighting the excellent cycling conditions. The brand is used on signage, as well as on their website and smartphone navigation apps.⁴



Figure IX-3: Screenshot of “I Bike CPH” branded cycling navigator by the City of Copenhagen

The City of Mississauga should develop a public brand for cycling initiatives that promotes Mississauga as a “bicycle-friendly city.”

Public Communication

Comments from the 2018 Cycling Master Plan consultation have indicated that people appreciated the interaction available through the project website, and would like more outlets for communication, such as through social media.

The City of Toronto has a comprehensive cycling website, including an up-to-date network map, cycling infrastructure projects list, and information about education and programs.⁵ This information is also advertised through a dedicated Twitter account.⁶

Many cities use social media to advertise cycling initiatives and maintain public interest. Two-way communication may also be used to collect public feedback.



Figure IX-4: Screenshot of City of Toronto Twitter account for cycling infrastructure

The City of Mississauga should update its trails and cycling website, and allow for easy updates by cycling staff to ensure information is current. The website should also allow easy communication with staff. Social media accounts for the Active Transportation Office should also be created to actively release information to the public, advertise cycling events, and solicit public participation.

Promoting and Celebrating New Infrastructure

The city should do more to advertise and celebrate new cycling infrastructure. Comments from the public consultations have indicated that many people are unaware when new infrastructure is planned, being built, and opened. Websites from other municipalities generally have this information, as well as how to use new types of facilities.

Comparing the implementation strategies of Chicago, IL and Salt Lake City, UT demonstrates how promotion campaigns can significantly increase the use of new infrastructure. In

Chicago, promotion and education campaigns were executed in combination with cycling infrastructure development to promote bicycle commuting. In Salt Lake City, cycling infrastructure was installed with little direct promotion. Consequently, the impact on commuting rates in Salt Lake City was less significant than in Chicago. The overall bicycle mode share in Salt Lake City stayed relatively flat (1.52% in 1990 to 1.49% in 2000, while in Chicago, mode share doubled, from 0.28% to 0.50% over the same period).⁷

One strategy of highlighting new and existing infrastructure, along with fostering a cycling culture, is to install bicycle counters that display statistics on them.

Eco-Counters have been used in many places to both provide data to planners, and show the public how many cyclists use a route. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency



Figure IX-5: Bike counter with public display in San Francisco, CA. Photo by SFMTA.

has installed 75 permanent bike counters. Many show an active daily and yearly bike count. This helps communicate to the public how many cyclists actually use a facility, which is often underestimated. As well, the data is available online to the public as part of a communications and open data strategy.⁸

A website, social media platforms, e-mail newsletters and media releases are all outlets to let the public know that something new has opened. Extending this to celebrate and advertise the new infrastructure can generate interest and enthusiasm in trying it out, and spreading the word.

Encouraging Bicycle and Multi-Modal Commuting

Metrolinx, GO Transit and MiWay support and are working towards multi-modal commuting. Metrolinx's recently released Regional Transportation Plan supports cycling and proposes a regional cycling network.⁹ They also operate Smart Commute, a program that encourages commuters to walk, cycle, and carpool.¹⁰ The City of Mississauga is a member of Smart Commute. GO Transit and MiWay allow bicycles on buses and trains (with some limitations), bike parking is available at all rapid transit stations, and enclosed bike stations are being built at some GO stations.

Much of the marketing and promotion for these are being done by Metrolinx, and proposed through Mississauga's Transportation Demand Management strategy (TDM).¹¹ The Active Transportation Office should continue to support these programs.

Cycling Events and Initiatives

The Tour de Mississauga and MCAC Community Rides are popular cycling events in the city. They help to promote bicycle infrastructure and cycling in the city. Keeping these events running is important.

The City of Mississauga should support these events, but because they require a time and staff investment that is beyond the capacity and mandate of the Active Transportation Office, it is recommended that they be operated by a third party.



Figure IX-6: MCAC Community Ride in Mississauga

Education and Bicycle Skills Training

Many municipalities provide or support bicycle education, safety materials, and skills training. This is normally in the form of safety guides, online information, and cycling skills safety courses, such as CAN-BIKE.

The City of Toronto provides CAN-BIKE courses for a fee, through its Parks, Forestry & Recreation department.¹² CAN-BIKE is the only accredited cycling safety program in Canada, operated by Cycling Canada.¹³ The City of Thunder Bay partners with a local not-for-profit organization to provide low-cost CAN-BIKE based cycling education programs for residents of all ages, including bike rodeos for kids, community discovery rides, commuter courses, workplace courses, women-only courses, 55+ courses, advanced cycling courses and instructor workshops. Branded "Safe Cycling Thunder Bay," it is one of the largest programs of its kind in North America.¹⁴

Mississauga should continue to provide cycling safety publications and information. This can be done through public outreach, using the existing Bike Ambassador program that hires students during the summer for this purpose. The city should also look to grow its CAN-BIKE based cycling skills program.

Promotion in Schools

Promoting cycling in schools encourages early development of cycling skills, and provides good exercise habits for young people.

The City of Vancouver and Province of British Columbia partner with a local cycling advocacy group, HUB Cycling,

to execute year-round promotion and education programs including a comprehensive bike to school education program. This education program includes courses for children in grades 3 to 8 that teach rules of the road and safe cycling skills, and provides the opportunity to practice on neighborhood streets. In 2016, HUB Cycling's team of certified instructors taught courses to 4,134 students in 32 schools.¹⁵ 49% of the course participants said that they were more likely to ride a bike after completing the program. This finding is in line with a nationwide German elementary school cycling education program that establishes lifelong cycling habits through early cycle-skills training.¹⁶

The work of encouraging students to cycle to/from school fits well with regional-level goals and responsibilities. The Region currently operates the Peel School Travel Planning program, the bike rack program, and Bike to School Week. A cycling skills program for students would be beneficial. The City of Mississauga should continue to liaise with the Region of Peel as necessary to support these programs and investigate opportunities to support cycling skills education in schools.

Education through Enforcement

Police enforcement can be used as a tool to educate cyclists and drivers. Ontario has some specific laws that affect motorists' interaction with cyclists. The "Dooring" law requires that drivers and passengers only open doors into traffic when safe to do so, while stopped on the side of the road. While on-street parking adjacent to bike lanes is not as prevalent in Mississauga as it is in other cities, this is still a concern, and something drivers need to be aware of.

In 2015, Ontario enacted a one-metre passing law, where motorists must leave a minimum of one metre between their vehicle and a cyclist when passing. As close passing has been brought up as a concern during public consultations, this could be a target of enforcement. Breaking either of these laws can result in fines and demerit points.¹⁷

The City of Mississauga should work with Peel Regional Police to support enforcement that encourages safer driving and cycling behaviours. Additional education through ticket diversion programs could also be considered as a proactive strategy.

Conclusions

Since adopting the 2010 Cycling Master Plan, Mississauga has made significant progress in fostering a culture of cycling and motivating residents to ride. Thanks to the vision and efforts of the Mississauga Cycling Advisory Committee, and the increased promotion and education focus of the Active Transportation Office, Mississauga runs several successful annual programs that have helped to further the 2010 Cycling Master Plan goals and position Mississauga as a leading city in the Active Transportation promotion and education field.

Although a lot of progress has been made, there are many opportunities to improve. Mississauga's promotion and education efforts are currently driven by opportunity rather than strategy. The city should develop a comprehensive promotion and education strategy, drawing on the successes of other cities, then set measurable goals and work diligently to implement and achieve them.

References

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