

8.1. Program Development

Encouragement, promotional and educational programs are equally important as and complementary to the physical infrastructure provided by bicycle facilities, and are an essential part of a comprehensive approach to increasing cycling levels.

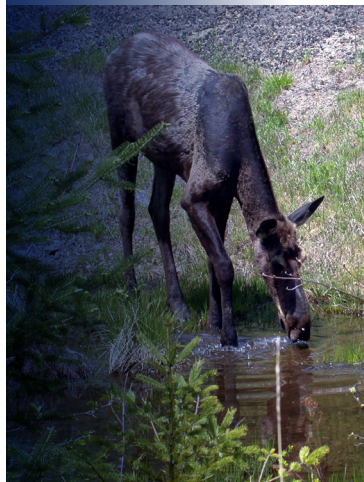
Such programs can serve to:

- raise awareness of the benefits of cycling;
- improve community attitudes towards cycling in general;
- increase the skills and confidence levels of cyclists of all ages;
- teach motorists and cyclists how to share the road;
- promote the cycling facilities and amenities available; and
- support cyclists who want to commute by bike.

To be effective, these programs should also include incentives to encourage participation and be supplemented by enforcement to ensure the safety of all users. Education and encouragement programs should be designed to reach all ages and types of cyclists.

Existing initiatives in Haliburton County to increase participation in cycling include an updated cycling routes map, website and the annual Shifting Gears Cycling Festival. Further detail on existing programs can be found in Section 3.2. These provide a starting point for further programs or enhancements to existing programs.

There is a need in Haliburton County for safe cycling courses for children and adults new to cycling. As well, more opportunities are needed to educate cyclists on safety and skills, including effective riding skills, how to properly wear helmets, commuter cycling, cycling rules and responsibilities, and defensive riding and safety. Methods to deliver these programs can range from the Shifting Gears Cycling Festival to public education campaigns, and school-based or community-based cycling skills.



Courtesy of Yours Outdoors

8.2. Cycle Tourism

Given that most cycling programming as outlined above relates to local residents, it does not address the economic opportunities and needs presented by cycle tourists. Promoting and marketing Haliburton County as a cycling destination demands other types of programs and considerations.

Cycle tourism is a niche market that has a strong presence in other areas of Canada, such as Québec and the Atlantic provinces. In Ontario, the Niagara Region has positioned itself as a cycling destination and nearby County of Lennox & Addington is endeavouring to do likewise.

A 2006 study¹¹ indicates that cycle tourists visiting Australia stayed on average 16 nights compared with 8 nights for total travellers and spent approximately \$2,400 on their trip, about \$900 more than total travellers. Cycle tourists who rented accommodations were more likely to camp in a tent but also stayed in hotels or at a bed & breakfast. In Quebec, bicycle tourists spend an average of \$83 per day compared to Quebec tourists in general, who spend an average of \$66 per day. Fifty-three percent of bicycle tourists choose to stay at tourist accommodations (B&B's, hotels, motels etc).¹²

Cycle tourists engage in a variety of activities while on their trips including: visiting with friends/family; surfing/swimming; shopping; enjoying country/wildlife/scenery; going to restaurants; historical places; bushwalking [hiking]; gardens/parks; and museums.

Another aspect of cycle tourism is the development of experiences that include cycling tours and tour packages that include cycling activities. Experience Haliburton is an initiative involving the Haliburton County Tourism, Haliburton Highlands Trails & Tours Network, and private tour operators. These partners work together to develop and promote unique Haliburton vacation and learning opportunities for tourists and local residents. These are single or multi-day events or experiences are often packaged with accommodation, good food, and other experiences and services. For example, Peddle Your Arts is an experience package that involves participants cycling from art studio to art studio.

¹¹ *Cycle Tourists – Insights. Roy Morgan Research, Sydney, NSW, Australia, June 2006.*

¹² *Bicycling in Quebec in 2005, Velo Quebec, June 2006*

These cycling experiences can:

- attract more tourists to the area resulting in benefit to the local economy,
- provide additional incentives for people to try cycling or do more of it, and
- result in more involvement (and support) by other sectors and business in cycling activities.

Accordingly, the priorities for cycle tourists visiting Haliburton County would include:

- Awareness of area attractions as a cycling destination
- Ability to access information online, including maps, accommodations, amenities and feature attractions
- Accommodations, including tent camping option
- Bicycle friendly businesses
- Local tours and experiential packages
- Staging and rest areas with access to water and washrooms
- Convenient and secure bike parking
- Proper directional signage to accommodations, feature attractions, staging and rest areas, bike parking, and bicycle routes
- Bike and gear rental (such as helmets)

This could be accomplished by:

- Following through on recommended cycling network improvements to ensure that routes are safe, signed and well-maintained
- Providing a website with all relevant information and maps

- Establishing links through other Haliburton County sites, such as Haliburton County Tourism, Chamber of Commerce, Experience Haliburton, Haliburton Highlands Trails & Tours Network, etc.
- Ensuring Haliburton County comes up as a cycling destination on search engines
- Creating a cycling friendly atmosphere in Haliburton County
- Working together to attract cycle tourists and extend their stay or encourage a return visit
- Offering opportunities for tent camping in addition to lodges, B'n'Bs, hotels and motels
- Conducting customer service training workshops so front line staff are able to provide information and guidance to cycle tourists (could also include hiking and skiing)
- Placing an HHCC logo in windows to indicate 'cycle friendly' establishments (both homes and businesses)
- Supporting the Experience Haliburton initiative

8.3. Policy Development

Haliburton County and its four municipalities have shown a substantial commitment to recreational activities and trails. The official plans of both levels of government have objectives and policy statements that support and promote this. However, to more fully realize the goals of the Cycling Master Plan, the County and Local Official Plans need to include objectives and policies that are specific to cycling and related infrastructure, and which recognize cycling as part of a healthy lifestyle and a sustainable tourism industry.

With reviews of the official plans scheduled in the near future (see Table 6), the HHCC and others in the cycling community have an opportunity to submit and promote the inclusion of cycling related policy into the five official plans. This can be achieved by attending public open houses and submitting potential cycling related policy wording to Councils for consideration.

Table 6: Projected review dates for County and Municipal Official Plans

Official Plan	Projected Review Date
County of Haliburton	by March 2011
Municipality of Dysart et al	2009
Municipality of Highlands East	2009
Township of Algonquin Highlands	2010
Township of Minden Hills	2010

The following objectives and actions present potential starting points to establish policy wording that reflects the cycling community's aspirations and priorities. Please note that these are suggestions only and should be reviewed and modified as circumstances dictate.

Objectives:

- a) To encourage bicycling and work towards a safe, bicycle-friendly environment in Haliburton County (or specific municipality) to enhance the overall quality of life.
- b) To promote safety through bicycling education and enforcement initiatives.
- c) To recognize and support bicycling as a legitimate and an environmentally sustainable form of transportation for utilitarian and recreational purposes.
- d) To promote bicycling as part of Haliburton County's (or specific municipality) tourism experience in partnership with the Haliburton County Cycling Coalition, Haliburton County Tourism, Haliburton Highlands Trails & Tours Network, the private sector and other agencies.
- e) To develop and support a Cycling Network and related infrastructure in Haliburton County that is planned, designed, constructed, and maintained according to recognized standards and/or guidelines.
- f) To incorporate bicycling in the County/Municipality's land use and transportation planning activities.

- g) To encourage and assist local municipalities to adopt and support bicycle-friendly initiatives where appropriate and to develop bicycle facilities which connect with the Cycling Network (County Official Plan only).

Desired actions by the County/Municipalities:

- a) Establish the Haliburton Highlands Cycling Coalition as an advisory sub -committee to the Roads Committee; and maintain, support and encourage the activities of the committee with membership consisting of political, public, appropriate agencies and government staff representation.
- b) Support the implementation of the Cycling Master Plan and Cycling Network where it follows county/municipal roads.
- c) Provide the Haliburton Highlands Cycling Coalition with the approved annual regional roads rehabilitation and construction program to examine and to provide recommendations on bicycling-related works.
- d) Pave or widen shoulders on cycling routes recommended in the Cycling Master Plan and as per the list of priorities for construction and upgrades to county/municipal roads.
- e) Adopt provincially and/or nationally recognized engineering standards as guidelines to assist in the planning and design of bicycle facilities in the Cycling Network. Prior to the design and construction of a bikeway or facility, safety and operational matters will be considered as well as the cultural, scenic and other environmental attributes through which the designated routes pass.
- f) Ensure local zoning by-laws contain minimum provisions for safe and secure bicycle parking in high activity areas and at public buildings.