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ONTARIO BICYCLISTS EAGER TO HIT THE TRAILS AND BOOST ONTARIO TOURISM RECOVERY

Three of Ontario's leading cycling organizations release the findings of its survey of 865 cyclists showing that Ontario cyclists will cycle the same or more than last year and are planning to stay close to home, keeping their touring dollars in the province.

Toronto—June 12, 2020 –If there is one form of physical activity that's most impervious to the COVID-19 virus, it's cycling. Cyclists can maintain their physical health and safety at the same time as maintaining social distancing. In a recent survey an overwhelming number of cyclists (92%) said they expect to take part in more, or the same amount of, bicycling as in previous years. "The survey is consistent with [data from Eco-Counter](#), which documents a significant increase in recreational cycling in Canada over the past few months", said Jamie Stuckless, executive director of Share the Road Coalition.

Almost 900 bicyclists were asked in May how COVID-19 had affected their cycling plans, and how Ontario cycling destinations could inspire them to visit in the post-pandemic period. The survey provided 865 responses and over 700 additional comments. "Many cyclists have changed their cycle tourism plans and are looking to cycle closer to home, in communities that offer safe infrastructure, signage and bike parking" said Marlaine Koehler, executive director of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust.

The survey was issued by Ontario By Bike (Transportation Options) and the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (Waterfront Regeneration Trust) in partnership with Share the Road Cycling Coalition and with assistance from RMCG Inc. It presented several key facts on COVID-19's impact on how the pandemic affected cycling activities; bicyclists' plans for the future; and how communities and businesses could welcome cyclists in the last half of 2020.

The survey found that, although cyclists continued to cycle recreationally or train throughout the pandemic, many cancelled or postponed cycling trips in Ontario or Canada (67%), or international trips (41%). Over one-third were planning to participate in an Ontario or Canadian cycling event that has been cancelled or rescheduled, and 34% are making plans for future participation.

In the upcoming months of 2020, Ontario cyclists are planning both day trips (62%) and multi-day trips (24%), to locations closer to home and within the province. 50% say they may cycle in small groups (fewer than 20 participants) as soon as this fall – and some will wait until 2021 to bike with others – but only a small percentage has no travel plans.



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As well as bicycling, they anticipate visiting outdoor locations such as parks and conservation areas, beaches, camping, and cafes and restaurants.

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Louisa Mursell, Executive Director of Ontario By Bike says, “Ontario has an exciting number of, and varied, cycling destinations for people wanting to tour for a day or two this summer, including extensive provincial cycling routes such as the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, the Greenbelt Route, and the Trans Canada Trail.”

Here is a list of some sites and resources with great day and 2 day trips plans:

www.ontariobybike.ca

www.waterfronttrail.org

www.greenbelt.ca/cycling

Cycling in Ontario / Le velo en Ontario Guide - www.ontariobybike.ca/2020

The survey offers good news for Ontario’s bicycle-friendly communities and businesses as cyclists plan to stay closer to home on day or regional trips. The survey offered insights on cyclists’ list of priorities that could help attract their business. These include assurance that cyclists are welcome in the communities, and that health, safety and sanitation measures in place. Bike parking and safe infrastructure are important factors.

Cyclists (94%) indicate that they will respect distancing guidelines to protect themselves and others; 72% will carry hand sanitizer, and 54% will use masks when distancing poses a challenge.

As cycling trails in Ontario continue to open, both cyclists and bicycle-friendly communities alike are looking forward to making the rest of 2020 great!

For full survey report and findings visit: www.transportationoptions.org/ontarioresearch

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