

September 10, 2002

To: The Toronto Cycling Committee
From: Sean Wheldrake, Bicycle Promotions Coordinator
Re: The Road and Trail Safety Ambassadors

Recommendation:

The Toronto Cycling Committee receive for information.

Comments:

Please see the attached summary of the 2002 Road and Trail Safety Ambassador program. As the Ambassador team leader, Liora Freedman did a great job meeting public demands with limited resources.

The Road & Trail Safety Ambassadors have conducted a study on cyclist behaviour over the last four years, including the ratio of female to male cyclists, helmet and mask use, bicycle choice, and trip purpose. These numbers are collected to help staff to develop and change cycling programs based on cycling trends. The results are included in the summary.

Sincerely,

Sean Wheldrake

ROAD AND TRAIL SAFETY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Year End Summary – April to August 2002

BACKGROUND – TORONTO BIKE PLAN

The Toronto Bike Plan (TBP) establishes a vision for cycling that creates *a safe, comfortable and bicycle friendly environment which encourages people of all ages to use bicycles for everyday transportation and enjoyment*. To "shift gears" towards a more bicycle friendly city, the Plan sets out integrated principles, objectives and recommendations regarding safety, education and promotional programs as well as cycling related infrastructure, including a comprehensive bikeway network.

The TBP has two major goals:

1. Double the number of bicycle trips made in the City of Toronto, as a percentage of total trips, by 2011
2. Reduce the number of bicycle collisions and injuries

The Road And Trail Safety Awareness (RATSA) program is one of the key promotional programs outlined in the TBP. Recommendation 7-4 explicitly advocates that the *City continue to maintain the Road and Trail Safety Ambassador Program as a cost effective vehicle to deliver educational and promotional campaigns*. The RATSA program is an essential mechanism for meeting the Bike Plan's goals of increasing bicycle trips and reducing injuries.

WHO:

The Road and Trail Safety Ambassadors are a group of trained cycling experts who encourage cycling and promote road and trail safety for all users: cyclists, pedestrians, in-line skaters and motorists. Ambassadors are responsible for meeting community requests for educational and safety programs and for communicating with any media, City departments and/or City councillors.

The Ambassador program runs all year-round with additional staff hired for the cycling season. In the summers of 2000 and 1999 twenty Ambassadors were divided into four teams across the City: North, South, East and West. Each team consisted of four Ambassadors and one Team Leader. The Ambassadors went to an average of 370 events during each of those summers. In 2001, due to budget constraints, only five Ambassadors and one Team Leader were hired. The events that summer totalled 140.

This year, due to further budget restraints, only five staff made up the Ambassador team, covering the north, south, east, and west districts of the City of Toronto. This is the first year the program has been run without a Team Leader. This central position ensures the smooth operation of the program by co-ordinating training, scheduling and day-to-day programming.

Hiring of Ambassador staff began with notices of employment opportunity which were sent to different cultural groups and organizations, and posted in the classified section of various

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newspapers, on the City web-site, and on the internet. An information session was also offered at City Hall in the spring, outlining the Ambassador program and opportunities for employment.

Applications for the Ambassador program were accepted until late April. All candidates must provide their own bicycle and a safety approved helmet. Applicants who are selected to participate in the interview process must first successfully complete a Bicycle Road Test. Only those who pass the road test are invited to the next phase of the hiring process. Successful candidates receive a program handbook, and are taken through a training and education session that introduces the program, and provides all the necessary information for effective program delivery.

As part of the summer student employment initiative, Ambassadors underwent an intensive two-week training period that included the following:

- CAN-BIKE II Certification – an 18 hour advanced course in defensive cycling
- CAN-BIKE Instructor Training (cancelled due to budget restraints)
- Emergency First Aid
- Public Outreach
- Media Relations Training
- Community and Special Event Programming
- Pedestrian Safety Training (cancelled due to labour disruption)
- Smog Awareness Workshop
- City of Toronto Policies and Procedure - Employment Access and Equity, Human Rights and Harassment, Team Building & Conflict Resolution

WHAT

The Road and Trail Safety Ambassador Program outreaches to communities across Toronto, from Etobicoke to Scarborough, in schools, recreation centres, and at community events like festivals, fun fairs, celebrations and picnics. The program assists communities in building safer and healthier neighbourhoods by addressing the following health and environmental concerns: increasing road safety; injury prevention; improving air quality (decreasing smog); fitness benefits of cycling; and the importance of protecting sensitive parklands by staying on designated trails.

The 2002 Ambassador program has six goals:

1. To reduce cycling injuries and fatalities
2. To increase the number of cycling trips
3. To foster co-operation and increase compliance with the Highway Traffic Act by all road and trail users
4. To promote safe and responsible trail use in parks and environmentally sensitive areas
5. To promote the Bicycle User Group Network
6. To promote the Bicycle Friendly Business Awards

The following messages and activities are used to achieve the above goals.

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Share the road safely.

Ambassadors host special programs such as the Safety, Prevention, Awareness, Courtesy, Education (SPACE) and Large Truck safety events to encourage safe behaviour and awareness on the roads. Information is distributed and items such as right turns and bikes, opening car doors, walking your bicycle on the sidewalk and pedestrian safety are addressed.

Share and protect the trail.

Ambassadors host special programs such as Off-road, Awareness, Safety, Information, Stop (OASIS) and Trail Maintenance events in conjunction with Parks and Recreation in order to encourage shared and responsible trail use and preservation of designated trails. Information is distributed along with *Protect the Trail* stickers, and Toronto bicycle maps.

Learn about bike safety.

Ambassadors host safety talks, children's bicycle safety presentations, and interactive displays. Information is distributed and items such as proper helmet fitting, keeping your bicycle in working order and the Highway Traffic Act are addressed.

Let's bike, walk or take transit and reduce smog.

Ambassadors promote this message during outreach rides and by distributing trail maps and information on cycling in Toronto. Ambassadors encourage smog reduction through public outreach and smog awareness programs.

Join the Bicycle User Group Network.

Ambassadors actively seek new Bicycle User Groups (BUGS) to join the BUG Network. They encourage the formation of new BUGs by spreading the word about this exciting new program. Ambassadors will attend cyclist meetings, hand out promotional materials, and walk interested individuals through the process of starting a successful BUG.

Bicycle Friendly Business Awards.

Ambassadors help to promote the Bicycle Friendly Business Awards by actively looking for bicycle friendly businesses, distributing promotional materials, and encouraging individuals to nominate a business

Information about the Ambassador program can be found on-line at www.city.toronto.on.ca/cycling, as well as in Cyclometer.

WHEN:

From late May until the end of August, Ambassadors attend community events, and deliver special programs. Focussing on specific program messages and educational campaigns, Ambassadors also host monthly media events to address particular road and trail safety concerns:

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June was designated as Bicycle Promotions month, with a special focus on Bike Week. Ambassadors were at 24 Bike Week events this year.

July was designated as Environment Month, with a special focus on attending City Environment Days and hosting OASIS events. Due to low staff numbers Ambassadors attended only 5 Environment Days and hosted a total of 12 OASIS events over the summer, down from 22 last year. July programming was also upset by the labour disruption, which lasted six working days.

August was originally designated as Large Truck Safety Month, with a special focus on hosting events on that theme. Due to low staff numbers, Ambassadors hosted only one large truck safety event this year, down from 4. The event, however, was well attended and received media attention from 6 outlets. In August the Ambassadors also hosted a special OASIS event which was covered by the media. OASIS events encourage shared and responsible trail use and preservation of the environment by staying on designated trails.

At the end of the month the Ambassador program wrapped-up with a celebration on Nathan Phillips Square. The chair of the Toronto Cycling Committee, Councillor Olivia Chow (Ward 20 Trinity-Spadina) thanked City Road and Trail Safety Ambassadors for their dedication and commitment this summer. “The Ambassadors continue to do an excellent job providing safety information and raising environmental awareness among all road and trail users,” said Chow. Councillor Jane Pitfield presented each Ambassador with a special thank-you from Mayor Mel Lastman. The Ambassadors also released the statistics from this year’s cordon count and smog survey, the results of which are on Appendix A.

Media Events

Last year during the summer, Ambassadors held one media event in each district every month, thus enabling opportunity for the Ambassadors to have contact with media outlets across Toronto. Hosting media events, conducting media interviews, and receiving coverage is vital to the success of the Ambassador program. Between May and August 2001, the Ambassadors made contact with the media on 40 occasions. This year, however, due to lack of staff, the Ambassadors contacted the media only 23 times.

Last year the Ambassadors held a unique media event to raise awareness about the existence of smog, and how sustainable transportation can assist in the improvement of air quality in the City of Toronto. The event involved Ambassadors setting up and hosting a smog information display, and conducting a survey to find out about the public’s awareness and response towards smog. This year the Ambassadors continued to sample the public about their awareness about smog, finding that 98% of respondents feel that more needs to be done to improve air quality in Toronto.

The table below compares the number and type of events in 2000, when there were twenty Ambassadors, to 2002, when there were five.

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CALENDAR TOTALS	2000	2002
Number of Events	349	133
Number of People Contacted	53,352	15 488
Contact/Coverage by Media	47	23
Average Number of People per Event	153	116

EVENT BREAKDOWN	2000	2002
Community Events & Outreach Rides	200	96
OASIS	41	12
CAN-BIKE or Safety Talk	84	19
SPACE	1	0
Unable to attend	--	21

MEDIA BREAKDOWN	2000	2002
Print Media Article	30	9
Television Footage	13	8
Radio Airing	3	6
Internet Content	1	0

WHERE:

The Ambassadors can be found in every community throughout the City of Toronto. Whether on the streets, on the trails, in the parks or at community events, the Ambassadors attended or hosted events as far west as Centennial Park, as far north as Yonge & Steeles, as far east as the Rouge Valley and as far south as the Toronto Islands in 2001. Ambassadors travelled to all events by bicycle, reaching the borders of Mississauga, Markham, Vaughan and Pickering.

WHY:

The Road and Trail Safety Ambassador program began in response to cyclist fatalities. Between January 1st, 1986 and December 31st, 1996, there were approximately 13,475 collisions recorded between motor vehicles and cyclists in the former City of Toronto. Of the 13,475 collisions, 38 collisions resulted in cyclist fatalities. Between 1990 and 2000, there were 34 cyclist deaths and 13,126 cyclist injuries involving motor vehicles in Toronto. Through public outreach and the delivery of road and trail safety messages, the Ambassador program continues to work towards increasing safety on the roads, and reducing cycling injuries and fatalities.

Through public outreach and education, the Ambassador program continues to promote cycling safety, and cycling as a sustainable and healthy means of transportation.

The Road and Trail Safety Ambassador Program allows for cost efficiency through effective sharing of mandates across different City departments. The Ambassadors assist Urban Development Services in following up recommendations stated in the 1998 Coroner's Report on Cycling Fatalities in Toronto. The Ambassadors assist the Public Health Department in delivering injury prevention programs, bike helmet campaigns, and anti-smog programs.

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Ambassador staff work closely with Fleet Management Services to raise awareness towards safety around large vehicles, and with Works and Emergency Services to promote the Toronto Bike Plan, bike lanes, and bike parking. Ambassadors also assist the Parks and Recreation Department in delivering CAN-BIKE programs, and raising awareness towards the protection and preservation of environmentally sensitive parkland.

The Road and Trail Safety Ambassador program is in high demand. In 2002, the Ambassadors received more requests from communities than they could possibly accommodate. With a small staff of five, Ambassadors were unable to attend, host or meet 20 event requests from the community. Furthermore, due to limited staffing, Ambassadors were unable to participate in many community events that were previously attended. Ultimately, the Ambassador staff needs to be expanded. With more funding support, a larger Ambassador staff would be able to accommodate more community requests, attend more community events, and further outreach and educate about road and trail safety across the City of Toronto.

How:

The Road and Trail Safety Ambassador Program was supported by City of Toronto, Urban Development Services, and Friends of the Environment Foundation Canada Trust. In-kind support was provided by 3M Scotchlite Canada, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Bell Sports, and Eurotex.

The Budget for 2002 was \$81,000 this includes funds to implement the Bicycle User Groups five-year plan. It can be broken down with 9,000 from TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment, 12 from Canadian Council for Human Resources in the Environment Industry 25,000 from the Toronto Atmospheric Fund for Bicycle User Groups and 34,000 from Urban Development Services.

Networking with various organizations, community groups and City staff, the Road & Trail Safety Ambassador program continues to gain recognition and support as a valuable and effective safety education program.

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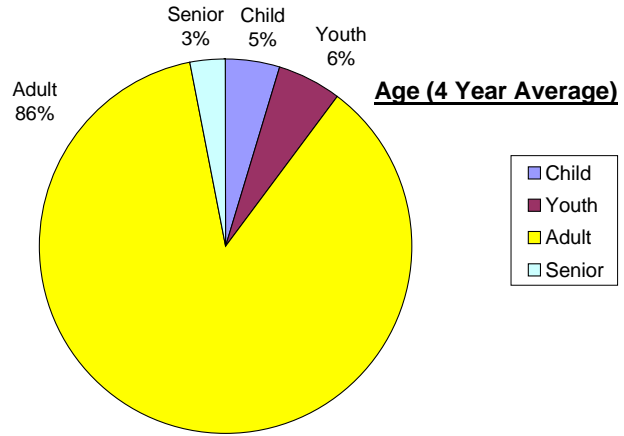
APENDIX A: Cycling Statistics

The Road & Trail Safety Ambassadors have conducted a study on cyclist behaviour, including the ratio of female to male cyclists, helmet and mask use, bicycle choice, and trip purpose. These numbers are collected to help staff to develop and change cycling programs based on cycling trends.

The following statements reflect the four-year average:

- 65% of cyclists ride mountain bicycles
- 16% ride road bicycles
- 14% ride hybrids
- 55% are commuters (the remainder fall within the categories of recreational cyclists, bicycle messengers, and shoppers)
- 75% of cyclists are men
- 33% of cyclists wear helmets
- 44% of women wear helmets compared to 30% of men
- 30% of cyclists ride on the sidewalk
- less than 1% of cyclists wear an air filter mask
- only 15 of 9043 or 0.166% of cyclist wear face masks
- yearly breakdown of face mask use
 - 1999... 4 of 1978
 - 2000... 3 of 1782
 - 2001... 1 of 2763
 - 2002... 7 of 2520

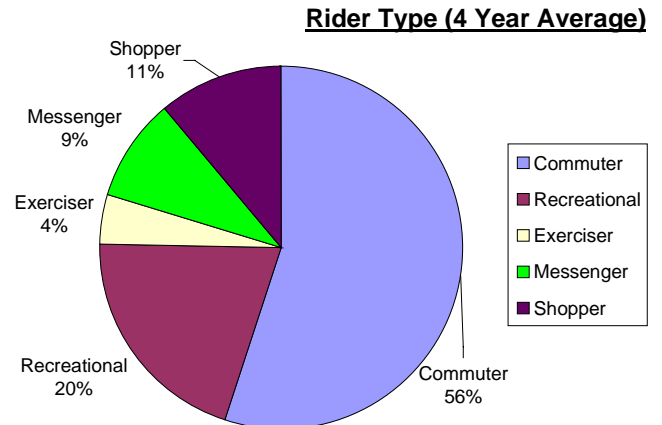
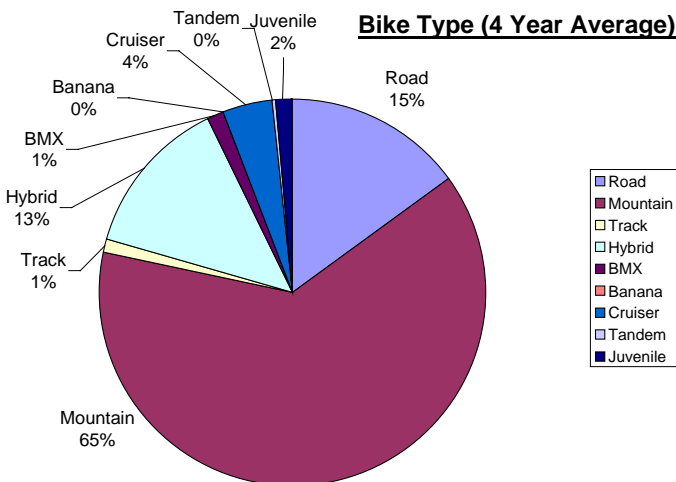
These conclusions are the results of two informal studies used for evaluating and developing cycling programs, including the Road and Trail Safety Ambassadors. The numbers are being released because they are of public interest.



Smog Survey

Over the past two years the Ambassadors have sampled public opinion on air quality in Toronto. Sample data indicates that **98%** of respondents think that more should be done to reduce smog. Changes respondents would like to see include:

- strong municipal, provincial and federal laws against smog producers
- laws to reduce vehicle use
- more bicycle lanes to increase cycling
- increased and more affordable public transportation
- free transit on smog days



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