

CYCLE TOURISM & CYCLING ACTIVITY SURVEY REPORT

COVID-19 ~ November 2020



Transportation
Options



Great Lakes
Waterfront Trail
A signature project of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust



Possibility grows here.

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About the Survey

Purpose:

- Assist tourism partners, tourism businesses and related organizations to understand impact of COVID-19 on cycle tourism and cycling activities.
- Assist tourism partners, tourism businesses and related organizations plan for future cycle tourism and cycling activities post COVID-19.
- Provide insight and information for planning purposes on the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail and the Greenbelt Route.

While this survey has been completed by primarily Ontario residents and it's results are intended to assist tourism partners in Ontario, it is our belief that the findings can be applicable in other jurisdictions across Canada and internationally.

The survey was launched mid October and closed at the beginning of November, 2020. In total of 904 respondents completed the 20 question survey. Over 300 additional comments were provided.

This survey builds on a similar survey conducted in May 2020, and report which can be found at: www.bit.ly/38hmlUq

About Survey Respondents:

- 96% of survey respondents were from Ontario.
- 66% identified themselves as experienced cyclists; 30% as leisure/recreational cyclists.
- 50% are aged 45 to 64; 35% over 65; 15% under age of 44

Prepared By:

The survey was issued and report prepared by: [Ontario By Bike \(Transportation Options\)](#) and the [Great Lakes Waterfront Trail \(Waterfront Regeneration Trust\)](#), in partnership with the [Greenbelt Foundation](#).

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Overview of Findings

- Cyclists were active this year, most increased their amount of cycling.
- Cyclists tended to travel closer to home this year.
- While the majority of cyclists took day trips, a fair number also took overnight trips that included cycling this year.
- Cyclists anticipate that they will be travelling more and participating in more organized cycling activities in 2021.



CYCLING ACTIVITY IN 2020

- 76% of respondents did the same amount (26%) of cycling or more (50%) this year than in 2019.
- Recreational cycling has been most popular this year and during Covid-19, nearly 100% of respondents have been cycling for recreational reasons.

Compared to survey results in May, both recreational cycling and commuting by bike have increased.



TRAVEL THAT INCLUDED CYCLING IN 2020

- 93% of cyclists cycled closer to home (locally, regionally and cross-regionally) and within the province in 2020.
 - 72% of cyclists travelled locally*
 - 60% regionally*
 - 31% cross regionally*
 - 10.5% inter-provincially *
 - 2.5% internationally*
 - 4% did not travel*

In the May survey results, 84% of cyclists surveyed anticipated cycling closer to home (locally, regionally, cross-regionally) and within the province in 2020 once travel restrictions were lifted.

- 60% made day trips only.
- 40% of respondents took one or more overnight trips that included cycling in 2020.

Results are similar compared to May survey, where 62% were anticipating cycling day trips only this year, and 24% multi-day trips.

- 28% participated in some type of organized cycling event or tour in 2020.

*When responses exceed 100%, respondents were permitted to select multiple answers to the question.

2021 PLANNING FOR FUTURE CYCLING ACTIVITIES

- 79% of respondents are considering making non-local regional travel plans that include cycling in 2021 if travel restrictions ease; 63% cross-regional and 49% interprovincial; 26% internationally.

Compared to 2020, respondents plan to cycle significantly more in all categories (locally, regional, cross-regional, interprovincial and internationally) should travel restrictions allow in 2021.

- 86% are considering participating in expanded cycling activities in 2021, beyond day trips only, should travel restrictions allow.
- 57% are considering participating in some type of organized cycling activity, including events and tours in 2021, if travel restrictions ease and safety measures are in place.
- 37% of cyclists are ready now or are optimistic that they will be able to cycle with larger groups, of 50 or more.
 - 32% won't return to group cycling until there is a vaccine, and 31% are unsure.



CYCLING TRIP PLANNING RESOURCES & TRIP PREFERENCES

- Cyclists use a variety of resources when planning cycling outings and routes.
- Websites and digital maps are the most used resources by cyclists to get ideas and plan cycling outings and routes, followed by word of mouth and printed cycling maps and promotional materials.
 - 70% respondents have used www.ontariobybike.ca and www.waterfronttrail.org as resources in the past two years.
- Cyclists surveyed have a preference to do day trips ride distances of 21km to 45km, followed by 46km to 99km.
- Cyclists are very likely to stop for food and beverages during their cycling trips, and a substantial number will stop to shop or visit attractions.
 - 91% are likely or very likely to stop for food and beverages (restaurants, cafes, fruit stands, wineries etc).
 - 60% are likely or very likely will stop to shop.
 - 43% are likely or very likely will stop at attractions such as museums and galleries.

THE GREAT LAKES WATERFRONT TRAIL & THE GREENBELT ROUTE

- 77% of cyclists are aware of or have used the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.
- 79% of cyclists are likely or very likely to recommend the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail to friends and family.
- 59% of cyclists are aware of or have used the Greenbelt Route.
- 69% of cyclists are likely to recommend the Greenbelt Route to friends and family.
- E-newsletters and blogs, followed by social media promotions on Facebook as well as information in print promotional materials including maps, were cited as best ways to share information about loops combining the Greenbelt Route and Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.



SURVEY COMMENTS FROM CYCLISTS

- *I had more time to cycle during Covid. I'm hoping to be able to continue riding a lot next year.*
- *I rediscovered cycling during the pandemic. I have always enjoyed cycling, and did a lot of it when I was in my 20s. As soon as a vaccine is ready and available, I'll be joining a local bike club, participating in events, and making new cycling friends.*
- *Cycling during the pandemic, as challenging as that has been to many people (and for some much more than others), has brought joy and delight, and contributed to good exercise too.*
- *This spring/summer was the first time that I saw so many people biking in parks. It made me really happy. I think this is the perfect time to get more people to enjoy cycling and to discover more of Ontario.*
- *My commuting and errands have gone up due to Covid, but my group rides have gone to zero.*
- *Life is better on a bicycle at any age. I look forward to freedom to travel by bike in 2021*
- *Just started biking 3 weeks ago. 250km done. 80 years old.*

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For More Information Contact:

Louisa Mursell
Executive Director
Ontario By Bike / Transportation Options
lmursell@transportationoptions.org
www.OntarioByBike.ca
www.TransportationOptions.org

Marlaine Koehler
Executive Director
Waterfront Regeneration Trust
mk@waterfronttrail.org
www.WaterfrontTrail.org

This report and other research on cycle tourism can be found online at: www.transportationoptions.org/research