

2011 OTTAWA REPORT ON BICYCLING



CITIZENS FOR
SAFE CYCLING



SafeCycling.ca

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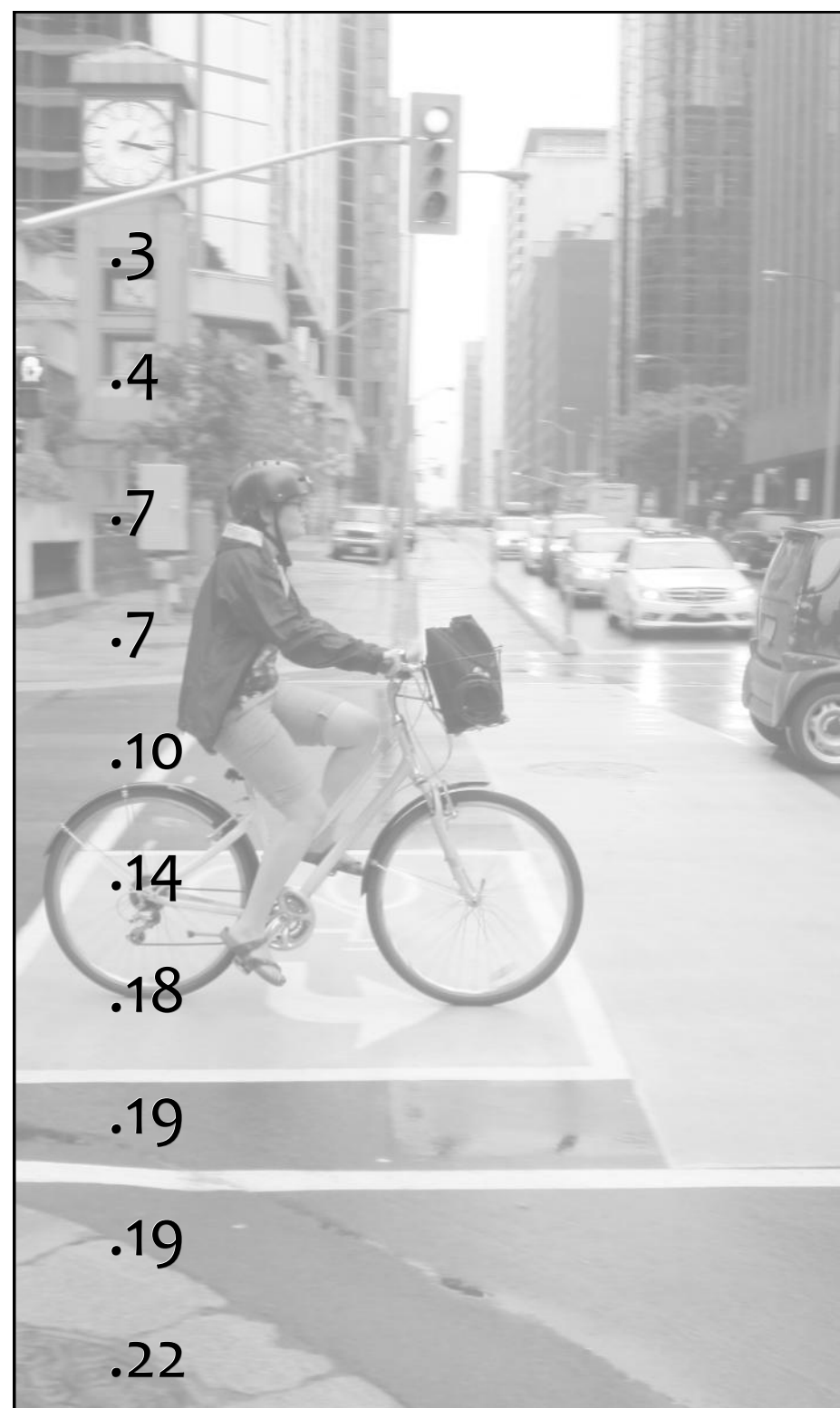
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INTRODUCTION

The adoption of cycling is accelerating as the city of Ottawa grows. Thousands of Ottawans are regular cyclists and we now have over 270 km of on-road cycling facilities and over 260 km of off-road pathways (City + NCC) on this side of the river. Seeing cyclists on the road is increasingly common.

Cycling reduces pollution and lowers the burden on our healthcare system. City roads are paid for by municipal taxpayers. Dollar for dollar, cycling is the cheapest form of transportation — second only to walking. Biking is good for everyone, even if we don't all bike.

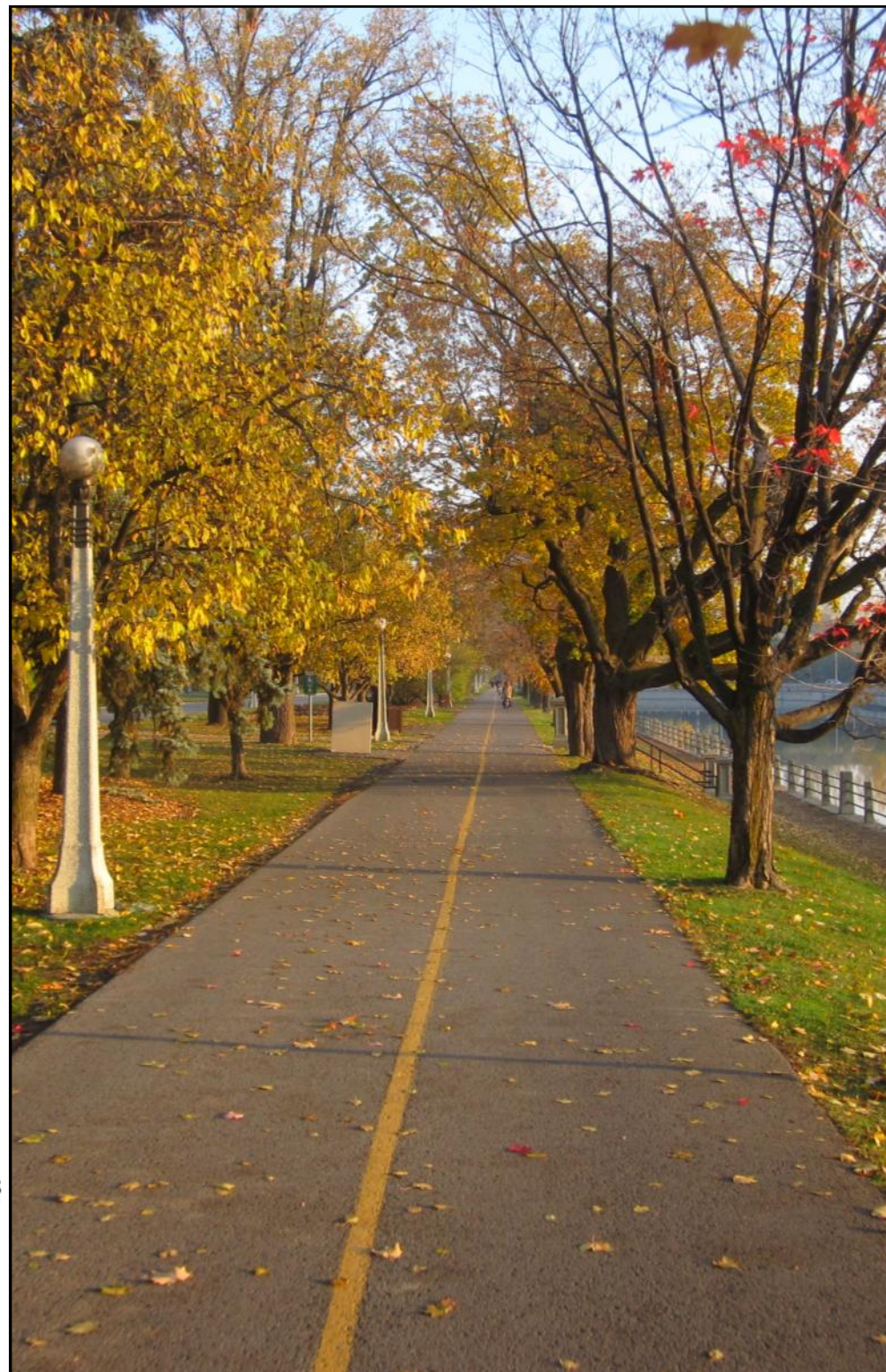
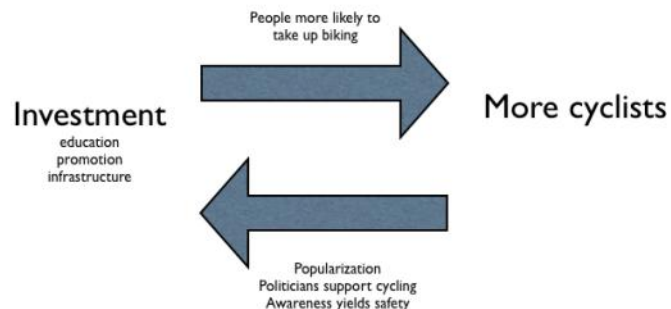
There's a circular dependency: more investment in promotion, education and infrastructure attracts people to bike. And cyclists are safer when there are more of them and when cycling is accepted by everyone.

Between 2007 and 2010, there were about 300 reported accidents per year. The rate remains roughly constant, despite the increasing number of cyclists over time. Major collisions are front-page news, but the health benefits of regular exercise rarely get the attention. Cycling is safe and getting safer.

This last year has shown growth in infrastructure in the city. The most obvious project has been the Laurier Avenue Segregated Bicycle Lane Pilot Project (page 9), which forms an east-west corridor 1.3 km long in each direction through downtown. Electronic counters show that 188,160 bike trips were taken on Laurier Avenue (west of Metcalfe) from the opening in July until December 31. This includes eight days with over 2000 bike trips a day. Citizens for Safe Cycling continues to work with politicians and planners to encourage projects like these.

These changes are difficult to adopt. Installing bike lanes sometimes affects parking habits, and drivers don't always know how to share the road with cyclists. Businesses don't always see the opportunity in selling to cyclists. We at [Citizens for Safe Cycling](#) work to dispel these myths through a combination of media messages and public events that show a positive view of cycling.

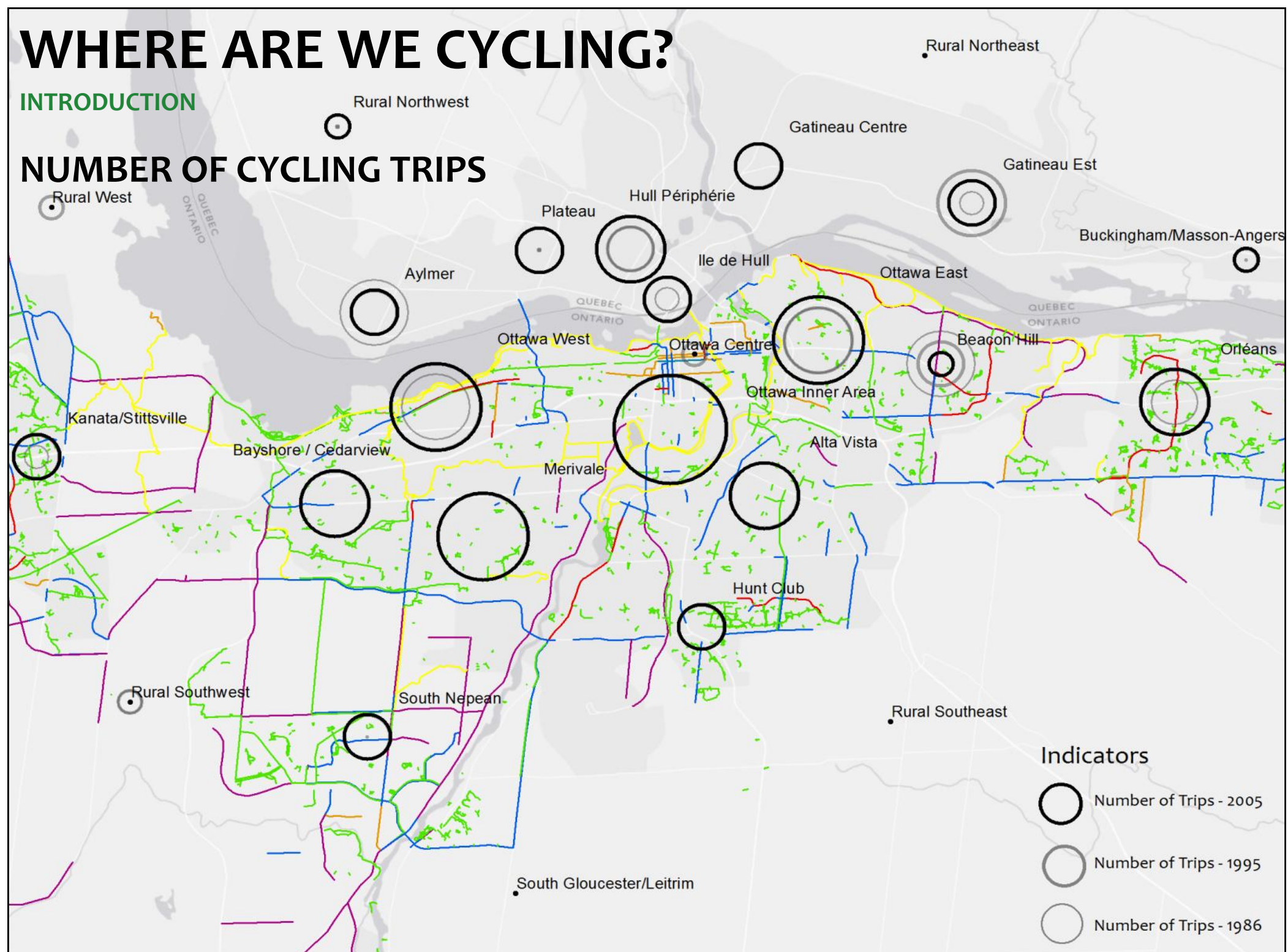
This document summarizes the state of cycling in the City of Ottawa, taking into account an even wider range of factors than the earlier 2010 Top 10 Problems report published by Citizens for Safe Cycling. For more information see our references (page 22).



WHERE ARE WE CYCLING?

INTRODUCTION

NUMBER OF CYCLING TRIPS



WHERE ARE WE CYCLING?

INTRODUCTION




















LEGEND

PREVIOUS PAGE:

The map on page 4 illustrates the total number of trips taken by bike in Ottawa, by area. The bigger the circle, the higher the number of trips taken by bike in a given part of the city.

NEXT PAGE:

The map on page 6 illustrates the modal share of cycling trips in Ottawa, by area. Modal share refers to the ratio of trips taken by bike to the total number of trips taken (by walking, car, bus, etc). The bigger the circle, the higher the cycling modal share in a given part of the city.

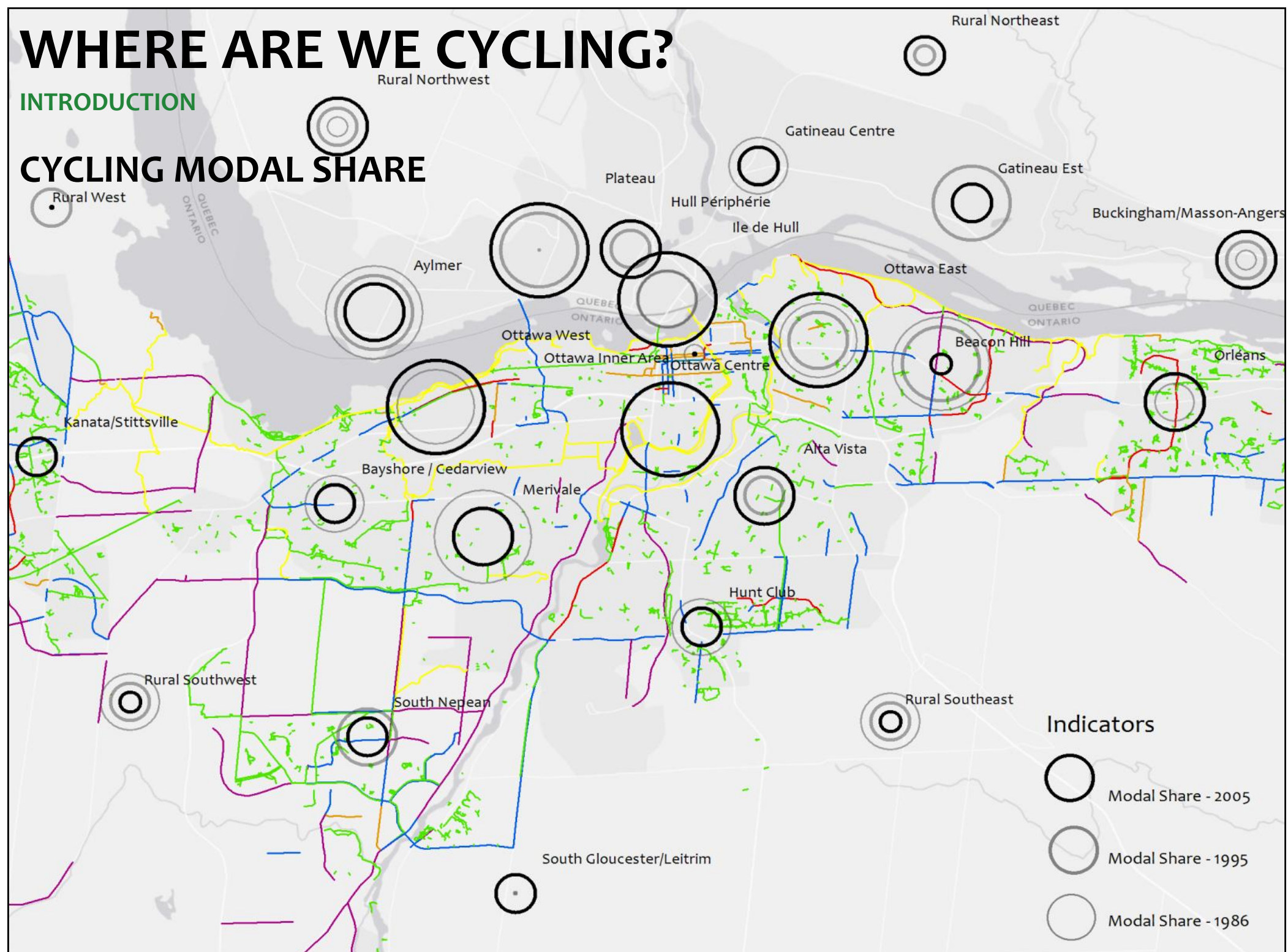
Number of Trips	Ottawa Cycling Network Facilities	Modal Share (%)
 33 - 222		 0.1 - 0.3
 223 - 430		 0.4 - 0.5
 431 - 1196	 Bike Lane	 0.6 - 1.0
 1197 - 2477	 Laurier Segregated Bike Lane	 1.1 - 1.4
 2478 - 4302	 NCC Pathway	 1.5 - 1.7
 4303 - 9128	 Pathway	 1.8 - 3.4
	 Paved Shoulder	
	 Signed Route	
	 Wide Cycle Lane	



WHERE ARE WE CYCLING?

INTRODUCTION

CYCLING MODAL SHARE

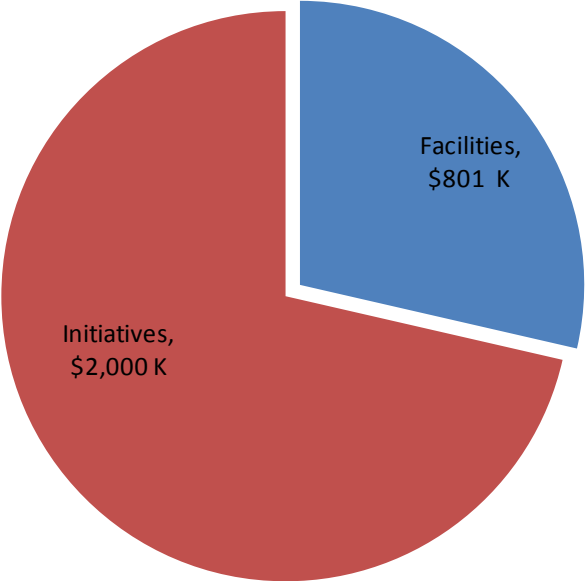


INVESTMENTS

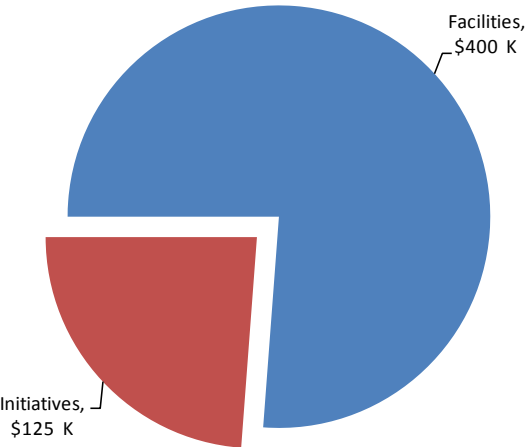
CYCLING IN 2011

CYCLING BUDGET TRENDS

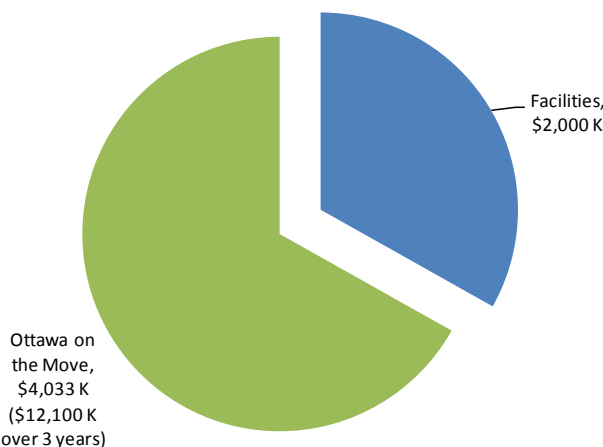
2011 (Actual)



2010 (Actual)

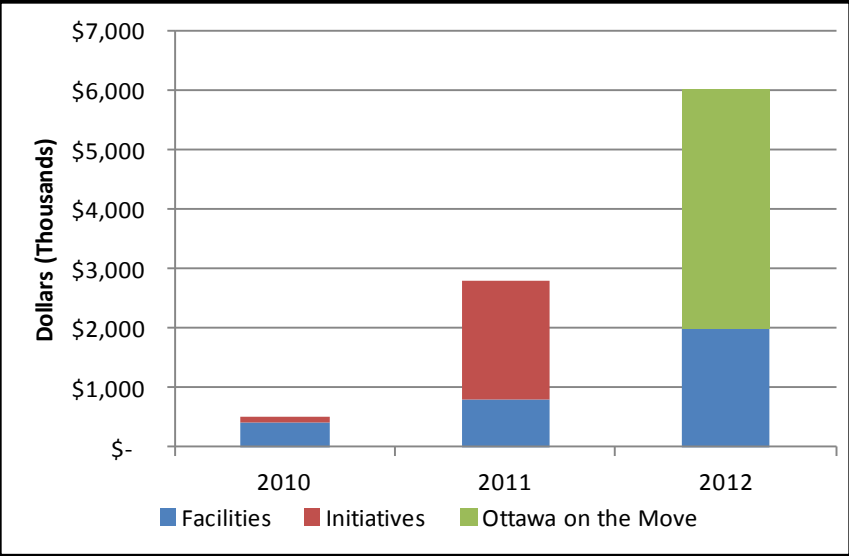


2012 (Budget)



City of Ottawa Cycling Budget (2010-2012)

In its 2011 Budget, the City of Ottawa increased funding dedicated to cycling by approximately 115%. The graph below shows the amount of cycling-related funding per year, and the funding is broken down into three categories: Facilities, Initiatives, and Ottawa on the Move. Facilities include physical infrastructure such as bike lanes, signage, etc. Initiatives include projects such as the Laurier SBLs, and joint Ottawa/NCC multi-use pathways projects. Ottawa on the Move is an urban design and transportation study that will identify ways to create vibrant, safe and accessible streets for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders. Ottawa on the Move will inform the City on how best to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the implementation of the Ottawa Light Rail Transit project. This funding commences in 2012 and goes until 2014. The charts assume that the total amount of \$12.1 million will be spent equally over the three years.



INVESTMENTS

CYCLING IN 2011

Scott Street Bike Lanes

These lanes are part of Phase 1 of the Western Cycling Corridor. Bike lanes were installed between Churchill and Holland, and sharrows between Holland and Parkdale. It should be noted that the sharrow locations are too close to the centre of the lane.

Wellington-Bay Facility Improvements

This work includes a bike box at Bay street, a segregated bike lane on the westbound lane of Wellington street from Bay to the Portage Bridge raised bike lane, and a bike lane on the eastbound lane of Wellington street that is not segregated. It should be noted that this project was started in 2011 and will be finished in 2012.

Somerset Bridge Underpass

This is an important link for the O-Train multi-use pathway corridor. This was not in the 2011 budget, however the City was able to redirect funds to begin work on the underpass. Work to finalize the underpass will continue in 2012.

Laurier Segregated Bike Lanes

See opposite page.

St Patrick - Beechwood - Hemlock Facility Improvements

These lanes are part of Phase 1 of the Eastern Cycling Corridor. This work was not completed in 2011.

Legend

Investments_Line

Status

- Complete
- Incomplete

Status

- EXISTING

Laurier Avenue Segregated Bicycle Lanes

In July 2011, the City of Ottawa implemented the first downtown segregated bike lanes in Ontario in a two-year pilot project on Laurier Avenue West. Along Laurier from Bronson Avenue to Elgin Street paired uni-directional segregated bike lanes (SBLs) separate cyclists from motor vehicles through the use of concrete curbs, plastic poles, parked cars and planter boxes. The traffic changes implemented along Laurier Avenue to improve safety include: new yield signs that instruct motorists to yield to cyclists and pedestrians when making right turns; new left-turn bicycle boxes at intersections to help cyclists turn left; new turning restrictions, including restrictions for right turns on red lights; new stopping, parking, loading and Para Transpo zones; and new additional paint markings and informational signage. To compensate for the car parking spaces removed from Laurier Avenue West with the implementation of the SBLs, on-street parking was added to Gloucester and Nepean Streets.

The City engaged in a thorough consultation process with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders in designing the SBLs and selecting the route for the lanes. To inform the public about the scope of the pilot project, and to educate Ottawa motorists and cyclists about how to use the new SBLs safely, an [educational video](#) and [FAQ](#) were created for the City's website. Through the on-site and [online bike counter data displays](#), people in Ottawa are able to see how many trips are taken on the SBLs daily.



INFRASTRUCTURE

CYCLING IN 2011

REVIEW OF 2010 Top 10



In 2010, Citizens for Safe Cycling released a pair of Top 10 lists to explain infrastructure problems that needed attention for the safety and comfort of people cycling in Ottawa. Both large problems and minor fixes were identified. This is a follow-up to show what's changed.

For a more complete description of the problems, see the original [2010 Top 10 Problems](#) lists.

Grades

Progress made on addressing the problems described on the following pages has been graded per the following scheme:

- A — The problem has been addressed
- B — Some progress, but not adequate
- C — The City has committed to fixing the problem
- F — No progress nor commitment to addressing the problem



INFRASTRUCTURE

CYCLING IN 2011

REVIEW OF 2010 Top 10

right: Train culvert on Carling before signage was installed

below: Crowded east-west route through downtown prior to installation of Laurier SBLs



Large Problems

These projects can take years to fund, plan and implement. None of them was fully tackled in 2011 but some have been partially addressed and others are being considered for improvement.

Grade B:

Some progress has been made on the following problems:

- The train culvert on Carling between Moodie and Herzberg now has better signage, although the routing still requires going under a narrow underpass with fast-moving traffic.
- Many of the cross-downtown route problems have been addressed with the Laurier Avenue Segregated Bicycle Lanes, although this is still only a trial to end in 2013.
- Providing an alternative to the bicycle route on Bay St. south of Wellington Street that requires cyclists to ride on the sidewalk. The City has installed cycling lanes and sharrows on Lyon Street to get from Wellington to Laurier.

Grade C:

The following problems were mentioned in the Ottawa Safety Study (May 2011) as candidates for future research:

- The route that connects Stewart to the Mackenzie King Bridge is difficult where it crosses Waller.
- On-ramps and off-ramps to the 416 and 417 are difficult for cyclists to cross.

The following was mentioned in the Downtown Moves report or presentation:

- The ramp behind the National Arts Centre would make a suitable connector between Elgin and the Rideau Canal Western Pathway and should be designated as a bike route.

Grade F:

The following problems have not yet been addressed at all:

- Providing links to get between the Rideau Canal Western Pathway and Hog's Back.
- Creating a cycling-friendly bypass to the Merivale Rd. commercial strip
- Making an effective way for cyclists to continue eastward on Innes Rd. where it splits off to the Blackburn Hamlet Bypass.
- The Chaudière Bridge is a narrow road which is needed for cyclists traveling between Gatineau and Ottawa.



INFRASTRUCTURE

CYCLING IN 2011

REVIEW OF 2010 Top 10

Minor Fixes

These were identified as simple infrastructure problems that would make a big difference with comparatively little investment.

Grade A:

One minor fix was addressed:

- Signage and lighting have been changed so that cyclists can now ride under Nicholas Street and the Transitway between the Rideau Canal Eastern Pathway and the University of Ottawa.

Grade B:

Some progress has been made on the following problem:

- To deal with the narrow Bank St. Bridge, signage is to be installed to indicate that drivers shouldn't pass cyclists.

Grade C:

The following has been identified in the 2012 City budget as part of the construction of a cross-city bicycle corridor:

- St. Patrick between Cobourg and the Vanier Parkway is intended to be rebuilt for cyclists before 2015.

Grade F:

The following problems have not yet been addressed at all:

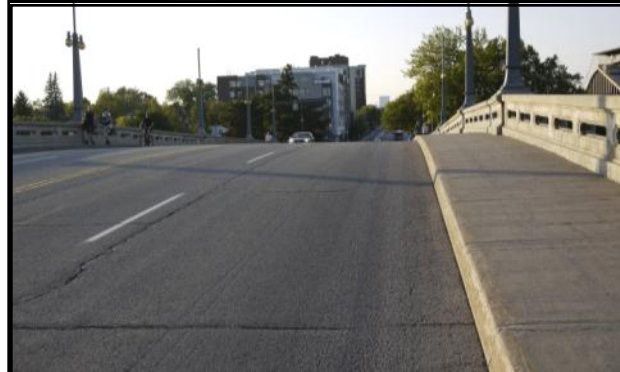
- The pathway on the north side of Carling west of the Ottawa River Pathway should be resurfaced.
- The Ottawa River Pathway is a busy cycling route, but requires that cyclists dismount where it crosses Booth St.
- Missing signage to get from the Ottawa River pathway to the downtown core
- Crossing the Hartwell Locks requires carrying a bicycle and climbing a steep hill. The City's Planning & Growth Management Department has indicated that this will be addressed in 2012.
- Percy at Chamberlain needs curb alignment and resurfacing.
- Rightmost side of many on-street bicycle routes have poor surfaces.



top: University of Ottawa underpass after better lighting and signage and lane markings were installed



left: University of Ottawa underpass before better lighting and signage were installed



bottom: Bank St. Bridge still missing sufficient bike signage

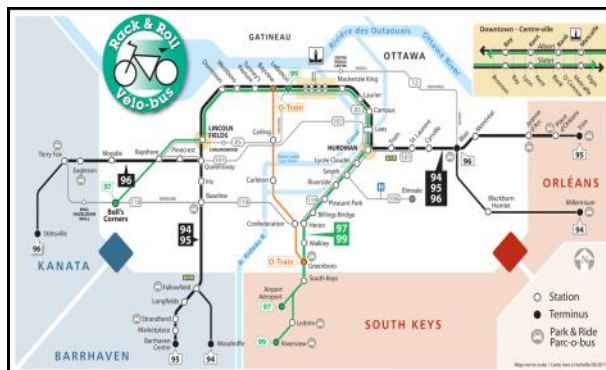
INFRASTRUCTURE

CYCLING IN 2011

Winter Maintenance

The City has implemented its first winter maintenance program for the new Laurier SBLs. This includes dedicated plows, sweepers, and de-icing equipment. With this program, a tiny fraction of designated bike routes in the city are being maintained at priority level. It should be noted that the maintenance of the Laurier SBLs is necessary for drainage purposes of Laurier Avenue.

The NCC maintains some of the Rideau Canal Pathways for use during Winterlude, however they do not have an official winter maintenance program. In 2010, the NCC conducted a survey on use of the pathways in the winter. Cycling is reportedly the fifth most common use for the pathways in the winter — but the report noted that winter cycling on the pathways could potentially double if winter maintenance was enhanced.



Cycling Stats

- Bike Lanes: 164 km
- Segregated Bike Lanes: 1.4 km
- City of Ottawa Pathways: 152 km
- NCC Pathways: 108 km
- Wide Curb Lanes: 41 km
- Paved Shoulders: 123 km
- Rack n Roll Buses: 350 Servicing 10 Routes



Bicycle Parking

The City has been increasing the amount of bicycle parking available on the main streets as they are being redeveloped (e.g. Bank St. in Centretown and Wellington St. West).

However cyclists lost a major source of secure accessible parking in the last year as parking meters were replaced by Pay and Display kiosks (see p. 21).

Ottawans can look forward to better information about bike parking in 2012. A new initiative called parkmybike.ca is a user-driven website that identifies bike parking spots on a map and allows users to rate the spots on ease of use, security, etc.

COMMUNITY

CYCLING IN 2011

FESTIVALS

Capital VéloFest

2011 saw the introduction of an independent bike festival in Ottawa. On June 4 at Marion Dewar Plaza, approximately 1000 people took part in Capital VéloFest 2011 activities. An expanded two-day cycling festival is planned for VéloFest 2012. Activities for the inaugural Capital VéloFest included:

- A daytime bike rodeo with cycling demonstrations, information, games, and entertainment.
- A 'Tour la Nuit' group ride allowed participants to ride under the stars while listening to live music.



MEC Bikefest

Bikefest is an annual day-long community celebration of all things bicycle related, including games, demonstrations, group rides, a gear/bike swap, and clinics on topics like bike servicing, cycling technique, and cycling safety. On June 26, 2011 approximately 400 people took part in the festivities at Britannia Park's Ron Kolbus Lakeside Centre.



Festival Bike Parking

The annual music festivals Ottawa Bluesfest (Lebreton Flats Park July 5-17) and the Ottawa Folk fest (Hog's Back Park August 25-28) encouraged cycling by providing valet bike parking, and wayfinding tools that highlight bike access and routes. Donations from the valet parking at Bluesfest are shared between Blues in the Schools and Citizens for Safe Cycling.



COMMUNITY

CYCLING IN 2011

CONFERENCES

Ontario Bike Summit

In 2011, Ottawa was awarded a Silver-level Bicycle Friendly Community status, by the Share the Road Cycling Coalition and the League of American Bicyclists. Other cities to be recognized were: Waterloo (Silver), Ajax (Bronze), Windsor (Bronze), Hamilton (Silver), London (Bronze), Oshawa (Bronze), and Town of the Blue Mountains (Bronze). In June, Share the Road hosted the 2011 Ontario Bike Summit in Ottawa. City planners, health workers, cycling advocates, elected officials, and community organizations from across the province gathered to learn about global best practices and local efforts to promote cycling. The conference theme “Building Bicycle Friendly Communities” was celebrated through the inclusion of many community-themed presentations over the two-day conference. The designation recognizes a city's achievements in bicycle-oriented engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation and planning.



COMMUNITY

CYCLING IN 2011

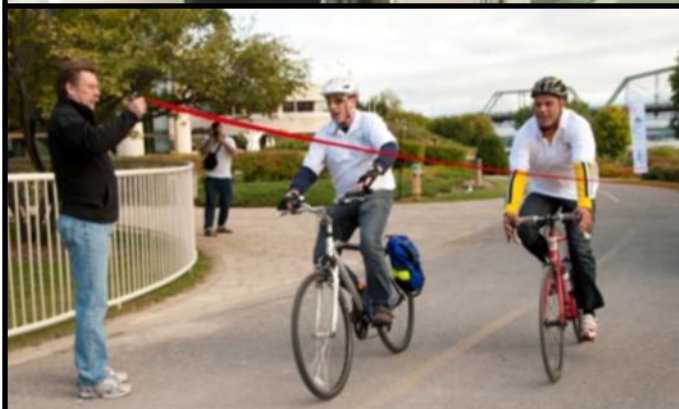
INITIATIVES

Sustainable Transportation Week

(September 16-22)

During Sustainable Transportation Week, EnviroCentre partnered with the City of Ottawa and Vivre en Ville to promote cycling as a legitimate form of urban transport. Sustainable Transportation Week activities included:

- A Bike-Bus-Car commuter Challenge (the bike won!),
- A public conference on 'Sustainable Mobility – From Planning to Reality',
- A Bike Museum at City Hall in celebration of Car-Free Day September 22.



Bike to Work Month (May)

The City of Ottawa and EnviroCentre's Bike-to-Work-themed activities throughout May included:

- **Learning:** 15 cycling skills lunch & learn presentations attended by 215 people, and educational workplace kits were sent to almost 200 organizations.
- **Trying Cycling:** Through Environcentre's Pledge to Cycle campaign, 861 people pledged to cycle in May for a total of 759,040 km.
- **Celebration:** At three cycling Celebration Stations set up along well-travelled commuter routes, volunteers encouraged bike commuters and provided resources, goodies, and information about other cycling initiatives.
- **Bruce Timmermans Cycling Award Ceremony & Community BBQ:** Over 150 cycling enthusiasts gathered to celebrate community members recognized for outstanding contributions to Ottawa's cycling community in 2010. The recipients of the 2010 Timmermans Cycling Awards celebrated in 2011 were Kathleen Wilker and the Ottawa Pathway Patrol.



COMMUNITY

CYCLING IN 2011

INITIATIVES



NCC Park-and-Cycle

The NCC ran a pilot project called Park and Cycle to expand commuting choices. Commuters can drive part of the way to their workplace, park their vehicle in one of ten NCC parking lots without incurring a fee, and then cycle the rest of the way. During the 2011 pilot project, there were three lots in Gatineau, four in Ottawa to the east of downtown, and three in Ottawa to the west of downtown at which commuters left their cars without being subject to the usual four-hour time limit on parking.

The NCC estimates that close to 1000 commuter trips were made from these lots between mid-June and August.



Public Bikes

- The NCC's Capital Bixi system returned to Ottawa in 2011 with 100 bikes in 10 stations around downtown Ottawa and Gatineau. The trial run in 2010 had four stations.
- Working with community partners SLOWest and Causeway Work Centre, the City of Ottawa supported the development of RightBike, a community bike share service in Westboro-Wellington West. The service is set to launch in May 2012.



CAN-BIKE

Bicycle Education Programs Programmes d'éducation à vélo

CAN-BIKE courses

2011 was successful as a promotional year for the CAN-BIKE program run by City of Ottawa-City Wide Sports. Awareness of CAN-BIKE cycling education courses was boosted through school visits, Bike to Work Month and special events.

- 38 courses were offered through spring-fall 2011
- 40 classrooms (1600 kids) were reached through the school program

In order to increase the number of courses offered in 2012, recruitment and training of new CAN-BIKE instructors is a priority for next year.

CYCLING IN 2011



The City released new cycling maps in 2011 for Downtown Ottawa and for the greater Ottawa region. The Ottawa region maps are being sold for \$2 at several bike shops around the city.

Bike Counters

Citizens for Safe Cycling, together with the city and other partners, has introduced the use of pavement-embedded counters to measure bike trips. In 2011, 1.3 million trips were measured by four counters in central Ottawa, with another 188 thousand trips on the Laurier SBL in its first six months of operation. Compared to 2010, that was a 79% increase from April to November for the same pathway counters. The record day on the SBL was on September 14th with 2,331 trips counted.

Open Data

The City launched the Open Data Ottawa website in early 2010 and has been building on the content since then. In 2011 they released the Cycling Network data which shows the existing and proposed paths, lanes, signed routes, and shared lanes.



TOP 10 FOR 2011

RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2010, [Citizens for Safe Cycling](#) released a pair of Top 10 lists to explain infrastructure problems that needed attention for the safety and comfort of people cycling in Ottawa. This is a follow-up to highlight some significant problems in Ottawa in 2011.

- **Traffic signals**

There are several deficiencies in the existing arrangement of traffic signals. An example is where the NCC Experimental Farm Pathway crosses Maitland Avenue. The signal cycle may require waiting three minutes, irrespective of the amount of traffic on Maitland. The result is that most cyclists won't bother waiting for the light. A more general problem is that loop-triggered traffic signals sometimes don't work, and they give no immediate confirmation of being activated. Because riding over the sensor provides no feedback, cyclists are often left wondering whether or not the signal has been triggered. Combined with slow cycle times, cyclists will assume they haven't been registered and will 'run the light'. The implementation of a feedback mechanism – such as the flashing light and 'beep' that confirms a pedestrian has triggered a traffic signal – would be a positive step toward increasing safe cycling behavior.

- **O'Connor Street and Catherine Street**

Southbound on O'Connor Street, the two right-hand lanes are formed for the 417 on-ramp and Catherine Street westbound. This creates a problem for cyclists who must shift over two lanes in fast-moving traffic to continue southbound. A marked route for these cyclists should be implemented. The southbound bike lane should also continue smoothly under the 417 and then onwards to the Glebe instead of abruptly merging with the raised pathway under the 417. There's also no way to ride northbound under the 417 without detouring east to Metcalfe Street via Isabella. The traffic on Isabella is very heavy with vehicles leaving and entering the 417.

- **Laurier connector (east end)**

The Laurier Avenue West segregated bicycle lane (SBL) has connection problems to the east. There should be room to [continue a bicycle lane](#) on both sides of Laurier at least over the Laurier Bridge. This has been identified as part of the east/west cycling corridor.



above: Southbound on O'Connor approaching the intersection of O'Connor and Catherine.

TOP 10 FOR 2011

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Laurier connector (west end)**

An important connection to the west of the Laurier Avenue West SBLs is to the Ottawa River Pathway and Scott Street near Lebreton Flats. The escarpment makes some of this difficult. Connections to the west of Laurier should be established so that cyclists traveling east-west along Scott St, the river pathway, and Somerset St. W can connect with the Laurier SBL to travel through downtown.

- **Expand and replace bike parking**

Parking meters have been a last resort when no better bicycle parking can be found. The city's changeover to Pay-and-Display now forces the issue that there needs to be predictable bicycle parking found, particularly near retail and institutional addresses. The creation in 2012 of www.parkmybike.ca may help highlight those areas with particularly poor bike parking facilities.

- **Bank Street near Billings Bridge**

This area is a confluence of the traffic for a shopping centre, the Transitway and two busy roads (Bank Street and Riverside Drive). A particularly difficult part is the southbound route along Bank, which has several intersections in short succession. The lack of a continuous bike lane makes it unclear to drivers that there are cyclists nearby. This location is the site of the highest number of bike-car collisions in the city of Ottawa. The planned painting of sharrows on Billings Bridge may lead to a modest improvement in the ability of cyclists and motorists to position themselves safely in the busy traffic at this location.

- **Baseline Transitway station**

Due to the modifications to the station for future LRT use, it is not possible to legally cycle in the east-west direction across the Transitway. The new parts of College Avenue and Navaho Drive on the west side of Woodroffe Avenue are restricted for bus use only. In order to connect from Algonquin College or the Woodroffe bike lanes to the adjacent multi-use pathway network a cyclist must walk her bicycle on the sidewalks.



above: Facing west at the intersection of Woodroffe and College.

TOP 10 FOR 2011

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reopen pathway in King Edward corridor adjacent to Lester B. Pearson Building

Public Works and Government Services Canada closed the pathway that safely took cyclists from the MacDonald-Cartier Bridge and passing under Sussex Drive to the Pearson building's bike parking and onward to Union Street and the Minto Bridges across the Rideau River. This has removed a good link between Gatineau and the New Edinburgh, Vanier, and Overbrook communities. Cyclists are now directed onto an alternative route that is challenging and unpleasant due to heavy bus traffic in a shared bus-cycle lane.

- Byron-Tyndall-Gladstone connection

Byron Avenue and Gladstone Avenue form a popular east-west corridor for cyclists traveling between Woodroffe Avenue and downtown. This route has a major interruption between Holland Avenue and Parkdale Avenue where Byron and Gladstone, respectively, terminate. Between Holland and Parkdale, cyclists are required to jog up to Tyndall Avenue – a small residential street – and then try to reconnect with the corridor on the other side of the interruption. The lack of supportive traffic signals to allow cyclists and pedestrians to cross Parkdale and Holland at Tyndall/Gladstone/Byron make the transition quite challenging and dangerous. In 2012, the City will undertake the Byron-Tyndall-Gladstone Cycling Corridor Improvement Study, which may result in recommendations to improve this connection for cyclists.

- Snow clearing

There are an increasing number of cyclists who ride in the winter, but there's also a potential of many more. The most common reason cyclists stop riding in the winter is because of snow and ice accumulation. A pilot project could involve a small number of downtown routes and would clear snow early and suitably on specific routes. The creation of a 'White Route' of bike facilities that would be maintained at priority level during the winter was proposed in September 2011 by the City's Roads and Cycling Advisory Committee (RCAC).



above: Southbound on Holland, transitioning from Byron to Tyndall.

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WHERE ARE WE CYCLING?

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Open Data Ottawa Cycling Network Layer http://ottawa.ca/online_services/opendata/info/cycling_network_en.html

Ottawa Cycling Map, City of Ottawa http://ottawa.ca/en/roads_trans/cycling/cycling_map/index.htm

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cyclist collisions report from OnTRAC Reporting System for 2009-2010 http://ottawabikingproblems.ca/?page_id=1347#stats

PHOTO CREDITS

Page 13 – OC Transpo [octranspo.com], Our Kitchissippi [ourkitchissippi.ca]

Page 14 – Ottawa Folk Festival / Andy Gibbons [ottawafolk.com], Ottawa Bluesfest [ottawabluesfest.ca] MEC Bikefest [blog.mec.ca]

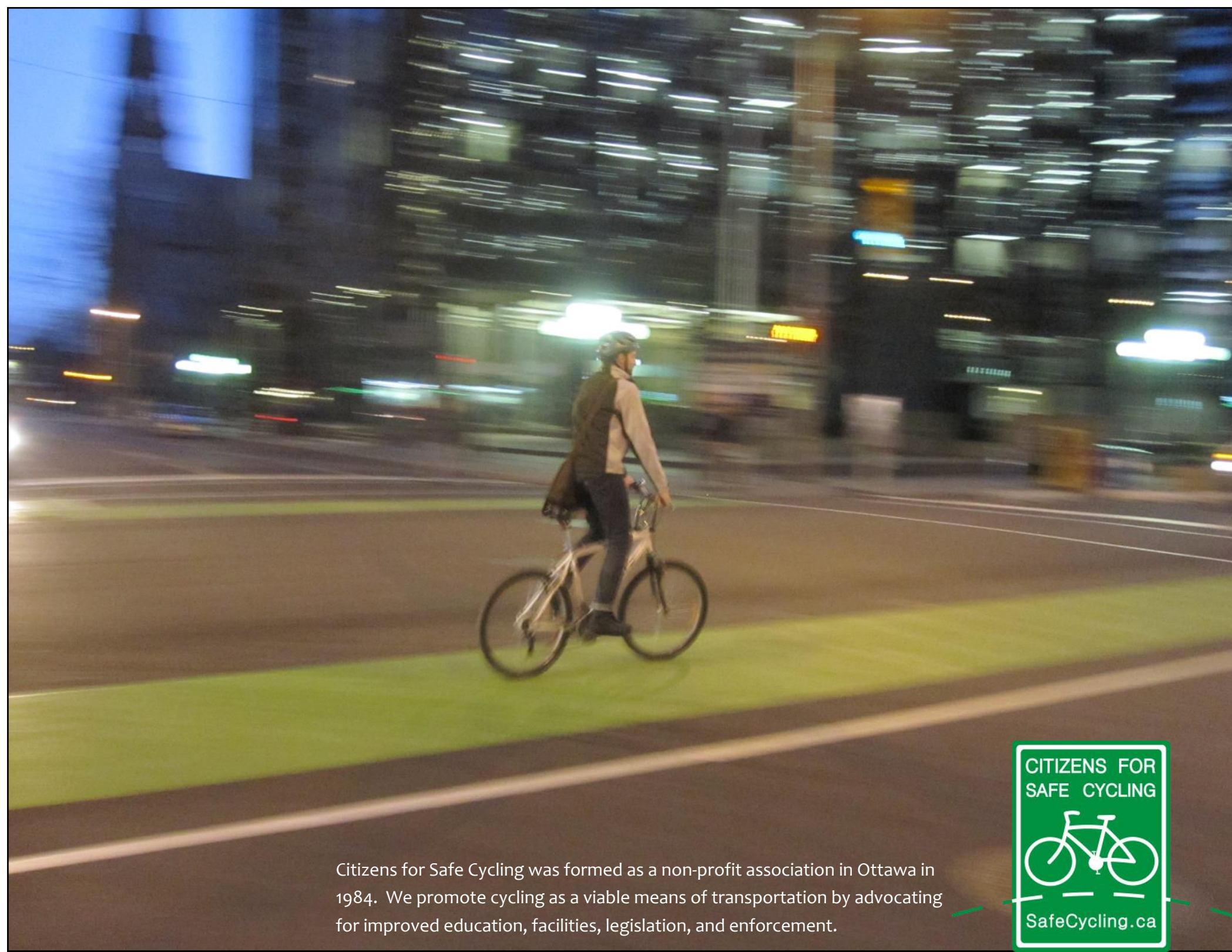
Page 16 – Envirocentre [www.envirocentre.ca]

Page 17 – www.rightbike.org

Page 18 – Wordle from CfSC's 2011 AGM [www.safecycling.ca]

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Citizens for Safe Cycling was formed as a non-profit association in Ottawa in 1984. We promote cycling as a viable means of transportation by advocating for improved education, facilities, legislation, and enforcement.

