

August 11, 2026

OHTO Launches Fall Cycle Tourism Workshop Series

The Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) is pleased to announce registration is now open for a free fall workshop series designed to help local businesses and communities prepare for the economic and community opportunities connected to the development of the [Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Loop \(EORTL\)](#).

Five in-person sessions will be held between September and November, presented by [Ontario By Bike](#) and sponsored by the EORTL project partners and OHTO.

Tourism operators (including restaurants, accommodations, attractions and retailers), business associations, municipal and economic development representatives, cycling and community organizations and advocates are encouraged to attend a session in or near their community.

Participants do not need to be cycling experts to benefit from the workshop; these sessions are intended to provide practical information, build connections and ensure local communities help shape the development of this unique trail experience.

"The Ontario by Bike workshops are the next steps in this ambitious, multi-year project to develop Canada's longest continuous rail trail cycling loop by 2030," said Nicole Whiting, Executive Director for OHTO. "This collaborative effort has been community driven from the start and now that we have a clear road map for realizing our vision, it is important to reconnect with our broader communities to generate excitement and get them involved."

The EORTL is a 320-kilometre continuous off-road trail loop that connects portions of the Cataraqui Trail, K&P Trail, Algonquin Trail and Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail across Eastern Ontario. When fully developed, the Loop is projected to increase visitation to the surrounding communities and generate approximately \$65 million in direct spending. Recent Ontario By Bike research found that 54 per cent of responding certified bicycle-friendly businesses reported increased business from cyclists over the previous two years, highlighting why preparing now can help communities and operators benefit as cycling visitation grows.

What participants will gain from the workshops:

- An overview of the cycle tourism market and what cyclists look for when choosing where to stop, stay, eat and explore;
- Practical, often low-cost ways to welcome cyclists and information on becoming a certified bicycle-friendly location through Ontario By Bike;
- An update on the EORTL vision, development work and opportunities for businesses and community organizations to get involved;
- Facilitated itinerary and experience-development discussions to connect local services, attractions and stories into stronger visitor offers; and
- An opportunity to identify local strengths, service gaps and partnerships that can improve the experience for cyclists and residents.

"The EORTL will be a huge win for the area, attracting thousands of cycle tourists annually," said Louisa Mursell, Executive Director for Ontario by Bike/Transportation Options. "These visitors spend more

and stay longer than regular visitors and will be looking for accommodations, food and beverage, and a variety of other activities. We are excited to connect with businesses and communities at the upcoming workshops to share info on how to capitalize on the coming opportunities."

Workshop Schedule:

Community	Date and time	Venue
Smiths Falls	Monday, September 14, 2026, 2 to 4 p.m.	Smiths Falls Welcome Centre Town Hall 77 Beckwith St. N.
Sharbot Lake	Tuesday, September 15, 2026, 9 to 11 a.m.	Kick & Push Brewery 24613 Highway 7
Portland	Tuesday, September 15, 2026, 2 to 4 p.m.	Portland Community Hall 24 Water St.
Carleton Place	Monday, November 9, 2026, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.	Bob Rintoul Hall Carleton Place Arena 57 Neelin St.
Calabogie	Tuesday, November 10, 2026, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.	Calabogie Community Hall 574 Mill St.

Register for a Workshop

Registration to attend a workshop is free, and advance registration is requested. The workshop series and registration pages can be accessed through Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/cc/eortl-cycle-tourism-community-workshops-4854254>

Learn more about the Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Loop at: <https://ohto.ca/eastern-ontario-rail-trail-loop>

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About the Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Loop

The Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Loop is a regional partnership developing a connected off-road cycling experience across Renfrew, Lanark and Frontenac counties, the Township of Rideau Lakes and the Town of Smiths Falls. The project aims to strengthen rural communities, support local businesses and create a seamless multi-day cycling experience by 2030.

About Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization

Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) is a not-for-profit organization mandated and funded by the Province of Ontario to support tourism within the counties of Haliburton, Lanark, and Renfrew and portions of Frontenac, Hastings, and Lennox and Addington. Find out more at www.ohto.ca.

About Ontario By Bike

Ontario By Bike works with partners to develop and promote cycling and cycle tourism across Ontario. The program administers a network of more than 1,700 certified bicycle-friendly businesses and provides trip-planning information that inspires visitors and residents to explore more of the province by bike.

Ontario By Bike is a program of Transportation Options, a non-profit organization dedicated to sustainable transportation and tourism solutions.

– 30 –

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