

Change comes on Two Wheels: locations for Scarborough's new community bike hubs announced

Kaitlyn Kochany | Wednesday, March 16, 2016



The new hubs will offer programming similar to last fall's Scarborough Cycles group ride

Coming this June, Scarborough residents will have two new reasons to hop on their bicycles. In conjunction with local community partners, The Toronto Centre for Active Transportation will be opening a pair of cycling hubs in the borough. The new hubs, located at the Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre and AccessPoint on Danforth, will both offer access to free tools and

bicycles, as well as programming such as bike repair clinics, cycling mentors for new Canadians, and family-friendly bike rides.

The sites were chosen after an extensive mapping exercise conducted in partnership with the University of Toronto's Cycling Think & Do Tank. Marvin Macaraig, TCAT's Scarborough Cycles Project Coordinator, says that some of the parameters they measured included the number of trips currently taken by bike, local car ownership levels, and proximity to key transit outlets. "We also considered existing and future infrastructure. In the city's ten-year plan, they've identified Kingston Road and Danforth as corridors, and both these hubs are a stone's throw away from those corridors."

Programming will build on existing success stories, such as the Bike Host program operated in partnership with CultureLink Settlement and Community Services, which trains and matches local mentors with new Canadians. Mentees receive a bike, as well as accessories like bells, lights and a lock, for a summer. Macaraig says that the new hubs will also tailor cycling programs to meet local needs; addressing, for example, the AccessPoint on Danforth's existing LGBTQ users, and creating new programs just for them. "Our two hubs are really established in the communities they serve," says Macaraig. "We would like our programming to not be exterior to what they're doing."

Macaraig sees these new hubs as beginning to address the need for cycling support in Scarborough. "There's only one bike shop in all of Scarborough, and we really think there's a gap for people to learn about bikes, and learn about advocacy for bikes, and basic bike maintenance." Indeed, while Toronto has seen cycling numbers rise over the past decade, they've actually dropped slightly in the inner suburbs. "Right now, Scarborough has zero bike hubs; after this spring, it will have two. We think that's really

important to help people move around."