

Gender Equity Steering Committee

Terms of Reference

RATIONALE (OUR WHY)

Cycling in Ontario, as in much of Canada, remains a male-dominated sport. For decades, Ontario Cycling's membership and participation data has consistently reflected an approximate 70/30 split between men and women. This imbalance is not a reflection of interest or capability, but rather of longstanding systemic, cultural, and structural barriers that have limited access, belonging, visibility, and opportunity for women and girls.

At the same time, there are countless women who ride bikes across the province - recreationally, competitively, socially, and for transportation - who may not yet see themselves reflected in organized cycling spaces, leadership roles, or development pathways. The purpose of this Committee is to intentionally bridge that gap.

Ontario Cycling affirms that cycling is for everyone. Establishing a women-focused advisory committee is an evidence-informed equity measure intended to address historical underrepresentation and accelerate progress toward a more balanced, inclusive, and welcoming sport system for all participants.

MANDATE

The Gender Equity Steering Committee (GEC) is committed to advancing equity, empowerment, and representation for women and girls across all areas of Ontario Cycling.

The Committee serves in an advisory capacity, providing leadership and recommendations to promote equitable access, inclusive programming, and pathways for women in all cycling disciplines and leadership roles.

The Committee supports the implementation of Ontario Cycling's Strategic Plan 2026–2030, particularly within the Sustainable & Inclusive Culture and Capacity Building through Leadership & Partnerships pillars, by:

- Increasing participation and retention of women and girls in the sport.
- Advancing gender representation in leadership, coaching, and officiating.
- Championing inclusive narratives and visibility for women in cycling.
- Supporting the rollout of educational and cultural initiatives that foster gender equity and belonging.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Committee's work is grounded in the values of Ontario Cycling:

- **Respect:** We treat every person and perspective with fairness and dignity, fostering a culture where all voices are valued.
- **Collaboration:** We believe success comes through partnerships — with clubs, members, coaches, volunteers, and the broader sport community.
- **Accountability:** We take responsibility for our actions and decisions, ensuring transparency and trust in all we do.
- **Inclusivity:** We welcome everyone into the sport, celebrating diversity and creating safe spaces for all to ride, race, and belong.

Additionally, the Committee is guided by the principles of intersectional gender equity, acknowledging how gender interacts with race, age, ability, identity, and socioeconomic factors.

COMPOSITION

- **Chair:** OC President & CEO (or delegate)
- **Additional Staff:** 2–3 OC Staff Members (ideally representing different departments)
- **Members:** Up to 6 community members, including but not limited to:
 - Athletes / Riders
 - Coaches
 - Commissaires
 - Club Leaders
 - Volunteers or advocates

Where possible, the Committee will include diversity in region, gender, and discipline.

2026 KEY DUTIES

The Committee will perform the following functions:

1. Advisory & Strategic Role

- Provide recommendations to advance gender equity within Ontario Cycling's strategic framework.
- Advise on the development of policies, programs, and communications that support gender representation and inclusion.

2. Participation & Recruitment

- Develop and advise on initiatives to increase the participation of women and girls in cycling, including club recruitment, youth outreach, and learn-to-ride pathways.
- Support initiatives encouraging female coaches, commissaires, and officials through mentorship and recognition programs.

3. Leadership Development

- Identify opportunities to advance women in leadership roles (board, staff, coaches, volunteers).
- Partner with Canadian Women & Sport and other organizations to offer leadership and training sessions.

4. Visibility & Storytelling

- Guide annual communications, campaigns, and storytelling that celebrate women and girls in cycling.
- Lead the Women's Month campaign (May) featuring riders, leaders, coaches, and volunteers.

5. Education & Collaboration

- Collaborate with the DIB Committee on shared initiatives (SafeR Space education, inclusive language, intersectional campaigns).
- Promote awareness of gender-based violence prevention, psychological safety, and belonging in sport environments.

6. Monitoring & Reporting

- Review annual representation data (membership, leadership, coaching, officiating).
- Provide an **Annual Advisory Report** summarizing progress, challenges, and recommendations to the Board.

AUTHORITY

The Committee is advisory to the President & CEO and staff team on matters relating to gender equity in cycling.

It does not possess decision-making authority but influences OC's operational planning and policy development through recommendations to the President & CEO and relevant staff leads.

MEETINGS

- The Committee will meet quarterly (minimum four times per year) or as required.
- Meetings will be held virtually unless otherwise scheduled.
- Additional working sessions may be held for project-specific tasks.

RESOURCES

The Committee will be supported by OC staff, who will provide administrative coordination, meeting scheduling, and access to shared files through Basecamp.

REPORTING & COMMUNICATION

- All minutes, recommendations, and reference materials will be posted to the Committee Basecamp.
- Key updates and recommendations will be shared with the President & CEO and relevant OC staff for consideration.

REVIEW & APPROVAL

This Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the President & CEO, with input from the Membership Services Manager and Committee, to ensure alignment with OC's strategic plan and evolving operational priorities.