

Annual Barrie Bicycle Poker Ride

Pedal, Explore & Advocate

Every June, Barrie comes alive on wheels with the **Bicycle Poker Ride**, co-hosted by **Living Green Barrie** and **Firebird Community Cycle**. This event blends fun, community, and advocacy to promote cycling and active transportation in the city.

What Is the Bike Poker Ride?

- It's a **self-directed, non-competitive ride**: you start anytime after 9:00 a.m. and visit participating businesses or stops to collect playing cards.
- The goal is to build your best poker hand or visit the most stops — but more importantly, it's about exploring Barrie, supporting local shops, and enjoying active transportation.
- The ride wraps up with a celebration and prize ceremony, typically held at **One Eyed Jack (Wellington Plaza)** around 3:00 p.m.
- It welcomes all kinds of two-wheeled riders: bicycles, e-bikes, and even e-scooters.

The Purpose: More Than Just a Ride

While it's fun, the Bicycle Poker Ride also carries a deeper mission:

1. **Raise awareness of cycling** as a viable mode of transportation in Barrie. The ride helps normalise biking, especially through neighbourhoods not often seen by cyclists.
2. **Support local businesses** — stops are often local merchants, giving riders an incentive to explore and patronize shops.
3. **Generate feedback for city planning**. Living Green Barrie holds a seat on Barrie's Active Transportation Committee, and insights from participants — where people felt unsafe, where routes were missing — can feed directly into city discussions.
4. **Celebrate community & inclusivity** — because making cycling visible, fun, and inclusive helps shift culture.

Challenges & Barriers

Of course, promoting cycling in a mid-sized city comes with hurdles:

- **Bike infrastructure gaps:** not all streets are safe or comfortable for cyclists, especially those less confident or riding with children.
- **Traffic conflict & safety concerns:** intersections, heavy vehicles, and lack of protected bike lanes can deter many people.
- **Weather & seasonality:** Ontario winters and spring rain make cycling more difficult part of the year.
- **Awareness & culture:** many residents default to driving, especially for errands or commuting, so events like the Poker Ride help break that inertia.
- **Accessibility & equity:** ensuring that people of all ages, abilities, and resource levels can participate (e.g. providing sliding scale registration or equipment support). Living Green addresses this in its pricing options.



What to Know If You Plan to Ride

Here are some tips and reminders to get the most out of the Poker Ride (and to help you feel confident):

- Wear a helmet (always!).
- Choose a comfortable route and pace — it's not a race.
- Use bike lights or reflective gear if needed.
- Bring repair basics (spare tube, pump, multitool).
- Stay hydrated and bring snacks.
- Ride in pairs or teams — it's more fun and safer.
- Review the stops list in advance to plot a route that matches your fitness and time.
- Be comfortable riding in traffic; follow the rules of the road.



Call to Action: Ride With Us Next June

Mark your calendar now: **June 2026** will bring Barrie's next Bicycle Poker Ride. Sign up when registration opens (typically in spring). Details will be posed on our Events Page. By riding, you're doing more than having fun — you're sending a message: we want safer, more

bike-friendly streets in Barrie. You're supporting local business and feeding real feedback into city planning forums via Living Green's involvement on the Active Transportation Committee.

So gather your friends, family, or co-riders, hop on a bike (or e-bike), and join the ride in June. Let's pedal together toward a greener, healthier, more connected Barrie.