

Sustainability Solution



transportation

Communities in Motion

Bringing active transportation to life



Photo: Robin Bennett



Building tomorrow, today.

FCM | Centre for Sustainable
Community Development



Photo: Grand Concourse Authority



Photo: City of Whitehorse



Photo: TransLink



People are quick to agree that active transportation is vital to sustainable, healthy communities. It's easy to see why — when people walk and cycle, they create desirable neighbourhoods with less traffic, livelier streets and cleaner air. Every year, more Canadian communities are making active transportation a priority and enjoying the benefits.

WHY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION MATTERS

Active transportation:

- improves **public health** and reduces healthcare costs by fighting obesity and chronic illnesses like heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.
- is **emissions-free**, making it a powerful tool in the fight against climate change and air pollution.
- is **accessible** to children, youth, seniors, low-income families and persons with disabilities who can be left out when transportation systems depend on cars.
- is integral to almost all trips made using **public transit**, and supports ridership goals.
- **improves safety** for all road users (by reducing automobile use) and all citizens (by adding “eyes on the street”).
- brings real **economic benefits** by reducing the social costs of transportation, revitalizing commercial areas and boosting tourism.

OUR CHALLENGE

Promote active transportation options. Only seven per cent of commuters in metropolitan areas usually walk or cycle to work, compared to 77 per cent who travel by car (Statistics Canada, *Commuting Patterns and Places of Work of Canadians*, 2006 Census, www.statcan.ca). Just 26 per cent of parents say their school-aged children walk or cycle to school, compared to 34 per cent who take them by car (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *2005 Physical Activity and Sport Monitor*, www.cflri.ca). Many communities want to encourage walking and cycling, and a few are succeeding — like Victoria, B.C., where 16 per cent of commuters regularly walk or cycle — but others have a ways to go.

Eliminate barriers. We know that active transportation is fun, healthy and affordable — why isn't it more popular? Travel choices are highly individual, but the reasons people give for not walking or cycling usually involve poor weather, safety concerns, a lack of sidewalks and cycling facilities, time pressures or a lack of secure bicycle parking. These are challenges, not constraints. Municipalities have an important role to play in overcoming them.

Follow a new path. Making active transportation a greater part of everyday life in Canada will take political will, professional knowledge, public involvement and adequate funding. Municipalities need to learn from the experiences of others, craft a strategy for local success, and implement it across municipal activities like land use planning, road design and maintenance, health promotion, budgeting and staff training. It may not happen overnight, but it can be done.

DID YOU KNOW...

...that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund™ offers financial assistance for municipal studies and projects related to sustainable transportation? The Fund provides financing and knowledge to support the development of communities that are more sustainable. GMF is managed by the FCM Centre for Sustainable Community Development. Find out more at www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca.

“Active transportation” is human-powered travel. It refers primarily to walking and cycling, but also to in-line skating, skateboarding, wheelchairs, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and even kayaking or canoeing.

Take the test

Is your community bringing active transportation to life? Use this checklist to assess your performance.

Every **YES** answer means you're doing something right — but maybe you could do more.
Every **NO** answer reveals a weak link that could undermine your efforts — look into it!

Has your municipality committed to making active transportation part of its business?

See *COMMITMENT* on page 6.

YES NO

- Do you support active transportation through daily operations, as a matter of course?
- Do you provide sufficient staff and budget resources to make things happen?
- Do you seek out and work with interested members of the public?
- Do you lead by example to motivate others?

Is your municipality planning for a more active future?

See *PLANNING* on page 8.

YES NO

- Do you have a comprehensive active transportation strategy?
- Do you integrate active transportation needs into other transportation plans?
- Do you support active transportation through land use plans and policies?
- Do you ensure that all new developments have features that support active transportation?

Does your municipality provide facilities to support active transportation?

See *FACILITIES* on page 10.

YES NO

- Do you ensure that streets offer active transportation opportunities, not obstacles?
- Do you provide trails to fill gaps in the road network and offer an alternative to streets?
- Do you provide linkages between public transit and active transportation?
- Do you ensure that bike parking and other trip-end facilities are available?

Does your municipality actively promote active transportation?

See *PROMOTION* on page 12.

YES NO

- Do you use promotional tools to encourage active transportation in your community?
- Do you use education and enforcement to enhance safety?
- Do you promote walking and cycling as ways for children to get to school?
- Do you work with partners to reach the community and strengthen key messages?

Profiles in success

MONTREAL FOSTERS AN ACTIVE CULTURE

City of Montreal, Quebec

In Montreal, 35 per cent of residents choose to make short trips of less than two kilometres on foot. A mix of dense land uses and an underground pedestrian network make walking and cycling attractive downtown, and high-quality public transit is available for longer trips. Other features that make Montreal a great city for walking include pedestrian-only streets, tree-lined boulevards, wide sidewalks, countdown pedestrian signals, traffic calming measures* and a law against vehicles turning right at red lights.

Montreal's 400 kilometres of bicycle routes include a 30-kilometre *Réseau blanc* or White Network that is maintained for cyclists through the winter. Recently developed trails include one, linking the Old Port of

Montreal to the Lachine Canal, that serves a million cyclists each year and may be the busiest in Canada. The city aims to double its cycling route network within seven years.

Cycling is promoted vigorously by the Vélo Québec Association, with financial support from the city. Among its activities is the Montreal Bike Fest, a week-long event that includes the famed *Tour de l'île de Montréal* which sees 30,000 cyclists celebrate with a day-long ride around the island.

For more information, see www.ville.montreal.qc.ca and www.velo.qc.ca.

* *Traffic calming is a set of strategies — like speed humps, traffic circles and turning restrictions — that slow down or reduce traffic, improving conditions for residents, pedestrians and cyclists.*



Photo: City of Montreal

SAANICH INVESTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARTNERSHIPS

District of Saanich, British Columbia

The 110,000 residents of Saanich, near Victoria at the south end of Vancouver Island, enjoy a mild climate that makes year-round cycling and walking appealing. The high proportion of bicycle commuters (11 per cent in 2004) may not be surprising at first glance, but in fact represents a substantial five-year leap over the 1999 rate of four per cent — a success founded in years of effort.

The district developed a Bicycle Master Plan in 1994, well ahead of many other smaller communities. The plan laid the foundation for a network of neighbourhood-focused connector routes and longer-distance commuter routes. Saanich now boasts an extensive



Photo: John Luton/Capital Bike and Walk Society

trail system and 50 kilometres of on-road cycling facilities. The district also requires bicycle parking in new multi-unit residential buildings, institutions, workplaces and car parking structures.

Despite these successes, promoting active transportation in Saanich is about more than infrastructure. Since 2002, the district has worked with local police and the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and others using the road through the Safer City program. It has also benefited from other partnerships with the Saanich Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Advisory Committee and the non-profit Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition.

For more information, see www.saanich.ca.

EDMONTON OVERCOMES NATURAL BARRIERS

City of Edmonton, Alberta

Edmonton may not seem like a natural cycling environment — winters are long, and the deep North Saskatchewan River valley divides the city. However, guided by its 1992 Bicycle Transportation Master Plan, the city has expanded its trail network and increased daily cycling trips from 10,000 in 1994 to 25,000 in 2005.

In 2002, Edmonton's Multi-Use Trail Corridor Study recommended 62 kilometres of new trails along rail lines and other rights-of-way to connect residential areas, downtown, the university area, the river valley and more than 250 kilometres of pre-existing trails



Photo: Claire Stock/City of Edmonton

and shared-use sidewalks. One important project, known as the Ribbon of Steel, integrated a new downtown trail with a heritage street car service and won a 2004 FCM-CH2M HILL Sustainable Community Award. Other additions have included dedicated trail facilities on major road and light rail bridges across the North Saskatchewan River.

Links between active transportation and transit are important in Edmonton. Cyclists can bring their bikes on several key bus routes, and on light rail trains outside of rush hours. A Trails, Paths and Routes Advisory Committee helps guide the city's efforts,

with members representing youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, walkers, runners, cyclists and in-line skaters.

For more information, see www.edmonton.ca.

Commitment

True municipal commitment to active transportation is embodied by a culture that supports walking and cycling, and that routinely makes active transportation a priority.

Enable active transportation through everyday operations. Too often, municipalities treat active transportation as a special activity when they should be making it mainstream. The involvement of active transportation specialists should not be required to bring about supportive action in key areas like land use planning, economic development, transportation and park planning, public health, road design and construction, road and trail maintenance, traffic safety and enforcement, and signal operations. Municipalities should integrate active transportation into everyday activities so that responsibilities are shared and good decisions happen naturally.

Provide adequate resources. Social trends can't be changed on a shoestring. Active transportation programs need staff who can act as champions within the organization, at council and among the public. Road designers, traffic engineers, transit planners and other staff need training to learn their roles. Dedicated funding for active transportation is critical, but can't pay for every initiative. For example, road budgets — and not the cycling budget — should bear the cost of bicycle lanes on new roads. This makes sense in principle and as a matter of practicality; roads are for everyone, and road budgets tend to be much bigger.

Involve the public. A culture that supports active transportation must involve interested and talented stakeholders. Advisory committees can help shape policy and plan new facilities. Neighbourhood groups can supply volunteers for promotional initiatives, and run articles in community newspapers. Charities can promote walking, running or cycling through fundraising events. Small businesses can be very supportive, and business leaders make great champions.

Lead by example. By being a visible leader, a municipality can motivate staff, attract partners, and bring other governments on board. Elected officials and employees should be encouraged to walk or cycle for their daily commute, and to get to meetings. Municipal buildings should have on-site walking routes, pedestrian lighting, secure bicycle racks and other features that announce the value of active transportation. Some Canadian cities offer bicycles to meter readers and bylaw enforcement officers — even police — who are willing to pedal their way around the community.

DEMONSTRATING LEADERSHIP

City of Toronto, Ontario

The City of Toronto partnered with Green Communities Canada to co-host the 2007 Walk21 Conference. The city adopted a Pedestrian Charter in 2002, supports cycling and pedestrian advisory committees, and coordinates an annual Bike Week that grew into Bike Month in 2008. Staff members are working to implement a five-year, \$30-million cycling infrastructure plan. The city is also creating a new public realm unit to improve pedestrian infrastructure while it develops a comprehensive Walking Strategy framework.

For more information, see www.toronto.ca/cycling and www.toronto.ca/walking.



Photo: City of Toronto

Mayor David Miller hits the streets for Bike Week.

BUILDING COMMITMENT

City of Greater Sudbury, Ontario

By signing the International Charter for Walking in 2007, the City of Greater Sudbury recognized the importance of walking and committed to reducing physical, social and institutional barriers. The city also hosted one of ten Green Communities/Walk21 Roadshows with international active transportation experts.

For more information, see www.sudbury.ca.



Photo: City of Greater Sudbury

ACCELERATING ACTION

City of Winnipeg, Manitoba

The City of Winnipeg's surge in active transportation programs has been championed by the mayor and strongly supported by council and energetic community groups. Since conducting its 2005 Active Transportation Study, the city has hired a dedicated coordinator and formed an advisory committee. Over the same period, the city's capital budget for active transportation has risen from \$300,000 to more than \$3 million.

For more information, see www.winnipeg.ca/services/transportation.



Photo: City of Winnipeg

Planning

Planning for active transportation involves more than lines on a map. It brings ideas to life through a combination of vision, courage, practicality, judgment and discipline. And it's not just about walking and cycling — good planning involves all aspects of transportation, as well as the full hierarchy of land use planning from growth management strategies to site design. It can even involve the integrated community sustainability plans (ICSPs) required under federal gas tax transfer agreements.

Create an active transportation strategy.

Developing a municipal strategy for active transportation is a great way to motivate elected officials, staff and the public. An entire community can be energized by the process of creating a vision, setting goals, evaluating options, defining networks and writing an action plan. A feasible, affordable strategy with a firm schedule and clear responsibilities is a great catalyst for action.

Integrate planning for all modes. Active transportation strategies are more likely to succeed if their key elements are integrated into transit, road and parking plans. For example, transit planners — not active transportation specialists — should take responsibility for putting bike racks on buses and providing bike parking at transit stations. It also helps if active transportation planners can learn about the objectives and constraints of other transportation staff.

Strengthen land use plans and policies.

Supportive land use planning is critical to making active transportation practical. Distance is a barrier to walking and cycling, so homes should be as close as possible to schools, offices and stores. Sprawling subdivisions discourage active travel, while higher

densities bring friends, stores and restaurants within reach. Mixed uses let people do several errands at once. Streetscapes with multiple entrances, varied facades, canopies and sidewalk cafés — and without a sea of parking between the building and the street — can encourage walking, attract shoppers and create valuable public spaces.

Raise the bar for new development.

Municipalities that are truly committed to active transportation require new developments to be supportive. Progressive developers recognize our aging, environmentally aware and health-conscious population by integrating street grids, sidewalks and landscaped trails in subdivisions. Like-minded builders include bicycle parking, showers and change rooms in new offices. Others, however, continue to focus primarily on drivers. Amending zoning bylaws, training planning staff, and applying political will can make a real difference to the quality of new developments and benefit those who choose active transportation options for decades to come.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

*Halifax Regional Municipality,
Nova Scotia*

The plan recommends a primary network of on-road and off-road active transportation corridors to connect urban and rural communities, linked to individual neighbourhoods. It includes a long-range implementation plan, technical guidelines for network planning and design, and a framework for education and promotion.

For more information, see www.halifax.ca/activetransportation.



Photo: Roxane MacInnis/Halifax Regional Municipality

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLANS

City of Kamloops, British Columbia

To reduce the demand for car travel, the City of Kamloops has created long-range plans for safe, convenient walking and cycling networks. The plans are based on analyses of user benefits and a strategic approach to prioritizing expenditures.

For more information, see www.kamloops.ca/transportation.



Photo: Dave Eagles/Kamloops This Week

CYCLING NETWORK MASTER PLAN

City of Quebec, Quebec

The City of Quebec is planning to improve an unstructured and discontinuous cycling network built by area municipalities before amalgamation. To triple the use of cycling for short trips over the next 10 years, the city intends to double cycling routes, make safety improvements, provide more bicycle parking, integrate active transportation with public transit, and support special events and cycling tourism.

For more information, see www.ville.quebec.qc.ca.



Photo: City of Vancouver

SOUTHEAST FALSE CREEK PLAN

City of Vancouver, British Columbia

Southeast False Creek is a 32-hectare mixed-use site that will be home to 14,000 new residents after housing Olympic athletes in 2010. The community puts pedestrians and cyclists first with a grid of streets and bike lanes, pedestrian-friendly design and requirements for on-site bike parking. The plan's transportation component was supported by FCM's Green Municipal Fund™, and won a 2006 FCM-CH2M HILL Sustainable Community Award.

For more information, see www.vancouver.ca/olympicvillage.

Facilities

Pedestrians and cyclists are very exposed to their environment, and sensitive to the quality of travel facilities. They avoid routes that they think are indirect or unsafe. Quality facilities for active transportation require investment, but without them, even the best intentions will yield few results.

Build streets for everyone. Streets are usually the shortest route between homes, workplaces and shops. They should be safe and efficient for all travelers, but as a matter of principle, they should give first priority to those who are slower and more vulnerable. Universal design* removes barriers and helps everyone get around — young or old, disabled or not. Wide sidewalks, boulevards, frequent crossings and low-level lighting all benefit pedestrians. Bike lanes, wide curb lanes and paved road shoulders encourage cycling. Lane reductions and other traffic calming measures make drivers more aware of other people on the street. Regular sweeping, snow and ice control and timely pothole patching also help keep streets and sidewalks safe.

Offer off-road options. Some pedestrians and cyclists stick to city streets to reduce travel time and distance. Others, however, prefer less stressful off-road routes that let them connect with nature. Lit trails improve safety and security, wayfinding systems help people get where they're going, bike ramps let cyclists get up and down staircases with ease, and dedicated bridges help everyone cross waterways, ravines and railway lines. Off-road routes are also important for recreation, and many communities are expanding their trail systems to boost tourism.

Make the transit connection. Together, transit and active transportation are an effective alternative to cars. People who use transit are almost always pedestrians; more and more, they are becoming cyclists, too. Communities are adding bike racks to buses, welcoming bikes on rail vehicles, offering bike lockers or sheltered parking at transit stations, and upgrading walking and cycling routes around transit stations to build ridership.

Help travellers end their trip. Sometimes, the greatest barrier facing those who choose active transportation is at their destination. Long-distance commuters need a place to shower and change at work. Cyclists will stop using their bikes if parking is inadequate, inconvenient or insecure. While property owners are ultimately responsible for resolving these issues, municipal bylaws can require solutions to be integrated in new developments. Many communities go further by offering high-quality public bicycle parking in downtown areas, and some even subsidize the installation of bike racks at private workplaces.

** Universal design is an approach to making the built environment accessible to and useable by the widest possible range of people, including those with disabilities.*

WHITEHORSE MOVES

City of Whitehorse, Yukon

The City of Whitehorse worked with partners to install new trails, a pedestrian bridge, a lighted staircase, downtown bike lanes and several “artisan” bike racks. City residents now enjoy a well-connected network of routes for walking and cycling.

For more information, see www.whitehorse.ca.



Photo: City of Whitehorse

Photo: Office of Diane Holmes/City of Ottawa



GRAND CONCOURSE WALKWAY

*St. John's Metropolitan Area,
Newfoundland and Labrador*

This 120-kilometre system of interconnected walkways links schools, seniors' homes and other destinations to parks and waterways in St. John's, Mount Pearl and Paradise. The Grand Concourse features rest areas, wayfinding and interpretive information, and is managed by an authority with the involvement of local municipalities.

For more information, see www.grandconcourse.ca.

BIKING AND WALKING TO TRANSIT

Region of Waterloo, Ontario

As part of its innovative iXpress bus service, the Region of Waterloo added bike racks to all Grand River Transit buses, installed bike parking at some iXpress stations and lockers at two key terminals, and improved access to transit stations by upgrading nearby sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.

For more information, see www.grt.ca.

MULTIMODAL BRIDGES

City of Ottawa, Ontario

Ottawa's numerous bridges serve thousands of cyclists and pedestrians every day. In recent years the city has upgraded older bridges with bike lanes and wide sidewalks, included bike lanes and off-road paths on new bridges, and opened the landmark Corktown Footbridge across the Rideau Canal.

For more information, see www.ottawa.ca.



Photo: Grand Concourse Authority



Photo: Region of Waterloo

Promotion

The barriers to active transportation aren't all visible — many exist in the minds of individuals and the civic culture of a community. Overcoming them requires municipal staff to engage citizens in a meaningful and continuous dialogue.

Maximize your market. Several tools help make active transportation a desirable choice. Promotional events raise awareness and encourage people to try new ways of getting around. Awards recognize key individuals and organizations. Maps help cyclists and pedestrians find attractive routes. Advertising and media coverage can build a positive image for active transportation, while targeted marketing helps families explore travel options in a personal, customized way.

Focus on safety. While changes to signs, signals, streets and trails may be needed to improve safety, other measures can be just as important. Educational programs teach drivers to share the road with cyclists. Training courses give cyclists the skills and confidence they need to ride in traffic. Enforcement campaigns encourage cyclists to have the right safety equipment, and encourage everyone to obey the laws of the road.

Help children get to school. Across Canada, communities are promoting alternatives to children being driven to school. Walking school buses, cycling trains, school-to-school contests and classroom curricula can improve children's physical and mental health, and reduce congestion and emissions around schools. Physical changes to active transportation routes support these efforts, making routes safer and more convenient for children.

Extend your reach with partnerships. Municipalities shouldn't try to do it all by themselves, when partners offer much-needed energy, knowledge and skills. Non-profit organizations can run education programs and special events, employers can offer incentives for active transportation commuters, and associations can educate professionals about active transportation planning and implementation.



Photo: TransLink

TRAVELSMART

Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

A number of area municipalities recently partnered with TransLink to test the potential of targeted marketing. Preliminary results indicate that by offering households customized information and incentives, the TravelSmart project increased walking by almost 10 per cent and cycling by more than 30 per cent in a variety of neighbourhoods.

For more information, see www.translink.bc.ca/projects.

i-GO

*Regional District of Central Okanagan,
British Columbia*

The Regional District of Central Okanagan, the City of Kelowna and their partners promote active transportation through several special events. These include Bike to Work Week, Bike to School Week, International Walk to School Day, Walk and Roll Car Free Day, Clean Air Day and the national Commuter Challenge in which Central Okanagan has won first place several years in a row.

For more information, see www.i-go.ca.

ACTIVE AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

City of Peterborough, Ontario

Local organizations including the City of Peterborough have partnered to encourage active transportation by school children. Activities include Cool Captain Climate transportation shows, International Walk to School Day, a Cross-Canada Walking Challenge, school zone anti-idling projects, monthly IWALK days and school travel maps.

For more information, see www.peterboroughmoves.com.

IN TOWN, WITHOUT MY CAR!

City of Montreal, Quebec

Every year since 2003, the city and its partners have closed downtown streets and offered activities to promote cycling, walking and other sustainable modes. Surveys show that the event encourages many drivers to leave their cars at home and try new ways of commuting.

For more information, see www.amt.qc.ca.

Photo: City of Kelowna, Transportation Demand Management



Photo: City of Peterborough



Photo: City of Montreal

Active transportation resources

The following national organizations offer descriptions of active transportation programs, case studies, research, tools and links. Readers should also seek out local, regional and provincial organizations.

FCM Centre for Sustainable Community Development

www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca

Transport Canada

www.tc.gc.ca/urban

Centre for Sustainable Transportation

<http://cst.uwinnipeg.ca>

Public Health Agency of Canada

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute

www.cflri.ca

Green Communities Canada

www.greencommunitiescanada.org

www.saferoutestoschool.ca

FCM | Centre for Sustainable Community Development

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has been the national voice of municipal governments since 1901. FCM fosters sustainable communities enjoying a high quality of life by promoting strong, effective, and accountable municipal government.

FCM's Green Municipal Fund™ (GMF) offers a range of resources and services that specifically address the sustainable community development needs of municipal governments. The Fund provides financing and knowledge to support the development of communities that are more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. GMF is managed by the FCM Centre for Sustainable Community Development (CSCD).

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