



BACKGROUND:

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

The way we design our streets, sidewalks, buildings and parks (known collectively as the built environment) can impact physical activity levels by either supporting or hindering access to healthy transportation options. There are many benefits to investing in active transportation infrastructure (bike lanes, sidewalks, trails) in a community. These benefits include: increased physical activity, increased social interaction or cohesion, improved safety for people walking and cycling, better air quality, and local economic benefits. However, active transportation infrastructure improvements are currently more commonly found in neighbourhoods with higher socioeconomic status, which has resulted in people in lower income areas being put at higher risk of traffic injuries and fatalities. In addition to missing out on the health benefits of walking and cycling, people with lower socioeconomic status also have access to fewer transportation options. Therefore, building communities that support active transportation allows all residents, regardless of income, to safely access the services and destinations they need.

What are the components of a built environment which enables active transportation?



Complete Streets

Streets which are designed to be safe and accessible for everyone: people who walk, bicycle, take transit, or drive, and people of all ages and abilities.



Network connectivity

Creating a compact street grid and ensuring the continuity of active transportation infrastructure makes a neighbourhood safer for all users, and encourages active transportation.



Mixed land use

Blending different land uses (such as commercial, residential, cultural, open space and employment uses), creates more integrated and vibrant communities. It also encourages walking and cycling because it reduces the distances between destinations.



Safe and visible bicycle and pedestrian routes

These provide designated space for different modes of travel, and provide buffers to separate people walking and cycling from cars.

Secure bicycle parking

Ensuring adequate bicycle parking facilities, both short and long term allows more people to cycle and store their bicycles.

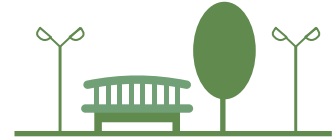


Street design measures which calm traffic

Speed humps, pinch points, traffic circles, and other traffic calming features have the ability to reduce automobile speed.

Safe and accessible pedestrian crossings

Includes elements such as accessible curb cuts and both tactile and auditory crossing warnings.



Exterior lighting

Lighting on streets and outdoor paths can increase safety and encourage use at all times of the day.

Street trees and vegetation:

These features provide shade and visual interest, and encourage people to walk.

Seating

Seating along paths and sidewalks provides areas in which people can rest along the way.

How can policy support active transportation best practices?



Develop active transportation plans. Developing and implementing active transportation plans.

Prioritizing the needs of people walking and cycling in transportation plans.

Adopt Complete Streets policies and guidelines.

Involve vulnerable road users. Ensuring the voices and needs of vulnerable populations are incorporated in the transportation planning process.

Incorporate with land use. Incorporating mixed land use and street connectivity in the planning of new large scale developments.

Apply an equity lens. Ensuring active transportation infrastructure investment is implemented fairly and equitably, with priority given to lower-income or underserved neighbourhoods.

Sample Canadian Policies that Promote Active Transportation

1. [Vancouver's Transportation 2040 Plan](#) - This plan targets at least two-thirds of all trips to be made by foot, bike and transit by 2040.
2. [Saskatoon's Active Transportation Plan](#) - This plan completed an equity analysis of the city which identified seven neighbourhoods with higher percentages of vulnerable populations that require priority active transportation interventions.
3. [Calgary's Step Forward Pedestrian Strategy](#) - This strategy was built on the concerns and opportunities identified by community members, with the most common concerns centred around the safety, enjoyability and ease of use of the city's walking network.
4. [#CycleON, Ontario Cycling Strategy](#) - This strategy identifies key success factors in supporting cycling, such as developing connected cycling networks, secondary infrastructure such as bicycle parking and storage, and public education.
5. [Greater Sudbury Complete Streets Policy](#) - The Complete Streets policy approach in Greater Sudbury takes into account the needs of all people during the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of transportation networks including all public roadways and all projects and phases.
6. [Drummondville Master Plan for Sports and Physical Activity](#) - This master plan utilized an accessibility lens throughout the plan.



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