

We would like to thank all the partners who contributed to the creation of Active Neighbourhoods Canada. We would like to highlight the work of citizens and local partners in 12 communities in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. They have made this initiative a reality and their accomplishments are at the heart of this publication.

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FOREWORD



TAKE ACTION **NEEDS OF CITIZENS** **health**
innovative national partnership
sustainable solutions SECURITY passionate about their neighbourhood
WALKING biking EVOLVING AND INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIP
GREEN **MEASURES FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

The Active Neighbourhoods Canada (ANC) project was launched in 2009 with the mission of creating green, active and healthy neighbourhoods. In the following years, 12 communities and a multitude of stakeholders were involved in participatory urban planning processes in their neighbourhoods. These initiatives resulted in sustainable solutions, both in terms of public policy and urban planning, that meet citizens' needs.

ANC stems from an innovative national partnership between our three organizations, informed by principles of participatory planning and environmentally responsible urban design. Although we work in different provinces, the Montréal Urban Ecology Centre (MUEC), Sustainable Calgary Society (SC) and the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT) have the same field of intervention: the living environment of citizens. Over the past four years, and with the support of local citizens and partners passionate about their neighbourhoods, we have enhanced and equipped 12 communities using the principles of participatory urban planning.

As an evolving and inclusive partnership, Active Neighbourhoods Canada has also allowed us to have an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the link between public health and participatory urban planning. Within the project, we have created a collaborative, bilingual network of urban planning professionals across Canada: the Community of Practice on Participatory Urban Planning. In addition, the ANC provides an invaluable toolbox that has accelerated innovation and allowed for real change in Canadian communities that want to become more green, active and healthy.

By developing local capacity for action, Active Neighbourhoods Canada was involved in promoting walking and cycling, and designing and implementing active transportation facilities in three Canadian provinces. ANC has also given rise to new partnerships between decision makers and professionals in the fields of transportation, urban planning, urban design, and health and safety promotion. These intersectoral partnerships have been beneficial to urban planning projects.

Our unique partnership has resulted in advancing knowledge and testing different practices in urban and rural locations, in suburbs or in cities, to build healthy living environments for all citizens. These experiences have been documented and evaluated. Lessons learned from this promising approach to urban planning can be used to improve the way we do community engagement, policy development and research.

Enjoy discovering Active Neighbourhoods Canada!



Dr. Noel Keough

Chair of the Board
Sustainable Calgary Society



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ACTIVE

NEIGHBOURHOODS

CANADA

The Active Neighbourhoods Canada partnership is working to identify ways for decision makers, planning professionals, community groups and citizens to cooperate on plans and solutions that encourage active transportation and citizen participation. Three partners - the Montréal Urban Ecology Centre, the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation and Sustainable Calgary Society - adopted an innovative, cooperative, Canada-wide approach.

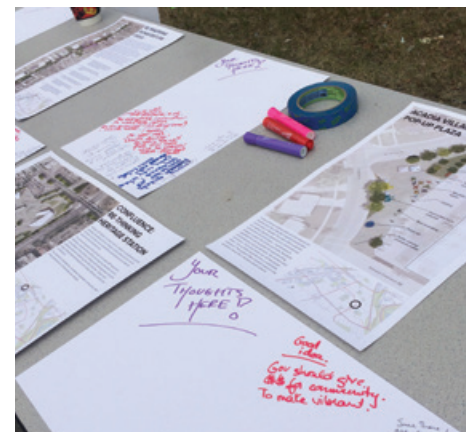


Engineers, planners, architects and public-sector decision makers are increasingly expected to test new and unconventional practices. This shift is intended to respond to the complexities inherent in planning the built environment.

With financial support from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), as one of the agency's Innovation Strategy projects, Achieving Healthier Weights in Canada's Communities, the project

supported 12 neighbourhood-level planning initiatives - four each in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec - including assessing the progress made between 2013 and 2017.

The three partners are confident that the results of the pilot projects will lead key stakeholders to recognize the importance of transforming the built environment, while involving local communities in planning and implementing change.



For two decades, active transportation issues have been gaining increasing traction in Canadian cities. In 2013, the Active Neighbourhoods Canada partners joined forces, each bringing their unique experiences with city design and planning to the table. This is how the adventure began.

TOWARDS AN ACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS CANADA NETWORK

When Sustainable Calgary (SC) and the Montréal Urban Ecology Centre (MUEC) met for the first time, in 2002, in connection with the Community Indicators Project, no one expected that the two organizations would come together ten years later for a project like Active Neighbourhoods Canada. When the MUEC approached SC in 2012 to gauge its interest in partnering for the ANC project, the two organizations clicked immediately. It was also in 2012 that Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT) and the MUEC met for the first time, through the CLASP initiative (*Coalitions Linking Action and Science for Prevention*), a Canada-wide collaboration among non-profits and health agencies, aimed at developing innovative citizen participation strategies to improve the built environment and public health. The MUEC's participatory urban planning projects and TCAT's Complete Streets projects seemed to be fertile ground for just that kind of collaboration.

There were several threads connecting the three organizations and their mutual interest in planning democratic, environmentally sound cities built at a human scale.

In 2012, the MUEC wanted to bring the Green, Active and Healthy Neighbourhoods project approach to other Canadian provinces. Encouraged by its initial contacts with the organizations that would eventually become its partners, it invited TCAT and SC to join forces and launch the pan-Canadian Active Neighbourhoods Canada project. The organizations' complementary expertise was a clear asset to the project. The initiative is the only one under the PHAC's Innovation Strategy to operate in both official languages. Furthermore, the three organizations' collaborative work within their



respective provinces - with universities and public health departments, among other partners - helped lead to new partnerships, improved knowledge and greater awareness of the ANC project.

MAIN GOALS

In 12 priority neighbourhoods in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, pilot and adapt our community involvement approach to promote healthy living: participatory urban planning.

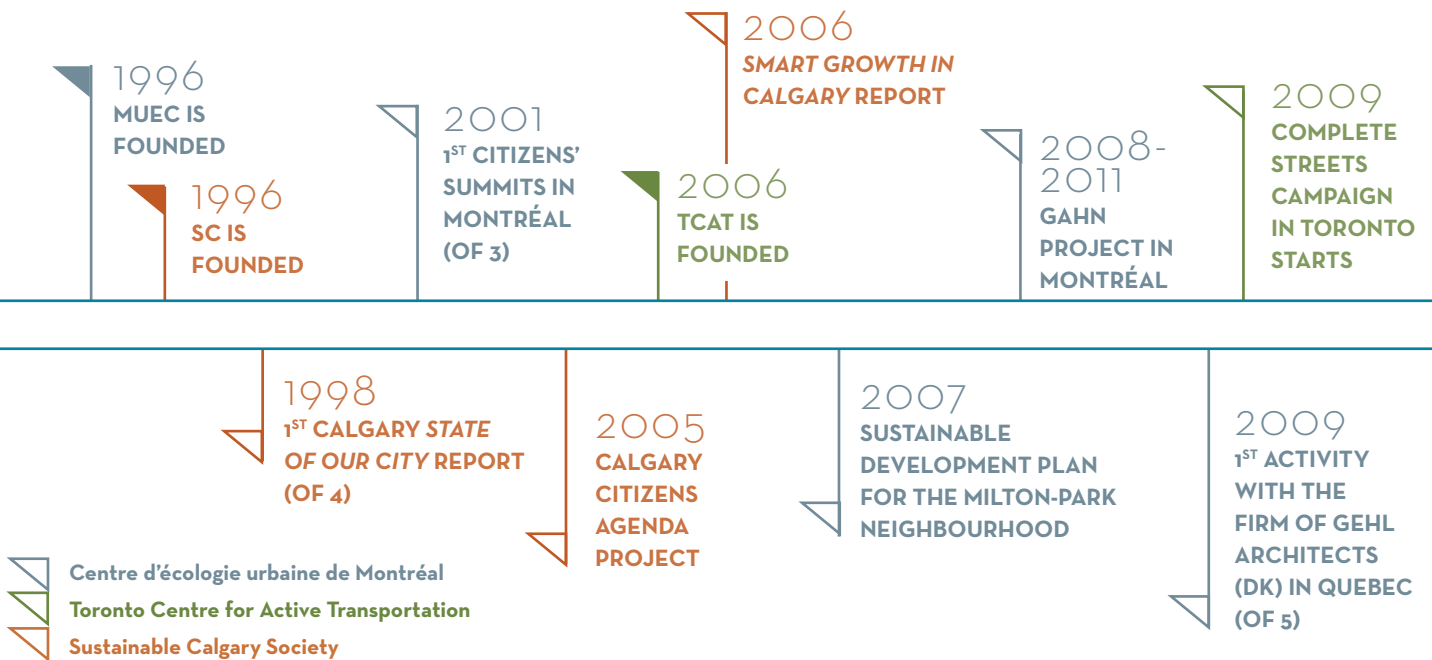
Inspired by the Community Planning process put forward by Nick Wates, and the work of architect Jan Gehl and activist-author Jane Jacobs for their vision of the city, the process outlined here emphasizes the importance of citizen participation in creating human-scale public spaces that meet community needs. More than just a simple consultation, participatory urban planning promotes open dialogue and interaction among users, experts and decision makers throughout the entire process.

More and more Canadian communities are making these ideas part of their practices and policies, giving momentum to the movement for planning that favours active transportation, within a framework of better public health and increased citizen participation.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Training and knowledge sharing among the partners;
- Engage in participatory planning work with 12 local communities in a variety of settings: rural, small town, suburb, city;
- Creation and leadership of a bilingual, Canada-wide community of practice comprising practitioners and researchers as well as Active Neighbourhoods participants from across Canada;
- Research, production of publications, presentations and public events;
- Experiments with new technologies and methods of citizen engagement;
- Formative evaluation process with the partners and key participants, for the purpose of improving the project throughout its implementation and identifying best practices.

THE ORIGINS OF ACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS CANADA



GREEN, ACTIVE AND HEALTHY NEIGHBOURHOODS IN QUEBEC...

In the mid-2000s, the public health and community sectors started taking a keen interest in issues related to neighbourhood planning. Several reports and projects demonstrated the urgency of taking action to make public spaces safer and more user-friendly.

In 2007, the Montréal Urban Ecology Centre (MUEC) received a call from a citizen who had started lobbying for pedestrian safety after her daughter was hit by a car. Her ideas had little currency among planning professionals, and she wanted to work with organizations that could put some weight behind her efforts. At the same time, the City of Montréal announced the creation of green neighbourhoods in its Transportation Plan. In that new surge of ideas and projects, the MUEC launched the Green, Active and Healthy Neighbourhoods (GAHN) project.

The GAHN project aimed to show that it is possible to design the built environment at the neighbourhood-level to make it more amenable to active transportation, with the participation of all, citizens and professionals. The MUEC developed a participatory planning methodology and tools for participatory urban planning. The new process was first tried in Montréal, followed by other locations in Quebec, through a program of promotion and knowledge transfer, advocacy and guidance at the community level.

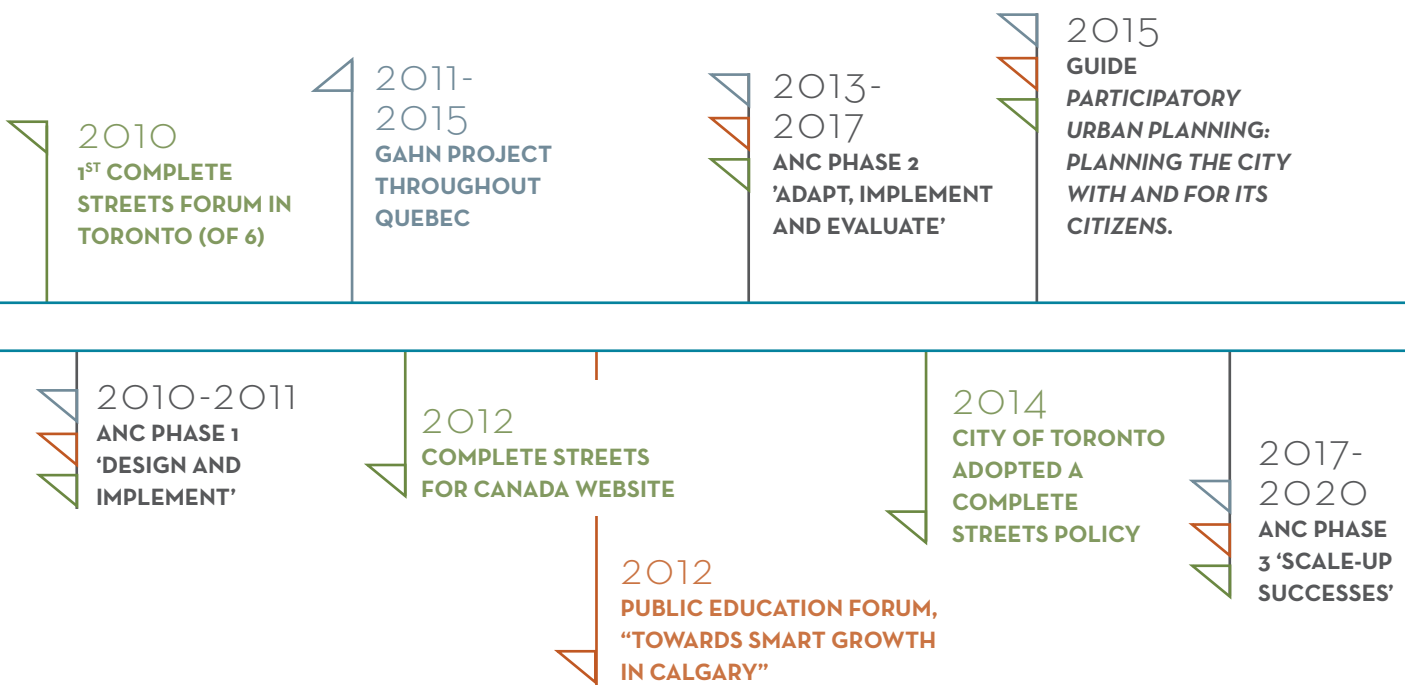
In 2010, the MUEC decided to adapt its approach to other settings and started working with the Public Health Agency of Canada within Phase 1 of the agency's *Innovation Strategy project, Achieving Healthier Weights in Canada's Communities*.

COMPLETE STREETS IN ONTARIO...

As in Montréal, at the turn of the millennium the City of Toronto also experienced momentum for active transportation with the adoption of its first Bike Plan in 2001. Formed in 2006 as a grassroots coalition to give a unified voice for pedestrians and cyclists, the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT) advances knowledge and evidence to build support for safe and inclusive streets for walking and cycling in Canada's largest city.

TCAT's work involves numerous projects and strategies to improve active transportation in and around Toronto. TCAT became well known for its Complete Streets approach, launched in 2009. In 2010, TCAT organized the first of six Complete Streets Forums, at a time when the concept was barely known in Canada. Today, it is integrated into official transportation planning. Also, several cities, including Toronto, have developed Complete Streets guidelines. Even better, municipalities are now moving from policy to action and are implementing people-friendly streets across the country. TCAT continues to research and track this progress on its Complete Streets for Canada website.

Since 2012, when they entered into a partnership with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, funded by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer through its CLASP (Coalitions Linking Action and Science for



Prevention) initiative, TCAT has worked collaboratively with Toronto Public Health (TPH). Through CLASP, TCAT and TPH shared knowledge about the health benefits of walking and cycling, discovered feasible design options to improve cycling and walking, and gathered information on community needs and preferences in two Toronto neighbourhoods. This work with CLASP opened the door for TCAT to become a partner in the Active Neighbourhoods Canada project.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN ALBERTA...

Sustainable Calgary Society (SC) is a citizen-led, non-profit organization started in 1996 when a group of Calgarians came together to discuss ways to improve the sustainability of their city, in response to the Rio Earth Summit, Agenda 21, call for new ways to measure sustainability. Its mission is to promote, encourage and support community-level actions and initiatives that move Calgary toward a more sustainable future. Participatory action research and deliberative policy-making have been the foundation of how the NGO engages citizens.

The local response was to engage citizens in the creation of the State of Our City Community Sustainability Indicators Report. Since 1998, 4 Reports have been published, the most recent being 2011. In 2005, SC launched the Citizen Agenda project. The project brought together more than 1,000 citizens to take on the task of analyzing issues and indicators, and brainstorming actions and policies to tackle the city's most pressing issues. Ultimately these citizen-selected policy and action priorities work together to create a healthier, more caring, vibrant and sustainable Calgary. They were published in a report, "The Citizens' Agenda – A City Built for Everyone". From 2007, the project's focuses expanded to include the community need for sustainable, equitable and smart transportation.

At the same time, SC participated in the drafting of a report on problems with the dominant North American urban development model. The result was *Overcoming Barriers to Sustainable Urban Development: Towards Smart Growth in Calgary*, a working document prepared for the Calgary Citizens Forum. Then, in 2012, SC organized a public education forum called *Towards Smart Growth in Calgary - Overcoming Barriers to Sustainable Urban Development*. SC, the University of Calgary and the Pembina Institute published a study on the obstacles and opportunities of smart growth as a sustainable alternative to the car-dependent development that is dominant in Calgary.

Based on these observations about cities' development and planning choices, and seeing an obvious affinity with the participatory urban planning approach developed by the MUEC, SC became a partner in the Active Neighbourhoods Canada project.

CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES

It comes as no surprise that a venture such as this one met its share of challenges. Those challenges became valuable opportunities to learn and improve practices.

RECOGNIZE THE LINK BETWEEN URBAN PLANNING AND HEALTH, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Several years ago, it took considerable effort to convince planning and transportation professionals, and some elected representatives, of the value of this process.

It is now generally accepted within the planning-related disciplines that there is a direct connection between the built environment and public health. Citizen participation is increasingly integral to planning processes, even if it cannot always be taken for granted.

BEST PRACTICE : Provide **professional training**, led by partners or respected trainers: to facilitate the adoption of innovative ideas by planners, urban designers, engineers and elected representatives (e.g.: TCAT provided training recognized by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute).

Make **public presentations**: help extend the reach of training by addressing a wider audience, including students in relevant professions (e.g.: lecture by Fred Kent (Project for Public Spaces) at the Quebec launch of *Participatory Urban Planning: Planning the city with and for its citizens.*)

Enter **partnerships with national organizations**: helps publicize the project, its aims and new ideas (e.g. Canada Walks, Canadian Cancer Society, etc.).

ACCEPTANCE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In certain local projects, the participatory process ran up against mutual distrust that already existed between citizens and professionals or elected representatives.

BEST PRACTICE : Promote **citizen participation in training**: thanks to an inclusive process, citizens and other participants from outside the planning professions gain credibility in the eyes of professionals and elected representatives.

Organize **bonding activities**: e.g.: an exploratory walk in a casual setting, facilitating the inclusion of all stakeholders, including citizens.



MULTIDISCIPLINARY, INTERSECTORAL COOPERATION

Once the participants are convinced of the value of incorporating these concerns into their work, it becomes necessary to change the culture of compartmentalization found in most professions. In several communities, professionals from different municipal departments seldom worked together.

*Example - Certain planning professionals have developed an interest in local projects by first participating in **specialized activities**, which made them aware of the issues and gave them confidence by putting them among peers.*

BEST PRACTICE : Adopt a **multi-pronged strategy** (fieldwork, promotion of best practices, advocacy), involving multiple audiences and different scales (neighbourhood, city, region, province): enables adaptation of actions to a diverse group of stakeholders, depending on interests, professional culture, etc.

Provide multidisciplinary training to local stakeholders: creates opportunities for discussion, promotes the adoption of a shared vocabulary, facilitates better understanding of different perspectives and spurs new collaborations. **Support in the form of guidance** promotes greater buy-in to the methodology and its tools, as well as their coordinated use.

Organize multidisciplinary **design workshops**: gives free rein to creativity in the search for solutions, which proves to be more unifying than focusing on problems.

COMMITMENTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

Some elected representatives are reluctant to participate in the participatory urban planning process, and to commit to it and follow through by implementing the proposed solutions, fearing that citizens might have unreasonably high expectations.

BEST PRACTICE : Produce a **diagnostic profile** of the area: ensures a shared understanding of the current situation and reveals the neighbourhood's problems and possible ways to alleviate them.

Produce a **succinct argument**: can convince elected officials of the relevance of designs that encourage active transportation.

Propose a **variety of planning solutions** (e.g.: temporary and inexpensive, or permanent and more substantial; one-off interventions

and tactical urban planning; pilot projects): reassures elected officials as to the feasibility of the proposed measures, lets them know that budgetary considerations have been factored in, and leaves open the possibility of undoing the changes if they prove to be unsatisfactory.

Aligning the participatory planning process with **upcoming capital investment opportunities** (e.g., focusing on the Bethune Street corridor in Peterborough, since it was already slated for redevelopment).

Example - In the communities, the diagnostic profiles were identified as an important tool for supporting efforts to lobby elected officials. Some municipalities even adopted them as a template for other projects.

MOBILIZATION OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The mobilization of certain vulnerable, often marginalized groups, such as the elderly and recent immigrants, proved difficult in most local projects.

BEST PRACTICE :

Focus on **inclusive activities that attract attention**: publicizes the project and encourages mobilization (e.g. the Playstreets events in Peterborough).

Seek out **vulnerable target groups**: visits to retirement homes or participation in ethnic community events can help reach these populations.



HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Lastly, the eternal question of human and financial resources was a constant concern for the partners.

Link projects to existing initiatives: can make it possible to build on already completed work, benefit from already confirmed budgets, etc.

Support **local partners in their search for supplementary funding**: helps ensure that local partners have sufficient resources to coordinate the initiative.

Be **flexible**: it is sometimes necessary to switch to less costly activities (in terms of both time and money) than those originally planned. With some imagination, it is often possible to achieve the same goals by simpler means.

Establish **selection criteria** and use calls for proposals to select project communities: requires communities to engage in prior reflection.

Example - Certain diagnostic profiles were included in larger-scale planning projects, putting the initiatives within a tangible and effective program.

GEOGRAPHICAL SEPARATION BETWEEN CERTAIN LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND OF THE PARTNERS FROM EACH OTHER

The distance separating the three main partners and certain local communities was a significant obstacle to building a strong, trusting relationship and effective communications.

BEST PRACTICE : Use of virtual, camera-based **communication technology**: enables remote meetings and guidance as well as the potential for webinars.

Earmark part of the project budget for **visits to the communities**: allows some meetings to be held in person.

Example - The projects allowed remote communities to access resources and innovative methods that are not always available.



BUILDING

PARTNERSHIP

STRUCTURE

To accelerate the desired shift to urban designs favouring active transportation, the three organizations formed a partnership whose mission is to create green, active, and healthy neighbourhoods. Because the three non-profit organizations are based in three different provinces and work on different contexts and cultures, the partnership is founded on the ability to share knowledge, take action together to affect systems, and form strategic alliances. This section discusses the approach taken to promoting collaboration and having a stronger impact everywhere in Canada.



WORKING TOGETHER

From the project's inception, the three partners agreed to take several actions to facilitate collaboration. A few months after the project launched, the partners met in Montréal for an initial in-person meeting. It was a chance to get to know one another, have informal discussions and talk about the vision for the project, with the aim of getting everyone on the same page. After the meeting, the partners adopted a set of communication and discussion methods.

Keywords:

COLLABORATION

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

COMMUNICATION

- Monthly meetings via video conference (project management)
- Online collaboration platform (project management and document sharing)
- Communication by phone and email
- Annual face-to-face meeting (planning, strategy and knowledge sharing)
- Translation of documents and tools
- Monthly community of practice (sharing of best practices)
- Training and conferences (sharing of best practices)
- Other tips and tricks: simultaneous interpretation and bilingual discussions



There are bound to be challenges for a partnership among organizations that are still getting to know each other, based thousands of kilometres apart, and working in two different languages. The project requires the coherent, effective deployment and adaptation of a methodology in very different organizational and geographical settings. The situation produced several key of challenges for the three Active Neighbourhoods Canada partners.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

“How do you say it in French again?” and « Comment dit-on cela en anglais, déjà? » were heard many times during meetings among the partners. Unless everyone is perfectly bilingual, language inevitably produces some friction in communications. To be as inclusive as possible, “whispered translation” – simultaneous interpretation – was sometimes used. But language is not a simple matter of translation: it is also a cultural and social issue. In a country as large as Canada, the challenge is to take inspiration from each other’s practices, and to adapt ourselves to each new context.

PROJECT GOVERNANCE

As mentioned previously, the Active Neighbourhoods Canada project was proposed in 2012 by the MUEC, which wanted to apply its participatory urban planning approach across Canada in collaboration with other organizations. Despite a strong desire to integrate TCAT and SCS into the process of defining the vision and planning activities, it remains the case that the foundations of the project were laid by the MUEC. The challenge, from the beginning, was to develop a learning project over a period of four years. With the experience acquired in the process, TCAT and SC became standard bearers for participatory urban planning in their regions. In a nutshell, the ANC project started with a lead partner and evolved to have three equal partners. The project’s governance model had to keep evolving based on the partners’ abilities and shared goals.

DISTANCE

It is easy to underestimate the communication difficulties caused by geographical separation. Of course, it is easier than ever to use video conferencing, with a wide range of tools available. However, virtual meetings can never replace face-to-face meetings, especially early in the collaborative process, when the partners are still building trust. Maximizing the number of face-to-face meetings promotes collaboration in planning the different facets of a project.

TAKING ACTION AT EVERY SCALE, FROM LOCAL TO NATIONAL

The project’s complexity and the many actions to be taken meant the pace of work had to be adjusted for different scales of action. Choices had to be made between developing and leading activities in communities; organizing and managing administrative processes and doing project evaluations within the organizations; influencing municipal or provincial public policy; and encouraging the creation of new urban designs. When working on a neighbourhood planning project, the on-the-ground perception of the time frame and scope of activity can vary depending on the specific goals and actors. For example, even several years later we are still observing new benefits in the communities.

THE DRIVE TO INNOVATE

Throughout the project, the three partners wanted to innovate in their approach to working with each other, with local partners, and with other networks of relevant participants, which gave the project added complexity. For example, the concept of the community of practice was relatively new to most participants. It took time to adopt and make the most of the potential offered by this type of space for sharing knowledge among partners and outside professionals. Another challenge was to adapt to local conditions. A great innovation in one community may be old hat for another. The project attempted to join communities at the right point in their path from planning to action, so that we could map the way forward together.

In summary: a continuously improving, productive partnership

Each challenge was an opportunity for learning and making adjustments. The ANC partnership made it possible to build on each partner’s expertise and networks to disseminate – among themselves and to new networks – the partners’ knowledge and processes. Local stakeholders in the project’s communities found themselves better equipped to build the kind of living environment they wanted. For example, experience acquired through the creation and operation of a community of practice led to the inclusion of new members and new ideas. The lessons learned over the years will make it possible to continue the partnership while making its favoured approach still more collaborative and participatory.

For four years, the partners have worked to strengthen their capabilities and position themselves as essential participants in their respective communities. Each partner reports that its organizational capacity and knowledge is greater than it was at the outset. The partners have also committed to three years of participation in Phase 3 of the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Innovation Strategy, which will run from 2017 to 2020.

INNOVATIVE

APPROACHES TO

BUILDING HEALTHY

COMMUNITIES

Created in 2009, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) Innovation Strategy embraces a Population Health Promotion (PHP) Intervention Research approach. This approach promotes the development and testing of programs and policies that reduce health risk factors by addressing underlying social, economic and environmental conditions through intersectoral action, systems thinking, and consideration of context. The Active Neighbourhoods Canada (ANC) project is part of this Innovation Strategy to Achieve Healthier Weights in Canada's Communities.



EXPERIMENTING TO INNOVATE

The built environment is recognized as a determinant of health. Intervening in this area is a relevant strategy that aims to change behaviours and increase rates of physical activity. The innovation of the ANC project lies in the participatory process to design neighbourhoods: participatory urban planning. Since 2010, it has received financial support from the PHAC through three distinct phases:

PHASE I

Initial design, development, testing and delivery of participatory urban planning methods, over a period of approximately 12-18 months in 2 communities in Quebec.

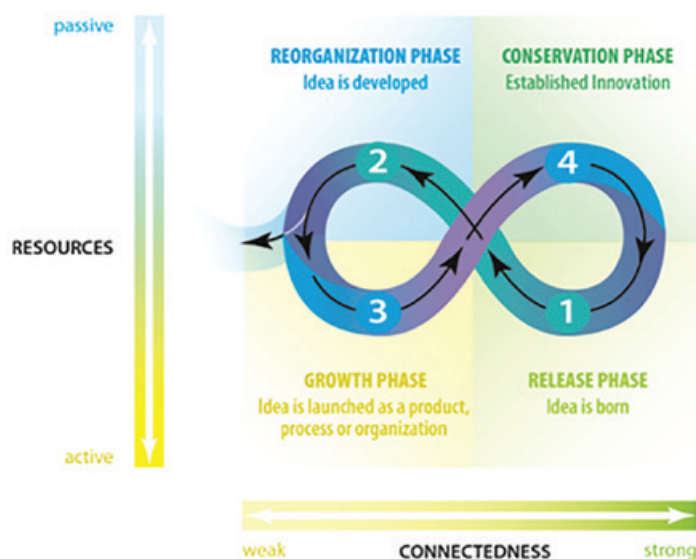
PHASE II

Full implementation, adaptation and evaluation of participatory urban planning pilot projects for comprehensive population health interventions across Canada, adapting to a variety of local contexts and project structures (12 communities in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta) over a 4 year period.

PHASE III

Increase the reach and impact of successful, and previously evaluated, participatory planning interventions on population health to benefit more people and communities across the country. This phase aims to foster effective, systemic changes to policy and practice to reduce health inequalities.

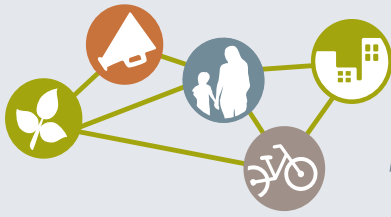
Active Neighbourhoods Canada is the only project in PHAC's Innovation Strategy working on the built environment.



ADAPTING WHAT WORKS

Social innovation can be regarded as an 'adaptive cycle' with the goal of finding solutions to complex problems. The roll out of ANC follows the adaptation cycle of social innovation. Kicking-off Phase 3, the project is moving towards step 4, the final stage of the adaptation cycle.

STEPS 1 AND 2	"Release" and "Reorganization" phases are located in the "back loop" of the model and represent the period when the effectiveness of approaches is called into question and where new ideas are introduced.	Emergence of participatory planning projects and concrete development and adaptation of the participatory urban planning process.	Green, Active and Healthy Neighbourhoods project (2008-2015) Active Neighbourhoods Canada project Phase 1 (2010-2011)
STEP 3	"Growth", phase where a new idea is studied and invested in, where products, processes or programs are created and tested over time.	Consolidation of the intersectoral approach during which we tested and created new knowledge on active transportation and the built environment, and deployed 12 pilot projects in Canada.	Active Neighbourhoods Canada project Phase 2 (2013-2017)
STEP 4	"Conservation" phase, where proven innovative approach is reproduced and distributed.	Consolidate technical knowledge and facilitate an incremental and sustainable change in policy and practices that encourage active transportation from a health equity perspective.	Active Neighbourhoods Canada project Phase 3 (2017-2020)



Montréal Urban Ecology Centre

FROM PROVINCIAL TO NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

With the development of the Active Neighbourhoods Canada project, the actions of the MUEC were deployed for the first time outside Quebec. The organization had already worked with numerous communities across that province, helping them transform their neighbourhoods to become greener, more active, and healthier. Participatory urban planning is now a well-known practice in Quebec, thanks in large part to the MUEC. For many years, the organization drew inspiration from European and American best practices. The ANC project allowed the MUEC to expand its knowledge base and strengthen its ties with other Canadian provinces and organizations, as well as strengthening its position in Quebec and raising its profile elsewhere in North America.



EVIDENCE-INFORMED PROGRAMMING LEADING TO ON-THE-GROUND CHANGE

Participation in the Active Neighbourhoods Canada project led to some changes in the way TCAT works. Originally, the organization was a grassroots coalition that had, over the years, come to focus on impacting active transportation and Complete Streets policy primarily through research and sharing best practice. The ANC project spurred TCAT to connect its research to on-the-ground action. The organization started to experiment with new community engagement and citizen participation techniques, applying the values that had informed its policy work for a decade.

Joining Active Neighbourhoods Canada allowed TCAT to start applying our expertise more broadly to communities across Ontario. Our work to create and consolidate research and evidence was enriched with new community engagement tools to directly impact on-the-ground change. The result is a truly integrated approach.

- Nancy Smith Lea, TCAT Director

NEW PROJECT

Creating a “Town Centre” in a Tower Neighbourhood.

NEW KNOWLEDGE AND TOOLS

- “Urban acupuncture” approach (small changes that collectively produce significant results)
- Citizen engagement in planning projects
- Experimentation with citizen participation in a rural setting

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

- Adaptation of the “Complete Streets” concept to a rural area
- Development of participatory processes for marginalized communities
- Professional workshops to seed new practices in several communities.

The Active Neighbourhoods Canada project led the MUEC to share its expertise and adapt it to new settings. That adaptation process involved several challenges and learning experiences. As a result, the MUEC has expanded its scope of action to the national stage, working with partners everywhere in Canada. We have expanded our horizons for experimentation, while remaining active at the neighbourhood level, where we are in touch with residents' everyday concerns.

- Véronique Fournier,
Executive Director, MUEC

NEW PROJECTS

- Vision Zero for Quebec
- *Sous les pavés*, in collaboration with Green Communities
- Support of a Federal Active Transportation Strategy

NEW KNOWLEDGE AND TOOLS

- Advocacy for green spaces in an urban setting
- Parking study
- Tactical urbanism projects supported by the municipality

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

- Adaptation of a model based on cases and practices from Quebec to other provinces
- Concise and action-oriented diagnostic neighbourhood portraits
- Calls for citizen-led, tactical urbanism projects



Sustainable Calgary

EXPANDING OUR NETWORK AND REFINING OUR EXPERTISE

Embarking on ANC created opportunities for Sustainable Calgary to join forces with a local coalition, engage with citizens in targeted communities, and have a more consistent presence in those communities – and across the city – due to the length of the project.

The coalition with which Sustainable Calgary teamed up was Safer Calgary, which joined Sustainable Calgary after writing a letter of recommendation for the organization's involvement in ANC. Safer Calgary is a group of city and community representatives advocating for improved road safety and design, with a special emphasis on the psychology of traffic. The coalition was looking for an organization to call home, and when they saw how aligned their goals were with those of the ANC project, both parties determined that they would benefit from working more closely together. Since then, Safer Calgary's yearly Safe and Smooth Symposium and NHTV (Breda University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)) partnership have focused their efforts on the communities with which ANC has worked, with inspiring results.

NEW PROJECTS

- Housing Food and Transportation Nexus project
- Literature review on the links between urban planning and health: a Canadian perspective

NEW KNOWLEDGE AND TOOLS

- Collaborated on creating the Calgary Pedestrian Strategy called STEP FORWARD
- Used the Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) to assess new bike paths in Calgary and presented results to City
- Created an online toolbox
- New tools to engage people whose first language is not English
- New inspiring format for redevelopment plans for city sectors

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

- Link between urbanism issues and the challenges of poverty and the work of immigrant populations
- Design Charrettes (in each community)
- Playful inter-professional activity (Safe and Smooth Symposium)
- Temporary arrangements of the pop-up type
- Citizen Engagement Visual Tool (Marlborough)

ANC has allowed us to create national partnerships that advance the local work of sustainable transformations of our cities, that we have been engaged in for over 20 years. We now have a clearer understanding of the importance of policy and advocacy work at both the provincial and national level."

- Noel Keough, Board Chair



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COMMUNITIES IN ACTION



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ACADIA

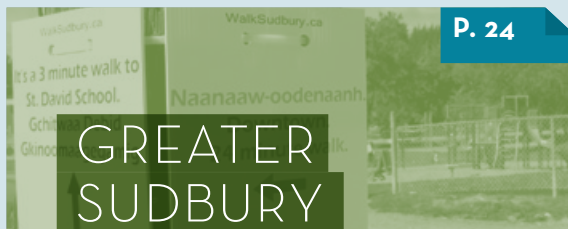
Slowing automobile traffic for a safer environment



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BRIDGELAND-RIVERSIDE

From temporary measures to permanent measures



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Active transportation to improve a neighbourhood's health



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Professional and collaborative expertise



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TORONTO

From citizen vision to professional action



ACADIA

Slowing automobile traffic for a safer environment

Sports hub, shopping destination, educational nexus, urban forest; home to two LRT stations and several major arteries: Acadia is a neighbourhood of about 10,000 residents in southeast Calgary, Alberta tucked between the Bow River and the Glenmore Reservoir. While this provides proximity to two gorgeous amenities, it also creates a bottleneck effect for north-south traffic in the city. As a result, many drivers cut through the residential neighbourhood at high speeds - a significant safety hazard for the area's pedestrians and cyclists.



RETHINKING THE CITY FOR ITS MOST VULNERABLE USERS

There is a long history of citizen and community action aimed at reducing vehicle speeds in the area. Since 2006, residents' associations have called for traffic calming, citing collisions caused by excessive speed. With nine schools, Acadia has the city's largest concentration of educational institutions. It also has several retirement homes and a high proportion of seniors. Many residents are thus less likely to be drivers, and are considered vulnerable users of the road network. Nonetheless, local infrastructure limits safe pedestrian and bicycle access to amenities, and - due to features such as wide vehicle lanes - encourages speeding and unsafe behaviour in drivers.

MORE ROOM FOR PEDESTRIANS, BETTER SAFETY FOR ALL

Sustainable Calgary launched several initiatives to draw attention to the neighbourhood's issues. A survey of residents provided interesting observations:

- A majority of those polled said it is easy or very easy to walk in the neighbourhood with the current infrastructure

- However, high automobile speeds reduce feelings of safety and discourage use of that infrastructure

- Better planning of streets is the favoured solution to improve safety and encourage active transportation.

The Acadia Community Association (ACA) organized a neighbourhood party in 2016, where Sustainable Calgary displayed design concepts for resident feedback and voting. The event was deliberately held on one of the neighbourhood's busiest streets, with the aim of showing that a livelier street with better accessibility for pedestrians is a safer street. The effect took hold immediately. Throughout the day, motorists were slowing down as they approached the temporary arrangement.

In 2016, as part of Safer Calgary's Safe and Smooth Symposium, the City of Calgary adopted the idea of implementing pop-up traffic-calming measures. Average speeds dropped by 15 km/h. Given the success of these temporary initiatives, the ACA, Sustainable Calgary and their partners are now pursuing further short- and medium-term projects in the neighbourhood.

A significant portion of the Acadia's residents are considered vulnerable and non-motorized road users. However, there are few pedestrian and cycling facilities in the neighbourhood.

These initiatives demonstrated that Acadia residents want slower traffic, and that design changes improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists in their neighbourhood. The public activities provided concrete examples of solutions that work. All the pieces are now in place to make Acadia a safer neighbourhood for every road user.



VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:

Acadia

[SUSTAINABLECALGARY.ORG/HOME/ANC/](https://sustainablecalgary.org/home/anc/)



BRIDGELAND- RIVERSIDE

From temporary measures to permanent measures

The Bridgeland-Riverside neighbourhood in Calgary has been a great example of the snowball effect that is possible when collaborating with passionate residents and local leaders, and building on their good work. A neighbourhood with active residents and associations is fertile ground for innovation and change.

POP UP MEASURES TO CALM TRAFFIC

Since 2013, the Safer Calgary Coalition has been organizing the annual Safe and Smooth Symposium. The goal is to explore innovations in road safety and urban design through knowledge-sharing, brainstorming and field experiments. In 2015, Safer Calgary partnered with Active Neighbourhoods and featured Bridgeland as the case study for its conference.

As part of this case study, the City of Calgary volunteered to install pop-up traffic calming measures¹ - temporary infrastructure used to alter the street and test its effect on human behaviour. In one intersection in Bridgeland, it was possible to host a full-size street hockey game for conference attendees without impeding vehicle traffic. As a result the city announced that the greater part of the street would become a permanent park the following year. Bridgeland residents now have a new place to play Canada's national sport!

BUILDING MOMENTUM

Several organizations have ramped up their involvement in addressing the neighbourhood's built form, and are contributing to broader momentum in the community. The Women's Centre in Bridgeland organized a Women's Safety Walk in 2015 and it has since become an annual activity. The walks help identify locations and design features that reduce women's safety, leading to recommendations being made to the appropriate decision makers.

Senior citizens' groups were some of the earliest champions of this work, leading a seniors' walk audit and producing a report on their needs and challenges. Collaboration with these groups and individuals over the course of a few years helped the community realize that it now had the data it needed in order to take action.

MOBILIZATION PAYS OFF

The Active Neighbourhoods Canada project reached hundreds of people and helped spark significant mobilization in

A neighbourhood with mobilized citizens and groups is fertile ground for innovation and change through ambitious projects that require significant mobilization.



the neighbourhood. Some benefits can already be quantified. Bicycle lanes have been installed to create much needed connections to the downtown core. The East Riverside Master Plan was drafted for the southeast part of the neighbourhood, which houses many elderly residents who felt isolated from the rest of the community; and design charrettes were organized by the City of Calgary with the goal of revitalizing an intersection identified as having safety issues. These last two activities focused on the four places identified as high priority by Bridgeland residents during a design workshop organized by Sustainable Calgary. Proof that mobilization works and helps residents put their concerns on the agenda.

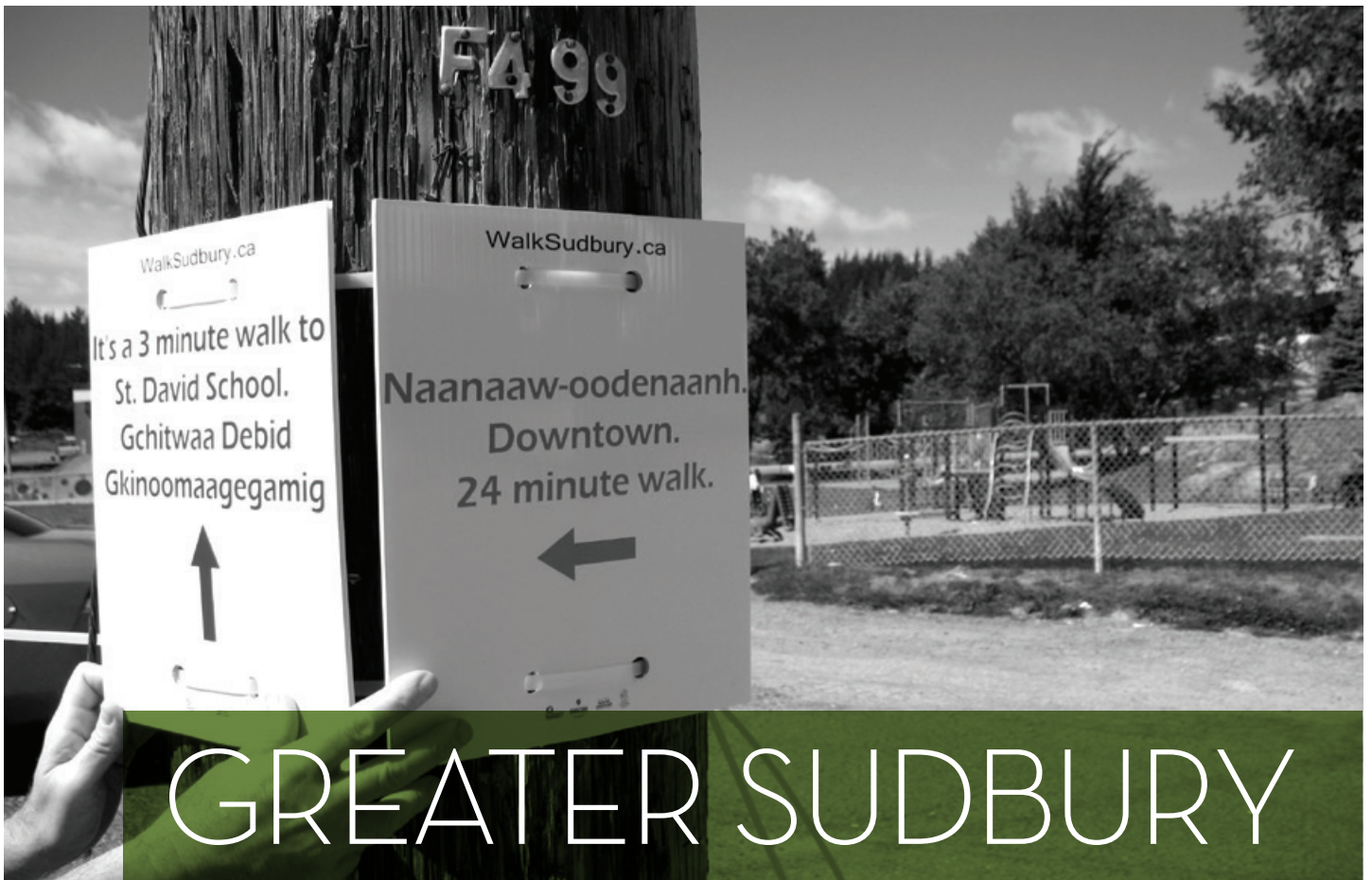


VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:

Bridgeland-riverside

SUSTAINABLECALGARY.ORG/HOME/ANC/

¹ The pop-up traffic calming measures are temporary initiatives aimed at demonstrating the potential effect of permanent measures. They also enable experimentation with playful elements and highlight design problems that can be difficult to see in the abstract.



GREATER SUDBURY

Active transportation to improve a neighbourhood's health

The Donovan neighbourhood is located to the northeast of downtown Sudbury. The commercial portion of Kathleen Street is the heart of the community, with popular stores, restaurants and a vibrant energy. The neighbourhood's small lots and narrow alleyways are unusual for Sudbury, making this an intimate neighbourhood with a village-style feel. It is very walkable. Based on these observations, in 2016, TCAT, with Active Neighbourhoods Canada, in partnership with EarthCare and the City of Greater Sudbury, launched consultations with stakeholders with the aim of producing a strong vision that could improve public spaces and walkability, and make Donovan a neighbourhood built for active transportation. This vision can help form a basis for any future Community Improvement Planning (CIP) implemented by the municipality. The goal with this project was to build a rich and accessible participatory process that reaches diverse resident voices.



IMPROVING RESIDENTS' HEALTH: A TOP PRIORITY

At the outset, the working group drafted a set of values to guide all future actions. Inclusiveness, affordability and health were identified as the top three values central to the neighbourhood's future. There was also a long-term goal: improving neighbourhood pride and the sense of belonging by transforming the neighbourhood into a model of active transportation and healthy living.

Several activities were organized with the aim of demonstrating the benefits of having a neighbourhood focus on active transportation. A large-scale mapping project helped document problem areas for active transportation. The information produced reveals that walking is an

appealing option, given the neighbourhood's layout, and that it is inexpensive to promote, since it requires minimal new infrastructure. Many popular destinations are a short walk or bike ride away, and some of them are public spaces suitable for physical activity in all seasons. A clear conclusion emerged: the Donovan neighbourhood has the foundation it needs for residents to live actively year-round.

CHALLENGES ON THE HORIZON

More than 100 people were interviewed in order to determine how residents use the streets and identify obstacles to active transportation. Unsurprisingly, the factors that influence the choice to use a given street are mainly linked to the street's design and safety. Likewise, the reasons given for avoiding certain streets

are often related to feelings of reduced safety due to suspicious activities and traffic hazards.

The results obtained from the local population indicate that the neighbourhood's dynamic character can be built on with several low-cost design and programming solutions to support the community's desire to become healthier and more active. By continuing the conversation with residents and embracing this movement for change, the Donovan neighbourhood could become a model for the prioritization of active transportation.

AN INVALUABLE ALLY: THE TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The plan promotes the benefits of active transportation for health and physical fitness, as well as its economic advantages. It recommends principles for planning the transportation network and a method for assessing future decisions in order to ensure that they account for the benefits of active transportation.

Long-term goal: increase sense of community among residents and neighbourhood pride by becoming a model for active transportation and healthy living.



VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:

Donovan neighbourhood vision
WWW.TCAT.CA



HALIBURTON

Complete Streets in a rural area

The Communities in Action (CIA) committee was formed in Haliburton, to help build healthy, active communities through active transportation. They do research that helps encourage the planning and implementation of active transportation in rural areas, and develop partnerships with a variety of stakeholders in order to build knowledge and capacity in the active transportation field. Recent population growth in the rural Municipality of Dysart et al has led to the emergence of a commercial area a short distance from downtown Haliburton, along County Road 21. This 2.4 km stretch of road is the area's most densely populated and needs to be suitable for both short and long trips. In its current configuration it has enough space for vehicle traffic, but few safe, fluid spaces for pedestrians, cyclists or reduced-mobility users.



CHALLENGES SPECIFIC TO A RURAL MUNICIPALITY

To keep improving the roads and public spaces in their community, the CIA wanted to adapt the Complete Streets concept to the particular conditions of a county road in a rural municipality. The committee then expressed its interest in joining Active Neighbourhoods Canada for support in designing the project. They saw an opportunity to encourage residents to identify their needs and concerns while enlisting professionals, municipal employees and decision makers to identify obstacles to the implementation of new street configurations. The approach has been useful because it exposed a key barrier: county roads are intergovernmental spaces, where the municipality has decision-making authority over sidewalks and other peripheral elements, while the county is responsible for the road's traffic lanes.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS THROUGH AN EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

In this context, a profile of the Haliburton area was created, to facilitate the sharing of residents' knowledge with local professionals. During a professional workshop organized for the purpose of refining the complete street concept for a rural area, the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation worked with professionals from both levels of government. With some co-developed ideas in hand, it was time to get to work on the ground. After securing approval from municipal council, a first step was taken: traffic calming measures were designed and temporarily tested, to clearly define the space reserved for vehicles and pedestrians on a particularly busy part of County Road 21.

The next step for Haliburton will be to secure support from municipal council to further the vision of implementing a complete street, with goals and solutions planned on five, ten and 20-year timelines. Thanks to this project, the Haliburton community will be able to continue to build streets as public spaces for all residents, regardless of their transportation preferences - and will show how complete streets are just as important in rural Ontario.

What are Complete Streets ?

A Complete Street is designed for all ages, abilities, and modes of travel. On Complete Streets, safe and comfortable access for pedestrians, bicycles, transit users and the mobility-impaired is not an afterthought, but an integral planning feature.

A Complete Streets policy ensures that transportation planners and engineers consistently design and operate the entire street network for all road users, not only motorists.

Complete Streets offer wide ranging benefits. They are cost effective, sustainable, and safe.

Complete Streets is also called *rue conviviale* in French.



VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:

Haliburton Village, Ontario
WWW.TCAT.CA



HIGH RIVER

Exploring a walkable rural context

The town of High River is a rural community of 13,500, located south of Calgary. With more than half of its residents working in town, High River has a strong local base of employment, while also housing commuters and serving as a hub to local ranches, farms and nearby communities. The town lends itself well to active transportation: small enough that it can be crossed by bike in about 20 minutes, according to residents, and endowed with a network of recreational “Happy Trails.”



LAVAL

Highlighting collective skills

Active Neighbourhoods Canada (ANC) uses the principles of participatory urban planning to transform communities. Dynamic citizens and organizations who are prepared to commit to the process are essential to the success of any ANC project. So how do we proceed when civil society in the community has already been active and committed for many years? In Chomedey, Laval, the challenge facing the Montréal Urban Ecology Centre (MUEC) was to put into action all those years of initiative and learning without repeating the work that had already been done.

SHARING THE LEARNING OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD

The initial meeting with the various organizations already active in the neighbourhood was crucial to the project's success. Numerous plans, policies and diagnostics had already been done in the area. The mandate was clear: it was time for action and bringing the various actors and sectors together.

The MUEC mapped the stakeholders and, with local partners, recommended the creation of a local working group. This helped strengthen links and build synergies and positive momentum around the project. The very productive meetings led to a reflection on everything accomplished in the neighbourhood to that point. The participants realized that while different groups had done much work, it was time to take action. Several unifying activities for residents were then organized.

Local stakeholders set a clear priority: put citizens back at the heart of decision-making.

A key moment was an exploratory walk that brought together community groups working in public health, social services, transportation and housing, municipal professionals, department heads, elected representatives, the police and parents. The group visited sites that residents had identified as having high-priority safety problems. By the end of the walk, the issues had been clearly exposed and understood.



PUT INTO ACTION SEVERAL YEARS OF WORK

The priority expressed by local residents was clear: putting residents back at the centre of the process. After several meetings, another priority emerged: getting different stakeholders and sectors to work together.

We therefore took advantage of existing sites and activities, where residents were already coming together, to go meet and talk with them, particularly young people and families. It was important to avoid repeating or duplicating past activities. Instead, the focus was on taking action and identifying the neighbourhood's priorities with the help of its residents.

Without that crucial coordination work, the many stakeholders might have kept working separately, without realizing that the sum of their work had already brought them very close to the goal. The coordination work paid off, because now Chomedey is well on its way to becoming greener, more active and healthier.



VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:

Aménagements en faveur des déplacements actifs dans Chomedey. Diagnostic et recommandations
WWW.ECOLOGIEURBAINE.NET



MARLBOROUGH

Citizen participation as a tool for integration

Marlborough is a vibrant neighbourhood in Calgary's northeast, boasting a strong community association, a variety of recreational programs, proximity to downtown, and ample green space. Surveys by Sustainable Calgary (SC) reveal that residents have a strong sense of belonging to the area. Historically, Marlborough has faced a higher than average crime rate, but substantial work has been done over the years to make the neighbourhood safer for all.



There are several current issues related to urban design. For example, there is inadequate lighting in some parts of the neighbourhood, which undermines some residents' sense of safety. Other urban design challenges include:

- Road safety and pedestrian traffic around the light-rail station and mall
- Under-used green spaces
- Number and quality of community gathering places

VALUING PEDESTRIAN SPACES

In Marlborough, the City of Calgary's *This is My Neighbourhood* project has already played a significant role by documenting residents' priorities for the neighbourhood, including back lane safety improvements, adding more trash cans, and commissioning public art. Some of these measures have already been implemented.

During preliminary discussions with residents and the city, it was determined that SC could contribute to the work that was already underway by developing a better understanding of residents' priorities spatially - where were common walking routes? Gathering spaces? Where should interventions focus? SC was also asked to work with the hardest-to-reach groups, such as recent immigrants.

One of the priority issues identified in the neighbourhood was related to its "catwalks", a network of pedestrian pathways connecting parks and schools. Pedestrian networks such as these are rare gems in Calgary. However, concerned

SC has had wonderful opportunities to collaborate with new immigrants, particularly those with English as a second (or third, or fourth!) language. New tools were developed, in collaboration with English teachers and students, to work around language barriers.

about safety, some residents choose not to use them at night. The pathways are unlit, and receive variable levels of maintenance. There is also a major obstacle to improving lighting: a citizens' group must submit a joint request to electricity suppliers and pay the monthly bills. In the winter, residents adjacent to the catwalks are responsible for snow removal.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TO REACH ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

SC has drawn attention to a diversity of "hot spots" in the neighbourhood reflecting feedback from residents, businesses, commuters, and schoolchildren. These hotspots highlight the good and the bad: vibrant gathering spaces at the local mall, which some have frequented for decades, but missing bus shelters and pedestrian connections; ample green spaces, but underused and lacking in programming for people of all ages.

Sustainable Calgary has also made exciting headway in citizen engagement in Marlborough, building off of previous work in other communities. As in other communities, efforts were made to meet people where they congregate, which respect their limited time and increases SC's chances of connecting with them. SC has had wonderful opportunities in Marlborough to collaborate with new immigrants, particularly those with English as a second (or third, or fourth!) language. New tools were developed, in collaboration with English teachers and students, to work around language barriers, and work with the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association led to a better understanding of the realities of immigrant life in the neighbourhood.

As a member of the organizing committee for the Walk 21 conference, SC has suggested a design competition be held to rethink the area's catwalks and start a conversation on how they are managed. Fellow collaborators have expressed interest, but there is still work to be done before the initiative can come to fruition.

The example of Marlborough shows us that involving residents in the design of their neighbourhood not only strengthens feelings of belonging, but also highlights issues that may not have been obvious before.



VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:

Marlborough

SUSTAINABLECALGARY.ORG/HOME/ANC/



Learning from different partnerships

This was Active Neighbourhoods Canada's first site. From the start, the Montréal Urban Ecology Centre (MUEC) wanted one of the communities to be located in a densely populated part of Montréal, Québec. Discussions and meetings led the MUEC to identify the Beaubien community in the borough of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie as a potential project site. The political climate was favourable, and the district was already discussing the revitalization of the area around the Beaubien metro station.

A PROJECT AND ITS OPPORTUNITIES

The MUEC now had an opportunity to work directly with decision makers on participatory planning. The setting was also very interesting. It is a very busy neighbourhood hub with several vulnerable populations located in close proximity: primary school pupils, seniors living in public housing and metro users, among others.

The MUEC and the borough also saw an opportunity for professionals to learn new practices and enhance their tool-set in urban design and active transportation, as well as helping different departments (engineering, planning, social services, etc.) learn to work together. There was also potential for changing practices in favour of more participatory and intersectoral approaches involving local community organizations, the borough's departments and institutional participants with a stake in the project (public transit, public health, etc.).

However, the project also had a number of technical constraints, leaving limited room for citizen input. Despite that drawback, the decision was made to go ahead with the partnership.

Several activities were undertaken to collect information for the neighbourhood profile and introduce tools used in participatory urban planning to borough professionals and local stakeholders. A local committee was formed and met several times. Field studies led to interesting observations about the design and use of public spaces in the targeted area, and gave the municipality's professionals some new tools. Because citizen participation is an integral part of the participatory planning process, several citizen-oriented activities were organized. Their success showed that the neighbourhood's residents are invested in the future of the spaces they use.

SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES

Participatory urban planning projects are executed in collaboration with multiple community-based partners. Good communication and a shared understanding of the project are therefore essential to each project's success.

The Active Neighbourhoods Canada communities distinguish themselves by the links they create between the variety of actors. Elected officials, community representatives, citizens are called upon to work together and develop a common vision.

In the Beaubien project we learned how important these two success factors really are and the pitfalls that arise when they are not present. As our first Active Neighbourhoods Canada pilot project it taught us these important lessons:

- **Facilitating information flow.** Several meetings were held involving either the political or administrative apparatus, but not both simultaneously. The borough mayor was very enthusiastic about the idea, and professionals were keen on learning new practices, but internal personnel changes and communication challenges made it difficult to share and understand information concerning the project throughout the hierarchy.
- **Identifying the right key actors.** Several partners identified by the MUEC did not have the resources to participate fully in a project of this scope, or the topic was not close to their mission. It is always important to be sure to have the means to match our ambitions. A project developed solely with a municipality is vulnerable to changes in direction. By working in concert with civil society, if expected changes do not materialize the community remains



equipped to demand a more pleasant neighbourhood for its residents. This might require finding additional funds to enable the participation of local groups, as was done in subsequent projects.

- **Defining a shared vision.** Active Neighbourhoods Canada is noteworthy for the links it has been able to forge among different participants in each community. Elected officials, community representatives and citizens are brought together and develop a shared vision. For contextual reasons, it was difficult to ensure that these actors had a common vision for the role of participation in the project, which surely played an important role in the Beaubien project's outcomes.

Because the borough's strategic directions had evolved, the Beaubien project ended earlier than expected. The neighbourhood is seeing new infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, demonstrating that the municipality is enthusiastic about active transportation. With the Beaubien neighbourhood profile in hand, local stakeholders can use the information from the field, from citizens and the existing literature to make progress at another time. The professionals appreciated the participatory urban planning approach and later used it effectively in other projects in the borough, with the understanding that the process needs to start before proposals are drafted, giving citizens true power to influence the outcome.



VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:

Portrait de quartier: métro Beaubien
WWW.ECOLOGIEURBAINE.NET



PETERBOROUGH

A neighbourhood revitalization movement

The history of the Stewart St. neighbourhood in downtown Peterborough begins during the “Gilded Age” of the early 20th century, when the area had several large industrial employers. Much of the neighbourhood’s rental housing stock was built for the factories’ workers and managers. In the 1980s, the neighbourhood started to show signs of economic decline. The loss of high-wage manufacturing jobs, combined with the growth of the suburbs, led to a population exodus.

RESIDENTS WHO EMBRACE THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD

In the last decade, the neighbourhood's residents have started to take charge of their community. It all started with an under-used park and a simple question: "How can we get neighbours to talk to each other more often?" The answer was short and to the point: "meet your neighbours through a new community garden and bring life to this homegrown gathering place."

With the help of organizations like GreenUP, the Peterborough Community Garden Network and Nourish, residents transformed the park into a source of community pride. The project was just the beginning of a major citizen-driven revitalization process in the neighbourhood.

Next, the municipality announced that a local street was scheduled to be torn up for major underground work to help the city's flood-control program. Already mobilized by the park revitalization project, residents saw the announcement as an opportunity to extend the revitalization movement beyond the park and rebuild this street to serve the community.

Along with GreenUP, representatives of the City of Peterborough, Trent University, BIKE, the local Health Unit and the Trent Centre for Community Research, these residents formed a neighbourhood consultation committee. Together, the committee members diversified and documented the use of local streets, what residents loved about their community and priorities for the neighbourhood's future. The committee used several different tools in order to develop a thorough understanding of residents'



priorities, including a community asset mapping exercise, a survey of local travel habits and conversations out in the neighbourhood during local events.

The next major challenge was to help link up the documented resident priorities with the official consultation process launched by the City for the revitalization of the street.

UNITING RESIDENTS' AND PROFESSIONALS' VOICES

The Peterborough project brought a central principle of the ANC project approach to the fore: the importance of connecting different people and sectors, facilitating collaboration among a wide range of groups and professionals involved in a project. The consultants hired to redevelop the street were invited to a workshop focused on learning about the neighbourhood's experts - its residents. The event had presentations on resident priorities and from then on, the consult-

ants clearly saw how this project and its results could be incorporated into the formal consultation process.

Currently, the design options on the table for the revitalization of the street address some of residents' top priorities. This will surely help the neighbourhood become even more welcoming, dynamic and accessible for all residents, whether they walk, cycle or drive to get around their community. The multi-sector work done in Peterborough demonstrates that building trust among stakeholders with different perspectives takes time and can be difficult, but that the voices of many are stronger than one voice alone when you are working toward long-term change.

The example of Peterborough demonstrates the extent to which public spaces and streets are fertile ground for a community's growth and progress. They are unique gathering places that help strengthen the sense of community belonging - to the extent that residents are able to participate in developing these places as their own.

Intersectoral work in Peterborough has shown that developing trusting relationships between stakeholders with seemingly opposing interests, takes time and can be difficult both internally and externally.



VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:

Stewart Street Neighbourhood, Peterborough
WWW.TCAT.CA



SAGUENAY

Reinventing a former railway line with tactical urbanism

The story of the Active Neighbourhoods Canada (ANC) project in Chicoutimi, a borough of Saguenay, begins with a municipal election in 2013. The residents of District 11 elected an independent councillor who had promised to invite more citizen participation. This was no idle promise: within a year, a residents' committee was formed in the district. The group would enable residents to participate in investment decisions related to the municipal councillor's budget, and to influence actions aimed at improving their living environment. It soon became clear that the priority was to make the neighbourhood more walkable and improve intersections that were problematic for active-transportation users.

SHOW OFF A PEDESTRIAN PATH

While identifying its work priorities, the District 11 residents' committee took an interest in a former Canadian National railway site in downtown Chicoutimi, now owned by the city. The land is partially developed as a pedestrian walkway, already used by many residents. The committee set as their main priority to upgrade the path's design as a pedestrian zone. It was imperative for them to involve citizens so that the community would embrace the project. Partnering with ANC and using a participatory planning approach allowed them to do this. On the recommendation of the Montréal Urban Ecology Centre, a linear-park committee – the Comité du parc linéaire (COPAL) – was formed, composed of representatives of the City of Saguenay, members of the District 11 residents' committee, and representatives of local organizations such as Eurêko!. Several months later, during the project's launch phase, the old railway site was renamed the Traverse du Coteau.

TACTICAL URBANISM: AN ESSENTIAL TOOL

Several activities were organized as part of this project. Some, such as the professional workshop, had a significant impact. With around 15 participants from different municipal departments, the MAMOT², the MTQ³, and the Cégep de Jonquière, there was an opportunity to explore design solutions to enhance the walkway and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists at two problematic Traverse du Coteau intersections. Beyond developing original planning solutions, participants noted that the workshop had the benefit of bringing together professionals from different disciplines to work in concert on integrated solutions.

Following the workshop, the COPAL, in collaboration with the City of Saguenay, decided to issue a call for residents' proposals. The goal is to ensure that residents embrace this public space through temporary tactical planning measures. There will be two calls, with a total of six citizen projects on the themes of urban art, greening and urban agriculture.



In addition to the development of original design solutions, one of the positive impacts of professional workshops is to bring professionals from different disciplines together to work on integrated solutions.

MOBILIZATION PAYS!

This project shows that much can be accomplished given sufficient political will and citizen mobilization. With hard work, a positive vision and plenty of imagination, the District 11 residents' committee had a tangible impact on its community. It should be stressed that the municipal councillor was involved in the project from the start and did remarkable work, showing that it is possible to develop very interesting participatory projects for fellow citizens when residents and civil society organizations are engaged.

The next step for the people behind the Traverse du Coteau is to make sure that the project's lessons inform the city's standard practices and have a snowball effect on other neighbourhoods. An elected repre-

sentative who participated in the professional workshop has already expressed her intention to bring participatory urban planning to her district. Some of the other participants in the project also want this type of approach and its associated expertise to be institutionalized for use elsewhere in Chicoutimi. The goal is to maximize residents' opportunities to take charge of their neighbourhoods and living spaces. By anchoring the application of participatory urban planning principles in the city itself, these practices will become the norm.



VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:

La Traverse du Coteau : un parcours de déplacement actif au centre-ville de Chicoutimi
WWW.ECOLOGIEURBAINE.NET

² MAMOT : Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire du Québec (Quebec Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy)

³ MTQ : Ministère des Transports du Québec (Quebec Ministry of Transport)



SHAWINIGAN

Professional and collaborative expertise

When the City of Shawinigan launched a revitalization initiative in the Saint-Marc neighbourhood in 2015, it decided to build on a previous partnership with the Montréal Urban Ecology Centre, which had introduced the principles of participatory urban planning to the city. The municipality wanted to apply the same approach to their devitalized downtown core, and joined Active Neighbourhoods Canada.

The neighbourhood's urban fabric is favourable for active transportation, and it also has dynamic and engaged community organizations. Despite those advantages, the area had few amenities for active transportation. It is also characterized by a socioeconomically disadvantaged population, a large number of urban heat islands and a severe shortage of public spaces.



LEARNING TO WORK TOGETHER TO TRANSFORM THE CITY

Wishing to seize the opportunity presented by the planned resurfacing of Saint-Paul Street, bordering the Shawinigan public market, a “project enhancement” meeting was organized with the municipality’s professionals. In addition to exploring different layout scenarios for Saint-Paul Street, the meeting was also an experiment in multi-sector work - several city departments worked together (engineering, planning, public works etc.) as part of an effort to change established practices. An interesting redesign idea emerged from the meeting, entailing the removal of several parking spaces around the market and transforming them into parklets that would serve as rest areas for the market’s shoppers and facilitate active transportation.

THE FIELD STUDY: A RELEVANT AND CONVINCING TOOL

What was the best way to convince merchants that it was a good idea to reduce the number of street-parking spaces surrounding the Saint-Marc market?

A field study was conducted to assess the feasibility of the proposal, determine the occupancy rate of parking spaces

around the market, and identify the best locations for the parklets. The study took place over several days and at different times, thanks to the support of several volunteers and interns.

The exercise revealed that there were more than enough parking spaces to meet visitors’ needs. The revitalization project committee has listened to these findings with interest. It will take them into consideration when designing a space that, ideally, includes significant support for active transportation and new public spaces.

The study’s conclusions will remain a decision-making aid, supporting the city’s professionals in their work and helping them make stronger cases for their proposals.

The ANC project in Shawinigan demonstrates that participatory urban planning does more than empower community groups and professionals: it also encourages them to break down the barriers separating them and talk to each other. Shawinigan’s planning and engineering departments are now in the habit of approaching their projects from a multi-disciplinary perspective. And that is how you create active, healthy living environments!

Active transportation: good for business!

- Motorists are often the most visible users of a commercial street, because cars take up plenty of public space. For that reason, the number of drivers is typically overestimated, even when they do not make up a majority of shoppers. (Convercity, 2004; University of the West of England and Carvill Associates, 2010).
- The implementation of traffic calming measures, the redesign of public space and the sharing of streets among all users, with emphasis on pedestrians and cyclists, led inevitably to an increase in the number of pedestrians on commercial streets (University of the West of England and Carvill Associates, 2010).
- Each square metre of space allocated to cars generates \$6/hour in spending, while each square metre allocated to bicycles generates five times more (\$31/hour) (Lee, A. and March, A., 2010).



VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:

Aménagements favorables aux déplacements actifs pour le quartier Saint-Marc
WWW.ECOLOGIEURBAINE.NET



TORONTO

From citizen vision to professional action

Thornccliffe Park and Flemington Park are dynamic communities located next to one of Toronto's biggest ecological resources, the Don Valley Ravine. As neighbourhoods favoured by recently arrived immigrants, the communities are anchors for numerous new Canadians. Thanks to highly effective community organizing and a politically active population, local resident groups like the Thornccliffe Park Women's Committee have worked to revitalize and re-energize public spaces in the area with events like the community markets they hold in R.V. Burgess Park. Inspired by local residents' exceptional commitment, the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation partnered with local groups to help continue the revitalization of public spaces and examine local streets.



WITH EACH PROBLEM ITS SOLUTION

In recent years, several reports and community forums identified pedestrian and cyclist safety, as well as safe access to the Don Valley Ravine's trails and parks, as persistent issues. There had been only limited progress and minor improvements on improving these, and residents still wanted more. The unique work process of the Active Neighbourhoods Canada (ANC) project made it possible to bridge the gap between residents' wishes, concerns and ideas and the expertise of local professionals and decision makers. As a result, TCAT was able to support the community by helping them identify their planning priorities to encourage even more ownership of spaces by local residents.

TANGIBLE RESULTS, THANKS TO COLLABORATION

There have been many benefits from aligning residents' vision with the expertise of professionals:

- The project helped support pop-up initiatives to celebrate public spaces, including a "Ravine repair day" in which young people and other local residents helped create a mural and signage to clearly identify Don Valley Ravine trailheads and paths;

- New Flemington Park facilities were tested with the help of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, local residents and the local city councillor. A structure to provide shade and seating was added to give new life to a neglected area of the park and encourage residents to gather and socialize;

- The City of Toronto's transportation department took note of the demand and potential for active transportation. They proposed that these communities should receive federal investments in cycling infrastructure to connect the neighbourhoods for cyclists and, above all, to improve local road safety and mobility.

The example of Thorncliffe Park and Flemington Park shows that when a neighbourhood is dynamic, committed and motivated, these attributes tend to be contagious! Not only because they can inspire others to take the same approach, but above all because they motivate people to become part of a lively environment. Several ongoing initiatives in the area led decision makers to take an interest. In turn, that led to funding from the federal infrastructure program.

The example of Thorncliffe Park and Flemington Park demonstrates that a neighbourhood that is dynamic, committed and motivated, is contagious!

 **VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:**

Thorncliffe Park and Flemington Park, Toronto
WWW.TCAT.CA

LOOKING

AHEAD

Participatory urban planning is a terrific tool for building healthy communities. It places citizens and professionals at the heart of the action, and is adaptable to unique contexts. The choice of the 12 communities that make up Active Neighbourhoods Canada is particularly telling: they vary from a dense urban setting, like Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park in Toronto to a rural setting such as High River, Alberta. In each case the approach delivers tangible results. It's also an evolving intervention process, which is transformed by successes and obstacles encountered in the field, as evidenced in the example of the project around Beaubien, Montréal. The ANC project, and the 12 communities that became a part of it, tell a story of learning and success. More specifically, they tell a story of committed citizens and professionals dedicated to building healthier living environments, that meet their needs and priorities.

Phase 3 of the ANC project will focus on the best practices from the first two phases to increase the reach and impact of successful interventions to benefit more communities and citizens across the country. The activities will be deployed at two levels:

- At the local level, according to the systemic social innovation model (SSIM): ANC partners will work in three communities. They will share their knowledge on the ANC approach, will provide each community with strategic support and will present intervention models and a model to use participatory planning in the field.

- At the provincial or national level, the ANC will carry out activities to share knowledge, train, influence and conduct research to better equip stakeholders and decision-makers determined to build healthy communities.

With strong academic and organizational partnerships, this 3rd phase will encourage professionals and decision-makers, current and future, to adopt a participatory urban planning approaches to creating spaces that promote active transportation. The experience of recent years and intersectoral work at the heart of the ANC approach, will allow stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to work together to develop integrated solutions that promote population health. Municipalities and communities across the country will be better equipped to deal with the challenges related to health, climate change, sustainable mobility, etc.

These values will continue to guide the ANC approach and, hopefully, encourage communities across the country to integrate these concepts into their practices and policies, thus strengthening the movement towards participatory planning that integrates active transportation, public health and equity.

Who knows, your community may be the next one to be inspired by Active Neighbourhoods Canada!

THE RESOURCES

IF YOU WANT FURTHER INFORMATION

MUEC

<http://www.ecologieurbaine.net/fr/activites-et-projets/projets/reseau-quartiers-verts>

Beaubien, Montréal (in french only)



Chicoutimi, Saguenay (in french only)



Chomedey, Laval (in french only)



Saint-Marc, Shawinigan (in french only)



TCAT

<http://www.tcat.ca/project/active-neighbourhoods-ontario/>

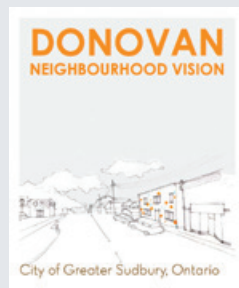
Haliburton



Peterborough



Donovan, Great Sudbury



Thorncliffe & Flemingdon, Park, Toronto



SC

<http://sustainablecalgary.org/home/anc/>

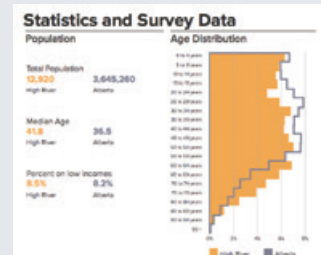
Acadia



Bridgeland, Riverside, Calgary



High River



Marlborough, Calgary



THE RESOURCES

TO EXPLORE YOUR REFLECTION

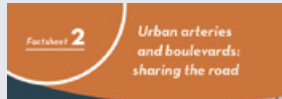
MUEC

www.ecologieurbaine.net | documentation

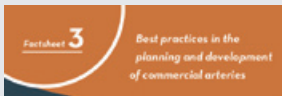
Securing intersections and crossings



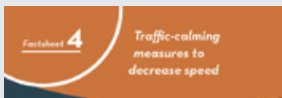
Urban arteries and boulevards: sharing the road



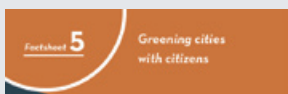
Best practices in the planning and development of commercial arteries



Traffic-calming measures to decrease speed



Greening cities with citizens



Vision zero, a new strategy of road safety (in french only)



Participatory urban planning (in french only)



SUSTAINABLE CALGARY

<http://sustainablecalgary.org/home/anc/>

Involving Youth in Community and Transportation Planning Through Participatory Research



Active Neighbourhoods Toolkit



IF YOU WANT TO ACT

MUEC

www.ecologieurbaine.net

Participatory Urban Planning. Planning the city with and for its citizens



Steps to build the city we want



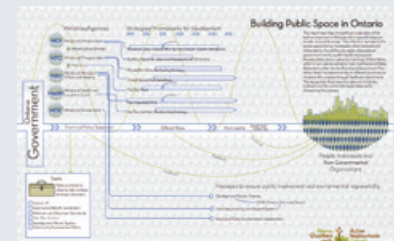
Boîte à outils Transformer sa ville (in french only)



TCAT

www.tcat.ca

Building Public Space in Ontario





The way cities are planned no longer meets the complex needs of citizens. A growing number of professionals, decision-makers, and passionate citizens are thinking differently about cities: a city on a human scale. For the past four years, inspired by the same participatory urban planning approach, citizens and professionals have met in community centres, at block parties, at design charrettes, or while conducting field surveys with pedestrians and cyclists, to collect qualitative and quantitative information to be used for developing urban planning projects that meet the real needs of their community.

This publication, “Building Active Communities Together”, describes how three non-governmental organizations based in Calgary, Montréal, and Toronto, have partnered to transform 12 communities across Canada. The Active Neighbourhoods Canada project supports urban planning professionals, decision-makers, and community organizations to work together to create neighbourhoods that encourage active

transportation and citizen participation. Supported by the Public Health Agency of Canada, as part of its Innovation Strategy “Achieving Healthier Weights in Canada’s Communities”, the project demonstrates that it is possible to think about and design our neighbourhoods differently; regardless of whether they are located in urban, suburban or rural areas.

This publication is intended for decision-makers and professionals in urban planning, design, engineering, public health, and community work, who are interested in innovative approaches to urban planning and want to break free of departmental silos. You will discover the challenges and lessons learned from a pan-Canadian partnership as well as best practices for a participatory urban planning project. Finally, you learn more about the 12 communities and the real changes that happened both in terms of practices and on the ground.

www.participatoryplanning.ca