



ACTIVE ***Transportation*** **for You**



3599 May 2019

Developed by the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit

Active transportation refers to any form of human-powered transportation used to get from one place to another, such as walking, cycling, using a wheelchair or skateboarding.^{1,2}

This information is for residents who use active transportation, or would like to use active transportation to get around the community. In our large rural area, many residents drive a long distance to get to town and may use active transportation to move around once they get there, while others live in town and can walk or bike from home.

Some residents may wish to do more active transportation but are faced with barriers such as:

- no access to safe walking or cycling routes
- feeling a lack of confidence or safety cycling or walking
- carrying large items/passengers that can pose a challenge when walking or bicycling
- not being able to walk or cycle the distance based upon your ability and comfort
- fear of sharing the road or trail with motorized vehicles



Benefits of Active Transportation:

- Promoting the use of active transportation is one of a few very effective ways of improving the health of people and the environment.³
- When people walk or cycle for transportation, it increases their level of physical activity, which also improves mental health and happiness (e.g., emotion and mood, self-esteem, sleep, cognitive functioning, dementia, depression, anxiety, stress, schizophrenia, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation).^{3,4} Children and parents who walk or bike to/from school are happier during the school trip than when they drive.⁵
- Increased physical activity associated with active transportation has been found to increase alertness and attention during the school or work day.^{4,5}
- Active transportation can give people the freedom to get around without relying on a car and the added costs related to them (e.g., gas, parking, car repairs, insurance and payments).¹
- Well-designed communities can support and promote active living, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gases and reduce social inequities.³
- Communities that are designed to support walking and cycling for transport also build a sense of community. Social connections increase in a community when walking and cycling bring people together and give them time to interact.³



Statistics & Data:



60% of Ontarians say they would prefer to cycle more often. The main reasons they are not riding more often are concerns about their safety on the road or not having routes where they want to go.⁶

Although **94%** of respondents rode bikes as children, only 6% of these adults are riding every day or almost every day.⁶



Men are more likely than women to say that they bike as a means of travel.

More women are likely to cycle if the routes are perceived as safe.

Young adults (18-24 years) are most likely to use active modes for transportation (both walking and bicycling) compared to their older counterparts.⁷

People feel there are more safe places to walk and cycle in larger communities.⁸

Older adults who are not in the workforce have more time to be physically active.⁹



Individuals Using Active Transportation:

Communities that are built for people to travel in a variety of ways allow those that use active transportation either for part or their entire journey, the opportunity to do this safely. Some residents are younger, older or may have a disability, so don't have a driver's license. Many cannot afford the cost of a vehicle. Active transportation is their only choice, as many have no access to public transit in our rural communities. Having active transportation options for residents is important to give them access to healthy food, services, work, school and recreation. For Leeds, Grenville and Lanark (LGL) residents, 6% commute to work using active transportation and 68% of Canadians are active by walking on local trails and paths.¹⁰ Trails may create an opportunity to link residents to key destinations in our rural communities. Approximately 30% of residents in LGL live within 4.9 km of work so could potentially use active transportation to get there.



Myths vs Facts:

Myth: It is too dangerous to walk or cycle.

Fact: The health benefits associated with cycling are much greater than the risks posed by cycling. Proper infrastructure can make it safer and increase the perception of safety among reluctant cyclists.¹¹ Safety increases with less cars and more bikes on the road.^{12,13} Proper bike lanes also make people aware of and look for bikes, this results in less injuries.

Myth: More active transportation means we end up with more traffic and less parking.

Fact: When there are less people driving there will be less cars requiring parking spaces and more people requiring bike racks. Adding bicycle parking will take up less space. Having safe walking and cycling routes allows people to park their cars and walk or cycle around town and reduce vehicle congestion and parking needs in town. Roads can move more people who are travelling by foot and bike than people in cars because they take up less space.¹¹

Get Involved

- Get involved in local planning committees to advocate for your own needs for active transportation.
- Get involved with a local school and support walk and cycle to school initiatives.
- Advocate for commuter parking to allow more active transportation in town.

Get Prepared and Get Moving

- Challenge yourself to stop driving your car as often.
- Take a cycling course with a local cycling group/cycling shop or ride with a group on a pathway to build your confidence on a bike.
- Get a local map and plan routes that you would enjoy, or find local cycling or walking routes that have already been mapped out with info on bike parking and other facilities.
- Leave a change of clothes and a wash kit in your car or at work in case an opportunity comes up to walk or bike to or from your destination.
- Dress for the weather and for your mode of transport. Wear reflective clothing when it gets dark.
- Find an ideal parking area that allows you to bike or walk to where you want to go.
- Find out if your community has bikes you can borrow for shorter trips in town.
- Find out if there is a more direct route to your destination by biking or walking versus driving.
- Find friends and workmates who can join you on your travels to make it more fun and increase your motivation.
- Look at your schedule and plan to walk or cycle at lunch to run errands or have a bite to eat with a friend at a local park or picnic area.
- Replace some of your shorter car trips with walking or cycling. Commuting smaller distances like 3-5 km is only 15 minutes by bike, or a 3 km round trip by foot can provide 40 minutes of physical activity just by doing day to day tasks like going to work or running errands. It may even take less time than driving.



Bibliography

- ¹Canada, G. o. (2014, May 5). Active Transportation. Retrieved February 7, 2019, from [www.canada.ca: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/being-active/active-transportation.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/being-active/active-transportation.html)
- ²Canada, G. o. (2016, June 4). Built Environment and Active Transportation. Retrieved February 7, 2019, from Canadian Best Practices Portal: Public Health Agency of Canada: <http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-as-pc.gc.ca/public-health-topics/built-environment-active-transportation/>
- ³Environment, C. A. (2017, March). Prescribing Active Travel for Healthy People and a Healthy Planet: A Toolkit for Professionals. Retrieved February 8, 2019, from [res.cloudinary.com: https://res.cloudinary.com/capeacme/image/upload/v1522366665/2.Report_-_Prescribing_Active_Travel_for_Healthy_People_and_a_Healthy_Planet_-_A_Toolkit_for_Health_Professionals.pdf](https://res.cloudinary.com/capeacme/image/upload/v1522366665/2.Report_-_Prescribing_Active_Travel_for_Healthy_People_and_a_Healthy_Planet_-_A_Toolkit_for_Health_Professionals.pdf)
- ⁴ParticipACTION. (2018). Canadian Kids Need to Move to Boost Their Brain Health: 2018 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children & Youth. Retrieved February 5, 2019, from ParticipACTION.com: https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/resources/report-card?gclid=EAlaQobCh-MIsPL5xO784QIVhLfACh3bHweGEAAyASAAEgJCo_D_BwE
- ⁵Travel, O. A., & Canada, G. C. (2018, December). Making the Case for Active School Travel: Fact Sheet & Reference List. Retrieved March 11, 2019, from Ontario Active School Travel: <http://ontarioactive-schooltravel.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Making-the-Case-for-Active-School-Travel-Fact-Sheet-and-Reference-List.....pdf>
- ⁶Coalition, S. t. (2010, March). When Ontario Bikes, Ontario Benefits. Retrieved February 7, 2019, from [www.sharetheroad.ca: https://www.sharetheroad.ca/share-the-road-green-paper-unveiled-p136419](https://www.sharetheroad.ca/share-the-road-green-paper-unveiled-p136419)
- ⁷Institute, C. F. (2018). Bulletin 22: Active Transportation Among Adults. Retrieved February 7, 2019, from [www.cflri.ca: http://www.cflri.ca/sites/default/files/node/1582/files/PAM%202014-2015_Bulletin%2022_Active%20transportation%20EN.pdf](http://www.cflri.ca/sites/default/files/node/1582/files/PAM%202014-2015_Bulletin%2022_Active%20transportation%20EN.pdf)
- ⁸Institute, C. F. (2010). Satisfaction with Facilities and Supportive Services Bulletin #6. Retrieved February 7, 2019, from [cflri.ca: http://www.cflri.ca/sites/default/files/node/127/files/PAM2009Bulletin6.pdf](http://www.cflri.ca/sites/default/files/node/127/files/PAM2009Bulletin6.pdf)
- ⁹National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. (March 2017). Aging and Safe Active Transportation: Issues and Courses of Action for Public Roadway Development. Briefing Note. https://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2017_BuiltEnvBati_ActiveTranspAging_En.pdf
- ¹⁰Institute, C. F. (2018). Bulletin 21: Locations to be active in the community. Retrieved February 7, 2019, from <http://www.cflri.ca/sites/default/files/node/1628/files/CFLRI%20PAM%202014-2015%20Bulletin%2021%20Locations%20to%20be%20active%20in%20the%20community.pdf>
- ¹¹Road, S. T. (2018). Bikes Can Do That. Retrieved February 7, 2019, from [www.sharetheroad.ca: https://www.sharetheroad.ca/files/STR_2018_Infographics.pdf](https://www.sharetheroad.ca/files/STR_2018_Infographics.pdf)
- ¹²Highways England. (2018). The road to good design. Guildon: Government of UK. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672822/Good_road_design_Jan_18.pdf
- ¹³Cavacuiti, D. C. (2012). AN OVERVIEW OF CYCLING RESEARCH: Selected Facts, Statistics, Citations and Quotations. Toronto: Share the Road. https://www.sharetheroad.ca/files/Cycling_Safety_Overview_2012_12_05.pdf