ALBERTA CENTRE FOR
Active Living

Benefits of Active Transportation

Active transportation includes any human-powered travel such as walking, cycling, running, using a non-mechanized wheel chair, or skateboarding.[1]

People can use active transportation in different ways. Examples include[1]:

- Walk or cycle/wheel to school or work.
- Walk to and from a transit stop.
- Walk or cycle/wheel for errands or to meet with friends.

CANADA'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

Adults, 18-64 years, should achieve 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week.

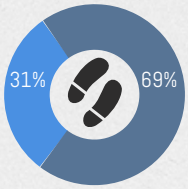
Children and youth, 5-17 years, should achieve at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day.

Ref: 2,3

ADULTS IN ALBERTA ARE NOT ACHIEVING ENOUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The 2017 Alberta Survey on Physical Activity[4] assessed physical activity, walking, and sedentary behaviour levels of adult Albertans and found that:

- 43% of Albertans are not getting enough physical activity to achieve health benefits.
- Albertans spend an average of 9 hours per weekday and 8.5 hours per weekend day in sedentary behaviours.
- Only 31% of Albertans achieve 10,000 or more steps per day.



USE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION TO HELP ACHIEVE DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GOALS

- People who use active transportation are more likely to be more physically active in their leisure time.[5,6]
- Walking to and from public transit can help adults achieve 8 to 33 minutes more physical activity each day.[7]
- Among 11-12 year olds, walking to and from school contributed to 22 minutes or over 1/3 of the total recommended daily moderate-to-vigorous activity.[8]
- The odds of being physically active are reduced by 1.6% for each hour of driving per week.[9]

HOW FAR CAN YOU TRAVEL ON THE EQUIVALENT OF 350 CALORIES?

Ref: 10

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CAN HELP REDUCE THE RISK OF DEVELOPING CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEMS

Increasing physical activity levels through active transportation can help to:

- Reduce risk of heart disease and stroke, as well as high blood pressure.
- Reduce the risk of various cancers, including breast and colon.
- Reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.
- Support good mental health.

Ref: 6,11,14-21

- Any level of physical activity, including low levels of walking less than 150 minutes/week, can prevent future depression.[12]
- Compared to driving, the benefits of cycling are about 9 times greater than the risks of cycling.[13]

The risk of obesity increases by 6% for each hour spent in a car daily.[11]

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

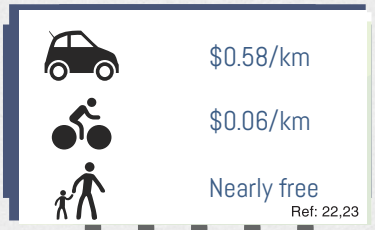
People who use active transportation spend less money on car fuel, maintenance, and insurance.[22,23]

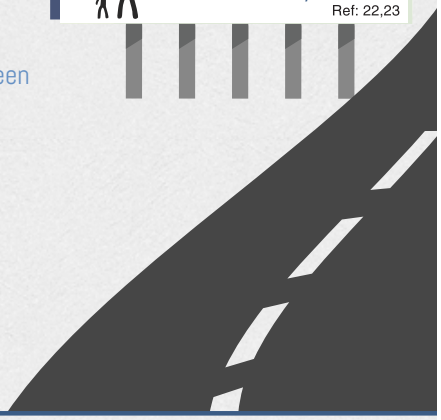
Less motorized traffic can lead to decreased infrastructure and maintenance costs for roads, bridges, and parking facilities.[24,25]

Active transportation can support increased productivity, lower absenteeism, and decrease lost productivity due to traffic congestion. Traffic congestion costs between $2.3 billion and $3.7 billion for the nine largest Canadian cities in 2006.[26-28]

Simply getting 10% more Canadians who are insufficiently active to move more and sit less could result in $2.6 billion saved in healthcare spending on hypertension, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and cancer over 25 years.[29]

Direct and indirect healthcare costs related to low physical activity rates totaled $5.3 billion per year in Canada.[11]





INVESTING IN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CAN BOOST LOCAL ECONOMY AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Cyclists and pedestrians stop more often than drivers and are more likely to spend their money at local destinations.[30,31]

Wider sidewalks and other strategies can create pedestrian-friendly shopping experiences, benefiting shop owners.[32]

Active transportation can support social relations, improve neighbourhood livability, increase tourism, and attract new business.[30-36]

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

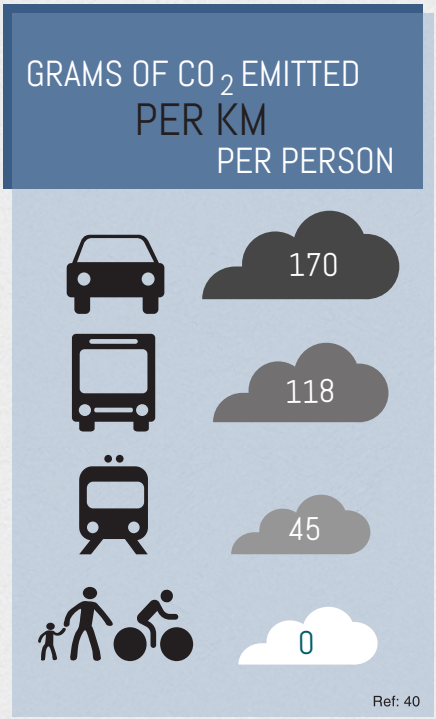
Walking and cycling are "clean" modes of transportation — they result in no greenhouse gas (GHG) or criteria air contaminant (CAC) emissions.[11,37,38]

Active transportation lowers energy consumption. For example[11]:

- A bicycle requires 100 times less energy to manufacture than an automobile, with little waste produced during the bicycle's life cycle.
- A bicycle can travel 423 kilometres on the equivalent of 1 litre of fuel for a vehicle.
- The ecological footprint of a cyclist is 1/10th of a commuting driver.

Based on the average Canadian household's environmental impact, motorized transportation accounts for[39]:

- Almost 50% of toxic air pollution.
- Over 1/3 of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Almost 20% of toxic water pollution.



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORTIVE POLICIES CAN HELP PREVENT INJURIES

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

As more people choose to use active transportation, the risk of injury and fatality rates decrease.[41]

Compared to driving, the benefits of active transportation have been found to outweigh these risks, such as collisions and exposure to emissions.[13,42]

The risk of injury can be reduced by providing simple supports to encourage residents to choose active transportation.[6,42]

- Safe infrastructure, including sidewalks, crosswalks, and raised medians.
- Safe cycling infrastructure, such as exclusive lanes and interconnected paths.
- Supportive policies for driver behaviour, particularly around speed enforcement and impaired or distracted driving. (MAXIMUM 40)
- Safety education and information for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.

Brought to you by:

ALBERTA CENTRE FOR
Active Living

For more information:

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