



## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

# Economic Development

Active Transportation (AT) is an important component of building healthier community and contributing positively to everyone's health and well being. Increasing access to active modes of transportation in Renfrew County also results in broader economic and social benefits.

### Active Transportation Means:

- any human-powered, non-motorized mode of transportation for commuter, tourism and recreational purposes
- moving from one destination to another for work, childcare, school, shopping and recreation
- walking, hiking, running, cycling, in-line skating, skateboarding, non-motorized wheel-chairing, skating, skiing, canoeing and kayaking

### AT is Good for Business

As many municipalities adopt a planning model based on economic, environmental and social sustainability, AT can be key factor in spurring economic growth while protecting the environment and promoting health. Collaborative initiatives that support active transportation can help municipalities — both urban and rural — achieve their economic goals and support the development of active, vibrant and healthier communities:<sup>1</sup>

- increased foot traffic and decreased vehicle congestion
- higher commercial property values
- lower real estate vacancy rates
- increased retail sales and tax revenues
- enhanced and accessible street design, known as streetscaping
- active commutes for employees and employers
- increased productivity, fewer sick days and lower employee turnover rates
- healthier work-life balance

### AT Benefits the Natural Environment

Natural environment includes all living things occurring naturally on Earth:

- forests, green space and open fields
- wetlands and waterways

Communities that promote AT can positively impact air quality, reduce environmental pollution and decrease the impact of climate change.

### AT Enhances the Built Environment

Built environment includes the physical features of a community:

- land-use patterns
- large and small features including architecture, landscaping and parks
- transportation systems including sidewalks, trails and roadways

Investment in the built environment and expansion of AT networks can provide increased opportunities for physical activity and ensure that active transportation is a safe option for all residents and visitors.



## AT Contributes to a Stronger Economy

Renfrew County's Active Transportation Strategy provides a framework for organizing the social and economic benefits of AT. When embraced by all levels of municipal planning and implementation, AT has potential to:

- diversify tourism opportunities
- enhance local business sectors
- optimize retail environments
- attract investments and residents
- improve residential neighbourhoods
- increase workforce health and well-being
- improve sense of purpose and productivity
- decrease healthcare costs
- build healthier communities <sup>ii</sup>

## AT Supports Local Tourism

Renfrew County's natural and cultural heritage resources benefit significantly from increased AT investment, capitalizing on various sector trends including ecotourism, shorter trips, stay-cations and product enhancement. Successful implementation of an AT strategy will support local tourism by attracting visitors and spurring economic benefits for the hospitality and service sectors, including lodging, dining, attractions, retail and repair.

## AT Enhances Economic Development

AT supports local business and increases the economic viability of a community. Those retail sectors that service the AT market, including outfitters, bike shops and sports stores, clearly profit from increased walking, hiking and cycling. However, the benefits are not limited to just specialized retail outlets. By better accommodating pedestrians and cyclists, AT revitalizes the downtown core of a community and enhances retail sales across the board. <sup>iii</sup>

## AT Increases Community Connectivity

Communities that prioritize AT are seen as safe, pleasant places in which to live and spend time, featuring:

- increased livability away from traffic noise and pollution
- livable spaces that support safe routes for walking and cycling to daily amenities
- higher property values especially near trails or along pedestrian-friendly streets
- increased social capital as people who walk and cycle are more likely to interact
- stronger sense of community and higher overall level of political participation
- reduced opportunity for crime and increased levels of security
- improved access to physical activity for all aspects of society, regardless of age, income or ability <sup>iv v</sup>

## AT, Equity and Social Inclusion

Municipalities that promote active and sustainable transportation can reduce the disparities between rich and poor as access to social and economic opportunities are enhanced. While these social benefits are more difficult to quantify, they are no less important in creating healthy, livable and economically sustainable communities.

20% of Canadian households do not own a car, and thus rely totally on alternate means for all their transit needs. <sup>vi</sup>

Communities that promote AT can increase mobility and quality of life for all residents, while creating equity for resident and visitors alike. <sup>vii</sup>

Access to an affordable and safe transportation system is a key characteristic of a socially equitable community, benefitting all users, regardless of economic status or physical ability. <sup>viii</sup> Walking and cycling are affordable modes of transportation for residents to access important services, including medical services, essential errands, education and employment.

Safe pedestrian access to services and links to public transportation are particularly important for people who are disadvantaged when it comes to transportation. As well, families with disabilities, the elderly, children and low-income also stand to gain from increased AT infrastructure.

Community bicycle programs help promote social equity by providing inexpensive access to AT, in regions where many services are located within cycling distance.

By providing safe, affordable transportation opportunities, Renfrew County promotes equity and encourages social inclusion, ensuring better access to employment, education, recreation, shopping and health and social programs. <sup>ix</sup>

### References

<sup>i</sup> Transport Canada. Active Transportation in Canada: A Resource and Planning Guide. Government of Canada, 2007.

<sup>ii</sup> Transport Canada. Sustainable Transport in Small and Rural Communities. Government of Canada, 2006.

<sup>iii</sup> Snyder T. Bicycling Means Business: how cycling enriches people and cities. DC.Streets Blog.org, March 8, 2013.

<sup>iv</sup> Leyden K. Social Capital and the Built Environment: The Importance of Walkable Neighborhoods. American Journal of Public Health. September 2003; 93(9): 1546-1551.

<sup>v</sup> Jacobs J. The Death and Life of Great American Cities. Vintage, 1992.

<sup>vi</sup> Campbell R, Wittgens M. The Business Case for Active Transportation: The Economic Benefits of Walking and Cycling, 2004.

<sup>vii</sup> Transport Canada. The Social Implications of Sustainable and Active Transportation. Government of Canada, 2006.

<sup>viii</sup> Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments. Trail users Survey, Little Miami Scenic Trail, 1999.

<sup>ix</sup> Bergeron K. & Cragg S. Making the Case for Active Transportation: Bulletin #7 – Increasing Social Capital. Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2009.