

Nova Scotia Pathways for People Framework for Action

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**Prepared by the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and
Protection on behalf of active transportation interests in Nova Scotia**

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INTRODUCTION

"Two thirds of Nova Scotians are not active enough to enjoy health benefits...making active choices can help us make strides in addressing many issues associated with chronic disease, obesity, climate change, air quality, and traffic congestion. Our government is committed to improving the health of Nova Scotians from many angles, including Active Transportation."

Premier Rodney MacDonald as Minister of the Office of Health Promotion,
Active Transportation Conference, "Moving Actively Through Atlantic Canada,"
2004

Premier MacDonald sums it up well. Our love affair with the automobile has made a majority of us overweight and prone to disease, has negatively affected our relationship with the natural world, and has made our cities congested and unsafe. As each year passes, it becomes increasingly apparent that our transportation system is not on a sustainable path. In Canada, only 1.2% of Canadians bike to work, compared to the Netherlands at 27%. But when asked, 66% of Canadians said they would be willing to leave the car at home, if the appropriate infrastructure was in place. As you can see, there is enormous room for growth.

Go for Green's 2004 Report, entitled *The Business Case for Active Transportation*, outlines the many societal and personal benefits of Active Transportation (AT). They also reveal that AT has a number of valuable economic benefits including reductions in: road construction, repair, and maintenance costs; costs due to greenhouse gases; health care costs due to increased physical activity and reduced respiratory and cardiac disease; and fuel, repair, and maintenance costs to auto users. Imagine the savings.

Nearly every sector of our society and economy stands to gain by embracing and promoting AT. The health sector knows that choosing an active form of transportation can help alleviate obesity and disease and contribute to overall health. Research has shown that exercising moderately for only 30 minutes a day reduces the risk of many different illnesses, including heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. The energy sector understands that using human power helps retain our planet's precious non-renewable resources. The environmental movement is committed to cutting emissions from cars to slow down global warming and make our air safer to breathe. City planners and engineers are investigating ways to cut down on traffic congestion and maintain green space in our cities. In addition, we all care about greater safety and security while commuting or while moving around our communities.

Active Transportation is a simple and obvious answer to these problems. It can help cut health care costs, meet our Kyoto obligations, and create sustainable, more livable communities. Over the last ten years, the concept of AT has been gaining popularity and is sidling its way into the mainstream. Some of the larger Canadian cities – Vancouver, Ottawa, Moncton, Halifax and Victoria (to name a few)– are putting forth strong efforts to promote AT. At a provincial level

though, Nova Scotia is the only province to develop any type of guiding structure for directing Active Transportation initiatives province-wide.

Right now, we're seeing a dramatic shift in the awareness of the positive outcomes AT can bring to individuals, families, and communities, in both rural and urban areas. More Nova Scotians than ever are thinking about and experimenting with Active Transportation and could benefit from supportive environments that will enable them to move spontaneously and safely.



This Framework paper was conceived as a way to showcase our province’s success stories in the arena of Active Transportation. Here you'll find ways we can join together and meet the growing needs of our communities. This is fundamental to the growth of AT: the development and maintenance of partners at the government, agency, and individual levels. These partnerships need to be diverse, strong, creative, sustainable, and supportive of one another.

Boldly stated, we do not want this paper to be perused on the way to the recycle bin. We want to create awareness but also work toward major community infrastructure and lifestyle changes. We want those individuals who read this Framework to feel galvanized to take action in whatever way is appropriate and achievable. Join Go for Green, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia, the Ecology Action Centre, Transport Canada, and N.S. Health Promotion and Protection in action. Identify a role for yourself or your organization, start talking to other like-minded folks, lace up your sneakers, jump on your skateboard, and go!

THE SCOPE OF ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Simply put, Active Transportation is any travel that is human powered and non-motorized. The term was first coined by Go for Green in 1994. Now when you Google it, you get 38 million hits. Initially, AT focused on alternatives to cars for short trips to and from work or school or the shopping plaza. Today, the definition is much broader and appeals to a larger audience.

Active transportation doesn't just concern commuters in the urban core. People who live in rural areas may have the opportunity to be more creative with modes of travel than urban folks, utilizing hiking trails, horses, and canoes or kayaks to arrive at their destination. AT doesn't just happen in good weather either. Cross country skis, dogsleds, snowshoes, and skates can be used in winter. And lastly, AT is not just for the young – it's for the young at heart. On the trails and waterways and streets of our province, the number of seniors and retired folk who get around using their own steam, is steadily increasing.

Today, people of all ages and abilities often choose more active, participatory forms of transportation. The reasons vary as much as the people do. Carol, who lives in Bedford but works downtown, runs to work three days a week. She's training for a marathon and uses the time when she would normally be stuck in traffic. Michael paddles across the Northwest Arm every day and then walks to work. This saves him time trying to find parking and the early morning exercise improves his work performance. Becca inline skates to school because she can't afford a vehicle and skating is quicker than walking. Gabe, who is in Grade six and a budding environmentalist, bikes the 6km to school every day and on the weekends, rides his skateboard to the park or the community centre. He likes being able to get himself around and not rely on his parents to drive him. He also enjoys knowing that he's helping the earth by not always using their family car.

As you can see, AT can be viewed as simply an alternative way to travel, but it's really much more than that. The beauty of getting around using our own steam is that it has so many benefits to ourselves, each other, and the environment. It improves our physical and mental health, helps the environment by cutting down on emissions and noise pollution, and makes our neighbourhoods less congested and more liveable. Active Transportation can be used anytime, anywhere, and by anyone.



A VISION FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IN NOVA SCOTIA

"The average car pumps over twice its weight in carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year. Auto emissions contribute directly to ozone depletion and the greenhouse effect, air pollution, smog, acid rain, and noise pollution. Cycling and walking are two of the cleanest and most energy efficient forms of transportation."

The Auto Smart Guide, Natural Resources Canada, 1995

Imagine a day when all the cities and towns in our province have bike lanes. Imagine that your employer actually encourages you to walk, run, or wheel to work by providing a change room with a shower. Imagine too that your employer gives you a bonus for not owning a car because they realize you're a more productive and ultimately less expensive employee. Imagine that the subdivision you live in has sidewalks on every street and traffic calming mechanisms, meaning your kids can walk to school. Imagine the joy your kids would feel at the daily adventure of getting themselves around on foot or scooter, bike or skateboard. Imagine safe, attractive, and convenient connections within and between rural communities.

This idyllic sounding future is attainable. We can make it happen. Germany's rural communities are often linked by bike-paths through farmlands. The world's cities that offer true alternatives to cars and in fact have car free downtowns (Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Venice, and London) did so because severe traffic congestion choked and clogged them into it. We don't have to wait for gridlock. We can be pro-active. Read on to see what some of the current initiatives and future hopes are for AT in Nova Scotia.

AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT INITIATIVES AND PLAYERS

There have been a number of key events over the last 10-15 years that have advanced AT to a top priority for many sectors within the province.

- Commitment to community based trail development (late 1980's)
- Development of Trans-Canada Trail concept(1992)
- Go for Green's creation of the phrase "Active Transportation" and subsequent provincial partnerships (1994)
- Development of a Provincial Policy for Rails to Trails in Nova Scotia (1997)
- Nova Scotia Go for Green Consultant seconded by Nova Scotia Health Promotion to focus on Go for Green programs in NS (2003)
- Atlantic AT Conference in Moncton (2004)
- Development of this AT Framework document (2006)

Partnerships are critical to the AT movement. Many diverse agencies and community groups are working in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection (HPP) to develop infrastructure, policy, legislation, and public education to promote AT. The goal is to bring AT more into the consciousness of every Nova Scotian.

An example of one of the many effective partnerships within AT is the relationship between Health Promotion and Protection, Go for Green, and the Ecology Action Centre (EAC). Delivery of the following programs is facilitated by EAC:

- ✓ **Active and Safe Routes to School** – provides healthy, safe options for transporting children to school in NS (see Spotlight section below)
- ✓ **Commuter Challenge** – coordinates local workplace and school participation in this national competition to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips (additional partners are Environment Canada and Teletrips)
- ✓ **Bike Week** - offers seven days of pedal-powered events in HRM (additional partners are Halifax Regional Municipality and NS Energy)
- ✓ **Trip Reduction Initiative** – reduces the number of single occupancy vehicles traveling to and from work in HRM (soon be expanded to include large businesses in Pictou County)
- ✓ **ADAPT** (Association of Doctors for the Advancement of Physically-Active Transportation) – pursues the implementation of bicycle/active transportation routes throughout NS for health reasons
- ✓ **Bike Again!** - repairs/rebuilds old bikes for new use

- ✓ **Steer Clean** - encourages people to get rid of old broken down cars and adopt AT as their new form of transport
- ✓ **U-PASS** – in partnership with Metro Transit, provides full-time students with unlimited access to Metro Transit's buses and ferries for the academic year, from September through April.
- ✓ **E-PASS** - offers an automatic payroll deduction and a permanent transit pass to participating workplaces.

Nova Scotia's extensive and diverse trail system is another example of partnerships at work within the AT movement. The trail community in Nova Scotia is largely volunteer-based with support from community partners, relevant provincial organizations, and government departments. The appearance and permitted uses of trails, in addition to specific management guidelines are all determined by the participating community.

A number of provincial staff have been put in place to specifically support the trail movement, including a Trans Canada Trail Coordinator (within Recreation Nova Scotia) and a GIS Technician (within Health Promotion and Protection) to aid in the development, mapping and promotion of the trail system (For a comprehensive listing of Nova Scotia's trails, complete with mapping, visit Trails Nova Scotia at www.trails.gov.ns.ca).

The "Rails to Trails" Policy of the Nova Scotia government guides the acquisition of abandoned rail-lines and their conversion to trails that link communities. Currently (2006) the province owns approximately 1,400 kms of abandoned rail corridor. This network of rail trails makes up a large part of the Trans Canada Trail route in Nova Scotia.

Development of the Trans Canada Trail in N.S. is supported by the Nova Scotia Trails Federation (or NS Trails): a provincial umbrella group representing trail builder and user groups across the province. They liaise with the national Trans Canada Foundation to maintain lines of communication with the community trail groups. When it is complete, the Trans Canada Trail will run from the new Brunswick border, along the Northumberland Strait through to Eastern Cape Breton (Inverness County) and then across to North Sydney's ferry to Newfoundland. A spur will also connect through the Truro area to Halifax. An additional section known as the Western Loop will circumnavigate the western end of the province through the South Shore and Annapolis Valley areas.

NS Trails has a full-time employee to support their work, as well as a volunteer Board. Funding and support for this work comes from a variety of areas, including the N.S. Departments of Health Promotion and Protection and Natural Resources (see provincial involvement section).

There are close to 140 community trail groups in the province, all working on developing and maintaining their respective trail system(s). Trails range from wilderness hiking opportunities to shared-use trails on converted rail beds. A number of communities have been able to hire full-time staff to assist their work. Numerous Trail and Open Space Coordinators now exist within

Municipalities across the province.

This information is just a brief overview of the hard work and accomplishments in the realm of Nova Scotia's trails. For more details, see the following websites: www.trails.gov.ns.ca/ (Trails Information Project), www.trailscanada.com (Trails Canada), www.novascotiatrials.com (Nova Scotia Trails Federation).



SPOTLIGHT ON ACTIVE AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Here's some alarming statistics:

- 32% of Nova Scotians, ages 2 to 17, are overweight or obese
- One in four Nova Scotian youth suffer from asthma
- 91% of kids own a bike but only 5% use it to go to school regularly
- 20-25% of morning rush hour traffic in Canada is school related
- Traffic congestion around schools poses a real safety risk to students
- 30% of all greenhouse gas emissions in Canada is transportation related and comes from cars and light trucks

Active & Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) is addressing these issues within Nova Scotia. It is a national program of Go for Green and is coordinated in our province by the Ecology Action Centre in partnership with the N.S. Department of Health Promotion and Protection (through the Active Kids Healthy Kids strategy).

The project encourages students to use active modes of travel (walking, wheeling, inline skating, skateboarding, scootering, etc.) while keeping safety concerns front and centre. It's about encouraging school administrators and parents to brainstorm ways to find safe alternatives for children to get to school, rather than having their parents drop them off in the family car. It's about kids reaping the health benefits of more physical activity, enjoying the adventure of being outdoors, and also learning about how they are helping the Earth by choosing to travel using their own body power.



The **Walking School Bus** is one of ASRTS's initiatives to cut down on trips by car or bus. An adult (parent, teacher, or volunteer) walks a group of children to school using a safe route. Currently there are four Walking School Buses in Nova Scotia in Pictou, Springvale (Halifax), Portland Estates (Dartmouth), and Wolfville. Despite its success in these communities, there are still many schools and parents who will not start a Walking School Bus due to safety concerns.

According to the ASRTS Coordinator, there are many issues that reduce the number of kids walking to schools:

- fewer and larger schools set on the outskirts of communities, resulting in longer distances children have to travel
- the prevalence and convenience of cars

- safety concerns (traffic, speed, and abductions)

Research is being done around the specific barriers to children walking to school within our province, in hopes of developing tools to overcome these barriers and sustain change. One tool may be developing maps for each town or school district which identify the "safe routes" within the area for walking and cycling. A pilot project is underway in Bridgewater NS. Once the process is complete and the map is developed, there will be a template that other communities can use.

Recent Events

Events, that may get covered by local media, are a way of reaching more people and raising awareness. The following AT events have taken place in Nova Scotia in the last few years.



HRM Bike Week: This annual event in June is hosted by TRAX (EAC) and features a full slate of pedal powered events including workshops, rides, tours, and races. David Engwicht, the traffic calming guru from Australia, presented two workshops in HRM and CBRM during Bike Week 2004.



Commuter Challenge: Did you know that 75% of Canadians commute to work alone? This annual national competition takes aim at that statistic with the hope of decreasing the number of single occupancy vehicle trips to work. It takes place during Environment Week in June and is coordinated here in Nova Scotia by TRAX. A friendly competition with other Canadian communities, this event raises awareness about how AT can reduce pollution and keep you fit. In 2004, 1500 Nova Scotians participated, preventing 32000 kg of CO₂-equivalent emissions.



Walk to School Week: This annual international event, hosted by Nova Scotia Health Promotion and the Ecology Action Centre, encourages children to get to school safely using their own steam. It is organized by EAC's Active and Safe Routes to School and is achieving remarkable success. During the week of October 3-7, 2005, over 30,000 students participated. Since its inception in Nova Scotia, the number of schools participating has soared from nine (in 2001) to 137 (in 2005). The 2005 figure represents one-third of our province's schools with four NS schools winning prizes for their participation. Schools across Canada participate in the event, joining 36 countries world-wide.



International Trails Day: This day, the first Saturday in June, is celebrated throughout the world. The idea of making it an international celebration was conceived by a local volunteer named Dave Carter. It is a day dedicated to celebrate trails, their development, their uses and the healthy lifestyles they encourage. International Trails Day 2005 was a huge success with an estimated 1500 Nova Scotians participating. In Nova Scotia, the event was hosted by the Nova Scotia Trails Federation.



Otesha Project: This charitable organization was created by two young Canadian women with the aim to enable and empower their generation to take action towards a sustainable future. Otesha means "reason to dream" in Swahili. The Otesha Project is an advocacy group that cycles across Canada, talking to young people about the connection between individual actions and global problems. Their education programs are hope and action-based and involve multi-media presentations, humorous skits, fun games, and interactive workshops. In 2003, they made more than 250 presentations to over 12,000 young people across Canada. This dynamic group has visited our province twice in their travels, inspiring Nova Scotians to think, among other things, about how our transportation choices affect our shared future.



The 1st Halifax Open Street Festival, coordinated by TRAX, was held in April, 2006 with an aim to promote the concept of public use of streets, including many uses other than automobile. The Festival celebrated all things that can be done in the street – cycling, skateboarding, dancing, street hockey, music, wheelchair rugby etc. The Festival marks an effort to have a regularly scheduled “street opening” weekly in Halifax, similar to other cities in Canada. By opening a street to AT, users can realize how quickly and easily we can get around without using our cars, while enjoying a fun, social atmosphere and getting some good exercise.



Recent Workshops and Conferences

The number and variety of workshops and conferences regarding AT are on the rise. This is a sampling of recent gatherings.

- ✓ **"Moving Actively Through Atlantic Canada,"** Atlantic Canada Active Transportation Conference, (Moncton, April 2004, 140 participants, 75 from Nova Scotia)
- ✓ **Taming School and Neighbourhood Traffic Workshops** in HRM and CBRM (with David Engwicht of Australia in 2004)
- ✓ **Velo Quebec technical workshop on building bikeways** (June 2004, 20 participants)
- ✓ **Cape Breton Island Pathways Initiative Conference**, sponsored by the CBIP committee, Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, Nova Scotia Health Promotion, municipalities and Regional Development Authorities (December 2004)
- ✓ **HRM Active Transportation Conference** (March 2005, 124 attended)
- ✓ **Cape Breton's First Bicycle Summit**, sponsored by HPP, Cape Breton Islands Pathways Association, Velo Cape Breton, Strait-Highlands RDA, April 2006
- ✓ **Ongoing Workshops**, available locally, nationally, and internationally, that include Rails to Trails Conservancy, Pro Walk/Bike and American Trails (International Conferences, attended by many Nova Scotians), skateboard workshops held by Recreation Facilities Association of Nova Scotia (annually in June/many adult and youth participants), and over 40 trail workshops (throughout Nova Scotia, past 15 years)

Information currently available

In today's world, it is increasingly important to have information available in electronic form. This seems especially important for youth, as it's how they now acquire much of their knowledge. To that end, each of the major players involved in AT in Nova Scotia have websites with extensive information available on the benefits and programs associated with AT. Check them out:

www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/ (Nova Scotia Health Promotion)
www.goforgreen.ca/ (Go for Green)
<http://ecologyaction.ca/> (Ecology Action Centre)
<http://ecologyaction.ca/trax/> (TRAX program, EAC)
<http://ecologyaction.ca/asrts/> (ASRTS program, EAC)
www.trails.gov.ns.ca/ (Trails Information Project)
www.trailscanada.com (Trails Canada)
www.novascotiatrials.com (Nova Scotia Trails Federation)

The Ecology Action Centre offers valuable AT info in its online publications: *Get on the Move*, *Walking and Wheeling Quarterly*, and *The Green Commuter*.

In addition, larger documents such as discussion papers and manuals are also available online. Go for Green has a number of documents concerning AT on their website including *Making a Business Case for Active Transportation*. The N.S. Trails Federation website contains a manual called *Developing Recreational Trails in Nova Scotia*.

In print form, there are a variety of guides to cycling, paddling, and hiking throughout Nova Scotia. "Paddle, Lunenburg/ Queens", "Paddle Annapolis County", "Hiking Trails of Nova Scotia", and the HRM Bike Map are some examples.

Planning and Research for Active Transportation

Did you know that although most Canadians (78%) walk for leisure or recreational activity, few ever walk to work? In fact 70% NEVER do. Did you know that 2/3 of Canadian children and youth, the future of our country, are not active enough to lay a solid foundation for future health and well being? With those kinds of statistics, there is much work to do. It's why planning and research are so vitally important to the AT movement.

In our capital city, the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) faces ever growing air pollution from vehicle emissions, in addition to a population that is increasingly overweight and unhealthy. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia recently determined that over half (51%) of our population is physically inactive and that this is directly linked to 200 premature deaths per year.

HRM has initiated a study to develop an Active Transportation Plan that will "connect, integrate, enhance and expand existing on and off-road facilities for a variety of self-propelled modes of

transportation." It is a step beyond the 2002 *Blueprint for Bicycle Friendly Halifax Regional Municipality*. The theory behind the new HRM AT Plan is this: if there are safe and efficient AT networks available for walking and wheeling (cycling, skateboarding, inline skating), that also connect with public transit, AT will be a viable option for a greater number of people. The Plan will address safety concerns and a lack of quality infrastructure systems and is scheduled to be released sometime in 2006.



Elsewhere, in the province, Cape Breton, Colchester County, and Pictou County are also researching AT plans. In addition, Annapolis Royal has developed a Perimeter Trail Plan which resulted from a partnership with community, governmental and private sectors. This innovative local development plan included the creation of a constructed wetland for the tertiary treatment of municipal sewage, plus a walking trail that linked points of cultural, historical and natural interest within the town. The plan won the Town of Annapolis Royal the Bay of Fundy Business Partnership Award.

Other research into AT has included the Hiking Trail Economic Study (1998), the Skateboard/BMX Interests Inventory and By Law Analysis (2003), the National AT Survey done by Go for Green and the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI), the Nova Scotia's Heart and Stroke Foundation's 2004 Report on "The Cost of Physical Inactivity in HRM," and Cape Breton Island Pathways' Economic Analysis (2005).

Government Involvement

Focused and committed government involvement is key to the growth of AT in Nova Scotia and in Canada. Go for Green is currently advocating for long term support and funding that would see dedicated funds linking AT to other existing plans and actions, including climate change and healthy living strategies. We need to be thinking a generation or two into the future. How do we establish policies, bylaws, and guidelines that encourage and mandate proper consideration of active modes of transportation in all public places and in the design and renovation of residential and commercial developments?

In Go for Green's 2005 Presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance entitled *Community Solutions for Climate Change, Health, and Transportation*, the group suggests that the Federal Government establish a National Secretariat responsible for undertaking investments to enhance infrastructure for AT in Canadian communities. They note that AT is often recognized as a

sustainable form of transportation but rarely supported through programs, policies, or the active removal of barriers. They also point out that Canada is lagging behind the rest of the world in AT programs and that we need to move up to international best practices. This requires designated funding within the realm of transportation spending and should be equivalent to what the US and other major countries are spending.

That being said, there are many government initiatives, at all levels, currently underway (or in recent history) that support AT in a variety of ways. The federal government is a large funder of AT development, either directly through programs like Eco-Action (an Environment Canada program) or indirectly, by providing funds at the provincial or municipal level (like the gas-tax dollars recently allocated for sustainable municipal development). These funding pieces really help the province and communities put action to their AT plans.

The federal government also provides services and programs that contribute to building a climate that allows for good things to happen around AT. Programs like the Commuter Challenge (through Go for Green), Katimavik, and the One-Tonne Challenge are examples of programs that contribute to education, incentive delivery, and human resources that support the movement. Departments like Parks Canada even provide great venues for AT to happen!

On the provincial government level, there have been some key pieces of legislation, policy, and planning put in place that open doors to communities wanting more options for AT. The Active Kids/Healthy Kids Strategy, now into its second generation, supports grass root action that increases physical activity levels among our young population. AT is recognized and included as part of this strategy. The Occupiers Liability Act and Volunteer Protection Act both help protect communities engaged in developing AT infrastructure from liability issues, and the Rails to Trails Policy allows abandoned rail corridors across the province to be converted to recreational trail opportunities.

The province also supports AT through direct funding (through Departments like Health Promotion and Protection and Tourism and Culture) and by acting as the conduit for federal dollars to reach communities. Many Departmental staff with valuable and related expertise are also accessible to communities and municipalities to facilitate various planning and problem-solving processes.

Most AT related infrastructure development happens within municipalities...where people live. Numerous Municipal governments across the province have now initiated planning processes to aid in AT support. These early AT plans, focusing on healthy community design, retrofitting for supportive infrastructure, education programs, and supportive policy development are the backbone of municipal efforts and will be models for other municipalities to follow. Resources currently being made available in the form of funding for AT plan and infrastructure development, and staff work plans committed to fostering AT are key to furthering the AT agenda.

Municipalities also have the ability to control by-laws. Some by-laws are restrictive to AT modes (particularly around sidewalk use), but some municipalities are taking steps to amend or create

bi-laws that support AT choices, particularly for young people.

****In total, 45 municipalities in Nova Scotia are currently supporting trails and AT development in their regions!***

For more details on the programs mentioned in the paragraphs above, and for a summary of many other government initiatives currently happening that support, or have the potential to support AT in Nova Scotia, take a look at the Appendices at the back (I-III).

Organizational Involvement

There is extensive and diverse community involvement in the AT movement among not-for-profit groups, schools, trail groups, and hospitals. Some of these players have already been mentioned in previous sections, but two are worth highlighting separately. **Growing up in Cities** is a HeartWood initiative (a leading community youth development organization) that uses skateboarding as a mechanism for youth engagement in their communities. And QEII Health Sciences Centre, Division of Neurosurgery has a **Bicycle Helmet Program** for disadvantaged youth. Other organizations are listed below:

National Organizations with AT Supportive Mandates:

- Go for Green – www.goforgreen.ca

Go for Green, the Active Living and Environment Program, is a national non-profit, charitable organization that encourages Canadians to pursue healthy, outdoor physical activities that protect, enhance or restore the environment. Go for Green aims to inform Canadians about healthy, active lifestyle choices, and nurture commitment and action... to improve personal health and the health of the environment.

Go for Green is committed to acting as a catalyst for community, provincial, and national action in the area of Active Transportation, as part of the sustainable transportation issue. They have delivery partners in every province and territory, and work with over 1,000 communities across Canada. Go for Green works with partners in planning, transportation, recreation, health and environment sectors and Health Canada and Environment Canada. Go for Green's focus is to create awareness, and community infrastructure, and ultimately change lifestyles. Go for Green employs a national AT Coordinator, a Trails Canada Coordinator, coordinates the Active and Safe Routes to School and Commuter Challenge programs nationally, and also employs an AT Coordinator specific to Ontario.

- Centre for Sustainable Transportation - <http://cst.uwinnipeg.ca>

The Centre for Sustainable Transportation, which was established in the Toronto Region in the mid 1990's, is now an integral part of the University of Winnipeg. The Centre was founded to provide leadership in achieving sustainable transportation in Canada. It provides reliable information, fills knowledge gaps through research, educates stakeholders and raises awareness among them, and offers strategic policy advice in selected areas. The Centre strives to become a central resource on sustainable transportation practices and supporting information.

The role of the Centre is to assist decision-makers in making appropriate choices in how Canada's transportation systems are planned and delivered. It is a membership based organization and welcomes supporters from all parts of Canada and beyond. In cooperation with the Ecology Action Centre and N.S. Health Promotion and Protection, they developed a document entitled "Child Friendly AT for Nova Scotia".

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Some others:

- The **Federation of Canadian Municipalities** (www.fcm.ca) has been a supporter of the AT movement and administers the Green Infrastructure Program.
- The **Canadian Urban Transit Association** (www.cutaaactu.on.ca) has a strong vested interest in the development of sustainable transportation with AT being a key component.
- The **David Suzuki Foundation** (www.davidsuzuki.org) has promoted and supported AT initiatives as they relate to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Pollution Probe** (Toronto) (www.pollutionprobe.org) has a number of initiatives that reduce pollution through the use of AT.
- The **Heart & Stroke Foundation** (www.heartandstroke.ca)
- The **Bronfman Foundation** (www.bronfmanfoundation.org) is a key supporter of the Trans Canada Trail Foundation.
- The **Trans Canada Trail Foundation** (www.tctrail.ca) is a legacy of Canada 125 and when complete, will span the country with 17,000 kms of shared-use trail. The N.S. Trails Federation coordinates the trail's development by community groups for close to 1,400 kms of trail with the support of three levels of government and the private sector.

Provincial Organizations with AT Supportive Mandates:

- The **Heart & Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia** developed the "Hearts in Motion"

program to encourage walking on trails and pathways almost a decade ago, and piloted it in Halifax, Dartmouth, Yarmouth, and other areas. The organization has staff committed to increasing the physical activity levels of Nova Scotians and are partnering with Health Promotion and Protection and the Ecology Action Center to establish a provincial walking initiative (see page 27).

- The **Ecology Action Centre**, through its TRAX initiative, has been a long-time force in advancing sustainable transportation in HRM and in recent years, have branched out to work in other areas of the province.
- The **NS Trails Federation** represents about 50 trail builder and user groups in the province and is responsible for the completion of the Trans Canada Trail by 2010. This group also coordinates the volunteer Trail Warden program and manages the provincial trail insurance program on behalf of the provincial government.
- **Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia** provides extensive canoe route mapping and promotion, as well as safety education and instructor training.
- The **Snowmobilers Association of Nova Scotia** coordinates the development and maintenance of 3400 kms of groomed snowmobile trail through it's 22 member clubs. These groomed trails also provide opportunities for winter AT such as walking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. They are protected by a volunteer trail warden program.
- The **All Terrain Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia** and it's 40 member clubs are a major player in the development and management of shared-use trails, in partnership with community trail groups. ATVANS is also building an extensive volunteer trail warden program that currently boasts almost 90 trained Wardens.
- **Bicycle Nova Scotia** have over the years, been supportive of recreational cycling but in recent years has begun to take a lead role in the areas of instruction and safety training (through the Can-Bike training program).
- **Velo Cape Breton** is a bicycle club that is strong on advocacy as well as hosting events. In March of 2006 they hosted (with Cape Breton Island Pathways and Health Promotion and Protection) the first annual Bicycle Summit held at the Gaelic College.
- **Cross Country Ski Nova Scotia** promotes winter AT through cross-country ski events and education, and also advocates for snowshoeing.
- **Recreation Nova Scotia** has a long history of being advocates for the use of trails. In recent years they have brought a Trails Coordinator on staff and are very interested in exploring ways to get involved in the AT movement in a more deliberate way. Currently they manage the N.S. Go for Green Fund which has provided funding for AT related projects

- The **Recreation Facilities Association of Nova Scotia** has provided ongoing leadership to the skateboard movement in Nova Scotia and is a key player in *Take The Roof Off Winter* initiatives.
- The **Orienteering Association of Nova Scotia** has developed a number of high-quality maps of trail networks in parks and around schools, which are used for many AT related events and activities.
- The **East Coast Mountain Bike Association** is a relatively new group that builds trails, promotes their use, and advocates for the protection of a land-base dedicated to mountain biking.
- **Nova Scotia Nature Trust's mandate** is to identify, protect, maintain and restore Nova Scotia's native biodiversity and ecological integrity, including representative, rare, outstanding, and unique or otherwise ecologically significant natural features for their ecological and aesthetic value.



SPOTLIGHT ON THE HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION OF NS

In August of 2004, this Provincial Organization made a major contribution to the development of AT in our region with their report *The Cost of Physical Inactivity in Halifax Regional Municipality*. The report makes a clear and irrefutable link between inactivity and disease and between active transportation and health. The study found that 51% of Nova Scotians are physically inactive and that compared to other Canadians, Nova Scotians have particularly high rates of chronic illness. Specifically, Nova Scotia has the country's highest rate of deaths from cancer and from respiratory disease; the highest rate of arthritis and rheumatism in Canada; and the second highest rate of circulatory deaths and of diabetes in the country.

The study estimated that 40% of chronic illness could be prevented by regular physical activity and suggested that urban planning could offer opportunities for increased physical activity by creating walking and cycling alternatives to motorized transportation. The report also clearly showed that by encouraging physical activity, the provincial government would save money in avoided health care costs. They estimate that medical care costs for people with chronic diseases accounts for 60% of total medical care expenditures, or \$1.2 billion a year in Nova Scotia, and that if you combine direct medical costs and indirect productivity losses, the total amount exceeds \$3.0 billion a year.

The HRM Regional Planning Committee was one group that sat up and took notice of the Heart and Stroke Foundation's report. As a result, they became the only health organization to be asked to contribute directly to HRM municipal policy through the 25-year planning process. The Planning Committee also adopted the Heart and Stroke Foundation's recommendations to bolster health and health-related policy within HRM's 25-year Regional Plan.

A CALL TO ACTION

Did you know that half of all commuter trips in North America are under 8km – a 20-30 minute cycle? And that for distances up to 5km, cycling is the fastest from door to door (including walking, car, and public transit)?

What would it take for people to realize that AT is not only good for humans and our environment but it's also a cheaper, more efficient, and often faster way to travel? Let's explore some ideas:

1. Awareness

Nova Scotians should be introduced to the concept of Active Transportation and its myriad benefits. The truth is that most young people think the city bus is the "loser cruiser." Studies show that employees who wheel or walk to work are seen as "fitness fanatics" or "eccentrics." It's cool to have a car; it's not cool to walk, ride a bike, or take public transit. The tide can turn though. Look what's happened within the world of cigarette smoking as social and political environments become suddenly unfriendly to smokers. AT needs to be supported by our communities, media, and leaders in order to be embraced. Crucial to this awareness campaign would be the buy-in and involvement among youth.



Ideas to get people committed to participating in and supporting AT

- Establish a Nova Scotia AT coalition (both government and non-government) to plan for and support AT in the province
- Engage young people as valued decision makers and planners
- Develop a strong and effective provincial skateboard association to support the sk8 movement within the province both as a "park" experience and as a mode of AT
- Build and support the growing AT network within the province through communication and networking using various tools (websites, ads on buses, other media spots, etc.)
- Develop clubs that share a vision towards improved AT in the province - Velo Halifax/ Cape Breton, hiking, cycling, Running Room, trail groups etc.
- Use events and festivals as awareness tools for public education on AT as an option to motorized travel (Trails Day, Cape Breton Hiking Festival, Commuter Challenge, Cabot Trail Relay, Bluenose International Marathon, International Walk to School Week, etc.)
- Educate and empower public and stakeholder representatives to enable them to provide input into provincial, regional, and local AT plans
- Alter school policies to allow for AT choices by student body (allowing in-line skates/ skateboards in schools, providing and maintaining supportive infrastructure like sheltered and secure bicycle parking, showers at school, etc.)
- Encourage employers to provide AT choices by staff (shower facilities, change rooms, storage units, bike racks, flextime etc.)
- Develop a provincial walking program

Is there a role here for you or your organization?

2. Knowledge

Nova Scotians should know how they can participate in AT and what resources are available. If the municipal government decides to add bike lanes to all the major roadways in their municipality, provide walker/cyclist activated crossing signals, and offer tax breaks to local companies that have bike fleets for their employees, they need to get the word out. Statistics show that in cities where governments have heavily invested in cycling infrastructure and facilities and make the effort to let the public know what is available, dramatic increases in cycling have occurred. Copenhagen, Denmark saw a 50% increase in cycling over five years after a massive campaign to educate the public and provide the appropriate resources.



Ideas to spread information, promote discussion, and create programs to influence people's attitudes and values toward Active Transportation.

- Develop an Active Transportation website to act as a portal for provincial AT information
- Promote the use of Go for Green AT resources (print materials, cd-roms, videos) within schools, workplaces, and communities
- Increase the use of local media to promote AT awareness and issues within the province
- Support the development of skate facilities and skate friendly attitudes by hosting skateboard conferences
- Educate stakeholders and the public on the benefits of AT, safety issues, design considerations, and attitude shifting by holding regular workshops
- Educate motorists, truck drivers, and off-highway vehicle users on proper “rules of the road”
- Build on programs like *Take the Roof Off Winter* (Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection and Go for Green) that promotes outdoor, physical activity in the winter and *ADAPT* (Association of Doctors for the Advancement of Physically Active Transportation) that brings awareness to the pressing health problems related to car dependency
- Promote existing programs such as *Bike Again*, dedicated to the repair and distribution of used bicycles and *Steer Clean*, encouraging people to “trade in” their old inefficient automobiles for recycling and adopt active modes of transportation
- Piggyback with other events (June is Recreation Month, Earth Day, Car Free Day, International Trails Day) to promote AT and educate the public
- Continue to develop the Nova Scotia Trail Information Project, a trails website showing the public where to engage in AT opportunities
- Continue AT related mapping projects in municipalities - cycle and trail maps
- Can you think of something else?


Could your organization help with this? Who could you partner with?

3. Choice

The array of active modes of travel needs to be enriched and made available so that transportation decisions are made on the basis of open choice. Nova Scotians need to know that travelling by AT can be convenient, safe, and affordable. This is a large commitment because it means that communities need to be re-designed for people, not just vehicles. All modes of transportation would be interconnected; facilities would be offered at destination points (bike racks, showers, change rooms); AT route maps would be widely available. In short, current transportation infrastructure would have to be overhauled to accommodate a broad spectrum of AT opportunities.



Ideas for making AT easy, safe, practical, and efficient.

- Design shared-use paths linking communities (using old rail lines works well)
 - Provide paved shoulders on highways and secondary roads for AT use
 - Design "fast lanes" for buses, taxis, car pools, and bicycles
 - Develop high speed ferries and rapid bus routes
 - Consider and plan for inter-modal support allowing seamless movement of people moving between different modes of transportation (biking to the bus which has a rack to get your bike to work)
- 
- Provide for bicycle parking (racks and designated areas) at public high density areas, transit stations, workplaces, schools, universities, recreation facilities, etc.
 - Develop signage that supports AT modes of transportation and educates users on safe travel
 - Rezone and re-design neighbourhoods to include retail areas that are within walking distance (functional mixed-use communities versus urban sprawl)
- Provide incentives to reduce parking in urban areas and use the remaining space for parks, community centres and housing
 - Clear sidewalks during winter months to allow for maximum use by residents choosing AT
 - Provide access to K-roads as a resource for AT corridor development
 - Provide appropriate lighting along AT corridors to ensure a safe transportation environment, particularly during winter months
 - Maintain public right-of-ways for future AT corridor development
 - Provide for increased development and support of existing trail networks that support active transportation
 - Include waterways as viable rights-of-way for AT use
 - Provide provincial park access during winter months for AT use
 - Are there other ways?

Do any of these ideas mesh with your mandate?

4. Commitment and Resources

All three levels of government need to be willing to work together and in conjunction with

community groups, the private sector, and not-for-profits to make the policy and legislation changes that will enable AT to grow. A good example of commitment and resources coming together is the "Rails to Trails" Policy of the Nova Scotia government, where abandoned railway corridors that link the province's communities are being converted into public recreation trails. Municipalities and community groups are encouraged to develop and manage the trails and the provincial government financially supports them.

Dedicated funding and in-kind donations, in addition to the changes to policy and legislation, is essential for sustained change to occur. The Canadian gas tax is an example of money that could be used towards growing AT infrastructure.



Ideas to engage partners and secure commitment

- Examine other legislation supportive of AT (other provinces, other countries, etc.)
- Identify traditional and unique sources of expertise, funding, equipment, resources, and land to support the AT movement
- Access AT studies through Environics/Canadian Fitness and Leisure Research Institute
- Determine the true value of AT in Nova Scotia through the Genuine Progress Index (GPI) Atlantic
- Identify rural issues and solutions to AT
- Develop an AT guide for developers to educate and encourage residential planning conducive to AT
- Compile a literature review for AT (summary of available research)
- Compile best practices focusing on safety
- Compile *Benefits of AT* piece to educate stakeholders and public
- Distribute Go for Green's *Business Case for AT* (list of economic benefits)
- Distribute child and youth friendly AT guidelines for Nova Scotia
- Promote AT among corporate sector/ businesses in order to gain support
- Engage relevant not-for-profit organizations as supporters of the AT movement
- Engage the education system as active supporters of AT within their jurisdictions (develop supportive policy, physical infrastructure, curriculum development etc.)
- Engage the health system as active supporters of AT within their jurisdictions (Community Health Boards, District Health Authorities) through the public promotion of the health benefits of AT, development of supportive policy work, lobbying etc.
- Any other ideas?

Is there work that you could do to move things along?



Ideas for comprehensive, sustained, and effective policies that support Active

Transportation

- Encourage Transport Canada to lead a national AT strategy and to increase funding to AT projects
- Revise the *Nova Scotia Trails Act* to better represents the current climate (community trail development) and support AT development
- Enhance the AT presence in the “Active Community Environments” component of the *Nova Scotia Active Kids Healthy Kids Strategy*
- Ensure AT is part of other relevant strategies and planning processes (Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy, Active Kids Healthy Kids, NS Active Healthy Living Framework, HRM Regional Plan etc.)
- Develop municipal by-laws that better allow for increased legal participation in AT (eg: sidewalk and road by-laws that allow shared-use)
- Encourage and support municipal planning for AT
- Influence school construction guidelines to both locate schools within communities (to encourage AT choices) and to include AT related infrastructure in the design of school facilities (bike racks/ storage, sidewalks, trails/lanes etc.)
- Establish creative funding opportunities for AT projects (Infrastructure Canada funding, gas tax, etc.)
- Are there others

How do you and your organization fit in?



Conclusion

In terms of Active Transportation within Canada, Nova Scotia is ahead of the wave of change. Worldwide, however, there is much to live up to. Many other countries have advanced AT infrastructure and policy and their citizens are reaping the benefits of travelling by AT. Here's a few "good news stories" to stoke the fire.



Bogata, Columbia, with a population of 6.8 million, has developed an innovative public transit system, expanded its bike paths, and holds four car free days a year.



The Netherlands National Policy ("From Local Traffic to Pleasurable Living") promoting public transport, walking, and cycling states "Henceforth other functions will be given priority over motor traffic and the car's dominance should be diminished by deliberately increasing travel times, creating a less dense network of main roads, and by reducing speeds."



In **Austin, Texas** householders who do not own an automobile are exempt from a local transportation fee that is used to fund roads.



The City of **Portland, Oregon** recently made it legal to skate (inline or skateboard) on any street or sidewalk in the city, 24 hours a day.

So much to do, so little time. That's one way to look at it. The flip side of the coin is: "we've come along way, baby." Many hardworking people and organizations and branches of government have been working together for years to get us here. Now we need your help.

We hope that you have found nuggets of information to inspire you and ideas to spur you forward. Our province and indeed, our world, need more people, groups, and agencies to push for AT policy change, to request dedicated funding, and to make our voices heard.

Let's get moving!

Appendix I

Current Federal Government Involvement Supporting Active Transportation in Nova Scotia

Transport Canada

In 2000, Transport Canada launched an exciting funding program intended to encourage innovative and sustainable urban transportation solutions as a means to reducing green house gas emissions. Funding from the *Urban Transportation Showcase Program* was awarded to a number of cities in Canada with solid, integrated plans. Halifax was one of them.

Transport Canada and other federal government departments tabled their first two sustainable development strategies in Parliament in December 1997 and February 2001. In their third strategy, Transport Canada builds on the accomplishments and lessons learned in the first two strategies. The *Sustainable Development Strategy* brings more precision to the concept of sustainability and sets out new targets and performance measures for key sustainable transportation issues, including active transportation.

Transport Canada has also established the *Moving On Sustainable Transportation (MOST)* Program to support projects that produce the kinds of education, awareness, and analytical tools needed to make sustainable transportation a reality. Funding from this program has also supported the *Association of Doctors for the Advancement of Physically Active Transportation (ADAPT)* initiated by TRAX.

In addition to the above programs, Transport Canada also provides encouragement and support to other levels of government and organizations as they design more sustainable transportation (including AT). Examples of this include encouraging provincial AT framework development, and the sponsoring of AT workshops by the Inter-provincial Sport and Recreation Council (ISRC).

Environment Canada

The *Climate Change Action Fund (CCAF)* was established in 1998 by the federal government to help Canada meet its commitments under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Through the CCAF, the Government of Canada took concrete and immediate steps to engage governments, businesses, communities and individual Canadians to address climate change. Various projects and programs involving AT solutions to climate change were and continue to be supported by the CCAF.

Environment Canada also provides support to the *Commuter Challenge Program*, administered by Go for Green. The Commuter Challenge is a national program that aims to increase the awareness of the benefits of sustainable commuting. It encourages Canadians to take action by walking, cycling, taking transit, carpooling or tele-working instead of driving alone to get to work.

EcoAction is an Environment Canada program, providing financial support to community groups for action-oriented projects that have measurable, positive impacts on the environment. Non-

profit groups are welcome to apply for projects that address Environment Canada's priority issues: Clean Air and Climate Change, Clean Water and Nature.

In addition to the above, Environment Canada walks the talk by encouraging its employees to use active modes of transportation.

Examples of other Federal and National Initiatives:

- The **Coalition for Active Living Plan** advocates for public policies that support physical activity in Canada, including AT. The *Pan Canadian Physical Activity Strategy* is one example of this by supporting increased physical activity and creating sustainable long-term change in the health of Canadians.
- The **Public Health Agency of Canada** (formerly part of Health Canada) provides funding to key National organizations and programs such as Go for Green, and are working closely with the Inter-provincial Sport and Recreation Council (ISRC) to further the AT agenda in provinces and territories.
- **Environment Canada** supports the Climate Change Action Fund and Commuter Challenge program which encourage and support public education efforts around AT
- **Infrastructure Canada** supports municipal infrastructure development (such as bike lanes) using a three-way funding partnership (municipal/ provincial/ federal).
- **Katimavik** has a history of supporting trail development through service by program participants. The Atlantic, regional office is now located in Halifax.
- The **Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency** (ACOA) has been a long-time funder of trails, both in their development and promotion (eg: Guysborough County, Lunenburg Co., HRM, Clare).
- **Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation** (ECBC) supported the development of the Trails for Tourism Strategy and are currently supporting the Cape Breton Island Pathways Association, which is the coordinating body for trail development and marketing on Cape Breton Island.
- The **Department of National Defence** (DND) initiated the Bridges for Canada program to celebrate 100 years of army engineering in Canada. They have provided skilled labour to trail groups for the building of large and often expensive trail bridges (39 completed in Nova Scotia with another 20 being reviewed).
- **Service Canada** (formerly Human Resources & Skills Development Canada) has been the largest serving federal government agency supporting the trail movement in Nova Scotia by funding much of the human resources needed to build trail and AT opportunities.

- **Parks Canada** has been a long-time provider of AT opportunities (hiking, biking, canoeing, kayaking) through its many trail initiatives.
- The **Inter-provincial Sport and Recreation Council**, represented by all provinces and territories, have included AT within their work-plan for upcoming years.
- **Sport Canada**, through a bi-lateral agreement with the province, has positioned a Sport Animator in each school board to help increase physical activity among youth.
- **Natural Resources Canada** is a potential partner in furthering AT through its ongoing interest in addressing non-renewable energy and air quality issues.
- **Canadian Mortgage and Housing (CMHC)** is supportive of housing development that supports AT.
- **Agriculture Canada** has a rural development program which may be accessible to groups developing AT related infrastructure in rural communities.

Appendix II

Current Provincial Government Involvement Supporting Active Transportation in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection

Over the last decade, the NS Department of Health Promotion and Protection (HPP) has both supported and been actively involved in the area of AT in Nova Scotia. By supporting trail development in the province, infrastructure now exists that allows citizens to choose active modes of transportation over motorized use. As well, HPP's focus on physical activity, sport and recreation, enables AT to take a place in the promotion of active lifestyles.

HPP directly funds projects that support AT (eg. Recreation Facility Development Program, the Planning Assistance Program, the Community Recreation Capital Grant Program, the Active Kids/Healthy Kids Strategy, and other special project funding). These programs develop the needed infrastructure and effective planning processes that enable AT to grow and support provincial organizations like Bicycle Nova Scotia, N.S. Trails Federation, Canoe/ Kayak N.S., Cross-country Ski N.S., Recreation Facilities Association of N.S., Recreation Nova Scotia, and others.

HPP also acts as a link to other government departments for community groups and municipalities that are working on AT related initiatives. The facilitation of these lines of communication is key to the development of effective and healthy partnerships between community and government. In this role, HPP staff have developed a level of expertise as facilitators and coordinators, with an accumulation of AT specific knowledge that is often accessed by groups, organizations, and other government departments.

HPP also employs a Go for Green Consultant who acts as a link to this national organization that promotes AT through the sharing of up-to-date research and best practices in the movement. In addition, in partnership with the Ecology Action Center, HPP, through Active Kids/ Healthy Kids, facilitates the delivery of the national Active and Safe Routes to School program in Nova Scotia (a Go for Green program) through the provision of a provincial staff person who coordinates the program.

Sharing of information and resources is an important part of what HPP does. Examples include: the NS Trail Information Project website, the Developing Recreational Trails in Nova Scotia manual, the delivery and co-delivery of provincial and regional AT/ trail workshops and conferences, in addition to the information contained on their own website.

Finally HPP has been instrumental in the development of effective policy and legislation that supports AT. Good examples of this are the provincial Rails to Trails Policy introduced in 1997, which allows for the conversion of abandoned rail-beds to recreational trails, and the liability insurance program for community trail groups in 2005.

Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for management of crown lands in the province, including provincial parks (but excluding wilderness areas), which are a valuable resource for the development of AT opportunities. Over the past decade, DNR's role has been instrumental in bringing the provincial abandoned rail corridors and other important areas (such as Cape Split) into public ownership. Without this resource, AT infrastructure development would be facing significant challenges.

Many DNR staff are trained and experienced in trail and park development. Staff are often available to help with everything from the accessing of public lands to the actual planning of a trail corridor. They have also lent their expertise to the development of supportive legislation and policy.

In addition, DNR has the role of promoting the use of provincial parks and other crown lands. This use is not limited to the "on" season. Our provincial parks act as outdoor playgrounds throughout the year with access permitted and encouraged during the winter months.

Examples of other provincial government involvement and initiatives:

- The **Active Kids Healthy Kids Strategy** has provided ongoing funding for the Active and Safe Routes to School Program (in Nova Scotia) offered through the Ecology Action Center, and supports other AT related initiatives such as skateboarding/ BMX biking through the Active Community Environments component of the Strategy.
- The **Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy** has identified active transportation as a key element to furthering the physical activity agenda.
- The **Take The Roof Off Winter** program, delivered in partnership with Recreation Nova Scotia, the Recreation Facility Association of N.S., Go for Green, and Cross-country Ski N.S., promotes spontaneous, outdoor activity in winter. Winter AT is promoted throughout program messaging.
- The **Motor Vehicle Act** legislates that all users of bicycles, skateboards, scooters, and in-line skates must wear a helmet at all times. It also allows a sidewalk to be designated as a trail allowing a wide variety human-powered use.
- **N.S. Off Highway Vehicle Action Plan** states that an interconnected, provincial network of OHV trails and a park system will be created. Much of this system will be available for AT uses.
- The **Occupiers Liability Act** reduces the duty of care owed to trail users by occupiers of land who have trails on their property.

- The **Volunteer Protection Act** has elements that protect volunteers who develop or maintain trail/AT opportunities.
- The **Rails to Trails Policy** for Nova Scotia encourages the acquisition and development of abandoned rail corridors as shared-use trails.
- The **Seniors Secretariat** has developed a Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia, which recommends improvements to the transportation environment and the expansion of safe AT opportunities for seniors (sidewalks, trails, and benches).
- The **N.S. Department of Environment and Labor**, through its Protected Areas Branch, supports the use of AT (eg: canoeing, hiking, snowshoeing) within all of its 33 protected areas. Environment and Labor's Youth Conservation Corps has also played a role in trail development and the promotion of AT opportunities.
- The **N.S. Department of Energy** is very interested in the conservation of non-renewable energy (fossil fuels) and has a history of supporting TRAX initiatives by providing ongoing operational funding and sitting on their Transportation Advisory Committee.
- **Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations** partners with Health Promotion and Protection in supporting the trail movement through the provision of mapping, planning, and promotion. They also provide for the provincial roll-out of the Infrastructure Fund and federal gas-tax dollars; funding available for investment in environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure.
- The **N.S. Department of Justice** is responsible for the Volunteer Protection Act, Occupiers Liability Act, and has key links to provincial and municipal policing.
- The **N.S. Department of Education** has shown ongoing support for the Active and Safe Routes to School program in N.S. and the creation of other active community environments
- The **N.S. Department of Transportation and Public Works (DOTPW)** manages many highway rights-of-way and k-class roads (abandoned public roads) that are becoming a vital part of an AT/trail network. They also provide over or underpasses for trail networks (abandoned rail corridors) when new highway construction is undertaken. DOTPW is also the architect of the provincial trail insurance program administered through the N.S. Trails Federation.
- The **N.S. Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage** has been a long-time partner in the trail and AT movement through funding (mainly through the Economic Diversification Agreement but also through other mechanisms), provision of expertise, and marketing.

- The **N.S. Department of Agriculture and Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture** could play a significant role in providing walking/cycling opportunities through its affiliation with the Marsh Bodies who manage dyke-land in specific areas of the province.
- The **N.S. Office of Economic Development** coordinates the Partners in Growth Fund with Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC) and are also a trail development partner with community trail groups.
- The **Emergency Measures Organization** plans to apply the civic address initiative to long distance trails thus improving emergency response efficiency.

Appendix III

Current Municipal Government Involvement Supportive of Active Transportation In Nova Scotia

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM)

HRM's Active Transportation Plan is still being developed, but its vision is an exciting one: "to create a well-connected, safe and functional active transportation network, which will take into account all origin and destination trips, utilizing non-motorized modes of transportation." To date, a number of exciting things have already happened. A "Blueprint for a Bicycle-Friendly HRM" was developed, bike route mapping was completed and published, a "share the road" program was implemented, various AT/ trail workshops were delivered, and the Halifax Regional Trails Advisory team (HRTAT) was established to foster the development of recreational trails in HRM. Many areas of HRM also employ a Trail Coordinator to boost the development of recreational trails in their areas.

HRM continues to be committed to the establishment of needed infrastructure to support AT and its integration with other sustainable modes of transportation. The pedestrian and bike lanes on the MacDonald Bridge, bike racks on Metro Transit buses, and bike lockers at bus terminals are some examples that illustrate this commitment. HRM staff are also involved and supportive of AT related special events and initiatives such as Bike Week, and "street openings" - events that are key in the promotion of AT as a viable choice for HRM residents.

Annapolis County

There's a lot going on in Annapolis County. In the summer of 2005, a cycling guide entitled *Bicycling Annapolis County* was released, outlining attractive and bicycle friendly routes. The publication is compact and easy to read and in addition to outlining services and attractions along the routes, it also provides bicycle safety tips, the province's bicycle laws, and other helpful information.

Also in Annapolis County, "Club 400 – The Order of Active Living" was recently launched. It's a cooperative project of the Town of Annapolis Royal, the Town of Middleton, the County of Annapolis, and the Town of Bridgetown. The program provides opportunities and incentives to promote active living in the county. AT messaging is included in the program. (<http://www.annapoliscounty.ns.ca/club400/index.html>)

Annapolis County has also published "Canoe Annapolis County", a paddling guide to the counties waterways (<http://www.annapoliscounty.ns.ca/rec/canoe.htm>). A number of walking and hiking trails throughout the county have also been created.

Colchester County

The people of Colchester County worked diligently over a number of years to develop a trail system that is now regularly used by residents. In fact, the municipality has demonstrated a commitment to further development of their trail network by pitching in \$1,000,000 over 5 years for that purpose. The county also has a dedicated Trail and Open Space Coordinator on staff to work with volunteer groups. The Warden's Walk Program is a project that the County has in place to promote trail use and AT in general. Participants register for the program and receive information and incentives for walking in the County.

Examples of other municipal involvement:

- The **Cape Breton Regional Municipality** has established an AT committee consisting of municipal and non-government parties.
- **Pictou County**, through the Pictou County Development Agency, is looking at connecting many of the Towns and major employers through an AT corridor.
- **Lunenburg/Queens Counties** have developed a canoe route guide to encourage both local and visitor use of it's many waterways.
- **Lunenburg County** has hired a Trail and Open Space Coordinator to work with more than 80 volunteers who are providing shared-use trail opportunities that connect Towns and Villages.
- The **Chester Municipality** has developed Chester Connector Trail and currently has a Parks and Open Space Coordinator on staff.
- **Towns of Kentville, Bridgewater, Pictou, New Glasgow and Lunenburg** have all developed rail-trails for AT uses (Pictou's is even paved).
- **Bridgewater** has started an AT committee and is in the early stages of developing an AT Plan.