

RURAL TRANSPORTATION SERIES

No. 2



Rural Youth and Mobility: An Emerging Rural Transportation Issue

*Let's Get Moving!
Focus Groups with Rural Youth in Ontario*

A report sponsored by the Sustainable Rural Communities Research Program,
(University of Guelph-OMAFRA); and the Canadian Rural Partnership, Government
of Canada

By

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PREFACE TO THE SERIES

This is the second in a series of reports on research undertaken on rural transportation in Ontario, 1998 – 2001.

The **second report** is based on an examination of rural youth and their mobility problems. Young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are almost invariably transportation-disadvantaged, especially those in rural locations outside of towns. Obtaining a sense of the dimensions of the problem is the main purpose of this scan. Using the voices of the rural youth themselves seems an obvious place to start, given the lack of research on this group in society. A report specifically on detailed community approaches to local transportation services will conclude this series

Report number one concerns rural community experience with the Community Transportation Action Program (CTAP), a provincial initiative to stimulate greater coordination of local transportation services. **Report number three** is a first look at rural roads and their future given the changes in municipal restructuring, and the “export” nature of the rural economy. **Report number four** is based on an examination of elderly and individuals with disabilities living in rural areas and their mobility problems. Information is drawn from the literature and from comparative studies.

At the small community level, rural transportation is almost entirely dependent upon the automobile. Apart from inter-city buses, there is no public transportation in small town Canada. We may assume that those with access to an automobile are able to get around. In this research, those without regular access to transportation are considered potentially to be “transportation disadvantaged.” This includes the elderly, rural youth, and the mobility challenged.

Getting around in rural areas is essential for most people’s needs. Mobility governs access to jobs and services as well as to social and recreational activities. To a large extent, the economy, as well as civil society, is dependent upon transportation of one kind or another. Therefore, the provision and maintenance of transportation infrastructure is of prime importance in rural areas and this includes roads, bridges and soft infrastructure such as regulation (insurance and policing). Transportation thus involves a complex set of interconnected parts and requires a good deal of planning and servicing to remain effective and efficient.

It is surprising therefore, that very little research attention has been paid to rural transportation issues in the 20 years preceding the end of the 20th century, at least in Ontario. This research series is designed as a scan of transportation conditions in rural areas of the province and is intended to provide information on some of the key issues and servicing problems facing governments, organizations and rural citizens.

Tony Fuller
Guelph

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was sponsored in large part, by the Rural Secretariat at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The fact that rural youths are a “vulnerable” group in regards to transportation and personal mobility was discovered through the SRC sponsored research on The Community Transportation Action Program (CTAP). The SRC program also supported this research on rural youth and their transportation problems. The research was undertaken in the field by Marni Herold and Kathy Kaye, graduates of the School of Rural Planning and Development at the University of Guelph. As a scan of rural youth perspectives, this research is a start in understanding this issue and is a testimony to the hard work and commitment of those involved.

Tony Fuller
SRC Research Program Director
Guelph, January 2001

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between May and August 2000, a research study was conducted on youth transportation issues in rural Ontario. A series of nine focus groups were conducted in various small towns across the province. Additional information was gathered from a short survey, a literature review and website postings from youth on the Internet.

The literature revealed that there are several factors that affect the ability of young people to access transportation in rural areas. There is a high dependency on single occupant vehicles (SOV's) in rural areas and many young people do not have access to their own vehicle or the family vehicle, or they do not have their driver's license. In relation to this point, the Graduated License System (GLS) is a factor that limits rural youth more directly because of the restrictions in usage and the length of time required to obtain a full license. This is particularly harsh on rural youth. There is also the issue around the lack of public transportation, which in turn limits mobility for many rural citizens, including young people. This relates to the urban bias in the development of transportation services that frequently affects rural citizens in a negative way.

Nearly 80 rural youth participated in the nine focus groups that were held in rural areas throughout various regions of Ontario. These areas include: Bracebridge, Barry's Bay, Durham, Manitoulin Island (Sheguiandah), Paris, Strathroy, Tweed, Winchester, and Woolwich. The participants were all between the ages of 15 and 24 and this age group was chosen based on the United Nations definition of youth.

The focus group sessions were entitled "Let's Get Moving" and the design was based on the "Community Action Planning Kit" that was developed by Wayne Caldwell. The focus group method consisted of a series of four questions that led to discussions by the youth about their transportation needs and possible solutions. They discussed ideas both as a whole and in small working groups to identify and develop ideas on how to address their transportation needs.

Main findings from this research study came out of the "Let's Get Moving" focus group discussions. The four common transportation issues for rural youth are:

- The rural nature of transportation issues in terms of the distance that must be traveled in order to get to desired destinations
- Financial aspects/expense of transportation
- Access to rides
- Weather conditions

Typical weekly activities that require transportation for young people include social activities, friends and jobs, and the most common modes of transportation to get to these activities were driving, getting a ride or using a bicycle. Activities that were considered to present transportation challenges were getting to social activities, to visit friends and to attend sports/recreation events. Overall, the three main mobility

challenges related to expensive prices for gas, lack of public transportation and not having access to a ride.

Youth solutions to mobility issues included implementing regular bus services, purchasing vehicles, easing the difficulties in obtaining a license, increasing car-pooling networks, adding more trails for cyclists, and increasing parent cooperation. When these issues were discussed further in small groups, the findings resulted in the following areas that could be considered further:

- Car-pooling/network of drivers/car coops
- Use already existing services (buses to special events/school buses)
- Form partnerships with organizations and businesses to increase access
- Improve bike safety standards and increase bike paths
- Modifications to the GLS in rural areas
- Increase the number of emergency pay phones

Therefore, young people in rural areas recognize that they have certain challenges with respect to transportation, and they have creative solutions to these challenges. The rural nature of transportation in itself can be a challenge, but for younger people, it can be especially trying. Many of the suggestions put forward by the youth participants could be implemented easily, or could build upon existing resources. Further attention is needed on this topic in order to address more accurately the issues that are facing the rural youth of today.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In discussions of rural Ontario issues, the problematic nature of community transportation is repeatedly interwoven no matter what the topic. Transportation has been recognized as a pressing issue related to municipal restructuring, family violence, school closures, and health-care restructuring, to name but a few. The lack of transportation options in rural areas is not a new realization. However, in the past the majority of rural transportation research has focused mainly on the needs of the elderly population (Cutler and Coward, 1992; Hodge, 1989; Joseph and Fuller, 1991; McCulloch and Kivett, 1995). Recently there has been increased attention paid to the problems of rural youth. Youth transportation has been identified as a problematic issue by rural youth themselves.

There are two benefits of improving transportation conditions for rural youth: i) improving their **sense of well-being** as equal members of Canadian society, and ii) increasing the chances of **retaining a younger population** for future rural community development. The out-migration of youth (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1998) combined with the growing proportion of rural elderly who plan to age in place (Stommes, 1990), emphasizes the need to address issues of rural youth today. Rural communities require ongoing involvement from all age groups in order to maintain a healthy demographic structure.

The trend to centralize social services in urban areas continues. This is also true of entertainment and recreational facilities. By comparing the ease of access to opportunities with urban counterparts, it is not a surprise that many rural youth chose to move to cities for a perceived better quality of life. If rural youth are able to easily access the services that are already available, either in their own rural area or a nearby urban centre, they would choose to continue their residency in the rural context. This, in turn, will support the future of their communities. Challenges that young people experience in participating in surrounding area activities involve the graduated licensing program (which appears to disproportionately affect rural youth), the quality of roads (especially in Northern areas), and the need for transportation relief for those youth who are trying to establish themselves in the workplace (Ramsey, Alderman, Shaw, and Lapensee, 1998). Centralization of services, the dependence on the personal automobile (Farrington, Gray, and Martin, 1997), the decline of agriculturally related jobs (Green and Meyer, 1997), and the increased knowledge of cultures and opportunities outside of their immediate surroundings due to increased technology (Borich, 1992; Stabler, 1992), are factors that have resulted in both a perceived and actual need to be mobile in order to survive and prosper in today's society (Farrington, Gray, and Martin, 1997). These issues all relate to the increased cost of transportation primarily to obtain employment and access education.

The combination of a lack of research pertaining to rural youth transportation issues, and an increased focus on the youth population of today, has sparked the need for this research. It is evident that increased attention must be paid to the needs and ideas of Ontario's youth in order to shape future research enquiry and policy actions.

A proposal to investigate rural youth transportation issues was forwarded to the *Sustainable Rural Communities Research Program (SRC)*, a partnership of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the University of Guelph (OMAFRA), and to the Rural Secretariat. This project is one section of a three-part scan of rural transportation issues in Ontario. The proposal outlined the use of the triangulation method of research, through data collected by surveys, focus groups, and webpage discussions.

1.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

To assess the *issues* that rural youth are facing regarding rural transportation in a North American context by means of a comparative literature review.

To determine the transportation *issues* experienced by the rural youth in Ontario by means of nine focus groups, youth surveys, and website postings.

To determine the *extent* of the transportation concerns of Ontario's rural youth population by means of focus groups, surveys, and discussion questions posted on an Internet website.

To identify potential *solutions* to the concerns identified by youth about rural transportation.

To devise a methodology and transfer plan to promote community awareness of the rural youth voice regarding transportation in rural areas.

With these objectives in mind, two graduates of School of Rural Planning and Development were commissioned to complete the study and write up this report.

1.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The minimal literature and research studies focusing on rural youth transportation issues resulted in a lack of background information and methodologies upon which to build this study. Limitations of this study, which may benefit future research in this area, include:

The study focus groups were held in the English language only. This may have resulted in a lack of representation of youth across Ontario, particularly in the Northern and Eastern parts of the province. However, due to funding restraints, this barrier could not be overcome in this study.

The far northern regions of Ontario were not addressed by this study. Again, funding was an issue.

The focus group method of data collection may have skewed the results of this study.

Requiring the youth to travel distances to attend the focus groups, which was not a familiar format to all participants, may have resulted in the attendance of only those who were able to access transportation modes. This, in turn, may have resulted in a lack of representation from

those youth who may face severe transportation problems. In order to minimize this bias, funding was made available for the youth to attend the focus groups if it was needed. In addition, the first question of the focus group asked the participants to think about transportation issues that were faced by young people in their area. This was an attempt to acquire information about participants who might not have been able to attend the focus group itself.

Timing was an issue with holding the focus groups in the summer months. This is often a time when young people are working at part-time summer, full-time, or farm employment, as well as participating in various sports activities. Attendance at the focus groups may have been higher if the groups were held at a different time of year, or during school hours.

This project was undertaken over a five-month period from May to September 2000. Material for the literature review was collected and revised during May and June. Initial contacts with key informants were made and the focus group packages were developed during this time. The focus group sessions began in the middle of July and were completed by the first week of September.

The findings from this scan of rural youth transportation issues were collected mainly through the analysis of focus groups with rural youth (15-24 years of age) in various areas of Ontario. A survey was administered, and information was gathered from a website posting with the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario (JFAO). This section will discuss the details of the data collection methods.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups were held in various areas of Ontario with the intention of gaining representation from various rural contexts. Information from these sessions was recorded and quantitatively analyzed with Quattro Pro.

It was decided that nine focus groups would be held in order to obtain a scan of rural youth issues across the province. The province was divided into four main regions: North-East, Northwest, South-East, and South-West. Locations for the focus group sessions were selected from each region. The rural areas that were selected can be seen in Table 1, and are located on a map (See Appendix A).

The focus groups sessions were titled "Let's Get Moving" and this format was developed as a tool for discussing transportation issues for young people in rural Ontario. It was based on the "Community Action Kit" that was designed by Wayne Caldwell for use in rural areas to identify important issues in communities and possible solutions for the future. The Let s Get Moving focus group format was a method for facilitating group discussions in terms of what transportation resources are used by rural youth, what limits young people from getting where they want to go, and possible solutions to transportation problems for the future. A group format was the chosen methodology in an attempt to encourage a discussion of issues and to generate new ideas for solutions (Neuman, 1994).

The researchers acted as facilitators for organizing and administering the focus groups according to a pre-determined agenda. A detailed outline of the focus group format can be found in Appendix B. Four main questions were asked and handed out to the participants on small cards. Participants recorded their answers on discussion cards that were then collected and used for group discussions. The questions that were asked are as follows:

"Think about the youth population in your area. What are some of the main problems that your peers are experiencing in terms of transportation?"

List the three most important things you typically go to in one week outside of school. (e.g. social activities, job, sports.) Describe how you get there.

List three places/activities in your area that you want to go in a week, but can t get there. Explain why you can t get there.

List three things that would make it easier for you to get where you want to go.

In terms of recruiting young people, key informants in the selected rural areas were contacted. These key informants included:

- Coordinators at District Health Councils
- Youth Workers

- Youth Counsellors
- Community Health Centre (CHC) Executive Directors
- Junior Farmers Association of Ontario
- Youth Leaders
- 4-H co-coordinators
- Heritage Centre summer students
- CCAC staff
- Teen Hospital Volunteer Coordinators
- Transportation Service Coordinators
- Community members involved with youth

The key informants were encouraged to invite a cross-section (i.e. economic status, place of residence) of rural youth to the focus groups. All of the key informants recognized the need for this research, and most were able to connect with and recruit young people in their area to participate in the Let's Get Moving focus groups. They also arranged for a time and venue for the sessions. Through this process, the researchers realized the difficulty in gathering rural young people for a focus group in the summer months. A special thanks must be given to all individuals who arranged for the discussions, as well as those who attempted to do so.

An overview of the focus group information can be seen in Table 2.1. This table outlines the community, the involved organization, geographical location, number and gender ratios of the participants, and the dates of the focus groups.

2.1.1 Recording and Analysis

Answers and ideas that came out in the discussion were recorded on flip-charts in order to promote discussion among the participants, and to add to the data collection process. Material from the discussion cards was entered into spreadsheets for quantitative analysis with Quattro Pro. General summary reports were completed immediately following the focus group and forwarded to the organizers of the group. A sample of a summary report can be seen in Appendix C.

2.1.2 The Survey

A survey was developed and distributed to participants in the focus groups. The survey related mainly to issues of employment and transportation (see appendix d). Surveys were distributed and completed by the participants in each of the focus groups.

Table 2.1: Focus Group Overview

Community	Geographical Location	Organization	Location of Focus Group	Size of Group	Male /Female Ratio	Comments	Date (2000)
Bracebridge	NE	Bracebridge United Church	Bracebridge United Church	6	3:3	Youth leader from the Bracebridge United Church Assisted in recruitment	07/11
Paris	SW	The Willett Hospital	The Willet Hospital	7	1:6	A student employed as a volunteer leader recruited the participants for the focus group	07/25
Belmont	SW	HUB	HUB			Declined	07/31
West Lorne	SW	West Elgin Community Health Centre				Canceled-Rescheduled - Canceled-not enough participants	07/31/ 08/30/
Tweed	SE	Gateway Community Health Centre	Gateway Community Health Centre	9	5:4	A university student employed at the Tweed Heritage Centre assisted in the recruitment of participants for the focus group	08/03
Sheguiandah	NW	Mnaamodzawin \ Noojmowin Teg Health Centre	Mnaamodzawin\ Noojmowin Teg Health Centre	20	10:10		08/09
Mindemoya	NW	MNDM				Canceled - not enough participants	08/10
New Liskeard	NW	Community Health Centre				Canceled - not enough participants	08/10
Parry Sound	NW	RISE				Declined	08/10
Woolwich	SW	Woolwich Community Health Centre	Woolwich Community Health Centre - St. Jacobs	13	7:6		08/14
Durham	SW	Edge-Hill Waldorf Country School	Edge-Hill Waldorf Country School	5	3:2		08/29
Strathroy	SW	Strathroy Community Resource Centre	Strathroy Community Resource Centre	6	5:1		08/30
Winchester	NE		Winchester Wesleyan Church	4	0:4	Summer student helped to organize and recruit youth	09/06
Barry's Bay	NE	Madawaska District Health Council	Madawaska High school	7	1:6		09/07

Another technique that was used to gather information was through the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario (JFAO) website (www.jfao.on.ca). This website has a discussion board titled Junior Soap-Box, where messages can be posted for discussion. The focus group questions were posted on numerous occasions, however, the response to this method was very low. Therefore, very little information was obtained through this medium.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Transportation is related to all spheres of community life. This is especially true in rural areas. Mobility enables people to access services such as health and education, provides a connection to their place of employment, and allows for participation in social activities and household provisioning. In rural areas, public transportation systems are limited and there is a reliance on the single occupant vehicle (SOV) to meet transportation needs. This aspect of the rural lifestyle needs attention in order for more equitable access to resources to be established and for the full potential of the economic system to be realized.

There are many issues that relate specifically to youth in rural areas, such as out-migration (Ramsey, et al., 1998), limited employment and educational opportunities, and inadequate access to community services (Seyfrit, 1986). Many young people seek to further their education and do not return to rural areas, which, as Seyfrit (1986) contends, is a main contributing factor to out-migration. These youth issues are all directly or indirectly related to transportation needs. In order to administer systems that allow youth to access necessary services and employment opportunities within their own area, the transportation needs of Ontario's rural young people need to be addressed.

This literature review provides a summary of the urban bias in the development of services, the current reliance on the personal automobile, definitions of youth, the graduated licencing system (GLS) and an overview of transportation needs for rural youth. The literature review provides a context for the issues to be examined in this study and provides background knowledge from previous literature on this topic. It should be noted that literature is limited on this specific topic and many of the youth issues previously identified exclude transportation as a limiting factor.

3.1 URBAN BIAS IN DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES

Many aspects of rural communities are negatively impacted by the development and implementation of programs that are based on urban models. It is difficult to compare the operation of rural transportation systems with those in urban areas, because the ways in which they operate vary greatly. This is highlighted in the following passage:

“Comparing community transit systems with traditional urban fixed-route operators is like comparing apples and oranges....because rural systems operate in a variety of different modes”

(<http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/rtap/pubs/ta/perform2.shtml>)

Several barriers and differences have been identified between urban and rural Ontario that influence youth opportunities. Rural communities differ from urban counterparts with limited or no public transportation, limited access to information technology and telecommunications, education and training programs, in different levels of municipal and educational services and facilities, seasonal employment due to the nature of primary industries and distance. More rural youth leave their home and communities than urban youth for employment reasons (Ramsey, et. al.1998).

One problem with project development is that funding support is often based on urban models. Guidelines for funding allocations are typically based on population densities, which automatically limit rural areas from gaining access to financial resources. Thus, rural areas are either excluded from receiving funding or allocated smaller amounts than urban areas. This creates challenges, as operating costs are much higher in rural areas due to increased distances. Rural communities do not have the same number of services and resources from which to draw, which limits the ability of many services to be provided at the same level as in cities. In sum, financial need does not decrease with lower populations.

Rural differences also relate to the specialized nature and criteria of many services that can limit access in a rural context due to differing needs. Connectivity between services is essential to enable people to access the services they need. Many funding sources are also often limited or based on short-term needs. This creates difficulties in program continuity, as sustainable funding is hard to find. Rural areas do not have the same resources to draw on for financial stability as urban areas. This can hinder the development or continuation of programs that are given one-time only or limited amounts of funding. Sustainability is, therefore, an issue and it has been suggested that financial support should guarantee at least five years of operation. This would enable community members to make long-term plans based on the security of services.

In addition, the rural voice is not heard as strongly because of isolation and lower population densities. This limits political pull and input in the decision making process. Thus, rural issues are not sufficiently focused on to ensure that needs are addressed. Specific areas of concern that are not as widely acknowledged, such as transportation and youth, are even more likely to be ignored and there needs to be an increased awareness of this situation in order for these needs to be properly assessed and addressed.

3.2 RELIANCE ON THE PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE

Studies have suggested that the majority of rural residents depend on and have immediate access to a personal automobile (Cullinane and Stokes, 1998; Cutler and Coward, 1992; Farrington, Gray, and Martin, 1997). However, not all of the studies have determined whether available vehicles can be operated by all individuals. These studies support the suggestion that the majority of people living in rural areas are not in need of public transportation services. It cannot simply be assumed that all rural residents will have access to a personal automobile, providing them with the freedom to obtain employment, access to health facilities, and the ability to carry out daily activities (Fraser and Fuller, 1989).

As it becomes easier for people with an accessible vehicle to be mobile, a greater division between those with cars and those without is formed. This suggests that not all Canadians are being treated equally in terms of insuring that mobility and accessibility needs are being met. The increased reliance on the personal vehicle has also allowed for the centralization of services, which makes it even harder for those who do not have access to cars, to obtain these services. For example, while many rural residents do own a vehicle, the ongoing costs of fuel,

insurance, and vehicle upkeep that is required to obtain employment and services, turns the vehicle into a financial burden, and leaves others feeling hopeless (Cullinane & Stokes, 1998).

The implications of current land use planning policies must also be considered when addressing the issue of increased reliance on the personal automobile (Kehm, 1998). The development of suburban areas, industrial zones, commercial zones, and residential zones, augments the need to rely on automobiles to carry out daily tasks such as grocery shopping, employment, recreation, and education. Because of these types of developments, it has become nearly impossible for one to rely on the bicycle, foot, or alternative modes of transport (Sewell, 1998).

The dispersed nature of populated centres makes it difficult to improve mobility and access for those without access to a car in rural areas (Cullinane and Stokes, 1998). As car ownership increases, there is less demand for public transportation and taxi services, resulting in the removal of many of these services that may have once existed in rural areas. Cullinane and Stokes (1998) explain how the 'now generation', stemming from instant access, technology and other societal factors, has helped to create a situation where people feel the need for instant gratification of their needs. In relation to the 'now generation' is the lack of ability, or lack of desire to plan for the short-term and long-term future. Not wishing to plan ahead for car-pooling, or for the use of a public transportation system, for example, attributes to the high use of single occupancy vehicle trips and difficulty in promoting public transportation solutions in rural areas. Farrington, Gray, and Martin (1997) agree by suggesting that there is a perception of the need to rely on a car, without actively considering alternative modes of transport. The attitude of car dependency will continue for future generations through the youth of today if feasible options for meeting the mobility needs of the transportation dependent are not explored.

3.3 AGE DEFINITIONS FOR YOUTH

The definition of youth varies throughout the literature. A commonly cited range is defined by the United Nations is between the ages of 15 and 24 (United Nations, www.youthweek.org/backgrounder.html). Other definitions have covered ages from as young as eight years old up to the age of forty (<http://193.43.36.44/ruralyouth/e-faqs.htm>). Many government youth programs organized through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) define youth as between ages 15 and 30. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concentrates on issues for youth between 12 and 25, but highlights the fact that organizational definitions range from 10-35.

In terms of maturity levels, age 15 has been established as the age where behaviours and thinking patterns have been adequately developed (<http://193.43.36.44/ruralyouth/e-faqs.htm>). Therefore, the United Nations definition of youth (**between 15 and 24**) was selected for the purpose of this study.

3.4 THE GRADUATED LICENSE SYSTEM (GLS)

Controversy has arisen concerning the age at which young people should be able to drive on their own. Research indicates that fatality rates are higher among drivers between the ages of

16 and 19, which has resulted in the April 1, 1994 implementation of a graduated licensing system (GLS), to address the safety issues of young drivers.

The GLS is a method for new drivers to acquire a license that involves a gradual increase in responsibility for the driver. Since it has been proven that younger drivers are at higher risk for accidents or injury, this system targets new, young drivers. It is intended to promote safe drivers and develop safe driving habits in young people as they are learning to drive.

There are two levels in the GLS that allow young drivers to acquire increased responsibility for their driving. The novice driver must follow a comprehensive set of rules at each level of G1" and G2" before they are granted a full G license. The details of the requirements for each level can be seen in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1: Requirements and Restrictions for Level G1 and G2 Licenses

G1 Requirements	G1 Restrictions
Minimum of 16 years of age	Operate only "G" class vehicles
Pass vision screening/knowledge tests	Be accompanied by fully licensed driver with minimum 4 years experience and zero BAC
Online driver's record created	Carry only same number of passengers as number of seatbelts n car
G1 time frame is 12 months (reduced to 8 months if taken certified driver's education)	Midnight to 5:00 am curfew
Pass basic on-road examination	No driving on freeways or expressways
G2 Requirements	G2 Restrictions
Successfully complete driver road test (twice as long as G1 test)	Only drive class "G" vehicles
This test also requires a much higher level of competency than the G1 test	Maintain zero BAC
	Carry only same number of passengers as number of seatbelts n car

Findings from an evaluation of the GLS by Boase and Tasca (1998) show positive results from this type of system in terms of fewer accidents. This report found that collisions were reduced by 31% per 10,000 novice drivers between 1993 and 1995. This is a significant number in terms of increased safety and level of driver expertise. Alcohol related collisions with novice drivers were reduced by 27%, night-time collisions by 61% and freeway collisions by 62%. These are directly related to the restrictions that are placed on novice drivers in terms of when and where they can drive. Table II, demonstrates these restrictions more fully.

It has been highlighted that the GLS saves lives, reduces collisions, and saves the social system \$59 million in both direct and indirect expenditures (Boase & Tasco, 1998). These expenses relate to the indirect pain, suffering and loss of income that can occur with accidents, as well as direct savings such as medical bills and property damage. The GLS has been implemented in various areas and appears to have had similar results. Therefore, there are many positive aspects of the GLS that increase driver awareness and safety.

Ramsey, et al. (1998) found that the graduated driver licenses are disproportionately affecting rural youth. This system can limit the ability of a young person to meet certain transportation needs that require nighttime or highway driving. The cost of obtaining a driver's license is also increased by this procedure, which can be difficult for many youth to afford.

It is difficult to ascertain the long-term impacts of this program, as the GLS is still relatively new. It is obvious that the two groups of people affected the most are parents and young drivers (Ramsey, et al, 1998). Research has indicated that many young people understand the intended safety benefits and reasoning behind the system but see problems with the financial expense of acquiring the license. There are some issues related to discrimination that arise with respect to the targeted nature of this licensing system, but for the most part the safety factor outweighs this concern.

3.5 TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF RURAL YOUTH

Literature on transportation supports the fact that transportation is an issue for many people who live in rural areas. Frequently, public transportation systems are not available to communities that are isolated from more urban areas, which limits choice and access. Many factors are connected to the lack of transportation. This section will outline the limiting factors that have been identified by youth, and various recommendations from previous research.

There is a lack of published information that specifically addresses rural youth transportation issues. Much of the literature that is focused on rural transportation relates to marginalized groups such as elderly people or those with low-incomes (Higgs & White, 1997). In this sense, many of the specific needs of young people are overlooked by policies and services developed to meet transportation requirements in rural communities. In addition, previous studies are limited in their ability to generalize findings due to the lack of a definition of necessary services or inconsistency among research techniques (Higgs & White, 1997).

3.5.1 Issues

Issues identified by Australian youth in earlier focus group studies concerning transportation were:

- General lack of transport
- Long distance travel required and lack of options
- High cost
- Having to rely on parents
- Hitch-hiking as a dangerous form of transport
- Behaviour of some young people on public transport
- Low road standards
- Need for more appropriate travel times
- Enabling school bus services to include non-students
- Lack of public transport links from one rural centre to another
- Restrictive driving age
- Cost of gas and insurance

(<http://www.tased.edu.au/youthaff/rireport/iitr.htm>)

Various parts of the country can present additional challenges in terms of weather and road conditions, especially in Northern areas where weather conditions can affect driving ability on a regular basis. In addition, rural residents face greater distances for travel, transportation options are less varied and the quality of the highway system is lower (Ramsey, et. al, 1998). Since young people have limited access to transportation to begin with, inclement weather can pose additional problems.

With respect to transportation limitations, distance and time are also linked to this concern (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1998). A lack of financial resources limits rural communities in addressing their transportation needs. In relation to young people, this concern is increased because of the distance and time that is required to travel to employment, which can increase their reliance on inadequate means of transportation.

Gender is another aspect in the literature that is frequently ignored. Young women in Australia felt especially isolated in rural areas where they claimed that there was nothing to do, and there was a feeling that young men met more frequently because sports events were attended on a more regular basis (<http://www.csu.edu.au/research/crsr/ruralsoc/v2n3p4.htm>). Therefore, gender may further limit the mobility of some young people.

On the other hand, one study found that disadvantaged rural youth in Australia had virtually no means of attending local sporting events. Studies on youth activities suggest that youth prefer active team sports (football, volleyball and softball) and swimming (Savage & Scott, 1997). Transportation is an issue for attending such activities and can influence the ability of youth to participate in extra curricular activities. Youth may therefore have difficulty being involved with certain activities due to a lack of transportation. Many youth drift into

nightclubs or local drinking establishments for entertainment due to a lack of choice in activities to attend. Rural youth are in danger of becoming involved in high-risk behaviours if they are unable to access a full range of activities.

Finances are a problem for young people as well, because many activities are not within their financial means. There is generally a lack of activities in close proximity to youth in rural areas, transportation costs are added to initial activity costs, which adds to the problem. Employment relates to this as well because youth need to have a source of income to participate in certain activities. However, in most cases, transportation is required, and many young people cannot afford the transportation without first having a job. This creates a problematic cycle of needing to gain employment but also needing to be mobile in order to do so.

3.6 WHY IS TRANSPORTATION NEEDED?

A study on aboriginal transportation issues found that many problems arose in connection to employment, health and education. These themes pervade much of the literature on this issue (<http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/rtap/pubs/ta/am-ind.shtml>). Studies on rural industrial development demonstrate that employment for local young people has commonly been cited as an advantage to retaining younger people in a community. Seyfrit (1986) emphasizes the need to test this as a hypothesis as opposed to treating it as an accepted truth. She found in her study that youth in rapid growth areas were no more likely to remain than youth in comparison counties. Therefore, it is difficult to suggest that there is one common solution to retaining youth in a rural area. Creating jobs is not the only mechanism involved with the retention of young people in rural Canada.

Quaglia and Perry (1995) found that young people require environments that provide purpose, enjoyment and meaning to be potentially productive. Even if activities are available to youth, these components are essential and affect the aspirations of youth in rural communities. Therefore, they have suggested that meaningful activities for youth must be created in order that they place value and meaning in their actions. Transportation then comes into play again, as access to services that will improve satisfaction levels is influenced by the ability to get to those activities.

It is more difficult for young people to own a vehicle due to their lower incomes and higher time commitments to education. Thus, access to transportation is an important service to provide for youth. Communities tend to focus on development and employment issues. There are two problems with this approach, one being that youth are typically ignored in the process and are not given a chance to voice their opinions. Many feel that they are not consulted in the process nor heard if they do speak out (<http://www.csu.edu.au/research>). Secondly, any development of services or job creation programs needs to recognize the strong impact that transportation has on success rates. In order for people to use the service, or become employed, they must be able to physically access the necessary resources.

3.7 WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Suggestions have been made to provide transportation relief to young people either through the Ontario Student Assistance Programme for students or to others who are in the process of establishing themselves in the workplace (Ramsey, et. al., 1998). This is related to the fact that it costs more to travel to work or school in rural Ontario compared to urban areas due to transportation provision.

Many transportation systems, both past and present, focus on the needs of the elderly and disabled in rural communities. These groups have legitimate concerns and special needs, but rural youth also contribute to healthy communities. For young people who may have low or unstable incomes, regular, reliable transportation can be difficult. Dependence on parents or limited access to the household vehicle can present difficulties in terms of timeliness and reliability. Addressing the specific needs of rural youth would increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs that are available and already operating.

Youth need to have access to low-cost transportation systems that allow them to access services, youth centres, entertainment, sporting facilities and other opportunities for recreational activities (www.csu.edu.au/research/crsr/ruralsoc/v3n4p9.htm). Many solutions to rural transportation problems have been identified. These include providing concessions for rural and isolated young people so that they can gain greater access, and deregulating the use of school buses to allow for shuttle bus services or the use of school buses for additional transport. Alternate forms of transport also include pick-up points for hitch-hikers, car-pool networks, and train services. There is also support for encouraging the use of roller-blades, skateboards and bicycles for local destinations. Other ideas that have been suggested to increase transportation access are linked to licensing public vehicles and extending the operating hours of private transportation service operators (www.tased.edu.au/youthaff/rireport/iitr.htm).

Flexibility is an important component of how a system operates in order to meet transportation needs effectively (<http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/ctap/pubs/commsol2.shtml>). Timesharing, ride-sharing and consolidating services are factors that improve effectiveness and partnerships with rural transportation systems. Attention also needs to be directed toward the ability of youth to access services in rural areas or for those services to reach them. Rural communities need technical and financial support to develop interactive electronic communications between collaborating agencies, to decrease time spent in transit while increasing the frequency of contact (Sheldon-Keller, et.al, 1996).

Therefore, many aspects of transportation influence rural youth and their ability to become contributing members of their communities. Access to employment opportunities and extra curricular activities are important for youth. Many suggested solutions involve integration, flexibility and services that are tailored to specifically meet the needs of youth.

4 STUDY FINDINGS

This section will discuss the overall results from the focus groups (See Appendix B), website postings, and surveys (See Appendix D). A profile of participants, and general trends in terms of main transportation issues, mobility patterns and modes of transportation are discussed. The solutions that were suggested by the youth in these groups are also summarized in this section.

4.1 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Nine “Let’s Get Moving!” focus groups were held with approximately 80 young people from rural Ontario participating in the focus groups and survey data collection. While there was representation from all of the targeted ages (15-24), the average age of the respondents was 17 (See Figure 4.1), with a nearly even split of male (46.7%) and female (53.3%) participants. The majority of the young people lived in a rural town (48.6%), while 23.6% lived on a reserve, 19.4% lived at a rural non-farm residence, and 8.3% resided on a farm (See Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.4.1: Focus Group Participants by Age

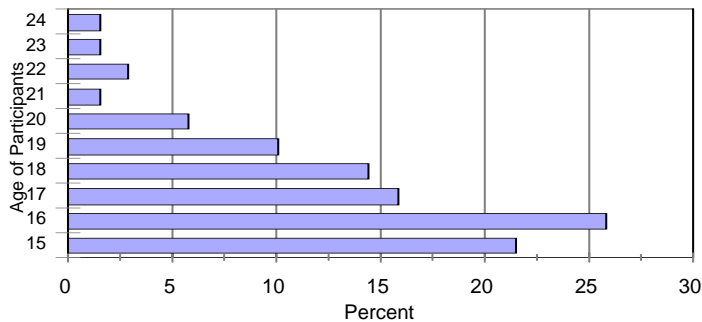
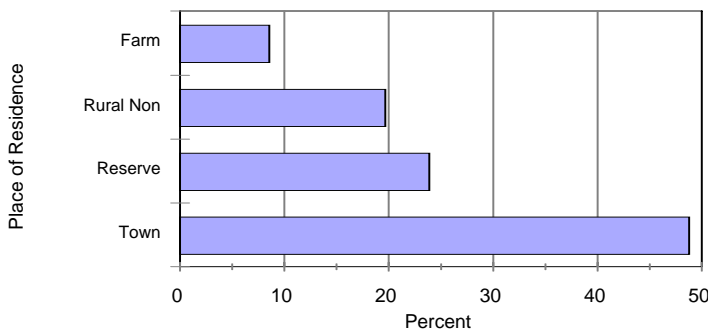


Figure 4.4.2: Focus Group Participants by Residence



Overall there was a fairly even split of participants who had some form of license and those who did not, however, there were differences among the focus groups. The Manitoulin group consisted of twice as many participants who did not have a license as those who did possess one. This was surprising because the participants in this group were generally older than other groups. Perhaps the low level of licence holders in the Manitoulin group is because licensing offices are located far from the rural youth in this area. Discussions with a key informant led to the identification of the economic situation of the area. It was stated that many of the youth came from single vehicle families, and the condition of the vehicles were often questionable. It would then make sense that the youth would not have a licence if driving a vehicle was not an option for the majority of them.

Strathroy was another group where there was an uneven split of license holders. None of the young people had a license, but this is likely due to the younger age of the group as a whole. Twice as many participants in Tweed, Winchester, Bracebridge, and Woolwich had their licences as those who did not have a licence. Overall, vehicles were owned by 13% of the study population.

4.2 WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Question 1 introduced the participants to thinking about general transportation issues for youth in rural areas. Results from this discussion can be seen in Figure 4.3. Answers were grouped into common categories leading to the three most popular answers including: **‘gas prices were too expensive’**, there was a **‘lack of public transportation’** and that they were **‘unable to get a ride’**. Other common responses from rural youth include the **graduated license system, not having a license, distance, high insurance and job issues.**

In addition to eight categories, 19 responses were classified into a category entitled “other” since these specific responses could not be grouped in with other categories. Some of these answers include issues such as ‘not enough bike trails’, ‘bikes being stolen’, ‘difficulty in hitch-hiking’, and ‘unsafe buses/school bus regulations’ etc.

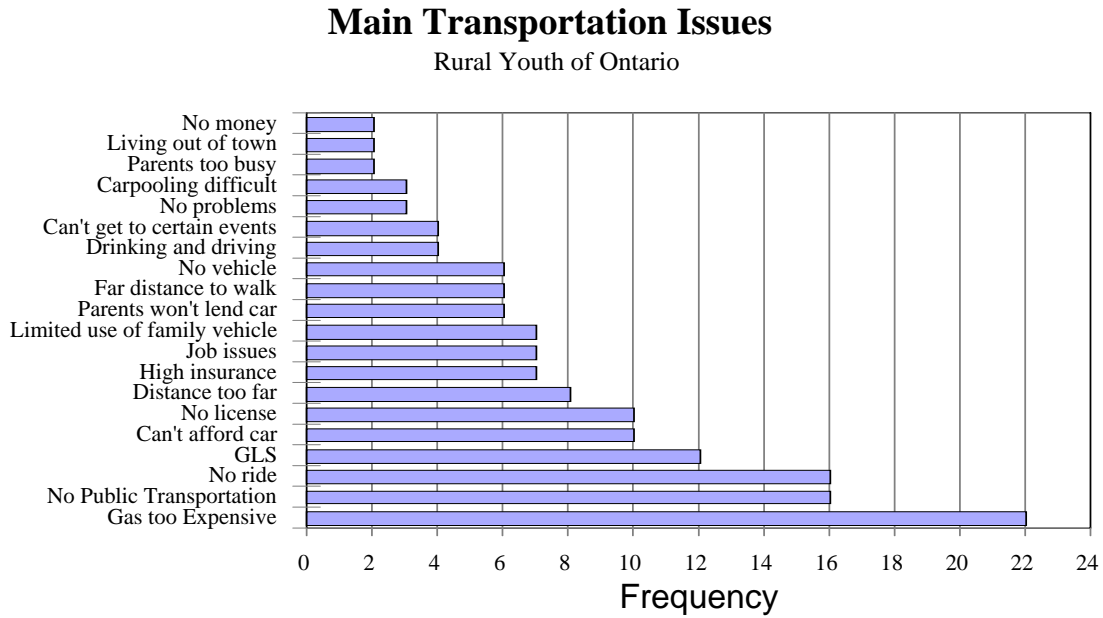
Four issues were common across the majority of groups. The issues repeatedly discussed include:

- The rural nature of transportation issues, in terms of distance that must be traveled in order to get to desired destinations
- Financial aspects/expense of transportation
- Access to rides
- Weather conditions

There were also some differences in the issues that were brought up in the groups. A challenge that was mentioned in three areas, Durham, Woolwich and Bracebridge, were the biking conditions. It was mentioned that these rural areas do not have adequate biking trails or bike lanes, and participants suggested that communities should encourage the use of a bicycle when it may be a feasible option for the youth, as well as the larger rural population. Along with problems in finding places to ride a bike, was the lack of bike racks located in these

small towns. This again may discourage people from using bicycles as a mode of transportation.

Figure 4.4.3: Main Transportation Issues

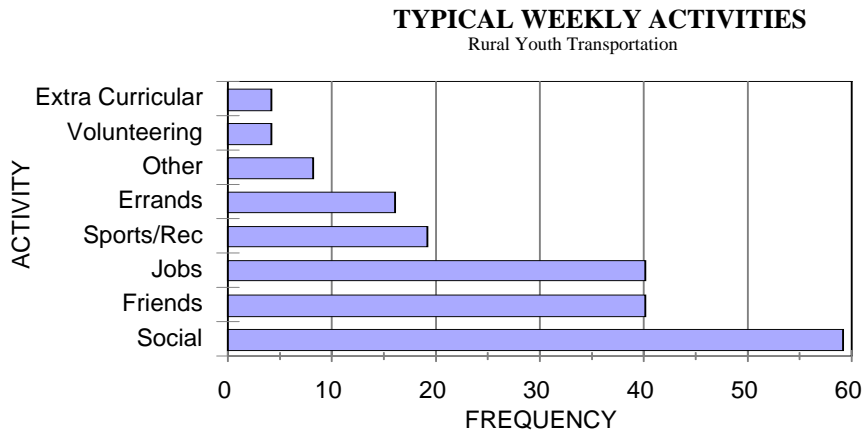


4.3 WHERE DO YOUTH GO?

The second question in the focus group sessions related to regular activities that youth participate in during the week outside of school. The most common responses for this question were related to social activities, friends and jobs. Social activities included movies, shopping, dances, parties and activities at community centres. Sports and recreation related to soccer, baseball, hockey, fishing, swimming, and horseback riding. Extra-curricular activities from this question included rehearsals, music lessons and cadets. This provided a general scan of the typical weekly activities of youth in rural areas of Ontario.

The answers from this question in the focus groups demonstrate that social activities and friends are highly important to young people and these activities are a large part of their lives. The focus group responses were similar in all of the groups. Each focus group made mention of visiting friends, while the majority mentioned social activities, and jobs. Sports and extra-curricular activities were mentioned in the majority of the groups as well including Winchester, Paris, Bracebridge, Barry's Bay, Sheguindah, Woolwich, and Durham. A 'community resource centre' was a frequent destination for the participants in the Strathroy focus group. 'Visiting family' was mentioned in Paris, Tweed, and Barry's Bay, and 'community projects/volunteering' was mentioned in Tweed and Paris only.

Figure 4.4.4: Typical Weekly Activities of Rural Youth



4.4 HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE GET TO WHERE THEY WANT TO GO?

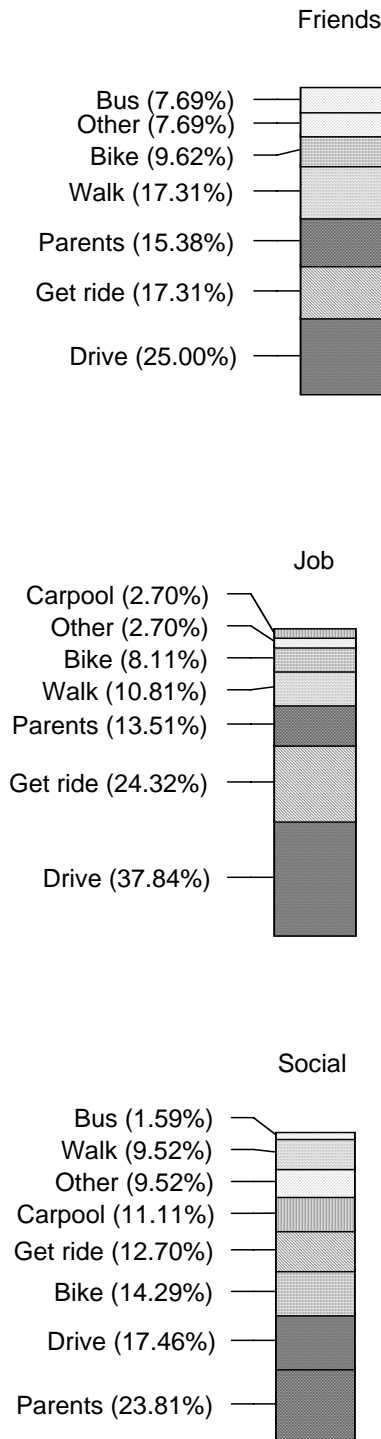
Question two of the focus group was more specific in asking the young people what activities they attend in a week, where these activities were located and how they got there. The following diagrams demonstrate the typical modes of transportation that youth utilize for the three most common activities: ‘social’, ‘friends’ and ‘job’.

In terms of how youth get around, the bar graphs in Figure 4.5 demonstrate, again, the high level of dependence on the personal automobile. The most common modes of transportation for each of these typical activities were to ‘drive themselves’, ‘get a ride’ or to ‘have a parent drive’. The majority of the answers that pertained to driving themselves involved the use of a parent-owned car. Web-site responses were similar, stating that parents had to operate as a taxi service in order to get their children to the various events and jobs in which their children were involved. Very few participants (13%) owned a vehicle. Walking and biking were other common modes of transportation and these results are consistent for small towns, villages, and rural areas where public transportation systems do not exist at all.

The ‘other’ response category for this question involves such things as roller-blades, skateboards, running, and hitch-hiking. None of the participants used public transportation for their typical weekly activities, due to the fact there are no formal transportation systems in place for any of the focus group areas. Few of the groups mentioned car-pooling, or the use of a taxi.

All of the focus groups noted that having a parent drive, getting a ride with friends or other family members, and borrowing a parent’s car helped them with their mobility needs. Walking and biking were popular methods of transportation mainly in Strathroy and Manitoulin, and were not mentioned at all in Winchester or Barry’s Bay. Strathroy and Manitoulin were the only groups reporting the use of roller-blades. Strathroy and Paris were the only places where the train was used for mobility reasons.

Figure 4.5: Mode of Transportation of Rural Youth



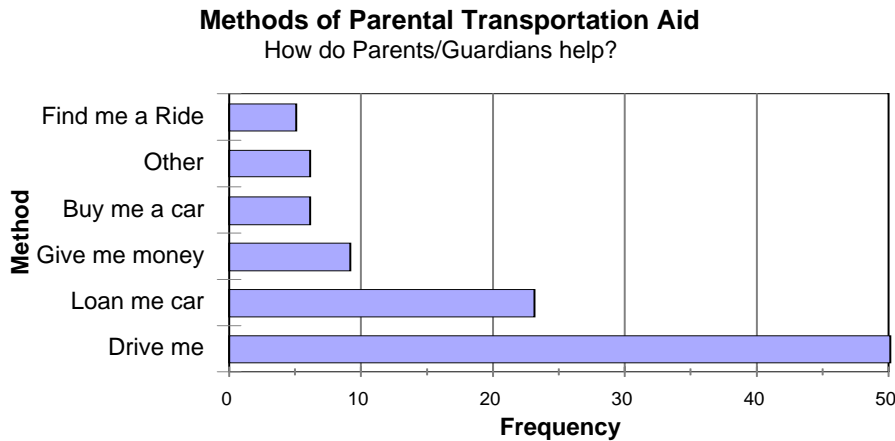
4.5 PARENTAL ASSISTANCE WITH MOBILITY

Only 2.7% of the respondents of the survey stated that their parents or guardians were never helpful in assisting them with transportation. The remaining respondents were evenly split between ‘always’ helpful (36.49%), ‘usually’ helpful (36.49%), and ‘sometimes’ helpful (24.32%) parents.

Parents appear to be equally helpful in most of the areas where the focus groups were held. While more than half of the respondents in Barry’s Bay, Tweed, and Winchester stated that they received constant support from their parents, areas where some respondents claimed that their parents were never helpful included; Woolwich, Durham, Strathroy, and Barry’s Bay. Manitoulin revealed the largest difference between the ‘levels’ of parental assistance, as more than half of the respondents stated that their parents were only ‘sometimes’ helpful.

Figure 4.6 illustrates how parents are likely to assist rural youth with their transportation needs. All of the responses, except for one (98 in total), directly related to the use of the personal automobile for mobility purposes. One young person claimed that a parent had helped them with their transportation needs by buying them a bike. Having a parent provide a ride was the most frequent type of help reported (50.5%), followed by the loaning of a car (23.2%). The ‘other’ response category includes types of assistance that were mentioned by fewer than three participants. These responses include: ‘fixing my car’, ‘supporting my interests’, ‘buying a bike’, and ‘anything’. Again, the dependence of rural youth on both their parents and the personal automobile is demonstrated.

Figure 4.4.6: Methods of Parental Assistance



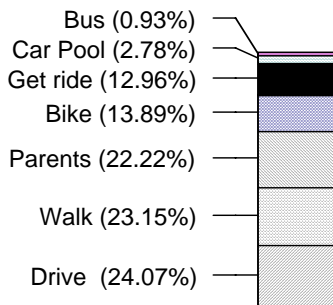
In comparing the focus groups to each other, some differences were evident. The parents in Barry’s Bay were more helpful with giving the young people gas money, more so than lending them their car or giving them a ride. In terms of providing gas money, participants in Strathroy, Manitoulin, and Bracebridge did not mention this as a form of support. The groups in Bracebridge, Strathroy, and Durham were the only groups whose participants did not have any parental support in purchasing a vehicle.

4.6 MOBILITY AND EMPLOYMENT

There is a discrepancy in the data regarding the modes of transport used by young people to access their places of employment. The survey (See Appendix D) asked the young people how they got to work, if applicable. Overall, 23.15% of the employed respondents stated that they walked to work (See Figure 4.7). However, the second focus group question (See Diagram V), asking where youth go and how they get there, resulted in only 10.81% of the working youth walking to their employment. Perhaps the difference is due to the method of data collection. Further investigation revealed that the majority of the young people from native communities walked to their places of employment, which were generally on a reserve. It was also noted that while there was room for three options on the question cards for activities and most of the First Nations groups reported only one activity. Therefore, ‘jobs’ may not have been recorded to reflect actual numbers.

Figure 4.7: Mode of Transport to Work

Mode of Transport to Work



Discussions with a key informant led to the realization that the ‘circle-type’ of gatherings were not common among the Manitoulin youth. At the same time it was expressed that the format used by the researchers was useful and beneficial for the group to hear other ideas. In sum, many of the participants may not have included ‘work’ as a regular destination on the focus group discussion cards. This discrepancy would, in turn, affect the results of the ‘mode of transportation to work’ between the focus group and survey data.

The major difference between the geographical locations of the focus groups related to how the young people got to work. As was already discussed, the Manitoulin group was more likely than the other groups to walk to work. This could be directly related to the fact that their work was a short distance from their homes.

Another group that deviated from the other group’s reliance on the personal automobile to get to work was the Strathroy group. This group noted that biking and walking were the most common way of getting to work. Again, this could be due to the short distances between home and work for these young people because most of them resided in the town Strathroy.

There were also differences between the focus group locations regarding ‘missing work’ or being late for work due to transportation problems. More than half of the Woolwich and Barry’s Bay employed respondents had faced transportation problems causing them to be late for work, while all of the employed Durham respondents had experienced the same circumstance. It did not appear that transportation was a major issue for those that needed to get to work because none of the respondents stated that they ‘always’ missed work due to transportation problems. However, 31% of the employed respondents stated that they ‘sometimes’ missed work because of problems in getting there.

4.6.1 Safety in Accessing Places of Employment

In terms of getting to their places of employment, very few of the youth (n=4) stated that they had ever felt unsafe. One participant in each of the Manitoulin and Winchester groups responded that they had felt unsafe, while two people from the Woolwich area expressed concern with the feeling of safety. These young people stated that they felt unsafe due to:

- The lack of adequate space on highways and roads for cyclists
- A fear of dogs attacking while walking and biking
- The amount of ‘drunk drivers’ in the area
- Winter driving conditions

4.6.2 Missing Job Opportunities

The answers of the respondents as a whole were quite evenly split on the question of if they had wanted a job that they could not take because of transportation problems. It is important to note that 48% of these rural youth had wanted a job that was not accessible to them because of transportation.

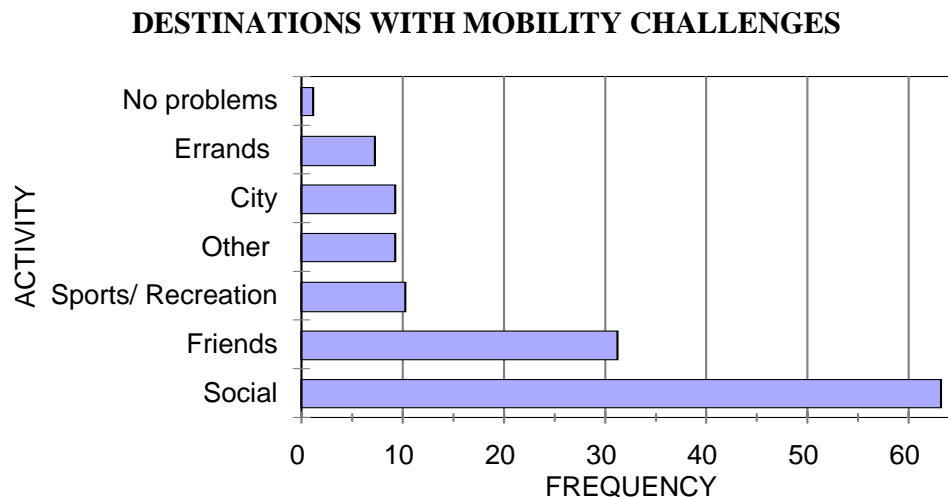
There were apparent differences across the geographic areas with respect to young people ‘missing out’ on job opportunities. While the number of respondents who stated that they had not been able to take a job because of transportation issues, and those who did not have a problem, was equal in both the Durham and Strathroy discussions. The answers in other groups were not as evenly dispersed. The rural young people in Barry’s Bay and Woolwich appeared to have more of a problem with accessing jobs that they were interested in due to transportation that was problematic. However, in areas such as Manitoulin, Paris, Tweed, Winchester and Bracebridge, more than half of the participants had not experienced problems in getting to their places of employment. As mentioned earlier, overall 48% of the respondents had faced mobility problems in accessing jobs that they would have liked to take.

4.7 WHERE WOULD YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE TO GO?

The third question in the focus group addressed the places that rural youth cannot access and the reasons for this inaccessibility. There were three parts to this question as youth were asked to indicate the activity they could not attend, the location and why they could not get there.

Figure 4.8 illustrates activities that youth are unable to attend. The most frequently missed activities involve ‘social activities’, ‘friends’ and ‘sports or recreation’. These activities are important to youth as was made evident in the responses to question number two in the focus groups. Thus, it would therefore seem reasonable that the transportation issues should be addressed. The category of ‘sports and recreation’ includes activities such as baseball, soccer, after school activities, after school practice, fishing and wilderness tours. The ‘other’ category represents responses of ‘visiting’, ‘northern Ontario’, ‘cottage’, ‘volunteering’, and ‘University’.

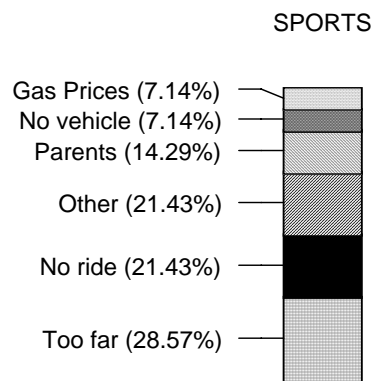
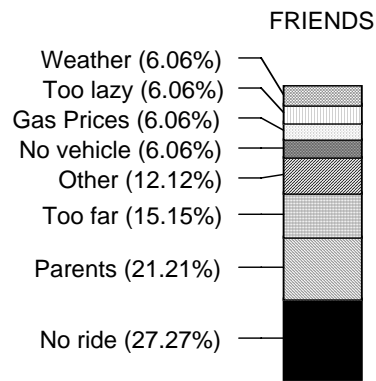
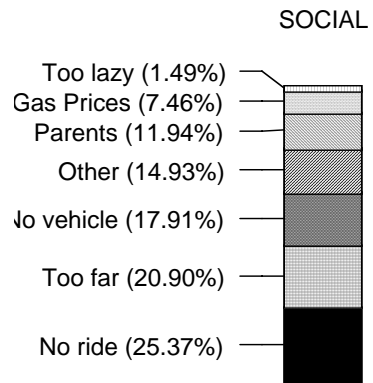
Figure 4.8: Destinations with Mobility Challenges



4.7.1 Why are Youth Unable to Reach Desired Destinations?

The graphs in Figure 4.9 indicate that the most frequent reason for youth not being able to attend important activities relate to: not having a ride, time and distance involved with getting there, and not having a vehicle.

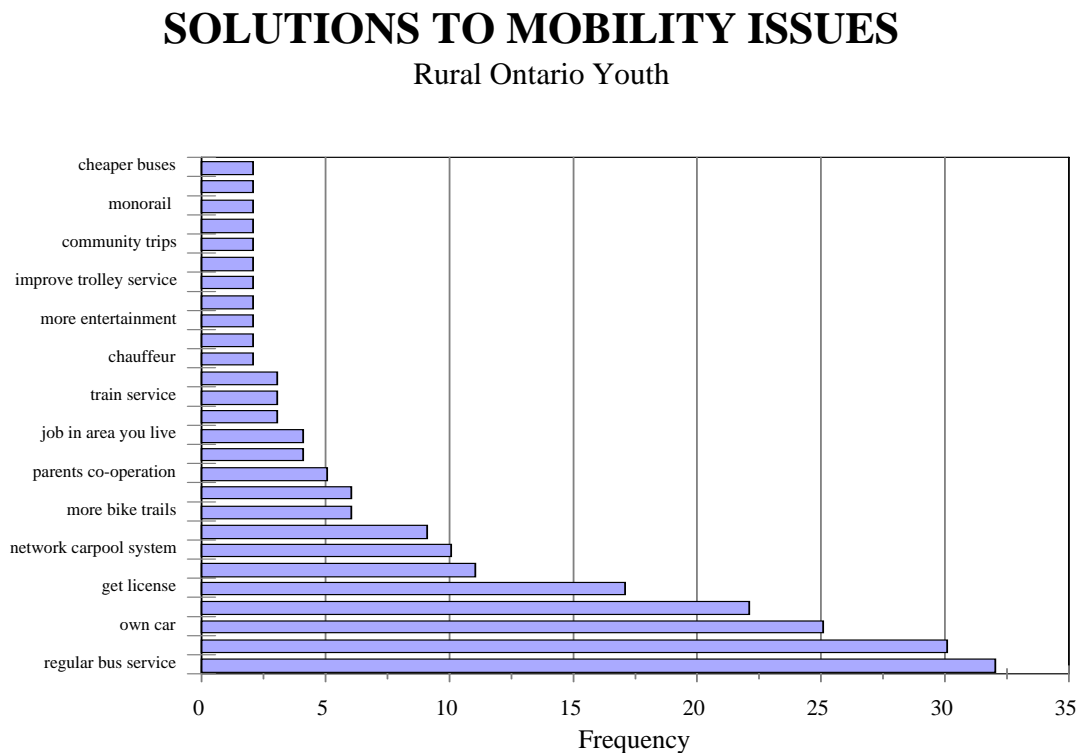
Figure 4.9: Reasons for Mobility Problems



Several similarities and differences in this question appear when the nine focus groups are compared to each other. In general, all of the groups felt that there was not a problem accessing places of employment. Given that most of the young people relied on their parents for mobility, this reveals that parents may place more importance on employment opportunities than visiting with friends, attending social events, or shopping. There were many comments in all of the focus groups stating that parents were not likely to provide transportation late at night. One common problem with the groups was the fact that the young people simply could not find a ride, or obtain access to a vehicle. One difference that was found with this question was in the town of Strathroy. This group of people claimed that there were not a lot of problems in their area in accessing resources and activities that were of interest to them.

One of the main desired destinations identified in this study was the movie theatre, which are not generally located in rural areas. However, the Strathroy group was made up of town residents who had immediate access to a movie theatre, which was one form of entertainment that did not exist in any of the other towns or rural areas that were part of this study, except Bracebridge.

Figure 4.10: Solutions to Mobility Problems



4.8 SOLUTIONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

After discussing mobility issues, activity patterns, and accessibility problems, the young people were given the opportunity to create solutions that might help to improve the mobility of their peers and themselves. Figure 4.10 represents the solutions to transportation issues that rural youth gave during the focus group sessions.

When the participants were approached with the question about solutions, there was a general sense that not a lot could, or would be done to improve the mobility of rural youth in Ontario. Some participants, including those responding on-line, stated that they simply ‘adjust their social life to what is available’. The young people appeared to take pride in their ability to be resourceful, but at the same time recognized that there were less employment, entertainment, and transportation options available to them in comparison to their urban counterparts. However, once a few ideas were proposed by the group, and the youth were given a chance to discuss ideas in small groups, feasible ideas were developed. Lists of individuals who could be approached for helping to implement such ideas were formed, payment structures were proposed, and discussions ensued over the possibilities that young people would use the proposed solutions. The following pages outline various mobility solutions that were discussed and developed by the young people who participated this study.

CREATE CAR-POOLING/NETWORK OF DRIVERS

Most of the solutions proposed by the rural young people focused on the personal automobile, again reflecting the reliance that rural areas have on this mode of transportation to meet their mobility needs. There were also many suggestions that relate to the need to organize car-pooling systems, or an easy way to access rides that may already be available. These suggestions include details for the design of a ride board that could be posted in a centralized area, such as a grocery store, and accompanied by a web site. The postings could include both regular, as well as spontaneous rides. People who did not frequent the location of the bulletin board, or have access to the Internet, could call a phone number to get information. The ride system would be membership based and both users and drivers would register to ensure safety. This would also be a method to collect money for the operation of the service. Users would pay a fee for each connection or pay money for each ride. Costs would likely vary depending on the destination.

Other groups suggested that a standard car-pool system could be set up for extra-curricular activities after school. This idea stemmed from the fact that many students who live in close proximity basically drive the same route to school each day, resulting in many single occupant vehicles traveling to the same destination.

It was felt by the young people that there were several agencies in their areas, including Community Health Centres, Community Resource Centres, and municipalities, who may be interested in helping the youth to establish such arrangements, as the services or programs may benefit the entire community. The

youth stressed that there were too many people driving on their own and that a coordinated network of drivers might be a means of sharing information about rides.

USE ALREADY EXISTING SERVICES

Two of the groups, Bracebridge and Woolwich, were aware of already existing transportation services in their communities. These services, a tourist shuttle, and a train aimed for tourist use, were thought to have the possibility of becoming a regular transportation service for the greater community. It was felt that since the service was already in operation there would not be many problems related to insurance and marketing.

FORM PARTNERSHIPS WITH ORGANIZATIONS

This idea focused on the point of view that businesses and corporations could provide transportation to and from their venues in order to increase business as well as to service a need for young people in the area. It was suggested that a 'pay as you go' fee with set pickup points would be feasible. The example was given of how "Silver City" arranges for buses to bring customers to the movies at certain times. It was suggested that speaking with companies and corporations in the private sector would be a way to address this idea. The youth participants also suggested that more businesses should come into the area to improve the economy and offer more variety for the people who live there.

IMPROVE BIKE SAFETY/BIKE PATHS

In relation to safety for people riding bikes, there was a lot of discussion on how cyclists need to have more legal rights so that they are safer on the roads. They suggested using the snowmobile trails in the summer months as bike trails, or paying compensation to farmers to have trails built on their property. There was negativity from one participant that the municipality would not pay for these ideas to be implemented, and that even if the community raised the money, the municipality would not support it. This suggests some of the obstacles that need to be addressed.

In addition to bike safety, it was suggested that there be a 'bike-sharing' option within the community. This would involve pickup and drop off points where anyone could use a bicycle to get around. Another common suggestion was the need for more bike racks in the towns. Stolen bikes were a topic of discussion among the majority of the focus groups.

LOWER GAS PRICES

Not surprisingly, there was a high frequency of suggestions revolving around the need for cheaper gas. A common suggestion for improving the mobility of youth was to have 'youth rates' for gas. The young people stated that it was a vicious cycle for them

to get around, as they generally needed to drive a vehicle or get a ride with someone else, since there were rarely public transportation options available. They felt that it was unfair that gas was so expensive, as it made it difficult to purchase a vehicle because of the high cost forced them to look for work while in the meantime they needed to be able to get to work. This was a common problem cited in all of the focus groups. It was felt that cheaper gas, combined with cheaper vehicles, and lower insurance rates, would solve many mobility problems for Ontario's rural youth. However, there were few concrete, feasible about how to implement this.

INCREASE YOUTH BUS SERVICES

Several groups suggested that a regular 'youth only' bus service was needed. The young people were aware of 'seniors only' buses in their communities, but did not feel that it would be a good idea to combine the senior and youth transportation services. Upon further discussion, it became clear that the young people did not actually feel that this was a reasonable suggestion due to the financial costs of operating such as system. Modifications to this idea included shuttle buses to be used by major employers of youth during the summer months.

DEVELOP CAR CO-OPS

An organized method of sharing vehicles would ensure that all people who required the use of a car would have access to a vehicle. The young people suggested that a member fee could be charged, as well as gas costs. At the same time, the youth realized that insurance would be a concern for this type of arrangement.

ORGANIZE SPECIAL EVENTS BUS

The idea of a youth bus was expanded upon when several of the groups suggested that simply having the option of organizing bus rides to concerts, shopping trips, or to the movies, would be a feasible starting point in improving young people's access to destinations that they wanted to reach.

USE OF SCHOOL BUSES EFFICIENTLY

Many of the youth felt that 'legalizing' the use of other buses, aside from the regular bus that students are assigned to, would make getting to their jobs and friend's houses easier. It was stressed that school buses are 'very crowded' at the present time, but better planning of the routes to accommodate extra spaces would assist in serving transportation issues of the greater community.

Increased late bus services were also suggested. Late buses are provided in limited areas to serve those students who wish to participate in extra-curricular activities at their schools. In the areas where this service was provided, the young people stated that the service was not used often because of irregular schedules, combined with the need to have additional transportation from the 'scattered' drop-off points. Late bus

routes that would continually operate, run late enough for all after school events, and have more drop-off points were noted as potential solutions.

CHANGES TO THE GRADUATED LICENSING SYSTEM (GLS)

Another popular solution to rural youth mobility issues was to revamp the GLS. All of the focus groups recognized the challenges of the length of time that young people have to wait for their testing, the distances traveled to take part in the testing, and the cost of the testing. Several groups noted that rural residents should be treated differently by the GLS, as there are not any public transportation options available to them. Others noted that youth often do not obey the restrictions that are placed on them by the GLS.

The native community in Manitoulin suggested the need for a community run driver's education program. These programs could follow provincial guidelines and standards for driving, but also allow young people to have access to locally based testing facilities.

MORE ENTERTAINMENT AND EMPLOYMENT IN RURAL AREAS

The majority of the activities that the youth wish to attend are located outside of their town or rural area. The youth felt that if there were more things for them to do in their own area, or if there was a youth centre, they would not have to go to other places. Therefore, this would decrease mobility problems by increasing accessibility to sources of entertainment.

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF EMERGENCY PAY PHONES

This idea was discussed in the Manitoulin Island focus group, as it was felt that there was a lack of available telephones. Installing more phones at strategic points would enable the youth to phone for rides or taxis, or call if they needed any type of assistance.

5 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This section will examine the overall trends in youth transportation issues. These trends relate to the high use of the personal automobile, the high dependency of youth on their parents, mobility issues and the GLS, distance in rural areas, safety issues, and comparisons to other research.

5.1 HIGH USE OF THE PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE:

Many of the transportation modes utilized by rural youth appear to relate to the use of a personal automobile. This supports research that indicates the use of single occupant vehicles as a main method of transportation in rural areas. In the discussion of methods that are used to get to places as well as issues that they had in not getting where they wanted to go, often getting a ride was the most common response. This supports research findings that suggest an increase in the use of the personal automobile, and the limitations that this phenomenon can create in terms of access for individuals who have ready access to an automobile and those who do not.

5.2 HIGH DEPENDENCY ON PARENTS

There was a constant reliance by the young people on their parents or guardians to assist with mobility needs. While the majority of participants stated that parents were often willing to help them out, discussions in the focus groups resulted in the realization that while parents do help, they are not always content with doing so. The young people expressed that fact the limiting fact that many parents were only available to assist during limited hours, for certain reasons, to close destinations only, and often had more than one child who needed a ride at the same time. This leaves the youth to find other modes of transportation in order to access their destinations, or they simply cannot attend. None of the youth whose parents gave assistance, stated that there was a problem with getting to their place of employment. This suggests that it is easier to arrange for rides that are related to work. On the other hand, it could be because work was usually based on a regular schedule that does not require a flexible mode of transportation.

5.3 MOBILITY ISSUES AND GLS

An underlying subject that arose in all nine focus groups was the Graduated Licensing System. This program of slowly increasing responsibilities for new drivers appears to only augment the mobility problems of rural young people living in Ontario. As there are few options in terms of public and community transportation, the youth are forced to be dependent on their parents for a longer period than in the past. This also puts extra pressure on parents who may be working outside of the home. Young people living in urban areas can rely on public transportation while they are going through the GLS, while this is not possible for their rural counterparts. It is worth noting that this issue has been raised in previous literature (Ramsey, et al., 1998), as well as in this study.

5.4 DISTANCE IN RURAL AREAS

Many of these rural participants recognized the problematic nature of the distance that must be traveled in order to carry out daily activities, as well as to seek employment and entertainment resources. One outcome resulting from the large distances is the perceived need to drive an automobile for a single, or only a few passengers. The youth noted that it is often difficult to plan for events, and therefore, hard to set-up car-pool arrangements. This would support Cullinane and Stokes (1998) suggestion that today's society is made up of a 'now generation', that is not capable of planning ahead, as there is a constant need for instant gratification. People feel that it is simply easier to make trips on their own, when necessary, instead of planning so that others may benefit and participate as well. This reflects an individual rather than a collective approach to mobility problem solving.

5.5 SAFETY ISSUES

While there were fewer safety issues related to mobility than expected, safety was still a concern for some rural young people. Safety issues that were identified include:

- A lack of safe areas for people to bike and roller-blade
- Unsafe taxi drivers and taxi vehicles
- Drinking and driving
- Road conditions, especially side roads, and winter conditions

5.6 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS STUDIES

While there are few studies that have explored rural youth mobility issues, limited examples were found in the literature review segment of this study. The issues that were identified in an Australian study were also issues that were identified through the focus groups, survey responses, and web-site discussion of this study. Common issues included:

- General lack of transport
- Long distance travel required and lack of options
- High cost
- Having to rely on parents
- Hitch-hiking as a dangerous form of transport
- Behaviour of some young people on public transport
- Low road standards
- Need for more appropriate travel times
- Enabling school bus services to include non-students
- Lack of public transport links from one rural centre to another
- Restrictive driving age
- Cost of gas and insurance

(<http://www.tased.edu.au/youthaff/rireport/iitr.htm>)

6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was designed as part of a three-part scan of rural transportation issues. In order to gain a more dynamic view of the transportation challenges facing rural young people, additional stakeholder groups must be consulted. Additional key informants for future research could include individuals who directly work with young people in rural areas.

It may also be beneficial to speak with the parents of the young people in order to get their ideas of rural youth transportation issues. This study indicated that many of the young people rely heavily on their parents, whether it is to provide rides to places, lending their car, or giving them gas money. Speaking with a wider range of those involved with the subject of rural youth would provide additional views of existing issues as well as feasible solutions.

In addition to expanding the group of individuals to be consulted, there is a need to widen the geographic area of study. This study attempted to provide a scan of Ontario rural youth transportation issues and was successful to some extent as a wide range of areas were covered. However, future research could also investigate the unique issues that may be faced by youth living in the more Northern, or remote parts of the province.

The fact that this study took place during the summer months may have influenced the type of destinations that were cited. Many activities differ during the school year, which could change the patterns during a different time of year. On the other hand, there are many activities and sports available in the summer that are not necessarily played during other seasons (e.g., Baseball). In addition, jobs may be more limited during the fall and winter months, which may increase time and participation in other activities. Further research is needed to determine the specific seasonal activity patterns of young people.

Many of the focus group participants stated that they wanted to know what solutions were feasible and how they could go about implementing or getting others to implement services that may be of benefit to them. Perhaps more attention could be placed on this type of discussion if a similar research project was to be repeated. Enthusiasm was generated at the majority of the focus group sessions leaving the young people with the hope that something could be achieved in their area. Quotes of this nature include:

“Lots of excellent solutions. Now all we need to do is implement them!”

“Now I’m all riled up about these issues and want to do the stuff we’ve discussed...”

“...you have generated some interest in me to get things going in the area.”

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Community Health Centres (CHC) are involved with improving the health of the community as a whole. Therefore, it is felt that this resource could be utilized in both future research, as well as the planning and implementation for transportation solutions identified by young people themselves. CHCs are generally well connected with community and other resources that may be available in rural areas, and may be able to identify which options, if any, could be implemented. The experience of working with the CHC network for this project was excellent, and the majority of the centres shared the realization of the need to look into the issues facing their younger population.

2) It appears that youth are often drawn to urban areas in order to attend entertainment events, but often have trouble accessing these areas. The common, simple solution of providing special transportation on a regular basis (or ‘as-needed’) for young people would be an option for many of the rural areas involved in this study. It is understood by the researchers that this avenue may serve to accommodate the young people leaving rural areas, and may therefore not be a popular option for most community members. However, the youth appear to generally be able to find a way of getting to where they need to go, even if their safety is in jeopardy. The high rate of discussions surrounding drunk driving, accidents, and ‘cramming people into my car’, indicates a need to find alternative mobility options that are safe for the young people of rural Ontario.

The only group that had limited problems in getting to where they needed to go was that of the Strathroy area. Further probing revealed that many of the activities that were attractive to the young people in town of Strathroy, included shopping, restaurants, and a movie theatre. However, it must be taken into consideration that the entire focus group lived in the town, leaving them with shorter distances to travel to access these services. At the same time, if more options that were desired by young people were located closer to their homes, mobility problems would be automatically be lessened. The youth would still need to get to the destinations, but it would take less time, and less of a distance would have to be covered.

3) Youth living in the countryside are especially disadvantaged given their farm or rural non-farm location and this should be given special consideration when setting up youth transportation services.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, this study found that rural youth of Ontario have many transportation issues. The main modes of transportation that were discussed in the focus groups involve the personal vehicle, or getting a ride from parents or from friends. The main mobility challenges for youth in the rural areas of this study are:

- Gas prices are too expensive
- Lack of public transportation
- No ride

Underlying many of the discussions was the Graduated Licensing System and its effects on the mobility of rural youth. The time and expense required to obtain a licence through the program, combined with the need to rely on parents for mobility for parents, creates a multitude of problems for rural young people. The lack of public transportation options, and the need to acquire centralized services, employment opportunities, and resources, places young people in rural areas at a disadvantage when compared to young people in urban areas.

In terms of enabling youth to have the opportunity to participate in certain activities, it is important to recognize the barriers they face. The main activities that youth have limited access to include:

- Social activities
- Friends
- Sports and recreation

Hence, these activities can bring a sense of belonging and worth to young people. The lack of transportation affects the ability of youth to engage in activities that can benefit their well-being. Previous literature suggests that a lack of access to activities can put youth at risk of engaging in high-risk behaviours. The information that was collected from the “Let’s Get Moving” focus groups supports previous literature that acknowledges the limitations that rural youth face. The issues were similar to those experienced by other young people.

From this research, we recommend that some form of transportation system be implemented for youth to access. The six most feasible solutions that could be given further consideration are as follows:

- Connected network for car pooling/ car-coops
- More efficient use of already existing transportation services (buses to special events/school buses)
- Partnerships with businesses to increase access to transportation
- Bike paths and steps to increase bike safety
- Installing more payphones in rural communities
- Modifications to the GLS for rural areas

These solutions were suggested by the rural youth themselves and they discussed possible methods to implement such types of transportation systems. It should be noted that solutions are unique to each area and some suggestions may be more feasible for certain areas than for others. Therefore, further investigation in local areas is needed to ascertain the stakeholders, interested groups, beneficiaries and exact methods required for implementation.

More research of this nature must be carried out. The youth that were involved with this study claimed that they appreciated the fact that ‘someone’ was interested in what they had to say, were excited that they were given a chance to develop their own solutions, and hopeful that something could be done to improve their mobility. The research format, especially the focus groups, seemed to be a success in providing a comfortable forum for young people to express their thoughts, and bring them closer to other people who may be feeling the same way.

In conclusion, the transportation needs of rural youth should be addressed. Through the “Let’s Get Moving!” focus groups, many rural youth of Ontario were given the opportunity to voice their concerns and ideas about transportation. There is evidence that young people are experiencing limitations in access to certain activities and they have suggested concrete, feasible solutions to addressing mobility issues. Young people need to have access to regular, reliable, affordable transportation that connects them to services and activities, in order to provide a sense of independence. Transportation services should include integration, flexibility and address the specific needs of young people in rural areas. With more low-cost and safe modes of transport, rural youth might stay longer in rural environments.

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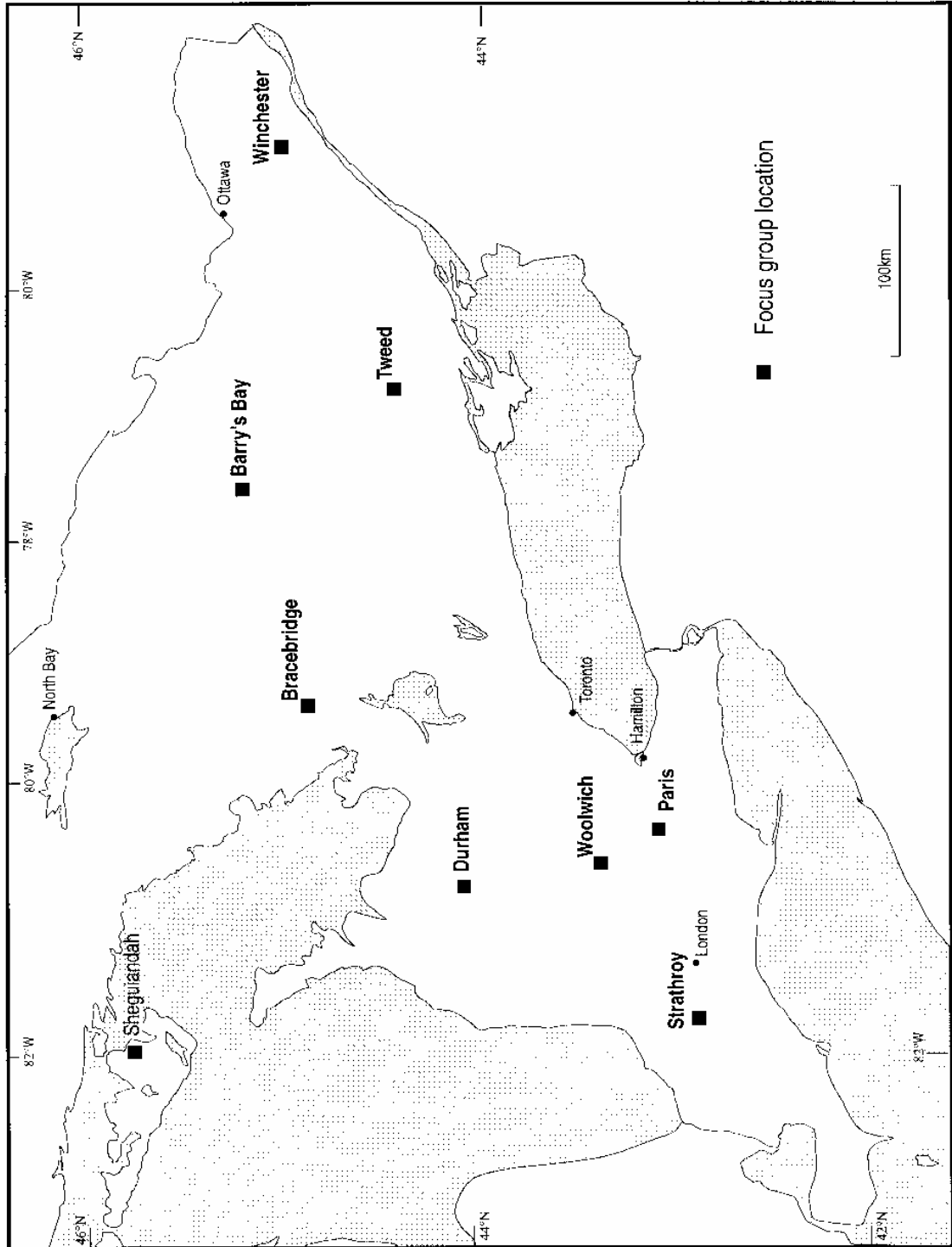
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10 APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP LOCATIONS



11 APPENDIX B: “LETS GET MOVING” FOCUS GROUP MATERIAL

LET’S GET MOVING

The "Let's Get Moving" workshop is a tool for discussing transportation issues for young people in rural Ontario. It is based on the "Community Action Kit" that was developed by Wayne Caldwell for use in rural areas to identify important issues in the community and possible solutions for the future.

This workshop intends to identify where youth need to go in rural areas, how they get there, what limits them from getting where they want to go, and possible solutions to transportation problems for the future. The purpose of this workshop is to provide a scan of transportation issues for young people in rural areas.

A facilitator will be responsible for organizing and administering the workshop according to a pre-determined agenda. Four main questions will be asked and the participants will record their answers on cards that will be collected and used for group discussion.

The agenda for the workshop is as follows:

AGENDA

Introductions

Trivia Questions

Two Discussion Questions

~~~ Break ~~~

Two Discussion Questions

Group Discussion/Conclusions

Survey

QUESTIONS FOR “LET’S GET MOVING” WORKSHOP

Think about the youth population in your area. What are some of the main problems that your peers are experiencing in terms of transportation?

List the three most important things you typically go to in one week outside of school (e.g. social activities, job, sports). Describe how you get there.

List three places/activities in your area that you want to go in a week, but can't get there. Explain why you can't get there (eg. No vehicle, no ride, homework, location, too far, winter conditions, etc)

List three things that would make it easier for you to get where you want to go? (Facilitator may ask participants if they are aware of any transportation systems in other areas. What they feel is working/not working for other areas)

QUESTION	INFORMATION TO BE OBTAINED
1) Think about the youth population in your area. What are some of the main problems that your peers are experiencing in terms of transportation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ A general sense of the transportation problems in rural areas as opposed to individual limitations ↓ Important issues for rural youth
2) List the three most important things you typically go to in one week outside of school (e.g. social activities, job, sports) State how you get there.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Activities youth participate in outside the home ↓ What's important to them ↓ Reveal the type of transportation being used.
3) List three places/ activities in your area that you want to go in a week, but can't get there. Explain why you can't get where (e.g. No vehicle, location, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Limitations for youth in terms of activities that they have poor access to. ↓ Transportation limitations and reasons for lack of mobility
4) List three things that would make it easier for you to get where you want to go.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Directions/suggestions for future transportation systems ↓ Main solutions as seen from the youth perspective

*** General, open discussion will follow more formal question period.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP

Please check one option for each of the following questions:

<i>Range of issues covered?</i>	<i>9 Excellent</i>	<i>9 Adequate</i>	<i>9 Poor</i>
<i>Relevance of questions?</i>	<i>9 Excellent</i>	<i>9 Adequate</i>	<i>9 Poor</i>
<i>Rapport of the facilitators?</i>	<i>9 Excellent</i>	<i>9 Adequate</i>	<i>9 Poor</i>
<i>Logical Flow of the workshop?</i>	<i>9 Excellent</i>	<i>9 Adequate</i>	<i>9 Poor</i>

Please provide a short answer for each of the following:

What other issues do you think could be addressed?

What was one positive aspect of the test focus group?

What was one negative aspect of the focus group?

Additional comments/suggestions:

12 APPENDIX C: SAMPLE OF FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY REPORT

"Let's Get Moving!"

**A Summary Report on the
TWEED AREA RURAL YOUTH
TRANSPORTATION FOCUS GROUP**

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AUGUST 2000

Introduction

Transportation in rural areas is a problem for many people, especially the youth population. A research project has been designed, through the University of Guelph School of Rural Planning and Development, to identify the specific transportation needs of youth in rural areas of Ontario. Focus groups with youth aged 15-24 across the province called “Let’s Get Moving” are currently being held in order to provide the opportunity for rural youth to voice their transportation concerns and ideas.

The “Let’s Get Moving” workshop is a tool for discussing transportation issues for young people in rural Ontario. This workshop is designed to identify where youth need to travel to in rural areas, how they get there, what limits them from getting where they need to go, and possible solutions to transportation problems for the future. The purpose of this workshop is to provide a scan of transportation issues for young people in rural areas.

This report is a summary of the information collected at the focus group held at the Gateway Community Health Centre on August 3, 2000. A “Let’s Get Moving!” Research report, including a summary of focus group findings, survey results, and a literature review will be completed in the fall and will be distributed to those who assisted in organizing each of the focus groups. The report will serve to direct future program planning for the rural youth population in specific rural areas, as well as rural Ontario youth as a whole.

Survey Results:

In addition to focus group discussion questions, each of the participants were asked to complete a survey designed to collect descriptive information regarding their individual transportation resources, issues, and situations. There were ten youth attending the focus group “Let’s Get Moving” held at the Gateway Community Health Centre. Most of the youth attending resided in a town, the average age of the participants was 18, five of the young people were male while the remaining five were female, and seven of the participants had some form of a license.

2.1 Employment:

Of the participants that were employed, the average hours of work a week was 33. Most of the young people worked during the morning and afternoon, while some worked in the evening, and no one worked through the night. The three most popular methods of getting to work were getting a ride with parents, driving a parent’s car, or riding with someone else, while other responses included car pooling, driving own car, walking and biking. None of the respondents claimed that they had ever felt unsafe getting to or from work. Transportation had caused two of the nine employed respondents to be late for work, and two employed respondents ‘sometimes’ miss work because they cannot get there. Only three of the respondents had been in a situation where they wanted a job but could not take it due to transportation issues.

2.2 Parental Assistance

All of the respondents claimed that their parents or guardians were helpful to some extent. Responses of how their parents helped, included:

- Loan me their car (2)
- Give me gas money (2)
- drive me places (5)
- find me a ride if they are unavailable (2)
- buy me a car (but I know other’s are not that lucky)
- Support my interests and choices of transportation

Focus Group Results

Question 1 - MAIN PROBLEMS

Financial Aspects

In this rural area, most of the youth rely on the personal automobile to meet their transportation needs. This poses a problem for the youth population due to the expenses not only in purchasing a vehicle for themselves, but also connected to acquiring a driver's license, purchasing the required insurance (which is more of an issue for young males than young females), and paying for gasoline. It was also suggested that high tuition prices result in fewer people having the financial resources to purchase a vehicle which is necessary for youth in the area if they want to be employed, participate in extracurricular activities, or volunteer in the community.

Access to a vehicle/ride

There is no public transit serving the Tweed area, which means that the young people must find other transportation means, usually via the automobile. As mentioned, there are problems in acquiring a vehicle of one's own, as well as borrowing the family car due to the condition of the cars, the number of cars available in the family, and the cooperation of the parents.

License Issues

Gaining a license is a problem for the participants. The backlog for testing is frustrating for the youth, extending the time that they are unable to drive themselves around. The cost of the various levels of licensing is also problematic. The group expressed concern with the high cost of insurance, and the procedure of determining insurance rate (i.e. Looking at academic grades).

Additional Problems

The group also expressed concern with drinking and driving, as many social activities are quite a distance away, which usually means that people must drive thereby exposing themselves to impaired drivers, and having to arrange for a designated driver. Other issues included fighting on school buses, the smell of buses, and the fact that it is hard to get a job as most of them are located out of town and require employees to have their own transportation.

Question 2 - ACTIVITIES AND GETTING THERE

There are not a lot of jobs and entertainment options in Tweed. The youth stated that they need to travel to Belleville to meet these needs, which means that transportation is required. The participants noted that they need to get for friend's houses on a regular basis, followed by accessing their places of employment or job interviews. Other identified activities that the youth needed to access were family and community projects or volunteering. For all of these destinations there was a heavy reliance on the personal automobile, whether the youth were driving themselves, getting a ride with someone else, getting a ride with their parents, or car pooling. As most of the group members had their licenses, and given the rural nature of the community, it is not a surprise that such a high reliance on the automobile was expressed. Other options for reaching destinations included biking and walking.

Question 3 - ACTIVITIES NOT ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN/WHY

The majority of the activities or destinations that the youth cannot get to are social in nature and are located outside of their immediate area. This suggests that getting around their immediate area was not a problem, but the majority of the places that they needed to get to were not in close proximity. None of the youth stated that there was a problem with getting to their place of employment, suggesting that it is easier to arrange for rides that are related to work, or perhaps it could be due to fact that work is usually based on a regular schedule that does not require flexible scheduling. Various transportation limitations were stated by the youth, including:

- Need to plan
- No vehicle
- Parents have car
- No ride

- Parent's work out of town
- Too far
- Time
- Gas
- Economy (no car)
- Winter roads (ice and mud)
- Little public transport - no links

It was mentioned that many people miss extracurricular activities (teams, clubs, music etc.) because they do not have a way to get home from school. There is a lack of regular late buses, and they only travel to town, which means that one still has to arrange transportation from the drop off spots. Most of the late buses run only for events that are sports related. The young people also noted that the nature or existence of a parent's job, and the number of siblings who are of driving age, play a role in access to transportation, and the number of siblings who can drive.

More than one third of the respondents suggested that the rural nature of the area hindered their opportunities of reaching their desired destinations. The participants realized that the distance between locations, the related time to get there, and the required plans to get there often resulted in the youth not getting to where they would like to go.

Question 4 - SOLUTIONS

1. MORE FUNDING FOR RURAL AREAS

The youth suggested that, in general, more money needs to be spent in rural areas to improve conditions.

2. MORE JOBS IN THE COMMUNITY

Four of the participants noted that there are very limited employment opportunities in their immediate communities, which means that they must travel in order to be employed. They suggested that more jobs in their communities would help to solve transportation problems.

3. INTERACTIVE WEB SITE

An interactive web site would allow young people to learn about solutions to youth transportation problems that are attempted in other similar areas.

4. MORE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR TEENS

It was suggested that a regular bus that is dedicated to transporting teens to specific events would be useful. It could be implemented slowly to gain support in the community and be expanded as the need grew. An affordable ride of \$2-3/trip would be necessary in order for people to use it. The group felt that the service would have to be specifically for events or occasions and not on a regular everyday schedule as it would not be financially feasible.

5. STANDARD CAR POOL SYSTEM

This type of program could be set up for extracurricular activities after school. Many students who live in close proximity drive the same route to school each day, resulting in many single occupant vehicles traveling to the same destination. Two participants suggested this idea.

6. MOVE TO CITY

It was felt by three of the youth that this would solve all transportation problems for rural teens in the area as there is more to do in urban areas, as well as better transportation systems.

7. MORE PUBLIC TRANSIT

There is one taxi in the area, which the youth felt was too expensive to use on a regular

basis. Safety was another issue with the existing taxis regarding the crowding issues, and driving habits. Four of the participants felt that a regular bus service would be beneficial to their peers as well as the rest of the community. However, it was also suggested that local businesses would not be in favor of increased public transportation services as this may work to remove business from the town.

8. *MONORAIL*

A monorail connecting the smaller villages together would get used a lot as people always have to drive back and forth for various reasons.

9. *LOWER EXPECTATIONS FOR SOCIAL LIFE*

Again, it was mentioned that there is little to do in Tweed and people just end up walking around without anything to do. If social expectations were decreased, it was felt that everyone would be content.

10. *CHEAPER CARS*

This was a popular option but it the group was aware of the costs involved with owning a vehicle. It was suggested that the economy needs to be better so that more people can afford to own their own car.

11. *CHEAPER GAS*

12. *PERSONAL CHAUFFEUR*

13. *LESS SPEEDING TICKETS*

14. *EASIER LICENSE PROCEDURE*

The back logs with appointments is an issue for the youth, as well as the expense involved

15. *HOVER CARS*

SUMMARY

The three main needs for transportation were related to work, friends, and social activities. There was a lot of discussion on the lack of entertainment in the area and the difficulty in getting to other areas to find entertainment. The challenge of getting ones license was also mentioned, as there are limited options for taking G1 and G2 tests, and long waiting lists. Due to the problems in getting a license, the older members of the group seemed to have fewer transportation problems in comparison to the younger members. The group explained that most people older than themselves own vehicles, but the conditions of the vehicles may be questionable, and that “not many people have brand new cars in Tweed”. It was recognized that driving on the roads is hard on the maintenance of the vehicle as well, along with driving in winter conditions.

Drinking and driving came up again in this group. This may be related to older ages of participants. They commented on five recent deaths of young people from drinking and driving. In addition, it is difficult to find a designated driver.

Many of the transportation systems require another mode of transportation in order to access it (i.e. bus and

trains in Belleville). The group stated that there needs to be a unity between the systems in order for it to provide a full service (i.e. have a pick-up from the bus-station to surrounding towns).

The focus group provided the youth of the Tweed area with the opportunity to discuss issues that were specific to their own age group. The group agreed that transportation was a problem for rural youth in the Tweed area. The Tweed youth were successful in creating potential solutions to improve their transportation situations. If the ‘right people’ were approached, it was felt that some of the requested changes could easily be implemented. These solutions include:

- ✓ Car-pooling
- ✓ More jobs in the community
- ✓ Rides for teens (bus service to out of town events)
- ✓ Increased options for public transportation (regular bus service)

The above solutions are quite feasible and would be of benefit to the greater population in the Tweed area, in addition to improving the conditions for the youth population. It is the hope that this “Let’s Get Moving!” summary report, as well as the final report which will be available in early fall, will be of assistance in helping the Tweed area to hear the rural youth voice speak of their transportation needs and ideas for solutions.

For more information about the “Let’s Get Moving!” Rural youth transportation research project, please contact:

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13 APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Rural Youth and Mobility Survey

- 1) Where do you live? Rural non-farm Farm Town Reserve
- 2) What is your age? _____
- 3) Sex: Female Male
- 4) Do you have a license? Yes No
- 5) Are you currently employed? Yes No (If no skip to question #13)
- 6) How many hours do you work each week (average)? _____
- 7) What time of day do you usually work? (check all that apply)
 Morning Afternoon Evening Night
- 8) How far is your employment from your home? ____ (Km)/ ____ (Minutes)
- 9) How do you get to work? (Check all that apply)
 My Parents drive Walk Taxi Car pool
 Drive my Parents car Bike Bus Ride with someone else
 My own car Other (Please describe) _____
- 10) Do you ever feel unsafe getting to or from work? Yes No
 If yes, please explain. _____
-
- 11) Have you ever been late for work or missed a shift because of transportation problems?
 Yes No
- 12) How often do you miss work because you can't get there?
 Often Sometimes Never
- 13) How helpful are your parents/guardians with getting you where you need to go? (Please check one answer)
 Always Usually Sometimes Never
- 14) If applicable, how do your parents/guardians help? (Eg. Loan car, buy me a car, drive me places, give gas money etc.)
- 15) Has there ever been a job you wanted but couldn't take because you didn't have a way of getting there? Yes No