

PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY

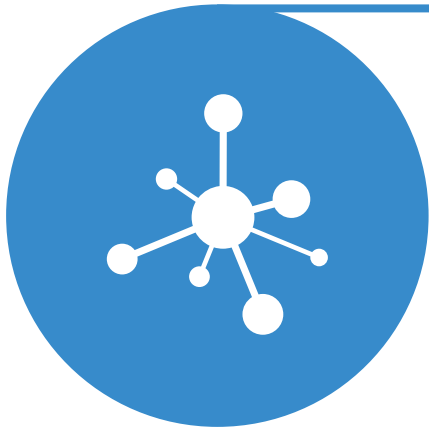
in Guelph



**GUELPH
WELLBEING**

REPORT

September 2014



Everyone will have ease of access to moving around the city by cycling, trails, walking and transit, to connect them to services and places.

OUR GOAL

When we have a healthy population we all benefit. Despite current support and success stories there is still a lot of work to do in our community to help move our residents around the city.

Guelph Wellbeing is working towards increasing all modes of active transportation and transit so everyone will be able to move around the city and connect to the services they need by bike, on foot, via trails or by transit.



Physical and social connectivity

Connectivity is the degree to which people who live in Guelph connect with our community. A community with high levels of physical connectivity is one where people of all ages and income levels can move around easily, find what they need, and attend local events. It is a place where getting around on foot, by bike, or on the bus is the easy choice. It is a community where people feel like they belong, where they get involved, help one another, participate in dialogue on civic issues, and reach out to those who are isolated. It is a community with high social connectivity. It's hard to get socially connected if you can't get around easily. Connectivity is one key component of what the Canadian Index of Wellbeing calls community vitality—the strength, activity and inclusiveness of relationships between residents, private sector, public sector and civic society that fosters individual and collective wellbeing.



**GUELPH
WELLBEING**

*Working together for the
best possible quality of life*

About Guelph Wellbeing

Guelph Wellbeing is a project guided by a Community Leadership Team working together to address our community's needs to create a happy, healthy and resilient community.

Our work is based on the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, a globally-recognized index that takes a comprehensive approach to measuring quality of life. Through extensive community engagement, Guelph Wellbeing has identified three key issues in our community: food security, social and physical connectivity, and affordable housing.

This report is one of four published in 2014 about Guelph Wellbeing. We hope this information about social connectivity brings awareness to the issues around the sense of belonging and inclusion in Guelph and provides you with opportunities to make a difference in our community. We will continue to gather data, take action, measure impact and prepare an impact report in 2015.

Our journey starts here...working together for the best possible quality of life.

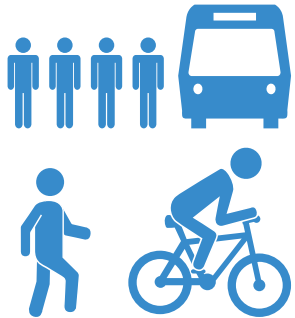
Facts about physical connectivity

2011 Transportation Tomorrow Survey

10%

of daily trips were by bus, walking or cycling

That figure is down from **14% in 2006**. That means we are more reliant on automobiles to get us around.



2012 Guelph Community Wellbeing Survey

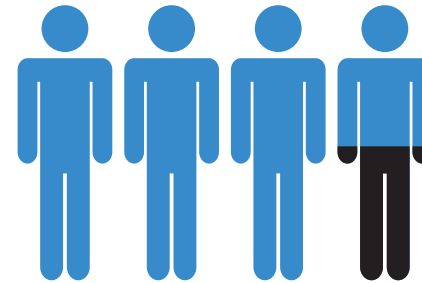
47%



Overall, **47%** of Guelph residents agree that traffic congestion in Guelph is a problem. Older neighbourhoods use sustainable transportation more than the suburbs: Wards 3, 5 and 2 had the highest reported use of non-auto modes “quite often” or “all of the time”.

36.6%

of the population indicated they walked, cycled or took public transit



Importance of active transportation

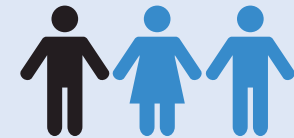


Risk of obesity goes up **6%** for every hour spent in a car each day, while the risk of obesity goes down by almost **5%** for every kilometre walked a day.

60%

of Canadian adults are considered overweight or obese.

So too are **26%** of Canadian children and youth.



1 in 3 obese children will be diabetic.

91%

of Canadian children and youth and **51%** of Canadian adults are not getting the recommended levels of daily physical activity.

Source: Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation

What lack of physical connectivity means

- Negative environmental impacts such as greenhouse gases and poor air quality
- Limited places to safely park your bike
- A lack of sidewalks
- Vulnerable community members and some older adults may have mobility challenges
- A lack of trails with adequate rest stops, shady areas and connections to destinations
- Increased living costs; according to Statistics Canada it costs an average of \$6,000 to \$10,000 annually to use a car
- Negative health impacts such as obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, some cancers and mental wellbeing due to lack of physical activity



Moving around our community

“Improved pedestrian and bicycle networks can have many positive impacts on overall community and individual well-being, social cohesion, community identity, and equality issues.”

Active Transportation Canada

In Motion is a coalition of organizations that all have an interest in physical activity and active transportation. It developed the Low Cost to Recreation Guide and is working towards defining next steps. Some of the organizations that are at the table are Guelph Community Health Centre, Guelph Family Health Team, Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health, Guelph YMCA, Wyndham House, the City of Guelph, Children’s Foundation, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) is an example of policy, education and advocacy with several stakeholders such as Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health, the City of Guelph, Guelph Police Services, Upper Grand District School Board and Wellington Catholic District School Board. The ASRTS Committee supports a coordinator who develops school travel plans. These plans are developed in conjunction with partner agencies and involve traffic counts, classroom surveys and walk-about to identify barriers to cycling and walking. The plans take into account evidence-informed practices to increase the number of children bicycling and walking to and from school.

The University of Guelph has been a community leader when it comes to supporting cycling. It has made significant investments in sheltered bike racks, fix-it stations and bike lanes on campus. Students also support cycling at the Central Students’ Association, Bike Centre—a co-operative that supplies tools, education and resources for repairing and building bicycles. The University has made contributions to enhancing public transit by expanding the University Bus Loop terminal and encouraging students and staff to use public transit through subsidized bus pass programs.

The City of Guelph and their Transportation Demand Management plan has a goal to reduce single occupant vehicle trips by encouraging other modes of transport. The plan works on policy, infrastructure and educational outreach. The City of Guelph has been recognized with a Silver Bike Friendly Community Award. It continues to explore other strategies such as carpooling and is looking to build an Active Transportation Network of routes for non-motorized travel. The City’s Parks Planning division also looks to add 9km of trails per year to encourage trail use. Guelph Transit’s affordable bus pass has been a successful program to allow those with limited incomes to move around the city. Guelph Transit is also working on Transit Travel Training, a program that supports people in learning how to use transit and increase their comfort level. The program will be in place in fall 2014 for seniors. The City is developing a similar program for youth.



What it means to be physically connected

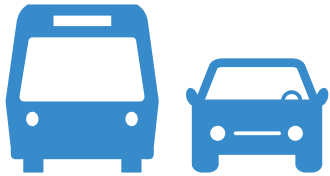
An elementary school teacher at Edward Johnson French Immersion School is thrilled to be able to use the new bike lanes that opened last summer on Stevenson Street. They help her; other teachers, parents and students get to school more safely and easily. There are two elementary schools and two churches that benefit from the new bike lanes.

Anna, 68 has had two hip replacements and now gets around the city on her scooter. Without mobility and community buses she would find moving around the city a challenge, particularly in the winter months. Getting around the city is extremely important as it connects her to medical services, shopping and to her volunteering at the Evergreen Seniors Centre where she connects with her many friends.



Current impact of physical connectivity

Transportation



1/3 of the city's total emissions

107 km
on-road bike lanes



The Community Energy Initiative shows transportation accounts for about **one third of the city's total emissions**. It targets a reduction in transportation emissions of **25%** by 2031

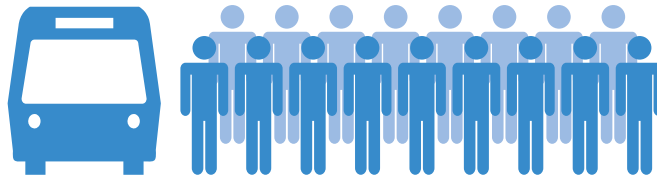
City cycling targets to increase bike ridership to **3%** by 2022 from the present **1%** of overall trips in the city

- **107 km** of existing on-road bike lanes
- Annual work with schools to develop travel plans and walk to school events

The city of Guelph presently has **112 kms** of trails

Public transit

- **1120** - The average number of monthly affordable bus passes purchased in 2013 by individuals with limited incomes.
- The City of Guelph's Transit Growth Strategy seeks to increase the number of bus stops within 450 metres of where people live by **90%**
- Approximately **7 million** riders in 2013

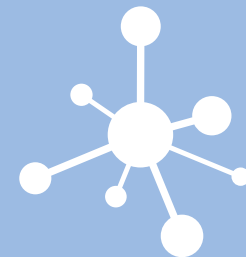


7 million

“When you see the high cost of automobile ownership, and the social and economic costs of the epidemic of sedentary diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease, an investment in cycling infrastructure just makes sense.”

Patrick Sheridan,
Guelph Coalition for
Active Transportation

Guelph has **112 kms** of trails



Our collective call to action

1 Get good local data

Improving local data will assist in showing the needs of the community and helps us understand the behaviours and needs of cyclists and trail users. Doing so would help to identify which infrastructure supports are required such as bike parking, number of kilometres of new trails, and safety issues.

Recommendation

Pool resources to coordinate data collection efforts and share data. Secure trail counters and conduct a PEAT Audit (The Path Environment Audit Tool), ask trail users about their needs and usage. Gather evidence to understand why residents do not use the trails and how these barriers can be overcome. All this work feeds into the applicable transportation planning initiatives, along with connecting all three types of active transport (walking, bicycling and use of public transit).

2 Advocate for policy changes

Advocacy for changes to auto parking to include additional spots for bicycle parking and bicycle lanes; eliminate vehicular idling to improve air quality; increase the number of bicycle parking facilities for all weather conditions, recognize workplaces that provide incentives or programs that support employees who walk their children to and/or from school; and to continue provide accessible active transportation options for all. Advocacy work could also include working with developers to get land for trails.

Recommendation

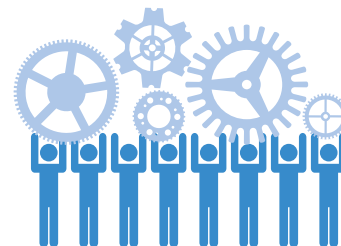
Gain community, business and community stakeholder support to advocate for policy changes that encourage active transportation.

3 Coordinate efforts to support existing programs

Several initiatives in Guelph—ASRTS and *In Motion* among them—promote the benefits of active transportation including transit. Some of the work of these initiatives includes youth and senior travel training, trails promotion, and encouraging walking and cycling. These initiatives can also provide coordinated support for the International Charter on Walking, and the City of Guelph's Cycling Master Plan and its aim to go for the Gold designation of a Bike Friendly Community. These groups and initiatives are well-positioned to support the development of an Active Transportation network of new facilities specifically for walking, cycling, roller blading and other active forms of travel. By pooling resources, sharing costs and working collaboratively these initiatives could be realized.

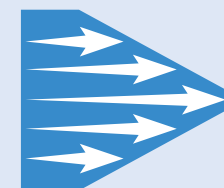
Recommendation

Pool our resources to share and coordinate administrative functions.



“Without data on how our trails and bike routes are being used, it is hard to determine where investments are needed most.”

Jennifer Juste
City of Guelph



Acting together through collective impact

Collective impact is the commitment of a group of people from different sectors that form a common agenda for solving a complex social problem. To achieve large scale, lasting solutions for social problems sectors such as government, civil society, and business need to coordinate their efforts and work together toward a clearly defined goal.

Conclusion

Designing communities for active transportation provides more opportunities for physical and social connections. Active transportation networks and infrastructure help foster community and neighbourhood interaction that, in turn, can help encourage a greater sense of community. By working together we will see an improvement in our health, spend less time in traffic and help our environment and economic outlook.



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the individuals and organizations that have contributed to the development of this report. We are extremely grateful for the contributions from those who participated in the various in-person conversations and the many conversations that took place to write this important document.

Special thanks to City of Guelph employees who contributed their time and expertise to make this happen; Louise Daw, Jenny Smith, Kelly Guthrie, Barbara Powell, Tara Sprigg and Diane Clarke, and to our evaluation team; Jaime Brown and Andrew Taylor of Taylor Newberry Consulting.

Contributors

Ishan Angra, Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health, wdgpublichealth.ca

Karen Armstrong, Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health, wdgpublichealth.ca

Jim Bonk, Guelph YMCA, guelphy.org

Jenn Bucci, Youth Services, City of Guelph, guelph.ca/youth

Karrie Cumming, Guelph Community Health Centre, guelphchc.ca

Jennifer Juste, Transportation Demand Management, City of Guelph, guelph.ca > [living](#) > [green getting around](#)

Wendy Kornelsen, Senior Services, City of Guelph, guelph.ca/seniors

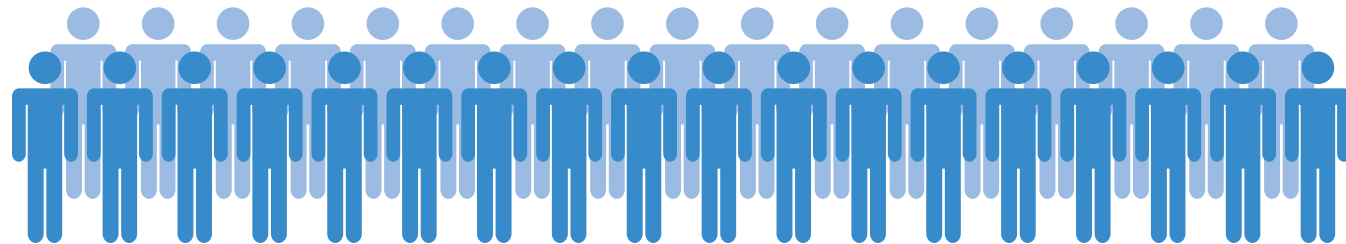
Jyoti Pathak, City of Guelph, Parks and Trails, guelph.ca/parks

Patrick Sheridan, Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation, [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/GuelphCoalitionforActiveTransportation) > [Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation](#)

Christine Warne, Guelph Transit, City of Guelph, guelphtransit.ca

Leanne Warren, Accessibility Services, City of Guelph, guelph.ca/living/accessibility

Jess Voll, Guelph Family Health Team, guelphfht.com



GUELPH WELLBEING

*Working together for the
best possible quality of life*

For more information

Louise Daw, Project Manager
Guelph Wellbeing, **City of Guelph**
T 519-822-1260 x 6581
E louise.daw@guelph.ca
guelphwellbeing.ca

