Prince Edward Island
CANADA

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Everyone has a role to play in order to increase active transportation on PEI.

PEI ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

For many residents of PEI, there are opportunities to incorporate active transportation into our day-to-day lives. The simple act of leaving the car at home and using muscle power for transportation, at least some of the time, will have a number of positive outcomes for individuals, communities and society. With more people using active transportation, the air will be cleaner, people will be healthier, and money will be saved.

The PEI Active Transportation Strategy lays out pathways to support Islanders in making active, cleaner and healthier transportation choices. Through a variety of investments and outreach initiatives the strategy will focus on:

- Enhancing the safety of everyone who uses active forms of transportation through infrastructure improvements;
- Improving active transportation route connectivity within and among communities and between key destinations across the province;
- Strengthening partnerships with municipalities, Indigenous communities and non-government organizations (NGOs) around walking, cycling and any other forms of active transportation; and
- Creating a promotion and education campaign to increase the confidence and competence of those wanting to commute actively.

While developing the Sustainable Transportation Action Plan for PEI, Islanders were asked what should be done to encourage more active transportation. The majority of people stated that safety was their number one issue.[1] Safety concerns are one of the most common barriers for people when deciding to use active transportation.[2] Creating safe, efficient and practical routes will increase the number of people who will choose to walk, cycle or use another form of active transportation to get to their destination.

Active Transportation

Active transportation (AT) is defined as any self-propelled human form of transportation such as walking, running and cycling. It is designed to get people to a particular destination whether it is work, school or to the grocery store. It can be done by any Islander including a parent pushing a child in a stroller, children riding their bikes, an employee walking to work or a person using their wheelchair or walker. Every trip starts and ends with active transportation whether you're using it for the entire trip or walking to your car or the bus stop, travelling and then walking into your destination upon arrival. Public transit is often combined with active transportation.

The benefits of more people using active transportation will impact a number of sectors. [3, 4]

- There will be positive impacts in the **transportation system** with a stronger, more diverse and connected network that reduces congestion and improves overall safety.
- There will be **environmental benefits** such as better air quality from the reduction in air pollution from fewer vehicles being on the road. It will help with meeting PEI's climate change targets by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The **health** of Islanders will be improved as more Islanders meet the physical activity guidelines. This lowers chronic disease rates or allows those living with a disease to better manage it.
- Active transportation investments will lead to improvements in community design and better connectivity between important places in **communities.**
- There are opportunities for **tourism** to expand its range of "green" offerings for visitors.
- **Rural areas** of PEI will benefit from being better connected to active transportation corridors.
- If more students bike to school, there will be reduced transportation costs for the **education system** and students' readiness to learn at the start of the day will be improved.
- There are high costs associated with vehicle ownership. Using active transportation can have a positive **financial** impact for users.

Indicators of Success

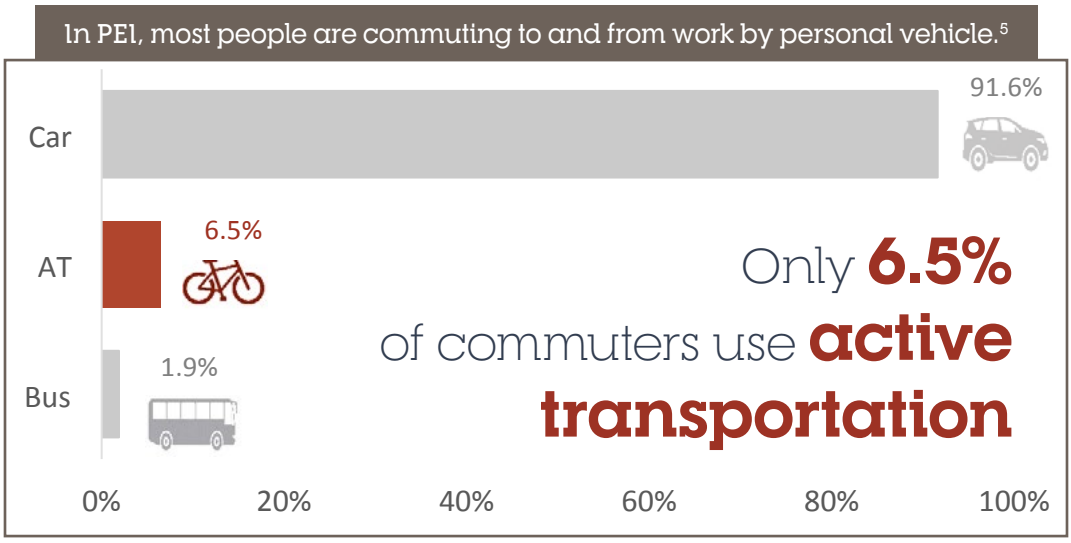
A significant amount of work has been done over the years to promote and encourage active transportation. This works sets the foundation to build from to reach the following goals:

1. Double the Province's active transportation rates by 2030.

2. Reduce emissions created by passenger transportation (in 2018, 472,000 tonnes CO_2e came from passenger transportation - accounting for 64.5% of all transportation emissions).

3. Increase the percentage of Islanders meeting the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (currently at 48.5 %) by ten percentage points by 2030.

4. Eliminate pedestrian and cyclists injuries and deaths.



Source: 2016 Census Profile, PEI Journey to Work

More people are driving than ever before. Per person, PEI has the most kilometers of paved road in Canada and the second highest number of vehicles registered.

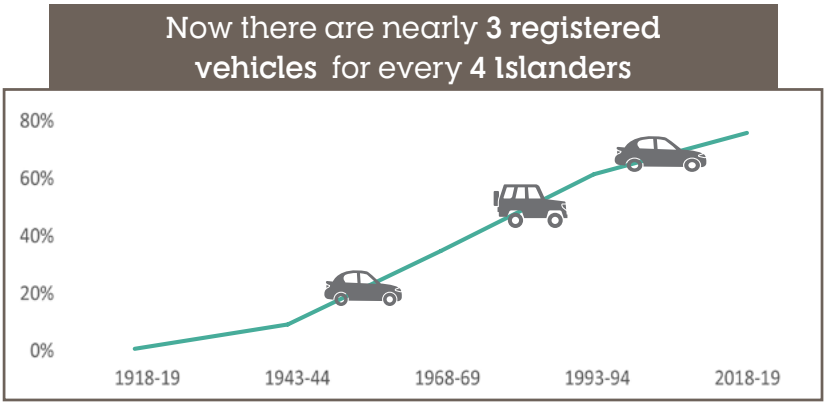
Another reason for this increase is that Islanders are buying larger vehicles. In the past, smaller more fuel efficient passenger cars were more popular. Since 2014, trucks, sport utility vehicles (SUVs), and vans have become more popular than passenger cars.

Different modes of transportation have different impacts on GHG emissions. Sustainable transportation means choosing transportation options that are more efficient and have less of an impact on the environment.

To lower PEI's total GHG emissions, emissions from the transportation sector need to be reduced. This can be accomplished by driving less, using alternate modes of transportation (like walking, biking, and public transit), or driving more fuel efficient vehicles such as electric vehicles.

Doing your part

- ✓ **Consider how you can work active transportation into your routine**
- ✓ **Follow the rules of the road – both as a driver and an active transportation user**
- ✓ **Do not pass on the right**
- ✓ **When driving, pay close attention to bicycle lanes and shoulders**
- ✓ **Look all directions when making a turn**
- ✓ **Wear reflective clothing or aids when using active transportation**
- ✓ **Encourage your friends and family to use active transportation**



Registered vehicles as a percentage of the population. Source: Chart of Motor Vehicle Registrations from 1918, Province of PEI.

These changes are possible but will require sound investment in transportation infrastructure, a review of how communities are designed and a requirement for Islanders to be open to exploring their transportation needs differently. Most importantly, this shift will take time. The change to a car dependent transportation network didn't happen overnight, nor will the shift to more Islanders leaving their cars at home. However, if PEI follows the lead of many other jurisdictions by continuing to make investments in the AT network over the long term, the shift will happen and Islanders and the province will enjoy the benefits of active transportation.

Safety

Safety is one of the greatest barriers that keep Islanders from walking or cycling to their destination. It isn't practical or possible to construct separated multi-purpose pathways along **every** transportation route in PEI. There are areas where traffic speed and volume are too high and separated AT pathways will be necessary if more people are going to choose active means of transportation.

For the majority of routes on PEI, and with careful consideration of how Islanders and visitors move within or between communities, communities can identify what types of infrastructure improvements could be made to make existing routes safer. This could include improvements such as shoulder widening, introducing traffic calming measures, lights and traffic signals.

Other measures could involve diverting pedestrian traffic to quieter streets, designating specific roads as active transportation routes or creating new access points to the Confederation Trail. There may also be key intersections that require crossing guards to support children walking to school or designated spaces for cyclists (like bike boxes) which allow cyclists to safely make left hand turns.

When thinking of safety, it is important to think of all users and not just a confident cyclist or an experienced walker when designing routes. Ultimately, if an active transportation system is designed to provide safety for a grade one child to walk to school, an older adult to get their groceries or a beginning cyclist to bike to work, then it likely will be considered safe for most.

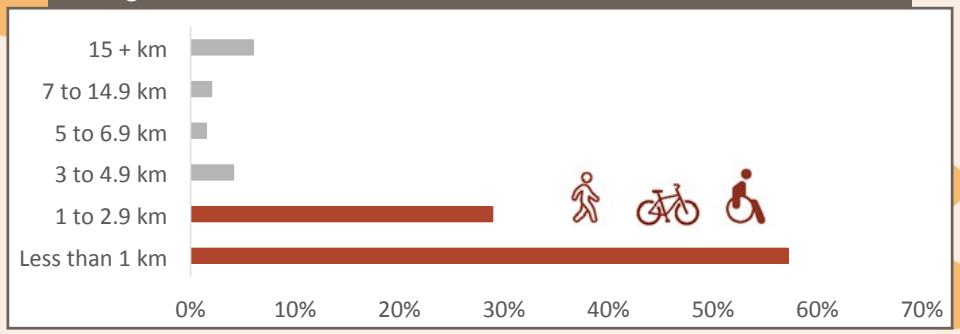
Research suggests that if more people begin to engage in active transportation, the rates of accidents and injury tend to go down because there is safety in numbers.[7] Drivers are more likely to see a group of children getting ready

to cross a street as opposed to seeing one child. And likewise, drivers are more aware that they may meet cyclists using the shoulder of the road if there is a constant stream of cyclists using it. Besides infrastructure improvement and safety in numbers there is another key ingredient to ensuring the system is safe - that is **individual responsibility**.

Each user of the transportation network has an individual responsibility to follow the rules and be considerate of the other users. Drivers of vehicles must adhere to the rules of the road particularly around traveling speed, distracted driving and observing traffic signs. Likewise, AT users (and in particular cyclists) must also observe the rules of the road, not making sudden moves for short cuts and ensuring they are visible at all times, which includes wearing reflective gear and using lights when out in the dark.

Through careful design, infrastructure improvements and a spirit of cooperation research suggests that increases in the number of Islanders using active modes of transportation will in fact lead to fewer injuries and deaths for pedestrians.[7]

Over **85%** of people who **use active transportation** to get to work on PEI live within **3 km of their work.**



Distance travelled to work by active transportation. Source: 2016 Census Profile, Journey to Work.

Connectivity

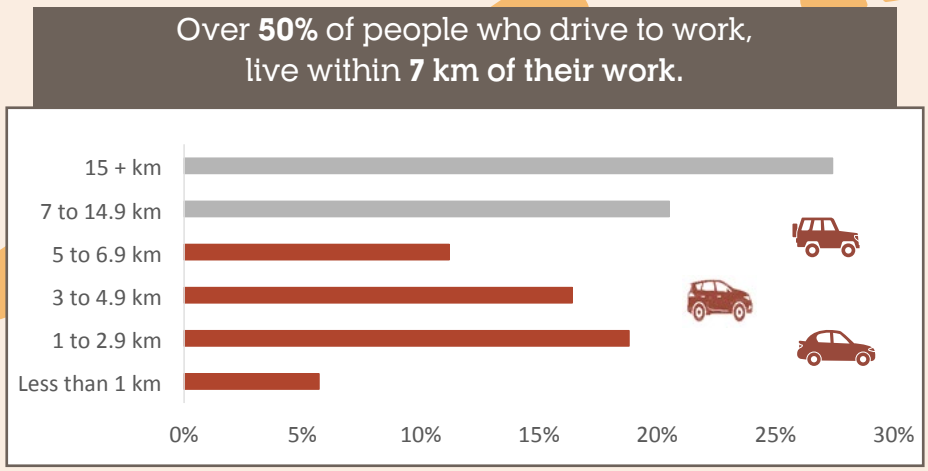
When working to convert current vehicle drivers to AT users, travel distance matters. In fact, when looking at barriers to AT, walkers suggest that distance, time and weather are the three largest barriers (in that order) while barriers to cycling include weather, distance and safety.[8]

Generally most people who **walk** to work or school are **within 2.5 km** and **cyclists are within 7 km** which means a commute time of less than 25 minutes.[9]

Currently on PEI, over 85% of existing AT commuters on the Island live within 3 km of their workplace.

Fortunately for PEI, over **50% of Islanders live within 7 km** from their place of work. There is a tremendous opportunity for a number of people to consider using active transportation for their commute.[5]

With a high percentage of Islanders living within a reasonable distance to work, it is conceivable a number of these commuters would be open to changing the way they travel with a well-designed, properly connected network. Over the past number of years there has been upgrades to the pedestrian and cycling networks through widening of shoulders, designating specific bike routes and installing sidewalks. One of the challenges is that sometimes the route or the



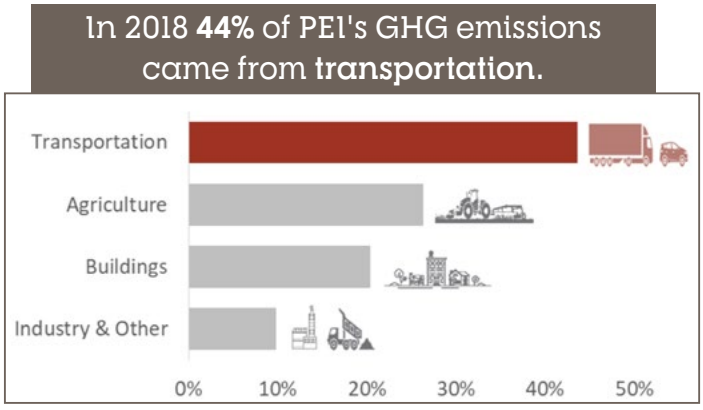
Distance travelled to work by car. Source: 2016 Census Profile, Journey to Work.

path comes to a choke point that no longer is seen as convenient or safe for the average AT commuter. A second challenge is that very few investments have been made to connect active transportation to public transit.

To overcome these challenges, the network must be connected and the key routes to popular destinations must be carefully planned. Resources must be allocated appropriately to create a route that is safe and convenient. In many cases it may not be feasible to build the route in its entirety in one construction season but it is important to share the plan of how each specific route will be developed so eventually the entire commute will meet the needs of all users.

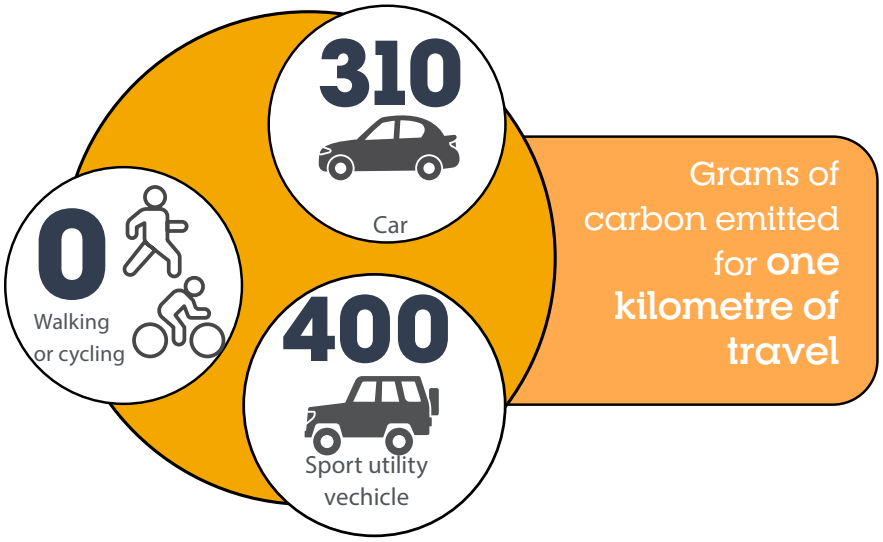
Environment

The transportation sector accounts for 44% of PEI's greenhouse gas (GHG) emmissions.[10] As part of PEI's Climate Change Action Plan the Province has committed to a variety of actions to reduce the impacts of climate change (adaptation) and to reduce the amount of GHG emmissions (mitigation). Supporting Islanders to make the change to active forms of transportation, as opposed to using vehicles for transportation, will result in reductions of GHG emissions.



For transport to happen, to move from place to place, energy must be burned.

The cleanest form of energy people have to transport themselves is walking and cycling.[11]



In the Province's effort to mitigate climate change, ***developing more sustainable ways to move within Island communities*** *is one of the most important actions to reduce provincial GHG emissions.*

Cycling and walking are the most **energy efficient** ways to travel-
500 calories can move a bike **16.4 km**

Distance moved by 500 calories of energy. Source: "Behind the Wheel" by the Pembina Institute

When comparing which mode of travel is the most efficient in using energy, cycling is first and then walking. For example, 500 calories is enough energy to move a cyclist 16.4 kilometres. This same amount of energy would only move a car 30.4 metres.[11]

In the Province's effort to mitigate climate change, developing more sustainable ways to move within Island communities is one of the most important actions to reduce provincial GHG emissions. Through a combination of encouraging more Islanders to choose active forms of transportation and increasing the use of public transit, the percent of GHG emissions from transportation can be reduced. Although each short trip only has a small impact on the amount of CO_2 released into the atmosphere, by stacking many small trips together there will be a greater reduction in overall emissions - leading to a healthier environment to walk, cycle and be active in.

Warmer temperatures will affect all aspects of PEI's climate.[12] There will be increased rates of erosion and flooding and more extreme heat events through the summer. It is important to consider the impacts of climate change on active transportation and to find ways to lessen these impacts when designing active transportation. Active transportation routes should include rest areas with plenty of shade. Longer routes should ensure that active transportation users have access to drinking water. For new infrastructure, the location should be assessed for flooding and erosion risks. Establishing resilient active transportation routes will ensure that they are well used today and available for users in the years to come.

Health

Many Islanders are sitting far too much and moving far too little. Compared to other provinces, PEI's physical activity rates have been consistently among the lowest in Canada for adults, older adults, children and youth.[13] Increased active transportation opportunities could play a large role in reversing these trends. Islanders can increase their minutes of physical activity through their daily transportation practices by using active transportation.

Children and youth can also reap many benefits from actively commuting to and from school. Research shows that if children and youth add more activity to their day, particularly in using active transport to get to and from school, they tend to be better prepared to learn.[14]

Through increased physical activity rates, Islanders can see lower incidences of a number of chronic diseases including heart disease, diabetes and hypertension.[15] Increased physical activity rates will also help those currently living with these chronic diseases better manage them.

It will also support Islanders to age independently and stay in their homes longer. PEI continues to see growth in its older adult population and this reinforces the importance of carefully designing routes to allow citizens of all ages to be able to enjoy active transportation.

Spending more time outdoors and being physically active will lead to positive outcomes for Islanders. By having older adults and all Islanders participating in AT, there will be an increase in social connections which is great for overall mental health.

Moving to Action

It will take a concerted, sustained and collaborative effort from all to advance AT in the province.

Expanding and enhancing the existing AT network with safety and connectivity as the main drivers will create an environment that will support more Islanders engaging in AT – leading to a **healthier environment, healthier people** and a more **socially connected population.**

Provincial actions for the **next five years**

1

Create a provincial AT network that identifies routes between communities and key destinations and aligns with community active transportation plans.

2

Develop and administer a Provincial Active Transportation Fund that provides specific funding for the enhancement and improvement of PEI's AT network of roadways, pathways and trails.

3

Develop a shoulder width policy for provincially owned roads, including recommendations for specific road types based on original design, traffic counts and vehicle speed.

4

Review existing routes between communities and destinations to determine which roadways are most appropriate for future investment to make them AT friendly routes.

5

Develop a publicly available web-based map which identifies current AT routes and proposed AT routes and pathways. As proposed pathways are completed, they would be updated on the map.

6

Build an AT corridor across the Hillsborough Bridge with easy and efficient access points on both sides of the bridge.

7

Develop an AT surveillance program based on key routes and locations that will track pedestrians and cyclists and allow for the monitoring of yearly changes.

8

Identify specific workplaces to determine travel distances for employees and work with those employers to encourage and support employees to change their commuting mode.

9

Work with the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning, Public Schools Branch and la Commission scolaire de langue française to identify schools with larger percentages of students within walkable and cycling distances and work with them to encourage a greater percentage to use those modes instead of parental drop off or busing.

10

Develop a Learn to Bike curriculum to provide cycling instruction to build the competency and confidence of new cyclists.

11

Align AT efforts with the actions identified in the PEI Sustainable Transportation Action Plan and in particular place a focus on those actions related to public transit, car-pooling and working from home.

12

Develop a promotional campaign that highlights the many benefits of AT including environmental, health, economic, social and community.

13

Review existing legislation that relates to cycling and walking to ensure it provides communities with the flexibility they require to create safe and connected routes.

14

Develop a monitoring and reporting mechanism to publish pedestrian and cycling accidents, injuries and death counts on an annual basis.

Everyone has a role to play in order to increase active transportation on PEI. Inclusive approaches and collaborative partnerships with municipalities, Indigenous communities, and organizations will be necessary in order to achieve a safe and connected active transportation system in PEI.

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