



April 30, 2019

Active Transportation Strategy Department  
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**Re: Surrey Board of Trade Active Transportation Submission**

The Surrey Board of Trade, representing 6,000 business contacts submits the following feedback on the Active Transportation Strategy. The Surrey Board of Trade advocates on behalf of our membership to support business and attract business.

We posed the same questions available on your website to our membership. The responses are summarized below.

**Question 1: What does active transportation mean to you and how does it fit into your life?**

Our members responded stated that “active transportation” is a vague term that needs to be further clarified. Many believe it to be walking and biking from point A to B as well as recreational walking and cycling.

At this point, many members noted that active transportation is a leisure lifestyle choice, not a feasible method to go to and from work. We need to ensure that a city is connected to the point where there is active workforce transportation strategies.

Active transportation facilities built in the community assists the average person in their comfort, safety and ease of walking, cycling and taking the bus/transit, culminating in livable communities.

**Question 2: What are some of the challenges in your everyday life that prevent you from moving towards using active transportation modes? What are some of your concerns about active transportation?**

There were many challenges that face utilization of active transportation modes:

1. Infrequency of buses and other transit options;
2. Distance required to travel make using transit, biking, and walking impractical;
3. Safety associated with biking/walking;
4. Persons with disabilities are unable to fully utilize active transportation strategies;
5. There is a lack of facilities (bus stops, transit hubs) in many communities and therefore, it is inaccessible;
6. Single-ridership using cars – a culture that is challenging to change.



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What hinders our use of alternative transportation modes is a lack of good facilities near where we live and work, the long hours we work, the multiple purpose trips many of us have to take in a day which are difficult in using active modes, the hours we work-many in the dark if part time, our laziness or lack of conditioning to use these modes, and our love of using the car.

There are a number of barriers to people walking and cycling more. They can be physical barriers, but they can also be personal – ingrained habits or perceived barriers. Most people know that more physical activity and a healthier diet is good for them, and that walking and cycling are an easy way to keep healthy. Despite this, however, simply having a car often means it becomes the choice for many short, everyday journeys.

Of course, it is more than just habit. Many people are deterred from making some trips on foot or bike because they have over-estimated the distance, difficulty or time involved. Many adults haven't cycled since they were at school and don't feel confident or safe getting back on a bike. Concerns about personal security make many people feel uncomfortable going out for a walk after dark, or allowing their children to walk home from school.

The barriers are also physical: the location and design of our most common destinations – e.g. employment and education sites, retail parks or leisure centres – can make people favour the car. Too often they are located on the edge of town and are too far to walk or located on busy main roads that can be difficult to cross. Sometimes, while there is ample car parking there is nowhere safe to lock bikes, or no storage and shower facilities for cyclists. The design of streets can also act as a barrier to walking or cycling. Cycle lanes can be poorly maintained, incomplete, or too narrow to allow comfortable cycling. Pavements which have gaps in them – or which are narrow at some points can put people off walking. Roads, particularly with heavy or fast-moving traffic, can be noisy or intimidating and a significant barrier for pedestrians and cyclists. Walking is the most common form of physical activity for older people yet older people cite uneven pavements as one of the main reasons why they don't walk more. Sometimes even safety measures designed into junctions can restrict pedestrian movement, actually making it easier to drive. It can even be as simple as signage for those on foot or bike not being as good as for the motorist.

Cyclists and pedestrians remain particularly vulnerable road users. Aside from the effect that casualties have on individuals and their families, pedestrian and cyclist casualties are a significant burden on local health services. Furthermore, safety concerns are often cited as a reason why people do not cycle or, for example, allow children to walk to school meaning that they are missing the opportunity to do more physical activity and improve their health.

We need reliable, efficient transport networks in our towns and cities. However, increasing car use on a constrained road network is impacting on reliability and increasing congestion, and the forecasts are for it to get worse. In Surrey, there is little room to add capacity to the road network, and there are significant cost and environmental implications. Therefore we need to consider how we make the best use of the road space we have already.

In general, communities are not planned in a way to make active transportation feasible. Workplaces need to be closer to home for active transportation to be truly effective. More transit hubs, transit options, and more frequent stops within side-streets are other options that need to be explored to improve the use of active transportation.



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**Question 3: What is the most important action that government could take to promote active transportation? What is unique in your community or region that needs to be considered?**

Surrey is a large urban centre (you can fit Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond into Surrey). Many areas are not close to transit hubs. Our members indicated that effective marketing and route-planning could encourage utilization of active transportation modes. If an individual knows that they can bike to a bus stop, dock their bike (and explain the docking method in detail), and then bike from the bus stop to their place of work more people would be inclined to use these methods. Unfortunately, due to congestion and the uncertainty of bus times it would still be underutilized.

Governments (at all levels) need to consider densification and incorporating mixed residential use buildings to promote more businesses in various communities. Additionally, governments could consider tax rebates or credits on bicycle purchases.

Active and public transportation facilities are smart investments as they stimulate local business and tourism in communities of all sizes. The economic benefits also extend beyond private business to healthcare: regular physical activity keeps people healthier and out of the healthcare system keeping government costs low.

The BC government has no clear direction to improve cycling in our province. When 2.8 million adults in BC support enhancing cycling infrastructure it is time for our province to start planning for more cycling.

Building safe biking and walking routes, upgrading streets and improving transit makes transportation easy. With better access to transportation, British Columbians are more likely to support our local economy. The guiding principles for the strategy should be that walking and cycling should be everyday ways of getting around – not just for their own sake but also because of what they can do to improve public health, tackle congestion, reduce carbon emissions and improve the local environment.

Health challenges, congestion and accessibility, and the environment all present significant challenges for national and local government. At a time when public finances are coming under increased pressure, we cannot ignore the potential of low-cost, sustainable measures like walking and cycling to contribute to tackling these challenges. For the South Asian community (30% of Surrey's population is of South Asian origin), cardiovascular disease is high. We cannot afford to miss the opportunity to get more people walking and cycling. The evidence is clear: integrated walking and cycling programmes in Local Transport Plans can get more people active and deliver significant benefits, offering high value for money.

Some ideas from the UK:

The Cycle to Work Guarantee is a major new joint initiative between DfT and DH aimed at transforming the numbers of people who cycle to work. By signing up to the guarantee, employers undertake to provide a series of simple, relatively low-cost measures that can make a real difference to their workforce.

Change4Life is a ground breaking social marketing campaign launched by the Department of Health in January 2009 designed to help us all 'eat well, move more and live longer'. Change4Life is much more than a healthy living campaign. It aims to be a practical, supportive movement across all walks of society, which acknowledges the pressures of modern life that we all experience. Obesity is a major problem which, potentially, affects us all, but we can't tackle it on our own.



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Funding improvements to infrastructure which will include at least 250 safer links to approximately 500 schools.

Cycling England are also working with the rail industry to help realise the potential for people to access rail stations on bicycles through the Cycle Rail Integration Taskforce: anyone passing through Cambridge station can see how much potential demand there is for cycling to stations. By putting the needs of cyclists at the heart of their rail network and station design, the Netherlands has enabled as many as 40% of rail users to access major stations on bikes, with cycle hubs at stations capable of providing top of the range facilities for thousands of cyclists.

Bikeability has been designed by leading experts in the fields of road safety and cycling to give children and parents the skills and confidence to cycle safely and well on today's roads. It consists of three levels: z Level 1 teaches basic cycling skills off-road, aimed at 7–9 year olds. Level 2 adds on-road training aimed at 10–11 year olds. Level 3 is aimed at older children and adults and includes tackling more difficult road features such as roundabouts.