

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation *Summary Report*



Go for Green
The Active Living & Environment Program

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

Summary Report

This study was conducted by Environics International on behalf of Go for Green in Ottawa. Technical and financial support was provided by Health Canada. For further information, please contact Go for Green at (613) 562-5313, 1-888-UB-ACTIV or info@goforgreen.ca. December 1998. For this and other Go for Green publications, visit Go for Green's Web site at www.goforgreen.ca.



Health Canada Santé Canada

“This survey shows that most Canadians want to be more active and are frustrated they are not active more often. Through education and the improvement of infrastructure, including more paths for walking and cycling, better lighting, dedicated bicycle lanes on streets, and bicycle parking facilities, society can create safer and inviting conditions for active transportation. We need to help Canadians move from good intentions to action by creating a community environment that supports an active lifestyle.”

Stephen Grundy
Executive Director
Go for Green

“The benefits of shifting to an active lifestyle include not only better health and lower health care costs but important environmental benefits as well. Every year, each of Canada’s 14 million cars travels an average of 16,000 kilometres and pumps out more than four tonnes of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants. The average car makes 2,000 trips per year of 3 kilometres or less and many of these trips could easily be done on foot or bicycle. The fact is, when we make a short trip, we cause a great deal of pollution because a cold engine generates much more emissions than a warm one. Promoting active transportation and eliminating needless short car trips is an excellent way to help Canada reduce smog and meet our international commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

Ted Scrutton
National Chair
Go for Green

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"National Survey on Active Transportation", Go for Green, Environics, 1998.

Également disponible en français sous le titre *Étude nationale sur le transport actif en 1998 – Rapport-éclair*, Décembre 1998

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

"...I've found the air quality here is so polluted. I live in Eastern passage...my children have had problems breathing and stuff like that."

Halifax focus group participant

"I agree, I think there's a big change in the climate conditions since pollution has been on the rise."

Toronto focus group participant

"There are a lot more asthmatics and a lot more allergies than there used to be."

Montreal focus group participant

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The major objective of the 1998 National Survey on Active Transportation is to establish a baseline of participation in active transportation (walking and cycling) among adults and school aged children.

- Aspects examined include:
 - participation levels
 - types of trips
 - frequency and length of trips
 - barriers and opportunities for increasing participation
 - the magnitude of potential shifts

METHODOLOGY

- The 1998 National Survey on Active Transportation was conducted by telephone between April 16 and 19, 1998.
- The survey was fielded to a random representative sample of 1,501 adults aged 18 and older in each of the ten provinces.
- Results of the national survey are considered accurate to within ± 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.
- The national sample included a subsample of 429 adults with children aged 18 or less, still attending school. Results of this subsample are considered accurate within 4.8 percent, 19 times out of 20.
- The survey research was also followed up by a series of focus groups on cycling conducted during October 1998 in

Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. Selected quotes from these focus groups are included in the margins of the current Report. The full focus group report is also available from Go for Green.

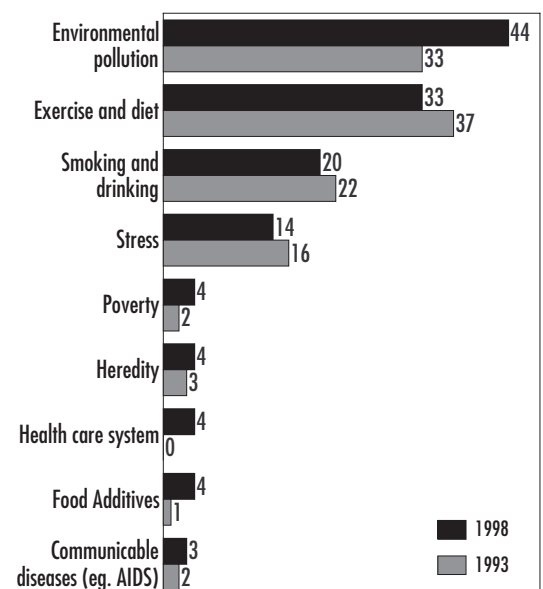
KEY FINDINGS

CRITICAL CONTEXTS

Canadians are most likely to view environmental quality and fitness (exercise and nutrition) as the key factors in promoting individual health. Increasingly they are also looking to governments for leadership on environmental issues, and less likely to feel personally empowered.

- In 1998, Canadians are most likely to view environmental quality and fitness as the most important factors influencing their personal health.

Most Important Health Risk Factors * Unaided Responses 1993 - 1998



*All numbers cited in charts and tables in this Report refer to percentages. Some totals might not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. Unless otherwise stated, the base in all charts/tables is 1,501.

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

- The number of Canadians focusing on the environment as a risk to their health has increased significantly over the past five years according to Environics polling. Indeed, over four in ten (44%, up 11 points from 1993) Canadians now believe that environmental pollution is the most important health risk, while another one in three (33%, down four points) point to exercise and diet.
- Concern over air quality is up in all regions of the country, and is now viewed by the public as the number one environmental problem in Canada according to Environics 1998 polls.
- As Canadians feel less empowered individually to address environmental problems, they are increasingly looking to government for help in finding solutions to environmental problems.
- In 1998, the number of adults pointing to individual Canadians as most responsible for solving environmental problems has fallen to 31 percent, down 17 points from 1994. The number pointing to government as most responsible has risen to 29 percent, up ten points. Other Environics research suggests that citizens are now less likely to feel that individual action is sufficient to make a difference.

WALKING

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

Overall, Canadians are active walkers. Walking, as a mode of transportation as well as for leisure or recreation, is a lifestyle in which a majority of Canadians participate.

- Over eight in ten (85%) Canadians report walking for leisure and recreational reasons.
- Six in ten (58%) Canadians walk as a mode of transportation “at least sometimes” to a routine destination, including:
 - leisure/recreation (33%)
 - shopping/errands (31%)
 - school (28%)
 - friends/family (26%)
 - work (14%)
- Overall, 43 percent walk “most of the time” (more than half of their trips) to at least one destination.
- British Columbians (64%) and Ontarians (62%) are most likely to walk to at least one routine destination, while Atlantic Canadians (44%) and residents of Saskatchewan (46%) are least likely.
- Canadians who walk, travel an average of 3.2 kilometres each way, with the longest average distance to work and to visit friends/family (3.6 km for each).

“I made a personal choice [to walk]. I love it.”

Montreal focus group participant

“I feel my health is mostly related to my emotional well-being, and then after that, nutrition, exercise are the things that I think are the next most influential.”

Vancouver focus group participant

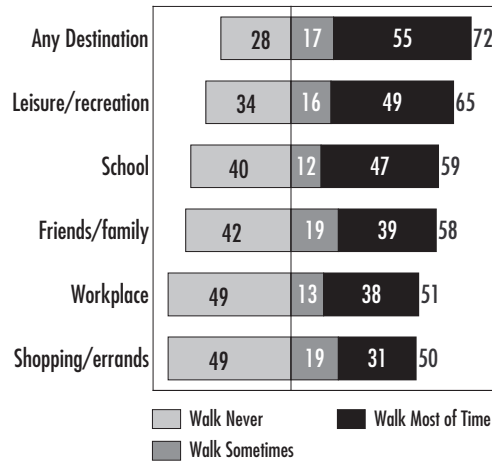
WALKING AS A MODE OF TRANSPORTATION
“AT LEAST SOMETIMES” TO ANY DESTINATION (%)

	CANADA	ATL	QUE	ONT	MAN	SASK	ALTA	BC
ALL RESPONDENTS	58	44	59	62	52	46	57	64
THOSE LIVING WITHIN 2.5 KM (BASE: 64% OF CANADIANS)	72	60	69	75	65	61	73	79

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

Current Participation in Walking as Transportation

Canadians Living Within 2.5 km of Destination (Base=64%)



Participation among adults aged 25 to 44 years is higher than average to leisure/recreation, shopping/errands and friends/family destinations.

BENEFITS OF WALKING

Canadians view the benefits of walking principally in terms of health or pleasure. In addition, many believe that walking is a practical and convenient mode of transportation. The linkage made between walking and improving the environment is weak.

- Top five reasons for walking as a mode of transportation in Canada are:
 - exercise/health (62%)
 - pleasure (30%)
 - practicality/convenience (24%)
 - environmental concern (10%)
 - saving money (9%)
- Residents of larger cities, younger Canadians and less affluent individuals, are more likely to view practicality and convenience as benefits of walking. People living

"I think once [people get] into the routine of walking or biking, they have more energy."

Halifax focus group participant

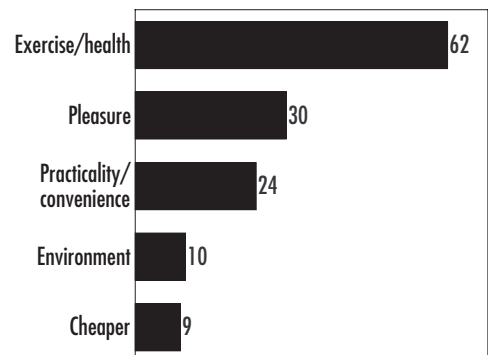
"I'm starting to see the benefits of [walking], so I don't feel as much that it's a chore. I find that if I try to incorporate it during my day... today, for instance, I had to go over to Spadina, and instead of taking the subway, I walked... little things like that..."

Toronto focus group participant

- Looking at only those Canadians who live within 30 minutes (2.5 km) of each specific destination, the percentage of participants walking "at least sometimes" is not only higher than the average for all Canadians, but the rank order of destinations changes as follows:
 - leisure/recreation (65%)
 - school (59%)
 - friends/family (58%)
 - work (51%)
 - shopping/errands (50%)
- The difference suggests that, among those Canadians living within a walkable distance, shopping/errands is the least attractive destination for walking while friends/family and the workplace are most likely to be walking destinations.
- Demographically, walking as a mode of transportation to any destination is much more prevalent among adults aged 18 to 24 years.

Main Reason for Walking as Mode of Transportation

(Total Unaided Mentions)



1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

in smaller towns, older individuals, and more affluent Canadians are less likely to view these as benefits.

- Low activity respondents, defined as those who walk to at least one destination less than half the time, perceive a narrower range of benefits to walking—focusing mostly on exercise and pleasure. High activity respondents, defined as those who walk to at least one destination more than half the time, perceive a wider range of benefits—exercise, pleasure, practicality and convenience. This could suggest that “behaviour begets attitude” or that people “learn to value an activity mostly by doing it.”
- Interestingly, few Canadians view an improved, cleaner environment as one of the reasons for walking.

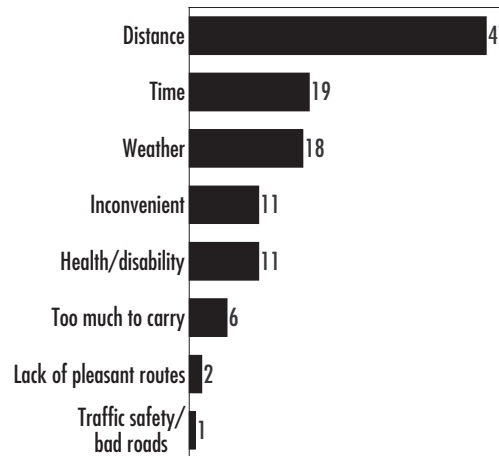
BARRIERS TO WALKING

Canadians cite distance as the primary barrier to walking more often.

- The principal barriers to walking as a mode of transportation reported by Canadians are:
 - distance (47%)
 - time (19%)
 - weather (18%)
 - inconvenience (11%)
 - health/disability (11%)

- While distance is reported to be a significant barrier, two in three (64%) Canadians report living within the equivalent of a 30 minute walk (2.5 km) of routine destinations like friends, family, recreation/leisure, workplace and the place they like to shop or do errands.

Main Barriers to Walking as Mode of Transportation
(Total Unaided Mentions)



“If you have to go out and the weather is really bad, if it’s freezing out or subzero and the wind’s really blowing, you’re a lot better off in a car.”

Toronto focus group participant

“I walk and I prefer to. I think if I cycled I would have to stop and shower when I got there and I don’t want to do that. It takes me about 40 minutes to walk. It’s about 5 km. I do it everyday.”

Vancouver focus group participant

ATTITUDES TOWARD WALKING AS A MODE OF TRANSPORTATION
“AGREE” (%)

	CANADA	ATL	QUE	BC	MAN	ONT	ALTA	SASK
NEVER HAVE TIME TO WALK	31	35	27	32	27	38	32	29
NO PLEASANT PLACES TO WALK NEAR MY HOME	15	20	21	15	14	15	10	10

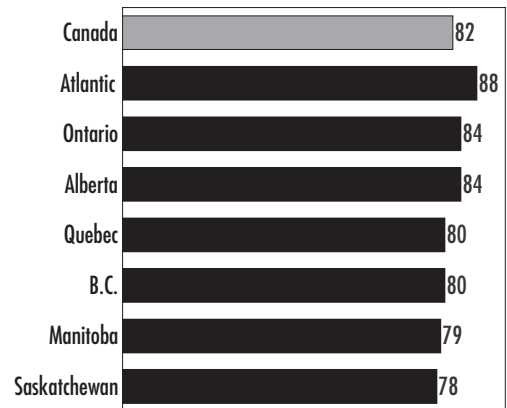
1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTING WALKING

Not only do a large number of Canadians live reasonably close to major destinations, but few say that they have no time to walk and even fewer say they have no pleasant places to walk.

- When asked, only a minority of Canadians say they do not have time to walk. Only one in three (31%) agree with the statement “I never have time to walk as a mode of transportation.”
- A lack of pleasant routes is not a major obstacle: when asked, only 15 percent of Canadians agree they lack pleasant places to walk near their homes.
- The mean distance travelled to routine destinations is 3.2 km, a reasonable distance for walking.
- Canadians were asked to express a preference about which of four destinations – leisure destinations, shopping, friends and family or work – they would be most willing to walk more often. They prefer leisure activities (41%), followed by shopping (20%), friends and family (20%) or work (7%).

Would “Ideally Like to Walk More” as a Mode of Transportation



POTENTIAL SHIFTS TO WALKING AS A MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

Eight in ten Canadians say that they want to walk as a mode of transportation more than they do at present; two in three live within a reasonable 30 minute walk of a routine destination.

- Canadians are motivated to walk more as a mode of transportation. Eight in ten (82%) agree that they would ideally like to walk more often than they do. In fact, fewer than two in ten (16%) are not willing to walk more often. Atlantic Canadians are most likely to say they want to walk more often (88%). In contrast, residents

“When I’m on a bike I’m going and I’m going at my own speed and don’t worry about everybody else. I’ll get there when I get there. I don’t have to worry about paying a token, standing up on a blasted crowded bus.”

Toronto focus group participant

“I like to cycle for fitness and for fun, and also I like the privacy.”

Vancouver focus group participant

PEOPLE LIVING WITHIN 2.5 KM OF DESTINATION
FREQUENCY OF WALKING AS PERCENTAGE OF POP.

	TOTAL LIVING ≤ 2.5 KM	WALK MOST OF TIME	WALK SOMETIMES	WALK NEVER
ANY DESTINATION	64	35	11	18
SHOPPING/ERRANDS	43	13	8	21
LEISURE/RECREATION	33	16	5	11
FRIENDS/FAMILY	27	11	5	11
SCHOOL	25	12	3	10
WORKPLACE	14	5	2	7

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

of Saskatchewan are the least likely in Canada to want to walk more frequently (78%). As well, adults over 45 and women are most likely to feel this strongly.

- Not only do Canadians ideally want to walk more often, but the data suggest a majority live within a walkable distance. A majority of two in three (64%) report they live within a 30 minute walk (2.5 km) of at least one routine destination, including:
 - errands/shopping (43%)
 - leisure/recreation (33%)
 - family/friends (27%)
 - school (25%)
 - work (14%)
- Looking at only those Canadians living within a 30 minute walk (2.5 km) of a routine destination, 28 percent never walk and could potentially walk “at least some of the time.” Another 17 percent only walk “some of the time” and could potentially increase their frequency of walking to “most of the time.”
- Canadians living in medium sized cities of 100K-1M on average live closest to their routine destinations, while those in small rural communities tend to live the furthest.
- Expressed as a percent of the total adult population, the above data show that 18 percent of Canadians who live within a walkable distance of least one destination, choose not to

walk. Another 11 percent who could walk to at least one routine destination, do so only sometimes. In total, 29 percent, representing 6.4 million Canadians, could potentially walk more than they do but choose not to.

- Those who live within a 30 minute walk of a particular destination, are least likely to walk to places for shopping/errands and/or walk to the workplace (49% each say they never walk to these destinations).
- Expressed as a percentage of the total population, the above shows that 21 percent of Canadians could walk for shopping/errands but do not, while seven percent could walk to work, but do not.

CYCLING

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION*

While over half of Canadian adults own a bike, only one in four ever cycle as a mode of transportation. However, one in two Canadians cycle for leisure or recreational purposes.

- Over half (57%) of Canadians own a bicycle. Bicycle ownership is highest in Manitoba, Alberta and Quebec. As well, men, affluent and university-educated Canadians are most likely to own bicycles. Older adults, 55 and over, are least likely to own a bicycle.

“I use the bike to go to work...and it gives me energy.”

Montreal focus group participant

“More people would be biking if we made it more accessible, a bit friendlier.”

Toronto focus group participant

CYCLING AS A MODE OF TRANSPORTATION “AT LEAST SOMETIMES” TO ANY DESTINATION (%)	CANADA	ATL	QUE	ONT	MAN	SASK	ALTA	BC
ALL RESPONDENTS	26	14	27	28	30	23	34	24
WITHIN 8 KM (BASE: 84% OF CANADIANS)	28	14	27	30	34	27	36	24

*Based on six months of the year.

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

"I take my bike out at least seven or eight months out of the year."

Montreal focus group participant

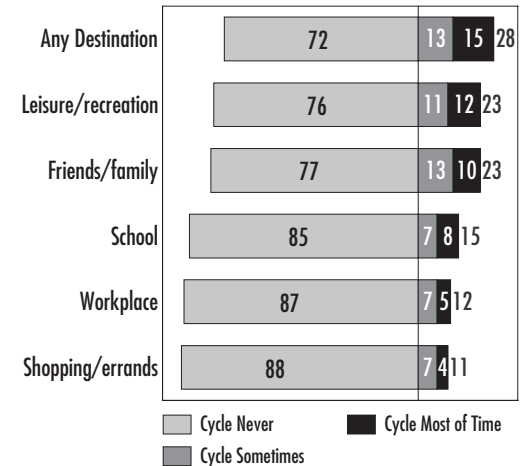
"I like driving the bike, I really do. I just love the wind in my face."

Halifax focus group participant

- Almost one in two (48%) Canadians report that they cycle for leisure or recreation purposes.
- Only one in four (26%) of all Canadians cycle "at least sometimes" to a routine destination including:
 - a place of leisure /recreation (18%)
 - friends/family (14%)
 - school (11%)
 - shopping/errands (9%)
 - work (8%)
- Overall, 14 percent of Canadians cycle "most of the time" to at least one destination.
- Albertans (34%), Manitobans (30%) and Ontarians (28%) are most likely to cycle to at least one routine destination, while Atlantic Canadians (14%) are least likely.
- Canadians who cycle travel an average of 5.6 kilometres each way, with the longest average distance to work being 7.4 km, to places of leisure/recreation and to school (5.6 km for each).
- Those living within a 30 minute cycle (8.0 km) of at least one specific destination, are no more likely than any other Canadians to cycle as a mode of transportation. Twenty-eight percent of those living within 8.0 km cycle "at least sometimes" to at least one destination compared to 26 percent of all Canadians. Only 15 percent cycle "most of the time" compared to 14 percent of all Canadians.
- Although among those who live within a 30 minute (8.0 km) cycle of each specific destination, the

Current Participation in Cycling as Transportation

Canadians Living Within 8 km of Destination (Base=84%)



percentage of participants cycling "at least sometimes" is not much higher, the rank order of destinations is different relative to other Canadians:

- friends/family (23%)
- leisure/recreation (23%)
- school (15%)
- work (12%)
- shopping/errands (11%)
- The difference suggests that among those Canadians living within 30 minutes of at least one destination, shopping/errands is the least attractive destination for cycling, while friends/family and leisure/recreation are clearly most likely to be cycling destinations.
- Demographically, cycling as a mode of transportation to any destination is much more prevalent among adults aged 18 to 24 years. Participation among adults aged 25 to 44 years is higher than

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

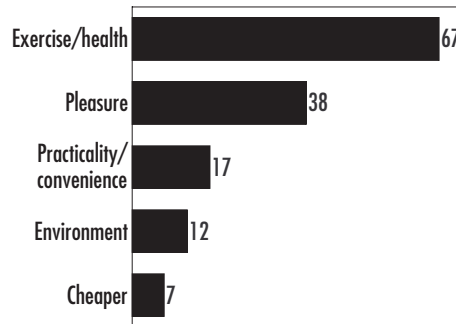
average to leisure/recreation, shopping/errands and friends/family destinations.

BENEFITS OF CYCLING

Canadians view the benefits of cycling mostly in terms of health or pleasure. Only a minority cycle for practicality or convenience; even fewer see a cleaner environment as a reason for why they cycle.

- The top five reasons for cycling as a mode of transportation in Canada are:
 - exercise and health (67%)
 - pleasure (38%)
 - practicality and convenience (17%)
 - environmental concern (12%)
 - saving money (7%)
- Older and more affluent Canadians are more likely than average to cycle for exercise/health reasons.
- Residents of larger cities, as well as younger and less affluent individuals, are more likely than average to view practicality and convenience as benefits of cycling.
- As with the case of walking, high activity respondents (defined as those cycling to any destination more than half the time) perceive a wider range of benefits to cycling, mainly - exercise, pleasure, practicality and convenience. Low activity respondents (defined as cycling to any destination less than half the time) perceive a narrower range of benefits—principally, exercise and pleasure. This again

Main Reason for Cycling as Mode of Transportation (Total Unaided Mentions)



reinforces the notion that “behaviour begets attitude” or that people “learn to value an activity by doing.”

- Interestingly, pleasure is a significantly more important reason for cycling to low activity respondents than to high activity respondents. This may suggest that Canadians who engage in a low level of cycling activity are less likely to respond to appeals that suggest cycling is “good for you,” and more likely to be receptive to those that reference “pleasure” and “quality of life.”
- As with walking, Canadians do not point to the environment as a main reason for their cycling activity.

“I think exercise for me is number one, it wakes me up in the morning and it lets me burn off my day’s stress from the office at night. The environment, for sure, I mean every time you’re riding to work, I think everybody can relate to that, exhaust that’s coming out of all the cars and just knowing that you’re one less of them, that makes me feel good.”

Vancouver focus group participant

“One of the reasons why I ride my bike or walk is I save money.”

Halifax focus group participant

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

"If you want to go shopping...you just can't do it with your bike."

Halifax focus group participant

"I had a little accident with a bus. It was hard to pick up my bike after that."

Montreal focus group participant

"I don't want to get to work and be all messy and everything."

Vancouver focus group participant

BARRIERS TO CYCLING

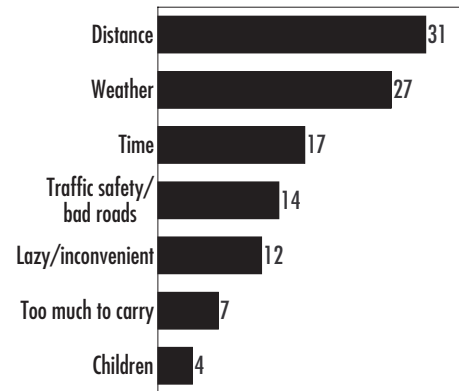
Although Canadians are most likely to cite distance, weather and time as the main barrier to cycling, these may, to a large degree, be proxies for concern about safety and traffic.

Focus group research suggests that parking and shower facilities are especially important for promoting cycling in the workplace.

- The most frequently mentioned barriers to cycling as a mode of transportation are:
 - distance (31%)
 - weather (27%)
 - time (17%)
 - traffic/safety or bad roads (14%)
 - laziness/inconvenience (12%)
- Canadians living within 30 minutes (8.0 km) of routine destinations are no more likely to cycle as a mode of transportation as those who live farther and cite time, distance and convenience as top barriers to cycling more.
- Safety is perceived as a major obstacle to cycling. When asked directly, one in two (53%) Canadians believe that cycling is dangerous because of vehicle traffic. Women are significantly more inclined to that opinion than are men, as are people living in large urban centres.
- The other significant obstacle preventing people from cycling more is the weather. More than one-quarter of Canadians feel weather is a barrier to biking.

Main Barriers to Cycling as Mode of Transportation

(Total Unaided Mentions)



This particular sentiment is strongest in large urban centres, and among those who live within 30 minutes of a routine destination.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTING CYCLING

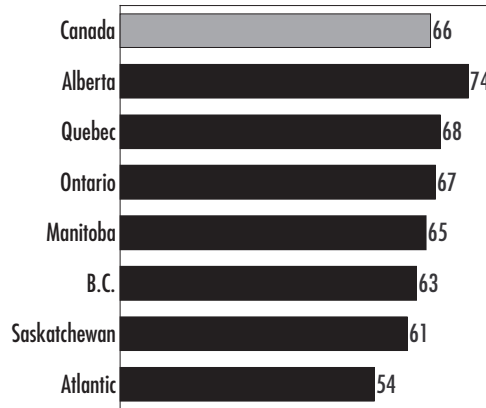
Two in three Canadians say they would like to cycle more as a mode of transportation than they do at present. A majority also support government spending on bike lanes and few look down on cyclists or themselves feel stigmatized for cycling.

- A strong current desire to cycle exists among Canadians: two in three (66%) would like to bike more often. This is most strongly expressed by Canadians living in medium sized cities (100K to 1M), and those up to the age of 55, three in four of whom would like to cycle more often.

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

- Regionally, Albertans (74%) are the most likely to want to cycle more often, while Atlantic Canadians (54%) are least likely to want to.
- A large majority of Canadians (82%) supports government spending to create dedicated bicycle lanes and paths.
- Asked which trips they would be most willing to cycle to more often, Canadians are most likely to point to leisure (46%), followed by family and friends (20%), workplace (12%) and errands and shopping (11%).
- Despite reporting that “convenience” and “laziness” are barriers to cycling, seven in ten (70%) Canadians say they would cycle to work if there “were a dedicated bike lane which would take me to my workplace in less than 30 minutes at a comfortable pace.”
- Interestingly, there is widespread sympathy for cyclists in traffic: nine in ten (90%) Canadians agree that drivers should be much more considerate of bicyclists than they are now. Of these, 60 percent strongly agree.

Would “Ideally Like to Cycle More” as a Mode of Transportation



- In addition, just one in four (26%) adults agree with the statement, “Cyclists in my community are reckless and a major menace to pedestrians and cars.” Seventy-two percent of Canadians disagree with this statement, 47 percent disagree strongly.
- There appears to be little stigmatization of bicycle commuters. Asked if “most Canadians view people who cycle to work as a little odd,” one-quarter (24%) agree and three-quarters (74%) disagree. Asked for views on the statement, “I think people who cycle to work are a little odd,” only seven percent agree and 92 percent disagree.

“I think paths would be incredible to have.”

Vancouver focus group participant

“You can go a long way in half an hour if you put your mind to it.”

Vancouver focus group participant

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CYCLING AS A MODE OF TRANSPORTATION “AGREE”

	CANADA	ATL	QUE	ONT	MAN	SASK	ALTA	BC
SUPPORT GOV'T SPENDING ON BIKE LANES	82	84	84	81	83	70	79	84
WOULD USE BIKE LANE	70	56	69	73	75	72	68	64
CYCLING IS DANGEROUS	53	64	49	57	52	40	45	59
MOST CANADIANS VIEW PEOPLE WHO CYCLE TO WORK AS “ODD”	24	31	10	28	31	24	33	27
I THINK PEOPLE WHO CYCLE TO WORK ARE “ODD”	7	7	6	8	9	5	9	9

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

POTENTIAL SHIFTS TO CYCLING AS A MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

Over eight in ten Canadians live within a cyclable distance of a routine destination, while another two in three say they would ideally like to cycle more often as a mode of transportation. If bike lanes were built, seven in ten working Canadians say they would use them to get to work.

- Not only do two in three (66%) Canadians say they would like to cycle more often, but clearly, an overwhelming majority could cycle to routine destinations within 30 minutes or eight kilometres of home. Over eight (84%) in ten Canadians live within a 30 minute cycle of a routine destination, including:
 - shopping/errands (68%)
 - leisure/recreation (57%)
 - friends/family (47%)
 - school (48%)
 - work (33%)
- Canadians living in medium sized cities of 100K-1M are most likely to live within a cyclable distance to their routine destinations, while those in small rural communities tend to be least likely.

- Looking at only those living within a 30 minute cycle (8.0 km) of at least one destination, seven in ten (72%) never cycle and could potentially cycle “at least some of the time”, while another 13 percent who only cycle “some of the time” could potentially increase their frequency of cycling to “most of the time.”
- Expressed as a percent of the total population, the data shows that 61 percent of Canadian adults – 13.5 million people in total – live within a reasonable cycling distance of at least one destination, but do not cycle. Another 11 percent who could cycle to at least one routine destination, do so only “sometimes.”
- Among those who live within a 30 minute bike ride of a particular destination, the destinations with least participation in cycling appear to be trips for shopping/errands and places of leisure and recreation, where respectively 59 percent and 43 percent of the total population in each case, could, but do not cycle.
- As well, 54 percent of the total population of working Canadians could cycle to work but do not, 36

“It’s good for your health. I don’t really exercise, so by cycling, I am exercising. I am doing something for me, for my body, for my lungs.”

Montreal focus group participant

“You have to address the issue of safety too because that’s what most people said their concern was.”

Toronto focus group participant

PEOPLE LIVING WITHIN 8 KM OF DESTINATION
FREQUENCY OF CYCLING AS PERCENTAGE OF POP.

	TOTAL LIVING ≤ 8 KM	CYCLE MOST OF TIME	CYCLE SOMETIMES	CYCLE NEVER
ANY DESTINATION	84	13	11	61
SHOPPING/ERRANDS	68	3	5	59
LEISURE/RECREATION	57	7	6	43
SCHOOL	48	4	3	41
FRIENDS/FAMILY	47	5	6	36
WORKPLACE	33	2	2	28

percent of all Canadians, could, but do not, cycle to visit friends and family, 41 percent of students could cycle to school, but do not.

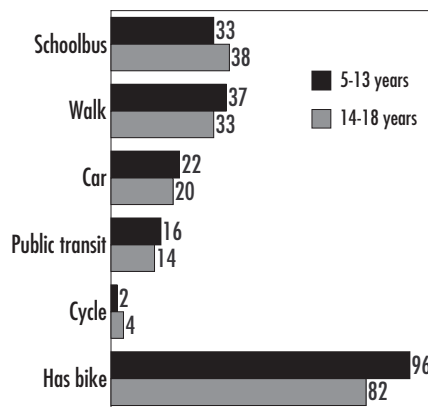
- Focusing solely on the limitations imposed by time and distance, the data on current participation levels, suggest that there is a much greater percentage of Canadians to shift to cycling than walking.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND CHILDREN

While a number of Canadian children walk to school, only a small minority cycle to school. As in the case with adults, distance and safety are the principle barriers to walking and cycling to school for children.

- Just over one in three (36%) Canadian children walks to school most of the time. However, among those living within one kilometre of school, over eight in ten (86%) walk most of the time, and among those living one to three kilometres of school, half (50%) walk most of the time. Only five percent of those living beyond three kilometres walk.
- While nine in ten Canadian children own a bike, only five percent take a bicycle most of the time. While six percent of those living less than one kilometre from school cycle most of the time, a slightly higher proportion (9%) living one to three kilometres cycle. Only two percent of those living beyond three kilometres ever cycle.

Children Using Mode "At Least Half the Time" According to Age



- Another four in ten (43%) take the school bus most of the time while one in five are driven (20%) and six percent (6%) take transit.
- For children, distance is the major barrier to walking, mentioned by 53 percent of parents, followed by weather, mentioned by 11 percent.
- The main barrier to children cycling to school appears to be distance, mentioned by 30 percent, and traffic safety, mentioned by 26 percent. Weather is cited by 12 percent.

"I've been doing a lot more walking and a lot more biking with the kids and they like it. It's been great."

Halifax focus group participant

"Freedom. [As a child] driving fast on your bike is very exciting. I just remember the speed of it all... It felt very powerful. It was like you arrived when you got your bike."

Toronto focus group participant

1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

CONCLUSIONS

PARTICIPATION

- Two in three (64%) of all Canadians live within a 30 minute walk (2.5 km) of a routine destination like work, leisure, shopping, friends/family or school. Nearly as many, six in ten (58%) of Canadians walk to at least one of these destinations as a mode of transportation. In comparison, 85 percent report that they walk for leisure or recreation. The data show that living within a thirty minute walk of a destination greatly increases the likelihood of participation.
- Participation in walking as a mode of transportation is highest in British Columbia and Ontario; it is lowest in Saskatchewan and the Atlantic provinces.
- Over eight in ten (84%) Canadians live within a 30 minute cycle (8.0 km) of a routine destination like work, leisure, shopping, friends/family or school, while 57 percent own a bicycle.
- While nearly half of all Canadians (48%) report that they cycle for leisure or recreational purposes, only one in four (26%) ever cycles

as a mode of transportation to at least one of the routine destinations listed above. In contrast to walking, living within a 30 minute cycle of a routine destination does not increase the likelihood of participation in cycling.

- Participation in cycling is highest among Albertans and Manitobans, while Atlantic Canadians are, by far, the least likely to participate.

BENEFITS

- Canadians view environmental pollution and fitness as the most important factors affecting their personal health today. This suggests that Canadians would be very receptive to the promotion of active transportation as part of a healthy lifestyle, since it offers both these benefits.
- Indeed, the data show that majorities of Canadians would like to increase their participation in walking and cycling, with respectively 82 percent and 66 percent agreeing that they would ideally like to do these activities more than they currently do.
- Canadians who already walk and cycle as a mode of transportation,

"It's fun to feel your muscles...whether you're walking or cycling."

Montreal focus group participant

"Market the fun aspect of it. Again, it goes back to what I was saying about our love affair with the car. It's very entrenched. Any kind of negative image about the car, I think that's not going to work."

Toronto focus group participant

SHIFTING TO ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION HOW FAR ALONG ARE CANADIANS?

	CYCLING	WALKING
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION "AT LEAST SOMETIMES"	26	58
ACTIVE RECREATION "AT LEAST SOMETIMES"	47	85
WANT TO DO MORE	66	82
LIVE WITHIN 30 MINUTES	84	64

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report that they do so mainly for health reasons and pleasure. Interestingly, the number mentioning environmental reasons is negligible, suggesting that the linkages between active transportation and environmental benefits need to be strengthened.

BARRIERS

- With two in three (64%) of Canadians reporting that they live within a half hour walk, and eight in ten (84%) living within a half hour cycle of a routine destination, distance is clearly not a physical barrier for most Canadians.
- However, the results of the survey clearly show that Canadians perceive distance to be a major barrier, and that this perception is linked to notions of convenience and safety. Among Canadians, issues linked to “convenience” (including time and distance) account for nearly half of all mentioned barriers to cycling and walking as a mode of transportation. Weather is also an important factor, but again, it should be noted that this barrier is seasonal and to a large degree also a component of convenience.
- In the case of walking, less than 15 percent mention lack of pleasant routes and only one in three mention lack of time.
- The data suggest that safety is a very large barrier to cycling, with over half the respondents (53%) agreeing that cycling is dangerous because of traffic. A strong

majority refuse to blame cyclists for this hazard, disagreeing (72%) that cyclists are reckless and pointing to the need for drivers to be more careful (90%). Scrutiny of the data suggests that cyclists concerns about weather, time and distance are also strongly correlated with concerns about safety.

- It is not surprising with the concerns about safety that strong support exists among both cyclists and non-cyclists alike for increasing government spending on bike lanes (82%); in fact a large majority (70%) indicate that they would be willing to cycle 30 minutes to work if such lanes were available.
- Few Canadians view cycling to work as stigmatizing, with less than one in four saying others would see them as “odd” if they cycled. Less than one in ten say that they themselves would view a person who cycled to work as “odd.”

GROWTH POTENTIAL

- Most Canadians who live within a 30 minute walk of a routine destination walk to at least one destination at least sometimes. The greatest potential for increasing walking lies in increasing frequency of existing trips and the range of destinations. Expressed as a percentage of total population, 29 percent or 6.4 million Canadian adults could walk more often than they do, but choose not to. These

“I think if one less person drives, that’s good for the environment.”

Vancouver focus group participant

“So you have to really market to their emotions, and what emotionally is going to turn people on about using the bicycle...is evoking childhood and that whole thing about freedom. It appeals to peoples’ emotions.”

Toronto focus group participant

■ 1998 National Survey on Active Transportation

"The city is saying there's too many cars downtown, [and people] should take a bike. [The city] should have bike lanes, so it wouldn't be so congested."

Halifax focus group participant

"Give us a safe place to ride our bikes."

Toronto focus group participant

are Canadians who live within a 30 minute walk of a routine destination, but do not walk at all, or walk only some of the time.

- There is much room to increase participation in cycling trips to routine destinations, given that over three in four Canadians live within 30 minutes (8 km) of a routine destination and only one in four ever cycle. The greatest potential for increasing cycling lies in both attracting new participation and increasing the range of destinations. The data suggest that 61 percent of Canadian adults, representing 13.5 million people, could cycle more often than they do but choose not to. These are Canadians who live within a 30 minute cycle of a routine destination, but do not cycle at all, or cycle only some of the time.
- Findings from both the survey and focus groups suggest that Canadians are very responsive to efforts to facilitate active transportation through both social infrastructure (eg. the walking school bus, cycle to work days) and physical infrastructure (eg. bike lanes, shower facilities at work).
- Focus group results suggest that both walking and cycling may be encouraged by focusing on quality of life and quality of "time" benefits. As many Canadians already cycle for leisure and recreation, it is not a major leap to recognize the added "quality time" benefits of integrating these activities into our lives as active transportation.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The survey finding that the vast majority of Canadians not only can, but *want to* participate more in active transportation is a very positive sign. Not only do the overwhelming majority report that they live within a 30 minute walk or cycle of a routine destination, but most already walk or cycle for recreation or leisure.
- It is clear, however, the key issues are barriers related to perceptions of "convenience" and "safety." People already want to participate, but feel they cannot. In this context, it should be noted that "calls to action" without efforts to address barriers may just lead to feelings of guilt and resentment. This suggests a need to focus on the removal of "barriers" to participation and the creation of supportive "reinforcing" messages (eg. active transport makes exercise easy).
- Efforts to increase walking as a mode of transportation would be particularly positively received by people over 55. Similarly, efforts to increase cycling as a mode of transportation would be well received by boomers with families living in major urban centres and medium sized cities.