



## BRIEF: Informed Community Engagement

# Strategic Priority: A City That Moves

## Definition

Facilitating sustainable transportation options and creating community connectivity. Also, this entails ensuring that everyone experiences dignity and accessibility while travelling and recognizing that movement throughout a city is not simply about moving people from point A to point B. It is also about ensuring that everyone is able to access things they need, community connection and opportunities.

## Research Shows...

Effective and sustainable transportation is vital to any city, no matter its size. Small and medium-sized cities, which often struggle to provide adequate sustainable transportation options for their citizens, also need to find ways to increase mobility in their communities in order to maintain equity of access to services and to improve economic and environmental health.<sup>1</sup> Whether it is the quality of roads, the presence of sidewalks and bike lanes or the accessibility of public transit routes, investment in sustainable transportation affects each and every member of a community. Another key concern for cities is ensuring mobility equity, which refers to the provision of transportation policies, funding, infrastructure and services that are responsive to diverse demographic needs and aspirations.<sup>2</sup> Building a sustainable city doesn't just benefit the environment; it also benefits a city's most important aspect: its people. By facilitating and encouraging a variety of transportation options, cities can lower traffic congestion, support local businesses, create a cleaner city and encourage community connectivity.

## Key Facts and Considerations

- » According to the [2021 Census](#), driving is the preferred mode of transportation for the vast majority of Owen Sound residents, with 88% listing car, truck or van as their primary method of commuting. Among Owen Sound residents who commute to work (via any mode of transportation, including driving, transit, cycling or walking), a majority live within 15 minutes of their place of work.
- » The [City of Owen Sound](#) operates four fully accessible bus routes Monday to Saturday, with routes costing \$3 per ride for adults or \$70 for a monthly pass. A discounted senior and affordability pass is offered at \$55, with the latter requiring proof of financial assistance from either Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program.

<sup>1</sup> Urban Transportation Showcase Program. (2006, June). *Sustainable transportation in small and rural communities*. Case studies in sustainable transportation, Issue paper 61. Transport Canada. [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2012/tc/T41-1-61-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/tc/T41-1-61-eng.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Jay Pitter Placemaking. (2024, April). Mobility equity and reparative placemaking [Workshop document].

- » A [2015 Complete Streets Policy & Implementation Guide for Grey Bruce](#), commissioned by the Grey Bruce Health Unit, responds to the area's unique rural context, finding the area's aging population, lower rates of physical activity, high motor vehicle use and growing interest in cycling supported the consideration of a complete streets approach.
- » Small towns and rural areas face challenges implementing effective transportation options for their residents, particularly [public transit](#), which poses unique issues related to ridership development, funding and organizational capacity.
- » Active transportation options, defined as non-motorized travel such as cycling and walking, are increasingly being recognized as fundamental to the health and sustainability of communities, with [city planners taking an active role](#) in their design and implementation.

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## Precedents from Other Communities

The following precedents may be aligned with current initiatives in Owen Sound and may be reviewed to assess local approaches and/or serve as inspiration for possible future initiatives.

- » The Town of Deseronto established a [transit system](#) that serves local rural communities, providing all-day accessible bus service along the Belleville to Napanee travel corridor.
- » [Ikwe Safe Rides](#) is an Indigenous-run ride-share service based in Winnipeg providing a safe transportation alternative for women in the community. Ikwe was started in 2016 after Indigenous women spoke out about incidents of violence and harassment related to traditional taxi services.
- » The Municipality of Leamington developed an [on-demand transit service](#), where riders request a pick-up at a local bus station and set a destination. This system has proven both faster for riders and more efficient for buses, as they are only dispatched upon request.
- » As a result of a [public-private partnership](#) between the Town of Innisfil and Uber, the town subsidizes a portion of each Uber ride in Innisfil. This subsidy includes flat rates for popular destinations, such as the train station or employment area.
- » After a community engagement initiative found residents wanted more bike-focused planning, the Town of Cochrane developed a completely [free bike-share initiative](#) during the spring and summer months. This program was a massive success, with constant demand for the bikes throughout the summer, and it has even spread to other nearby municipalities.

- » [TTCriders](#) is a Toronto-based advocacy group that organizes on behalf of city transit users for frequent, accessible and affordable transit service. TTCriders is a grassroots organization that advocates with two central goals in mind: the establishment of a new transit funding model and encouraging leadership among riders to harness the power of everyday citizens.

Note: This brief is not intended to be complete or exhaustive. It is an informative community engagement preparatory tool. Special thanks to the students of URB432H in the Department of Urban Studies. Instructor: Daniel Fusca