

## **Appendix D: Pathway and Trail Benefits**

## **Benefits of Walking and Cycling: Statistics**

The demand for cycling and walking facilities is increasing in communities across Ontario. Across Ontario, recreational cycling is recognized as one of the top three recreational pursuits, having a 20 % participation rate and estimated annual growth rate of 2.3 % (Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, 1998). Regional municipalities, including Niagara and Waterloo, as well as municipalities such as Toronto, Ottawa, Brampton, Durham, London, Milton and Windsor, to name a few, are actively developing networks to encourage cycling and walking, and to lower reliance on the automobile.

In the City of Toronto, approximately 20 % of the population cycle for utilitarian purposes, such as getting to work, school, shopping, errands, etc., and 44 % of the population cycle for recreational purposes to follow leisure and fitness pursuits (Decima Research Inc., 1999).

At the provincial level, the Ontario Trails Council is promoting the integration of community and regional trails into a province-wide system known as the Ontario Trillium Trails Network. At the same time, a national trail system is being developed through the Trans Canada Trail initiative.

According to David Foot, author of “Boom, Bust & Echo”, and his American counterparts, significant changes are occurring in recreation as a result of demography. In short, a large proportion of our population is aging and looking for different types of recreational opportunities than were typical in the past.

The promotion of walking and cycling has significant transportation, recreation, health and fitness, environmental, and economic benefits.

## **Transportation Benefits: Statistics**

The addition of even a small volume of traffic to a congested road can create enormous delays for all users. In fact, at capacity conditions, increasing traffic by 5 % can reduce speeds by up to 25 %. Congestion costs in Ontario were estimated to be \$6.4 billion annually and could grow by an additional \$7 billion annually by 2021 without increased investment in alternative modes of transportation<sup>1</sup>. Shifting a little traffic off busy roads can create surprisingly large time savings for individuals as well as for time-sensitive commercial vehicles<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Business Case for Active Transportation, The Economic Benefits of Walking and Cycling; Go for Green, March 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Transportation Demand Management Strategy, City of Ottawa, Travelwise, Transportation, Utilities and Public Works, April 2003.

## Recreation, Health and Fitness Benefits: Statistics

In 2001, approximately \$2.8 billion was spent on health care due to physical inactivity in Canada, which could be reduced by \$280 million if physical activity was increased by 10%<sup>3</sup>. Our health system is shifting from protecting people from hazards in the environment to developing healthy environments in which people live. Evidence suggests that improved walking and cycling facilities lead to higher use. Increased physical activity such as walking, cycling and other trail related activities could help to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, premature death, high blood pressure, obesity, adult-onset diabetes, depression and colon cancer. A more active population can, in turn, reduce the cost of medical care, decrease workplace absenteeism, and maintain the independence of older adults.

## Economic Benefits: Statistics

A few examples of Economic Benefits of pathways and trails include<sup>4</sup>:

- The Adanac Bikeway in Vancouver was completed in 1993 and bicycle volumes increased 225 % during the period from 1992 to 1996;
- Trails in New Brunswick employ around 1500 people for an average of six months per year;
- 70 % of Bruce Trail users cite the trail as the main reason for visiting the area, and they spend an average of about \$20.00 per user per visit within a 10 km corridor on either side of the trail;
- Annual expenditures linked to La Route Verte rose to \$95.4 million in 2000, representing 2,000 jobs and \$15.1 million and \$11.9 million for the governments of Quebec and Canada, respectively;
- In 2002, Quebec hosted 190,000 bicycle tourists who spent an average of \$112 per day and an average of 6.5 nights compared to \$52 per day and an average of 3.1 nights spent by other tourists; and
- In Ontario, the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance estimated that at the end of a ten year build-out period, 320 km of their system, constructed at a cost of \$5.4 million, will generate approximately \$36 million in *annual* economic benefits in the communities through which it passes, and create/sustain over 1100 jobs.

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<sup>3</sup> The Business Case for Active Transportation, The Economic Benefits of Walking and Cycling; Section 4.7.2; Go for Green, March 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

A 1997 survey of Canadian tourists active in the outdoors showed that 30 % of Ontario tourists cycled on at least one occasion while on vacation. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation reported that touring cyclists spend an average of \$130 per day in Ontario, and the bicycle retail and tourist industry contributes a minimum of \$150 million a year to the Ontario economy. Bed and breakfast operators between Ottawa and Kingston report that the majority of their business is from touring cyclists. Cyclists in Vermont spend an average of \$180 U.S. per day, the same amount expected of someone traveling by car.

In 2002, Canadian households spent an average of \$42 on bicycles, parts and accessories for a total of \$495,600,000.<sup>5</sup> The small size of the bicycle results in infrastructure costs for bikeways and bicycle parking that are 10 to 20 times less than for the same quantity of automobiles.

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<sup>5</sup> The Business Case for Active Transportation, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation – BEST, Go for Green, March 2004. Section 4.5.4, pg. 24.