

BRIEFING NOTE: Active Transportation Goal

Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act

March 2022

GOAL IN EGCCRA

#9 The Government's goals with respect to active transportation are(a) to establish a Provincial Active Transportation strategy to increase active transportation options by 2023; and(b) to complete core active transportation networks that are accessible for all ages and all abilities in 65% of the province's communities by 2030.

OUR ANALYSIS OF THE GOALS:

A Provincial Active Transportation Strategy is an invaluable tool for coordinating the funding/budgeting and implementation of AT infrastructure and unlocking federal funding. However, it is crucial that a Provincial Active Transportation Strategy includes soft infrastructure like pedestrian/bike safety education, bike maintenance education, access to bike repairs, and snow clearing plans-allowing for the safe and continued use of hard infrastructure (sidewalks, off-road trails, bike lanes and paved shoulders).Likewise, the strategy should be informed by the voices of underserved and marginalized communities, BIPOC communities and youth to adhere to the government's commitment to equity.

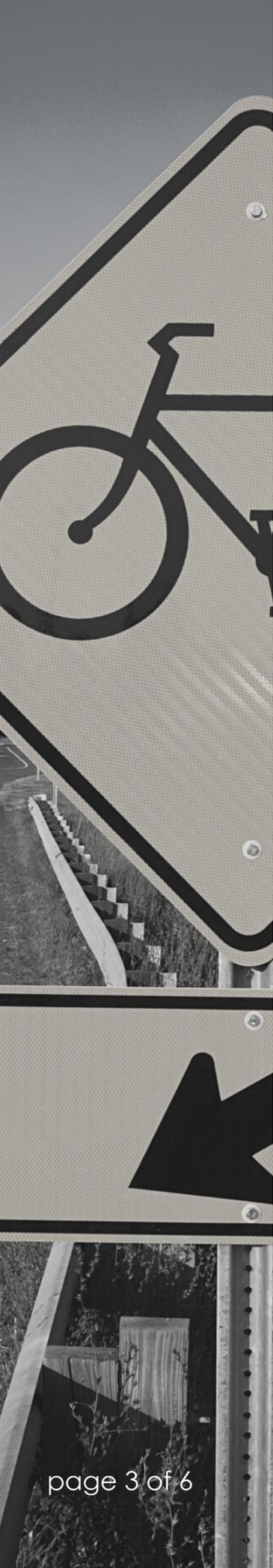


ACHIEVING THE GOALS:

1. Create a provincial Active Transportation Fund to leverage and streamline access to the national Active Transportation Fund. The national Active Transportation Fund will contribute up to 60% of capital costs for municipal projects in provinces. A provincial commitment to contribute up to 30% of capital costs would require municipal contributions as low as 10%, which is more aligned with the budgets of smaller municipalities that do not have the tax base to self-fund much needed pathways, sidewalks and bikeways.

2. Develop a comprehensive travel demand data strategy for collecting multi-modal travel data, establishing baselines and targets, and ongoing monitoring with sustainable funding. Current active transportation and transit data is limited and fragmented, which restricts abilities to identify equity gaps, set effective long-term goals, and track progress. Without this information, the planning and execution of future systems will be limited in their ability to reach wide audiences and increase provincial ridership. To assist in moving this forward, a recommended series of indicators is provided in the attached Appendix.

3. Create a public engagement accessibility fund to support municipalities in removing barriers to participation in community consultations, such as: interpreters and translators for language barriers including ASL; offering honoraria for participation; paying community members to co-facilitate engagement sessions in historically marginalized and underrepresented communities



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- It's imperative that we meet accessibility, equity, and emissions targets. To do this, Nova Scotia must provide viable alternatives to driving motorized vehicles so that we may:
 - Increase independence for people who cannot drive due to age, ability, or expense.
 - Reduce the time and financial burden of chauffeuring on parents and caregivers.
 - Reduce the number of trips which can only be made by car.
 - Reduce the volume of trips that are made by car, through attractive alternatives.
- An accessible, connected, and dependable active transportation system supports improved individual, community and environmental health and wellbeing.
- Current active transportation infrastructure is fragmented, both in stewardship and connectivity, resulting in trails with unpredictable conditions and sidewalks that end abruptly rather than forming a cohesive network.
- Nova Scotia has not provided sufficient resources and policy solutions to strengthen municipal transit and coordinate a reliable network of public and community transit across the province. Efforts to achieve the above goal, and any meaningful change in this area, must address this problem.
- In order to shift our transportation habits, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport, and achieve accessibility targets, Nova Scotians must be given realistic, viable and appealing alternatives to driving cars.

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APPENDIX RECOMMENDED INDICATORS TO MONITOR

Data answering the following four questions is needed to guide investments and monitor our progress.

1. Access: Do residents have access to sustainable mode choices?

Not all residents have access to sustainable transportation options. Many households are not within walking distance of essential services and amenities, or within range of transit service. Indicators include:

- Per cent of NS residents within the service area of community transit; walking distance of a transit stop.
- Per cent of households living within 1-km (walking distance) or 5-km (biking distance) of destinations such as education, health, food, and public administration facilities.
- Per cent of K-12 students living within 1-km (walking distance) or 5-km (biking distance) of school.
- Total members of local car-sharing services



APPENDIX CONTINUED

2. Usage: Are residents using sustainable mode choices?

To understand where to invest in transit and active transportation, we must understand how people move. Possible indicators include:

- Vehicle Kilometers Traveled, by census tract, community and region to indicate vehicle usage.
- Passenger Kilometers traveled by public and community transit.
- Pedestrian/cyclist counters on community sidewalks and trailheads.
- Distance traveled by carshare vehicles.

3. Safety: Do residents feel safe and comfortable using sustainable mode choices?

Access to and usage of transit service and active transportation networks does not mean everyone.

- Per cent of all K-12 students walking or cycling to school.
- Membership and attendance of Women on Wheels cycling groups across the province.
- Number of vulnerable road user - vehicle collision reports.
- Number of police reports involving incidents on trails or transit vehicles/facilities.



APPENDIX CONTINUED

4. Investment: Are governments investing in sustainable transportation infrastructure?

To make transit and active transportation viable alternatives to driving, requires investment.

- Number of full-time staff dedicated to active transportation project planning (by municipality, county/region).
- Number of full-time staff dedicated to public transit and community transit planning.
- Metres of new sidewalks and bike facilities added, repaired, and maintained (plowed) by year.
- Number of transit priority measures implemented each year such as bus lanes and queue jumps.