

Walking & Wheeling

Quarterly

NOVA SCOTIA
Health Promotion
Sport and Recreation

Pathways
for People
Active Transportation

ECOLOGY
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CENTRE

Nova Scotia's Active Transportation Newsletter - Fall 2004

Published by Pathways for People, a project of the Ecology Action Centre and the Nova Scotia Office of Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation Division

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Car free day in Halifax

By Angela Bischoff, TRAX of the Ecology Action Centre

International Car Free Day will once again be celebrated in Halifax on Wednesday September 22. Join us!

Why Car Free Day? In over a thousand cities around the world representing over 100 million people, September 22 has been celebrated as Car Free Day (CFD) for the past six years. CFD is a day to transform pavement to playground, fumes to fun. It's a day to acknowledge the problems of cars in our communities, to look at the alternatives, and to highlight the quality of life benefits of living with fewer cars, even if for only one day.

CFD in Halifax this year will consist of a public forum, a movie night, a newspaper tabloid and a Parade and Party.

At 11:30 am on Car Free Day we will enjoy downtown main streets in car-freedom as we parade en mass from the Public Gardens to the Grand Parade with company floats, musicians, clowns, skateboarders, cyclists, pedestrians, joggers, roller bladders, wheel chair users, stilt walkers, radical cheerleaders, bicycle bell choir and more. The parade will end at noon at the Grand Parade (City Hall), which will be car-free at last (at least for this day)! There will be sod where the Councillors normally park, games, exhibits and throughout the park there will be tents, table displays, BMX performances, face painting, live music, art exhibits, free bike repair, free food, dancing and so much more (noon to 3 pm).

What could your school or company do? How 'bout get a team from your school or workplace, all donning school/company t-shirts, to join the parade? You could wave a school/company flag. You could all ring bike bells, or play instruments. You could all wear wild hats. You could all bring your bikes that day, or play frisbee on the street, or baseball, or sing, or skip. Or just walk in support of a vision of a Halifax with fewer cars and more bikes, buses, pedestrians, street hockey, etc.

For more information or to get involved, contact Angela Bischoff of TRAX, Ecology Action Centre at www.trax.ns.ca or (902) 429-0924.



Angela Bischoff of the TRAX program takes part in Car Free Day, 2003.

Get a Move On: Walk to School Week

By Janet Barlow, Active & Safe Routes to School of the Ecology Action Centre

Time is running out for schools to register for International Walk to School Week, from October 4 to 8, 2004! During this week, millions of students, teachers, parents and community members around the world will walk to school for the environment, health, physical activity and safety.

Schools may register online at www.goforgreen.ca/walktoschool/en/step1.aro or contact the Coordinator at (902) 442-5055 or asrts@ecologyaction.ca. Schools get a prize just for registering: an educational board game about the environment from Intelli-Kid™.

Once registered, organizers receive a kit with resources to help them plan a terrific event. Registered schools with participation rates of 85 percent or higher become eligible to win prizes, including up to \$500.00 from Go for Green, a bike rack for the school from Timbertec Inc. and reflective arm bands for students from 3M™.

Whether they are walking schools, bussing schools or something in between, all schools can participate. It is as simple as promoting an activity like walking or cycling on the way to school, once bussed students arrive at school or on a local trail.

International Walk to School Week is a component of Active & Safe Routes to School, which encourages the use of active modes of transportation to and from school, such as walking or cycling, in a safe and healthy environment. It is a national Go for Green program coordinated in Nova Scotia by the Ecology Action Centre in partnership with the Nova Scotia Office of Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation Division.

Traffic Calming Guru Visits Metro

David Engwicht, the traffic calming guru, will visit Halifax and join the Ecology Action Centre for Car Free Day festivities on September 21 and 22 (see Car Free Day in Halifax above for more information).

David is the inventor of the Walking School Bus, authority on Street Reclaiming techniques and award-winning author of such books as *Street Reclaiming: Creating Livable Streets and Vibrant Communities* and *Reclaiming Our Cities & Towns: Better living with less traffic*.

He will also conduct a Taming School and Neighbourhood Traffic Workshop on September 21. Anyone wishing to attend this workshop to learn how to apply ideas and tools to local schools and neighbourhoods may contact Janet Barlow at Active & Safe Routes to School at (902) 442-5055 or asrts@ecologyaction.ca. To learn more about David Engwicht's work, visit www.lesstraffic.com. This event is sponsored by the Nova Scotia Office of Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation Division and the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Nova Scotia Trails Update

By Michelle Lucas, Nova Scotia Trails Federation

This summer was an excellent season for trails in Nova Scotia. International Trails Day was a big success with more participants than ever before. The Nova Scotia Trail Patrol

teamed up with the RCMP and Halifax Regional Police for a six week trial patrol period and decreased complaints by 60 percent. Plus, three new trails, all which provide a uniquely different experience, have made a

wonderful addition to Nova Scotia.

The Bluff Trail and Bay of Islands Trail opened on June 5, this year's International Trails Day. The Bluff Trail provides a wilderness experience less than 20 km from HRM. Located on the Chebucto

On Walk to School Day, 2003, Premier John Hamm and former Principal Kim Nadeau cut the ribbon launching the new sidewalk to Sackville Centennial School in Lower Sackville.



Peninsula, the trail rests entirely on Crown land for preservation. The hiking trail was developed by the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization (WRWEO) and will eventually consist of four stacked loops, two of which are currently open.

Hurricane Juan couldn't stop the opening of the Bay of Islands Interpretive Trail. Although the trail suffered some damage, the Bay of Islands Sustainable Economic Development

Association worked hard and held its grand opening in Moser River on the Eastern Shore. The trail displays the natural and social heritage of Moser River and will be accompanied by the Bay of Islands Centre to promote social, economical and environmental principles for sustainable development. When the centre is complete it will act as a tourist attraction and educational facility.

The Dartmouth Harbourwalk Trail also opened this summer on June

24. The trail was a joint effort between the Waterfront Development Corporation and the Dartmouth Harbourfront Trails Association. The trail runs 1.2 km from the Woodside Ferry Terminal to Cusack Street but will eventually run to the McDonald Bridge and be an excellent resource for active transportation.

Trail opening continues this fall with the Bell Park trail in Mount Uniacke opening around Labour Day.

Canadian Commuter Challenge 2004

By Susanna Cheng, TRAX of the Ecology Action Centre and Coordinator of the Commuter Challenge 2004, Halifax Region

More and more Nova Scotians are taking action against air pollution and traffic congestion by participating in the Canadian Commuter Challenge.

The Challenge is a friendly competition between Canadian communities. It encourages as many people as possible to use active and shared modes of transportation in an effort to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles choking up our roads.

This year, Haligonians were part of over 60,000 individuals in 128 communities across Canada who took part. In Nova Scotia, residents from Amherst, Bridgewater, Wolfville, Mahone Bay, Oxford, Grand Falls, and Annapolis Royal also took the Challenge.

Participants made a commitment to walk, jog, cycle, rollerblade, take the bus or ferry, carpool or telework during Environment Week (May 30 - June 5), and recorded their travel distances on the official Challenge website.

Congratulations, Haligonians! The number of participants in HRM more than doubled from 708 last year to 1,459 this year. In just one week, HRM participants collectively prevented a total of 29.1 tonnes of carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas) from entering the atmosphere. Also, emissions of nitrogen oxides (a key component of smog) were reduced by 141.4 kg.

By opting for more sustainable modes of transportation, HRM showed its support for improved air quality and less traffic congestion. Or maybe, conscientious commuters just wanted to save money on gasoline, and get some healthy exercise into their daily routines!

The Canadian Commuter Challenge is an Environment Canada Clean Air Day initiative coordinated nationally by Go for Green. To find out more, visit www.commuterchallenge.ca.



Cyclists loud and proud!

By Susanna Cheng, TRAX of the Ecology Action Centre

Bike Week, which took place this year from May 31 to June 5, is a time when we collectively celebrate our two-wheeled, people-powered, eco-friendly choice of transport. It's a time when all folks, young and old, are encouraged to get out and ride! The more people out riding,

the more presence we have on the roads, and the more power we have as road users.

This year, TRAX of the Ecology Action Centre hosted seven events in HRM - all of them free, open to the public, informative, entertaining and fun.

To kick off, city officials and others took a Hotspot Bicycle

Infrastructure Tour of downtown Halifax and Dartmouth. This scenic ride emphasised the importance of designing our communities to accommodate cycling. Doing so would save the city big bucks in infrastructure costs and save the provincial government even bigger bucks in associated health costs.

To further emphasise the wisdom of cycling as an efficient mode of transportation, a Commuter Race was held through downtown Halifax between cyclists, pedestrians, a jogger, a rollerblader, bus rider and car driver. The cyclists won first, second and third prizes – of course!

Another premiere event was the Cyclists' Fashion Show where riders from all walks of life pedalled around the People's catwalk – the Grand Parade. The show wasn't just about spandex either. Riders donned rain gear, business suit and even an academic gown!

At the Cyclists Awards Night,

cyclists tipped their helmets in appreciation of those who've made cycling life so much better in this province. Other highlights included two Bike Movie Nights ("The Bicycle Thief" and "Beijing Bicycle") and an informative program on Cyclists Rights.

Can't wait until Bike Week 2005!



Moncton's first Car Free Day a success

By Carole Saucier, Downtown Moncton Centre-ville Inc.

It was Firefighters versus Crime Fighters in the bus pull competition during Moncton's Car Free Day on June 5, 2004.

As part of Environment Week, Downtown Moncton declared June 5 as Car Free Day and many of the core's working population took the challenge. More than 1,566 kilometres were walked, biked, bussed or carpooled that day in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Of those who registered their efforts that day, the majority used their feet to get to work, with the bicycle coming in a close second as an alternative to fuel-powered travel.

The event was a joint effort between Downtown Moncton Centre-ville Inc., the City of Moncton and the Codiac Transit Commission. To help encourage the public to use less gas that day, there were lots of prizes and incentives such as riding the bus for a loonie, picking up goodies at checkpoints along the way in

our downtown for walkers and cyclists, and for carpoolers who traveled with three or more passengers.

The day was marked by lunchtime activities and entertainment in front of City Hall, where Main Street was closed to traffic and roughly 500 people gathered for an hour and a half. The highlight of the afternoon was a 20,000-pound bus pull competition between the Moncton Firefighters and Crime Fighters. The Firefighters won the competition with the Crime Fighters vowing to come back next year for a rematch. Music, a fund-raising barbeque, cake and prizes all helped to celebrate the day and create a festive atmosphere in our downtown.

Organizers are already looking forward to next year's challenge and hope to create an annual event, which will not only gain momentum, but ultimately encourage people to incorporate those greener alternatives to fuel their daily lives.

Velo Quebec Workshop Rolls Out

By Jody Conrad, Go for Green Consultant of the Office of Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation

On May 20, Marc Jollicouer from Velo Quebec delivered a workshop in Halifax on technical bikeway design. The workshop was organized and supported in Nova Scotia by the N.S. Office of Health Promotion – Sport and Recreation Division and the N.S. Department of Transportation and Public Works.

Eighteen participants attended the workshop from across the province, including representatives from various municipalities, non-profit groups, planning firms as well as interested individuals. The morning portion of the workshop included a class on successful design strategies for incorporating bicycle travel into both existing and new infrastructure. Examples were highlighted from numerous countries around the world, which provided valuable insight into successful bicycle infrastructure design.

The content for this portion of the course was based on a publication developed and distributed by Velo Quebec titled “Technical Handbook of Bikeway

Design”. The book is a valuable resource for anyone interested or involved in planning for bicycle use, whether in towns, cities or rural areas. More information can be found on Velo Quebec’s website at www.velo.qc.ca.

The second half of the workshop took participants on a field trip, visiting some of the “hot spots” of bicycle barriers in Halifax. Marc facilitated discussion around possible solutions while local experts added pieces of history and insight that illustrated how complex some of these issues can be.

By the end of the day, it became clear that we should be shifting our thinking from moving cars, to moving people. The result will be a healthier population, cleaner air and happier, healthier communities...full of bicycles!

For more information on the workshop, or if you would like to request another workshop, please contact Jody Conrad at the N.S. Office of Health Promotion – Sport and Recreation Division at 902-424-7589 or conradjo@gov.ns.ca.

Halifax Criterium Makes Tracks

By Gerard Walsh, Race Committee of the Bicycles Plus Cycling Club

On Saturday, August 7, over 100 cyclists had the streets around the North Common in Halifax all to themselves. The Halifax Criterium, held for the second time with help of generous sponsors, has quickly become the premiere event on the bicycle racing calendar in the Atlantic Provinces. This year’s event saw large teams entered from both New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Also, an Ontario rider returned to defend his title from last year.

Bicycle road racing was frequently held at this venue in the 70’s and 80’s and the exposure that it gave cycling caused many young people to take up the sport. The organizers of the Criterium realized that for the sport to continue to grow in Nova Scotia the race around the Commons should be brought back.

For the second year in a row the races took place in the pouring rain. Despite this, the event had the best attendance of any road race in the Atlantic Provinces this year. The licensed categories offered racing for ages 13 to 50 plus and because of the growing popularity of Women’s racing, there was a women-only race. This race was dominated by Heather Lamson, a new rider from PEI who rode away to finish a minute ahead of her nearest rival. Both the Senior and Masters races ended with a spectacular sprint finish.

New this year were the children’s races and a bike draw. The kids’ events were a hit with spectators as 5 to 9 year olds raced one lap of the commons and 10 to 12 year olds raced two laps. They were guided around the course by some of the top male and female racers in the province. After the race, a lucky eight year old from Dartmouth rode away on the beautiful new Giant mountain bike.

Buoyed by the success of this year’s race, the organizing team is already planning for next year.



Eager participants line up for the Halifax Criterium kids' bicycle race on August 7

Nova Scotians support healthy communities

By Clare O'Connor, Director, Policy and Government Relations, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia

Nova Scotians are concerned about their health – and they recognize that staying healthy is strongly linked to communities that support active living. We know this... because they told us. Recently the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia commissioned a poll of the province. We had two burning questions:

- Would your support for a government or a political party increase, decrease, or remain the same if that party announced it was going to invest more funding in health promotion strategies aimed at reducing Nova Scotia's high rates of chronic diseases even if it means diverting funding from other government programs?
- To what extent do you either support or oppose increased funding in health promotion strategies, such as healthy eating initiatives and the development of walking trails and biking paths, across the province that encourages and helps people have healthier lifestyles?

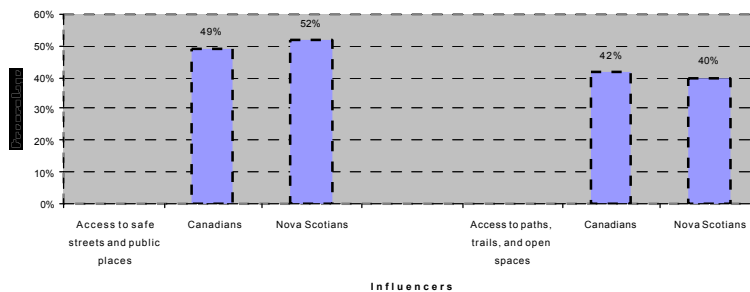
The response was unequivocal. Sixty percent of Nova Scotians surveyed by Corporate Research Associates said they would support parties that call for an increase in health promotion spending. Eighty-six percent of respondents said they supported increased funding for health promotion, including development of activity-friendly infrastructure.

There is little doubt that physical activity provides proven health benefits. It protects against serious, debilitating – and often fatal – diseases including heart disease, stroke, hypertension, type-2 diabetes, colon cancer, breast cancer and depression. Research indicates that 36% of heart disease, 27% of osteoporosis, 20% of stroke, hypertension, type-2 diabetes, and colon cancer and 11% of breast cancer are attributable to physical inactivity.

Urban and rural planning offers excellent opportunities to increase chances for physical activity of residents by making walking or cycling viable alternatives to motorized transportation.

It is both encouraging and exciting that Nova Scotians are so overwhelmingly supportive of these opportunities to create healthy, active communities.

Influencers to Increasing Physical Activity Levels



Source: GPIAtlantic, *The Cost of Physical Inactivity in Halifax Regional Municipality* August 2004.
Commissioned by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia

Determinants of Physical Activity: Recreational and Utilitarian

- Neighborhood design features
- Density
- Land use Mix
- Presence and Quality of sidewalks and footpaths
- Scenery
- Presence of other active people
- Safety

Source: Frumkin, Howard, Frank, Lawrence and Jackson, Richard, *Urban Sprawl and Public Health: Designing, Planning and Building for Healthy Communities*, Island Press 2004.

AT Tidbits

NS Physical Activity Grants

The Office of Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation Division aims to see a ten percent increase in the number of physically active Nova Scotians by 2010. To help make this happen, it created a \$500,000.00 physical activity grant program where organizations may apply for up to \$10,000.00. For more information go to www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/srd or call 1-866-231-3882 or (902) 424-7512.

Kingston (ON) 25-year Plan Includes AT

Kingston's Transportation Master Plan for the next 25 years highlights active transportation and transit to reduce traffic congestion.

www.kingstonthisweek.com/webapp/sitepages/content.asp?contentid=73023&catname=Local+News

Going Car-Free in Kensington Market

This summer meant car free Sundays at Kensington Market. In an attempt to attract more people to the famous market, the City of Toronto collaborated with community activists and businesses to ban cars from market streets until August 15.

www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&call_pageid=971358637177&c=Article&cid=1089324610489

Toronto cyclist wins case to make streets safer

A cyclist who collided with a car door opened in her path in 2002 won a court case against the City of Toronto to make the city responsible for designing streets and roads that are safe for cyclists.

www.respect.to

Resources

AUTOMATED BICYCLE SHARING POTENTIAL

The smart bike or automated bicycle rental system is used in several countries across Europe. This paper explores the possibility of such a system taking off in the United States (from the Journal of Public Transportation, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2004).

www.nctr.usf.edu/jpt/pdf/JPT%207-2%20DeMaio.pdf

A GUIDE FOR REDUCING COLLISIONS INVOLVING PEDESTRIANS

From the National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 500, Volume 10, 2004.

gulliver.trb.org/publications/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_500v10.pdf

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INVESTING IN BICYCLE FACILITIES

A case study from the North Carolina Department of Transportation concludes that cycling brought \$60 million annually to the Outer Banks, attracted tourists and improved safety.

Study shows Time Spent in Car Linked to Obesity

This study shows a strong link between obesity and the time one spends in his or her car. There is a three percent increase in the chance of being obese with every 30 minutes spent behind the wheel of a car. Those who live within walking distance of a good mix of shops and services are seven percent less likely to be obese.

www.scarp.ubc.ca/Biographical%20Sketches/Driving%20Walking%20and%20Where%20You%20Live.pdf

Walking School Bus Study Shows Benefits

Reducing Children's Car Use: The Health and Potential Car Dependency Impacts says what many would assume - that walking school buses are a healthy alternative to being chauffeured in the family car.

www.cts.ucl.ac.uk/research/hcaruse



www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/safety_economicimpact.html

HEALTHY TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Another active transportation resource is the Healthy Transportation Network web site from the California Centre for Physical Activity. The site focuses on creating communities that are walkable and bikeable.

www.healthytransportation.net

NEW BOOK BY JANE JACOBS

"Dark Age Ahead" is Jane Jacobs' newest release. This is the eighth book by the celebrated advocate for vibrant and healthy communities. For an overview, see:

www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?1400062322.



SAFE ROUTES FOR SENIORS

There is a growing trend to provide safe routes for children to get around, but what about for seniors?

This article from the Traffic Safety Centre's Online newsletter (Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 2004) explores walkable communities for older adults.
www.tsc.berkeley.edu/html/newsletter/spring04/olderpeds.html

ASRTS NEW HOW-TO MANUAL FOR NOVA SCOTIA

This new manual outlines steps for starting a program at a school and how to keep it running all year long. It provides a menu of initiatives to help a school create an action plan and includes a Backpack section containing survey samples, templates and forms. Contact the ASRTS coordinator at (902) 442-5055 or asrts@ecologyaction.ca.

Events

- **September 7** - Active & Safe Routes to School Institute, Victoria, BC (www.bikewalk.org/PWPB2004/PWPB2004.htm)
- **September 7-10** - Pro Walk/Pro Bike 2004 conference, Victoria, BC (www.bikewalk.org/PWPB2004/PWPB2004.htm)
- **September 9** - Encouraging workplace cycling, Nottingham, UK (cpd.conference@nottingham.ac.uk)
- **September 18-22** - Rail-Volution: Building Livable Communities with Transit, Los Angeles, California (www.railvolution.com)
- **October 20-22** - 2nd "Child in the City" Conference, London, UK (www.europoint-bv.com/events/?child2004)
- **October 21-24** - 17th National Trails Symposium, Austin, Texas (www.americantrails.org/Austin/default.html)
- **October 27 - 29** - Open Space: People Space, An International Conference on Inclusive Outdoor Environments, Edinburgh, UK (www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/conference/confbackground.htm)

FREE RESOURCES

There are several copies of the following resources available at the Ecology Action Centre:

- Retrofitting Communities for Sustainable and Healthy Active Transportation (Published by Go for Green)
- Increasing Physical Activity Through Community Design: A Guide for Public Health Practitioners (Published by the National Centre for Bicycling and Walking)

Phone or e-mail (902) 442-5055 or asrts@ecologyaction.ca to request copies.

*Pathways
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Active Transportation*



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Graphic Design: Office Of Health Promotion

Thank you to those who submitted articles and information for this issue of Walking & Wheeling Quarterly. A number of resources were used in researching some of the information found here and include:

- University of South Carolina Prevention Research Center Notes e-newsletter (prevention.sph.sc.edu/Newsletter/index.htm)
- Streetwork list serve from the Conservation Law Foundation Transportation Project (www.clf.org/transportation/listserv.htm)
- CenterLines e-newsletter from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking (www.bikewalk.org/technical_assistance/resources_information/ri_intro.htm)

About Walking & Wheeling Quarterly

Walking & Wheeling Quarterly is an electronic publication of Pathways for People, a project of the Ecology Action Centre (www.ecologyaction.ca) in partnership with the Nova Scotia Office of Health Promotion's Sport and Recreation Division and part of the Active Kids, Healthy Kids Physical Activity Strategy for Nova Scotia (www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/srd). Its aim is to share information on active transportation (walking, biking, in-line skating, skateboarding, scootering, etc.) initiatives in Nova Scotia and beyond. Walking & Wheeling Quarterly is published four times per year in September, December, March and June. Submissions are due by the 15th of August, November, February and May. The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Ecology Action Centre or the Nova Scotia Office of Health Promotion. Contact us at:

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www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/srd/pathways/wwq.htm

SIGN UP

Anyone interested in active transportation may sign onto the distribution list for Walking & Wheeling Quarterly. Send a message to asrts@ecologyaction.ca and ask to be added to the list. Please send this to a friend or colleague!

If you do not wish to remain on the distribution list for Walking & Wheeling Quarterly, please send a message to asrts@ecologyaction.ca and ask to be removed.