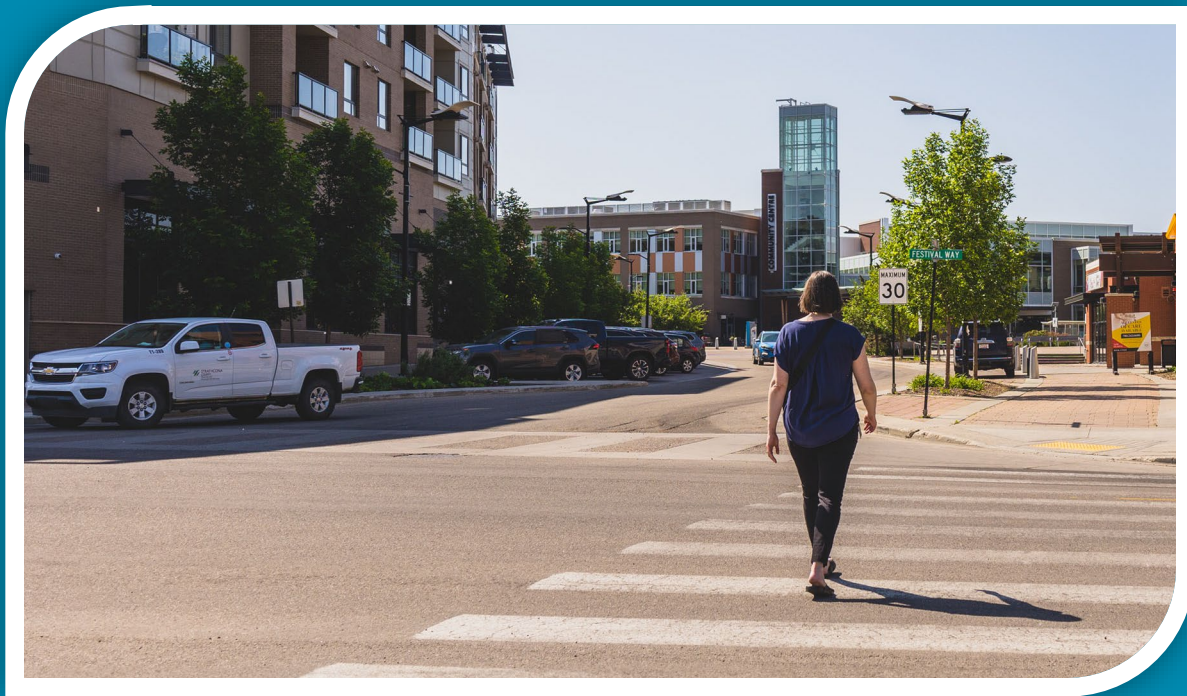# ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC SAFETY TASK FORCE

FINAL REPORT

Strathcona County

MARCH 2025

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Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Task Force Final Report

The Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Task Force (the "Task Force") offers the following report intended as guidance and support to increase active transportation and improve vulnerable road user safety in Strathcona County.

Summary of recommendations

Based on the barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, 21 actions have been recommended. These recommendations were ranked based on five criteria determined by the Task Force: potential to increase safety for vulnerable road users, alignment with Integrated Transportation Master Plan (ITMP) priorities, scope of impact, complexity and cost of implementation.

Highest priority/short-term recommendations

The top ten recommendations were all rated eight or nine against the criteria on the ten-point scale. As safety, cost and complexity accounted for over half of the points on the scale, these recommendations rated highly because they are relatively easy to implement actions ("quick wins") that should provide a measurable increase in safety for a significant number of road users in the short-term.

1. *Reduce residential speed limits to 40 km/h for safety and consistency with other Edmonton Metro Region (EMR) municipalities (B1)*

This recommended action emerged as the highest rated item on the priority matrix due to strong evidence that the action will increase safety for all users on the network, strong alignment with the priorities of the ITMP, and relatively low complexity and cost to implement. It is a short-term

action the County can undertake to increase safety and encourage walking and cycling almost immediately.

2. Create a new position for an Active Transportation (AT) Coordinator in the County (A1)

This recommendation is rated highly as this position is crucial to ensuring the implementation of all actions identified by the Task Force. This position will be a champion for AT and vulnerable road user safety in the community and will lead the development of the Active Transportation/Vulnerable Road User Strategy.

3. Develop a dedicated tool for ongoing reporting/tracking issues with active transportation safety concerns to Strathcona County (PE 1)

Involving residents and leaders in planning active transport improvements ensures that safety concerns are most accurately identified and effectively addressed. Existing County systems can be leveraged to reduce the cost and complexity of creating this tool. Additionally, this tool can be used to collect public input for the creation of the Active Transportation/Vulnerable Road User Plan.

4. Facilitate a study to identify a priority bike lane network for a commuter route (C1)

This recommendation is rated highly due to its potential to increase safety for many road users (both cyclists and motorists) as well as for its alignment with the priorities of the ITMP. Although implementing the study will be long-term and require significant investment, having the study completed will ensure the County can include construction of the network with future development and/or rehabilitation projects.

5. Identify, develop and promote rural, recreational cycling routes that are most conducive to safe cycling (K1)

This action is rated highly as the County has a significant number of recreational cyclists who utilize our rural road network; thus, it has the potential to increase safety for many road users (both cyclists and motorists). It also has close alignment with the priorities of the ITMP. The potential costs of this project are offset by potential tourism revenue this project may generate. Partnering with Economic Development and Tourism will help provide some resources to mitigate costs/complexity associated with this action.

6. Provide secure bike storage on site at Strathcona County events (G1)

Encouraging residents to cycle to County events such as Canada Day has the potential to reduce congestion at community events increase safety for everyone. This is a simple action the County could take to make a significant difference.
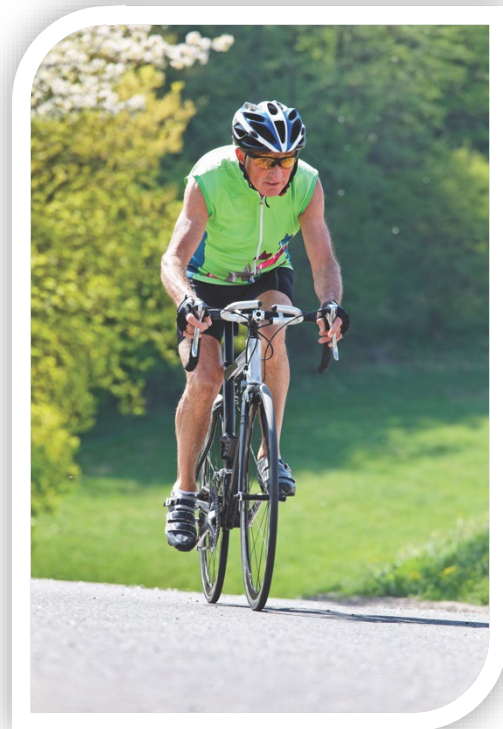
7. *Provide more information on the transit website regarding storage options for bikes and micromobility devices (E1)*

8. *Offer opportunities for people to try out the bike racks and storage options on Busses(E2)*

9. *Encourage AT and promote sharing the roads/trails safely to adults/seniors through ongoing and coordinated education/engagement (F1)*

10. *Provide support to local school boards and local schools that are interested in increasing AT (H1)*

Community education and engagement are important to improving the safety and uptake of AT in the County. These four education/engagement recommendations were identified as high priority due to their simplicity of implementation and low cost, coupled with their alignment with the ITMP.

Medium-term recommendations

These recommendations rated from five to seven on the priority matrix. These recommendations are still considered important to action but scored lower on the matrix because they related more to facilitating AT than to safety, impact fewer road users, or are more complex/expensive to implement.

11. *Incorporate coordinated improvements to multi-modal transportation infrastructure with road upgrades/maintenance (C3)*

12. *Ensure that a complete streets approach is considered in redevelopment plans and standards reviews (C2)*

Although these items rated lower on the matrix due to the high cost and potentially complex nature of retrofitting existing infrastructure, prioritizing investment in improvements to multi-modal transportation infrastructure when scheduled road/trail maintenance is undertaken is crucial to improving safety and convenience for active road users. These actions are already incorporated in the requirements of the Integrated Transportation Master Plan/Municipal Development Plan, but they are included here to emphasize the importance of committing to ongoing, long-term, sustainable funding of active transportation infrastructure.

13. *Work with EDT to explore business opportunities for introducing a bike share program to Strathcona County (L1)*

Although a bike share may not improve safety or impact a large number of users, a bike share program helps achieve important goals, such as encouraging AT, addressing transportation inequity and providing added connections for people to access public transportation.

14. *Council to direct administration to prepare a report to investigate the potential use of next generation AI for traffic signals to optimize travel times for both vehicles and AT users(I1)*

Although expensive to implement, next-generation artificial intelligence (AI) may offer possible improvements that can be made to the current Strathcona County traffic system to prioritize cyclists/pedestrian traffic while maintaining the flow for vehicles.

15. Advocate with the province through municipal organizations for supportive legislation/driver education and infrastructure for AT

In response to new information about cycling safety, and how to better manage the interactions of cyclists and motorists on the road together, updates to provincial legislation are needed to modernize those laws, improve safety, and reduce conflict. Further, updates to driver education are necessary to ensure drivers understand how to share the road safety.

AT between communities often involves using roads under provincial jurisdiction. Collaboration between the province and municipalities through the Alberta Municipalities (AB Muni's) and the Rural Municipalities Association (RMA) is necessary to create AT corridors to connect the Edmonton Metro Region.

The Task Force recommends Council advocate with the RMA and AB Muni's to request:

- That the province updates the Traffic Safety Act (TSA) to improve cycling safety (J1)
- That the province updates basic driver training messaging on how to share the road safely with cyclists (J2)
- That the province plan for and deliver on the creation of AT corridors between municipalities (J3)

16. Review and update trail standards to better support accessibility and AT. Review trail network to identify where retrofits are needed to align to the updated standards and create a plan to bring the existing network into compliance (D2)

Strathcona County should be more actively encouraging cycling, walking and scootering. Every person who is engaging in these modes of transportation is reducing traffic congestion, wear and tear on roads and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. There are conditions on our trails that discourage AT, such as stop and dismount signs and a lack of seating, shade and wayfinding signs.

17. Review and update the Land Use Bylaw for bike parking requirements to ensure they reflect best practice (G2)

18. Provide information to local businesses on the standards for installation of bike racks to encourage compliance (G3)

The cost of bicycles and the number of ebikes has increased over the years. Inadequate or uncertainty on the type of bike parking and

security available at the transit stations, local events and local businesses discourages cycling. Bike racks are often not provided in a quantity or location that provides ease of use or adequate security at local businesses.

19. Enhance public transit opportunities between rural hamlets and Sherwood Park (E3)

Integrating AT with Transit is particularly important in rural areas, given the long commuting distances. While costly, expanding transit to rural areas can decrease reliance on vehicles and is also important to consider.

20. Consider rural priority routes for infrastructure upgrades to enhance safe active transportation (C4)

Currently, most cycling in rural areas is done for recreation. However, upgrading routes in the rural areas with consideration of AT between communities (Sherwood Park to Ardrossan, Collingwood Cove to Ardrossan, Josephburg to Ft. Saskatchewan) will help encourage multimodal transportation. These facilities could also be used by recreational cyclists.

21. Explore policy and bylaw options to encourage active transportation (D1)

There are laws in Alberta that discourage AT, such as requiring cyclists to come to a full stop at stop signs and lack of regulation of micromobility devices. In absence of provincial direction on these items, the County could choose to integrate changes into their policies and bylaws to encourage AT in the County.

Introduction and Background

The Active Transportation (AT) and Traffic Safety Task Force offers the following report intended as guidance and support to increase active transportation and improve vulnerable road user safety in Strathcona County.

Strathcona County should be more actively encouraging cycling, walking and scootering. Every person who is engaging in these modes of transportation reduces traffic congestion, wear and tear on roads and decreases greenhouse gas emissions. Ensuring safety and convenience for these users' needs to be prioritized.

Most attention given to enhancing active transport has been in urban Strathcona County; however, within Strathcona County, there are eight rural hamlets. Rural communities frequently face challenges such as limited public transport options, geographic isolation, high traffic speeds, and lack of pathways and lighting, which can be a significant barrier to utilizing active transport. Research has shown that when active transport options are safe and accessible, rural inhabitants are just as likely to utilize AT as their urban counterparts.

As rural areas grow and evolve, prioritizing active transport can drive economic development and tourism, enhance quality of life, and ensure that no community is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable and inclusive mobility solutions.

Establishing robust active transport connectivity in rural Strathcona County is essential to bridge the gaps between our communities. Particularly with the rise in battery powered bikes, our dispersed geography may present as less of a barrier to AT in the future. It provides a cost-effective and environmentally friendly transportation option. Furthermore, active transport infrastructure supports public health by encouraging physical activity, reduces the carbon footprint, and strengthens the social fabric by fostering safer, more connected neighborhoods.

About the Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Task Force (the Task Force)

The Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Task Force was established by Council (Bylaw 15-2023 - see Appendix 1) with a mandate to develop a report for Council with advice and opportunities from a community and active transportation user perspective for pedestrian and cyclist safety and functionality. The Task Force is comprised of seven public members, one member of Council, and one alternate member of Council. The Task Force was supported by two Administration representatives from Transportation Engineering and Operations.

The Task Force was provided with information on Strathcona County's strategic planning documents and current County efforts to support active transportation and vulnerable road users. The Task Force was provided with information from Transportation Engineering and Operations, Planning and Development Services, Recreation, Parks and Culture, Transit and Enforcement Services. The Task Force met ten times between March 2024 and March 2025, in addition to time spent by members on their own researching and developing recommendations.

The Task Force identified several barriers/concerns related to active transportation and traffic safety in the County. Using research and personal experiences (informed by Strathcona County's strategic planning documents and Council member advice), the Task Force developed 21 recommendations. The Task Force then rated each recommendation against an agreed upon group of criteria (see Appendix 2). The result is a prioritized list of recommendations for the County to support active transportation and vulnerable road users in our community.

Detailed information on concerns and recommendations

The Task Force has identified the following areas of concerns/barriers to active transportation in Strathcona County:

A. Organizational Leadership for Active Transportation (AT)

There is no single point of contact to champion/coordinate AT in Strathcona County. Although strategic documents indicate encouraging AT is a priority, work to do so is generally done off the corner of several staff members' desks, rather than having one individual dedicated to champion AT.

A dedicated staff member will be more effective in championing AT. Other staff will know exactly who to go to when they need AT input. This individual will also be able to focus on tasks such as exploring possible grant funding opportunities (provincial, federal, private, industry) and developing relationships among other stakeholders that may lead to more effective initiatives and use of resources (such as intermunicipal partnerships).

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following action is recommended:

Recommendation A1: Create a new position for an Active Transportation Coordinator in Strathcona County dedicated to coordinating and implementing the recommendations of this Task Force by working with County Administration and other stakeholders. (see Appendix for potential job description)

B. Reduce vehicle speeds

Strathcona County's Integrated Transportation Master Plan (2022) recommends speed reductions through posted limits, traffic calming and enforcement. Several neighboring municipalities, including City of Edmonton, City of Fort Saskatchewan and City of St. Albert have incorporated 40 km/h speed limits through their residential areas.

Safety studies have shown that when hit by a vehicle, the survivability for pedestrians struck by a motor vehicle increases as speeds decrease. High speeds increase the risk of catastrophic outcomes for those who choose to walk/roll/bike.

Drivers' field of vision expands when travelling at slower speeds. This allows drivers to spot active transportation users more easily and has also found drivers will stop more often for walkers/rollers when driving slower.

https://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/road-safety/behaviours/speed/laws-physics.
https://visionzeronetwork.org/resources/safety-over-speed/

Vehicles travelling beside vulnerable road users leave those users feeling unsafe. High speeds increase the intimidation factor and create environments with excessive noise that reduce the overall appeal of alternate modes of transportation.

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following actions are recommended:

Recommendation B1: Reduce residential speed limits to 40 km/h for safety and consistency with other EMR municipalities.

Recommendation B2: Increase speed enforcement in areas where complaints are received and streets are designed for speeding (i.e. main roads, no traffic-calming measures, or ineffective traffic calming).

C. Improve infrastructure to facilitate active transportation

Strathcona County's Integrated Transportation Master Plan (2022) places importance on safety and applying the Safe Systems approach in transportation network planning and design (S2). With this in mind, all planning and development in urban and rural spaces should include as much emphasis and consideration on active transportation routes as roadways. There is a lack of safe infrastructure, specifically separated bike facilities.

A common complaint is conflict created by shared spaces with different modes of transportation. Pedestrians are upset cyclists/scooters go by too fast. Cyclists have to navigate riding on the road which is often not safe and pedestrians on paths are often unpredictable. Ebikes and e-scooters travel at a higher rate of speed and are becoming increasingly popular. As usage increases, conflicts will also increase.

One of the key strategies for Safe Systems is the physical separation of users. Different modes of transportation separated by physical space allows people to move more freely and limits conflict. Studies have shown that separated bike lanes are safer for all road users; this includes drivers as well as vulnerable road users.

As growth in the region increases, so will traffic congestion. Addition of traffic lanes have been shown to temporarily increase capacity, but they are soon overwhelmed with more congestion. It is more economical and efficient to provide infrastructure for means of travel other than vehicular.

https://www.peopleforbikes.org/statistics/economic-benefits

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following actions are recommended:

Recommendation C1: Facilitate a study to identify a priority bike lane network for a commuter route along collector roads and connectivity between multi-use trails and commuter bike routes.

Recommendation C2: Ensure that a complete streets approach is considered in redevelopment plans and standards reviews.

Recommendation C3: Incorporate coordinated improvements to multi-modal transportation infrastructure with road upgrades/maintenance.
- o Consider the creation of a separate bike facility in conjunction with trail rehabilitation/redesign projects if it is part of the priority bike lane network.
- o Enhance crossings at high traffic intersections to improve pedestrian/cyclist safety.
- o Install traffic calming near community hubs, schools and residential areas.
- o Upgrade pedestrian/cycling facilities leading to major bus stops/transit centres (link to E).

Recommendation C4: Consider rural priority routes for upgrades to enhance safe active transportation (priorities: Sherwood Park to Ardrossan, Collingwood Cove to Ardrossan, Josephburg to Ft. Saskatchewan)
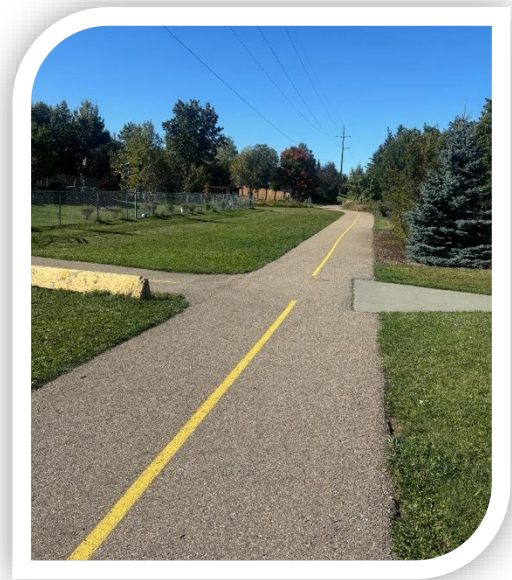
D. Become walking/rolling-friendly

Strathcona County should be more actively encouraging cycling, walking and scootering. Every person who is engaging in these modes of transportation are reducing traffic congestion, wear and tear on roads and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. There are existing bylaws and conditions that contribute to the hostility towards these users, such as stop and dismount signs and requiring cyclists to come to a full stop at stop signs.

Stop and dismount signs are hostile to cyclists. Cyclists rely on momentum in their mode of transportation. Unnecessary stopping and dismounting can greatly increase the effort required to cycle and make the trip less efficient and less enjoyable. Cyclists are not impeded in vision by a vehicle frame and are acutely aware of their surroundings, including vehicles. Requiring cyclists to stop makes their crossing times extended and can lead to other safety issues.

Example of a trail with no wayfinding signs

Children, older adults and those with mobility restrictions require more resting stops along walks. Some trails are equipped with benches, but it does not appear to be a consistently applied standard and cannot be relied on for those seeking a resting spot

With the increasing global temperatures, open trails/streets designed without shade can lead to more people choosing vehicle transport due to high temperatures. Natural or artificial shade incorporated into rest stops will allow for a reprieve from the elements. The multi-use pathways within Strathcona County are extensive but are not lit unless beside arterial and collector roads. This decreases safety for active users.

Strathcona County has some wayfinding signs but in many of the trails, there are no identifying features to show you where you are. The online trail map is not an accessible feature to children or older adults without smartphones or the proficiency to use them.

Wayfinding plays an important part in encouraging AT by showing people where they are, how far they have gone, and the distance left to travel. Uncertainty about one's location creates a lack of confidence in ability and comfort in active travel.

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following actions are recommended:

Recommendation D1: Explore policy and bylaw options to encourage active transportation (such as guidelines for micromobility, alternative crossings that provide right-of-way to cyclists, etc.)

Recommendation D2: Review and update trail standards to better support accessibility and AT, including, but not limited to:
- Signage- consider removal of stop and dismount signs for cyclists and addition of more wayfinding signage.
- Seating
- Shade
- Lighting- consider additional lighting on trails to support use in low light
- Supportive amenities: consider bike repair stations along key trails

Review trail network to identify where retrofits are needed to align to the updated standards and create a plan to bring the existing network into compliance.

E. Integrate active transportation with Transit

Strathcona County offers bike racks on their buses for people to bring their bikes with them on their bus ride. There is a lack of information about the racks available and low proficiency/comfort with using transit bus bike racks. Riders may be reluctant to try to learn how to safely secure their bike during their commute without previously being able to try it out.

The transit website indicates riders can bring their skateboards and scooters, provided they are secured. Beyond that, there is limited information on how to store bikes, skateboards and scooters. This creates uncertainty if there is enough storage space for these items, especially during peak times.

Public transportation is an important service in reducing congestion on roads. Supporting the use of bicycles and micromobility devices with public transportation has a positive impact in increasing ridership and lessens the demand for centralized parking. Expanding transit to rural areas can decrease reliance on vehicles.

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following actions are recommended:

Recommendation E1: Provide more information on the transit website regarding storage options for micromobility devices. The website should also include more information on on-site secure storage options - what they look like, security measures, hours of access, etc.

Recommendation E2: Offer opportunities for people to try out the bike racks and storage options either through options such as:
- Host 'Try It Out' events at the transit terminals.
- Install a stationary rack at the transit terminals that mimic the height and set up on the bus. Riders could come to a transit station to try loading their bike and securing in preparation of their transit ride.
- Develop an informational video on storage options within the transit terminals and for securing bikes to the bus racks.

Recommendation E3: Enhance public transit opportunities between rural hamlets and Sherwood Park.

F. Encourage active transportation through education and engagement of adults/seniors

Strathcona County offers an annual Bike Rodeo for families and children, but the activities are focused for children, not adults. To reduce traffic congestion, it's imperative to engage adults and encourage them to also participate in Active Transportation (AT). Further, safety messages regarding cycling tend to be limited to children and in urban spaces.

While walking/biking to work may not be feasible for everyone, there are other ways to incorporate AT into our daily lives. Walking/biking to run errands on the weekend/evening is an easy way to add physical activity if it seems like an achievable task. Adults may not know the options of devices that are now available, such as e-trikes. These can still provide them with a method of AT that is not as physically taxing as walking or riding traditional bicycles.

With increasing usage of ebikes and scooters, our multiuse trails are becoming more congested and there is increased potential for conflict. Conflict between on-road cyclists and vehicle drivers is a problem in both rural and urban areas. There is a lack of messaging in the County regarding trail etiquette and how to share the road safely.

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following action is recommended:

Recommendation F1: Encourage AT and promote sharing the roads/trails safely to adults/seniors in both urban and rural areas through ongoing and coordinated education/engagement. Specific suggestions include:
- Define the term "Active Transportation" and use it consistently in communications
- Develop annual campaign(s) to continue to encourage adults to walk/bike within their community.
  - Provide a method for residents to track their trips during these campaigns and report to measure uptake. Use it as an opportunity to gather feedback on their routes and their comfort level with existing infrastructure. This can also increase familiarity with public engagement tools described in later sections.
  - Post info on social media, local paper, buses, community recreation centres, schools, county web sites, local podcasts.

- Find ways to leverage existing annual cross country events monitoring bike use (Velo Canada, Pedal Poll- June 4-9 each year). Also other technology ie. Strava.
- Engage local businesses to provide incentives for customers/employees who use AT
- Incorporate adult education into the current Bike Rodeo or develop a separate but similar event focused on adults. Partner with suppliers in the area that can allow adults to try out traditional bicycles, ebikes and tricycles.
- Develop ongoing tools/messages to support the annual campaigns and keep the dialogue going. Possible examples include:
  - Post AT news on County website
  - Educate residents on benefits of AT (lower fuel costs, health benefits, social connection, lower road maintenance, etc.) and provide general information on average travel times for walking and cycling. Encourage residents to walk/bike to destinations within 2-3 km of their homes.
  - Design a Senior Mobility Guideline Document- tips for safety operating mobility devices in and around the community

G. Safe and Secure Bike Parking

The cost of bicycles and the number of ebikes has increased over the years. While it remains one of the most economical transportation methods available, thefts have also increased, and security is a big concern.

Strathcona County encourages the use of public transportation for daily trips as well as to both local and City of Edmonton events. Parking at the transit stations and at local events can be difficult and traffic congestion near events can be overwhelming. Riding bikes to the transit station or event can help alleviate some of these issues. However, inadequate or uncertainty on the type of bike parking and security available at the transit stations, local events and local businesses discourages cycling. When someone rides their bike and leaves it, they want assurance that it will be there when they return.

Bike racks are often not provided in a quantity or location that provides ease of use or adequate security at local businesses. Cyclists have had to lock their bikes to benches and other stationary equipment because bike racks are full or non-existent. The semi-circle bike racks provided at Emerald Hills Shopping Centre are sparsely laid out and don't allow for direct supervision while in certain stores. There are limited bike parking requirements in the County's Land Use Bylaw.

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following actions are recommended:

Recommendation G1: Provide secure bike storage on site at Strathcona County events. Include information on this service with general event information to encourage people to ride to the site.

Recommendation G2: Review and update the Land Use Bylaw for bike parking requirements including consideration of the following:
- o Directional signage indicating where bike parking is located if not easily visible.
- o Reduce the distance to the business from 15m to 10m.
- o Provide spacing requirements and acceptable bike rack types to be installed.
- o Provide a method for the public to identify a lack of adequate bike racks at local business and destinations (included below in public engagement section)
- o Requiring existing businesses to meet updated standards within a defined timeframe.
- o Check the requirements are being met and enforce where necessary.

Recommendation G3: Provide information to local businesses on the standards for installation of bike racks, suitability for bikes, ebikes and cargo bikes, and general security considerations.

H. Safe Routes to School/active transportation support for schools

A common complaint around schools is the increased traffic in morning and afternoon drop-off and pick-up times. Fewer children walk or ride to schools now than they did in previous generations. This can be attributed to several factors including school designation outside of a general walking distance.

Strathcona County recognizes the increased risk of vehicles in school zones and has developed the School Traffic Safety Partnership. This partnership focuses primarily on how traffic is managed in school zones to reduce the risk to those walking and rolling to school. However, Strathcona County should also be looking into supporting AT to schools in an effort to reduce the overall number of personal vehicles travelling to and from schools and encouraging AT habits in children that can continue in adulthood.

Having more children walking and riding to school has shown an overall increase in child health. Parents are reluctant to have their children walk/ride to school due to their potential interactions with vehicles. Bike racks at schools also potentially need updating to be able to secure larger framed bikes more securely than the typical racks that were installed decades ago. Storage for skateboards and scooters should also be provided in a safe area on school grounds with appropriate lock up features.

https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/active-transportation-how-children-getting-school.html

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following action is recommended:

Recommendation H1: Provide support to local school boards and local schools that are interested in increasing AT to/from schools, both urban and rural. Support could be offered in the following ways:
- o Helping to identify the safest routes to get to schools for children. This can include the expertise of Strathcona County traffic engineers to identify and avoid potentially dangerous intersections, identify favoured crossings based on traffic light sequences and suggest multi-modal pathways where trails are wider for both pedestrians and cyclists/scooters/skateboards.
- o Provide information to schools on bike rack standards including considerations for location and security, and suitable types of bike racks.
- o Utilize the existing Strathcona County School Traffic Safety Partnership to educate and encourage parents who drive their children to school to park away from the school and finish the trip with a walk the rest of the way to the school.
- o Support schools interested in creating 'walk/roll to school days' and the establishment of bike buses or walking buses to encourage students to participate in active transportation. Support could include traffic enforcement or temporary signage informing motorists in the area to be cautious.
- o Try to book safety presentation assemblies at schools. Communicate with school boards to set dates.

I.   Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Traffic Network

Traffic management systems (TSM) and their centers are critical resources for the safety and mobilization of travel within communities. As emerging technologies, next-generation artificial intelligence (AI), and steadily growing amount of road users there are a wide range of opportunities and possible improvements that can be made to the current Strathcona County traffic system.

According to the most recent report by the Federal Highway Administration (https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/FHWA-HRT-24-081.pdf) most current TSM's will be out of date and considered archaic in the next couple years. With this in mind, some cities like London (https://www.intertraffic.com/news/yunex-adaptive-flow) and Singapore (https://bachulal.medium.com/this-way-ai-can-solve-world-worst-traffic-problem-b2b6f17835d3) have been investing in AI to help combat traffic problems and make the roadways safer.

However, Strathcona County can benefit from a closer to home pilot project in Toronto that uses next-generation AI (https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/torontos-traffic-jams-are-infamous-heres-the-new-20-000-an-intersection-solution-the-city/article_9358e272-e6c9-11ee-93c9-7f66c5ecce00.html). This pilot project is looking at allowing AI to identify different types of road users and allow for split second prioritizing between cyclists/pedestrian traffic while maintaining the flow for vehicles. The City of Toronto is making this project cost neutral, as it has partnered with some of the industry leading development companies. Strathcona County could do something similar or even try to join the current pilot project by selling it as a way to downsize the project into urban/rural scale to make it more cookie-cutter.

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following action is recommended:

Recommendation I1: Council to direct administration to prepare a report for presentation to Council that investigates the potential use of next generation artificial intelligence to make real-time adjustments to the traffic signal systems to optimize travel times for both vehicles and AT users throughout Sherwood Park. The report should identify:

- potential costs of implementation of a pilot project along a major corridor in Sherwood Park;
- identification of how to measure the benefits of implementation of the system
- potential estimated travel time savings that could be achieved with such a system
- potential overall costs for full implementation of traffic signals within Sherwood Park;
- any other aspects administration identifies as important.

J.   Supportive Legislation/Driver Education for Active Transportation

Cycling has continued to increase in popularity as a leisure activity, a competitive sport, and as a means of daily transportation showing significant continued growth in Alberta. This has resulted in additional municipal expenditures aimed at increasing cycling safety and improving the potential for cycling to become not only safer but more attractive as an alternative means of transportation, which can assist with reducing traffic congestion and our general reliance on motorized transportation in our daily lives.

Cycling technology has also continued to change in ways that have increased both the number and types of bikes in use on our provincial and municipal roads. Ebikes in particular are enabling the public to ride bikes for longer, further, faster, and much later into their life. In fact, ebikes have made cycling possible and attractive to increasingly larger segments of society. This trend of more bikes and more cyclists out on the roads throughout much more of the calendar year will continue, long into the future. The result is that we are seeing more safety incidents involving cyclists and motorists each year.

In response to new and better information about cycling safety, and how to better manage the interactions of cyclists and motorists on the road together, more Canadian provinces are making amendments to their provincial traffic safety laws to modernize those laws, improve safety, and reduce conflict. However, the existence of different laws between provinces can create confusion driving ongoing misunderstanding and conflict on our roads when cyclists and motorists are traveling away from their home province.

When this inconsistent regulatory framework is exacerbated within a single province (as is the case now in Alberta), the issue is even more confusing and frustrating for motorists and cyclists alike and this is what we have in Alberta today with most provincial and municipal roads being managed under outdated and ineffective provincial rules while our two largest municipalities have enacted safe

passing bylaws that are instead consistent with newer laws that continue to come into effect in other Canadian provinces.

Alberta's Transportation Safety Act (the TSA) provides regulations specific to cyclists on the road and how motorists are expected to interact with cyclists. However, the TSA's regulations are out of date and at odds with modern, safe cycling practices. They need to be improved by drawing on current best practices for cycling safety and evidence-based research on providing the safest environment. This conflict forces cyclists to choose between operating a bicycle according to the written rules of the road or employing common safe-cycling practices, which only contributes to frustration and increased aggression amongst drivers who are familiar with the old rules and don't understand why cyclists choose to ride in ways that are inconsistent with old, problematic rules.

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following actions are recommended:

Recommendation J1: Advocate with its two municipal associations, Rural Municipalities Association (RMA) and Municipalities Association (MA), that they collectively request the province to update the Traffic Safety Act (TSA) to modernize the TSA as follows:

- Add a regulation on how to safely overtake and pass cyclists that is identical to the safe passing bylaws in effect now in Calgary and Edmonton with the minimum safe passing distance of one metre at speeds up to 60km/h and 1.5 metres at speeds greater than 60km/h
- Remove the requirement to travel single file only and instead allow two abreast riding. Groups of cyclists travelling together as a peloton must ride in a revolving side-by-side line of cyclists alternating the lead cyclists to save energy and maintain speed over distance. Further, a shorter double line of cyclists can be more easily passed in less time than a slower, longer line of single file cyclists.
- The TSA currently requires cyclists to ride "As near as practicable" to the curb – this language needs to be changed to read that cyclists should ride "as far to the right as is safe". A subtle but important differentiation as drivers currently do not appreciate that a cyclist that is not riding as close to the curb as a motorist thinks is "practicable", may not be doing so because it is not actually "safe" to do so. This current language adds to frustration and aggression among drivers that reduces the safety of cyclists in these cases.
- Advocate that the province considers enacting a law to wear a bicycle helmet, regardless of age, while riding a bicycle on a public road.

Recommendation J2: Advocate with the RMA and MA that they collectively request the province to change basic driver training messaging on how to share the road safely with cyclists. This messaging should include information on:
- How to pass cyclists safely (1 m at speeds under 60 km/h and 1.5 m at speeds over 60km/h),
- Dutch Reach method for shoulder checking before opening a car door into a traffic lane,
- Why bicycles may at times be travelling "in" the main travel lane, or not as close to the curb as a driver might think they should be and that it is not illegal for a cyclist to ride in the main travel lane
- This new and improved safety messaging to new drivers can and should be delivered, regardless of whether or not the TSA has been updated as suggested above.

Recommendation J3: Advocate with the province, RMA and MA to plan for and deliver on the creation of AT corridors between municipalities to reduce the number of cyclists and other users of alternative transportation devices have to travel on roads between communities.

K. Recreational Rural Cycling Routes

With our extensive, paved rural road network as well as natural amenities (Elk Island National Park, Beaver Hills Biosphere), rural Strathcona County is a popular destination for recreational cyclists from the entire Edmonton Metro Region. There is an opportunity to improve safety for cyclists while contributing to tourism and economic development in the County.

At times, there is conflict between vehicle drivers and cyclists on rural roads. Poor behaviour of both vehicle drivers and cyclists contributes to decreased safety for cyclists on the rural network. There is also a lack of information available on which routes are the safest for cyclists.

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following action is recommended:

Recommendation K1: Identify, develop and promote rural, recreational cycling routes that are most conducive to safe cycling.

- Review the network for routes that provide the safest infrastructure (ie. Off-road facilities, best shoulder conditions when on-road, sightlines). Also consider start points with facilities and parking, such as the Strathcona Wilderness Centre.
- Review intersections on chosen routes and add appropriate safety upgrades to encourage compliance with stop signs approaching the route (such as rumble strips)
- Work with local cyclists to identify and promote use of these cycling routes.
- Explore connections with Economic Development and Tourism/Recreation Parks and Culture departments to identify synergies that can help move this project forward

L. Bike Share Program

Bike share programs can be beneficial for people to easily access and incorporate active transportation into their daily lives. The use of these programs can address inequity issues of providing an option for people who cannot afford bikes and the associated costs of storage and maintenance. Bike share programs offer individuals an option for travelling further without the use of a vehicle and provide added connections for people to access public transportation. They are also convenient for one way travel.

Based on these barriers/concerns identified by the Task Force, the following action is recommended:

Recommendation L1: Work with EDT to explore business opportunities for introducing a bike share program to Strathcona County.

i. Consider focusing docking stations on high density residential areas and common destinations such as transit stations, retail areas and recreation centres.
ii. Consider requirements for return of bikes to docking stations to limit abandonment along sidewalks and boulevards.

Public Engagement Concerns and Recommendations

It is difficult to provide robust feedback on walkability/active transportation concerns to Strathcona County departments. County Connect offers residents the opportunity to provide feedback on issues. However, the follow up from this reporting method is not necessarily complete or to the satisfaction of the resident. Concerns identified as it relates to active transportation safety should be seen from
the user's perspective, not a desk review of engineering standards.

Using planned road upgrades or maintenance projects is an economical and well-timed opportunity to incorporate improved design and safety measures for multi-modal transportation. The Integrated Transportation Master Plan (S.3, 2022) notes this as a safety investment strategy. However, there is a lack of consultation with residents on upcoming road upgrades or maintenance projects as they pertain to active transportation safety improvements.

Seeking input from residents on upcoming projects can help identify safety concerns from the perspective of vulnerable road users.

When the County is engaging the public with regards to active transportation and vulnerable road user safety planning, the Task Force recommends the following actions to ensure the voices of cyclists/pedestrian are heard:

Recommendation PE 1: Develop a dedicated tool for ongoing reporting/tracking issues with active transportation safety concerns to Strathcona County.

- o This can be used for engagement on the development of an Active Transportation/Vulnerable Road User Strategy. Involve residents and leaders in planning active transport improvements to ensure they meet real needs.
- o This may be another option under County Connect, but a level of priority should be given to these issues.
- o Identify opportunities to leverage this tool to notify impacted residents of upcoming projects that they can provide input on for vulnerable road safety improvements.

- o Facilitate a walkability study/audit with interested residents for areas identified with concerns using a tool such as https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/getting-around/aarp-walk-audit-tool-kit-download/
- o Provide opportunities for residents to provide feedback on changes that have been made.
- o Encourage the public to identify a lack of adequate bike racks at local business and destinations (i.e. County Connect). Contact the business to inquire into the concerns and identify possible improvements. (From H3)

BYLAW 15-2023
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC SAFETY TASK FORCE

The *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000 c M-26, provides that a council may pass bylaws in relation to the establishment and function of council committees and other bodies.

The purpose of this bylaw is to establish a Council committee named the Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Task Force, and to prescribe a mandate, terms of reference, composition, and procedural rules for the committee.

Council enacts:

PART I – DEFINITIONS, AND INTERPRETATION

Definitions 1 In this bylaw:

(a) "Active Transportation" means the movement of people or goods powered by human activity;

(b) "Administration" means all of the individuals who perform work for and directly or indirectly report to the Chief Commissioner;

(c) "Administrative Liaison" means the member of Administration appointed to the Task Force by the Chief Commissioner;

(d) "Chair" means the person presiding at the meeting;

(e) "Chief Commissioner" means the chief administrative officer of the County, or delegate;

(f) "Council" means the elected governing body of the County;

(g) "Councillor" means an elected official of the County, including the Mayor;

(h) "County" means the municipal corporation of Strathcona County, a specialized municipality established under the authority of the *Municipal Government Act,* RSA 2000, c M-26 and Order in Council 761/95;

(i) "Ex-officio" means membership by virtue of one's office. Ex-officio members do not form part of the quorum;

(j) "Mandate Letter" means the letter provided to the Task Force from Council setting out the Task Force's specific priorities for the upcoming two years;

(k)   "Mayor" means the County's chief elected official;

(l)   "Priorities Committee" means the committee comprised of all members of Council and established under the Priorities Committee Bylaw;

(m)   "Public Member" means an individual who is not a member of Council and is appointed by Council to the Task Force;

(n)   "Task Force" means the Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Task Force established under this bylaw;

(o)   "Vice Chair" means the individual elected annually to fulfill the Chair's duties in the absence of the Chair.

Interpretation   2   The following rules apply to interpretation of this bylaw:

(a)   headings, titles, and margin notes in this bylaw are for ease of reference only;

(b)   gender-specific words, phrases, and references are intended to be gender-neutral, and the singular includes the plural as the context requires;

(c)   every provision of this bylaw is independent of all other provisions and if any provision of this bylaw is declared invalid by a Court, all other provisions of this bylaw remain valid and enforceable; and

(d)   references to bylaws and enactments in this bylaw include amendments and replacement bylaws and enactments, and regulations and orders thereunder.

PART II – ESTABLISHMENT, MANDATE, AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Establishment   3   The Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Task Force is established as a committee of Council.

4   The Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Task Force is a Task Force as defined in the County's *Boards and Committee's Bylaw*, 28-2021.

Mandate   5   The mandate of the Task Force is to:

(a)   develop a report for Council with advice and opportunities from a community and active transportation user perspective for pedestrian and cyclist safety and

functionality; and

(b)   advise and support Administration to ensure the active transportation user lens is considered as the County implements identified plans, strategies, and priorities to enhance safety while achieving accessibility and transportation goals for all road users through strategic infrastructure and operational improvements.

6   The report to Council is to prioritize strategies, projects, and programs related to walking, running and/or rolling that guide investment in the transportation network, whether for recreation or commuting, that best aligns with community goals, as identified in the County's strategic planning documents.

7   The Task Force must provide its report and recommendations to Council by December 31, 2024.

Terms of Reference

To fulfill its mandate, the Task Force will:

8   Work with Administration to define areas of concern related to active transportation for cyclist and pedestrian safety;

9   Identify and provide advice on the engagement of stakeholder groups to amplify cyclist/pedestrian input into active transportation and vulnerable road user safety planning; and

10 Provide guidance and support in the development of an Active Transportation and/or Vulnerable Road User Safety Strategy in alignment with current Strathcona County Trails Strategy and Integrated Transportation Master Plan.

PART III – MEMBERSHIP

Members   11 The Task Force will be comprised of:

(a)   no less than five (5) and up to seven (7) Public Members;

(b)   one member of Council; and

(c)   one alternate member of Council.

12 Public Members must be residents of Strathcona County.

13 Public Members must not be current employees of the County.

14 Public Members must not have been employed by the County for a minimum of 12 months prior to applying for a Public Member position.

15 Public Members are voting members.

16 Councillors appointed to the Task Force are non-voting members.

17 When making appointments to Task Force, Council will consider representation from both rural and urban communities.

18 If a Public Member vacancy occurs before the expiration of their term, the Public Member appointed to fill the vacancy will hold office for the remainder of that term.

19 Council may, for any reason, remove a Public Member by Council resolution.

Term
20 Members will serve until the Task Force's final report has been presented to Council.

Mayor
21 The Mayor is an Ex-officio member of the Task Force and is a non-voting member.

PART IV– PROCEDURES

Procedures
22 Except when it conflicts with this bylaw, the Task Force will follow the procedures in the County's *Boards and Committees Bylaw*, 28-2021.

Election of Chair and Vice-chair
23 At its first meeting the Task Force must elect a Chair and a Vice-chair from among its members.

Chair's duties
24 The Chair will preside at all Task Force meetings and decide all procedural matters that may arise. If the Chair is unable to perform the Chair's duties, the Vice-Chair will perform those duties.

First Meeting
25 At its first meeting, following the election of the Chair and Vice-chair, the Task Force must:

(a) create a work plan; and

(b) determine a meeting schedule.

Change to meetings
26 The Task Force may vote to change the date, time, or place of a scheduled meeting, or schedule an additional meeting, as long as the Task Force provides at least 24 hours' notice of

the change to the Task Force members by email and to the public by notice on the Task Force's website.

Meeting Schedule	27 The Task Force may schedule as many meetings as necessary in order to fulfill its mandate.
Quorum	28 A majority of the voting members will constitute a quorum for a Task Force meeting.
Public Meetings	29 Task Force meetings will be held in public unless the meeting is closed for reasons permitted or required by the *Municipal Government Act,* RSA 2000, c M-26.

PART V – ADMINISTRATIVE LIAISON'S ROLE

Administrative Liaison	30 The Chief Commissioner will appoint an Administrative Liaison to the Task Force.
	31 The Administrative Liaison is not a member of the Task Force and cannot vote on any matter before the Task Force.
Administrative Liaison duties	32 The Administrative Liaison will perform the following duties and functions for the Task Force:

    (a)   publish the Task Force's meeting schedules and notices;

    (b)   provide technical, administrative, meeting space, meeting management and other supports to the Task Force as required for its meetings;

    (c)   manage the Task Force's minutes and records;

    (d)   provide County information or records to the Task Force about matters within its mandate if requested, subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, RSA 2000, c F-25 and other confidentiality requirements; and

    (e)   facilitate the preparation of Task Force reports to Council or Priorities Committee.

PART VII – GENERAL

Repeal   33 This bylaw is repealed 30 days after the Task Force has provided its final report to Council.

FIRST READING: July 4, 2023

SECOND READING: July 4, 2023

THIRD READING: July 4, 2023

SIGNED THIS 4th day of July 2023

Rod Frank

_____

MAYOR

Sara Mckerry

_____

A/DIRECTOR, LEGISLATIVE AND
LEGAL SERVICES

Appendix 2: Prioritization Criteria

From Active Transportation and Traffic Safety Task Force Mandate Letter:

The report to Council is to prioritize strategies, projects, and programs related to walking, running and/or rolling that guide investment in the transportation network, whether for recreation or commuting, that best aligns with community goals, as identified in the County's strategic planning documents.

Scoring: 0-4 Lower priority; 5-7 Medium priority/term; 8-10 High priority/short term

Criteria	Total Score	Scoring Metrics
Potential safety benefit		Is there strong evidence the recommendation will improve safety for pedestrians/cyclists? 0=weak/no evidence, 1=some evidence, 2=strong evidence
Alignment with other ITMP priorities: Connectivity, Accessibility, Efficiency, Economy		Does the recommendation significantly improve connectivity, accessibility or efficiency for those using active transportation? Does it support industry or economic growth/Tourism? 0=doesn't align with any priorities; 1=aligns with 1-2 priorities; 2= aligns with 3 or 4 priorities
Scope of impact		Does the recommendation have the potential to affect improvements for a relatively large or small amount of active transportation road users (local, regional, provincial)? 0=relatively small group of users, 1=moderately large group of users, 2= large/almost all users on the network
Complexity of implementation		Is implementation of the recommendation complicated by jurisdiction, lack of political support or other factors? 0=high degree of complexity, 1= some complexity, 2= relatively simple implementation
Cost of implementation		What is the cost of implementing the recommendation? 0=high cost to implement, will require significant capital planning, 1= moderate cost to implement but will require additional budget, 2= can likely be implemented using existing resources

Appendix 3: Recommended Job Description: Active transportation coordinator

Review reports and recommends plans, facility and transportation network improvements, design standards, and public investments to meet objectives identified by the active transportation plan.

Conduct, lead, and guide various programs and projects including education, coordination, planning, and programming related to active transportation implementation to support strategic objectives and initiatives

Provide work oversight and performance feedback, training and instruction to meet goals and objectives. Assurance to safety standards policies and procedures.

Develop, administer, review and amend plans, policies and ordinances for active transportation in collaboration with other government departments and agencies.

Review construction projects and building permits to ensure compliance with active transportation policies and standards. Conduct site visits, inspections and project design review to ensure compliance.

Respond to inquiries, provide training, present education materials and distribute relevant resources to provide assistance and information on related assignments and activities.

Maintain and update information and data in various mediums. Maintain information on county website.

Monitor opportunities for provincial, federal, private and industry grant opportunities to support AT. Develop partnerships with stakeholders to facilitate meeting the County's AT goals.

Engineering: Improve connectivity by creating safe and convenient places for active transportation.

Education: Giving people of all ages and abilities the skills and confidence for active transportation.

Encouragement: Create a strong culture that supports and welcomes active transportation

Evaluation and planning: Planning for active transportation as a safe and viable transportation option.

Oversee and implement the Strathcona County active transportation plan. Respond to public inquiries on active transportation matters. Coordinate and promote active transportation related projects, special events and activities to promote safety and education.