



Plenary Session at the University of Toronto, Great Hall. Photo Courtesy Luke Plichta



Complete Streets Forum 2011

"This conversation today is about how to be intentional together. Having those partnerships between ministry staff and public and private ventures is critical and I think that's what allows us to do good planning."

- Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Transportation, Ontario

On April 28 & 29, 2011, the Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation and the Clean Air Partnership hosted the 2011 Complete Streets Forum. Building on the success of the two previous Bike Summits in 2008 & 2009 and the first Complete Streets Forum in 2010 the two-day event provided a meeting place for public, private, and non-profit partners to discuss active transportation as a vital component of complete streets and a sustainable city.

The theme for this Complete Streets Forum was "Building Alliances". This focus is a response to the multifaceted transportation challenges we

face, which transcend municipal boundaries and political factions, and affect us all, regardless of how we choose to get around – by car, bike, transit, or our own two feet. We urgently need to address common opportunities and challenges in balancing the needs of all users and to infuse transportation options into how we think about and plan our streets.

This year 221 attendees met at the University of Toronto's historic Hart House to discuss these issues. Delegates represented diverse perspectives (49% were from the public sector, 18% from the private sector, 19% from the non-profit sector and 14% from other sectors) as well as diverse regions (58% from Toronto, 24% from elsewhere in the Greater Toronto Area and 18% from outside the GTA). An overwhelming majority (90%) of registrants reported being satisfied or extremely satisfied with the Forum. Even better, 87% agreed or strongly agreed that the Forum was inspiring and 79% took away concrete recommendations to help with their work. What follows are some highlights from the presentations made by the 26 distinguished speakers.



Bridging the Downtown/Suburbs Divide Breakout Session
Photo Courtesy Elana Horowitz

Presented By:

tcat toronto coalition for active transportation



Portland Alliances help Create Complete Streets

Portland, like other North American cities, was engineered around the car. Yet today 7 to 10% of Portlanders ride their bikes for their transportation needs. This did not happen by chance. Rather, like many European cities, Portland's reinvestment in pedestrians and cyclists was deliberate. It started in 1971 when the state of Oregon passed the Oregon Bicycle Bill (ORS 366.514), which may be the first Complete Streets policy in North America. The bill required that pedestrian and cycling facilities be included whenever a street was built or rebuilt. It also required that at least 1% of transportation funding be spent on bike and pedestrian projects. Less than two years later, Portland formed their first cycling advisory committee. Also important in Portland's Complete Streets history are two key figures. In 1986, renowned bicycle-friendly politician Earl Blumenauer was elected to Portland City Council. And in 1993, Portland took another step forward by hiring dynamic Mia Birk as its Bicycle Program Coordinator.

"The places people live, work, and play go hand in hand with transportation, how we get to those places."

- Mia Birk, President, Alta Planning & Design

Mia Birk presented on Portland's path to success at this year's forum. She emphasized the alliances that were built in order to grow Portland's bicycle network, from politicians to the city maintenance staff to the general public. Inspiringly, when she found the latter group hard to meet with, she put a projector on her bicycle trailer and began presenting to neighborhood groups, civic groups, and anyone who would listen. After each presentation, she found that people would come up afterwards and recount, for example, that their doctor had told them that they needed more exercise or that they wanted their kids to be able to bike to school. When in 1996 the City of Portland accepted the plan to make the bicycle an integral part of daily life in Portland, it was those members of the general public, who might be as much as 10 to 20% of the population, who became spokespeople for Portland's cycling programs. Since then other successful projects to engage the public have included Safe Routes to School and Personalized



"...it's a celebration, let's do it with style" Councillor Blumenauer referring to the first bike lane on Burnside Bridge in Portland.

Photo Courtesy Mia Birk.

Travel Encouragement programs. As part of the second program, participants receive a bike-delivered bag of goodies designed to encourage active transportation such as transit passes, coupons or umbrellas. They also get access to hands-on programs in their neighborhood that can help them make the switch.

From Keynote: Bicycle Transportation & the Future of Toronto & other North American Cities: 12 Keys to Success

"These sets of tools are critical [to translate vision into the design and construction] and really affect what you interact with on a daily basis when you step out into the world."

- Janet Lo, City of Toronto

Moving Forward in Toronto

Following TCAT's 2010 Forum, City of Toronto staff began researching a Complete Streets policy for Toronto. Janet Lo, from Toronto's Transportation Services, updated forum participants on the results of this study.

Toronto already has a solid policy foundation containing complete streets components that integrate walking and cycling into transportation planning. For example, Ontario's *Places to Grow* Act and *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, Metrolinx's *The Big Move* and Toronto's Official Plan.

However, Toronto still needs a better toolbox for effective multi-modal delivery and implementation to realize its plans. Properly stocked, this toolbox will include state-of-the-art technical standards and innovations, as well as additional tools for public education and engagement.

From Panel: Update on Complete Streets in Toronto and Waterloo





Toronto Pedestrian Scramble
Photo Courtesy City of Toronto



Davenport Road, Waterloo. Redesigned under Complete Street Guidelines.
Photo Courtesy Chris Hodgson

Moving Forward in Waterloo

On April 18, 2011, Council for the City of Waterloo, Ontario approved in principle a Transportation Master Plan which includes a Complete Streets Policy. Chris Hodgson, from the Waterloo Capital Projects & Services department, introduced us to the seven key pillars of Complete Streets including planning, design, maintenance, operations, communications, asset management and implementation.

"Re-train is probably a bit of a harsh word, but certainly [we need to] educate staff, management and council in understanding the principles of Complete Streets."
- Chris Hodgson, City of Waterloo

Long before the Transportation Master Plan was approved, Waterloo was already looking into redesigning Davenport Road to avoid conflict amongst users. Working under Complete Streets guidelines staff reallocated the space between the curbs, divided the street with a landscaped median, and added bicycle lanes, pedestrian refuge islands and transit shelters. They also worked to accommodate emergency response and maintenance department needs. Costs were offset in part by the reduced snowplowing costs of a two-lane road versus a four-lane road.

From Panel: Update on Complete Streets in Toronto and Waterloo

Public Health as Active Transportation Partners

Obesity and diabetes rates are rising in Canada as Canadians become increasingly sedentary. As of 2007, over 50% of Canadian adults and 78% of teenagers are not physically active enough to maintain their health. The combined annual economic burden of physical inactivity and obesity in Canada is over \$9.6 billion. According to

Monica Campbell, Director of Healthy Public Policy at the City of Toronto, active transportation is a solution to this problem, and people who commute actively are less overweight and have improved cardiovascular fitness.

However, safety concerns can discourage active transportation. A recent U.S. poll showed that while 71% of adults walked or cycled to school when they were young, only 18% of their children do, with traffic-related danger as a common concern. Yet studies show that injury and fatality rates decrease as the active transportation mode share increases. A Dutch study found that the physical health benefits derived from cycling were greater than the risks from injury or air pollution. Additionally, according to a study released in 2009 by Britain's national school of public health, active transportation benefits in London could include preventing 541 premature deaths and 5,295 years of life lost each year by increasing physical activity and decreasing vehicle emissions.

"The path forward has to be to change our city, to change our streets, to change our communities, so that...the healthy choice is the easy choice."
- Monica Campbell, Toronto Public Health, City of Toronto

Infrastructure is required to make cycling and walking safe for people of all ages. In New York City, a Safe Streets for Seniors initiative addresses the unique needs of elderly pedestrians and considers the role of street design in maintaining good cardiovascular health in old age. The project improved traffic flow and safety, as well as local air quality. Much of the budget was covered by partnerships with local business improvement districts who saw the relationship between increased foot traffic and profits.

From Panel: Partners in Change for Healthy and Safe Active Transportation



"Bring the debate on a higher level...for vibrant, socially integrated, green, prosperous cities...and share the benefits of that. And then see what kind of contribution cycling can play in it."

- Roelof Wittink, Interface for Cycling Expertise

Cycling is Marketable

Although the potential demand for cycling may be growing, as long as cycling facilities remain sub-par cycling numbers will most likely remain the same or only grow very slowly. More decision makers are considering cycling promotion but do not know how to approach the issue. They require information on how to invest in cycling inclusive planning and the costs and benefits of an investment in cycling.

This provides an opportunity for capacity building because many professionals may not have a background in cycling inclusive planning and design. For example, Kathleen Wynne, the Ontario Minister of Transportation, reminded forum attendees that her Ministry started out as the Department of Highways. The presentation by Roelof Wittink, Executive Director for the Dutch Interface for Cycling Expertise, also reinforced Minister Wynne's words as he asserted the need for the public to pressure decision makers to use their mandate to improve citizen well-being and overall livability.

Despite the vast amount of research on the benefits of cycling, politicians, staff and the public here in North America often seem unaware of the bicycle's potential. There is a clear need for targeted marketing efforts that consider the viewpoints of different audiences and pick aspects of bicycle transportation that will most resonate with each group. For example, a non-cyclist may decide to support cycling infrastructure because it decreases traffic speed and makes streets safer for his children.

From Keynote: Planning for Cycling and Walking: Economic and Marketing Perspectives



Unfriendly Streets: Toronto's Inner Suburbs.
Photos Courtesy Paul Hess

"If you don't have the policy but you get the culture right, you can do tremendous things."

- Daniel Haufschild, Director, Policy and Planning, Metrolinx

Complete Streets Beyond Downtown

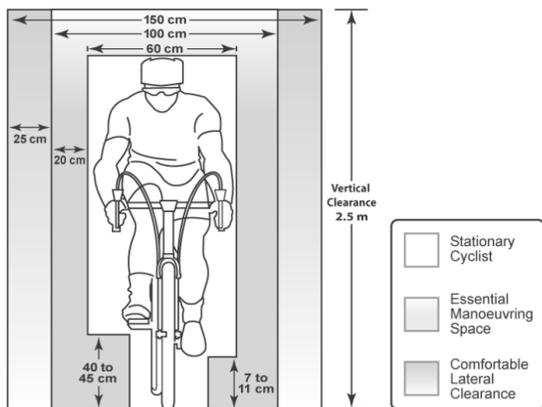
Complete Streets means livable, enjoyable, and safe neighborhoods where multiple transportation modes provide mobility to all. But what does Complete Streets mean, in terms of real design work, and local needs, outside the urban core? There is more than one type of suburb. In Toronto's inner ring of suburbs, hundreds of thousands of people with the least choice in terms of housing and transportation live in high rise apartment buildings located on high motorized traffic arterials. By contrast, the regional municipalities that make up the outer ring of suburbs in the Greater Toronto Area are doing extremely well in economic terms, but their poor urban form may impact their ability to continue their economic prosperity. We need to overcome the misconception that Complete Streets only means adding bike lanes and a pedestrian crossing and get back to the bigger picture. It means planning residential growth where jobs are located, so people do not have long commutes. It means creating mobility hubs, such as GO train stations, that better serve and encourage transit, bicycle and pedestrian access. Streets are a reflection of the surrounding built environment. Sometimes Complete Streets means looking beyond the streetscape and into the built environment context within which the streets operate.

From Breakout Session: Bridging the Downtown/Suburbs Divide

"There is no one kind of downtown or one kind of suburb but a range of built forms, or urban contexts, in which different forms of Complete Streets could be appropriate, ranging from industrial parks, tower neighborhoods, Victorian Waterfronts, 1950s highway strip developments, 1980s new urbanist greenfield developments... There's a lot of different ways to unpack those terms."

- Hannah Evans, Director, Partnerships and Consultation, Ontario Growth Secretariat, Ministry of Infrastructure





Defining Cycling Space
Image Courtesy Ray Bacquie

to manage traffic, studies have shown that these measures can give drivers a false sense of security and reduce their eye contact with other road users, increasing the chances of collision. On the other hand narrower lanes and lower speed limits increase eye contact and modify a driver's perception of risk, which makes them more alert and decreases fatal crashes.

- Keep designing for human dimensions. At 30 km/hr cyclists and pedestrians can comfortably share the road with cars. Pay special attention to intersections where the driver's field of vision is reduced. Design streets according to their context. For example, do not use highway design principles to improve car mobility on a dense, city street.

"If you slow down you can interact with other road users."
- Nepali driver's insight into Complete Streets, recounted by Dewan Masud Karim, City of Oshawa

"People are willing to walk 5 to 10 minutes to transit on a regular basis, and after that distance... their willingness to do it drops off."
- Jeannie Lee, Ministry of Transportation

Tools Available

When it comes to Complete Streets, policies are not always enough. In order to have Complete Streets in our cities, our engineers and planners need the tools to apply these concepts to the road. Standard definitions or targets are key. If you do not have an objective, you are unlikely to reach it. This includes defining transit space, where and how you want transit to operate, cycling space, the space required for a cyclist to safely share the road, and pedestrian space, evaluating it in terms of walkability and seeing streets as destinations rather than corridors. It also means coordinating streetscape elements so that there is a clear space for pedestrians to both walk and gather.

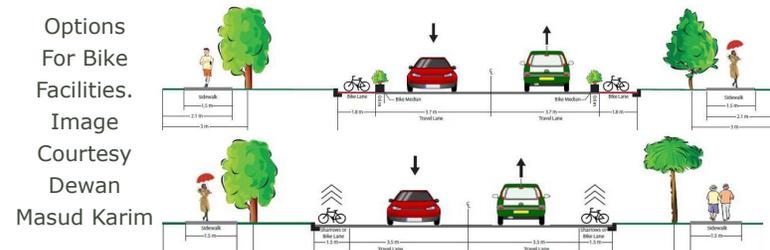
We need to:

- Recognize the misperceptions surrounding us regarding cycling. Although many perceive cycling to be dangerous, and it is more dangerous in Canada than it should be, the risk of injury needs to be balanced against the individual and public health benefits. Another misconception is that cycling facilities are expensive but new bike lanes typically only require an adjustment to the pavement marking plan, not new asphalt. When a roadway is being constructed or repaved, pavement markings are required anyway, and bike lanes can easily be accommodated at little, if any, additional cost.
- Challenge assumptions. While speed signs, wider lanes, and traffic signals are often used

Ray Bacquie, from Cole Engineering Group, introduced zebra crossings and crossbikes as examples of useful tools. A study found that the stronger delineation of space provided by zebra crossings reduced the conflict at intersections and these are now standard practice in Toronto and Mississauga. The Highway Traffic Act does not allow cyclists to bike on pedestrian crossings but cyclists generally do not walk across. In a creative twist, a new type of intersection marking (crossbike) delineates where cyclists should ride.

Specific documents that Complete Streets planners and engineers can refer to include Ontario's new Traffic Manual Book 15 that offers control measures and engineering practices that support pedestrian elements and pedestrian crossings, as well as the Ontario Ministry of Transportation's draft Transit-Supportive Guidelines, which emphasize the inter-dependent relationship between transit ridership and land use patterns.

From Breakout Session: Tools for Change (Tackling the Technical Challenges)



If we use the organizing picture of universal mobility then we get a clearer picture of what we're trying to do."
- Susan Eng, Vice President, Advocacy, CARP

"One car for every person on this planet is not a sustainable way to move people."
- Michel Labrecque, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Société de transport de Montréal

The Art of Collaboration

Collaboration is often depicted as a friendly co-operative process but it is just as often a confrontational and adversarial situation where consensus is difficult to achieve. Nevertheless the changes we wish to create are often bigger than any individual or single group, and being productive and progressive is an art form. Some points to keep in mind during negotiations:

1. Remember your mission and be gracious: You are going to disagree at times and you need to be gracious in accepting those disagreements.
2. Don't shy away from tough decisions: When the time comes to tell someone they won't be getting what they want, confront the issue head on.
3. Listen: Even if you don't agree, hearing the opposition out and understanding their views can go a long way toward achieving consensus.

4. Broaden the conversation: Public health, livability, local economic revival and increased safety benefit everyone.

5. Partnership is vital: Partners help overcome resource gaps, navigate red tape, and demonstrate community support for projects. Public support played a large role in the endorsement of the Hurontario/Main Street Master Plan by Mississauga and Brampton, two separate municipalities.

"We're all in the same road here."
- Eleanor McMahon, Share the Road Coalition

6. Common goals do not require common reasons: Look for common ground and do not limit your partners to one ideology. For example, Share the Road partners with the Ontario Trucking Association because the OTA also wants paved shoulders.

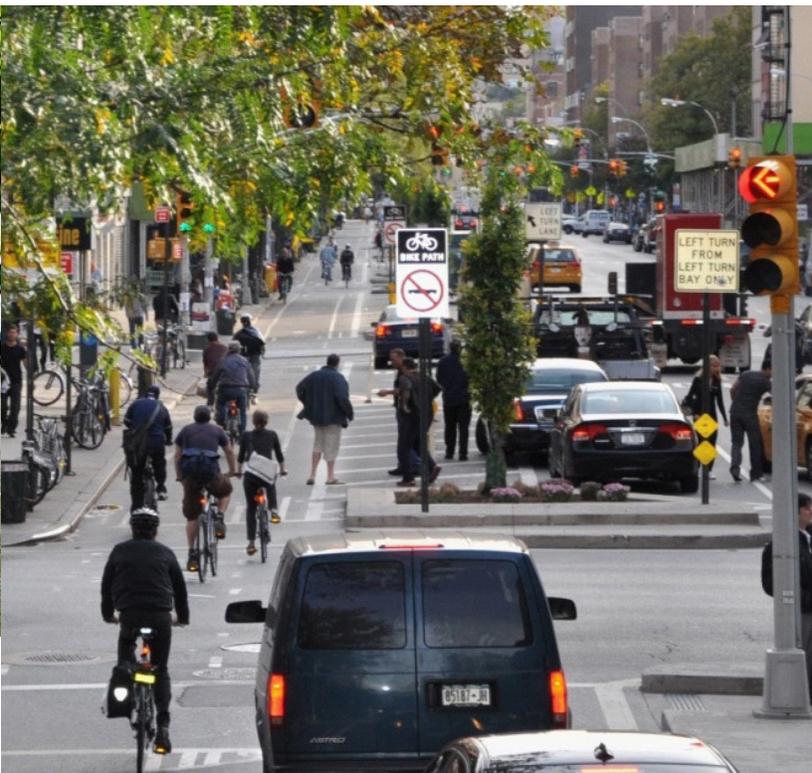
From Breakout Session: The Art of Collaboration

"Ridicule turned to acceptance. Fears overcome by delightful reality. And we learned that backlash is normal, because changing built infrastructure and deeply ingrained habits is really hard stuff."
- Mia Birk, President, Alta Planning & Design



"It's essential to normalize bicycling as a form of transportation for the next generation. Abernethy Elementary in Portland OR has gone from having almost no kids biking to school to 30-40% during peak season, thanks to five years of dedicated efforts on the part of parents, City officials, school leaders, and community partners."

Caption & Photo Courtesy Mia Birk



Shared Streets, New York City
Photo Courtesy Hillary Poole



Intermodal Collaboration

Of Canada's six largest cities, Montreal has the highest percentage of commuters traveling by transit, walking and cycling. Montreal's 2008 transportation plan set a target to install a total of 800 km of cycling routes by 2015. In 2009, Montreal became the first North American city to implement BIXI, a public bike sharing system. Currently Société de transport de Montréal (STM), the public transport provider, adopts an innovative approach called the "transportation cocktail", a combination of private and public transportation options achieved through partnership with other stakeholders (self-serve bicycle rentals, car sharing, and regional public transit companies) who grant preferential rates to transportation cocktail enthusiasts. The goal is streamlining mobility, making it faster for an individual to reach their destination. On average, the transportation cocktail can reduce travel times from 25 to 40%. STM has an ambitious plan to make Montreal the North American flagship city for active transportation by 2020.

From Keynote: Overcoming Resistance to Change: the Transportation Cocktail Movement

Being Mainstream

Complete Streets are sustainable, they are destinations, and they provide a safe transportation corridor for all users. To grow and evolve the Complete Streets movement, partnerships will be needed amongst the various players, including government, non-profit groups, community, and business. As we work together, we need to shift beyond labels of cyclist, pedestrian, and driver, and move towards a transportation system that supports people



Kitchener, Ontario before Complete Streets implementation.
Photo Courtesy Cory Bluhm

"It's very, very important that we understand that this isn't about the fringe, this is about the mainstream. This is about people..."

- Honorable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Transportation, Ontario



Kitchener, Ontario after Complete Streets implementation.
Photo Courtesy Cory Bluhm

traveling around the city in different ways for different type of trips. After all, what we are promoting is mainstream. People want to be healthy. People want to be safe. People want to lower their bills. People want a stronger economy, with high levels of well-compensated employment. People want shorter commutes. The goal should be to provide people with choices and not get caught in one-dimensional transportation planning. We know diversity is critical for transportation but for many years we have been putting all of our eggs in one basket (planning only for cars and trucks). Building a healthy transportation investment portfolio requires diversification and balancing travel modes.

After all, business people, doctors, lawyers and students all cycle to work. Yet, as Minister Wynne recounted, some of them do it almost secretly, arriving early, showering, changing, and never really talking about cycling in their regular work lives. And this has to change. In order for people to know that it is ordinary, they must see that it is ordinary. And that means letting your co-workers know how you get to work every day and mentioning it at dinner parties. Sometimes people who have only used one form of transportation have never considered that there are any other possibilities. And meeting people just like them, who happen to engage in active transportation, can be a powerful moment of change.



"We're facing lots of challenges and barriers and there's surely more to come. But we are articulating a positive vision of what we want and have rallied behind it. We need to stay strong in our belief and our commitment that we can and should make our streets safe and comfortable for all users"

– Nancy Smith Lea, Director, Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation

Complete Streets Forum 2011

Presenters

- Ray Bacquie, P. Eng., Cole Engineering
- Mia Birk, Principal, Alta Planning & Design
- Monica Campbell, Director, Healthy Public Policy, Toronto Public Health, City of Toronto
- Susan Eng, Vice President, Advocacy, CARP
- Hannah Evans, Director, Partnerships and Consultation, Ontario Growth Secretariat, Ministry of Infrastructure
- Daniel Haufschild, Director, Policy and Planning, Metrolinx
- Paul Hess, Associate Professor, Geography & Planning, University of Toronto
- Chris Hodgson, P. Eng., Project Manager, Capital Projects & Services, City of Waterloo
- Michel Labrecque, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Société de transport de Montréal
- Eva Ligeti, Executive Director, Clean Air Partnership
- Janet Lo, Project Officer, Pedestrian Projects, Public Realm Section, Transportation Services, City of Toronto
- Steve Kemp, Director, Transportation Management and Intelligent Transportation Systems, Regional Municipality of York
- Robin Kortright & Jeannie Lee, Ministry of Transportation
- Dewan Masud Karim, Transportation Planner/Engineer, City of Oshawa
- David McLaughlin, Senior Project Manager, Transportation Planning, MMM Group
- Eleanor McMahon, Founder, Share the Road Cycling Coalition
- Denzil Minnan-Wong, Chair, Public Works and Infrastructure Committee, City of Toronto
- Rosalyn Morrison, VP, Community Initiatives, Toronto Community Foundation
- Hillary Poole, Senior Project Manager, Research, Implementation & Safety, New York City Department of Transportation
- Nancy Smith Lea, Director, Toronto Coalition for Active Transportation
- Mark Winfield, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University

- Roelof Wittink, Executive Director, Interface for Cycling Expertise (I-CE)
- Geoff Wright, Director, Transportation Projects, Transportation and Works Department, City of Mississauga
- The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Transportation, Ontario Ministry of Transportation
- Paul Young, Public Space Workshop

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Opening reception at ING Direct Cafe.

Photo Courtesy Yvonne Bambrick

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