



Building Bike Culture in Suburban Communities. New report shows how to make it happen.

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Toronto, ON – More people are getting around Scarborough on two wheels thanks to an innovative bike hub program that can be replicated in other suburban communities, suggests a new report from The Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT).

[Building Bike Culture Beyond Downtown: A Guide to Suburban Community Bike Hubs](#) sheds light on how Scarborough Cycles, an innovative program led by TCAT between 2015 and 2018, tapped into the potential for cycling in this eastern suburban district of Toronto. The three-year community bike hub project has successfully repaired over 2,000 bicycles, led over 1,000 people on rides, and trained over 200 people in cycling skills – all in a suburban community with next to no bike lanes and only one bike shop.

“With millions of short trips made each day in communities outside of Toronto’s core, there’s great potential for cycling,” says Nancy Smith Lea, Director of The Centre for Active Transportation. “Using the innovative four-step process we piloted in Scarborough, other suburban communities can now tap into this potential to get more people on bikes.”

The report describes how, in 2015, TCAT launched two community bike hubs in Scarborough – welcoming spaces where people can learn more about cycling, meet other people who cycle, and go cycling together – to spark cycling adoption. The hubs offer programming such as do-it-yourself bicycle repair, bicycle loans, and guided rides to encourage cycling in an area where few trips are made by bicycle.

Researchers developed a targeted, four-step approach for other suburban communities to build bicycle culture. They adapted proven social psychology strategies, such as those used for quitting smoking or reducing energy consumption, to encourage and sustain behaviour change for cycling. In the report, the four-step process to 1) find the neighbourhood, 2) identify local barriers, 3) remove barriers and start cycling, and 4) keep cycling, is laid out for others to use.

The Scarborough Cycles project team is led by The Centre for Active Transportation at the Clean Air Partnership, and includes Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services, Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre, CultureLink Settlement and Community Services, Cycle Toronto and the Toronto Cycling Think & Do Tank at the University of Toronto. It is funded by the Metcalf Foundation.

Report Launch Event

A launch event for the report is open to the public and will include a panel discussion with cycling experts from Toronto and beyond, moderated by urbanist, author and Toronto Star columnist Shawn Micallef. It will take place on January 17, 2019 from 6:30PM-9PM at the North York Memorial Community Hall. Free tickets are available on [Eventbrite](#).

Quick Facts

- In Toronto's suburban communities of Etobicoke, Scarborough, and North York, 1.5 million trips are made each day that are 5 km or less, short enough to be cycled in under 20 minutes.
- While cycling rates in downtown Toronto and East York have grown from 1 per cent to 7 per cent between 1996-2016, cycling rates in Toronto's inner ring of suburbs have held steady at 1 per cent.
- Toronto's climate action strategy, TransformTO, was approved by City Council in 2017 and establishes the goal that 75 per cent of trips under 5 km will be walked or cycled by 2050.

Additional Resources

- Download the report: [Building Bike Culture Beyond Downtown: A Guide to Suburban Community Bike Hubs](#)
- [Scarborough Cycles Snapshot](#)
- [Scarborough Cycles website](#)
- Download a PDF of the press release [here](#)

About The Centre for Active Transportation

The Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT), a project of Clean Air Partnership (CAP), advances knowledge and evidence to build support for safe and inclusive streets for walking and cycling. We believe that active transportation plays a critical role in creating environmentally and economically sustainable cities.