

INCUBATING CYCLING IN SUBURBAN CANADIAN COMMUNITIES



INCUBATING CYCLING

In Suburban Canadian Communities

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Who is TCAT?

The Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT) is a project of Clean Air Partnership, a charitable environmental organization.

Mission: Our work advances knowledge and evidence to build support for safe and inclusive streets for walking and cycling.

Key Strategic Priority: Conduct active transportation research that leads to on-the-ground change.



Timeline

Launched 2014
Peel Region Pilot



Launched 2019
Markham Cycles



Launched 2015
**Scarborough
Cycles**

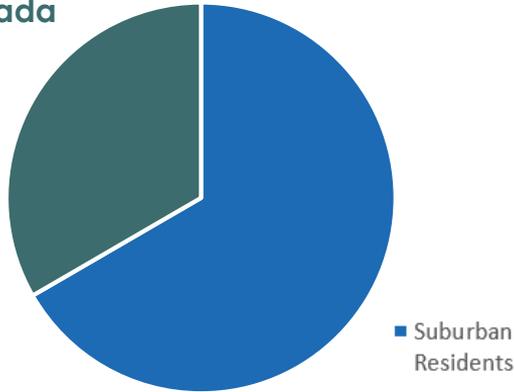


The urban core is not the most significant site of change.

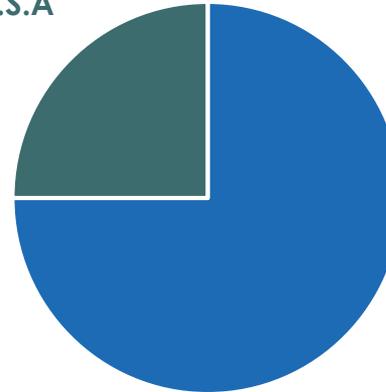
Even if everyone living in downtown areas stopped driving, it would only make a small dent in the problems associated with automotive transport.

Why suburban communities?

Canada



U.S.A



2/3 of Canadians and 3/4 of Americans live in suburbs.^{1, 2,}

75% of Canada's population growth between 2006 and 2016, occurred in auto suburbs.¹

Growing transportation emissions contribute 24% (Canada) and 30% (U.S.) of GHG.^{3,4,}

***Suburbs are
evolutionary or
transitional states:
yesterday's suburbs
are today's mature
suburbs and
tomorrow's older
suburbs or inner city***

Bourne 1996



Rosedale in the heart of Toronto: photo credit Google

Opportunities

One third (4.35 million) of daily trips in the GTHA are potentially cyclable.⁵

Wide right of ways

Trail systems/Recreational cycling

Desire for healthy lifestyle



**Many suburban trips are
5km long or less – a
distance that can easily be
cycled in 20 min.**

Photo credit: Marvin Macaraig

Challenges

Physical

- Fast moving traffic
- Wide streets
- Little or no cycling infrastructure
- Disconnected routes
- Lack of repair facilities

Social

- Belief that roads were built for cars
- Cycling as recreational activity
- No practical way to learn skills
- Few people cycling—seen as niche
- May translate into seeing people who cycle as marginal.

Results



2011

Pharmacy Ave



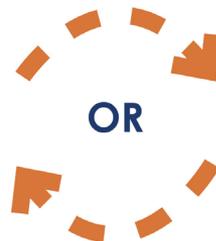
2014

Google Streetview
The logo for tcat, featuring three blue diagonal bars to the left of the lowercase text "tcat".

WHAT COMES FIRST?

PEOPLE RIDING BIKES

More cyclists means more support for bike lanes, more business for bike shops and more positive social norms around cycling for everyday travel.



SUPPORTS FOR BIKE RIDING

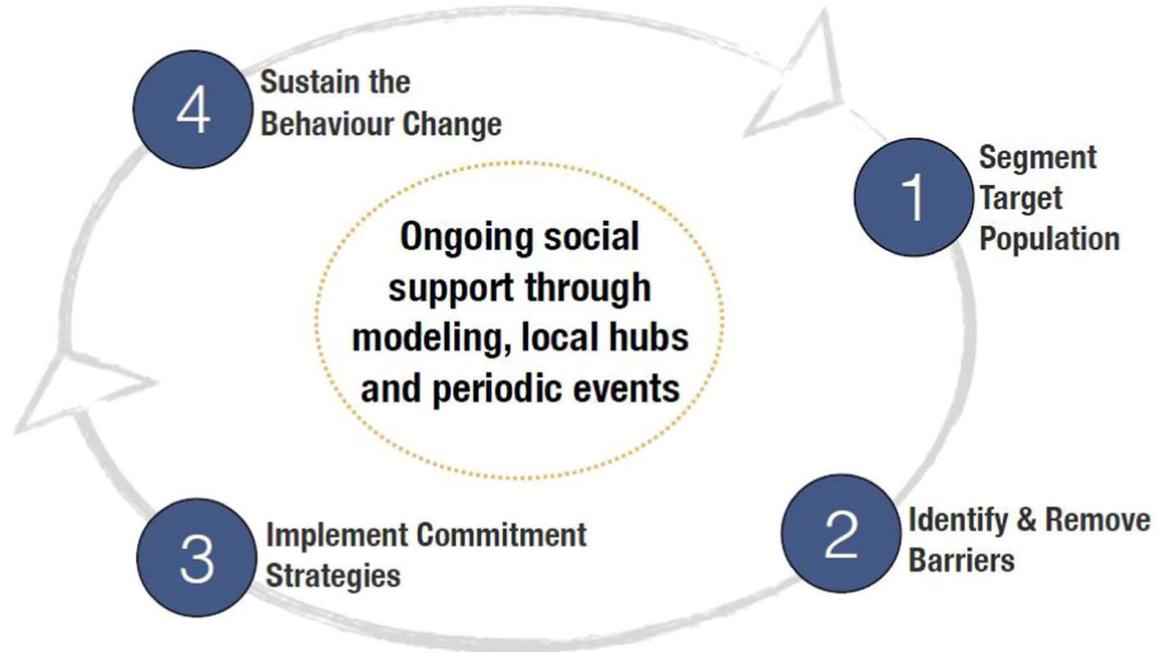
But until bike lanes, bike shops and positive social norms have been established, people are unlikely to start cycling.

Social
Psychological
Literature on
Behaviour Change



Cycling
Programming

A Theory of Change

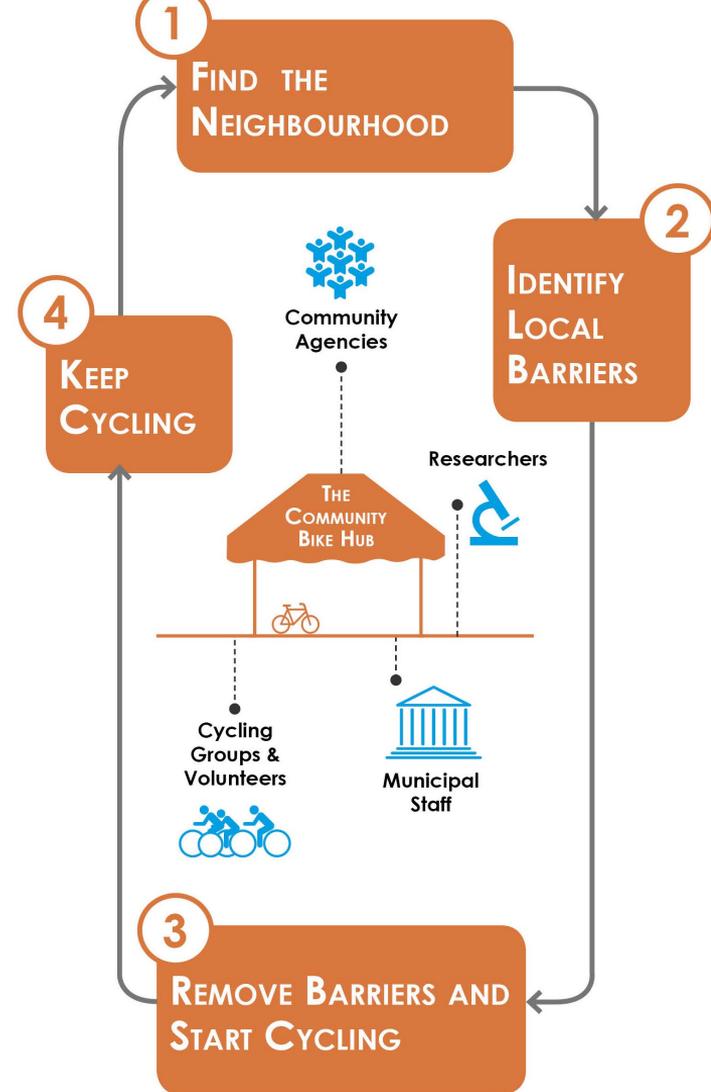


From Theory to Action



Community Bike Hubs

Source: Ledsham, T. & Verlinden, Y. (2019). Building Bike Culture Beyond Downtown: A guide to suburban community bike hubs. The Centre for Active Transportation at Clean Air Partnership.



Barriers

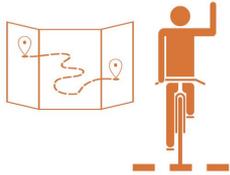
PHYSICAL

- A Bike
- Bike Lanes
- Bike Parking
- Bike Repair Shop
- Bike Bags/Baskets
- Child Seat



SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Riding
- Road Rules
- Routes
- Managing transitions to work or transit
- Attire



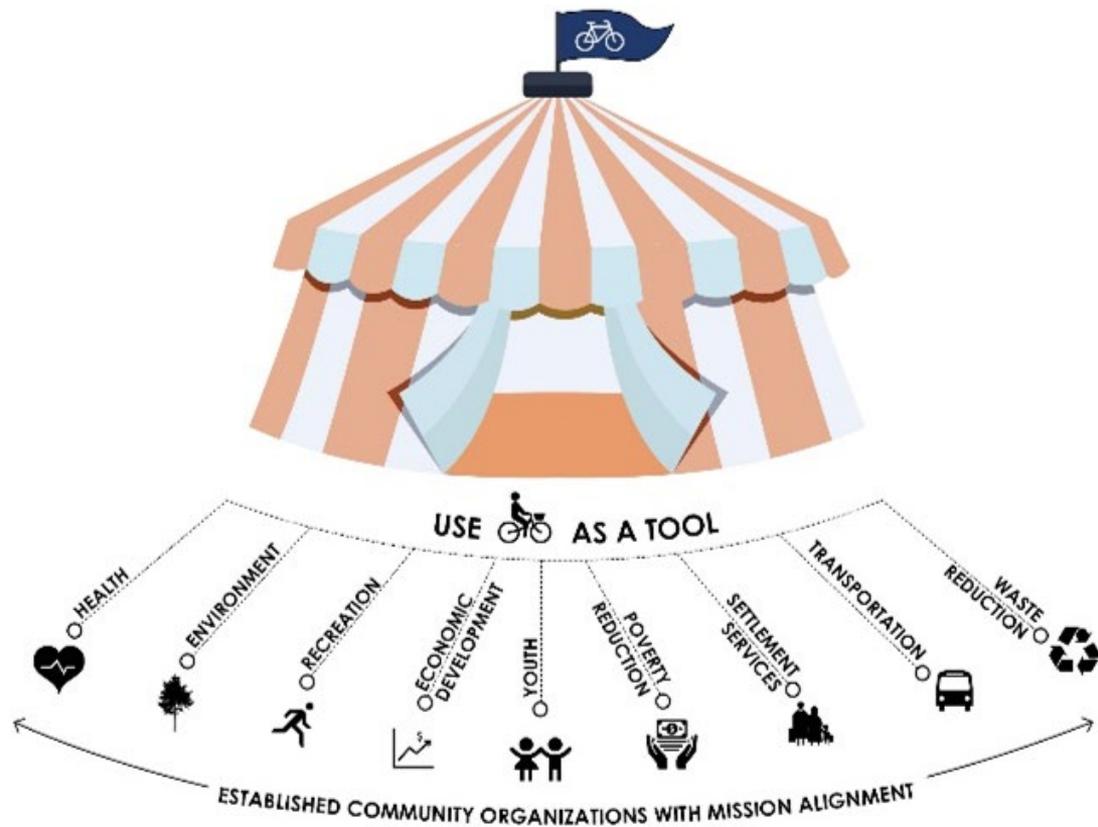
POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS

- Biking is fun and viable for everyday travel.
- You do not need to be fit, brave and dressed in lycra to bike.



Building Partnerships to Incubate Suburban Cycling

A Big Tent Approach to Cycling Programming



The Power of a Partnership

Cycling Organization

Cycling and programming expertise



Local Host

Suitable Location and Space

Organizational capacity

Community presence



The Power of a Partnership

Cycling Organization



Local Host

Cycling and
programming
expertise

Launch



Establish



Co-Facilitate



Support

Scarborough Cycles Case Study





**Ontario's Community
Health Centres**

**Les centres de santé
communautaire en Ontario**

Access Alliance

- **Community Health Centre**
- **Our Vision**
 - Toronto's diverse communities achieve health with dignity.
- **Model of Care**
 - Primary Care
 - Illness Prevention
 - Health Promotion
 - Community Capacity Building
 - Service Integration



Our Bike Hubs

- A community space for residents of all ages and skill levels.
- Our focus is to implement programs that address the barriers to everyday cycling for residents.

Scarborough Cycles Bike Hub Locations



Lawrence-Orton
Toronto
Community
Housing



AccessPoint on Danforth
Community Health Centre



Birchmount Bluffs
Neighbourhood Centre



Access Alliance's Strategic Priorities

- *Improve both individual and community health*
- *Drive health equity*

2015-2018



Funder Focus: Build bike culture in suburbs.

- Create new knowledge about cycling in the suburbs
- Build capacity among agencies to support cycling

2018-2019



Funder Focus: Fight climate change, reduce GHG's, and transition to a low-carbon economy

- Adoption of low-carbon choices by Ontarians

2018-current



Funder Focus: Help build sustainable communities and reduce landfill waste

- Build a culture of waste reduction, reuse, sharing, and repairing through education

Bike Hub Programs



DIY Drop-In Bike Repair

- We provide access to space and tools and empower residents so that they can learn how to fix and maintain their bikes.
- 2019 (1800+ visits)
- 2018 (1233+ visits)
- 2017 (602+ visits)
- 2016 (550+ visits)



Group Rides

- Group rides are public facing events that help normalize everyday cycling to the broader community.
- 2019 (28 Group Rides)



Community Bike Repair/Outreach

- We offer free bike tune-ups, helmet fittings, and safety checks at community events year-round.
- 2019: (45 Events)



Earn Your Bike

- **8-week program the first of its kind in Scarborough.**
- **2019**
 - Earn Your Bike (8 Sessions)
 - Kids Earn Your Bike (4 Sessions)
 - Kids' Bike Giveaway (90+ bikes)
- **Participants learn mechanic skills, how to ride safely, and support the community with the completion of 25 volunteer hours.**



Workshops

- We offer a variety of in-class, hands-on, and both on/off-bike workshops tailored to the specific needs of our community.



Resident Engagement

- Provide opportunities for residents to get involved and help identify openings for grassroots advocacy.
- Hours dedicated by volunteers
 - 2019 (2440+ hours)
 - 2018 (1518+ hours)
 - 2017 (945+ hours)
 - 2016 (378+ hours)

Report: Building Bike Culture Beyond Downtown



BUILDING BIKE CULTURE BEYOND DOWNTOWN

A GUIDE TO SUBURBAN COMMUNITY BIKE HUBS

 the centre for
active transportation
 a member of
Clean Air Partnership



Questions?

References

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2. <https://www.citylab.com/life/2019/06/suburbs-definition-census-data-way-of-life/591343/>
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5. Mitra, R., Lea, N. S., Cantello, I., & Hanson, G. (2016). Cycling behaviour and potential in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. *School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University in collaboration with Toronto Centre for Active Transportation, Toronto. doi, 10.*
6. Ledsham, T. & Verlinden, Y. (2019). Building Bike Culture Beyond Downtown: A guide to suburban community bike hubs. The Centre for Active Transportation at Clean Air Partnership