



CHASE

CANADIAN HEALTH ASSOCIATION
FOR SUSTAINABILITY & EQUITY

The Health Case for Walkable, Bikeable & Transit-Supportive Communities

Highway 413-Don't Pave our Future

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Urban Sprawl Affects Health in So Many Ways

- ... It makes us dependent on cars.
- Increases air pollution.
- Decreases physical activity.
- It forces us to spend hundreds of hours commuting to & from work.
- It consumes irreplaceable farmland.
- Destroys greenspace.
- And it fuels the climate crisis - which threatens the liveability of our planet.
- I am going to focus on air pollution & physical activity because they are the health risks that are easiest to quantify.



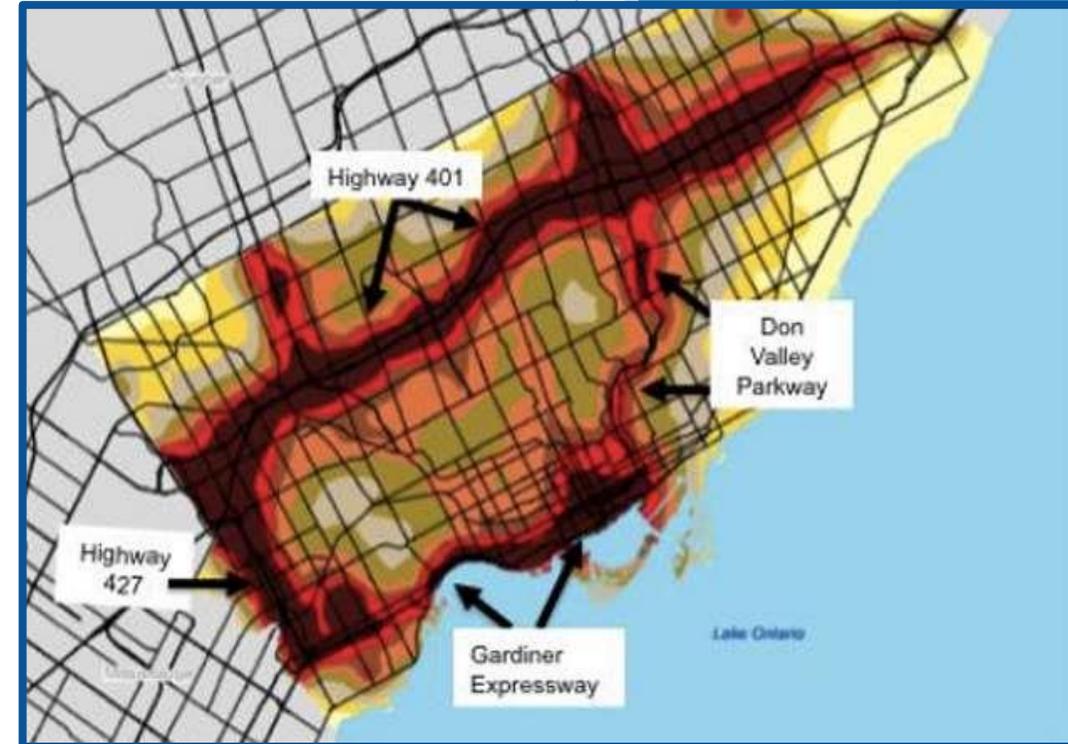
Physical Activity is the Elixir of Life

- ... It reduces the risk of 25 chronic diseases.
- It improves mental health.
- It can relieve the pain of arthritis.
- **But most people in Canada do NOT get the physical activity needed to maintain good health.**
- **Chronic Diseases** are bankrupting the health care system.
- And robbing people of years from their lives.
- **Physical Inactivity & Obesity produce about \$4B in health-related costs in the GTHA each year**



Air Pollution Continues to be a Significant Health Concern in Canada

- ... And the Transportation Sector is a major source.
- Hundreds of studies have been directed at **traffic-related air pollution (TRAP)** over the last 25 years.
- They have linked TRAP to a broad array of negative health impacts - everything from asthma to premature deaths from heart disease, strokes and lung cancer.
- **In the GTHA alone:**
 - 700 PD & 2800 HA each year
 - \$4.6 billion/year in health-related costs



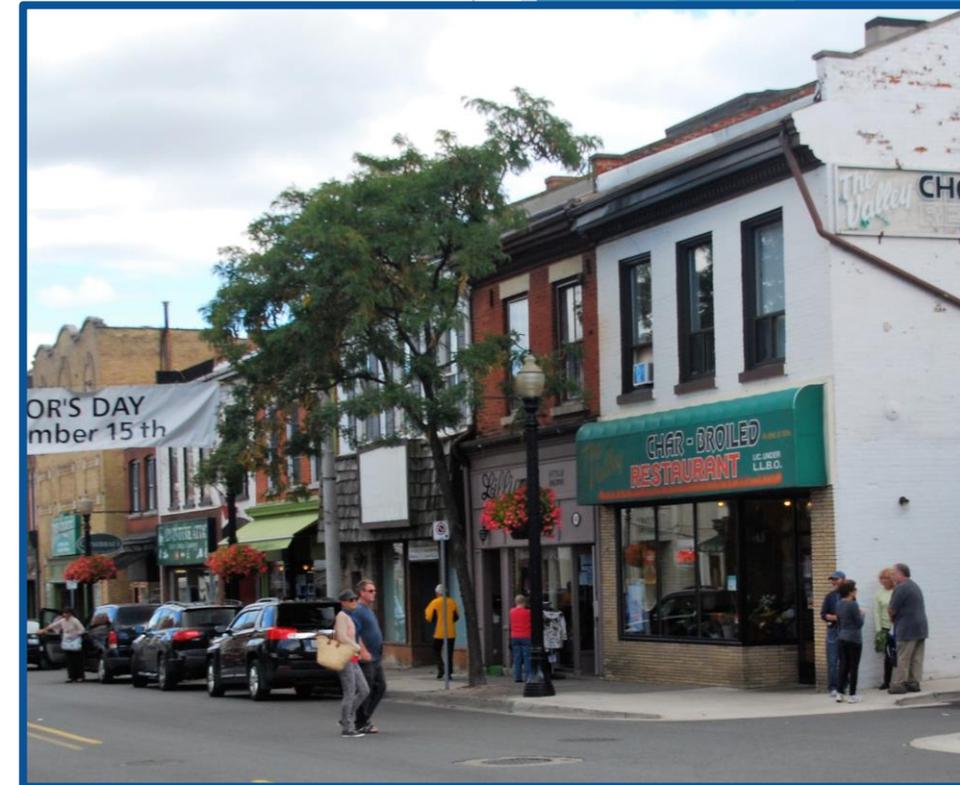
Active Transportation Increases Physical Activity & Improves Health

- Within the public health sector, it is well understood that we can increase physical activity by encouraging active modes of transportation.
- Many studies have found that active transportation improves health.
- For example: One long-term study found that the risk of premature death is reduced:
 - By 28% among people who ride their bikes 3 hrs/week
 - By 22% among people who walk 29 min/day, 7 days/week.



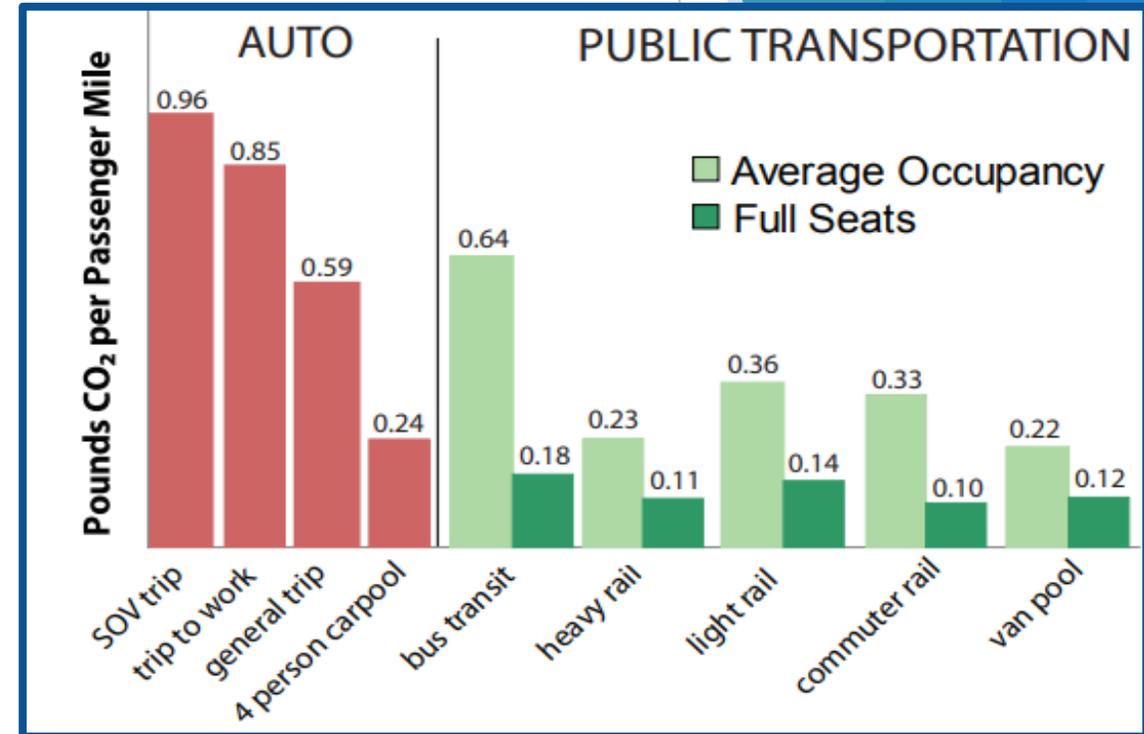
Active Transportation can Improve Health Equity & Air Quality

- Studies have found people who live in “Walkable neighbourhoods”:
 - walk more for utilitarian reasons
 - drive less frequently & fewer kms
 - take transit more often.
- A few Canadian studies have demonstrated that “walkable neighbourhoods” have lower rates of diabetes; neighbourhood design has a greater impact on low-income populations.
- Modelling studies have shown that we can avoid \$billion in health-related costs by shifting people from cars to AT - air quality & physical activity.



Transit Use Improves Physical Activity, Air Quality & Health Equity

- Several studies have found that people can get a good portion of the physical activity they need by walking to & from transit stops.
- Because public transit reduces the VKT by people, it reduces the air pollution & climate emissions associated with each person's travel.
- Transit also increases social equity by making jobs, services and recreational opportunities more accessible & affordable to people of all ages, abilities and income levels.



What makes Communities Walkable, Bikeable & Transit Supportive?

- **Everything that Urban Sprawl is NOT!**
- **Density:** Sufficient population or job density to support efficient transit service & a range of amenities.
- **Diversity:** A diversity of land uses - stores, restaurants & homes - within close proximity.
- **Design:** Streets that feel safe, pleasant & convenient for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Destination:** Easy access to popular destinations such as parks.
- **Distance:** Ensure that common amenities such as transit stops are within walking distance (5-minute walk) or Cycling distance (1 to 5 km)

