

PUBLIC HEALTH ROLES

How we design transportation networks has a significant impact on our health. The development of healthy public policies to increase active transportation involves coordinated efforts from multiple sectors, including public health. Across the cases¹, public health demonstrated a variety of roles:

- Reviewed planning documents and provided commentary



In Ontario, public health has a “commitment to policy and environmental changes that can improve the built environment and prevent chronic disease. The Ontario Public Health Standards, which guides public health action, includes a focus on healthy living, chronic disease prevention and the built environment”.

Brought active transportation forward as a health issue

- Developed active school travel programs that were used as an example of what was possible



The Bike Pilot was conceptualized when the Primary Care Network approached the City of Red Deer with concerns related to obesity levels.

Contributed evidence on the influence of the built environment, physical activity levels, obesity levels, and chronic disease



Participated on active transportation committees

Public health agencies like Vancouver Coastal Health are key partners for us. Billions are spent each year on preventable illnesses as a result of sedentary lifestyles. There is mounting evidence that the built environment strongly influences activity levels, and that good design and infrastructure can result in healthier, happier citizens and significant savings.

→ Attended council meetings to support active transportation policy development

→ Conducted public engagement activities

Having the Medical Officer of Health be supportive of active transportation really enables [us] to do the work that we're doing to support Public Works and other departments. So both our [Chronic Disease Prevention Section] and our Healthy Living [Section from our Public Health Service Division] supplied some of their support to Public Works.

Acted as champions



¹Propel Centre for Population Health Impact. (2014). Propel Centre for Population Health Impact. (2014). *Understanding healthy public policy processes: A multiple case study of the use of road modifications to improve active transportation*. Propel Centre for Population Health Impact, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario.