

Establishing a Baseline: Process, Lessons, and Resources



About the Project

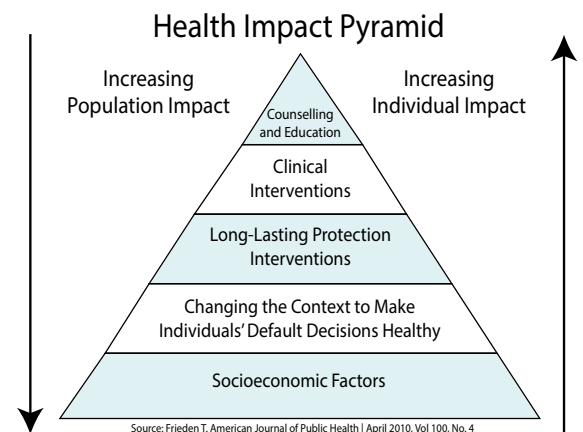
Active Transportation (AT) has significant health benefits to both people and populations. The NSHA, Public Health - Central Zone, in partnership with a multidisciplinary team of stakeholders, initiated this project to:

- Raise awareness about the link between AT and health;
- Address information gaps and support evidence informed decisions; and,
- Build capacity locally and in other NS communities and health zones.

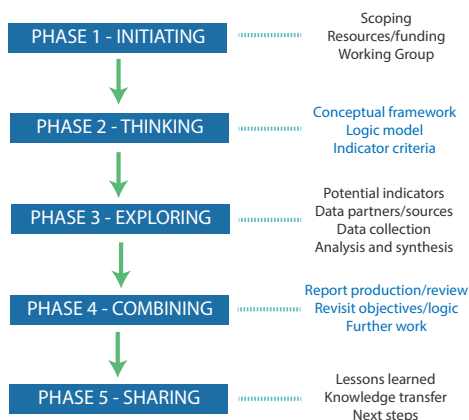
Role of Public Health

Public Health advocates for supportive policies to create communities where default decisions for people are healthy decisions. Increasingly, public health practitioners focus on population-level interventions that change the context in which individuals live, to make healthy decisions accessible and convenient for everyone. One part of this work is advocating for planning policies and design that prioritize AT to make engaging in physical activity the easy choice.

Through this project, we explored local AT and health trends with community partners to support evidence-based decisions which create healthier communities.



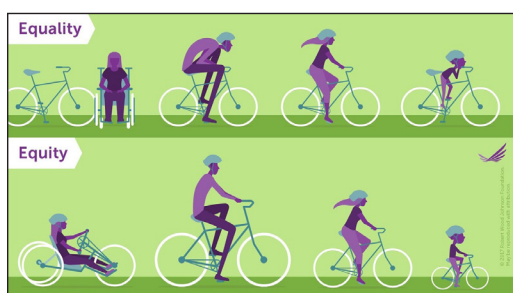
Project Process & Working Group



This project used a five stage process with a strong focus on relationship building, planning, and thinking concepts through at the beginning. This framed data, indicator and resource decisions.

Central to this project's success was the involvement of key organizations and people with diverse backgrounds at a more in-depth level in a project working group. Members provided guidance, acted as a sounding board, made decisions, and supported data work and knowledge transfer. This approach built local capacity and established lasting relationships. These relationships will be important to future monitoring and collaboration opportunities

Considering Health Equity



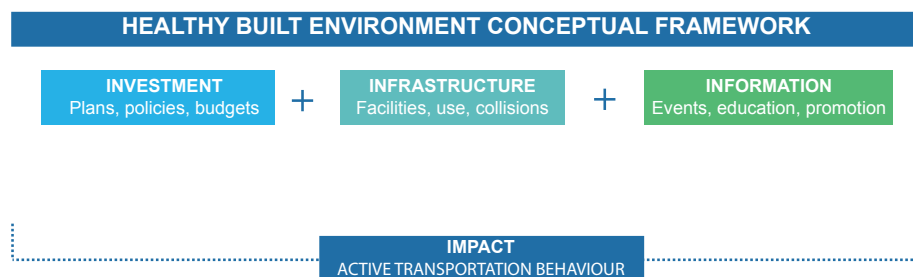
Source: 2017 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Healthy equity occurs when everyone in a population has the resources and opportunities they need to achieve their full potential. This includes the fair distribution of and access to resources and services. Consider, are we designing our cities to benefit everybody?

Incorporating an equity lens into AT planning and infrastructure decisions identifies differential health impacts on population groups and neighbourhoods. While a full equity analysis was outside this project's scope, it was identified as a future collaboration priority.

Conceptual Approach & Logic Model

To keep the multi-disciplinary group on track, support decision making, and select indicators, a conceptual framework and logic model were used. The framework is based on 3 pillars working together to create a healthy built environment: Infrastructure, Investment, and Information. The logic model built on this framework and helped the working group assess how inputs associated with the 3 pillars would impact outcomes.



DOMAIN	INPUT	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT	OUTCOMES
INVESTMENT	Funding Human resources Political leadership Municipal Plans Other AT plans and policies	Budget for infrastructure that supports AT (both municipal and provincial) Cross-sectoral working groups Plans and policies that support AT Budget for maintenance of AT infrastructure	\$ invested in AT infrastructure and facilities # AT policies # funding policies endorsed Amount of funding leveraged for AT projects # cross-sectoral working groups/committees	# investment in AT Incorporation of AT into planning and transport engineering # AT policies # improved culture around the built environment/infrastructure for AT # AT options for all users More equitable access to AT Quality AT policies # understanding within the public, staff, Council about the importance of policies and budgets that support AT # commitment among Council to invest and prioritize AT policies, budgets and infrastructure
INFRASTRUCTURE	Facilities for AT (e.g., protected bike lanes, etc.) Complete Streets upgrades Multimodal infrastructure (e.g., bike racks on buses, covered bike networks, bike storage facilities, etc.)	Street design and AT infrastructure that is comfortable and connected Proportion of road network that has traffic calming measures Road upgrades that incorporate AT	Bicycle and pedestrian facilities Proportion of road network that has traffic calming measures # time of pedestrian infrastructure (e.g., crossing and wait)	# infrastructure for AT # vehicle traffic # pedestrian/bicyclist Higher walkable score in more neighbourhoods # conflict between road users Faster routes Healthier facilities
INFORMATION	Special events In-school education programs and events School travel planning programs Wayfinding elements	Develop/disseminate promotional materials Produce newspaper articles # people using AT # commuter Challenge participants # in-school cycling education programs + events	# people using AT # commuter Challenge participants # in-school cycling education programs + events	Commuter behaviour changes # awareness of importance/benefits of AT

Indicator Selection Criteria

Indicators measure current conditions and track trends over time. They are useful in measuring whether a community is moving towards a stated goal or objective. For this project, over 75 AT and health indicators were considered with 40 identified for ongoing monitoring. Of these, baseline data was established for 28. Despite this, the other 12 were kept on the list due to their significance.

Indicator Selection Criteria	
Current	Data must be recent
Timeline	Available during collection period
Representative	Must be meaningful to the region
Access	Readily and easily available
Relevant	Useful in informing policies/decision-making
Transferable	Applicable to other communities
Reinforces existing processes	Feeds into existing monitoring, i.e., don't reinvent the wheel

Data Sources

- Statistics Canada (e.g. census data, Canadian Community Health Survey)
- Local municipalities and police
- Research institutes (e.g. DalTrac)
- Community groups/advocates
- Local/provincial health authorities
- National transportation, health, and physical activity associations

Lessons Learned

- A working group of diverse and committed partners is essential.
- The project's scope and priorities must be clearly defined.
- Plan for flexibility! Data availability and partner capacity will vary.
- Keep the project moving. Do not let the information get out of date.
- Prioritize resources. What is the role of: GIS, graphic design, primary data collection, and data purchase?
- Create collaborations and relationships that last beyond the project.

This resource was completed by Public Health, Central Zone - NSHA as part of the project *Establishing a Baseline: Active Transportation & Health in the Halifax Region*. For more information contact (902) 481-5800. This project was made possible by funding provided by the Province of Nova Scotia.