

Dear Honourable Ministers Halman, Masland, Dunn, and Rushton;  
and Honourable Deputy Ministers MacEachern, Hackett, Huston and Gatien,

The Provincial government has set Goal 9a of the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act* (EGCCRA) which aims to have a Provincial Active Transportation (AT) strategy that increases AT options by 2023. This commitment is a generational and unprecedented opportunity to ensure that past investments in AT are met with future ambition and vision. Our organizations were extremely pleased to see this in the EGCCRA as a legal commitment, which is rare in provincial government legislation.

While there have been significant efforts to increase safe active transportation infrastructure throughout Nova Scotia, there has not been a cohesive, funded plan that shifts Nova Scotia to a cycling province. The benefits of such an initiative will meet several other government objectives - from increased economic development in rural areas, to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and a healthier, more active population across generations. We know that the existing infrastructure provided immense value to Nova Scotians during the height of the pandemic and continues to be well used by commuters, recreational cyclists, children and visitors to Nova Scotia.

As Nova Scotia embarks on the development of the Active Transportation Strategy, we want to be your partners and champions, with direct connections to communities across the province. Bicycle Nova Scotia has worked for over a decade on Blue Route implementation and active transportation policy. In 2020, BNS developed a roadmap for a Complete AT Network in Nova Scotia, and has been working with communities across the province to complete and implement active transportation plans. As the provincial cycling organization, BNS represents 24 community-based clubs and organizations who regularly organize rides and advocate for safe routes and infrastructure in their communities. The Ecology Action Centre has developed and delivered safe cycling projects and programs that center equity-deserving groups in order to help all Nova Scotians access active transportation. Alongside programming, the EAC is a strong advocate for community-centered policy and infrastructure for walking, rolling and transit. We see the demand that exists on the trails, streets and sidewalks in Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia's Active Transportation Strategy must be ambitious; moving us from where we are now to fully connected communities by 2030.

Attached is an overview of our recommendations for what must be included in the new strategy. We can't wait to engage Nova Scotians on this strategy.

Sincerely,



**MAGGY BURNS**  
*Executive Director*  
Ecology Action Centre



**BRITTNEY MACLEAN**  
*Director of Blue Route Development & Cycling Advocacy*  
Bicycle Nova Scotia



# Ecology Action Centre and Bicycle Nova Scotia's 2023 Active Transportation Strategy Recommendations

Nova Scotia has already laid many foundations of a successful and ambitious active transportation strategy. These existing initiatives and commitments should be the base of a cohesive strategy. These include:

- [Blue Route](#): an established vision for a province wide network of ~3000 km of active transportation routes. Action 43 of the *Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth* provides continued commitment to the Blue Route.
- Many more municipalities (and communities within them) are in the process of creating AT plans:
  - [Blue Route Hubs project](#): a focused program in 11 municipalities that advances AT plans and their implementation.
  - EAC is supporting an additional 5-6 municipalities create AT plans
  - [Roadmaps to Nova Scotia Active Transportation Future](#): 3 maps outlining all the existing & proposed AT infrastructure and AT plans in a quick glance
- BNS's Complete AT Network Plan: a plan for province-wide complete AT connections with costing estimates.
- Ongoing efforts to pave shoulders in municipalities.
- Education programs including: [Making Tracks](#) – a curriculum aligned youth safe cycling education program, built in partnership with St. Francis Xavier University's teaching program for the NS curriculum; CANBIKE and HopOn both available in communities as requested.
- BNS's [Bicycle Wayfinding Guide](#)

In our view, the strategy must also include:

- Centering equity both in the strategy and during its development, working with underserved communities to identify and meet their mobility needs.
- An overarching and coordinated vision for connected communities, including:
  - Plan and infrastructure initiatives listed above;
  - Standards for AT infrastructure and wayfinding;
  - Targets, timelines and measurable indicators for implementation.
    - Targets should include participation rates, modal shifts, economic benefits and emissions reductions as well as kms of infrastructure implemented.
    - Roles and responsibilities of relevant departments in meeting targets should be defined, including AT budget allocations.

- A governance structure that breaks down silos between departments and levels of government, that is accountable, and is not on the shoulders of volunteer organizations (i.e. community trails associations). This structure must integrate non-government organizations in implementation, to maximize program and education delivery (i.e. role of Velo Quebec in active transportation).
- Enabling and incentivising policies and laws, that ensure safe cycling, and allow municipalities to make progress on active transportation. Such examples include, but are not limited to:
  - allowing municipalities to lower speed limits (i.e. less than 50 km/h and on community main streets under provincial jurisdiction);
  - mandating safe cycling skills in the provincial school curriculum
  - ensuring that provincial infrastructure (i.e. roundabouts) plan for active transportation use.
- A commitment to shifting our culture, from one that places barriers to active transportation to one that incentivises active transportation as an attractive, affordable and accessible choice for all Nova Scotians.

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