

Haliburton Communities in Action

April 10, 2013

Webinar Transcript





Landmark Designation

The program described in this case study was designated in 2012.

Designation as a Landmark (best practice) case study through our peer selection process recognizes programs and social marketing approaches considered to be among the most successful in the world. They are nominated both by our peer-selection panels and by Tools of Change staff, and are then scored by the selection panels based on impact, innovation, replicability and adaptability.

The panel that designated this program consisted of:

- Mark Dessauer, Active Living by Design
- Jacky Kennedy, Green Communities Canada
- Ryan Lanyon, Metrolinx
- Nathalie Lapointe, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- David Levinger from the Mobility Education Foundation
- Lorenzo Mele, Town of Markham
- Geoff Noxon, Noxon Associates
- Chuck Wilsker, U.S. Telework Coalition
- Phil Winters from CUTR and the University of South Florida
- JoAnn Woodhall, Translink

This transcript covers a webinar held on Wednesday, April 10, 2013. Additional materials about this program can be found at: <http://www.toolsofchange.com/en/case-studies/detail/661>.

Introduction by Jay Kassirer

Welcome to today's webinar on Haliburton Communities in Action. Today's webinar is the third of four transportation case studies. It was designated as a Landmark case study by our peer selection panel [p. 2 of this transcript] on the basis of impact overall and the individual innovation, replicability to other locations, and adaptability of the approach to other behaviors.

I'd like to acknowledge the members of this panel, which includes both on-the-ground program organizers and some of the most proactive agencies and consultants supporting transportation initiatives.

I'd like to give credit to those organizations that have helped promote this webinar. Since today's webinar focuses on active transportation, I'm including some information on Canada Bikes, Canada's new national voice for commuter touring and recreation cycling.

I'm going to give you a few tips on what to look for in today's case study webinar. When scoring it, the selection panel noted that it is one of the few active transportation models for smaller and rural communities. In addition, the program methodically researched the key barriers for walking and cycling.

The program is also a great illustration of how to speak to a broad range of issues without making the problem too big or too paralyzing, as one of our reviewers said. They've stuck with the program over a number of years and have been able to measure both short- and long-term benefits. Further, the main cost of the program is staff time, so it's readily replicable by other communities. Finally, the panel thought the same sort of approach could be used for a wide range of other behaviors.

The panel wanted to know more about the final results and impact evaluation, which, at the time of the selection, hadn't been completed, although the preliminary results were pretty good already, and about how this program will be sustained over a period of time. In terms of planning a social marketing program, you'll see some good information on their formative research and partnership development.

The logic model that they used helped to overcome the barriers that they had identified. Finally, note that they used both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods. Because they used a number of impact measures they were able to compare what they found with each to make sure they were getting a consistent picture. This process is usually called triangulation.

We have two speakers today. The first is Sue Shikaze, who lives in Haliburton County and works as a health promoter with the Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge (HKPR) District Health Unit. She is the chair of the Communities in Action Committee. A significant part of her work is advocating for and planning to create communities that are more walking and cycling friendly.

Sue believes in the importance of creating supportive environments to encourage people of all ages to walk and cycle more, and promotes the benefits of active transportation throughout the communities. She's an avid cyclist, runner, and skier and uses all of these activities for transportation, fitness, and recreation.

Kate Hall is a planner with 20 years' experience working in community development as both a professional and a leadership volunteer. Her work focuses on creating healthy, active communities through active transportation planning. She has particular expertise working with small towns and rural communities.

Kate has been active as a project coordinator for the Communities in Action Program since 2004 and is also a consultant with the Canada Walks Department of Green Communities Canada where she manages the Walk Friendly Ontario Designations Project. Please join me in welcoming both Kate and Sue.

Sue Shikaze, Chair & Health Promoter, HKPR District Health Unit

Thank you, Jay. Kate and I will be going back and forth throughout the presentation. I'm going to do a quick overview of what we're going to cover, starting with a brief background of Haliburton County. I'll also give a little bit of background on the Communities in Action Committee. We'll talk about some of the strategies that we've used in our work over the years. Then, we'll go into our evaluation and strategy that Jay referred to. We'll talk about the approaches that we use to evaluate the work that we've done and some of our results and findings, then wrap up with some conclusions and implications.

[Slide] The County of Haliburton is in Ontario, about two and a half hours north of Toronto. It's a very rural area. It's about 4500 square kilometers and what that means is it takes about an hour to drive north, south and an hour to drive east, west. So it's quite a large area.

Our year-round population is about 16,500. We have two main villages, Haliburton and Minden, which are the locations of most of our economic and social activity, and then a number of smaller hamlets scattered across the county. There are a couple of unique features about Haliburton County. One is that our population triples in the summer months because we have a very high number of seasonal residents who live in cottages. We also have a number of summer camps. We also have quite an aging demographic.

We have a higher rate of seniors than the rest of Ontario. If you haven't been to Haliburton County, I encourage you to come and visit because it's a great place to walk and cycle. More and more people are cycling on our roads each year. We have lots of assets. We have fresh air and interesting terrain and destinations and relatively low traffic volume.

[Slide] Why plan for active transportation in Haliburton County? From the Communities in Action (CIA) perspective here are some points that we think are important related to

planning for active transportation. The CIA has been the leader and initiator in the county around all aspects of planning and promoting active transportation. We feel that it's important for equity and accessibility to make mobility options available for people regardless of their age, income, or ability.

Another important point for me as a public health professional is the growing evidence of the link between health and the built environment. Making our communities better for active transportation encourages more physical activity and reduces injuries. Finally, it intersects with our municipal priorities around economic development, particularly tourism.

Kate Hall, Project Coordinator & Community Development Planning Consultant

[Slide] The Communities in Action Committee was formed in 2004 with an interest in raising physical activity levels through active transportation. It currently includes representatives from Public Health, from Community Economic Development, Trails, Healthy Communities, and also business. The focus of our work has been on the village centres or hubs because the distance and density are issues in rural communities with respect to active transportation.

The CIA provides leadership by working with municipalities to enhance their capacity to do this work. Building partnerships is really the key to addressing capacity issues that can exist in rural communities. Our primary focus is to build positive relationships, particularly with local governments as they play a key role in making changes to policy and infrastructure related to active transportation. Rural communities don't always have the luxury of staff dedicated to cycling and walking.

Having groups such as the CIA willing to advocate, raise awareness, educate, promote and plan has been really critical in bridging the knowledge gap both for the public and within municipalities. Public health, of course, has been a very important partner in this work. Raising awareness is the key. If influencing decision makers and policy are top-down approaches, equally important are the bottom up strategies, such as community engagement and building a base of community support.

[Slide] Raising awareness, interest and activity levels are key because decision makers are more likely to respond to the interests of their constituents. If they see the demand and hear those voices, then there's more chance that the change will happen on the ground. We focused on our village hubs because we recognized that people in rural communities likely need to drive to get to town, but we've promoted a doable message: park the car and get moving once you're in town.

[Slide] We also have hosted community events that educate and encourage people to walk and bike more. We also included local media as a key partner. We have two radio stations and three local papers. We submit PSAs regularly and newspaper ads and articles and do interviews on a regular basis. We've also developed some educational materials. Here are some examples of that [slide]. We have Walk, Bike, and Active

maps and signage for both Minden Village and Haliburton Village. These tools help to raise awareness about active transportation and reinforce those messages like “Park the car and get moving” and “Share the road.”

[Slide] Advocacy with municipal elected officials is also something that we do by updating council through delegations, hosting workshops and events, participating in the official plan and review, and coordinating letter writing campaigns.

A few years ago we went to council specifically to talk about their role in creating healthy, active communities and really tried to think about what’s in it for them. It’s hard to argue with the health message, but what really speaks to them is economic development and economic benefits. Increasing economic activity, encouraging more economic development, and attracting and retaining new people and businesses because of improved quality of life can be achieved through communities that are walk- and bike-friendly.

[Slide] Research and planning has been really important in terms of building a strong evidence base, as well as developing tools and resources that guide decisions. We’ve done a lot of community-based research through focus groups, surveys, and forums, which then informed the development of active transportation plans for the villages of Minden and Haliburton. It’s important to note that these plans were developed by community partners rather than commissioned by county or municipal government, which is more typical.

Time and resources of municipal staff and council may be limited in rural communities, so this is a great example of how community groups can act as key partners and enhance the capacity to do new and innovative things. Of course, these resources then in turn lay the foundation for further advocacy around supportive policies and infrastructure investments.

Measuring Impacts

Sue Shikaze: We’ve been at this work since about 2005. We felt like it was time to do a bit of research and evaluation on the impact of our work. [Slide] In 2011, we undertook a fairly extensive evaluation strategy to answer these three questions: 1) What has changed since we started this work on active transportation? 2) What has been our contribution? 3) How effective have we been? We applied for and got a grant for the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion’s Healthy Communities Fund in order to do this evaluation project.

We weren’t looking for a direct causal relationship, but rather we were trying to measure our contribution to the changes that had taken place. We also know that there’s not a lot of existing research on the impact of community-level efforts around active transportation in smaller communities. We hoped that other small and rural communities could use these findings and apply it to their own situations, so we created an evaluation framework [slide] that focused on these key outcomes.

We wanted to know to what extent our work between 2005 and 2012 influenced changes observed in these areas related to active transportation [policy & planning, community design & infrastructure, community awareness, actual levels of active transportation activity]. [Slide] We created a schematic model of what we were trying to accomplish. The yellow boxes represented those four outcome areas; the light green boxes are the activities that the CIA has been engaged in. The darker green boxes represent external factors that would also have some measure of influence on those outcomes in the yellow boxes. The arrows represent the relationships between these things and the direction of influence. Through our research we found stronger influences, which are the solid lines, and partial influences (the dotted lines), which indicate not as much data came out to those relationships or perhaps more research is indicated.

For the rest of this presentation, we're going to speak to those arrows and what we found in terms of influencing the outcomes that are described in the yellow boxes. In order to do this, we created an evaluation process that had four components [slide]. One was an inventory of policy and infrastructure changes that had taken place during the time frame. Another was a survey that asked residents about their active transportation awareness and behaviour. We also did an observational study, which was manual counts of people walking and cycling, and did key informant interviews of municipal staff and council members. We'll talk a little bit about each of those and the findings from them.

Policy and Infrastructure Changes

Kate Hall: [Slide] First we did an inventory and developed a list of all the policy and infrastructure changes that have taken place between 2005 and 2012. Influencing policy is an important aspect of our work because supportive land use policy is the first step in creating a healthy, active community. Our official plans at the county and local levels now include language to support healthy, active communities in general and include policies specific to active transportation.

Here are a couple of policy examples [slide]. The first one is with the Township of Algonquin Highlands. The township will support the development of bicycling and walking routes. It goes on further to reference the Haliburton County cycling master plan. The bottom quote is from the official plan in Dysart et al., which is where Haliburton Village is located. It says that it is encouraging healthy, active communities by applying principles of good community design, active transportation, etc. There is some specific language in our policies now.

[Slide] There have been a number of infrastructure improvements throughout the county, including some paved shoulders to support cycling, and here we've just put a few highlights of some of the infrastructure improvements that have been made in Minden and Haliburton Village. Over the past seven years, Minden has seen the completion of the Riverwalk, which is a paved path system on either side of the Gull River in town and includes the Logger's Crossing Bridge, which is a pedestrian bridge.

The top right photo shows the downtown streetscape improvements that happened last year, which widened the sidewalks by 18 inches on either side to improve the walking environment. Last year, the township developed a downtown improvement plan with a long-range vision that reflects several of the recommendations that were found in the Minden Active Transportation Plan.

Similarly, over the last seven years, Haliburton has completed the York Streetscape improvement. The top photo is from before and the bottom is after. You can see that there's been a significant improvement for walkers and bicyclists on that street. Things like bike parking, sidewalks, tree planting, and lighting have all been added.

This year, they are completing a streetscape improvement for Highland Street, the main street in Haliburton. We look forward to that being completed this spring.

Survey

Sue Shikaze: [Slide] The second tool that we used was a survey. The purpose of that was to get self-reported data on the use of active transportation. We had previously done surveys in Haliburton in 2005 and in Minden in 2007. We revised the survey to refine it and wanted to try and get some comparative data. Because of the tweaks that we had to make to the survey, we were able to compare survey data from 2011 to the Minden survey in 2007 on these four specific points.

For the 2011 survey, we had 370 respondents. In 2007, we had 170. We had a great response rate, probably because it was done on-line and was fairly widely available. Here are some highlights of those results [slide]. Again, these are comparative for Minden only. The green (right) is 2007 and the blue (left) is 2011. The question we asked was: How much do you use active transportation? We defined active transportation as including people parking their car in town in one spot and then walking or biking to get around to do their errands.

It could be that some of the increase that we're seeing was a result of more clearly defining what constituted an active transportation trip. Either way, it's encouraging to see some increases in activity. We asked about reported destinations that people travel to using active transportation. [Slide] Shopping continues to be the number one response, followed by friends and family, work, and school. We also asked about barriers to using active transportation.

[Slide] In both 2007 and 2011, the top barriers reported were distance, weather, time, and unsafe traffic conditions. Of course distance and weather, we can't do too much about, and time is personal barrier. We can do things about unsafe traffic conditions, which sort of follows to the next question where we asked what would encourage people to use more active transportation. The top two responses were more and better quality sidewalks and better bicycle facilities, things like paved shoulders and bike lanes.

These findings are also supported by the literature, which says that better infrastructure does increase levels of active transportation. The survey also had some qualitative components to it where people had a chance to give some quotes. [Slide] Here are a couple of quotes that reinforce the work that we've done around promotion and education activities. People are saying that they've become more physically active because there is more public education.

[Slide] Specific to the Share the Road campaign, as a driver it's helpful to have the signs as a reminder to look out for and share the road with cyclists. There was a specific question asking about the effectiveness of the Share the Road campaign and it was encouraging to note that the majority of the people felt that the campaign was somewhat or very effective in making roads safer for cycling. The Share the Road campaign was initiated in 2009 and continues through the summer, depending on how much funding we're able to find.

[Slide] There are some limitations around the survey and one was that it was a convenience sample. It was available online; it was promoted through newspapers and email lists, that sort of thing. Essentially people chose to complete it or not.

The survey questions were somewhat different from what we'd done in previous surveys. The way we addressed these limitations was by promoting the survey quite widely and we also did make paper copies available at public places like libraries and municipal offices for people who might not have had access to it by computer. We maintained the intent of the key questions while improving them for clarity so that we could still make comparisons on those four key points that I showed you on the bar graph.

Direct Observation

Kate Hall: [Slide] We also did an observational study to collect quantitative data on active transportation activity to complement the survey data. In 2012, we used this screen line method as described in all the planning and designs of the national bicycle and pedestrian documentation project, which uses a method similar to what is used to measure average daily traffic for vehicles. There's an imaginary line across the roadway. Any person walking or cycling that crosses that line moving in either direction is counted. Observation studies were done in the same location, season, and time of day that the counts were done in previous years for comparisons. Counts were done in 12 screen line locations in Minden and at 11 screen line locations in Haliburton.

[Slides] Here are some of our results. The tables in the next couple of slides show the three locations with the highest average number of people using active transportation, and that's walking and cycling combined in Minden and in Haliburton. Counts were done for an hour at three different times of day based on when we thought there would be peak activity: morning, midday and late afternoon.

Counts were not necessarily done all on the same day. We had different people involved in doing the counts, so sometimes it depended on schedules. You can see that there were

considerable increases from 2007 to 2012 on these three locations. In Haliburton, again, the data shows that there are considerable differences in the number of people observed using active transportation.

[Slide] Some of the limitations of the observational study were that counts were done for pedestrians and cyclists only. We don't know the total number of people that were in town on that day. We also need to account for other potential factors of influence, such as slight population increases and also new trip generators (new libraries were built in both of those communities). Events such as the Rotary Carnival were held in town in Haliburton. We tried to address some of these limitations by taking averages so that we could normalize those peaks and valleys and also counts were done on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays only, because those were found to not be significantly statistically different in terms of travel behaviour. The data was compared with the same locations only from previous years to 2012.

Key informant interviews

Sue Shikaze: [Slide] The fourth and final component that we used in our evaluation approach was to do key informant interviews with municipal staff and councilors as a way to get their feedback and some qualitative data on the impact of the work of the CIA from their perspective. It was a purposeful sample. We had representation from all four of our municipalities in the county. We had a cross section of several municipal roles. We had some planning representation, administration in transportation, as well as council members.

Our criteria was that our councilors were currently sitting on council and were also on the previous council because that would encompass the whole time frame that we were looking at. The interviews enabled us to get our key informants' observations about changes to active transportation and what some of the factors of influence were on those. We did a total of 12 interviews.

[Slide] Some key themes emerged. One was that the CIA did emerge as a credible resource for municipalities. Here are some quotes that make a good point to illustrate that. Organizations like the CIA were independent bodies that provided direction and best practices and resources. The CIA has been the main reason and has been a great partner in lobbying other levels of government.

[Slide] We asked them directly about our contribution by asking these questions on a scale of one to five: How much do you think the work of the CIA has contributed to the community-related changes in active transportation? The average response was 4.2, with one being no contribution and five being a very important contribution. They also felt that the CIA would continue to play an important role in the future, so that was encouraging as well.

[Slide] Another theme was the evidence of a cultural shift in decision making and again some key quotes indicate this. Showing increased awareness is becoming part of the

mindset in terms of planning and decision making. When we first started doing this work there wasn't a lot of understanding or awareness about what active transportation really is within the municipal structure.

[Slide] A third theme was around the benefits of active transportation and recognizing that it can achieve multiple benefits that are in keeping within other priorities of municipalities. One was addressing the needs of an aging population and making our communities attractive places for retirees to stay and also to move to. There were also benefits around tourism and economic development and creating a welcoming community so that people can't wait to park their car and get out of it and walk. This recognized the link between walking and biking friendly communities and how that contributes to economic development. From our perspective, measuring the benefits also helps us to continue making the case to municipalities to continue to invest in active transportation because it does align with other aspects of things that they are working towards.

Kate Hall: [Slide] Some limitations around the key informant interviews included the interviewer and analyzer bias of qualitative data, i.e., the fact that we did a purposeful sample of key informants versus a random sample. We addressed these limitations by having one person do all the interviews. We established criteria for selecting our key informants and interviewed to saturation or the point where we started to get repetitive information from people. We also had three people doing the data analysis on two separate occasions.

Findings and Lessons Learned

[Slide] In summary, what we've learned from the data is that there does appear to be an increase in walking activity and that improved infrastructure does make a difference; that awareness raising is also important to encourage more walking and cycling; that partnerships and communication between the municipalities and CIA has been a positive feature over the years; and that there are multiple benefits of creating walking and cycling friendly communities.

Sue Shikaze: [Slides] What did the research tell us about the impact of the CIA on the observed changes with respect to active transportation? We can draw some conclusions from the research findings. These are some of the conclusions that we think are relevant. The CIA contributed to observed changes in policy planning and, to a lesser degree, infrastructure to support active transportation. Those promotional efforts were successful in raising awareness and contributed to more people using active transportation.

Investments in infrastructure are an effective way to get more people walking and cycling. Those two points were evident both by comments in the survey and also through key informant interviews. Active transportation plans were also effective resources for municipal planning and CIA's participation in the review of official plans was an effective strategy to affect policy change.

[Slide] Finally, all of the interventions that took place between 2005 and 2012 have contributed to an increase in the number of people walking and, to a lesser degree, cycling in the villages of Minden and Haliburton. There are some implications that we can draw for practice also. Those are that community municipal partnerships increased the capacity to effect changes that support active transportation.

This is particularly important in rural areas because neither the municipality nor the community groups can do this work alone. Increases in active transportation are achieved through many interventions implemented over time. Behaviour change is complex and therefore, requires a multi-pronged approach to be successful. Measurement, monitoring, and evaluation of interventions to improve the conditions for active transportation are required to better understand the return on investment.

This helps to build the case for future investment. It also helps to track what and who contributed to the changes, what's effective, and what isn't. Having and articulating a consistent vision and continuing to put that vision out there into the community is important. It's important that it is the community's vision to begin with and put it in front of our municipal councils. This is a quote here from one of our key informants: "Persistence and consistency—slow consistent pressure applied over a long period of time."

[Slide] That was certainly a lesson for us and for other community groups. Influencing takes time, but we did learn from the data that the activities of the Communities in Action Committee were identified as contributing in a number of steps along the way, indicating that taking a variety of approaches and that targeting a range of audiences can be an effective way of getting the message to penetrate. One thing we learned from the evaluation process itself is that what doesn't get measured doesn't count.

There's little data available about how many people are using active transportation. However, in order for us to make the case for investment, it's important to have the evidence, so we need to measure it. Seeking assistance from your health units, epidemiologists, or university professors and students can be great ways and resources to help you do an evaluation. If you're not sure about how to go about it, certainly ask for help. There are resources out there.

Setting an evaluation strategy at the start of the project is a great way to go rather than scrambling to evaluate a project at the back end. It takes some planning and forethought. Also, asking the right questions is important. For example, in our survey we found that we needed to clarify some of those questions in order to get the answers that were not necessarily what we were looking for, but that the questions were clear enough that people knew how to respond to them.

If it's not the right question, make adjustments. Be transparent about the limitations of your interpretation of the data. Measuring results often for a comparison is important if you want to be able to know whether you're actually having an impact on changes

happening. You try to control for as much as possible, but know that there are many factors that lead to change.

Q&A

Q: My town thinks that putting Share the Road signage and share rails on the road is sufficient infrastructure to improve and encourage active transportation. How have you decided what improvements are suitable for specific streets, both sidewalks and roads?

Kate Hall: Some of our work has been to develop active transportation plans both for Minden and Haliburton. That was based on community-based research and a number of surveys and that kind of thing. Incorporated into those plans are recommendations for specific trouble spots related to active transportation. There are either photo-shopped improvements or artist's renditions of what an improved area could look like. Those plans, I think, have provided a tool for us to use for advocacy and when we present those to council for them to use as planning tools. It's a reference document for them.

Sue Shikaze: Our research shows that the barriers to active transportation go beyond distance, weather, and time. It's really unsafe traffic conditions. The one thing that would encourage people to use active transportation more is better infrastructure and that includes hard infrastructure like sidewalks, paved shoulders, and bike lanes. I would suggest that signage and share rails is soft infrastructure and that you would need to ask your community whether they feel that those areas are then safe to use. If people are already using them then maybe they are feeling safe; but if people aren't using those spaces and places where the signage is, that may be an indication that people still aren't feeling safe in those areas.

Jay Kassirer: You have to do your own homework if I hear properly. You have to go out into the community and find out where people are having issues, where there are safety issues. You don't get that data collected for you otherwise.

Sue Shikaze: That's right. The other add-on to that is that's part of our advocacy work. We continue to make the case for investment in infrastructure improvements because there's a lot of competing interests in our municipalities. We're not incredibly rich in terms of finances. Part of our ongoing work is to make the case. Go to the community to find out what people want. Then take that and have conversations with our municipalities about where we think there would be some good investments.

Q: What about rural highways and roads as compared to things in town. Does the same methodology apply? And what sort of things have you ended up doing to make them safer?

Sue Shikaze: The roads between settlement areas is where we have focused more on the cycling master plan for the county and those tend to be county roads, e.g. looking more at paved shoulders. The distances between our settlement areas are not walkable, so we

haven't really focused our efforts on providing walking infrastructure, but more cycling infrastructure.

The focus in-town has been a little bit more on walking, but certainly providing cycling and end-of-trip cycling amenities as well. For the in-between settlements the focus has been more on cycling and more on advocating for paved shoulders.

Q: How has the new active transportation infrastructure been funded?

Kate Hall: It's been funded in a number of different ways; with the streetscape improvements it has been the municipalities taking the lead. They received stimulus funding for those projects. It was a third, a third, a third - municipal, provincial, and federal money there. The infrastructure piece has been government funding.

Q: Are you able to say roughly how much that was?

Kate Hall: I would say each of those streetscape projects were a million plus. York Street was 1.4 million dollars or something like that.

Q: How many kilometers long are you talking about?

Kate Hall: It's about 400 meters for the streetscape project.

For things like the Riverwalk trail there's been funding from a number of different places. The Federal Recreation Infrastructure Program that was around a few years ago funded that. There's also a community group that has done some local fundraising to get things off the ground. They've accessed economic development funding.

They've accessed the Trillium Foundation for various pieces of that as well. That's another really great example of municipal community partnerships to bring about infrastructure changes where the community group does some initial work. When it comes to the big bucks, the municipality did step in and went after some larger money as well.

Q: The three locations that you measured in the observational study, were there infrastructure changes to these areas that would contribute to such big increases? What sorts of things were done there?

Sue Shikaze: Definitely in Haliburton, York Street was one of the three locations that we showed in the table. That streetscape improvement had been completed at that time. In addition, there were a number of new trip generators. The library parking area is up on York Street, but there is a trail that leads right down to the library there. There's also a food bank and a park as well, so there are a number of different trip generators.

That partly contributed to the reasons for upgrading that space. I think the municipality had that on their radar for a number of years, but it was a combination of us doing some

work, the community identifying it as a real hot spot, and an unsafe place for walking and cycling. Then new trip generators started to develop along there. Then some stimulus funding came along. It was a combination of things that came together to make that happen.

Q: Can you describe a little bit more about how your team was first established and the sectors that were represented within the team? Who came together to make it happen?

Kate Hall: Initially it was a group of people that had been working on a recreation-based project actually, about raising physical activity levels. Then it was the Communities in Action fund, actually, that came out at the time. We decided that rather than focusing on municipal recreation as a way to raise physical activity levels, we would focus on active transportation, building in that physical activity into people's daily lives.

That could ultimately transform our built environment and our policy environments to support more healthy active communities. That became the focus and we have had representation from our local development corporations right from the get go. We've also had representation, of course, from Public Health, from trails groups, from Aging Well, our seniors groups.

We've had representation on and off throughout the years, but it's been a fairly consistent core group of volunteers that come together around that committee table. Certainly Public Health and Local Economic Development have been key and have been core right from the very beginning.

Sue Shikaze: We communicate and establish relationships with various other groups depending on what kind of work we're doing. Obviously communicating and having relationships with the municipalities has been really important, but over the years we've also connected with the Ontario Provincial Police and with our local schools. Again, sort of depending on what the project happens to be that we're working on.

Q: Were the improvements in urban areas on county roads?

Sue Shikaze: They were, but because it was in the urban settlement area it's the responsibility of the municipalities. I did note that somebody said something about the combination of county, municipal, and provincial roads and planning when you've got that whole variety. We certainly have that situation here as well. A great example of that was the Share the Road project where it was a great communication and partnership between the CIA, Public Health, the county, and municipalities as far as where to put the signs up and who takes care of maintaining them and that sort of thing.

Most of them are on county roads, but some of them are on municipal roads as well, so we had to engage with all the different players to develop a plan of where those signs would go. The other thing that has happened around improvements that's not infrastructure related is that on a number of the municipal roads that go through

settlement areas the speed limits have been lowered and that's created community safety zones because there's a lot of pedestrian activity around a lake or a hamlet.

That's something else aside from infrastructure because it could be that the volume of traffic or the volume of pedestrians don't necessarily merit creating sidewalks, but by lowering the speed of traffic it creates a greater perception of safety for people who are on foot.

Kate Hall: It was a bit different in Minden and Haliburton. In Haliburton there is a county road that does come through town. In Minden it is a municipal road that is the main street in town, but the bypass is Highway 35 which is a provincial highway that has been redeveloped over the last 10 years and the speed has been reduced from 80 kilometers to 70 kilometers as it passes through.

There are also three sets of lights that have been installed at each of the entrances that lead into the Village of Minden. There have been some other things that have contributed to a safer environment, I think, for cyclists and pedestrians.

Q: What would be your take-away message for making a program sustainable over time? How have you been able to last so long? How have you tried to make sure that it will continue in the future?

Sue Shikaze: One thing for sure is that our work is funded through grants. We look at local grants, provincial grants from various places; from Ministry of Health, from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, from our Community Development Corporation, etc. Any time we create a grant application, we always make sure that we incorporate a chunk of money for project coordination, which can be a few hours a week or a couple of days a week; it's varied over the years. That's been a critical piece because that means that we've got someone paid to coordinate the work.

The other key piece is that, because I work in Public Health as a health promoter, part of my work is to do policy work and health promotion around health in the built environment. Having somebody like myself where it's part of my job helps to sustain across and in between projects. If there's a time when we're in between a project, like we are right now, I can wear my work hat and still continue to move the agenda of the CIA forward.

Q: Has there been any measure of the economic impact of your work?

Kate Hall: There hasn't been thus far, although, that is an area that was flagged in our key informant interviews as an area of focus because it is so important to municipalities, particularly in a rural area or in our community where we have quite a tourism-based economy. Making the case from an economic development perspective, from tourism prospective, is really the key.

That may be something that we will want to look into down the road. Some of our observation studies and counts may help to contribute to that, as well knowing more about how many feet are on the street. We have some benchmark data and can look over time to that as improvements are made to the built environment.

Q: Along the lines of sustainability, have policies been created in official plans perhaps to include such infrastructure when roads are redone or initially created?

Sue Shikaze: Most definitely. We have tried to do that in the policy review process by encouraging policies and they are there. Also, to say that when there is a road reconstruction or a new road created that they consider paved shoulders, and/or if it's in an urban area that sidewalks are included, through a number of means, either through site plan control or through other measures that they might use to have developers be part of that process. There are policies there that do support that, yes.

Kate Hall: In keeping with that question, that is part of our continued work as well. Now that the policies are in place in the official plans, I think, we see for ourselves in the future continuing to just be aware of upcoming road projects and other related infrastructure projects and advocating for those investments to be made and referring to the policies that are in the official plan, which is why it's really great to have those policies there. We can call attention to them when decisions are being made.