

Fondaction and Carrefour earn points for sustainable transportation

EcoMOBILITY Series, March 21, 2011

Webinar Transcript



Transports
Canada

Transport
Canada



This case study was selected as a Tools of Change *Landmark* case study, by a peer selection panel consisting of:

- Chuck Wilsker, U.S. Telework Coalition
- Daniel Coldrey, Transport Canada
- Elizabeth Allingham, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Geoff Noxon, Noxon and Associates
- Jacky Kennedy, Green Communities Canada
- JoAnn Woodhall, Translink
- Lorenzo Mele, Town of Markham
- Ryan Lanyon, Smart Commute



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.

Claudie Ouellet, Senior Analyst, Urban Transportation, Transport Canada, Environmental Initiatives

Good afternoon and welcome to the sixth webinar on ecoMOBILITY. Today we are going to offer you two presentations, which should help you in your daily activities.

Transport Canada's ecoMOBILITY program aims to reduce emissions from urban passenger transportation by helping municipalities attract residents to less polluting forms of transportation and to help them with their transportation demand management projects. The program includes two components. The first one is the financial support component. Right now, we've got 13 projects underway across Canada. If you want more details about each of those projects, please visit our website: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs/environment-ecomobility-menu-eng-144.htm>. The second component of the program is the research and information to build capacity.

We're developing resources to help us as transportation specialists implement transportation demand management (TDM) projects. [Slide] Here is list of a few of our capacity building activities in Canada. We have learning events and information dissemination, and webinars as part of the capacity building activities. We're also do sessions at national conferences in our sector of activity, in order to help build capacity. We're also developing case studies and implementation guides for practitioners to help them implement TDM projects. All of these resources, and more, can be found on our website.

[00:02:01]

Jay Kassirer, Tools of Change and Cullbridge

Thank you, and welcome to all of you. For those of you with an interest in transportation-related behaviours, I'd like to point out that our Tools of Change website now has a Transportation Resources page where you can see the site's resources from a transportation point of view (<http://www.toolsofchange.com/en/topic-resources/transportation/>). There's a customized introduction to the site and to social marketing for transportation professionals, the latest news on transportation programming, brief overviews of our most recent transportation case studies, and similar overviews of our most recent online resources for planning and evaluating transportation behaviour change programs. There are similar topic pages for a range of environment, health and safety topics.

This season our social marketing case study webinars relate to sustainable transportation and home energy. These, and our social marketing instruction and review webinars, continue to the end of May. Today's webinar is the first of the two landmark designation transportation case study webinars this season. The second one is on England's Sustainable Travel Towns, on May 10.

Landmark designation recognizes programs and social marketing approaches considered to be among the most successful in North America, although we do allow for a small number of outstanding international case studies, such as England's Sustainable Travel Towns.

These case studies have been carefully chosen by a peer selection panel, based on individual and overall impact, innovation, replicability to other locations, and adaptability of the approach to other behaviours. I'd like to acknowledge and thank the members of our Transportation Peer-Selection Panel, who work at on-the-ground programs as well as some of North America's most proactive NGO and government organizations supporting TDM professionals.

Our panel selected today's case study because the program is running successfully at a small business, and there aren't enough good examples of programs running at small organizations. However, the presenters are quick to point out that this approach could work at any size of organization. The panel also liked the use of small, ongoing incentives. We look forward to hearing today about the two things the panel wanted to know more about: how the incentives are funded and about the full range of modal shifts that were observed.

This case study also illustrates the use of a number of Tools of Change, including Building Motivation Over Time, Overcoming Specific Barriers, Norm Appeals, and Vivid Personalized Empowering communications.

I also would like to thank the following organizations for their contribution to the promotion of this webinar [slide].

It now gives me great pleasure to introduce to you to today's main speaker Karin Savoye, a marketing analyst. She holds a Masters in marketing from the University of Chambéry in France. Savoye arrived in Canada ten years ago. Since 2007, she has worked as a marketing analyst at Fondation. Sensitive to the issues for responsible consumers, she has worked over the last four years on sustainable transportation issues – as a member of a committee – in order to raise awareness among businesses and their staff and employees to adopt better transportation practices.

[00:08:20]

Fondation, Karen Savoie

I'm very pleased to be here to introduce to you the CarboPOINT Program, which is the hallmark of Fondation's sustainable transportation plan. This presentation is made up of three parts. First, a quick overview of Fondation; the second part of the presentation will deal with sustainable transportation plans. Thirdly, I'll talk about the CarboPOINT Program, which really goes to the very heart of our sustainable transportation plan.

Fondation is a workers' fund, which has two components. First of all, we want to build up a savings plan within the general population, and 60% of the funds collected are reinvested in Quebec businesses to create and maintain jobs in Quebec. Fondation now has over 100,000 shareholders and we've now created or maintained over 20,000 jobs in Quebec. Fondation was created in 1995 and, as soon as it was created, announced that part of its mission was sustainable development. Every two years, we produce a sustainable development report. A third report on sustainable development was produced in the fall of 2010.

We also have an environmental policy, which has four components. Firstly, there is the building management program and the responsible purchasing policy, the idea being that we have specific purchasing criteria that allows us to choose our suppliers in a responsible way. We can, for example, purchase coffee, paper, recycled paper, paper that's 100% recyclable. We can talk about promotional gifts that will be created in Quebec or designed in Quebec. The residue management plan, for example, for recyclable paper is a fairly obvious way of going about things. Obviously, you can print on both sides of the paper. We also keep the coffee grounds and use them as fertilizer in landscaping. We also keep corks and give them to a shoe manufacturing company.

Our transportation plan was implemented 2007 under the context of Voyagez fute's Allégo Program (<http://www.voyagezfute.ca/allego.asp?lng=1>). The Allégo Program helps businesses develop systems to encourage their employees to adopt alternative transportation choices.

We share our sustainable transportation plan with the nine economic and social development institutions that are part of Carrefour financier solidaire. Carrefour has 130 employees in all, and, since the sustainable transportation plan was developed in 2007, has avoided emitting over 79 tons of CO2 equivalent.

Fondation is the largest of these nine institutions. We have a business that at its core promotes sustainable development, which is the context for our focus on sustainable transportation.

The primary goal of our sustainable transportation program is to reduce the use of single-occupant cars. We're trying to encourage people to use more environmental modes of transportation to go to and from work, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We want to raise awareness among the employees and encourage them to adopt alternative transportation modes, rather than just driving alone in their cars. The program reaches all the employees of Carrefour and is introduced to new staff during orientation. We encourage all staff to participate in the CarboPOINT Program.

The sustainable plan has five parts, and the significant part I'd like to talk about is the CarboPOINT Program. The second part is the financial incentives for using public transit. It's very easy. We have the subway here that's very close to Carrefour Solidaire, and there are measures that have been taken in order to promote active transportation, bicycles, walking, and carpooling and car sharing.

Do any of you use alternate modes of transportation to get to work? [Webinar attendees indicated their response.] That's good. I know that I'm talking to a very aware audience. We'll talk about those actions individually.

For public transit, one of the actions taken was to pay 50% of the monthly transport expenses for the people who live in Montreal proper or in the suburbs. So we pay 50% of the monthly pass for the subway or for the bus or the train. There's also a three-month trial period policy so that the people who use their vehicles can try this for three months.

It's more a contract that is taken with our centre. They commit to not take the cars for three months, so they try public transit the first month. There's no fee. We reimburse all of the fees. The second month, we reimburse 75% of their passes, and the third month, 50%. A lot of people are surprised by all the benefits of using public transit.

In terms of active transportation, we have some actions that encourage people who want to come to town using their bicycles. For example, there are bike racks that are provided in the inside parking spaces. We even have a pump that is provided. It's accessible to people who use their bicycles. We also have prize draws for all of the people who use active transportation and every year, in the spring and in the early summer, we have a barbecue where we invite employees to come to work using their bikes. There we offer a free tune up of their bicycles. During these activities we promote the transportation plan and the CarboPOINT Program. This is an event where we talk about the benefits of that program. Finally, there are free activities that are offered to employees. For example, Le Tour de L'isle is a complete tour of Montreal Island, so there's always a small gang who get together every summer.

[00:18:03]

Another action that has been taken is carpooling. People who carpool are eligible for a reserved parking space in the underground parking so it could be an incentive for staff to opt for that type of transportation. For the people who carpool, we also have a guaranteed ride home program. In case of emergency, a person who carools can benefit from a free taxi ride, up to four per year.

As for car sharing, we provide access to two Communauto vehicles for business trips. Communauto is a business that provides vehicles to the people who subscribe. So you can have a car for one hour, two hours, or a full day. It's very flexible, 24 hours per day, seven days a week, and the cars are accessible anywhere in the city in special parking lots. It can be close to home or to work, and there's always a Communauto parking lot that provides access to a car.

More specifically, we're now getting into the meat of the issue, the CarboPOINT program created by Fondation. It's a point system for people who use alternate modes of transportation, i.e., people who use their bicycles or use public transit or who walk for work and home trips. It's a bit like an air miles program. The program is managed by the

Sustainable Transportation Program and Committee that I'm part of. The purpose of the program is to increase the use of people using sustainable transportation and also to promote other modes of transportation. Instead of having 100% use of the car, it could be 80%/20%

The idea behind the program is to educate employees about climate change and transportation issues. We received two awards in 2008 and a third prize in the Leaders in Sustainable Transportation Competition. It also received an honorary mention at the Recognition Gala on the Environment.

How does the program work? If you look at the chart [slide], the program users register through an online platform.

The first thing you see is the percentage of usage table. You can see, in percentages, how much you're using certain modes of transportation during the week. For example, today, we're on Monday and 20% of my trip was made on foot and 80% was made using the subway. My return trip will be the same so I enter these data. Everything else is calculated automatically. If you look at the upper part here on the right, it's done automatically on this platform according to the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions.

The postal code of the user is entered when you register, so it's also according to your mode of transportation. There are coefficients that are provided to each mode of transportation. Walking and cycling gives you more carbon points than public transit or car sharing because they're active and the coefficient is higher. The calculation is done automatically, and on top, you can see a recap since the person's initial registration. Here you can see that, since November 2007, I have accumulated 4,411 carbon points, and since the beginning of 2010, I have accumulated 260.

What's the equivalent value of the carbon point? According to the budget that is allocated by the transportation committee every year, which is based on the number of participants or on sustainable transportation modes, we are able to meet this satisfactorily. We are influenced by the nine organizations that are part of Carrefour Solidaire, and it's prorated according to the number of institutions. We provide this user chart, which enunciates the various principles of the program.

There's also assistance available in order to do the calculation of the operation of this program. Once the carbon point year is completed (it starts in November, so at the end of October), we close the books. We extract the data for our annual reports in order to produce the sustainable development report and also to trade in those points for rewards.

Trade-ins are done once per year, just before Christmas. In December participants get their gifts, which is much appreciated. The gifts are provided as gift certificates, not as physical products or services; they include gift certificates for local products, fair trade or organic products, as well as corporations and businesses that are supported by Carrefour. The users can choose between eight providers (e.g., Mountain Equipment Co-Op) and there is a wide choice.

[00:28:14]

We also invite people to make comments every year in order to improve things. We're open to that. Participants can also make a donation to a charitable organization. These are exchangeable once per year. We can't really accumulate it one year over another. This helps facilitate the management of the program for us, or else it would be continuous, and sometimes people might just leave Fondation or forget. In those cases, the sustainable transportation committee decides to make the donation to their own charitable organization.

There are many promotion campaigns that were done since 2007 to promote the sustainable transportation plan and the CarboPOINT Program.

[Slide] Here is an example of Julien who is in the subway. He's saying that he likes to be driven to work and that he can relax and listen to music, and he's also accumulating carbon points. This is widely shown.

In terms of results, the reimbursement of 50% of monthly passes in the subway, it's about 40%, or 32 people in 2010. That's almost 40% of people who get a refund for their monthly pass. As for carbon points, 37 participants is 45% of participants who can take advantage of the system.

These are extremely good outcomes. If you look at the increase between 2008 and 2010, it's a modest increase with regard to the number of employees, but we believe that this is quite respectable still, and we hope that it will continue to increase.

If you look at the data with regard to greenhouse gas emissions, it could be surprising, but I do have an explanation. You can see that it's lower since the beginning of the program. Why? We believe, or we assume – and I think it's a good assumption – that the first people who adhered to the program were people who were already using active transportation quite a bit. There was not really a big change in their way of moving from one place to another. They were the first participants and those who came along afterward in 2009 and 2010, those are the people who made an effort to change. These people were using their own vehicles and decided to use an alternate mode of transportation once in a while. This is why I believe that, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, they decreased. Our objectives are always based on participation, that's the basis of the program.

We want to change consumers' habits and behaviors; we want to raise awareness in terms of more responsible modes of transportation.

To compare all of this with transportation methods across all of Montreal, the greater area of Montreal, this is from the 2008 origin – destination survey [slide]. We can see that 52% of people are driving by themselves in their own car, which is still huge. In terms of

public transportation and active transportation, we have better results than across all of Montreal. We can attribute this result to the CarboPOINT program.

That really seems to be the major component of our sustainable transportation plan. To wrap up, in terms of the limits and the challenges that we encountered, we realized that this requires quite a lot of resources, it represents a lot of time, especially in terms of launching the program. It means a lot of people around the table. Many people must define the parameters of the system, and once the launch has taken place, we have to manage the online platform and exchange the CarboPOINTS. We have to analyze the data, communicate with participants, manage the rewards program, and buy the gifts. All this takes up a great deal of time.

The second issue is that this is a system based on participants' good faith. That's fairly easy when you're a small organization, but it does mean, nonetheless, that you have to come up with some kind of peer-to-peer system to watch over each other and to make sure that participants aren't abusing the program or taking advantage of it.

The third thing is that Carrefour offers free parking to all its employees. That is an obstacle to changing people's transportation habits, especially since it's easily accessible by car. We're near bridges; we're in the suburbs. We're not downtown. So the way traffic moves, it means that it's quite easy to go to work by car.

That's a major hurdle to overcome. It's also very difficult to change people's habits. We are a society that loves its comforts and is quite individualistic. Coming by car to work remains the most comfortable option. I have a video, but unfortunately am not able to show it, but I do encourage you to watch it (in French) at www.reervert.com. It's about green RFPs and offers very concrete, practical information and advice. It's only in French at the moment.

Jay Kassirer: Thank you Karen. Our second presenter today is Bernadette Brun who has a BA in geography and a Masters in landscaping. She has worked in the environmental associative area since she has arrived in Canada in 1993. Madame Brun also teaches at the Université du Quebec in Montreal.

[00:37:43]

Bernadette Brun, Voyagez Futé Montreal

I'm here to talk to you because we supported Fondation in its undertaking. I'd like to take a few moments to tell you about that, first of all. Voyagez Futé Montréal (VFM), in English Travel Smart, is a travel management association (TMA). There are three in Montreal and eight in the Province of Quebec. We support businesses and institutions when they implement programs (such as the one presented to you by Karin) aimed at small, medium and large businesses with all kinds of potential projects. We offer advice in terms of sustainable transportation but also in terms of stimulating and facilitating the implementation of programs. We are a not-for-profit organization; we are funded by the

Department of Transportation, as well as by other transportation organizations, including l'Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMC) which is the municipal transportation association.

We use a business-based approach. The idea is to work with the employer so that they can develop and implement initiatives such as the one we've just seen with its employees in order to change their behaviors. When we're talking about sustainable transportation programs, we're talking about public transportation, bicycle, carpooling, and walking to work. We're also talking about using communications methods just as we are doing today with this webinar and remote communications methods like teleconferences, etc. Our ultimate goal is to reduce the use of cars in moving people to and from work, and from other professional travel. The Allégo program, in which Fondation participated, is truly an analytical process. It's also for the follow-up and it's an evaluation of a sustainable transportation program. We've done this in Quebec, in Montreal.

We've also got several other programs going on across Canada, and what we're trying to do is to support the business throughout every step of the way. The analysis and the evaluation are really important steps. We have to understand exactly what's going on. The diagnosis includes the action plan, which also has a survey. At Fondation we had an employee survey and we came up with statistics such as those presented to you [slide]. About 50% of people are using their car to go to work. Thanks to the working committee, we were able to develop an action plan. In the case of Fondation, what was really important and what allowed the program to work well, was that the business was involved every step of the way in terms of all the decisions that were made.

The business had to agree that they wanted to try to reduce, for example, single-occupant car use. It's extremely important that the business be involved throughout the whole program and we also have to develop and implement solutions that are adapted to the business in question. We have to do a lot of promotion of the program and you can see that, even in small businesses and in some large businesses, too, that's a very important step. We have a dynamic coordinating committee that has some resources to do its work. What we realized was that often employers don't have enough staff or resources to implement such programs. Here in Montreal there already are programs that help businesses manage and promote their own plans.

For example, the "je l'essaie" (I'll try it) program encourages the use of public transportation. There are incentives for drivers and they have developed tools and personalized follow-up for each of the participants, which removes the onus in program management from the business. Everybody knows how twinning software works, so that is used and is very popular, and we also assess what's going on with all the participants. We also developed a rewards program, which also helps the business communicate with and encourage its workers, and helps them as well follow up and evaluate the take up by employees. We're also developing partnerships with local transportation companies. In that case, we had BIXI and Communauto.

In closing, it's not easy to implement such programs. The business has to really want to do it, and at the local level there have to be programs that exist to support the business. As Karin was saying, it requires a great deal of energy. Over the last decade, we have worked with over 76 businesses, which adopted certain measures for sustainable transportation solutions. You can see by the graph [slide] how many projects were developed by the businesses and within the businesses. The most popular one was the free bicycles program, Vélo Libre. These are self-serve bicycles that people can use.

I wanted to add that the CarboPOINT program is a very interesting one. It could easily be implemented even by the transportation management associations. We can see that businesses need to measure the impacts of the programs they implement, and the CarboPOINT program seems to offer a very good solution for that.

[00:45:35]

Q&A

Q: After the Webinar, could you share with us the factors that are used to calculate the CO₂ equivalents?

Karin Savoye: Since it's up to me implement the CarboPOINT program, I myself don't have the information. I would have to find out from the people who initiated the program for Fondation.

Q: Is the 50% reimbursement tax exempt?

Karin Savoye: Unfortunately, I can't respond. I'll have to find out also.

Q: How do you verify the payment of transportation, public transit, passes? How are people reimbursed for their monthly passes? How do you check that people have paid for their monthly passes?

Karin Savoye: We ask for a receipt for the payment of the monthly pass. The reimbursement is provided when we receive a copy of the transaction.

Q: You talked about 130 employees. Is that the total number of participants or the minimum number required in order to participate?

Karin Savoye: That refers to the number of people who work Carrefour financier solidaire, which consists of none institutions including Fondation, which is the largest. That's the beauty of the program. There's no minimum number of participants required. This is a program that can be easily implemented in small businesses. The parameters are changeable according to the size of the business or if you want to put \$1,000 in a budget for this or \$5,000. It's up to you. It's very flexible, and the value of the CarboPOINT program is set according to the budget. We can limit the choice of suppliers. It's really

made to measure according to the people who are in charge also because, as Bernadette said, it requires just a lot of time and energy.

Bernadette Brun: All this can be done based on very specific parameters and they are flexible.

Q: Who provides maintenance for the bicycles?

Karin Savoye: As to the tune-ups, this is a common activity to the nine organizations that are part of Carrefour Finance Solidaire. The tune-ups are funded by the nine organizations, prorated on the number of participants. It's really the organizations that have a sustainable transportation budget, so they fund it.

Q: Could you please provide more details on the guaranteed return home program?

Bernadette Brun: We want to avoid situations where people who carpool are stuck if an emergency occurs, so the people who are carpooling get a guaranteed ride home in case of emergency, up to four times per year. That's all the information that I have, unfortunately. I don't really deal with that aspect of the sustainable transportation plan. I mostly deal with the CarboPOINTS and promotion, but eventually if I do receive more information, I will supply it by email.

Q: When drivers do try out public transit for three months, are they denied the pass after three months if they go back to their cars?

Bernadette Brun: Those parking spaces are not for one person. They're first-come, first-served and we have fewer spaces than employees (about 30 spaces). It's a major problem if at one point the lot is full, we have to find another spot. But in answer the question, no the person does not lose their parking space if they go back to using their car after three months.

Q: How do you check that participants tell you the truth about their habits?

Karin Savoye: It's one of the challenges of the program considering that there's relatively few of us at Fondation. There's only four people on the committee and we do have some monitoring that is done. We know who takes their bicycles, and who uses the bus. It's based on an honor system and we believe that the system is rather attractive, and we hope that people won't abuse it.

Bernadette Brun: It's a challenge. For large organizations, it could be a major challenge.

Q: Could you tell us more about the strategy used in your promotion campaign?

Karin Savoye: In the last promotion campaign, we decided to use an approach that targeted certain models in Fondation, like the super CarboPOINT users. It's these people

who gave the information to various participants who had not tried it out yet. The idea behind it is to show what you can do through posters in bathrooms or washrooms.

Bernadette Brun: It sounds funny, but people do read it, and they talk about it. We also use emails. All these things together allow us to have a superhero or CarboPOINT superheroes. Some people who do the three-month tryout might want to promote it also.

Q: Have you done a survey at the beginning of the project in order to have reference points to see how things change over the years?

Karin Savoye: As Bernadette indicated, an analysis was done in 2007 or 2006, just before the implementation of the transportation plan. And surveys were done in the employee population.

Bernadette Brun: I was not involved at the time, so I can't really give you too many details, but I will investigate further.

Q: What is the parking rate for individual car users and people who use other modes of transportation?

Karin Savoye: You're talking about the people who are single-occupants in their cars? It's free. There's no charge.

Q: The modal split that you showed, is it for the full day or for peak hours?

Karin Savoye: It's for peak hours.

Q: Could you provide more details on the transit try it on initiative?

Bernadette Brun: This was developed in cooperation with a local transportation company. The first month is offered free of charge by the transportation company. The second is paid in part by the business, and the third is shared between the employee and the employer. This is only for car users, and we do a survey after three months in order to evaluate the modal split change.

[00:57:15]

Claudie Oulette: We have five questions that remain. We'll follow up on those by email in the coming days.