

5.0

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Through the public consultation process, a variety of challenges and opportunities emerged. The following presents a summary of the issues that were identified

5.1. Challenges

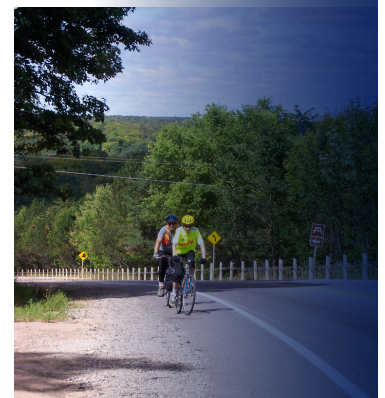
Challenges to creating a safe and active environment for cycling can be separated into two main categories: physical/geographic and personal/attitudinal.

5.1.1. Physical/Geographic

- Many secondary roads are unpaved or poorly paved for road cycling,
- Some roads with high traffic volumes lack paved shoulders
- Some roads have sections of non-paved or inconsistently paved shoulder widths; this is a safety issue as it results in cyclists riding both on and off the main roadway making their behaviour less predictable for drivers,
- Some roads have unsafe angles for grading and drainage.
- Some roads have speed levels and traffic volumes that deter cycling.
- There is a lack of amenities (washrooms, rest areas, bike racks, etc.) to support cyclists and a lack of secure lock-up facilities to keep bicycles safe.
- The hilly terrain means that some roads are too challenging for beginner cyclists; there is a general lack of easier routes for inexperienced or younger cyclists.
- There is a lack of off-road cycling facilities, including mountain biking trails and routes for people who do not want to cycle with traffic.



Courtesy of Haliburton Highlands Trails & Tours Network



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5.1.2. Personal/Attitudinal

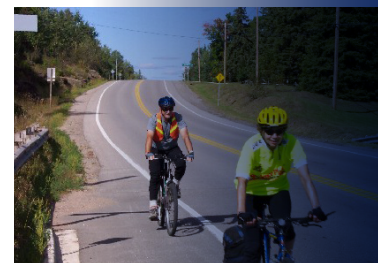
- Haliburton County is geographically large with significant distances between many destinations. In general, a mindset often exists that motorized vehicle transportation is the only available method of getting to a destination. Consequently, in general, cycling is not viewed as a viable means of transportation.
- Many people do not have a high level of comfort or confidence riding on shared roads with traffic.
- There are different degrees of readiness within the local municipalities and the county to embrace cycling as a priority.
- There are many different needs in the community and limited financial resources are available for building and maintaining infrastructure.
- There is a need for both cyclists and motorists to learn how to share the road.

5.2. Opportunities

A variety of opportunities have been identified through the consultation and planning process as follows.

- Cycling is growing in popularity across Canada, and Haliburton County offers beautiful cycling routes. The existing network of paved roads offers a variety of both looped and out-and-back route options.
- While the hilly terrain can pose a challenge, it also presents an opportunity for various levels of cycling as well as elite cycling events (e.g. training, road races). In addition, curving, twisting roads can act as a “traffic calming” effect on motorized traffic.

- There is capacity in the community to create education and awareness campaigns focusing on: 1) how motorists and cyclists can safely and respectfully share the road; 2) increasing awareness of cycling for recreation and as a non-motorized form of transportation; and 3) promoting the health, economic, tourism and environmental benefits of cycling to increase the community's appreciation of these benefits.
- The HHCC is positioned to assist decision makers to incorporate cycling when developing projects to pave/ improve roads and shoulders. The cycling community can also work with the elected officials at both the County and municipal level to help develop language that incorporates cycling into their official plans. This language can be shared with like-minded groups in other jurisdictions who can use it in their own strategic plans and in their approaches to local government.
- Haliburton could become a model for other rural communities wishing to engage the community in cycling planning.
- Funding programs exist to support various cycling projects (see Section 7.6 for examples).
- Several organizations in Haliburton County include cycling in their mandate or programs and could be partners in the process (Haliburton Highlands Trails & Tours Network, Haliburton County Tourism, Yours Outdoors, Communities in Action Committee).
- Being a rural community presents the opportunity to create a network of "cycling friendly" homes to provide support (similar to Neighbourhood Watch).
- Partnerships are possible to use existing facilities and amenities to support cyclists rather than creating brand new facilities.
- The two existing rail trails provide infrastructure for developing easy, off-road routes for beginning cyclists, families and children.



Courtesy of Haliburton Highlands Trails & Tours Network