

More Kids on Bikes

a presentation to the Halifax
Transportation Standing Committee

Thursday 22 May 2025

**kidical
mass
halifax**



Who Has Access to Cycling Infrastructure in Canada?

Study Published in June 2024 (Zhao, Q. et al.)

- Areas with more children were found to have less infrastructure access
- Transportation planning in Canada overlooks the needs of children, and needs to adopt a more inclusive approach
- Children need to be involved in the decision making processes



Kidical Mass Halifax

- Kidical Mass is a joyful protest
- Demonstration of community support for safe streets
- We choose routes that should be safe places for kids and grownups to ride bikes together: community centre to a playground, or playground to a school.
- None of this should be radical, but it is because Halifax does not truly design its streets with the goal of allowing children to have independent mobility.



Kidical Mass Halifax

- Through our rides, we create the environment we want to see for kids
- We calm the streets through the volume of people on bikes and our volunteer ride marshals, who hold back drivers so that kids can enjoy the freedom of movement.
- We create space for like-minded grownups to find each other, building community by riding side-by-side.
- We instill in kids the idea that cycling is a viable way to navigate city streets, build their confidence in riding, and teach them that there are grownups in their community who care for their future.



Kidical Mass Halifax

2025 is our 4th season

We've grown enormously since our first season

2022	2023	2024
~200	645	780
6 rides	6 rides	6 rides



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Kidical Mass Halifax: Grown-ups Say...

- “I'm more aware of how challenging it is for kids to ride safely on the roads”
- “Feeling more confident riding on residential streets with kids”
- “Seeing other families biking makes me feel better about the choice and so doing so I can hopefully return the favour and/or help influence others to bike”
- “We were able to grow both our eldest child and our confidence with him riding his own bike to school by seeing how well we all navigated the Kidical Mass rides.”
- “...biking more often and feel more confident that it's the right thing for us. Trying to organize more rides with my kids' friends and classmates.”



Kidical Mass Halifax: Kids Say...

- "Daddy there are so many bikes!!"
- "I loved riding my bike, and the snacks!"
- "Can we do that again?? When is the next one?"
- "I did it!!" (Proud 5 year old who had never ridden on the street before)
- Loved the idea of taking over the street
- LOVED being able to be free on the road
- Loved seeing other kids on bikes and biking alongside a group!
- Liked being able to ride on the road "like a grown up."



Kidical Mass Halifax

- We want you to know about the community you're making decisions for when you vote on things like the annual budget for active transportation, or when you compromise on infrastructure designs in ways that won't improve safety for kids.
- So, today we're asking you to join us for a ride, hear from the community, and see who you're building a bike network for.
- And then, build the network you've promised when you label it "All Ages and Abilities".



“All Ages and Abilities” Cycling Networks

Guidance from the National Association of City Transportation Officials defines ‘All Ages’ as being suitable for school-aged children through to older adulthood, while ‘All Abilities’ encompasses less confident cyclists and people experiencing various physical and/or cognitive disabilities (*NACTO, 2017*).

“In essence, the term ‘All Ages and Abilities’ embodies a cycling ecosystem designed to be accessible, safe, and comfortable for *anyone* to cycle.” (*Laberee et al., 2023*)



Halifax's “All Ages and Abilities” Cycling Network

From the Halifax Integrated Mobility Plan, page 7

“Mobility options should provide people of **all ages and abilities** with the independence to pursue these activities, including those with physical, visual, auditory and mental disabilities. An integrated mobility network, coupled with land-use plans that support the development of compact, complete communities, will allow people to choose how they move. In particular, the IMP recognizes that **viable options to walk, ride a bicycle or take transit to reach daily destinations are needed by those who are too young or unable to drive.** Improving mobility options will ultimately make the region more equitable.”



Major bikeways in Halifax

Existing and planned



Map courtesy of
Ben MacLeod

What makes Halifax's "AAA" Facilities unsafe for kids?

- Local Street Bikeways
 - Parking
 - Vehicle volumes during peak times
 - Vehicle speeds off-peak
- Protected Bike Lanes
 - Intersections
 - Two-stage turn markings
 - Parked cars in unprotected sections
 - Lack of connectivity
- Multi-use pathways:
 - Lack of connectivity
 - Shared spaces are challenging with larger volumes of pedestrians



Photo taken by Ben MacLeod



What we'd like to see:

Metrics that measure and account for kids on our cycling network:

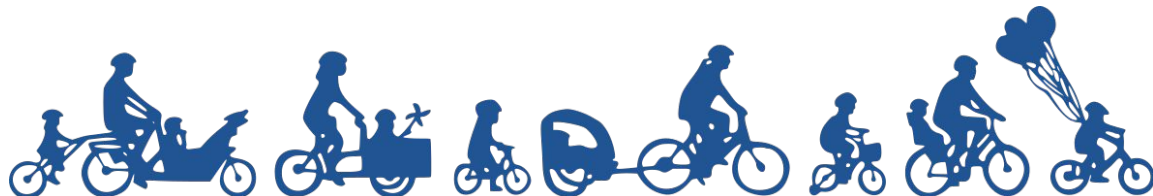
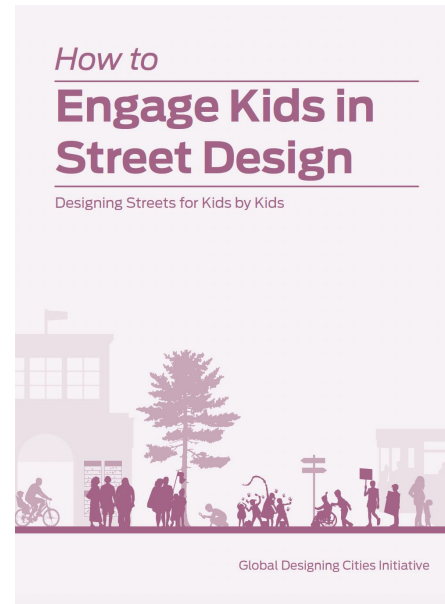
- Intercept Surveys with kids/families using the bikeways
- Ride-along Audits with kids/families
- Screenline counts that include perceived demographic data, to measure who is using “AAA” cycling facilities
 - Count kids on their own bikes separately from on parents' bikes
 - Count in automated counter locations near kid-focused destinations: parks, playgrounds, schools, libraries, community centres, recreation facilities, etc.



What we'd like to see:

A focus on including kids during the planning and design stages:

- Public engagement sessions that welcome and facilitate kids' participation
 - See reference resource from Global Designing Cities Initiative
- Questions about cycling with kids in municipal surveys (e.g. Shape Your City, Road Safety Survey, Traveller Opinion Survey)



Resources & References

- Global Designing Cities Initiative (2024). How to Engage Kids in Street Design: Designing Streets for Kids by Kids. <https://globaldesigningcities.org/publication/how-to-engage-kids-street-design/>
- Halifax (2017). Integrated Mobility Plan
- Laberee, K., Zanotto, M., Funk, A., Kirk, S. F. L., Moore, S. A., & Winters, M. (2023). 'All Ages and Abilities': exploring the language of municipal cycling policies. *Urban, Planning and Transport Research*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/21650020.2023.2264365>
- NACTO (2022). Making Bikes Count: Effective Data Collection, Metrics, & Storytelling <https://nacto.org/publication/making-bikes-count-effective-data-collection-metrics-storytelling/>
- NACTO (2017). Designing for All Ages & Abilities: Contextual Guidance for High-Comfort Bicycle Facilities. https://nacto.org/wp-content/uploads/NACTO_Designing-for-All-Ages-Abilities.pdf
- Zhao, Q., Winters, M., Nelson, T., Laberee, K., Ferster, C., & Manaugh, K. (2024). Who has access to cycling infrastructure in Canada? A social equity analysis. *Computers, Environment and Urban Systems*, 110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compenvurbsys.2024.102109>



Come ride with us!



Photo taken by Ben MacLeod

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