



SHIFTING GEARs

Peterborough Workplace Transportation Challenge

2011 Program Summary

This year marked the eighth year of the Shifting Gears Workplace Challenge, and was our most successful event to date. The Shifting Gears Workplace Challenge is a month-long competition created to inspire Peterborough area employers, employees, and individuals to use active and efficient modes of transportation, such as walking, cycling, public transit, carpooling and telecommuting to get to and from work. The Shifting Gears Program is a partnership of the City of Peterborough, the Peterborough County-City Health Unit and Peterborough Green-Up with support from Transport Canada's ecoMOBILITY program.

This May, over 1,300 employees from more than 100 workplaces across the city of Peterborough participated in the challenge. Participants logged more than 33,000 trips using sustainable modes of transportation. These results are truly significant. Changing the way we think about daily commutes helped to promote healthy individuals (over 70,000km were traveled using active modes of transportation during this year's challenge), healthy communities (participants chose to share a ride on 10,000 occasions during the month of May), and a healthy environment (over 43,000 kg of carbon emissions were avoided this month alone!).

During the Challenge, participants track their trips using on-line or paper tracking sheets. Incentive kits and draw prizes were offered to all individuals to encourage participation, and employer recognition awards provide an additional incentive for workplaces as a way to encourage intra-workplace cohesion, a sense of celebration, and a bit of inter-workplace competition.

The program is evaluated by recording trips to and from work during the month of May and through evaluation surveys completed by participants and workplace coordinators. This year, nearly one third of all the program participants identified as commuters who normally drive alone to work - this indicates that the Workplace Shifting Gears Challenge is not simply rewarding those commuters who are already travel using active and efficient modes, but is indeed influencing the behaviour of individuals who regularly commute in a single occupancy vehicle. Significantly, this May there was 27% increase in the use of active and efficient travel, relative to the rest of the year! As well, more than half of participants pledged to maintain or increase their use of active or efficient transportation during the Challenge and 95% of those reported that they plan to maintain their new travel habits!

