



Playbook 2030: Environment

About: This document is part of a collection of learning briefs, each with their own thematic area, focused on key findings from the ActiveCITY Playbook 2030. This learning brief is focused on the environment.

About the Playbook

The goal of the ActiveCITY Playbook 2030 was to listen to the diverse voices of Calgarians. Over the past 18 months, the ActiveCITY Collective proactively engaged a diverse group of over **23,000 citizens** since March 2019 - the largest public engagement exercises in the city's history.

The Playbook will evolve as our community evolves. The long-term plan must maintain a sustained commitment to ongoing community engagement over the length of the Playbook - this plan is only successful if all **4,000 active economy enterprises** and **1.5 million citizens** own it - every single day.

Outdoor recreation can also have a positive impact on the environment through an **increase in preservation of urban forests**.

The active economy can also play a role on environmental sustainability through time spent in nature promoting **environmental stewardship among both children and adults**.

What is an Active economy?

In short, an active economy is defined as a group of organisations that are focused on improving both citizens and communities through the **delivery of physical activity including sports and recreation**.

What is the impact of the Active Economy on the environment?

An active economy has been shown to have links to environmental prosperity including active engagement in nature and its links to environmental stewardship.

Calgary possesses some of the best air quality in North America, it has recorded over 300 poor air quality events in the past two decades. However, at a macro-level, Calgary appears to be becoming more sustainable with indicators linked to **water, air quality and waste-diversion**. In 2018, Calgary's average water consumption was 362 litres per capita per day, an 11 per cent reduction since 2012.



Case Study: Copperfield School

For the past three years, Southeast Calgary's Copperfield School has used its Active School Travel (AST) project to encourage active and safe community travel.

As a member of the provincial Ever Active Schools initiative, Copperfield created this program to achieve their collaborative goal of a healthy school community.

Administrators and a team of parent champions are now working hard to influence a more active student environment through hosting active school travel event days, working with the City of Calgary to add and upgrade crosswalks, add bench buddies and scooter racks, and increase the number of bike racks available to students.

The result? **49 per cent of Copperfield's students now walk or wheel to school**, with the percentage expected to reach **55 per cent** in two years' time. The AST team continues to meet monthly to further improve their students' active travel experiences, and this leadership has not gone unnoticed.

Neighbouring schools have followed suit with their own active school travel projects, their collective paths lit by the light of Copperfield's progress.

Copperfield School is a prime example of the potential our schools hold to foster innovative solutions to involve youth in active living. Other organizations and schools in Calgary can learn from Copperfield School's success to develop their own unique, community-based solutions.

GOAL:

By 2030, Calgary's regional active economy leads Canada in active economy energy and water consumption reduction.



Better air quality



A 5% increase in **walkability** reduces vehicle traffic by 6.5% and decreases nitrogen oxide by 3.6%

- A study found that a 'Safe Routes to School' programs resulted in a 13 per cent reduction in vehicle drop-offs, and an annual reduction of **1,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions** and **70 tons of other environmental pollutants**
- Another study found a **5 per cent increase in walkability** is linked to a **7 per cent decrease in vehicle traffic**, equating to a **6 per cent decrease in emissions of oxides of nitrogen**.

Benefits to individuals and community

What should be prioritised?

Advocate for policies and harmonized investments that deliver a sustainable active economy

1. Integrated and harmonized regional transportation strategy to enable efficient and sustainable access to natural and built active economy amenities.
2. Developing and deploying a comprehensive harmonized four-season active transportation plan.
3. School boards adopt harmonized policies that support active transportation by students.

Advocate for a 15-minute city

1. A design principle where citizens can access all their amenities in terms of work, retail and leisure within 15-minutes' walk or cycle ride of their home.

What is the context?

The Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety estimates the cost of **traffic congestion** in Canada to be **\$4.5 billion** - not to mention the impact of emissions on the environment.



- Active economy expenditures are immediate, whereas the impacts are measured over years. This lack of immediate return on investment must be more effectively measured and tracked at an ecosystem-level to understand the impact over time.

References: [1] Keough, N., Morrison, B., & Lee, C. (2020, May 27). State of our city 2020: An urgent call for a just transition. Sustainable Calgary. [2] Staunton, C. E., Hubsmith, D., & Kallins, W. (2003). Promoting safe walking and biking to school: The Marin County success story. American Journal of Public Health, 93(9), 1431-1434. [3] Frank, L. D., Sallis, J. F., Conway, T. L., Chapman, J. E., Saelens, B. E., & Bachman, W. (2006). Many pathways from land use to health: Associations between neighbourhood walkability and active transportation, body mass index, and air quality. Journal of the American Planning Association, 72(1), 75-87.