

# Tread Lightly

## Moving Through Our Communities in Sustainable Ways





Getting around is part of everyday life—whether we're heading to work, school, or the grocery store. But how we travel has a big impact on the environment and on the liveability of our communities. In Ontario, transportation accounts for nearly **one-third of greenhouse gas emissions** (Government of Ontario, 2023). The good news? Choosing more sustainable ways to move through our neighbourhoods not only reduces emissions but also improves health, strengthens community connections, and makes our streets safer.

### What Is Active Transportation?

**Active transportation** refers to any form of human-powered travel, such as walking, cycling, rolling, or using mobility aids. It's about choosing modes of transport that minimize environmental impact while also providing health and social benefits.

In Barrie, active transportation is gaining attention. The City's [Active Transportation and Sustainability Committee](#) has highlighted cycling infrastructure, safe pedestrian routes, and better connections to transit as key ways to make our city greener and more accessible (City of Barrie, 2024).

### Why Tread Lightly?

-  **Reduce Emissions:** Walking, cycling, or rolling produces zero emissions. Even choosing transit reduces your carbon footprint compared to driving alone.
-  **Improve Health:** Active travel means built-in exercise, which reduces stress, improves cardiovascular health, and boosts mood.
-  **Build Community:** When more people are out walking or biking, neighbourhoods feel friendlier, safer, and more connected.
-  **Save Money:** Fewer car trips mean less money spent on gas, maintenance, and parking.

### Tips for Treading Lightly in Barrie

1. **Walk Where You Can**
  - For short trips under 2 km, consider walking instead of driving. Many errands can be done on foot in dense areas like Downtown Barrie or Allandale.

## 2. Choose Cycling for Medium Distances

- Barrie is expanding its cycling network, including bike lanes and trails like the **Waterfront Trail** and the **Barrie–Collingwood Rail Trail**. Consider biking to work or school when possible.

## 3. Take Transit

- Barrie Transit offers routes that connect key neighbourhoods and GO stations. Combining cycling and transit (with bike racks on buses) makes longer trips easier without needing a car.

## 4. Carpool or Use Ride-Sharing Wisely

- If driving is necessary, share rides with friends, coworkers, or neighbours. Apps and community boards can make organizing carpools simple.

## 5. Plan Ahead

- Consolidate errands into one trip instead of multiple short drives. This saves time, fuel, and emissions.

## 6. Make It Social

- Turn a walk or bike ride into quality time with family or friends. Active transportation is easier (and more fun) when shared.

## A Community Shift

The City of Barrie's [Transportation Master Plan](#) emphasizes reducing dependence on single-occupancy vehicles. Supporting these goals means embracing a culture shift: making walking, cycling, rolling, and transit the “default” choices whenever possible.

Neighbouring communities in Ontario are leading the way—Toronto's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, for example, and Guelph's Cycling Master Plan—show how rethinking transportation can transform daily life. Barrie is poised to follow suit as infrastructure improves and residents push for safer, greener options.

## Call to Action

Every step—or pedal stroke—counts. By choosing active transportation even a few times a week, you're helping cut emissions, improve health, and build a more connected Barrie. Imagine cleaner air, quieter streets, and neighbourhoods designed for people instead of just cars.

So next time you're heading out, ask yourself: **Can I tread more lightly today?**