



Golden Builds a Path to Active Living

September 2008

Employees at businesses and organizations in Golden walked to and from work during the town's first Everyone Walks to Work Day this summer. The campaign, spearheaded by the Town of Golden Leisure Services, aimed to get commuters out of their cars.

"We went around to all the businesses and let them know that this was going to be Walk to Work Day," said Lisa Reinders, who leads Golden's Active Communities initiative as Manager of Leisure Services. She and the town's summer student, Special Events Coordinator Brittany Jones, came up with Everyone Walks to Work Day after brainstorming ideas for an Active Community event that could tie into the Steps Out online activity tracker program (www.stepsout.com/golden).

"Every year we will be creating an Active Communities event, whether it is the

Walk to Work Day or Move for Health Day," Reinders said.

During the days leading up to the July 9 event, Jones set up a table outside the post office to promote Active Communities and Steps Out and to hand out pedometers. Everyone Walks to Work Day was also promoted through the local newspaper and radio, posters, brochures, and coupons were offered for free pedometers.

A 2006 survey of Golden residents' physical activity levels, commissioned through a grant from the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) through Active Communities, found that for 40% of respondents, the top barrier to getting physically active was a lack of time. The Everyone Walks to Work Day showed working professionals how to incorporate physical activity into their busy days.

Golden and District Hospital had the most staff walking to work that day. To recognize their efforts, Leisure Services awarded prizes and a certificate.

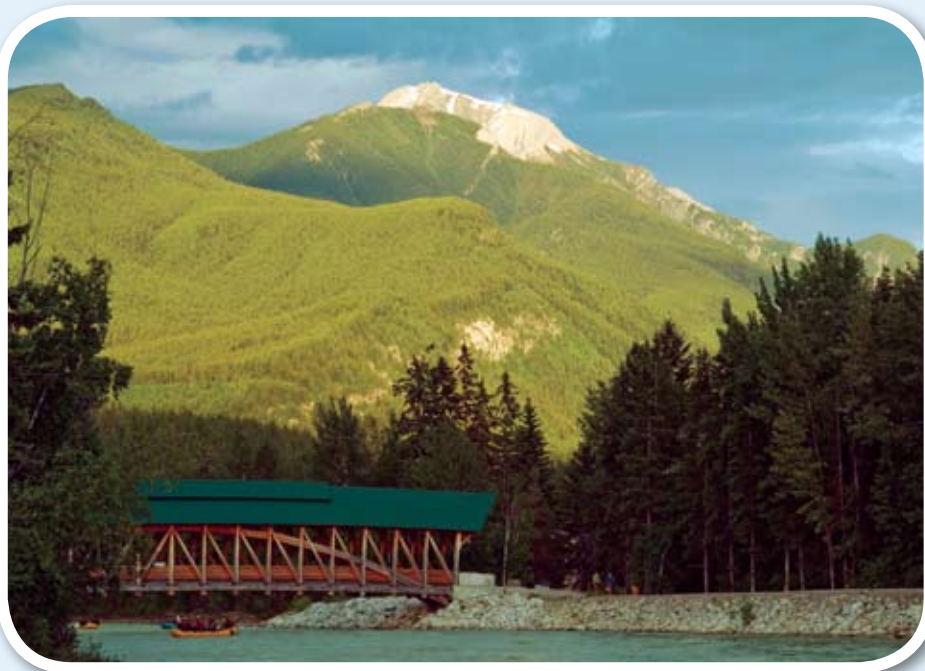
In addition to distributing the pedometers to Everyone Walks to Work Day participants, Leisure Services has also given the devices to people registering for community recreation programs, and an elementary school to help students get a walking program started. The online community tracker website, purchase of pedometers and promotional efforts were funded through a \$5,000 Active Communities grant from BCRPA.

The Everyone Walks to Work Day campaign heightened awareness of a wider movement by the town to create more active transportation opportunities to get residents out of their cars and onto safe walking paths and bikeways.

"Golden has a pathway system called Rotary trails, so you do have the opportunity to either walk or bike to work if you choose," Reinders noted.

The town is not only encouraging residents to make use of the area's existing trail, pathway and bikeway networks, it's also planning an expanded active transportation network. With the help of provincial grants and community participation, Golden is well on its way to being a model town for active transportation.

Golden was recently awarded a \$13,020 community planning grant from the Built Environment and Active Transportation (BEAT) Initiative at BCRPA. The BEAT initiative supports community efforts to increase levels of walking and cycling.



Kootenays – Golden

The funding is brought in Michael Haynes, an expert on walkable and bikeable communities.

During Haynes' three-day visit this October, he did an inspection and evaluation of existing active transportation networks, hosted an open house to educate the public on active transportation, and held workshops with Town staff and partners to collect suggestions on possible active transportation routes. Haynes also conducted an open community consultation to explore which streets, sidewalks, pathways and trails should be a part of a comprehensive active transportation plan. The results will set the guidelines for future developments.

"Some of the main goals are to have a continuous pathway/trail/sidewalk system and also to provide a plan that will be given not only to the developments that already exist, but also to new developments," Reinders explained. *"So when someone comes in and does development in Golden, they will have to connect to our pathway trail system."*

Haynes' presentation will inform Golden's active transportation plan. The town will put the plan together in consultation with engineers.

"I want the document to help create the future of Golden," Reinders said. *"If you have an active transportation plan and a map, when new developments come into Golden, they will know that it's not even an option—they will have to provide the connectors to our trails and sidewalks and pathways. One of the goals is to have a more walkable, bikeable community."*

The town received another major funding boost from the provincial government through the Local Motion program. The \$381,573 grant will fund building separate pathways, sidewalks or shoulder bike lanes along various sections of 11th Avenue South, 7th Street North and 12th Street North.



Reinders did a presentation on the town's active transportation goals and overall planning process at September's UBCM convention in Penticton. Her presentation noted the aim of the plan is also to *"build new or improve existing infrastructure to provide safe and accessible routes to connect residents to community facilities, schools, bus stops and recreation areas; have a continuous, integrated and connected active transportation network throughout Golden in both established and new developments; and to develop trails and roadways within Golden to encourage the connection to other communities."*

With town officials driving active transportation efforts, residents of Golden will likely have many opportunities in the near future that will make it easier to leave their cars at home.

Golden Highlights

- Promoted Everyone Walks To Work Day for workplaces
- Started a Steps Out activity tracker website for Golden participants to virtually walk to Europe (www.stepsout.com/golden)
- Pedometers distributed to community members registering for recreation programs and students at an elementary school
- Received an Active Communities grant from BCRPA in 2007 for the Steps Out website, pedometers, promotions and Move for Health Day (\$5,000)
- Organized free Move for Health Day activities in 2007 with community partners
- Received a grant through the BC Healthy Living Alliance's Built Environment & Active Transportation (BEAT) initiative to develop an active transportation plan (\$13,020)
- Received a Local Motion grant from the B.C. Government to build separated pathways, sidewalks or shoulder bike lanes along various sections of select streets (\$381,573)
- Commissioned a survey of physical activity levels with a \$5,000 subsidy from BCRPA through Active Communities in 2006 as a baseline measurement
- 14 schools registered with Action Schools! BC in School District 6

Golden Info

- **Population:** 4,043 (BC Stats 2007)
- Located in the north end of the Columbia Valley between the Rocky and Purcell mountain ranges, along the Columbia and Kicking Horse rivers
- Surrounded by 4 national parks: Banff, Glacier, Kootenay and Yoho
- Outdoor recreation opportunities: white water rafting, mountain biking, rock climbing, hiking, golfing, skiing, snowboarding

www.goldenchamber.bc.ca
www.town.golden.bc.ca
www.tourismgolden.com
www.hellobc.com