

Pathways Newsletter



The Pathways for People newsletter is published twice a year and shares trail stories and updates, events and local news on infrastructure work happening across Norfolk County

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Submitted by Gordon Mason
Pathways for People, Chair

It is my pleasure to welcome you to a new year with Norfolk Pathways for People – a coalition driven by community passion, partnership, and a shared vision for improved connected pathways in Norfolk County.

This year, we are also proud to introduce our refreshed logo!



This updated visual identity represents our continued vision for a healthier, more connected community. The flowing pathway symbolizes movement, connection, and progress – representing the trails, sidewalks, and active transportation infrastructure that link our communities together. While our look has evolved, our mission remains the same: advocating for safe, accessible, and well-connected spaces where people can walk, cycle, and move with confidence.

Since forming in 2008 as part of a public health initiative, our coalition has worked collaboratively with trail organizations, municipal partners, and residents to advance walkable communities. We know that when the places where people live, work, learn, and play are designed to support walking and active transportation, we foster healthier lifestyles, stronger social connections, and a more vibrant Norfolk.

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In the year ahead, we will continue to:

- Advocate for new and improved trails and pathways across Norfolk County.
- Promote safety and accessibility to ensure our pathways are welcoming for people of all ages and abilities.
- Encourage regular use of trails, sidewalks, and roadways for recreation, health, and everyday transportation.
- Strengthen partnerships and community engagement to advance a more connected future.

Thank you to our dedicated members and community partners for your continued commitment and leadership. Together, we are creating pathways that connect people – not just places.

Here's to a year of progress, partnership, and possibility.

FOR THE LADIES

Submitted by Rob Luke
Turkey Point Mountain Bike Club

“The Bicycle is just as good a companion as most husbands. When it gets old and shabby, a woman can dispose of it and get a new one without shocking the entire community.” – Ann Strong, Minneapolis Tribune, 1895

“It has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. I stand and rejoice every time I see a woman ride by on a wheel (bicycle).” – Susan B. Anthony, 1896

In the last newsletter I related how the Simcoe Spoke Cycling Club (1882–1900) advocated for better roads in Ontario. They also advocated and supported the women's rights movement and push for suffrage in Canada. Here is part of that narrative.

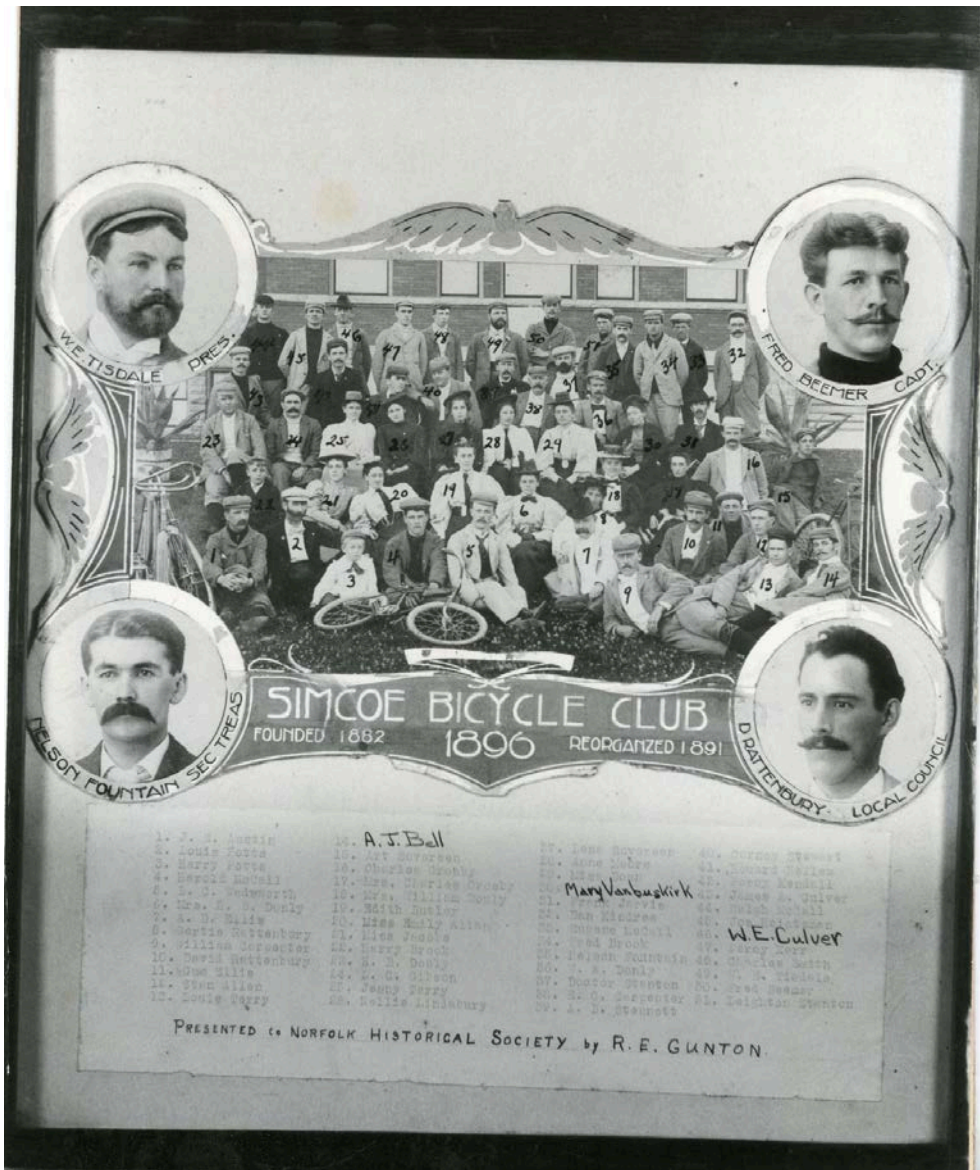
The Scene – Cycling had become all the rage in the 1880s and 90s. The newest inventions in transport and technology thrived in the early age of the bicycle. Witness the Wright brothers; Orvil and Wilbur, honing their technical skills, designing and manufacturing bicycles in their shop in Dayton, Ohio.

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The Norfolk Historical Society put out a photo on social media. The 1896 sepia photo was that of the Simcoe Cycling Club, handle bar moustaches and newsboy caps prominent, ladies clad in bonnets and the garb of the day in their entire Victorian splendour. A pennant in the photo claims the club was founded in 1882 and a list of the members shows an A-List of who's who in Simcoe in 1896.



There are a lot of recognizable old United Empire Loyalists (UEL) names – Culver, Tisdale, McCall, and Nelles – but more importantly we see Mrs. A.W. Donly, married to William Donly, whom we know as Eva Brook Donly.

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A surprising feature of the 1896 Simcoe Cycling Club photo is that of roughly 50 members, 11 were women, mostly single. The attraction to cycling for woman was the chance to be courted. Church picnics and cycle club rides were one of the few venues where the opposite sexes could have discourse. It was not considered proper, in this Victorian age, for women to ride their bicycles unescorted.

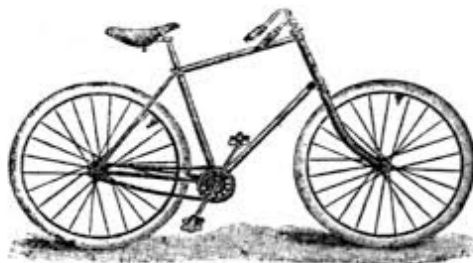
Fierce moral debates took place at the time on the issue of females on bicycles. Many people felt that women had no business riding a bike and women that cycled were of low character and morals. They were ostracised at first but accepted by the males of the cycling clubs.

Cycling was a liberating movement for women because they could participate along with men and were almost treated as equals. Many suffragettes of the day claimed that women would have never achieved voting rights, unless they rode the bicycle first.

Many attitudes of the day felt that women shouldn't ride a bicycle for health reasons. Many medical opinions weighed in. Some Chicagoans worried that the female body was too fragile to withstand the physical effects of bicycling.

- "It is a somewhat violent exercise under some circumstances, and is not a safe kind for a woman who is delicate," said Dr. Henry Byford. But most doctors contacted by the Tribune said female cycling was perfectly safe. "Bicycle riding is an antidote against moping, indolence and enervation," said Dr. Edwin Kuh. "I believe that physicians should advise their bachelor clients not to marry any girl who doesn't ride a bicycle." (Chicago Tribune 1896) (May 03, 2014 | By Robert Loerzel | Special to the Tribune).

The Canadian Wheelman's Gazette promoted and supported women in cycling and it even had its own column called 'For the Ladies'. Topics included proper posture, the right saddles for female parts and controversially, should she be allowed to wear only her bloomers on a bike?



The Victor 'Flyer' of 1893.

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We must remember that this is the Victorian age and the cycling movement is most radical in the treatment of women. Queen Victoria was not fond of bicycles and her granddaughters hid from her the fact they enjoyed riding the bike! The biggest debate that raged for years was whether it was proper for a woman to ride wearing a long skirt, or a short skirt with bloomers, or heaven forbid - just bloomers (CWA Oct. 7, 1895).

Bloomers were most practical for women to wear riding but they were closely associated with prostitutes. Ladies were advised that woolen undergarments worked best for riding and skirts of tweed or serge were most comfortable. Moralists were against the knickerbockers on a bike but long skirts of the day were just not practical. It seemed that a major practical problem and concern for women cyclists was finding a hat for riding that protected the eyes but wouldn't fall off at higher speeds. Here was some practical advice for all wheelwomen, 'Women ought to study with more than usual care is good style in dismounting'.

The Victorian cyclists were fond of poetry to promote their cause and here one such poem depicts the popular debate of the day – Skirt or Bloomers?

“A lady may go to a party or ball in a costume decidedly shocking;
But, when cycling, she really musn't, y'know, show the least glimpse of a stocking”
(Canadian Wheelman Association – May 1898- Cycle Chat)

It is reported in the May 18th, 1886 Gazette that the Simcoe Spokes Cycle Club will don club uniforms. The club's main concern is that they do not appear to look like the Salvation Army.

But women did not enjoy full equality and the Gazette was capable of condescending and patronizing attitudes. Here's a nugget from April 1, 1895:

“She Should Slowly Ride” – “Given a proper fitting machine, reasonable skills, and a well cut skirt, there is only one thing needed to make a woman ride a bicycle gracefully, and that is the limitation of speed. No woman should attempt to scorch (ride fast) about eight miles an hour on asphalt, or more, if she values her appearance. Her skirt must have time to fall and drape between the motions of her feet, and this cannot take place if a rapid action of the knees is kept up. A well mounted woman, riding at a moderate speed, is seldom seen, but when she is met with, everyone turns to look at her, and here is given the secret of her superior attractiveness. The woman should set the pace for her escort, and not try to keep up with him”. (CWA April 1 1895)

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However, in all fairness, the CWA Gazette allowed women themselves to reply in print against the naysayers who felt women on a bike were considered immoral. Mrs Charles H. Pankhurst wrote in the Gazette in November 2, 1897 "Of course, I do not believe that bicycling is immoral. I am a wheelwoman myself, and believe that the wheel is beneficial from every point of view. The bicycle is a very active agent in the advance of morality. A girl who rides the wheel is lifted out of herself and her surroundings. She is made to breathe purer air, see fresher and more beautiful scenes, and get an amount of exercise she would not otherwise get. All this is highly beneficial". (CWA, Nov. 2 1897)

There is no doubt that this kind of attitude towards the rights of women was a precursor to their right to vote, still another 24 years coming in the 1921 Federal election.

EMPOWERING YOUTH TO LEAD THE WAY IN ROAD SAFETY

Submitted by Alex Dobias
Grand Erie Public Health

Norfolk Pathways for People is proud to support local youth who are passionate about making our roads safer for everyone. If you're between the ages of 15 and 24 and want to create meaningful change in your community, the Parachute Youth Road Safety Ambassador Program, offered by Parachute Canada, could be the perfect opportunity.

What Is the Parachute Youth Road Safety Ambassador Program?

The Parachute Youth Road Safety Ambassador Program empowers young people across Canada to turn their ideas into action. Each selected Youth Road Safety Ambassador receives a \$1,000 grant to fund a youth-led project that:

- Identifies a local road safety issue
- Raises awareness and/or proposes evidence-based solutions
- Partners with a local organization
- Develops a proposal to present to community influencers (such as municipal leaders, enforcement agencies, or school administrators)

This is your chance to transform concerns about road safety into real, community-driven solutions.

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What Could Your Project Focus On?

Youth ambassadors can build projects around a variety of road safety priorities, including:

- Pedestrian, bicycle, and wheeled safety
- Road design and infrastructure improvements
- Equity and accessibility in transportation
- Safe, sustainable cities and climate change
- Driving behaviours such as speeding, impaired driving, or distracted driving

Whether you're passionate about safer school routes, improved cycling infrastructure, or reducing distracted driving, your creativity and leadership can make an impact.

Examples of Youth-Led Advocacy Projects

Not sure where to start? Here are a few project ideas:

- Advocate for policy changes or infrastructure improvements such as traffic calming measures, reduced speed limits, or separated bike lanes through letter-writing campaigns, petitions, or town halls.
- Host a community event - a pop-up engagement booth, idea board session, neighbourhood walk, or community bike ride to raise awareness and gather feedback.
- Develop and present recommendations directly to municipal leaders or school boards.

The key is that the project is youth-led, collaborative, and action-oriented.

Who Can Apply?

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be 15 to 24 years old
- Live in Canada (citizen, permanent resident, or refugee)
- Be passionate about promoting road safety
- Lead a project that takes place in Canada
- Partner with a local organization (e.g., non-profit, advocacy group, local business, police department, school, or post-secondary institution)



Applications must be submitted by individual youth or youth groups - not organizations. Only the main applicant(s) need to meet eligibility requirements.

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How Norfolk Pathways for People can help:

As a community coalition committed to advocating for accessible, healthier, and connected communities, Norfolk Pathways for People is happy to support interested youth in developing their ideas, forming partnerships, and strengthening their applications.

If you have a vision for improving road safety in Norfolk County, we would love to help you take the next step. Feel free to contact us by e-mail: pathwaysforpeople@gmail.com

To learn more about the program and explore past Youth Ambassador projects, visit Parachute's website: <https://parachute.ca/en/program/youth-road-safety/past-youth-ambassador-projects/>

Let's empower the next generation of leaders to create safer roads for everyone.

UPCOMING PATHWAYS EVENTS

Submitted by Alex Dobias
Grand Erie Public Health



Explore with Norfolk Pathways for People - Join Our Upcoming Events!

Norfolk Pathways for People is excited to invite community members of all ages to two fantastic spring events that celebrate active living, local history, and community pride. Mark your calendars and bring a friend!

Spring Walk at Delhi Quance Park

Saturday, May 2nd 2-4pm

Location: 200 Talbot Rd, Delhi, ON N4B 2A2

Kick off the season with a refreshing spring walk at Quance Dam in Delhi. Enjoy the natural beauty of the area, connect with neighbours, and get moving outdoors as we explore one of Norfolk County's scenic spots. We'll wrap up the afternoon with a special guided tour of the Delhi Tobacco Museum & Heritage Centre, featuring the fascinating Velodrome exhibit. It's a wonderful opportunity to learn more about Delhi's unique cycling history and cultural heritage.

Whether you're a regular walker or just looking for a reason to get outside, this event is a perfect way to welcome spring.

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Simcoe Trail Clean-Up

Saturday, May 23rd, 9:00-11:00am

Location: Simcoe (final meeting location to be confirmed)

Help us keep our trails beautiful and enjoyable for everyone! Pathways will be hosting a community trail clean-up in Simcoe, and we'd love your support. Final meeting details and the clean-up focus area will be announced closer to the date - stay tuned!

We hope to see you there!

AWAITING SPRING

Submitted by Frank Woodcock
Waterford Heritage Trail Association

We are on the cusp of spring and being teased by a day of glorious weather followed by rain or wind or snow. We want to rake our lawns, plant, dust off our bikes and get out on the trails. The itch to be outside is strong and the sighting of robins doesn't help.

Mother nature has 4 moods; in spring she awakens, in summer she plays, in fall she sets things in order to hibernate for the winter... EXCEPT... that her dreams and nightmares result in snowstorms, ice storms, cold, slush, greyness, shivers, colds, flu, and trips to the fracture clinic.

The optimist in us awaits spring and the babbling of birds the buzzing of bees the birth of beautiful babies the buds to blossoms the bouncing bunnies the bountiful butterflies and the break in the weather so we can get out on the trails once again.

And we in the trail business await you and welcome you.



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SPRING WALK POSTER



The poster features a dark blue header with the Pathways for People logo (an orange wavy line) and the text "Pathways for People NORFOLK". To the right, the title "Spring Walk at Delhi Quance Park" is written in large white font. Below the header is a photograph of a river with a stone dam and lush green trees. The middle section has an orange background with a calendar icon and the text "Saturday, May 2, 2026 from 2 to 4 p.m." on the left, and a location pin icon with the text "Delhi Tobacco Museum and Heritage Centre, 200 Talbot Rd, Delhi, ON N4B 2A2, Parking available at the museum." on the right. The bottom section has a grey background with a photograph of a velodrome and a list of bullet points: "Join us for a spring walk through Delhi Quance Park and end with a tour of the Delhi Tobacco Museum, featuring the Velodrome exhibit." and "Donations to the museum are appreciated." A dark blue rounded rectangle on the left contains a question mark icon and the text "Questions? Contact Alex Dobias 519-900-9600 x 3367 adobias@geph.ca".

Pathways for People
NORFOLK

Spring Walk at Delhi Quance Park

 **Saturday,
May 2, 2026**
from 2 to 4 p.m.

 **Delhi Tobacco Museum
and Heritage Centre**
200 Talbot Rd,
Delhi, ON N4B 2A2
Parking available at the museum.



- Join us for a spring walk through Delhi Quance Park and end with a tour of the Delhi Tobacco Museum, featuring the Velodrome exhibit.
- Donations to the museum are appreciated.

Questions?
Contact Alex Dobias
519-900-9600 x 3367
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