

# Shannon Lohner



Shannon is the chair of Paths for People, a non-profit organization based out of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. They work to shape Edmonton into a multi-modal city where active transportation is a safe, accessible, year-round option for all. This work is achieved through advocacy to their local municipal government, developing programming initiatives with local organizations, and communication campaigns to their membership of 1700+ people. Shannon will begin an MSc in Urban and Regional Planning in Fall 2025, with goals to work in the areas of safe mobility and active transportation.



Edmonton, Canada



Transport systems can be considered inclusive only if...

... we prioritize accessibility and connectivity across our systems. Transit needs to be accessible to those using wheeled devices such as rollers, wheelchairs, strollers, etc. Active transportation networks need to be safe, separated, and connected across a municipality to allow users to get anywhere they want via safe infrastructure.

If I was in power of our transport systems, the first thing I would do is...

... focus on building out connectivity across a municipality. In most North American cities, there is a complete and comprehensive road network that allows you to drive anywhere, meanwhile transit and active transportation networks are full of missing links and holes that make it challenging to move across your city solely by non-private car means! Or, even if you can get there by active or public transport, it will take 3x longer than driving there.

How does the current situation for women and persons with disabilities in your city influence your work?

As a women with an invisible disability, I am constantly seeing opportunities for improvement in my city. Our most vibrant central shopping district (Whyte Ave) has sidewalks that are too narrow and crumbling under our feet! This influences my work by motivating me to push further for improved pedestrian infrastructure, as every journey (even those by car) starts and ends with a walk or a roll.

What's the main challenge that you face in your daily work?

Public buy in. Many of our transportation decisions are steered by our elected officials, and our public is highly hesitant to change from our existing car-focused transportation network. The best way to get people to see the benefits of high quality public and active transportation is to build it, but since people don't have experience with it, it is very challenging to get them to agree to new projects, and our elected officials want to

My work aligns with the  
Hamburg Charter Principles!

### Principle #2 Inclusivity in Transport:

As my work mainly focuses on active transportation, I work to create a city where everyone has the opportunity to move around in a way that works best for them. Over 30% of people in North America cannot drive, particularly seniors, youth, and those with disabilities. High quality active transportation networks allow people from all backgrounds to connect with their communities, achieve their daily goals, and level gender disparities.

appease the public to ensure their political popularity!

#### Why is it important to listen to young people?

We (in North America) have been perpetuating the same style of sprawl focused urban development for the last 70+ years. Our youth are looking for a different style of living that allows them to live a more affordable, active lifestyle in a more vibrant city. These development patterns are more financially sustainable for municipalities than our historic growth patterns – the youth have bold ideas for how to shift our cities for the better, from both an economic and experience-based perspective!

#### What would you tell other young people working in the transport field?

Work together. It is far easier to make change happen when multiple people/groups are working towards the same goal, rather than everybody working in their own isolated, fragmented areas!



