



Barriers to Implementation

What Prevents Municipalities from Building More Complete Streets and Vision Zero Infrastructure

Alex Hanes | Research Intern

Agenda

- 1. Overview: the project and its findings**
- 2. Methods: policy scan and interviews**
- 3. Policy and implementation**
- 4. Barriers to implementation**
- 5. Conclusion**
- 6. Next Steps**

Overview

Two safe street movements building momentum in Ontario:

- **Complete Streets:** an approach to street design that accommodates all users, regardless of mode, age and ability.
- **Vision Zero:** a global road safety movement that aims to reduce all traffic related serious injuries and fatalities to 0.

Purpose of Research: Rapid policy growth vs. slow implementation

- Complete Streets and Vision Zero policy adoption has grown, while infrastructure implementation has proceeded slowly.
- Safe street advocates care more about infrastructure than policy.

Overview: Research Questions

- 1) What is the state of Complete Streets and Vision Zero Policy in Ontario and how effective has this policy been at putting shovels in the ground?

- 1) What is it that still gets in the way of building Complete Streets and Vision Zero infrastructure when municipalities have, theoretically, all the right policy?

Overview: Findings

Policy Appears Effective

- Abundant policy appears to drive implementation.
 - The apparent effect is small.
- Complete Streets projects tend to be outnumbered by non-Complete Streets projects.
- Difficulties assessing success.

Barriers Identified

1. Policy
2. Cultures of Opposition
3. Staff Coordination
4. Budgeting and Resources
5. Balancing Needs
6. Data

Research Methods

Scan of Policies and Municipal websites

- 46 Ontario municipalities.
- Scanned and coded planning documents.
- Descriptively analyzed with graphs.

Interviews with Municipal Planners and Engineers

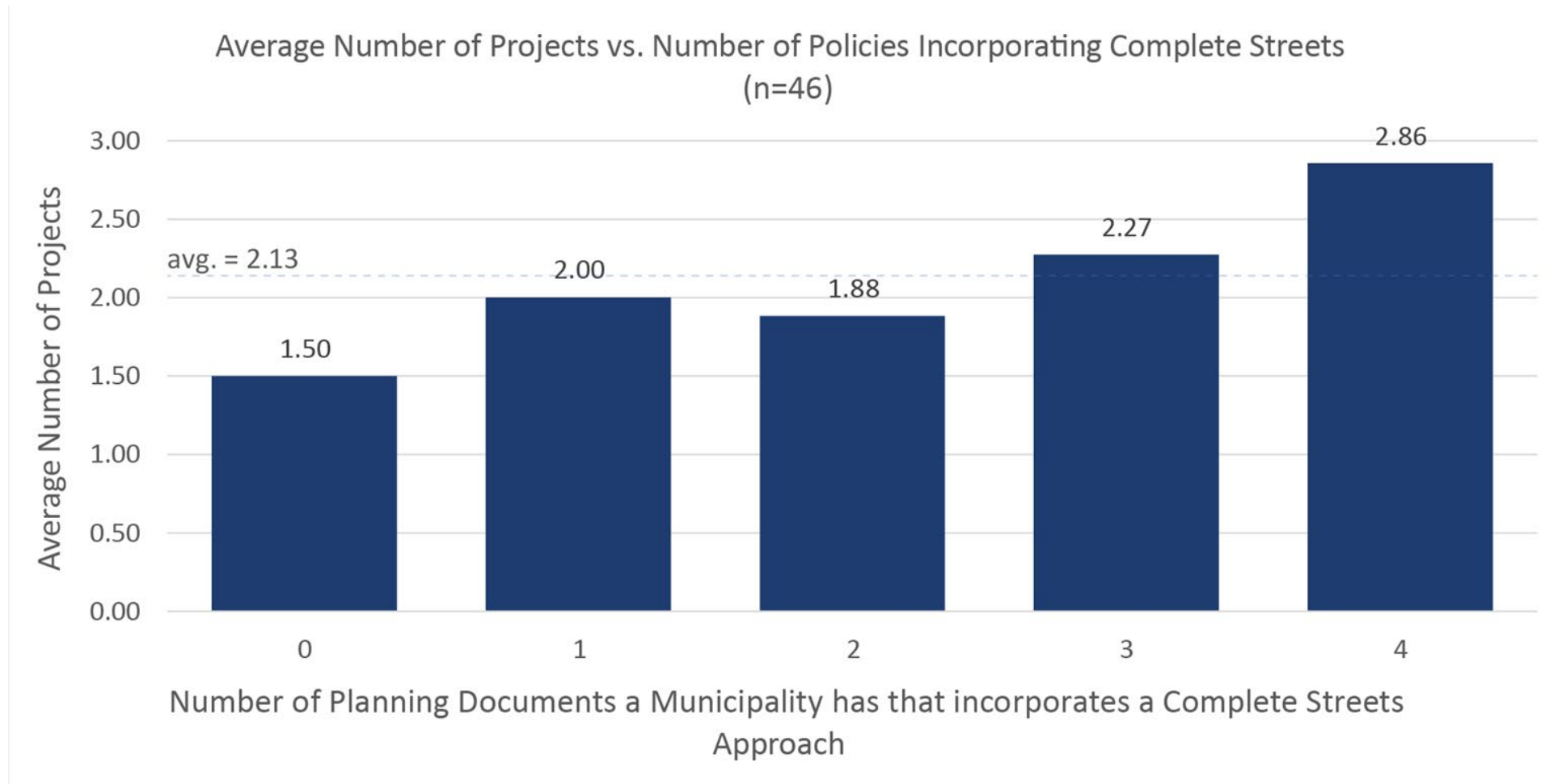
- 7 municipalities: Guelph, Hamilton, London, Markham, Mississauga, Peel Region, and Toronto.
- 6 broad questions about Complete Streets/Vision Zero policies and projects.
- 6 themes identified across interviews.

Policy and Implementation

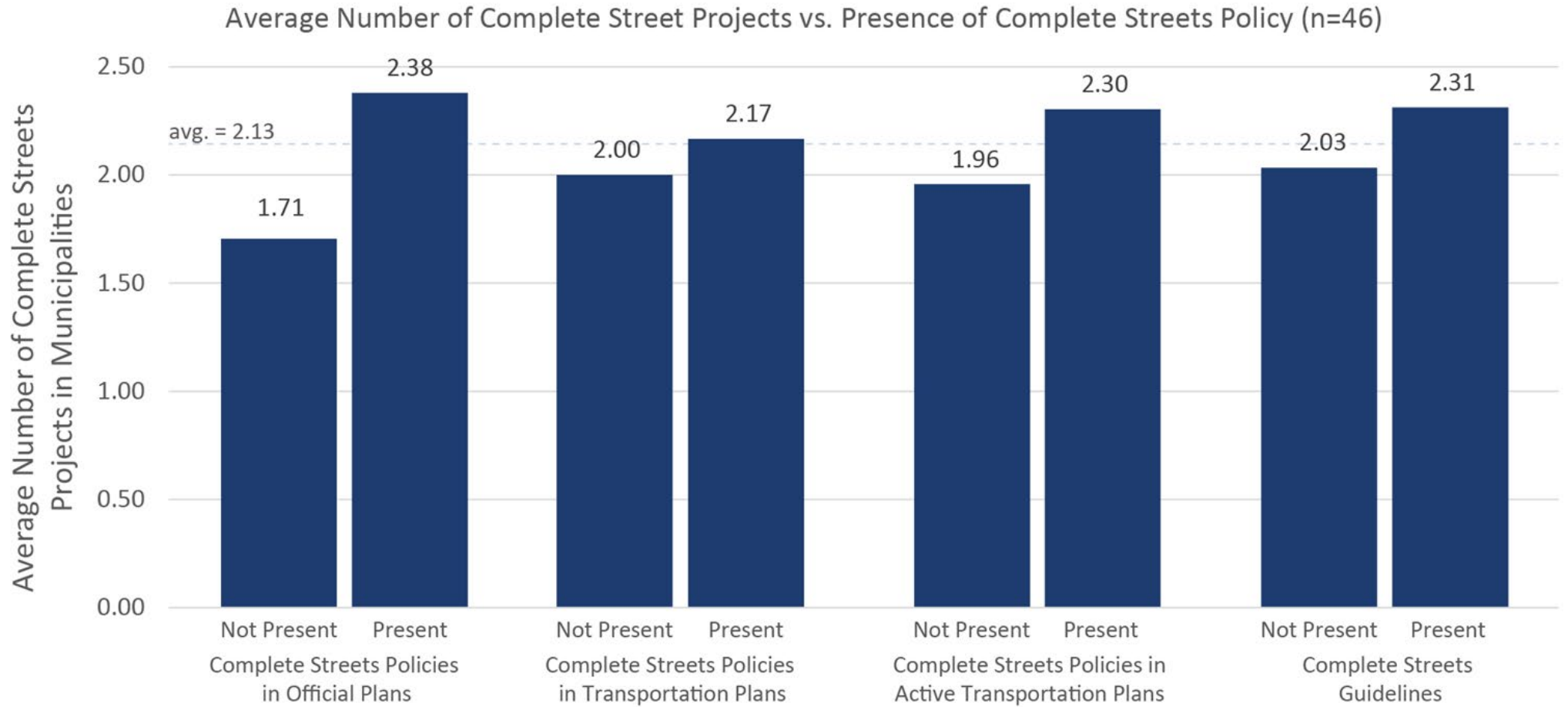
Patterns between policy and implementation

- Planning documents scanned and coded for presence of Complete Streets policies.
- Municipal websites scanned and coded to gauge a municipality's number of Complete Streets Infrastructure projects.
- Vision Zero and Road Safety Strategies scanned and coded.
- Descriptive analysis to recognize patterns.

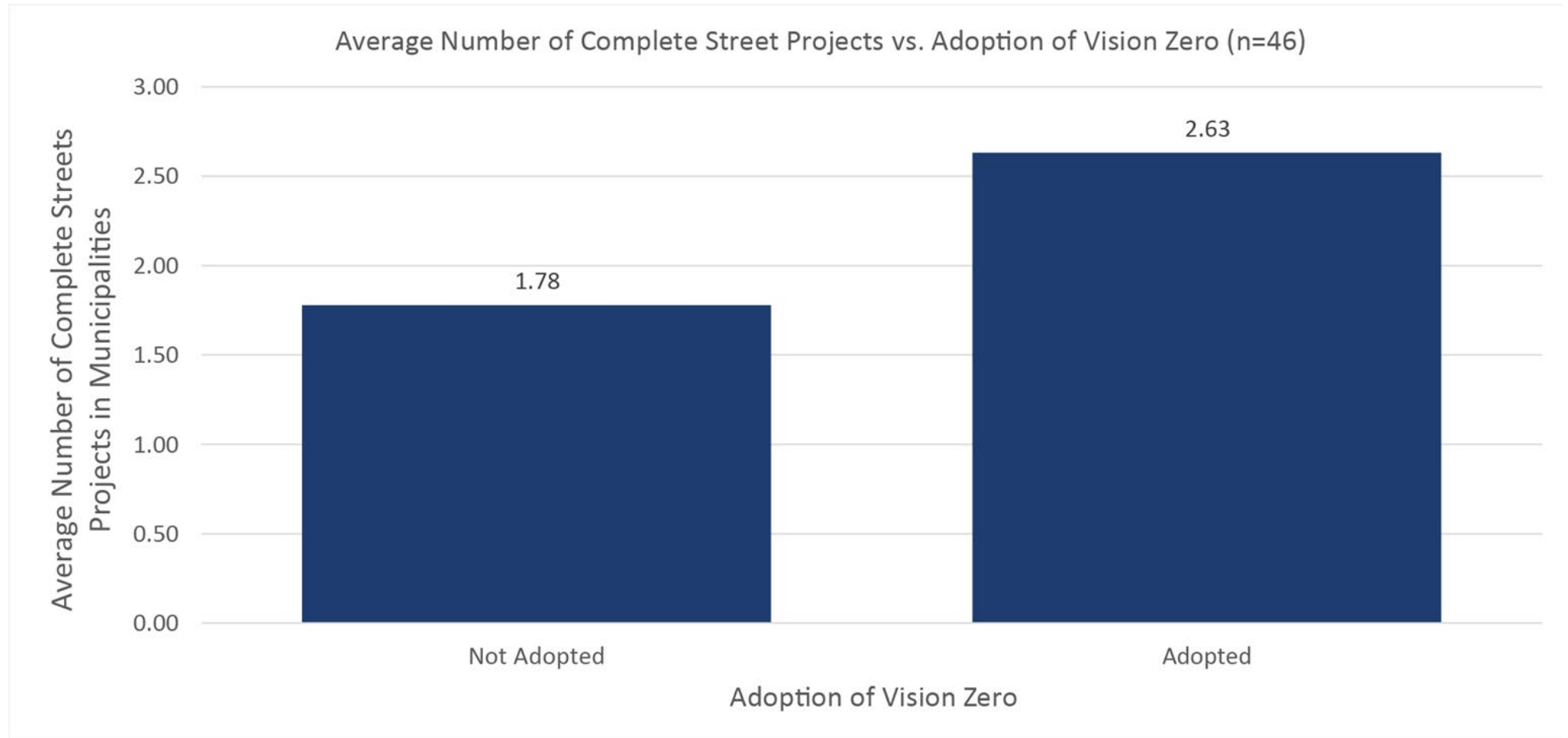
Policy and Implementation



Policy and Implementation



Policy and Implementation



Policy and Implementation

Takeaways

- Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies do appear to be effective.
 - Individually and cumulatively.
- Effect does not appear to be strong.
 - Other factors likely at play.

Other Observations

- Use of Complete Streets and Vision Zero as rationale.
- Complete Streets projects siloed under "Active Transportation Projects".
- Need for more summarizing metrics (e.g., linear kms of new bike facilities installed).

Barriers to Implementation

6 Themes Were Identified in Interviews

1. Policy
2. Cultures of Opposition
3. Staff Coordination
4. Budgeting and Resources
5. Balancing Needs
6. Data

Policy

Insufficient Policy

- High level policies do not provide strong direction.
- No operationalizing details.
 - What does a Complete Street look like?
- Assumption of optimal conditions.

Need for Complete Streets Guidelines

- Complete Street Guidelines facilitate a more efficient process.
 - Operationalizing details.
 - Cross Sections.

Cultures of Opposition

Car Culture

- Street planning and design viewed from auto-centric perspective.
- Persistent reluctance to reallocate car space.

Opposition from Staff, Politicians and Public

- Staff refusal to alter long time practices.
- Vocal minority of residents with oversized influence.

Solutions

- Strong rationales in policy.
- Staff Training.
- More extensive public engagement.

Staff Coordination

Failure to Communicate

- Staff required to notify colleagues of relevant work but sometimes fail to do so.
 - Happens too late or not at all.
- Lack of clarity as to when to notify.
- Insufficient procedure.

Solutions

- Dedicated staff or committee to flag projects.
- Disseminated details from Complete Streets Guidelines.

Budgeting and Resources

Funding sufficient for Infrastructure but lacking elsewhere

- Maintenance costs create catch 22.
 - No bike lanes for the plows. No plows for the bike lanes.
- Difficult to secure funding for planning and designs.

Car-Centrism Balloons Cost of Projects

- Desire to widen road for Complete Streets additions leads to infeasible budgets.

Solutions

- Itemized costing of elements and countermeasures.
- Rationales for components in guidelines.

Balancing Needs

Compromises on Vision

- Reluctance to implement road diets leads to a desire to widen roads.
 - Decisions between Complete Streets Components.
 - Decisions between Vision Zero and Complete Streets.
- Compromises on infrastructure location leads to equity issues.

Solutions

- Stronger rationales in policies and guidelines for all the elements of Complete Streets.
 - Especially needed for road diets.
- More detailed exceptions to Complete Streets Policies.

Data

Inadequate methods

- Systems for analysis and management of data are lacking.
- Lack of human resources to effectively analyze data.

Collection Issues

- COVID posed issues for interpreting Vision Zero accomplishments.
- Lack of demographic data means it is difficult to tell who benefits from road safety countermeasures.

Solutions

- Need for staff to analyze and manage data.
- Need for demographic data.

Barriers to Implementation

Takeaways

- Update policies and guidelines
 - Need for clear direction and strong rationale.
- Reluctance to remove car space from street.
 - Street planners playing at the margins.
 - Increases budgets.
- Streetscaping elements undervalued.
- Better communication among staff.
- Need staff for better data analysis.

Conclusion

Policy and Implementation

- Policy growth has led to acceleration in implementation.
 - But there is still room for better policy.
 - Better direction, more clarity, more flexibility.
- Cultures of opposition and especially the dominance of the automobile are at the root to many of the barriers discussed.
 - Must think beyond policy to address this issue.
- More public information on Complete Streets and Vision Zero projects is needed.

Next Steps

Major Research Project topic:

- Reluctance to implement road diets seems like a fundamental issue.
- Complete Streets and Visions Zero seem to approach road dieting differently.

Research Question:

What is the role of Road Diets in Complete Streets and Vision Zero policy, and what role do Road Diets play in the practice of Complete Streets and Vision Zero planners?

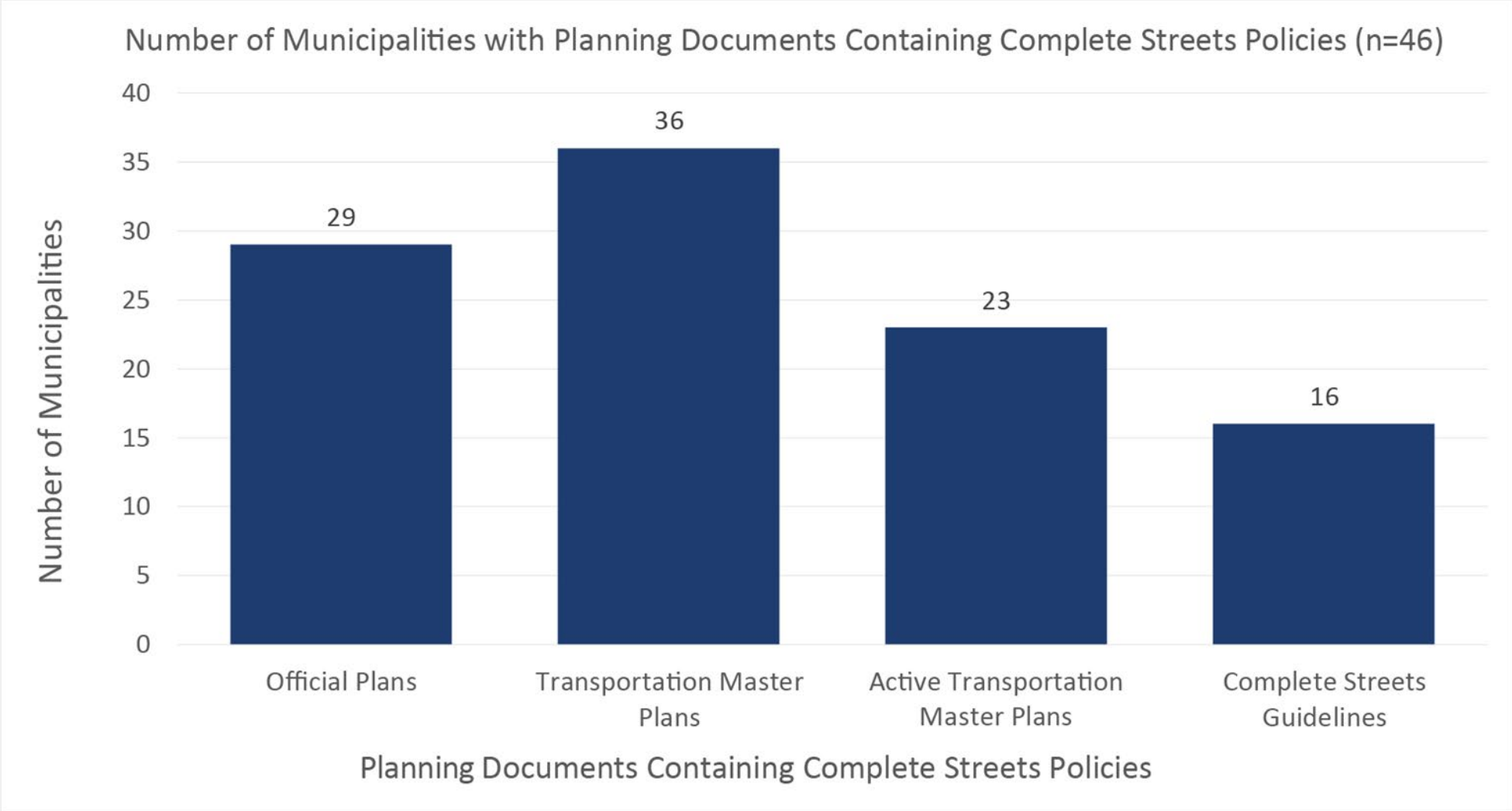
Contact: alex.hanes@torontomu.ca

Thank you!!

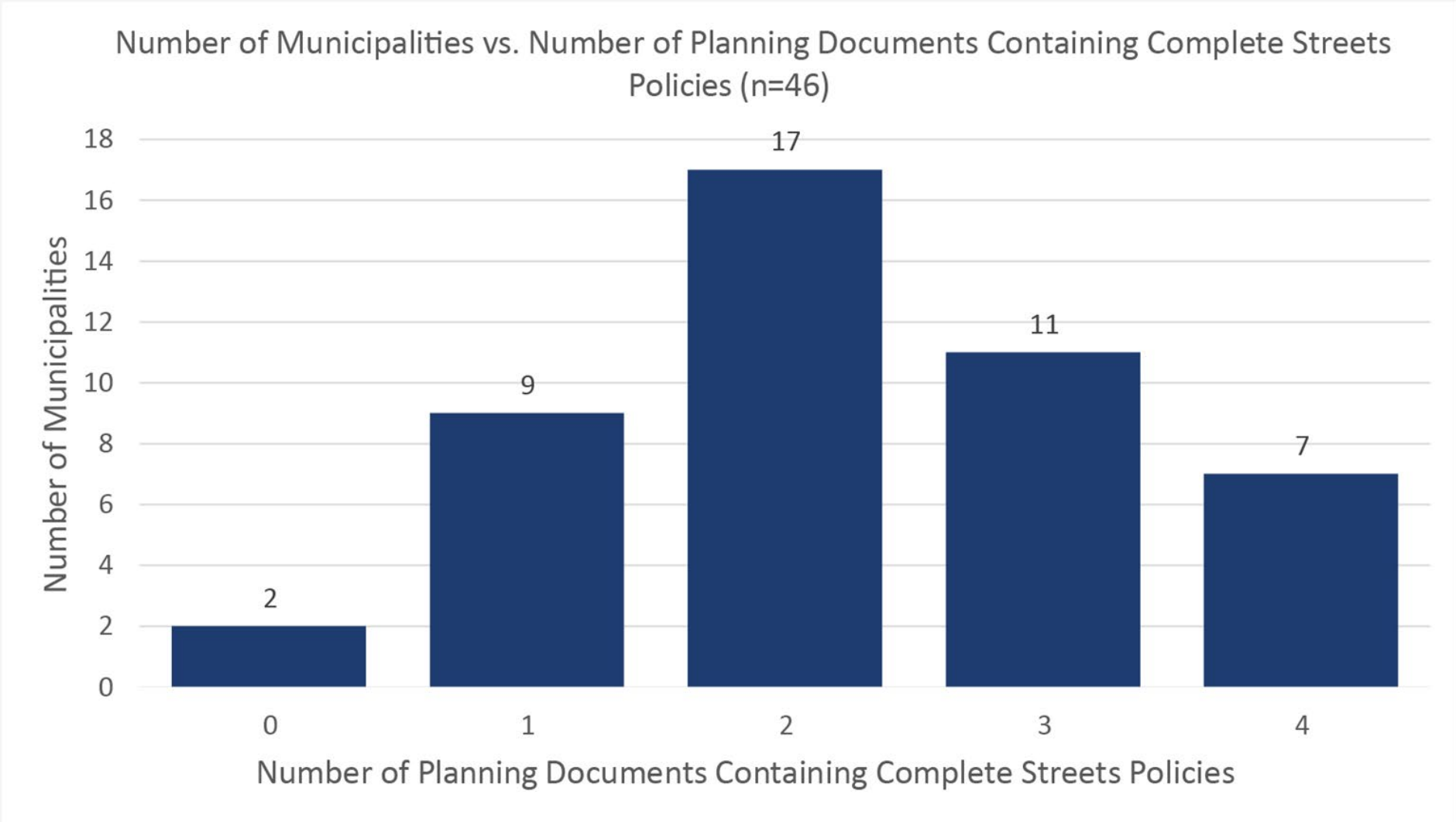


Appendix

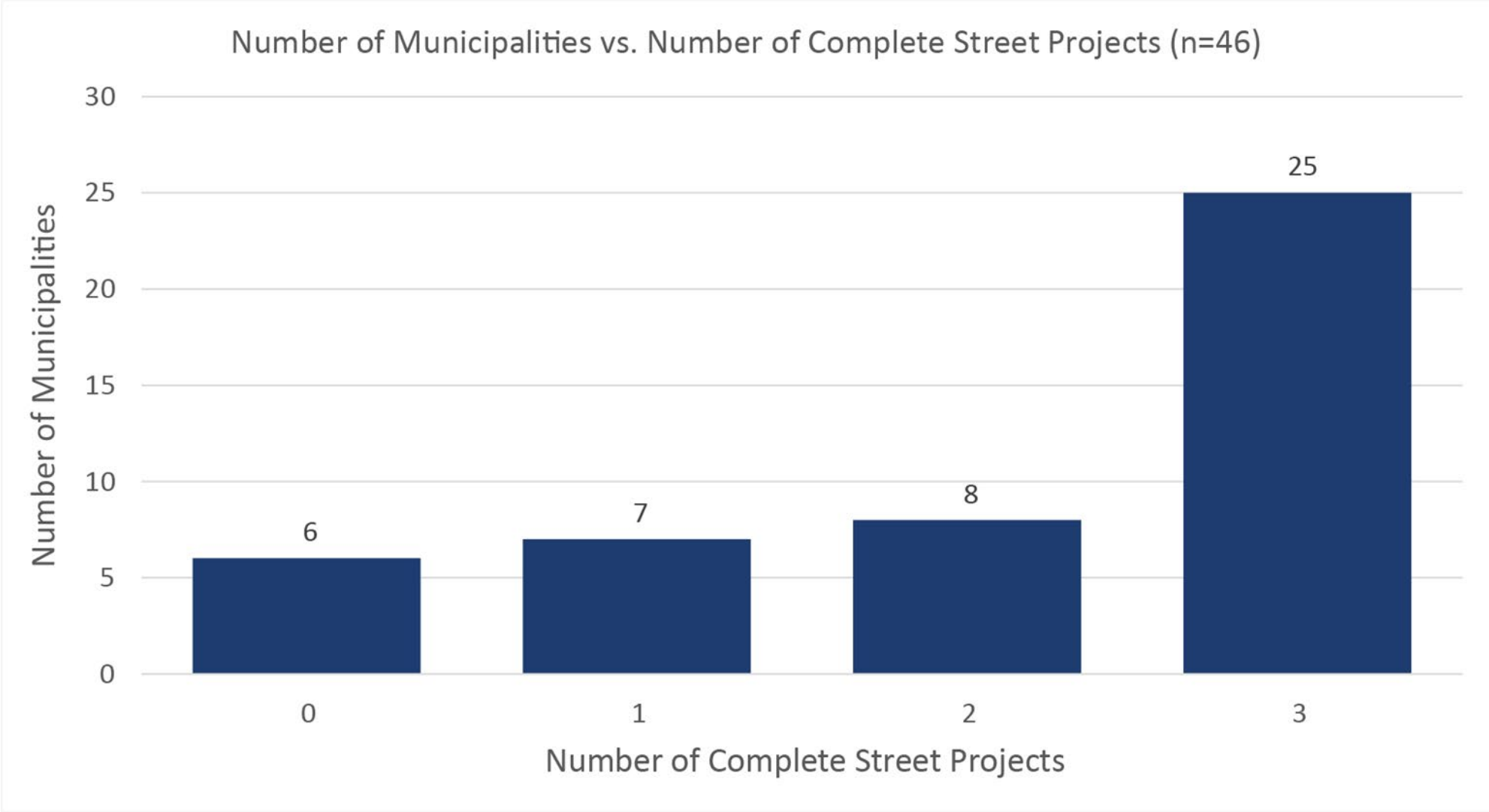
The State of Policy and Infrastructure.



The State of Policy and Infrastructure.



The State of Policy and Infrastructure.



The State of Policy and Infrastructure.

