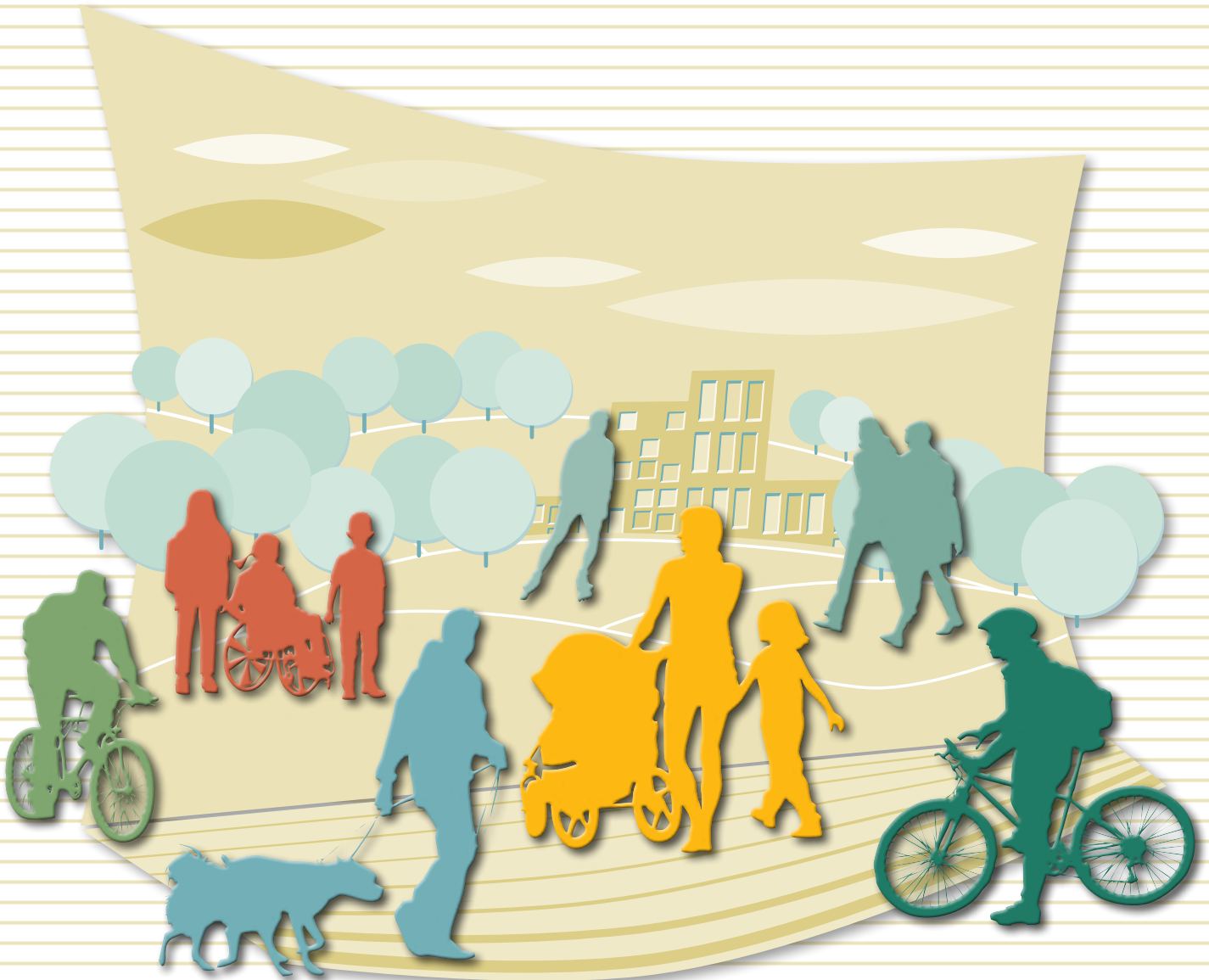


# Canadian Action Plan Inspiration Guide



May 2011  
(Revised March 2016)



[www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca)



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## Introduction

### How to use this guide

This guide was created to help School Travel Planning (STP) Facilitators, Municipal Stakeholder Committees, School STP Committees, and other STP staff and volunteers formulate an Action Plan, one of the most important products of the STP process. After completing the baseline data collection phase of STP, you can start to discuss potential solutions and next steps to address your school community's active transportation barriers thereby beginning to formulate the Action Plan.

The Action Plan Inspiration Guide (APIG) provides a summary of some key programs and initiatives you may choose to feature in your Action Plan. Note that it is not an exhaustive list, but rather a suggestion of tools that can be used, along with examples of their application.

It's important to remember that simply acknowledging and identifying issues is part of the solution – so you're already on your way!

## Let's take action!



## Why People Make the Transportation Choices They Do

### Thinking like a parent/caregiver/driver

The STP pilot in 2008-2009 elicited some interesting background into the transportation choices parents and caregivers make for the trip to and from school. Just over 1500 families in the four pilot provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Nova Scotia) completed and returned their Family Surveys; of these, 42% indicated driving as their usual mode of transportation to school, and notably fewer (35%) chose to travel by car on the way from school. Parents and caregivers gave a variety of reasons during the pilot for driving their children to school: inclement weather was cited by 21% of survey respondents; convenience/time pressures were indicated in 18% of the responses; 17% said they drove their children because they were on their way somewhere else; while 16% did so because the distance from home was too far. Rounding out the list of top reasons for driving were personal safety issues and traffic danger, each at 11%.

From 2010 to 2012 the project *Children's Mobility, Health and Happiness: A Canadian School Travel Planning Model* used Active and Safe Routes to School programming combined with Transportation Demand Management principles to encourage active and sustainable modes of school travel for students, families and staff. Results are detailed in a national summary document and video found online at [www.saferoutestoschool.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/CLASP-2012-National-Results.pdf](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/CLASP-2012-National-Results.pdf).

The project addressed barriers to active travel caused by attitudes and car-dominant design in school neighbourhoods in an effort to reduce the potential health risk to children at over 120 schools spread across every province and territory in Canada.

A study by the University of Toronto's BEAT project (Built Environment and Active Transport) investigated the parental decision-making process for the trip to and from school. Researchers found that parents and caregivers tend to choose the mode that is quickest and easiest, reiterating the influence of convenience, and that the decision-making process is two-fold, as outlined in the diagram on the next page.

These responses give us a good idea of the kinds of Action Plan items that could potentially have the biggest impact on reducing the number of students being driven to and from school. Initiatives that aim to counteract the



convenience/time aspect of the trip to school can make a difference – some parents and caregivers may be surprised to learn that the time it takes to walk or cycle to school is much less than they anticipated. Alternatively, one could focus on balancing the inconvenience of walking or wheeling (perceived or otherwise) with the benefits of choosing active transportation over driving (such as more quality time together on the walk to school, for instance). These types of approaches could similarly be used to show why AT could be a good option even if the parent or caregiver is passing by the school on their way somewhere else. These ideas will be discussed further on in this guide.

Initiatives that aim to show that students can walk and wheel safely in inclement weather, and maybe even have fun while doing it, stand to have a positive effect. As such, in this guide you'll find more information about Winter Walk Days and other ideas for all-weather active school travel.

The distance issue can be a tough one to tackle; convincing drivers to abandon their car when they live a considerable distance from the school can oftentimes be a tough sell. However, this barrier is sometimes an issue of perception – in the 2009 STP pilot, 64.1% of respondents lived 3 kilometres or less from the school, a distance that most elementary-aged children are capable of walking or cycling. If parents or caregivers are not comfortable with allowing their children to walk or wheel the full distance from their home to the school, the students could be dropped off some distance away from the school to walk the remainder of the way. More information on these types of initiatives can be found in the *Specific Actions* section on page 6.

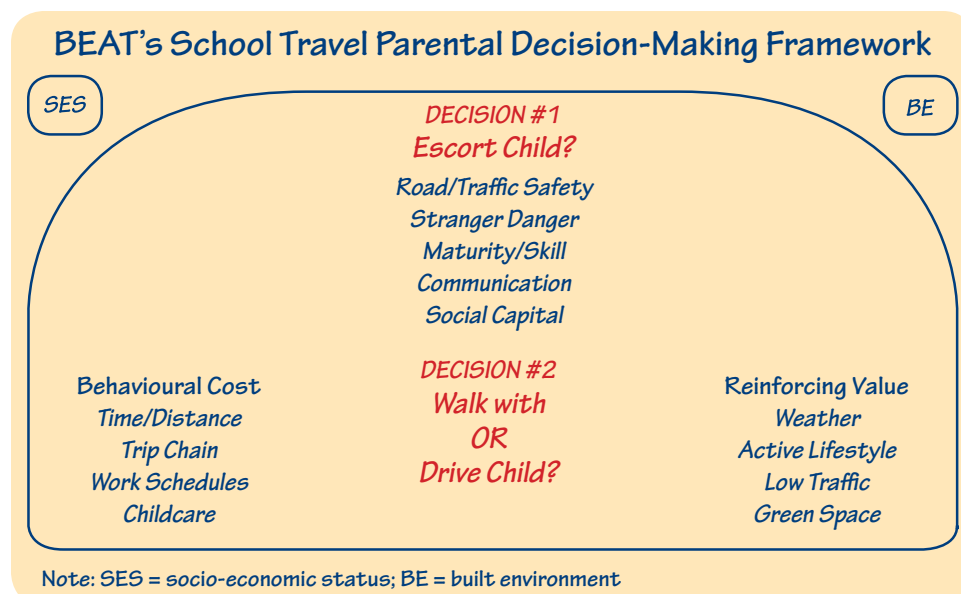
Personal safety issues and traffic danger both contribute to the security and well-being of students on their journey to school. Programs like the Walking School Bus, Walking Buddies, the Pace Car Program, and initiatives that focus on creating and/or identifying safe routes help bring the community together to address these types of safety issues more cohesively.

It's important to remember that you're unlikely to get all drivers to start using AT for the trip to school. However, by tailoring your Action Plan initiatives to help address some of the main reasons why parents and caregivers prefer to drive their children to school, you can have an impact.

Follow-up data reported by families in the 2009 STP pilot indicated that 13% chose to drive less after the program was initiated, and 14% of families reported that traffic outside of the school had decreased.

Of course, in order to foster a change in behaviour, it's

important to consider not only what your program does, but how it does it. Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) provides a valuable means of designing programs to positively affect the transportation choices that students, parents and caregivers make. An introduction to CBSM and its application to STP can be found in Appendix 1: Community-Based Social Marketing and School Travel Planning.





## Common Barriers to Active Transportation

### Top-cited barriers

Despite the diversity in STP school communities involved in the 2009 STP pilot, school route concerns listed by parents and caregivers have some distinct similarities. The top five cited barriers were:

1. Fast cars/busy road/cannot cross easily
2. Unsafe drivers (i.e. ignoring signs, taking u-turns, failing to stop at crosswalks, etc.)
3. Crosswalk or crosswalk upgrades needed (such as repainting lines or improving lighting)
4. Sidewalks absent, in poor condition, or too near the road
5. Parked/stopped cars block traffic and/or sidewalks

Ironically, many of these barriers spur parents and caregivers to think that their child would be safer if he or she was driven to school, creating a vehicular snowball effect – the more cars on the road, the more parents and caregivers will drive their children, which adds more cars to the road, and so the cycle continues. These issues highlight the need to educate the school community on the many benefits of getting out of their cars and into active travel.

### Other issues

The 2009 pilot unearthed some relatively unique barriers to active travel, some of which required “out of the box” interventions. In Nova Scotia, parents and caregivers in one neighbourhood were hesitant to allow their children to walk or cycle to school in the fall and winter months because it was often dark by the time they headed home and one of the key intersections was missing a street light. The local councillor brought this obvious safety issue up to Municipal Council, and within weeks, a light was installed. Without STP, this issue may not have been discovered and resolved so expediently.

#### *Did You Know...*

*... 40% of parents and caregivers indicate they would allow their children to walk if they were not alone\*.*

*\*according to 2008 baseline Family Survey summary*

At another school located on a secondary highway, it was discovered through survey comments that a passing lane existed within the school zone. After a quick phone call to the Department of Transportation to bring this issue to their attention, the passing lane was painted over only days later – a simple fix that resulted in a big safety boost. The expertise and resources of the Municipal Stakeholder Committee can provide great help for these types of issues.

Other inconvenient and unpleasant route features may have similarly quick fixes, or may simply require some innovative thinking. One respondent during the 2009 pilot cited “falling trees/tree limbs” as an issue along their preferred route, which could possibly be resolved with a simple call to the municipality’s maintenance department. Some school communities have found that pathway blockages and visibility issues caused by overgrown trees and shrubs can be combated quickly and easily, once they are drawn to the right person’s attention. Other issues, such as unsightly garbage along a route could be tackled with a combination of group effort and ingenuity: consider organizing a community pick-up, with prizes going to the individual or group that picks up the most bags of trash! Not only will this type of activity help solve the problem, it can also help to increase individuals’ sense of connection to and caring for their community.

Whatever the travel issues reported in your Family Surveys, you and your STP committees will want to design an Action Plan that best suits each school community’s unique situation. While it makes sense to put the most focus on those barriers that are affecting the most people, don’t forget to look into some of the less-reported problems that could be relatively quick, simple – and even fun – to address, and take advantage of resolution opportunities that can bring the community together.

## Effective Interventions

### The “big three”

Just as we’ve seen a pattern emerge with the barriers to AT faced by schools across the country, so too is there a trend in the type of STP Action Plan interventions that parents and caregivers feel have had the greatest impact to date. It’s a good idea to consider the types of interventions that parents and caregivers have been especially interested in so far.

### 1. Safety education

24% of 2009 survey respondents rated this activity highly. There are Canadian initiatives that aim to teach children and youth the skills they need to walk, cycle, skateboard and in-line skate safely and with confidence.



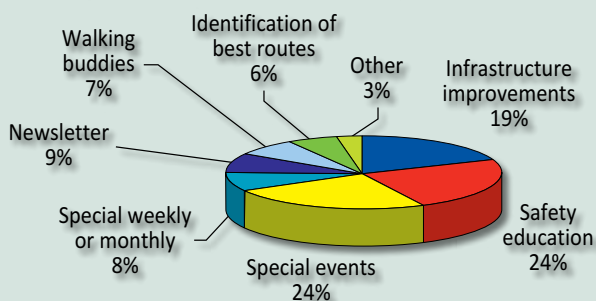
### 2. Special events

Special events were also perceived to be effective motivators of change, underlining the importance of organized initiatives such as *IWALK, Walk or Wheel on Wednesdays, We Often Walk (or Wheel)* – a.k.a. *WOW* – and other events that bring students, their families, and the school community together to give active transportation a try.

### 3. Infrastructure improvements

Things like sidewalk construction or upgrades, increased cycling infrastructure, and installation and maintenance of easily-visible and user-friendly crosswalks can go far to encourage the use of active transportation modes more often. Many of these types of initiatives often require a longer-term time commitment to fully bring them into being, but they are an important part of most Action Plans.

### Q19: Most Effective STP Activities



*The most effective STP activities, according to 2009 Family Survey results*

While Family Survey results tell us about common active school travel barriers and effective interventions, they also shed light on what parents and caregivers feel most needs to change in order for them to allow their children to walk or wheel. This data can give us a better idea of what can be done to make a real difference in the way students travel to and from school.

### Influencing change

The Family Survey includes questions that aim to get more information about what could be done to get students who are usually driven out of their family cars. Where 2009 pilot survey respondents answered the question “*I would allow my child to walk/cycle if...*,” responses were quite similar for both walking and cycling. The top-cited answers are below.

#### 1. Not walking/cycling alone

Family Survey results indicate that 40% of parents and caregivers who do not usually allow their children to commute to school actively would allow their child to walk to school if they did not walk alone; 33% said the same about letting their child to cycle to school. Clearly, initiatives that address the issue of walking/cycling alone – such as the Walking School Bus and Walking Buddies programs – have the potential for big impact on the number of students whose parents allow them to use active transportation. In fact, 22% of parents and caregivers who reported driving less in the Follow-Up Family Survey identified Walking Buddies initiatives and Walk to School Days as a highly effective STP activities.

#### 2. Reduced traffic dangers and safer routes

In order to allow their children to walk to school, 22% of parents and caregivers stated that traffic barriers would need to be reduced, and 25% said decreasing these dangers would make them more comfortable with allowing their child to cycle. Initiatives such as infrastructure improvements that support active transportation, programs that teach and promote more careful and courteous driving habits, and increased active transportation safety education to help teach students how to safely and confidently walk or wheel are therefore key.

Safe Routes Mapping can be used to identify safer travel routes. Outlining the best routes to school for students and parents/caregivers can help them discover how to avoid areas of concern and increase their enjoyment and safety on the trip to



school. Evidence supports this: 26% of those who reported driving less in their follow-up rated route identification high on the list of effective STP interventions.

## Specific Actions

Developing an Action Plan can feel like a daunting task – planning for change in the short-, medium- and long-term requires careful consideration of the programs and initiatives that would best fit each individual school community. Remember that the Action Plan – and in fact the entire School Travel Plan – is meant to be a living document that changes as the STP process moves forward: ideas that were initially included might be removed if they are not showing success; new ideas might be developed and added as inspiration strikes or as the school community's reality changes. The interventions described below are meant to help get your creative juices flowing so you can develop an exciting Action Plan – one that will evolve and change as the STP process continues in the years to come.

**SUPER Road Cycle Safety**  
**U**se your hand signals when turning, turning down an alleyway, and at the end of the street. Signal in advance of the turn.  
**U**se your hand signals when turning, turning down an alleyway, and at the end of the street. Signal in advance of the turn.  
**U**se your hand signals when turning, turning down an alleyway, and at the end of the street. Signal in advance of the turn.  
**U**se your hand signals when turning, turning down an alleyway, and at the end of the street. Signal in advance of the turn.

**Why Walk or Bike to School?**  
**BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS**  
**BEING ACTIVE BUILDS HEALTHY BONES AND MUSCLES.** Walking or biking to school is not only a great way to be healthy and keep moving but has also been shown to increase attention and grades at school.  
**TIME SPENT WALKING TOGETHER** allows families and friends to connect without stressful distractions. It's a time to connect, play or share stories about each other's day.  
**KNOWS YOUR COMMUNITY.** Walking and cycling is a great way to meet your neighbours. People feel safer when they know other people in their community.  
**CARE FOR OUR EARTH**  
**VEHICLE EMISSIONS** are a significant Canadian source of greenhouse gas emissions. Every vehicle that is replaced by walking reduces our contribution to climate change.  
**TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SAFE, ACTIVE TRIPS TO SCHOOL VISIT** [www.123bc.ca](http://www.123bc.ca)  
**hastec.org**  
**saferoutestoschool.ca**

**Best Routes to School**  
**BROOKLYN ELEMENTARY**

Now that you know more about some of the common concerns and countermeasures identified in Canada's STP program, you can use this larger picture to help you decide which STP initiatives could be most effective for your school. The following section is meant to provide you with a bit of inspiration about the kinds of activities you could consider in your Action Plan.

## Walk the Talk: Special walking events and campaigns

Special walking events and campaigns have formed the backbone of many Active & Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) programs for years. One-off events, such as Walk to School Day, and semi-regular initiatives, such as monthly Walk on Wednesdays, can be an effective first step towards getting people turned on to the idea of walking or wheeling to school.

### Where Do I Go For More Info?

Information on International Walk to School can be found on the IWALK website at [www.iwalktoschool.org](http://www.iwalktoschool.org), or on Green Communities Canada's Active & Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) website at [www.saferoutestoschool.ca/international-walk-to-school-month](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/international-walk-to-school-month).

Keep updated on the latest IWALK and other campaign news by subscribing to the Canada Walks newsletter at [canadawalks.ca/news](http://canadawalks.ca/news).

More information about and examples of Walking (or Wheeling) Wednesdays and other walking and wheeling initiatives can also be found on the Green Communities Canada ASRTS website: [www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca).

**Active & Safe ROUTES TO SCHOOL**  
 Home Programs Who's Involved Resources Contact About Research and Results  
 Active & Safe Routes to School is a national movement dedicated to children's mobility, health, and happiness.  
 English Français

**I let my kids walk to school**

**Working to overcome barriers to children's active school travel by mobilizing children and families one step at a time.**  
 Research tells us that children want to walk and bike  
 Children know that using active transportation to and from school is part of a healthy lifestyle. It's good for the environment and it makes them feel happier. A recent Ontario study indicated that a whopping 42% of children are driven to school. Read more research.  
**Why don't more children travel actively to school?**

**"Most mornings, my daughters and I walk to their school. It is half a mile from our house. Twelve hundred and fifty footsteps. It is often my favourite 15 minutes of the day."**  
 Dan Rubenstein from Born to Walk: The Transformative Power of a Pedestrian Act.

**"My kids LOVE walking to school...it doesn't take much encouragement to get kids out and active; that's their natural state...so walking to school is not a big challenge..."**  
 Alana Bresson, Dominion, NS

**"In transport and land-use planning, the needs of children and youth should receive as much priority as the needs of people of other ages and the requirements of business."**  
 Guideline #9: Child and Youth Friendly Land Use and Transportation Planning Guidelines



In fact, **International Walk to School Month (IWALK)** was developed to do just that. First launched in Chicago in 1998 and then spreading internationally in 1999-2000, IWALK provides a fun, inclusive way for people to join others from their community and around the globe as they practice using active transportation for the school run, even for just one day. Hopefully, once they've tried it, students and their families will realize the benefits of walking and wheeling to school and will choose to use active transportation more often.



Schools that participate in IWALK have the option of taking part for only one day, a week, or the entire month, and each school community chooses its own theme: health, safety, the environment, or any other motivation that is important to them. Other than the dates (Walk to School Month falls in October, with Walk to School Week being the first full week of that month), the IWALK initiative is completely flexible and limited only by the imagination of each participating school.

Many ASRTS programs have developed directed initiatives that schools can use to promote active school travel beyond IWALK. One common tactic is to designate one day each week (or each month), during which walking and wheeling is especially encouraged, such as Walking (or Wheeling) Wednesdays.

Other than a few suggested components, there is no hard and fast rule for what a designated walking or wheeling day should look like. Advertising the initiative well, keeping track of how many students participate, and providing incentives for those who participate (such as a special privilege or award) can increase success, but the specifics are up to the participating school.

The School STP Committee may choose another day of the week, such as "Trekking Tuesday" or "Freedom Friday." They might keep track of the number of kilometres each student walks, or perhaps tally the distance walked by each

classroom or the entire school. They could pick an overall theme for the initiative, or they may decide to change the focus each week or each month. Whatever they choose, keeping the program fun and engaging will help ensure that students want to participate.

To help encourage greater participation in AT, Ontario has launched the **iWalk-iWheel** club in 2015 as outlined in the Community Case Study on page 21.

Walking or wheeling the entire distance from home to school is often not a feasible option for individuals who are bussed or those who have mobility challenges. In such cases, encouraging walking or wheeling for a portion of the trip allows these students to be involved and still affords them the benefits of using active transportation.

**Park & Walk a Block or Two** initiatives, outlined in the Community Case Study section, encourage families who drive to school to park a distance away and actively commute the rest of the way. Schools can work with the school board and municipality to identify safe drop-off zones for students who arrive by personal vehicle. Students can then continue on their own or with an organized Walking School Bus to the school grounds. By decreasing the distance that a student is driven, Walk a Block and Park and Stride programs can help decrease congestion in front of the school, making the school community safer and less hectic during drop-off and pick-up times.

Bussed students may or may not be able to participate in Walk a Block or Park and Stride initiatives – some school boards will not allow students to be dropped off anywhere except the school grounds. As promoted through the WOW program, these students can still take part in walking and wheeling initiatives through intentional walks at recess, lunch or before and after school.

As mentioned, incentives can go a long way to encourage active school travel, and they needn't be expensive or elaborate to make a real change. In a following Community Case Study, you'll find out more about how a simple incentive elicited big change for some elementary schools in Surrey, BC.

### *Who's Liable?*

*When planning special walking initiatives you might come face to face with concerns about liability and risk.*

*Municipal Risk Services Ltd. examined these concerns and put fears to rest. You can download the report **Risk Management and Active School Travel**, in the School Travel Planning Toolkit at [www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca).*

## Building Infrastructure, Building Communities

### Changes to encourage walking and wheeling

As mentioned, the condition of active transportation infrastructure can have a big impact on the rates of walking and wheeling in a community – infrastructure issues account for two of the top five barriers cited on STP surveys. Unsafe or non-existent crosswalks, poorly designed or missing sidewalks and sub-standard cycling routes can all contribute to pedestrians’ and cyclists’ personal risk and feelings of insecurity.

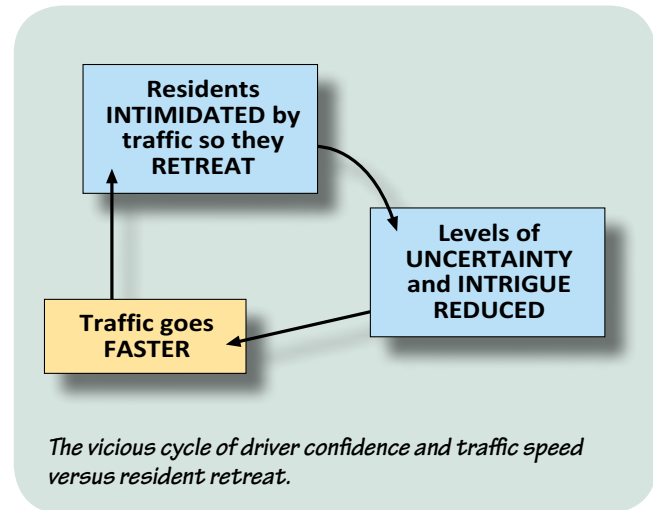
Infrastructure development and upgrading are costly items, and consequently it can take some time for improvements to be made – if infrastructure-related improvements are a part of the Action Plan, you may have to be prepared to wait for significant change. Major improvements can, however, happen more quickly if the key players are on board with STP and the timing is right. Such was the case in Vernon, BC, where big changes were orchestrated in a short period of time, as described in the Community Case Study on page 23.

While poor AT infrastructure can have a big influence on the behaviour of pedestrians and cyclists, poor road design can also affect drivers. Wider streets, especially those without sidewalks and with sparse vegetation, can make a residential street feel less like a friendly, walkable neighbourhood and more like a thoroughfare. The resulting traffic issues make residents less likely to use their streets for active transportation, which also gives drivers “permission” to drive more quickly, creating a snowball effect<sub>2</sub>.



Excessive road signs can be confusing – even dangerous – for road users

David Engwicht of Creative Communities International calls this phenomenon “psychological retreat,” suggesting that the counter to this effect lies in intrigue and uncertainty: creating vibrant, engaging communities with a distinct human presence to help tame traffic. Bringing people out of their houses and onto the street brings a sense of the unexpected to the neighbourhood, and thus makes drivers slow down – toys in a front yard, for example, signal that children are playing in the area and need to be considered.



Getting the community back out and about in the neighbourhood by congregating on sidewalks and street corners as they walk to school and other destinations helps create a sense of uncertainty and perhaps a little bit of intrigue in drivers, which can slow traffic down. Each resident who spends time on the streets as a pedestrian is one more person who is out of their car and participating in their community. By organizing walking and cycling groups (such as Walking and Cycling School Buses, discussed later in this guide) and holding school events (such as STP launches) outside, STP Committees can help increase visible street activity and contribute to the process of reclaiming the road.

An overabundance of signs can impact not only the aesthetic of the street, but can also add to the confusion of drivers<sub>3</sub>. In a world filled with signs telling us where or where not to turn, when to stop, and how fast to go, the amount of information being relayed to drivers can be staggering, and sometimes even disorienting.

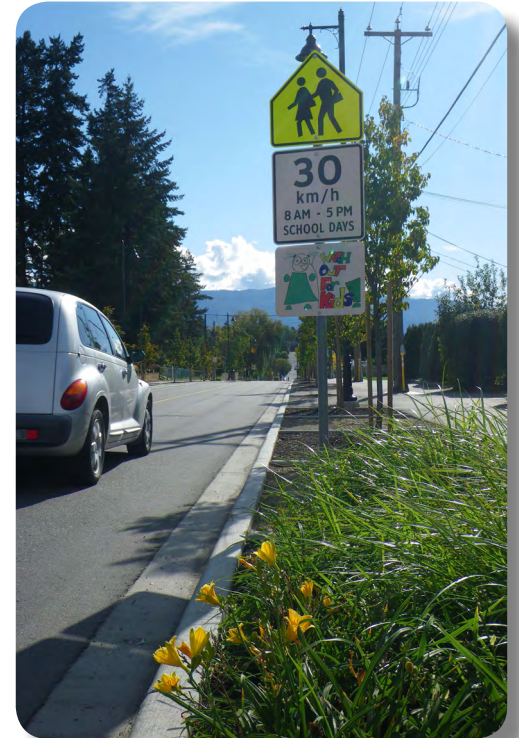
## Thinking Outside the Box

*The Child- and Youth-Friendly Land-Use and Transportation Planning Guidelines are an invaluable tool for any professional planner or transportation expert looking to achieve transportation and land-use arrangements that meet the needs of children and youth — and everyone else. The Guidelines have been adapted for each of Canada's ten provinces, as well as for rural communities. The guidelines for Ontario are available at [http://richardgilbert.ca/Files/2005/Guidelines,%20Ontario%20\(Web\).pdf](http://richardgilbert.ca/Files/2005/Guidelines,%20Ontario%20(Web).pdf)*

Research shows that excessive signage can actually contribute to increased danger on roads, lulling drivers into a false sense of security that makes them more likely to take risks. In short, by removing all clutter, drivers will notice people on the streets and other notable landscape features, which will create an uncertainty that causes drivers to slow down. City planners in the Netherlands have employed this concept since the '70s with great success<sup>5</sup>. Many communities in Europe are starting to put the theory into practice. For example, removing the white lines on some roads in the English county of Wiltshire has resulted in a 10% reduction in speed. Other areas in the UK that removed the white lines have boasted a 35% decrease in vehicle-related casualties.



*Street art in Toronto, Ontario*



*Winning sign designs were chosen from the original artwork submitted by students in Vernon, BC (one is shown installed here)*

Traditional road signage has one other community-destroying flaw: it can be ugly. Nothing ruins a picturesque neighbourhood like a cluster of unsightly signs peppered throughout. With this in mind, transportation and planning staff members in Vernon, BC are turning the idea of sign design on its head, using children's art on existing school zone signage as a visual reminder of the need to slow down for children's sake.

An STP school in Winnipeg, Manitoba has also found an innovative way to ask drivers to slow down without relying on traditional signage around the school grounds. Instead, students have teamed up with local organizations to create colourful street art with a message; read more about it in the Community Case Study on page 24.

Innovation doesn't have to be restricted to sign and street design. Employing creativity in the development of everyday structures can help jazz up the streetscape and make it more attractive to all road users. Many communities have used street art displays to make an area more appealing and encourage pedestrian traffic.



*This Hubbards Farmers' Market bike rack was constructed from salvaged playground equipment*

**Creative infrastructure design** can also help increase the attractiveness of a space. Park benches and bike racks needn't be traditional to be functional, and a little bit of ingenuity can have added benefits. When the village of Hubbards, Nova Scotia was looking to install bike racks at their farmers' market, community members went beyond the conventional to integrate a piece of local history into the design. They salvaged playground equipment from a local elementary school that was closed down in the mid-90s to build a colourful bike rack. The rack received "priority parking" placement near the entrance to the market where it is prominently visible to all who come and go.

Considering AT infrastructure and the impacts of other elements of street design is an important component of any Action Plan. Thinking ahead – and outside of the box – can help ensure that your community's streetscapes are attractive and welcome to all road users.

### *Where Do I Go For More Info?*

Further information on Living Streets can be found at [www.best.bc.ca](http://www.best.bc.ca) and at [www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk).

### *Did You Know...*

... the Canada Safety Council's "Elmer the Safety Elephant" loves safe travels. His website features an interactive safety village, printable active transportation colouring pages and games, and much more. Check Elmer out at [www.elmer.ca](http://www.elmer.ca).

## Knowledge is Power

### Active Transportation Safety Education

Any School Travel Planning program would be remiss to not include some component of active transportation (AT) safety education. AT safety education can help children, youth and parents become more confident users of active transportation, which could potentially increase participation. It also helps to ensure that children and youth engaging in AT are doing so in the safest and smartest manner possible.

AT safety education initiatives come in all shapes and sizes. They can range from bike rodeos offered by local police to multi-day courses taught by accredited national organizations. While any form of education is good, here are a few things we know can increase the effectiveness of an AT education campaign<sub>6</sub>:

1. Practical, hands-on experience helps to solidify positive behaviours
2. Multi-day programs are preferable over single-session skills training
3. Repeated opportunities to view and display proper skills and behaviours can increase retention
4. Keeping a low ratio of participants-to-instructors can increase effectiveness
5. Making the program fun can help keep participants interested and engaged

Any internet search for AT safety education programs will turn up a wealth of options from around the world. There are a few excellent national initiatives, however, that integrate a more Canadian perspective.

Alberta's Department of Transportation provides safety education and links to a variety of resources about being "Street Safe" for children and youth, educators, and the community as a whole. It includes resources for safe walking, cycling, in-line skating, skateboarding, and bussing.

While teaching AT safety skills over a longer period of time and across multiple sessions is ideal, some schools or STP champions simply will not have the time or resources to commit to an extended campaign. In these cases, shorter, less-detailed initiatives can be coordinated that will allow

students to learn basic AT safety skills that they can then build on individually or with their families.

Another way to deal with limited parental and/or school staff resources when planning an AT safety education campaign is to empower the students to plan and implement an initiative themselves. This method is at the core of BC's Cool Routes to School program, which is the focus of a Community Case Study on page 26.

In some cases, hands-on safety education may not be an option. While experiential education is definitely preferred, there are electronic educational resources that can be helpful. For example, BC's former Autoplan Broker Road Safety Program and the now-defunct Way to Go! School Program produced the *Bike Safe – Walk Smart* DVD to teach pedestrian and cycling safety in the classroom. Aimed at students in kindergarten to grade 7, the DVD illustrates walking and cycling dos and don'ts, and comes with an accompanying teaching guide that includes follow-up activities that can be offered in or outside of the classroom.

Online resources and games can offer fun options for teaching children and youth how to walk and ride safely. Crucial Crew is an interactive cycling game where players answer a series of safety-related questions as they work their way through cycling scenarios. The game shows the consequences of incorrect decisions and praises correct ones. (Note that this resource was developed in the UK and therefore is not in Canadian context.)

Whatever the medium, parents and caregivers list AT safety education as one of the most effective STP interventions – indeed; it is an integral component of many STP Action Plans.



*Teaching on-road bike skills as part of the process to create a student "Bike Pool" for school travel in BC*

### *Where Do I Go For More Info?*

Street Safe in Alberta

[www.saferoads.com/children/children-and-teens.html](http://www.saferoads.com/children/children-and-teens.html)

Those in BC can order ICBC's safety resources by visiting [www.icbc.com/road-safety/teaching](http://www.icbc.com/road-safety/teaching).

Individuals from other provinces/territories can order the Bike Safe - Walk Smart DVD by contacting Green Communities Canada. For information see [www.saferoutestoschool.ca/steps-to-success-the-5-es/](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/steps-to-success-the-5-es/).

Try out the Crucial Crew game yourself at

[www.crucial-crew.org/interactive-safety-game/cycling-safety.cfm](http://www.crucial-crew.org/interactive-safety-game/cycling-safety.cfm).

## Taking It to the Streets

### Best Routes to School Mapping

An important component of any safe and active trip to school is, of course, a safe route. Because the School Travel Planning Family Survey asks families to map out the route(s) they take to and from school along with issues they encounter along the way, STP Facilitators and stakeholders have some invaluable information at their fingertips to help determine the streets and pathways in the school neighbourhood comprise the best routes to school as well as the ones that need some work.

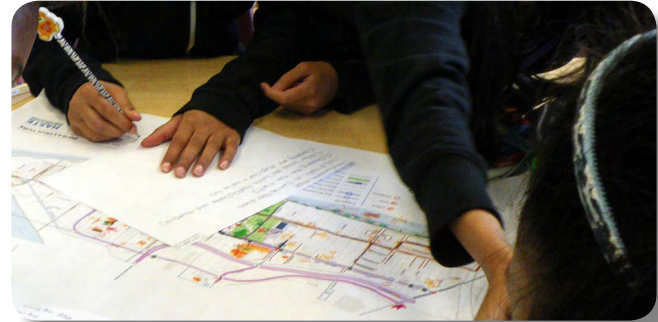
Developing best routes maps provides an excellent opportunity to involve and engage students and their families. While participating in safe route identification, children and youth will learn more about their community. The process also offers the chance to promote tips about health and wellness. As an added bonus, taking a hands-on approach to the mapping process provides students with an opportunity to practice AT safety skills.

Vélo Québec's On the Move to School campaign also integrates a mapping component into the School Travel Planning program. Using information gathered from the school community and the municipality, Vélo Québec develops four maps for each school: one shows the geographical distribution of the student population, another shows the official school routes (as decided by police) and road signage, the third shows the barriers to AT within the school community, and the final map identifies areas where changes to infrastructure and other local elements could help make the area safer. These maps can be used throughout the STP process to illustrate the various elements that comprise a "best route to school."

A classroom exercise can have students, using a map of their school's catchment area, develop a personalized map of their neighbourhood that illustrates their favourite spots and points of interest, destinations they walk or wheel to (such as the store or a friend's house), and any other places they want to include.

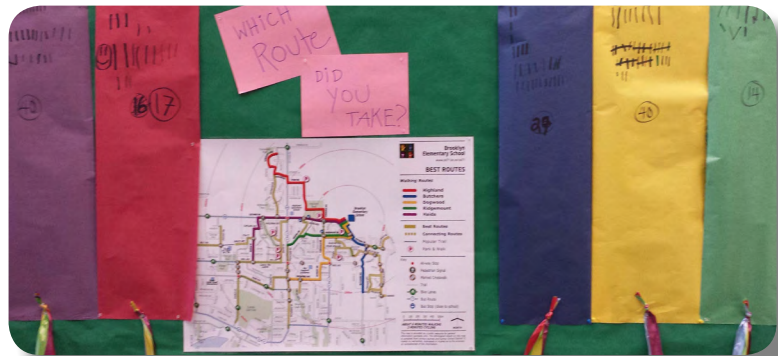
Students also identify areas that they feel are safe or unsafe while drawing out the route they use when they actively commute to school. They are then encouraged to take their maps home to share with their parents and / or caregivers.

An additional classroom activity is a visioning exercise that asks students to draw an ideal neighbourhood and to work together to create a "Top 10" list of things people can do to make the streets safer. They might plan to organize classroom or school-wide AT events and programs.



In Comox, BC, an inspiring activity to try and reach parents, use a new Brooklyn Best Routes Map and get people actively commuting to school was a success.

During the 2016 Earth Day assembly students identified what route they could take to school and raised their coloured ribbon to identify who else was on their route. People actively travelled to school — the STP facilitator reports there were: "125 bikes in racks instead of 60; 5 skateboards instead of 1; two full racks of scooters instead of 1; and walkers galore!"



Best routes mapping is an excellent way of ensuring that the routes students use to get to school are thoughtfully chosen, while helping parents and caregivers feel more confident about the safety of the course their children are walking or wheeling. Walking and biking route development are included in a following Community Case Study.

### Thinking Outside the Box

Community “WalkShed” maps were created by Urbanthinkers of Vancouver, BC, to group streets and trails that share pedestrian accessways toward a common destination, such as a school or park. Similar to a collection of rivers and streams within a watershed, the sidewalks and paths of a WalkShed join together toward a similar destination.

A colour-coded WalkShed map can help families identify friends and neighbours living along shared walking routes. Recognizing others within the same WalkShed zone can invite discussions that will strengthen a school’s sense of community.

These acquaintances reinforce active school travel programs as they lead to informal walking groups, formal Walking School Buses and possibly the shared task of walking one another’s young children to school.



### Where Do I Go For More Info?

The process of Best Routes to School Mapping is described at:

[www.hastebc.org/resources/route-planning-safety](http://www.hastebc.org/resources/route-planning-safety).

Find out more about using people power to tame traffic and reclaim streets on Creative Communities International’s website: [www.creative-communities.com](http://www.creative-communities.com).

Further information on Living Streets can be found at [best.bc.ca](http://best.bc.ca) and at [www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk).

## Don’t Go It Alone

Even on the safest of school routes, many parents and caregivers are nervous about allowing their children to walk or wheel to school on their own. In fact, when parents who usually drive their children to school were asked in the 2009 Family Survey what would need to happen in order for them to allow their children to use active school travel, “not walking alone” was the most-cited answer (40%). Campaigns that promote and facilitate safety in numbers therefore have the potential to significantly impact the number of students using active modes to get to and from school.

Many of us had one or two friends who lived close by and joined us on the walk to school each day. Quite simply, the *Walking Buddies* program encourages students who live near each other to buddy up for the trip to school.

Students can identify and choose walking buddies in a variety of ways. Some schools promote the initiative as a classroom exercise where the teacher helps plot students’ homes on a map to see which classmates live close to one another. Parents and caregivers can also be involved in the initiative by pinpointing where they live on a large map that is made available at school functions, such as Parent-Teacher events. Labelling the pins with some sort of identifier, such as the family name or initials, can help parents and caregivers find “buddy families” or allow the activity’s champion to identify potential matches. This exercise can be especially helpful at the beginning of the school year, when families new to the school or to the community are just starting to get to know their neighbours.

*Walking Buddies* can be formalized by designating official Walking Buddy days, or students and their families can be left to decide when and how they’d like to travel with their buddies to school. Providing some sort of incentive for students to connect with their walking buddies can help make the initiative a greater success. In Alberta, for example, walking buddies are determined at the neighbourhood level and participants choose their own buddies, registering their partnership via the SHAPE website. After adult verification that the pair has walked or wheeled to school together ten times, they receive a special Walking Buddies zipper pull to wear proudly. When other students witness the recognition and see the prize, more walking buddies tend to join the program, which shows the positive influence that peer groups – and incentives – can have on these types of initiatives.



Even after being matched with a Walking Buddy, some students and their families still may not be comfortable with walking or wheeling to school. While encouraging active school travel is the ideal goal of the program, in these instances a school may choose to encourage matched families to carpool with their buddies instead – this practice will still help to decrease the number of cars in front of the school at pick-up or drop-off times, and as families get to know each other, they might eventually be comfortable with the students walking or wheeling part-way or the entire way to school.

If walking and wheeling in groups of two or three is good, travelling in a larger group is even better! *Walking and Cycling School Buses* (WSB) use the same concept as *Walking Buddies* to encourage active travel with a goal of “picking up” children along the route. The more, the merrier! WSBs are simply two or more families joining together for the active trip to school, with one or more parents or caregivers (or sometimes, older youth) acting as chaperones.

Travelling in greater numbers and or with an adult or mature student at the helm contributes to greater safety. WSBs also provide a great opportunity for students – and their parents or caregivers – to add some regular physical activity to their day in a fun, social atmosphere.

WSBs function much in the same way as a regular school bus, except the students’ feet are their vehicle. The WSB follows a specific route to school, either picking students up along the way, or commencing from a designated meeting area and continuing to the school from there. Many WSBs integrate themes to make the trip even more



fun; for instance, students might wear an article of clothing of a pre-determined colour. Other WSBs play music on a portable player along the way to jazz things up a bit. Still others dress in costume or play instruments as they walk. The most important aspect of the WSB, however, is making sure the students practice safety and vigilance (and have fun at the same time).

In Ontario, an Ottawa WSB program has expanded from pilot to program – you can read more about it in a Community Case Study on Page 28 of this guide.



### Where Do I Go For More Info?

Check out some of the STP partner websites for more information on Walking Buddies, such as

SHAPE-AB

[shapeab.com/programs](http://shapeab.com/programs),

Manitoba’s Green Action Centre

[greenactioncentre.ca/content/asrts-handbook-and-resource-guide](http://greenactioncentre.ca/content/asrts-handbook-and-resource-guide),

Ottawa Walking School Bus Program

[www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/wsb](http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/wsb), or

Trottibus

[www.trottibus.ca/en](http://www.trottibus.ca/en)

### Did You Know...

... just 9 families participating in a Walking School Bus for a full year can reduce climate change-causing emissions by as much as 1000 kg! (Pembina Institute)

... 1 car in 5 travels less than 1 kilometre, the average person can walk 1 kilometre in 10 minutes. (Environment Canada. *Air Quality and Healthy Active Travel Fact Sheet - STP Toolkit* [www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit))



## Driving Change

Green Communities Canada has often stated that School Travel Planning and related programs are not anti-car, but rather pro-walking and -cycling. Add to this the fact that “traffic speed and volume” has been one of the top-cited barriers on Family Surveys so far, and any STP program would be remiss if it did not address vehicle-related solutions in addition to AT initiatives.

The Pace Car Program is a great initiative to help get drivers thinking about the consequences of their driving habits. The Pace Car program involves seeking out community members to sign up as Pace Car drivers. Participants will sign the Pace Car Supporters Pledge and proudly display the official Pace Car emblems on their car window. Many Pace Cars work to calm traffic throughout a neighbourhood - the more people who participate, the better it works!

Carpooling programs can also be a first step towards change. By encouraging drivers to carpool, emissions can be reduced, traffic and congestion in front of the school can be decreased, and people may actually begin to consider the implications of their transportation choices.

For those who live too far way to walk, carpool matching can be facilitated in much the same way as the Walking Buddies program does; mapping out where driving families live and the routes they drive to school can help determine where ride-sharing opportunities exist. As with other STP initiatives, offering incentives for carpooling families can be an effective method of encouraging participation.

Anti-idling campaigns are another great tool for teaching the impact of car use. Drivers learn about the effects of idling – not only on the environment, but on children’s

health, and also on their pocketbooks. Saving money can be a strong motivator; many drivers identify “potential cost savings” as their main interest in related programs that address and promote fuel efficiency.

Idling not only wastefully burns gas and pollutes the air, but for the most part, it is an unnecessary habit. Many drivers mistakenly believe that shutting down their engine during short stops – especially during winter weather – is bad for the vehicle, but in reality idling can actually harm an engine, forcing it to operate inefficiently and contributing to the build-up of soot deposits. In addition, idling for any longer than 10 seconds will burn more fuel than it takes to restart the engine. These and many other downsides of idling can resonate more clearly with drivers if they’re hit where it may hurt the most – their wallets.

In the same vein, letting drivers know about the cost of the drive to school may help them consider choosing alternative transportation more often. Online mileage calculators, such as the one on Nova Scotia’s DriveWiser website ([www.drivewiser.ca](http://www.drivewiser.ca)), can help drivers figure out just how much fuel they use for the daily commute. Many of these websites also include tips for increasing fuel efficiency, which can have the same benefits as anti-idling. Sharing these tips with the school community can help ensure that if parents, caregivers and school staff must drive, their vehicles will at least have less impact on the environment.

Illustrating how to use a vehicle more efficiently and considerately can help ensure that families intent on driving are still able to participate in an inclusive School Travel Plan. Such awareness materials can potentially be an ice-breaker to open conversations about reducing vehicle use. Even a small change in driving habits can have a great impact if multiple drivers take part.

### *Where Do I Go For More Info?*

The Pace Car Program

[www.parachutecanada.org/programs/item/pace-car](http://www.parachutecanada.org/programs/item/pace-car)

Many STP partner websites have anti-idling resources, such as BC’s HASTe at

[www.hastebc.org/tools/anti-idling-cookbook](http://www.hastebc.org/tools/anti-idling-cookbook)





## Growing Support

Effective communication is an extremely important facet of any initiative looking to foster change. Getting the word out about School Travel Planning and advertising your Action Plan initiatives will help build support for the program and increase its chances of success. Ensuring your communications are as explicit, engaging and inclusive as possible will significantly help your plight.

The School Travel Planning toolkit contains a plethora of materials to help you build your communications plan. Press release templates, newsletter articles, fact sheets and multi-media presentations have all been designed to help you put together a media kit specific to your community.

Don't forget the power of images and illustrative techniques to build support and understanding for STP. Sharing a snapshot of a school's transportation profile at different points in time can effectively communicate how students get to school and where changes may be made to improve active travel numbers. One sharing tool is the Greening Tree, which is part of a following Community Case Study on page 29.

Effective communication isn't just about what you produce – ensuring you're on top of new initiatives and the latest STP-related information can help you deliver an even stronger program. Below, you'll find links to a few walking- and wheeling-focused communications that could help keep you in the know.

### News and resources

Canada Walks News is a monthly e-newsletter ([www.canadawalks.ca](http://www.canadawalks.ca)) that focuses on newsworthy walking and walkability initiatives in Canada and beyond.

Centerlines ([www.bikewalk.org/newslettersubscribe.php](http://www.bikewalk.org/newslettersubscribe.php)) is a US-based e-newsletter produced monthly by the National Centre for Biking and Walking

The Fostering Sustainable Behaviour Newsletter is a periodic e-newsletter about the latest in Community-Based Social Marketing. To subscribe, send an email to [web@cbsm.com](mailto:web@cbsm.com) with "subscribe newsletter" in the subject line.

Canadian STP Toolkit resources are found at: [www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit).

## All-Weather Fun

Including all-weather initiatives in the Action Plan can help students and their families realize how fun it is to walk and wheel in all types of weather.

Many schools already share information about how to dress for the season.

Be sure that any outdoor initiative included in your Action Plan promotes dressing for the weather and seasonal conditions, including lower light at times of the year when the days are shorter.

In recent years, recognizing the need to promote active school travel year-round, many Active & Safe Routes to School programs added **Winter Walk Day** to their repertoire. Alberta was the first in Canada to officially kick off the initiative, this and events now held elsewhere are chronicled in a Community Case Study on page 30.

Another way to encourage walking and wheeling in all types of weather is to provide weather-relevant incentives and giveaways like umbrellas, woollen mitts and hats, reflective clothing or lights.

Don't forget to include all types of weather in the photos and images included in all STP communications. One Action Plan item could be the collection of local images of students and their families walking or cycling in rainy, snowy, and dark conditions. Have an all-weather photo contest!



Ottawa Public Health mascot "Phyz" (for Physical Activity) greets happy walkers

### Where Do I Go For More Info?

Check out some of the STP partner websites for all-weather tips and videos at:

Manitoba:  
[greenactioncentre.ca/living-green-living-well/myth-1-winter-walking-for-kids](http://greenactioncentre.ca/living-green-living-well/myth-1-winter-walking-for-kids)

Saskatchewan:  
[www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca/tools-resources/active-safe-routes](http://www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca/tools-resources/active-safe-routes)

Ontario:  
[www.saferoutestoschool.ca/winter-walk-day](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/winter-walk-day)

## Counteracting Convenience

When promoting active travel solutions, one of the greatest barriers faced by the STP team may be the notion of time and convenience. Single-parent families and families with both parents working outside of the home may feel that there's just not enough time to walk or wheel to school. Many families cite the convenience of dropping children off by car since they're already driving themselves to work.

"Convenience" and "being en route" were two of the top reasons for driving given relatively consistently across the country. In some cases, however, using active transportation can actually save time over driving. Statistics gathered from a bike-sharing program in Lyon, France show that urban cyclists are able to get from point A to point B as quickly or even faster than the average driver, and that doesn't account for the time drivers spend looking for a parking space.

Getting everyone to regularly commute by bike, however, could be quite an ambitious undertaking in Canada. Perhaps more Canadians would choose active travel if they knew how much it could contribute to their general well-being.

Sustainable happiness is a key component of School Travel Planning because walking or wheeling to school can have a positive effect on students' health and wellbeing (and that of their parents and caregivers as well). Tying in nicely with the sustainable happiness concept is the idea of time affluence. Tal Ben-Shahar, a Psychology instructor at Harvard University, defines time affluence as "the feeling that one has sufficient time to pursue activities that are personally meaningful, to reflect, to engage in leisure." On the flip side, time poverty is "the feeling that one is constantly

**Thinking Outside the Box**

Sustainable happiness is a term that was coined by Dr. Catherine O'Brien, a professor at Cape Breton University in Nova Scotia. She defines the concept as "happiness that contributes to individual, community and/or global well-being and does not exploit other people, the environment, or future generations."

The concept merges principles from sustainability and happiness studies, encouraging individuals, communities and organizations to reflect on opportunities to leave a legacy of sustainable happiness.



From Green Action Centre, Manitoba

stressed, rushed, overworked, and behind." Tipping the balance from time poverty to time affluence can seem tough if one is already time-strapped, but the key is to intentionally plan leisure time to include activities that are meaningful and beneficial. For example, rather than being lured into watching an extra television show by commercials, one could take some of that time to make lunches or plan breakfast for the next day, freeing up more time in the morning to walk or wheel to school. Ben-Shahar calls this "life mapping," and says it can help people re-prioritize their lives to allow more time for what they enjoy most, such as family time.

Promoting parental time affluence, then – and its positive effect on health and well-being – could be an effective counteraction to the argument that driving is convenient. Even if driving could get a family to school faster, budgeting one's time to walk or wheel instead could produce mental and physical benefits that far outweigh the convenience

### Did You Know...

... there is a curriculum resource for Sustainable Happiness? *The Sustainable Happiness and Health Education Teacher's Guide* by Dr. Catherine O'Brien of Cape Breton University can be found at: [sustainablehappiness.ca/teachers](http://sustainablehappiness.ca/teachers). There are unique resources available for different provinces and territories, with lesson plans and videos.



factor. Celebrating the many other benefits of an active school commute may also help to sway a few minds, such as more quality one-on-one time between parent and child, improved physical fitness, increased benefit to the environment, the chance to interact socially with other parents and caregivers, and the health and wellness benefits of time spent outside in the fresh air, to name a few.

An active commute to school breaks up time otherwise spent remaining sedentary. Periodic breaks in sedentary time throughout the day have been shown to be positively associated with health outcomes (such as body composition and cardiovascular health) in children and adults<sup>10</sup>.

Programs do seek to refute the idea that busy people can't fit walking and wheeling to school into their schedules. By inviting time-strapped government officials to participate in Walk to School event days you can show that even the busiest of people can benefit from taking part in active school travel.

Including Action Plan initiatives that aim to increase mindfulness, promote time affluence, and integrate the concept of sustainable happiness could help lower the convenience factor on parents' and caregivers' priority scale, potentially increasing the success of the STP program while boosting happiness and well-being in the school community at the same time.

## Active & Safe Routes at School

### Programs for bussed students and those with limited mobility

This section of this guide will provide a bit more detail about how to integrate active travel at school into your Action Plan in an effort to include students who must be bussed or driven to school.

As mentioned earlier, implementing a dedicated walking or cycling program at the school is a great way to get bussed students or individuals with limited mobility involved in active travel initiatives. Coordinate a school-wide walk (or cycle, skateboard, wheelchair roll or in-line skate) around the school grounds or gymnasium at recess or lunchtime, or arrange a trek along a nearby trail after school. Consider the abilities of any mobility-challenged students when planning the route, and be sure that students participating in these activities get credit towards any active school travel incentive program in place.

Walking and wheeling programs can also be brought into the classroom as a way to get all students involved. In-class

activities such as the Virtual Cross-Canada Walk can help inspire all students to step it up. Using a wall map of Canada to keep track of students' progress, classes can tally up the number of kilometres walked or wheeled as a group each week and find their corresponding point on the map. Using the honour system to self-report activity works well for this type of initiative so that students can count their active treks to and from school, and other places they go, rather than only considering the trips they take as a group. Alternatively, each student can be outfitted with a pedometer and keep track of the number of steps they take each week; this is an excellent way to get families involved in the activity. Teachers could also tie this initiative in with subjects they cover as part of the curriculum.

When promoting alternative transportation choices to students, remember that public transit is another great option. Transit often involves walking some distance to get from home to the bus stop and again from the bus stop to school, and it's much healthier for the environment than driving in the family car.

TransLink, the transit authority for Metro Vancouver in BC, helps make it easier for children and youth to choose transit during Walk to School Week through their "Kids Ride Free" program. Read more about it in a Community Case Study on page 31.

Metrolinx has its own resources and campaigns, including the School Travel Infographics Campaign for year-round use.

### *Where Do I Go For More Info?*

*GCC's Active and Safe Routes to School website at [www.saferoutestoschool.ca/steps-to-success-the-5-es/](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/steps-to-success-the-5-es/)*

*Some STP partner sites have ideas, such as the Metrolinx School Travel infographics: [www.metrolinx.com/en/projectsandprograms/schooltravel/asst.aspx](http://www.metrolinx.com/en/projectsandprograms/schooltravel/asst.aspx)*

*Saskatchewan Schools in Motion: [www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca/tools-resources/schools-in-motion](http://www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca/tools-resources/schools-in-motion).*

*Physical Activity Guidelines are online at [www.participation.com](http://www.participation.com).*

*Safe Kids' "Canada's Favourite Crossing Guard" program: [www.parachutecanada.org/safekidscanada](http://www.parachutecanada.org/safekidscanada).*

## Enforcement

While positive reinforcement is the preferred route to foster change, laws are there for a reason, and having the right people on board to enforce those laws can be a welcome addition to any Action Plan. Issues such as speeding, failing to stop at crosswalks, and passing stopped cars can seriously infringe on student and community safety, and having the support of police, by-law officers, and other municipal staff is an important part of the STP equation.

When launching an initiative to establish a safe stopping zone around the school grounds, for example, it can be useful to have **police** or **by-law officer** presence at “no stopping” areas to help urge drivers to kick the habit. The presence of law enforcement officers brings increased legitimacy to a traffic safety program by supplying messaging from a “credible source.”

**Crossing guards** are a great example of civilian efforts to maintain safety and order while ensuring that everyone – motorists, pedestrians and cyclists alike – obeys the rules of the road. When individuals are held accountable, by law enforcement officers or otherwise, they are more likely to adhere to social boundaries and expectations.

If parents and school staff feel that crossing guards are required in the neighbourhood, you may be able to request a needs assessment. Adult crossing guard programs are usually implemented by school boards, police departments, or other municipal entities. Research how the initiative is coordinated in your community to determine who to contact. The process of determining whether a given intersection warrants the



presence of a crossing guard can be quite detailed, and an assessment may take some time to complete.

Fredericton, New Brunswick

**Speed radar and computerized speed monitors** are useful enforcement tools. Police services often respond to speeding complaints by setting up manned or unmanned speed monitors in a target area. These devices collect and log speed data over a period of time, which means “before” and “after” data can be gathered to support an anti-speeding campaign such as the Pace Car Program.

New York’s “Liveable Streets Education” program offers an initiative that lets students measure the speed of vehicles near their school and ties their discoveries into classroom-based learning. In Alberta, SHAPE and the Alberta Automobile Association teamed up to purchase speed radar guns available for use by qualifying school communities and in BC their use by students has been part of the Cool Routes to School Program, see the Community Case Study on page 26.

*Note: Be sure to research your community’s laws and regulations before implementing any enforcement-related initiatives.*

## Policy Influencing Change

The School Travel Planning process can achieve sustainability not just at the local level through the provision of a single School Travel Plan document, but by facilitating meaningful policy development at the school district, municipal, provincial/territorial, or national level. For instance, an effective school board policy may encourage the safe and responsible use of bicycles or skateboards rather than allowing individual schools to ban their use. School boards could also implement idle-free zones around schools and bylaw enforcement may work with schools to create “no stopping” areas along sections of road adjacent to a school.

Some school boards involved in STP have developed excellent policies in support of active school travel. PL Robertson Public School in Milton, ON, for example, was officially decreed a “walking only” school since its opening in January 2010.

Some municipalities show their support of active travel for children and youth by making formal commitments through the creation of active travel policies. In Surrey, BC, City Council has adopted guidelines to promote child- and youth-friendly infrastructure improvements. You can view their Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy online at [www.surrey.ca/files/Child\\_and\\_Youth\\_Friendly\\_City\\_Strategy\\_City\\_of\\_Surrey.pdf](http://www.surrey.ca/files/Child_and_Youth_Friendly_City_Strategy_City_of_Surrey.pdf).

## Other Resources

There are far more local, national and international initiatives and resources than we could possibly cover in this Guide that may also inspire you. At [www.saferoutestoschool.ca/steps-to-success-the-5-es](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/steps-to-success-the-5-es), you'll find a summary of some that may be of interest. Don't hesitate to do some of your own research to unearth ideas that aren't covered in this guide, or of course, create your own. Share your successes with us at [asrts@greencommunitiescanada.org](mailto:asrts@greencommunitiescanada.org) so you can inspire future STP Action Plans, too!

The Canadian School Travel Planning model was developed over several years working with many organizations across Canada. The STP toolkit exists because of the dedication and participation of the following organizations - from east, to north, to west:

City of St. John's Department of Recreation, NL  
[www.stjohns.ca/living-st-johns/recreation-and-parks](http://www.stjohns.ca/living-st-johns/recreation-and-parks)

Ecology Action Centre, Nova Scotia  
[www.ecologyaction.ca](http://www.ecologyaction.ca)

Recreation PEI  
[www.recreationpei.ca](http://www.recreationpei.ca)

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Coalition of NB (HEPAC)  
[hepac.ca](http://hepac.ca)

The New Brunswick Lung Association  
[nb.lung.ca](http://nb.lung.ca)

Vélo Québec  
[www.velo.qc.ca](http://www.velo.qc.ca)

Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC)  
[www.partnershipagainstanccancer.ca](http://www.partnershipagainstanccancer.ca)

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)  
[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

Transport Canada  
[www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca)

Green Communities Canada, Active & Safe Routes to School program  
[www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca)

Heart and Stroke Foundation  
[www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)

Government of Nunuvut, Population Health  
[www.livehealthy.gov.nu.ca](http://www.livehealthy.gov.nu.ca)

Yellowknife Education District #1, Northwest Territories  
[www.yk1.nt.ca](http://www.yk1.nt.ca)

Green Action Centre, Active & Safe Routes to School program, Manitoba  
[greenactioncentre.ca](http://greenactioncentre.ca)

Saskatchewan *In Motion*  
[www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca](http://www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca)

Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere (SHAPE) Alberta  
[shapeab.com](http://shapeab.com)

The Hub for Active School Travel (HASTe), British Columbia  
[hastebc.org](http://hastebc.org)

The Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY)  
[www.rpay.ca](http://www.rpay.ca)

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IWalk IWheel in Ontario

School Travel Planning Action Plans in 2015-16 had many student participation and student-led initiatives that include event days, weeks and months. Iwalk Iwheel is a new resource in Ontario, with punch cards, stickers and tattoos to help active travel campaign success.

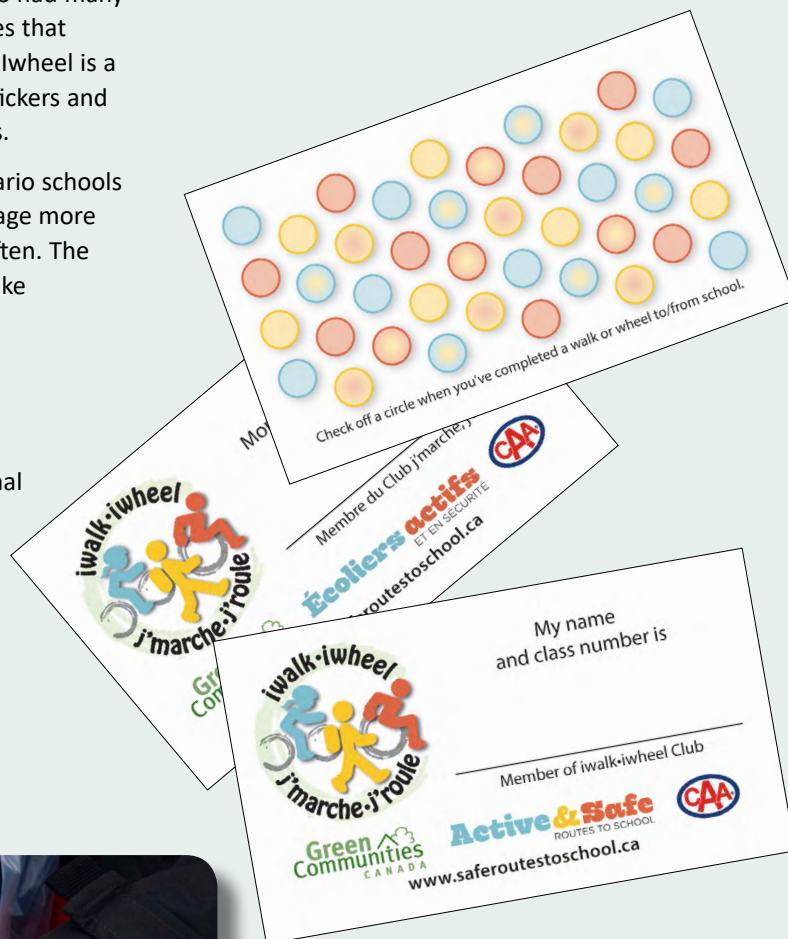
The *iwalk-iwheel club* is a fun activity for Ontario schools and communities who are working to encourage more families to use active travel to school more often. The iwalk-iwheel theme complements initiatives like

- walk-wheel on Wednesdays,
- walk-wheel once a week, and
- the walking school bus

The club can also be incorporated into seasonal events like

- October's International Walk to School,
- February's Winter Walk Day
- Spring into Spring, and
- Bike to School Week.

For information visit [www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca)



Tattoos for students at Valley Park school in Toronto



## The “Walk & Roll Contest” in Surrey, BC

The “Walk and Roll contest is an integral part of the City of Surrey Safe and Active Schools Program. The main prize is the Mayor’s Golden Shoe Trophy that has been part of contests for over twelve years, and awarded to excited school children by three Surrey Mayors.

### How it works

The current Walk & Roll to School Week is a chance for all City of Surrey elementary schools to encourage and celebrate students and their families walking, cycling, and scootering to school. On top of \$3 million in school infrastructure upgrades (2015), the fall celebration was bigger and better than ever, including more resources, prizes, and fun activity suggestions.

### Directive to schools:

- Before Walk & Roll, register your school. We’ll send you a detailed resource kit (including, posters, small prizes, resource material) to help you plan your school’s Walk & Roll to School Week event.
- During Walk & Roll, use the recording poster to track your schools active trips to school.
- After Walk & Roll, PRIZES! (for coordinators too). Watch for an email to submit your school’s participation results.

### The City of Surrey Safe and Active Schools Program

#### 1. Road Safety Reviews.

Traffic and pedestrian safety has been reviewed for all schools in Surrey, and now the work is on education, enforcement, and engineering improvements.

#### 2. School Travel Planning.

A complete School Travel Planning (STP) program is started at several schools each year under guidance of an STP Facilitator to find even more ways to increase the number of students walking and cycling to school.

#### 3. Bike to School Training.

The City sponsors bike training for all grade 4 and 5 students at every public elementary school.



#### 4. The “Walk & Roll Contest”.

From 2010 - 2015, as part of the City of Surrey Safe and Active Schools Program, the City has completed more than 600 engineering projects near schools. This includes: 200 new or upgraded pedestrian crossings, 40 sidewalks and pathways, 240 signage projects, 70 traffic calming projects and 50 other improvements.

To learn about engineering improvements near schools, email [transportation@surrey.ca](mailto:transportation@surrey.ca) or call 604-591-4853.

See more at: [www.surrey.ca/transportation](http://www.surrey.ca/transportation)



**Building Multi-modal and Complete Routes in Vernon, BC**

Municipal staff members in Vernon, BC use the information gleaned from participation in School Travel Planning (STP) to improve how they allocate their active transportation infrastructure budget. City officials considered the data from Family Surveys and STP committee feedback to help them identify the best use of resources to ensure the greatest benefit for the community.

The work included identifying deficiencies in Active Transportation (AT) infrastructure where sidewalk and bike route upgrades were needed, with school areas taking priority. The STP surveys and Walkabouts identified areas with the most significant issues and the routes with the greatest potential for AT use, allowing the City to prioritize those areas for infrastructure development.

This work was an important precursor to the establishment of Walking School Buses. Here is the Walking School Bus on Allenby Way, Vernon's most popular Walking School Bus multi-use path. It was constructed after STP and in conjunction with a utility upgrade project.



*Mayor Mund joins the WSB group*

Initiatives have included the construction of pedestrian and bike lanes along multiple routes, and multi-use paths, connectors, pedestrian-activated crossing lights in conjunction with crosswalk improvements, and the retrofitting of two bridges to allow safe pedestrian access.



Participation in STP has also helped staff solidify – and where necessary, modify – other plans for infrastructure development, such as street reconstruction after sewer upgrades.

In 2016 the City of Vernon is working on several projects that originally stemmed from School Travel Planning.

For more information, please contact the City of Vernon's Transportation Department by email at [csbreception@vernon.ca](mailto:csbreception@vernon.ca), by phone at 1.250.550.3634 or through their website [vernon.ca/vernonmoves](http://vernon.ca/vernonmoves).



## Winnipeg's Street Art Project

Students and other residents of a community in Winnipeg's West End decided to take traffic safety into their own hands with a creative idea that encourages drivers to slow down. Children in Grades 3 – 6 at Greenway School designed safety-themed murals and brought their ideas to fruition with the help of the Daniel McIntyre / St. Matthews Community Association and neighbourhood art centre Art City, starting in 2010.

The colourful murals stand approximately 3 ½ by 6 feet and are interspersed at different points along roads adjacent to the school grounds. The murals remind motorists to drive the limit, be safe, and watch for children in the area.

Before the art was installed, the area was not very attractive; lots of chain link fence and cracked concrete conveyed a cold, industrial feel. Wide roads without much greenery did little to discourage speeding, and drivers would often use the route as a shortcut. The murals remind drivers that the neighbourhood contains a school zone, and hopefully increases drivers' inclination to slow down, potentially increasing safety.

The project was a big hit with the school community, prompting the creation of three additional murals. Like the first three murals, they are mounted on the school's fence in the hopes of helping to calm traffic.

The street art project is part of a larger safety program in Winnipeg funded by Safe Kids Canada and FedEx Canada.



For more information, please contact Manitoba's Green Action Centre: [info@greenactioncentre.ca](mailto:info@greenactioncentre.ca).

Students at Winnipeg's Greenway School have created lively street art with a message

**Park & Walk a Block or Two**

The Park & Walk strategy has become an important part of Action Plan development to address the:

- special programs at schools that bring families from out of catchment (and biking isn't an everyday option);
- convenience factor — parents are on their way to work or need to get children to different destinations.

Once activated, this strategy has been shown to segue into daily walking and biking — driving families realize the time taken fighting school site congestion is longer than a much less stressful walk, either partway or all the way from home. Across Canada there are some creative programming ideas and supportive stakeholder partnerships to tailor the best adaptation in different school communities.

**Permanent infrastructure**

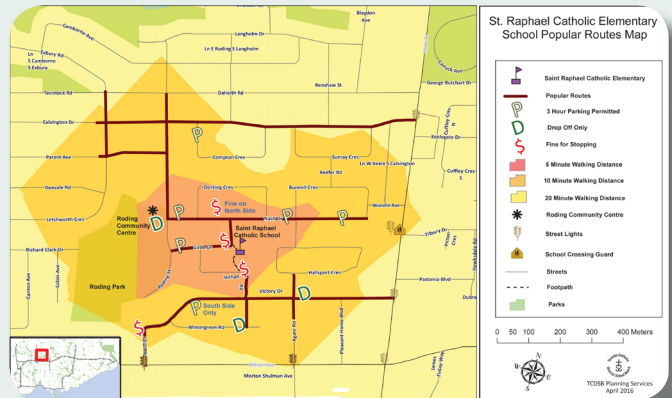
A program in Waterloo, Ontario has the support of the municipality to raise permanent signage approximately 400 metres from schools and lay down sidewalk markings between the signs and schools. Sign locations can promote alternate drop-off spots while also serving as a reminder that “it is really not that far”. Sidewalk markings encourage a little fun along the way. These installations require commitments from the schools to undertake complimentary activities that encourage walking and biking.



More information can be found in the project's evaluation report, “**Signing Routes to School**”.

**Information maps**

A Toronto Catholic District School Board map, drafted after consultation with STP committee stakeholders, clearly defines walking times, five suggested parking points and three drop-off points. This Park & Walk promotion is incorporated into an information brochure that outlines active travel benefits and helps alleviate security concerns by highlighting popular routes students actively travel on to school.



**Parents Power**

These parent-led and student-supported strategies build walking momentum as families try out a short walk to school in Vancouver's north shore communities.

1. *Freedom Friday uses Drive To 5.* Parents organize and manage fun greeting stations with music and treats set up at 5 minutes walk from school. This gives an opportunity for families to connect and build a stronger school community that can only be done when outside the car.
2. *Lead the Way Teams use Park & Walk* locations at established TransLink Park & Ride lots. This includes parent crossing guards and signs aimed at those still driving in drop-off zones.



*Drive to 5* and *Park & Walk* locations are building to a daily use.

For further information on inspiring community stories consult the Canada Walks newsletter at [canadawalks.ca](http://canadawalks.ca)

## Cool Routes to School Engages Students in British Columbia

This successful program continues in 2016, with 13 schools from across four school districts chosen to participate in HASTE's Cool Routes to School (CRTS) as part of each municipalities' Active and Safe Routes to School initiative.

CRTS employs a student leadership model to help change school transportation attitudes and behaviour. A student engagement facilitator works directly with a "lead class" from each school to provide education and resources on transportation impacts and options, assist students with their project design and implementation, and ensure overall program and learning objectives are being met.

The CRTS program's main objectives are:

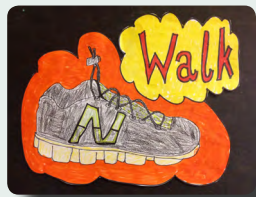
1. To educate students about the benefits of safe and active school travel and;
2. To empower students with the ability to make healthy and sustainable travel choices in the future.

The curriculum is based on a four-step process:

### 1. Introduction/Sustainable Transportation Overview

The lead class is introduced to the major issues surrounding school travel, the impacts of transportation systems and decisions, and the range of options available to students and families.

Information about student travel behaviour is an important part of the CRTS campaign and is tracked using HASTE's iSchoolTravel Calculator ([www.hastebc.org](http://www.hastebc.org)). This student-friendly travel emissions calculator allows students to explore how small changes in their travel choices can make big improvements to their health and the environment.



### 2. Student-led Ideas and Strategies

By designating a lead class, the CRTS program empowers students to create their own ideas and strategies. Emphasis is placed on positive ideas that promote active and safe routes. At this stage, Transportation Demand



Management (TDM) principles are introduced to be used throughout the program as an important guide for the students' project development and learning process.

### 3. Launch Assembly

While strategies are unfolding, lead classes are also busy organizing their CRTS launch assembly, which allows students to introduce and promote the program to the entire school. By means of posters, songs, plays, poems and speeches (to name a few), lead classes promote active school travel and inform the student body of upcoming CRTS initiatives while showcasing their talents.

### 4. Action Planning & School-wide Implementation

After the launch assembly, it's back to work on group projects using the action-planning template. Lead classes have designed Walking School Bus and bicycle skills activities, and implemented training for CRTS student ambassadors with the goal of presenting their projects to fellow students, at PAC meetings, and at City Council meetings. Activities are implemented school-wide and measured to assess quality and success.

The student leadership model generates student-designed projects that are uniquely suited to the travel needs and cultures of individual schools. This model also develops a strong sense of student ownership and accomplishment as a result of producing valuable results for the participants' peers, families and the entire school community.

For more information about *Cool Routes to School* check out the Hub for Active School Travel (HASTE) website [www.hastebc.org](http://www.hastebc.org) or email at [info@hastebc.org](mailto:info@hastebc.org).

ASTEP Helps Shape the Built Environment and Active School Travel in Manitoba

An innovative partnership between Green Action Centre, the University of Manitoba’s Civil Engineering Department and the City of Winnipeg is helping to shape the built environment around 17 Winnipeg elementary schools. This ground breaking project helped to create Active School Travel Engineering Plans (ASTEP) at schools in three school divisions; Louis Riel, Pembina Trails and Winnipeg School Division.

As part of the new Active School Travel Engineering Planning process, Civil Engineering Students assessed the immediate area around the schools, as well as streets throughout the surrounding neighbourhood and made recommendations to the City of Winnipeg about priority areas for infrastructure improvements that could enhance the walking and cycling environment for students travelling to and home from school.

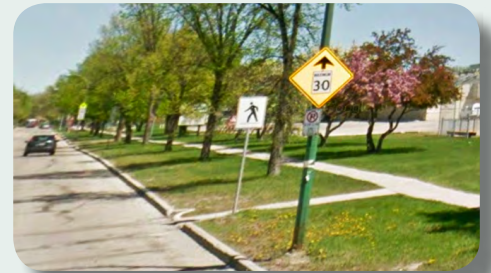
A similar process in the Fort Richmond Neighbourhood resulted in \$500,000 of infrastructure investments including pathways, better signage and raised crosswalks. The process in Fort Richmond also created the first Neighbourhood-Based Walking and Cycling Map in the City of Winnipeg.

Findings from the students’ neighbourhood evaluations were shared at Community Open Houses at each school in Fall 2014, followed by a series of broader community consultations that will were hosted by Green Action Centre early in 2015.

This project is very exciting for many reasons:

- This is a pioneering project related to active school travel. A project of this scale has never been done before in Manitoba.
- Active Transportation helps to ease traffic congestion around school and the physical activity associated with walking and biking helps children stay healthy by being active, makes them happier, more alert and better ready to learn when they get to school.
- Building from the success of the project, it could be replicated or expanded in future years and impact more schools. Ultimately, it will assist in improving the safety of children traveling actively to and from school and other important neighbourhood destinations.

École St. Avila, Fort Richmond



For more information about the ASTEP project in Winnipeg, please contact Manitoba’s Green Action Centre at [asrts@greenactioncentre.ca](mailto:asrts@greenactioncentre.ca)



## The Ottawa Walking School Bus: From Pilot to Program

Since 2010, Green Communities Canada has introduced School Travel Planning to more than two dozen elementary schools in the City of Ottawa. During that time STP survey results have consistently indicated that more parents would allow their child to walk to school if they did not walk alone. While many schools expressed interest in a Walking School Bus, efforts to launch and maintain them were largely unsuccessful due to a lack of available volunteers.

In 2014, Green Communities Canada (GCC) partnered with Ottawa Public Health, the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority and the Ottawa Safety Council to launch the *Ottawa Walking School Bus Pilot Project*. Its purpose was to allow more schools to reap the benefits of a Walking School Bus (WSB) by reducing the barriers to their introduction and sustainability.

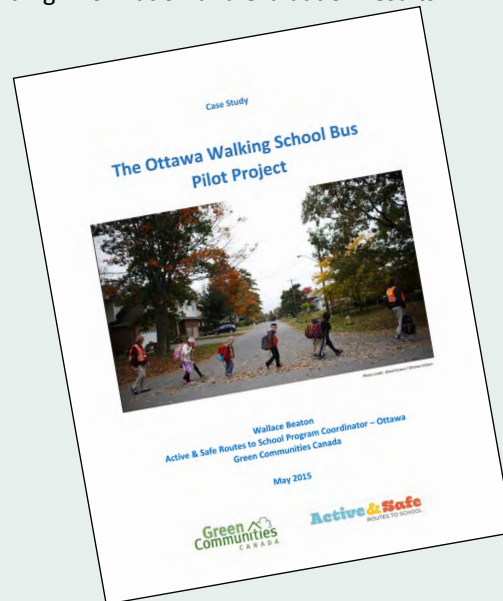
Through the pilot, WSBs were introduced at eight schools and operated on a daily basis for twelve weeks. A key and unique feature was the provision of a screened, trained, insured, supervised and paid adult leader on each route versus a traditional reliance on volunteers.

The program structure has

- reliability,
- support, and
- addresses risk management concerns.



*The Ottawa Walking School Bus Pilot Project Case Study* [www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/helpful-resources/walking-school-bus-wsb-program-active-transport-2](http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/helpful-resources/walking-school-bus-wsb-program-active-transport-2) provides more details including operational highlights, funding information and evaluation results.



Since that time the project has evolved into a program of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority and its popularity is growing with increased registrations and other schools expressing the desire to introduce a WSB into their community.

For the latest updates including promotional videos visit: [www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/wsb](http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/wsb).



Making the World Healthier One Leaf at a Time

When the Active and Safe Routes to School Working Group in Waterloo, ON wanted to encourage students to walk or cycle to school, they decided to use a fun, visual prompt that would be easy for every grade level to understand. Taking some tips from a similar idea they found in their research, the group developed the Greening Tree activity. When asked how they travelled to school on a particular day, each student receives a paper leaf whose colour corresponds to the method of travel the student used. The leaves are then attached to a paper trunk in a common area of the school for all to see.



*This Greening Tree goal is to grow darker green over time*

After the initial 'Greening Tree Day,' schools repeat the activity on at least one more randomly chosen day – with no warning to students and their families – in the hopes that the tree will be greener than it was the previous time around.

The materials, including a step-by-step "how to" guide, can be found online

[www.saferoutestoschool.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Greening\\_Tree\\_Activity\\_kit.pdf](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Greening_Tree_Activity_kit.pdf).



Other school programs have developed their own variation, such as this colourful Responsibili-Tree in a Fergus, Ontario elementary school that tracks responsible actions — which could include active travel. Such a tree would be a collection of positive sustainable action for every child to take pride in.

Some schools do choose to only record active travel and watch the tree or vines stretching along corridors gain many colours. Inclusive active transportation may capture many students when using a wide range of categories:

- walking, biking and rolling,
- walking partway,
- taking transit, a ferry or the school bus, and
- walking or rolling on a track on the school grounds.

## Students Warm to Winter Walk Day



2016 is the tenth year of Alberta's Winter Walk to school Day (WWD).

In 2007, stakeholders in support of children's independent mobility organized an event that would challenge the belief that it's just too cold to walk to school in the winter. Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere (SHAPE),

the provincial Active & Safe Routes to School lead joined forces with local Be Fit for Life Centres and what is now Alberta Culture & Tourism, to launch the first WWD. To boost interest, partner groups provided incentive items such as stickers, wristbands, mitts, hats and awards to recognize participating schools. Organizers have also enjoyed the support of local politicians and a few Olympic athletes.

For more information on current campaign design and support, check out SHAPE's website at [www.shapeab.com](http://www.shapeab.com). You can also contact SHAPE by email [lesley@shapeab.com](mailto:lesley@shapeab.com) or by phone at 780.406.8530.

### School Events and Activities

#### Walk celebration

February 2016 saw Ottawa break two records: for snowfall in one day (51cm) and the highest number of schools marking Winter Walk to School Day (22).

The student Active Transportation Club at Roch Carrier PS conducted a six-week Walking Wednesday Challenge leading up to their school's Winter Walk Day celebration. Some classes saw their walking rate jump as much as 30%.



The Ottawa Police Service were out in force at Good Shepherd CS.



#### Assembly fun

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, Toronto during year two of their School Travel Planning process are successfully building momentum while addressing some of the many travel issues. They took a unique approach to promoting walking in winter by first addressing the need to dress properly for the cold – and this was even more necessary this 2015-16 winter as Toronto experienced 38 extreme cold days!

An innovative Winter Walk Kick-Off assembly was held. After a short video prepared by student volunteers of their St. Jamestown community, Principal Peterson was dressed for the weather'. On stage wearing shorts and a t-shirt; students yelled excitedly which clothing items should go on first, starting with long johns. The Heart and Stroke Foundation provided a short presentation linking walking to school year-round with a healthy heart.



The school's Winter Walk Day a few days later was a big success. Teachers, the school Health

Action Team, police officers, parent volunteers, Toronto Public Health and Green Communities welcomed walkers with stickers as they arrived at school on a bright but cool (-13°C) morning. Students cheered "Way to Walk, LOL!" and "Give your heart a gift. Walk! Walk!! Walk!!" And a few lucky students received backpacks and skipping ropes.

For further information on inspiring community stories consult the Canada Walks newsletter at [canadawalks.ca](http://canadawalks.ca)





### Kids Ride Free for IWALK Week

The International Walk to School campaign (IWALK) isn't just for students who are able to walk or wheel to school; it is also about finding other alternatives to driving in a private car. Since 2005, Metro Vancouver's transit authority, TransLink, has been committed to making alternative transportation options more available to all students during BC's Walk to School Week.

For the past twelve years, TransLink has offered free bus rides for all students during Walk to School Week. Secondary school students get a complementary fare when they show a GoCard (a school ID needed for reduced fares), whereas elementary students need no identification to score a free ride. The offer goes beyond buses to include the SkyTrain and the SeaBus as well, so students can travel the entire Metro Vancouver area.

The offer isn't simply lip service: TransLink goes further to suggest that teachers take advantage of the fare-free week by taking their classes on field trips using transit. Teachers simply register their classes online (to help ensure against field trip-related bottlenecks). As an added bonus, registered classes are put into a draw to win TravelSmart items.

*Metro Vancouver's TransLink offers free transit rides to students during Walk to School Week*

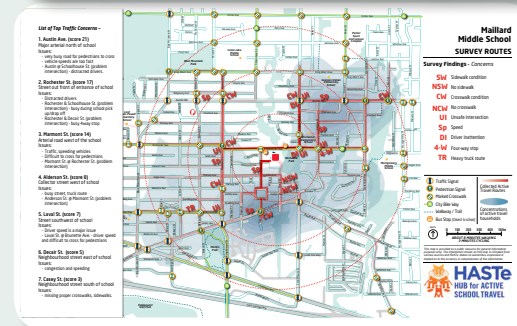
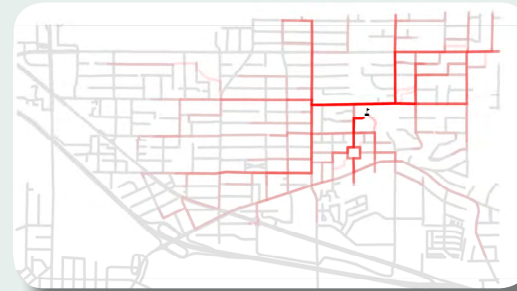


For more information about TransLink's Kids Ride Free program, check out their Walk to School Week "Buzzer Blog" post at [buzzer.translink.ca/2015/09/kids-ride-free-during-international-walk-to-school-week](http://buzzer.translink.ca/2015/09/kids-ride-free-during-international-walk-to-school-week). You can also find out more about this and other TravelSmart initiatives by visiting [www.travelsmart.ca](http://www.travelsmart.ca) to contact the TravelSmart team.

### Using Heat Maps to Inform Best Walk and Bike Routes to School Maps in BC

In British Columbia, Best Route to School mapping is part of a comprehensive School Travel Planning (STP) process. The map development now includes GIS heat mapping. This is the process:

1. Prepare base maps with the school, road names and traffic control locations. These accompany Family Surveys and are used in schools to collect current walking and biking routes students and their families like to use, and the location of barriers for safe active travel.
2. Plot the route information as Heat Maps to show:
  - a) the concentration of active travel on routes to school - all the family route layers are combined and illustrated using graduated colour
  - b) the concentration of where those active travel families live - all the route start points are mapped and illustrated using density shading.
3. Determine the Top Travel Concerns from the collected Family Survey and map data.
4. Merge the basemap and heat maps and add Top Ten concern locations. Share this map of survey findings on a Walkabout with stakeholders.
5. From the Walkabout, school STP meetings and student classes, create draft maps that only show determined Best Routes to School (all the density shading and survey findings text have been removed).
6. Collect further data from the municipal stakeholder committee, including any pedestrian and bike facility upgrade plans, policing campaigns and endorsed Park & Walk locations.
7. Compile the maps into information pamphlets that have safety, environment and health messaging for students and their families.



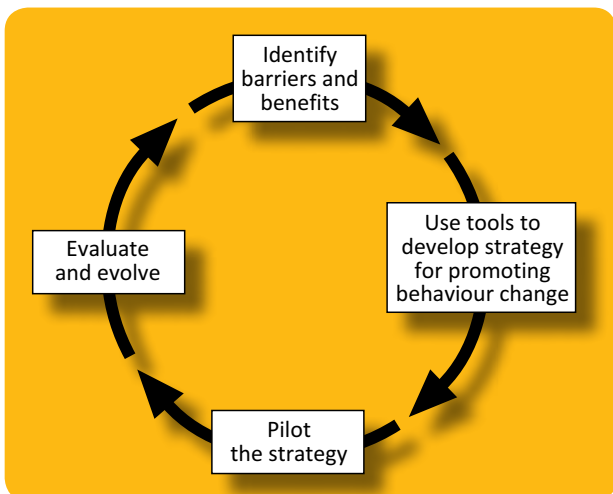
8. Share the map pamphlets with families at the beginning of a school term and post online for all-year access.

For more information about initiatives undertaken by the Hub for Active School Travel (HASTE), visit [hastebc.org](http://hastebc.org) or email [info@hastebc.org](mailto:info@hastebc.org).

## Appendix 1: Community-Based Social Marketing and School Travel Planning

Like many modern programs that aim to create social change, School Travel Planning subscribes to the concept of Community-Based Social Marketing, or CBSM\*. Founded by Doug McKenzie-Mohr, CBSM emerged from research in social psychology that suggests the effectiveness of social and behavioural change initiatives is increased when they are delivered at the community level through direct contact with people. Simply advertising or providing information is not sufficient – one must do more than create awareness to foster real change.

CBSM includes a set of tools to help proponents of sustainable behaviour in their goal to transform the behaviour of their target audience. Used alone, each tool can help improve the success of such a campaign – used as a group, the toolkit has the potential to transform the way programs are delivered and to truly engage a greater audience. CBSM also offers guidance for the development and evaluation of programs to ensure they have a solid foundation and evolve when necessary; this process helped guide the development of Canada’s School Travel Planning program.



*The four-step CBSM process*

### Step 1: Identify Barriers and Benefits

The first step in the CBSM process – identifying the barriers and benefits for your target activity – is integral to School Travel Planning, and indeed to the development of an Action Plan. Until a school community’s barriers to active transportation are identified, we can’t know which STP interventions to apply to achieve the greatest benefit.

The results from the Baseline Family Survey are instrumental in identifying barriers to active school travel in the community. Other elements of data collection including Pedestrian/Cyclist/Traffic Counts, School Site Visits and Walkabouts, are also integral to gaining thorough knowledge of the barriers first hand. These tools will also shed light on the school community’s attitude and behaviour in the face of those barriers. This type of qualitative information can help corroborate the Family Survey data and help the School STP Committee prioritize Action Plan items.

### Step 2: Use Tools of Behaviour Change to Develop a STP Strategy

Various tools can be applied to behaviour change strategies to increase their effectiveness and longevity. These tools are inherent to the STP process and Action Plan initiatives.

Seek a commitment from the target audience. Research has shown that getting people to commit to an initiative can foster change by altering the way they see themselves, and by acting on their desire to be consistent. For instance, if someone commits to walking to school once per week, they often start to see themselves as a walker instead of a driver, and as such, they will have a desire to continue to walk so as not to counteract both their commitment and their newfound self-perception. These commitments need not be big; in fact, starting small (such as participating in International Walk to School Day) often makes people more agreeable to more significant commitments (such as walking to school one day each week) in the future.

The way a commitment is proclaimed can also have a significant effect on its outcome. Written commitments seem to have more staying power than verbal ones, as do those decreed in public and those obtained from structured groups (such as an established School Advisory Committee). It is ideal to obtain commitments through existing connection points like pre-existing school events, and to ensure the commitment is voluntary rather than coercive.

\* McKenzie-Mohr, D and Smith, W. 1999. *Fostering Sustainable Behaviour: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing*. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada. New Society Publishers. 176 pp.



Use prompts to drive change. McKenzie-Mohr defines prompts as “visual or auditory aids which remind us to carry out an activity that we might otherwise forget.” Indeed, driving is ingrained as habit for many people – helpful reminders such as posters or street art can remind people to choose active transportation instead. To be most effective, prompts should be visible, easy to understand, positive, and in close proximity to where the action is to be taken.

Pay attention to norms. Essentially, norms are the tendency of individuals to engage in the culture they witness around them. Of course, by this definition, norms are more effective when they are visible. The scene in front of the school during students’ morning arrival lends clear clues about the community’s transportation norms – if driving to school is the norm, people are less likely to use active transportation than if they see others walking and wheeling on a regular basis. Therefore, supporting a critical mass of AT users, and making sure they are visible, can help encourage others to join in. Reporting on how many students and their families are using sustainable forms of transportation, rather than advertising the rather negatively-oriented number of people who drive, will have a greater impact on increasing the use of AT. Personal contact also helps to internalize norms, so encouraging AT users to gather at the school or to travel in a group (i.e. by occasionally providing coffee stations for walkers, or through the promotion of Walking/Cycling School Buses) can help reinforce their positive behaviour.

Think about how you are communicating your message. CBSM advises that good communications should be vivid, personal, non-threatening and concrete. Knowing your audience, and developing your communications to suit them, will also increase success. Using a message that outlines what folks would miss out on by not engaging in an activity will be more effective than telling them what they’ll gain if they do engage – people always want what they don’t have! Keep your message simple and easy to

remember, and whenever possible, deliver the message in person (i.e. at school events rather than just in the newsletter). Having the message delivered by a credible source, such as a principal or a local, trusted councillor, will also help ensure more people take notice. Finally, don’t forget to communicate successes to ensure the whole community knows the positive impact of their actions!

Use incentives as motivation. Incentives can be especially useful when participation is low, such as when the initiative is seen as an inconvenience (i.e. walking during inclement weather). It’s important to put careful thought into an incentive before it is introduced, however; the incentive must be delivered in a timely fashion relative to the desired behaviour (for example, handing a child a jacket tag directly after he or she arrives at school using an active travel mode). The incentive must also not be so significant that the behaviour will cease if the incentive is removed. Choose an incentive that is appropriate and relative and, if possible, one that will help encourage the behaviour you want to promote, like giving attractive umbrellas to students who walk in rainy weather. Consider non-monetary incentives as well; for example, give a “Golden Shoe Award” to the classroom with the biggest percentage increase in AT use. This can be a budget-conscious way to inspire behaviour change.

Remove external barriers to active travel. Eliminating these barriers, where possible, can be quite beneficial; in the case of STP, this is where the Municipal Stakeholder Committee can be invaluable. Missing sidewalks, unsafe pedestrian crossings, and sub-par bicycle storage all fit into this category. While changing these factors may be more of a long-term initiative, working to remove such external barriers can be an important piece of the STP puzzle.

### Step 3: Test the Strategy

Step 3 of the CBSM plan was significant to the development of School Travel Planning in Canada. Before the 2010 STP toolkit was completely developed and finalized, the process and resources were pilot tested in four Canadian provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Nova Scotia. Feedback gathered during the pilot phase helped prove the effectiveness of Canada’s STP program.



*Here’s one example of a message that could use a little tweaking*

As a result of experiences gained during the 2010 to 2012 pilot project *Children’s Mobility, Health and Happiness: A Canadian School Travel Planning Model*, new STP Toolkit resources were made available.

The STP initiatives listed in this Action Plan Inspiration Guide have already been used by other provinces and territories and beyond – see the community case studies section to get a taste of certain initiatives that have occurred or are currently underway in other STP municipalities.

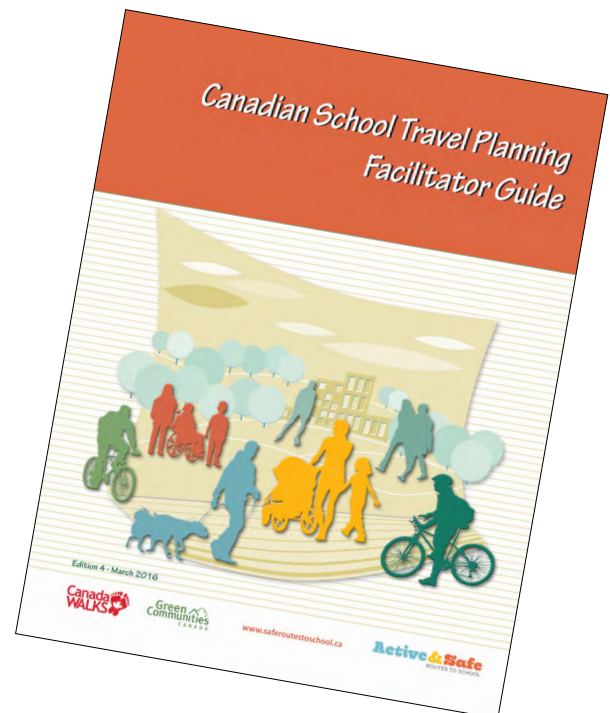


Regina, Saskatchewan

### Step 4: Evaluate and Evolve

For any program to be truly effective, it must continually be evaluated and revisited. Each element of Canada’s STP process is re-examined and adapted as the program grows and evolves. In the same vein, a School Travel Plan is never fully complete – it is meant to be a living document that changes with the culture of the school community. Action items that are completed will be celebrated and may be removed from the list and replaced by emergent items.

Please refer to the Canadian STP Facilitator Guide, March 2016 Edition, for recommendation on how to create a School Travel Plan.



The guide can be found in the updated 2016 STP Toolkit at: [www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit).



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