

## Quarterly update: 6

August 2019

*An overview of developments in active school travel with provincial significance during the past quarter.*

**Developing AST indicators.** GCC has commissioned a Delphi survey, led by Dr. Subha Ramanathan, to identify and prioritize measurable indicators of Active School Travel (AST) in Ontario. The Delphi survey is a systematic method for building consensus amongst a panel of experts using multiple rounds of simple questionnaires. Members of the OAST Council, members of provincial active school travel organizations, and AST researchers will be invited to participate in the Delphi survey, to be deployed over three-rounds June-August 2019. The resulting framework report – featuring ranked indicators and details of the development process – will be used to guide action planning and activities undertaken by the Ontario Active School Travel program.

**OAST Fund.** The Fund is supporting a total of 28 community-based projects across the province. The 12 Round 1 projects are ongoing, and 16 Round 2 projects are getting under way in summer 2019, with launch events expected in Fall 2019.

**OAST Council working groups.** At its most recent meeting (3 July), the Council's Parent Engagement Working Group reviewed information from its ongoing review of existing research and resources. The work is being documented in an environmental scan template that is due to be completed in September 2019. The Council has formed two additional working groups to focus on:

- Supportive Policy
- Walk- and Bike-Friendly Communities

**Ontario Active School Travel Network.** The Network continues to grow, with membership invitations extended to OAST-funded projects. An online coaching session for Network members was held 4 July to share tools and guidance for selecting schools that are likely to participate successfully in AST programming.

**In the Eye of the Beholder:** A record 119 people from across Ontario and beyond tuned into OAST webinar *In the Eye of the Beholder: Parent and Child Perceptions of Active School Travel* on 20 June. Presenters from Western University's Human Environments Analysis Laboratory (HEAL) and The Strategic Counsel shared key findings from recent focus group and interview-based studies that explore the journey to school from the unique viewpoints of students and their caregivers.

**Metrolinx.** Metrolinx has announced that, following a fiscal review of its programs and services, it “will no longer be involved in coordination of the region’s Active and Sustainable School Travel (ASST) programs.” Metrolinx has a decade-long history of supporting and coordinating ASST in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area region, and commissioning school travel-based research. These services are being discontinued. As previously reported, legislation has been altered to restrict Metrolinx’ mandate to transit and remove reference to walking and cycling. GCC is in discussion with Metrolinx about how to support the transition and preserve access to the substantial knowledge base established by Metrolinx over the past 10 years.

**Bike to School Week.** Bike to School Week 2019 was a huge success as schools discovered the fun of biking between the beginning of May and mid-June. Close to 600 schools across the province registered for this year’s event including a record 64 schools outside the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area. Overflowing bike racks were a common sight that cheered many a teacher, parent and student. All schools will soon receive a certificate of participation.

**Parachute.** Green Communities Canada has signed an MOU with Parachute, a national injury prevention organization that has secured funds from Desjardins Insurance for a five-year project: “Creating Safer School Zones, Safer Communities.” (See May update.) The MOU acknowledges our respective expertise – including GCC’s work on traffic safety – and commits the organizations to share information and explore the potential for collaboration, including the promotion of community-level connections between networks.

**On Your Feet Challenge.** The Canadian Cancer Society will be piloting the On Your Feet Challenge with approximately 10 Ontario schools in October 2019. CCS has operated the challenge with schools in Quebec for several years and this is the first time for it to be tested and evaluated in Ontario. The OYF Challenge promotes active school travel and physical activity among students and families by challenging school communities to collectively walk across Canada (6000 km) during the period of 7-25 October. Kilometres are accumulated by walking, running, cycling or scooting.

**Road Safety Awards.** Toronto's Vision Zero Active and Safe Routes to School Partnership received the Road Safety Achievement Award from the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario. With funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies, the ASRTS Partnership project aimed to increase road safety on school routes "by implementing a comprehensive program which will increase the number of students participating in active school travel." Partners include Toronto Transportation Services, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, Green Communities Canada, and the Hospital for Sick Children.

Canadian Automobile Association, South Central Ontario, received the Road Safety Corporate Leadership Award. CAASCO also won this award last year.

**Vision Zero 2.0 – City of Toronto Road Safety Plan update.** Toronto City Council approved Vision Zero 2.0 in July, which includes a funding increase (subject to availability of funds) for active school travel safety zones, and providing safe walking zones for seniors.