

Quarterly update: 7

November 2019

An overview of developments in active school travel with provincial significance during the past quarter. Please let us know if we've missed anything. For elaboration and discussion at the Council meeting.

Ministers endorse OAST. The Minister of Education and the Minister of Transportation both attended and spoke at a launch event for the OAST Fund project in Simcoe-Muskoka district, on 2 October at St. Angela Merici CES in Bradford-West-Gwillimbury. The two Ministers spoke positively of their government's investment in active school travel (AST) and encouraged the audience of students to walk to school. <https://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/education-minister-confirms-support-for-oast/>

OAST Fund. The Fund is supporting a total of 28 community-based projects across the province. All projects will submit their next progress report to OAST at the end of November 2019. Individual 'Project Profile' sheets are now available (in English and French), listing the key partners and activities for each project: <https://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/ontario-active-school-travel-fund/>

An **OAST Fund Workshop** (Hamilton, 12 November 2019) is being hosted by GCC as a capacity-building event designed to bring together 60 practitioners and representatives from the 28 funded projects to share knowledge and best practices between communities. The workshop's program of presentations, discussion and walk tours will cover topics that OAST Network members have identified as key issues for AST: program sustainability, community engagement, built environment and parental engagement.

OAST Network. This online community of practice for AST practitioners continues to grow, with membership now in excess of 70 practitioners. Online coaching sessions for Network members were held 27 August and 10 September to share tools and guidance for implementing School Travel Planning. The next session on 22 November 2019 will focus on Walkabouts.

International Walk to School (IWALK) Month. Schools across the province celebrated IWALK 2019 during October. Over 200 schools have already registered their participation with more still coming in. This is an increase over last year.

iWalk iWheel News. OAST has launched a new bilingual e-newsletter targeting schools with the aim of more effectively engaging principals, teachers, parents and students. <https://mailchi.mp/1d6cdf53c924/ontario-active-school-travel-news-1194561>. The newsletter will be published three times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring).

School Streets. OAST is hosting a public webinar on 21 November in partnership with 8-80 Cities, focussing on the ‘School Streets’ concept that has been developed in the U.K and has recently been piloted in Toronto. The ‘School Streets’ program introduces car-exclusion zones around a school site during drop-off and pick-up times. The webinar will feature presentations from staff at 8-80 Cities and the London Borough of Hackney (U.K).

Developing AST indicators. The Delphi Study to identify and prioritize measurable indicators of AST in Ontario is nearing completion. Members of the OAST Council, members of provincial active school travel organizations, and AST researchers have participated in the three-rounds of surveys led by Dr. Subha Ramanathan (Ryerson University). The resulting framework report – featuring ranked indicators and details of the development process – is due to be complete by the end of 2019 and will be used to guide action planning and activities undertaken by OAST.

National media coverage. OAST and GCC staff were featured in a 19 October Globe and Mail opinion piece about active school travel, “[Why did our children stop walking to school?](#)” Author Naomi Buck said our “coordinated approach” is essential to mobilize supportive school zone changes.

GCC Leadership. Clifford Maynes is stepping aside as Green Communities Canada Executive Director, effective 31 December. Hiring for a new ED has been initiated. GCC’s Director of Finance Sé Keohane will be acting ED in the interim.