

Quarterly update: 8

February 2020

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

MEDU.

- In December, GCC submitted its sixth OAST update (progress and financial report for the period July-December 2019) to the School Board Business Support Branch at MEDU.
- Cheri Hayward retired as Director of the School Board Business Support Branch at the end of 2019. She has been succeeded by Colleen Hogan, who reports to Didem Proulx as the new Assistant Deputy Minister of the Capital and Business Support Division. Ms Proulx comes to MEDU from the Treasury Board although she previously worked in the MEDU's finance branch for several years.

OAST Fund. All 28 funded projects are fully operational. The first group meeting combining both Round 1 & 2 project representatives took place on 16 January. Main topics of discussion included responses to the labour situation affecting the education sector as well as guidance on finalizing the Environmental Policy Scans that each project is due to submit end of March.

OAST Network. Membership continues to grow and now stands at 84 AST practitioners. A Network coaching session held 22 November 2019 focused on Walkabouts (a critical step in the School Travel Planning process) and attracted 27 participants. Upcoming sessions will address storytelling and data collection.

Winter Walk Day 2020. Promotion is in full swing for Winter Walk Day (WWD) on 5 February 2020. Schools have the option to celebrate anytime during the month and, in light of the labour situation, OAST has extended the period for celebrating and registering WWD events until mid-March. Almost 280 schools have already registered. In 2019 WWD proved the most popular of the four seasonal encouragement events with almost 440 schools enrolled. See www.ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/winter-walk-day

iWalk iWheel News. The winter issue of the new bilingual e-newsletter targeting schools was issued on 17 January. The e-newsletter is distributed to all OAST Fund project leads and OAST Network members to share with schools in their communities as well as a growing list of direct subscribers. <https://mailchi.mp/55a4f16e33b4/ontario-active-school-travel-news-6198523>

School Streets. The November OAST webinar, highlighting examples of car exclusion zones around schools in Toronto and London (UK), set new participation records with 247 registrations, 147 attendees and almost 270 views (and counting) of the webinar recording on YouTube. GCC has already held a follow-up meeting with [8 80 Cities](#), who spearheaded

Toronto's School Streets pilot and produced [a related guidebook](#), with a view to exploring further opportunities to expand this concept to more Ontario communities.

Pedestrian Safety Education. The need to better prepare children to safely navigate streets and intersections on foot is a regular topic of discussion amongst OAST Network members but relevant resources and examples of how to do that well are few and far between. The next OAST webinar on 4 March seeks to fill that gap by shining a spotlight on existing and emerging pedestrian safety resources and initiatives in Ottawa, Waterloo and London.

Enquiry from B.C. Green Communities Canada's (GCC) Kate Berry and Wallace Beaton recently met with B.C. Ministry of Transportation staff interested in the OAST framework as a potential model for B.C. Since then the Ministry has confirmed that they will be partnering with [B.C. Health Communities](#) to launch a similar (but smaller) program to OAST. A follow-up meeting with GCC is in the works.

Automated Speed Enforcement. The Ontario Traffic Council has launched [a new website](#) and related social media platforms as part of a multi-media campaign to promote the roll-out of Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) across Ontario. The campaign focus is on providing accurate information on ASE and why it is a transparent, efficient and effective road user safety tool to increase speed compliance.

Ecoschools goes national. Ontario Ecoschools has re-branded as [Ecoschools Canada](#) (EC) with the goal of expanding its school certification program over time to every province and territory. EC is currently developing and testing an new online certification platform for participating schools and GCC is providing input on the AST elements of the new platform.

On Your Feet Challenge. In October the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) piloted the [On Your Feet Challenge](#) with eight Ontario schools. Students, families, staff were challenged to collectively walk or wheel "across Canada" (6,000km). Participants tracked their progress via an interactive website and collectively travelled almost 40,000 km. CCS is currently evaluating the pilot and determining next steps.

OBS 2020. With the theme "Making Connections" the 2020 Ontario Bike Summit (OBS) organized by Share the Road will take place in Toronto on 6-7 April. It will include several presentations from OAST Fund projects. For details and to register: <https://www.sharetheroad.ca/ontario-bike-summit-s15917>

National news.

- **AST Canada Working Group:** This new group has been formed to advance AST initiatives across Canada by fostering networking, information sharing, and collaboration amongst front-line practitioners in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Co-chairs are Jamie Hilland (Urban Systems Ltd., Winnipeg) and Wallace Beaton (GCC, Ottawa). The first members' webinar took place on 23 January and featured presentations from Nova Scotia and Manitoba.
- **Federal government:** A meeting in Ottawa in late January brought together GCC, Vélo Canada Bikes, AST Canada, Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) and Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) representatives to explore opportunities for engaging the federal government on active transport issues following the October 2019 election. GCC was represented by former

executive director Clifford Maynes who is continuing to support this effort in a volunteer capacity.

- **Measures to protect VRUs.** Transport Canada is developing a new publicly accessible website that will inventory contemporary road safety initiatives that protect vulnerable road users (VRUs). This follows the release of the [Safety Measures for Cyclists and Pedestrians Around Heavy Vehicles](#) report in October, 2018. GCC staff are providing Transport Canada with information regarding School Travel Planning.