

Quarterly update: 13

June 2021

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.

OAST Fund.

- **Round 3:** Funding agreements have been signed with the four successful applicants and activities are now underway. [Listen to this CBC Radio interview](#) about the new project in Windsor/Essex County.
- **Innovate Stream:** This new funding stream allows communities that had previously received support from the OAST Fund to undertake initiatives that build upon their existing programming. Funding agreements have been signed with 14 successful applicants and work is now underway. Additional funding agreements are being completed in May 2021 for a School Streets pilot involving three Ontario communities (see OAST special projects below).
- See the full OAST Fund project list [here](#).

OAST special projects.

Due to COVID-19, the number and quality of submissions to the OAST Fund in Fall 2020 was lower than expected. As a result GCC obtained approval from the Ministry of Education to use the unallocated funds to support the following special projects in 2021-22:

- **Measuring progress** – A new database and tools will be developed to improve AST data collection across the province.
- **School Streets** – OAST will support School Street pilot projects in Hamilton, Markham and Mississauga. The initiative will be coordinated by 80 Cities and include delivery of “How-to” workshops and a new toolkit for use by communities across Ontario.
- **Policy workshops** – To further boost the results of the AST policy review already underway in cooperation with Western University, OAST will support a series of workshops to share the recommendations and support stakeholders to implement policy change.
- **Parent engagement** – The recommendations from the OAST Council’s Parent Engagement Working Group will form the basis for a pilot project to develop, test and refine effective messaging targeting parents using a social marketing-based approach.
- **Pedestrian/cycling skills resource hub** – Create a new online hub of existing best practices and resources to ensure wider uptake. Will include French translation of materials currently only available in English.

National Active Transportation Strategy & Fund.

- On March 12 the [Government of Canada announced](#) the first dedicated federal fund for active transportation infrastructure, committing \$400 million over five years to help build new and expanded pedestrian and cycling networks across the country. Concurrently it announced its intention to develop a national Active Transportation Strategy that will guide the government's investment decisions to support future AT networks, promote healthier communities, and strengthen data collection to ensure measurable outcomes.
- Consultations on the Strategy have moved forward quickly with a series of hastily-arranged, but well-attended, online consultation sessions in late March. More than 600 people attended regional calls for Atlantic Canada, Québec, Ontario and Western Canada. GCC attended the Ontario session as well as several meetings between the Active Transportation Alliance and MP Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister McKenna) and representatives of Infrastructure Canada. It also made this [written submission to the federal government](#).
- As co-chair of the Active School Travel Canada (ASTC) working group, GCC coordinated a stand-alone online consultation session focused exclusively on AST. It was attended by more than 30 members as well as government representatives. [Read ASTC's written submission](#).

Seasonal encouragement events.

In light of the continued impact of COVID on the school system, including the delayed March Break and the province-wide closure of schools since mid-April, GCC shortened its [Spring into Spring campaign](#) to the last two weeks of April, cancelled school registration, and focused social media messaging on the general benefits of walking/cycling outside as a healthy activity and break from online learning. [Bike to School Week 2021](#) (week of May 31st), which is organized by CultureLink and Cycle Toronto with some financial support from GCC, was postponed until next year.