Canadian School Travel Planning Facilitator Guide
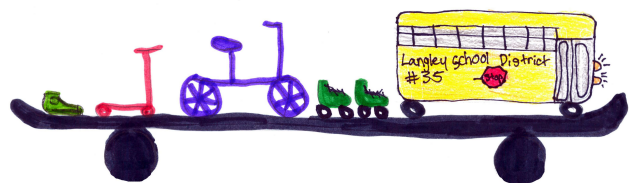
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find new ways to get to School!

Langley School District #35

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Preamble

The recommended approach to School Travel Planning (STP) and the design of the STP Toolkit are the result of the successes and lessons learned during STP projects that have taken place in Canada since November 2007.

From 2010 to 2012 the project Children's Health, Mobility 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. 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.

Surveys took place before and after the project, to gauge family attitudes and practices concerning the school commute and to see how the students traveled to and from school. Baseline surveys showed that 41% of participating students arrived at school in personal vehicles. Even before many Action Plan items had been fully implemented, by March 2012, Follow-up Surveys showed some provinces saw a shift towards active travel of up to six per cent and some individual schools saw a shift of over 20 per cent.

The final results are detailed in a national summary document and video found on line at *www.saferoutestoschool.ca/blog/clasp-results-2012*.

www.saferoutestoschool.ca

1. Introduction to this Guide and the School Travel Planning Process

This guide and the School Travel Planning (STP) Toolkit resources referenced throughout have been prepared to assist STP Facilitators with taking elementary and middle schools through a comprehensive STP process, in collaboration with community stakeholders. The STP process is designed to help deal with travel-related issues at schools and encourage safe, healthy, active travel to and from school.

The STP process has five phases that are detailed in Section 2 of this guide. They are:

- Set Up
- Baseline Data Collection
- Action Plan Development
- Action Plan Implementation
- Evaluation

Phases do overlap. During Baseline Data Collection, after surveys have taken place, an enthusiastic school will often initiate simple ideas identified on a Walkabout; such as small signage changes that can be made early on. Essentially, Action Plan development and implementation have started. Acting fast on ideas at the outset of the STP process is a great way to capitalize on the new project energy of school champions and community stakeholders.

A key component of the STP Toolkit is a *School Travel Plan* template that has the essential building blocks to customize a School Travel Plan for each school all in one place. It is compiled as the STP process unfolds.

The School Travel Plan is started immediately after a school agrees to take part. It can be a simple collection of information, graphs and tables; however, many schools and facilitators like to enhance it with photos, event examples and sometimes engineering drawings of proposed infrastructure changes. The resulting School Travel Plan is a living document intended to be revisited and updated every year.

All five phases of the STP process have STP Toolkit resources and flexible templates to assist with every task. They are referenced throughout this guide and are accessible at *www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit*.
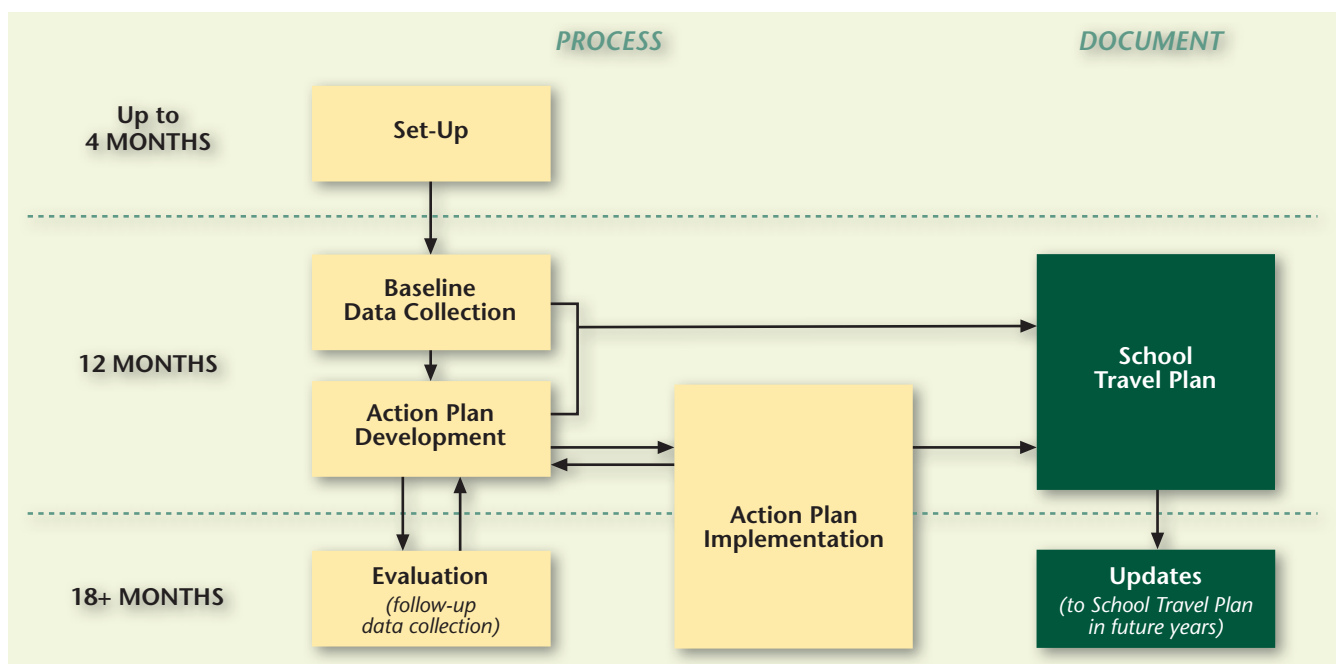
1.1   Benefits

Different stakeholders and champions will focus on those benefits that inspire them or support their daily work. Some include:

Improved physical health

- The current Canadian strategy to combat obesity is to focus on reducing sedentary time and incorporate 60 minutes of physical activity into each day *www.activehealthykids.ca*. Daily exercise is linked to numerous benefits including decreased risk of chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. When parents join their children for an active school journey, they role-model good practices and experience health benefits as well.

Student focus

- Students who have an active morning journey arrive more alert and ready to learn - and studies show they score higher on tests. Physical activity is linked to improved academic performance.

Development of life-long healthy habits

- Using active travel to and from school is an easy and effective way to help children integrate physical activity into their daily lives. Studies show that fitness habits formed prior to age fourteen lead to greater physical activity and health in adulthood.

Sustainable happiness and well-being

- Active travel can contribute to sustainable happiness — that is, happiness that contributes to individual, community and/or global well-being and does not exploit other people, the environment, or future generations. Visit *www.sustainablehappiness.ca* for information. Active school travel increases personal health and well-being, while a child develops independence, appreciation for natural surroundings and community connectedness.

Environmental benefits

- Reducing vehicles trips lowers emissions, helps improve air quality in local neighbourhoods and contributes to a decrease in greenhouse gases that are a key ingredient of global climate change. The *Air Quality and Active Travel* fact sheet, designed with the input of Environment Canada and Health Canada, makes the links and explains the use of the national Air Quality Health Index.

Improved safety for children and neighbourhoods

- More walkers mean more 'eyes on the street.' Walking or biking groups ensure children are not alone, and in a group they are easier to see in traffic.

Reduced costs

- The coordination of effort between agencies can reasonably be expected to result in synergies that save time and cost. For example, after reducing traffic congestion at a school, the need for bylaw enforcement or a principal's time spent dealing with traffic complaints is reduced. Examining school bussing practices can result in restructured schedules and routes to fill empty seats. Safety improvements on routes to school may make it possible for students to use active travel instead of the bus. Public funds for infrastructure can be prioritized based on feedback from a comprehensive STP data collection process, resulting in more effective spending.

Communities easily navigable by all people

- Supportive built environment features (e.g., traffic calming, safe crossings) around schools may encourage more students to use active travel and benefit residents of all ages. Enrique Peñalosa, former Mayor of Bogota, refers to children as a sort of indicator species of the health of a community. He says; "One common measure of how clean a mountain stream is, is to look for trout. If you find the trout, the habitat is healthy. It's the same way with children in a city…If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people." Communities in agreement with this philosophy may be interested in signing the *Active Travel Charter for Children and Youth*.

1.2 Keys to Success

The STP Facilitator

- Provides an essential link between the school and the wider community.
- Is a dedicated lead for the STP process.

Multiple champions

- Are needed at each school to provide the initiative required to get through the process.
- Carry the momentum into subsequent years.

Stakeholders involvement

- Represent a diverse group of community interests to make the process comprehensive and successful.
- Agree to implement relevant action items up front to save time and effort.

School community ownership

- Must own the School Travel Plan; it must be seen as the school's plan, developed by the school community for the benefit of its students.

Incentives for key steps

- Honoraria can emphasize the value of STP work and make it a priority program amongst all those competing for a school's attention and time. Providing honoraria may help to facilitate the collection of follow-up surveys, off-set the cost of teacher release time and make small infrastructure improvements.

The School Travel Plan document

- Helps achieve program sustainability.

A flexible framework

- Allows for links with existing local and regional health and environmental programs.
- Customizes an approach to include provincial and community resources.
- Allows phases to overlap as best suits the community.

AT A GLANCE

Components in each phase of the School Travel Planning process

Set-up
- *Municipal Stakeholder Committee*
- *Schools chosen and approved*
- *School STP Committees*

Baseline Data Collection
- *School Travel Plan started*
- *School profile*
- *Classroom and family surveys*
- *Walkabout*
- *Traffic observation and optional traffic count*
- *Summary of findings*

Action Plan Development
- *Education, active travel strategies and infrastructure planning*

Action Plan Implementation
- *Education*
- *Minor infrastructure*
- *Active travel strategies*
- *Walking/biking best routes*
- *Major infrastructure*

Evaluation
- *Classroom Survey repeated each year*
- *Follow-up Family Survey after significant progress made on Action Plan implementation*
- *Policy development*
- *School Travel Plan updates*

1.3   Responsibilities of Stakeholders

If you are responsible for recruiting, you may find it helpful to refer to the *Facilitator Job Description* template. School and municipal committee participants in Canada universally agree on the importance of having a person dedicated to leading the School Travel Planning process.

There are typically two committee levels involved in School Travel Planning in Canada—a Municipal Stakeholder Committee (one per municipality or one regional committee, depending on the make-up of the local government) and a School STP Committee (one per school). In some jurisdictions a provincial or territorial level committee has also been set up.

The Municipal Stakeholder Committee (that may be part of an existing committee with active transportation within its mandate) is a high-level group of stakeholders that contribute to the process for multiple schools that fall within their geographic region.

The School STP Committees are local-level groups, each working specifically on a plan for their particular school. This could also be part of an existing health or environmental committee within a school. Sometimes a group of neighbouring schools work together in concert with municipal stakeholders to coordinate strategies and save time.

Both committees should agree to a Terms of Reference found in the *STP Toolkit*. This ensures significant stakeholders are aware of their necessary commitment to the STP project.

Municipal Stakeholder Committee member responsibilities

|	
Municipal staff, e.g. transportation engineer, planner, local councillors	• Participate in all Municipal Stakeholder Committee meetings as well as select School STP meetings to provide traffic engineering expertise. • Recommend candidate schools (where possible). • Participate in relevant aspects of data collection. In particular, they must attend the Walkabout and they are the logical stakeholder to spearhead the Traffic Count if this takes place. • Provide any relevant historical data, e.g. crash and injury statistics, major arterial road statistics. • Help to develop Action Plans, especially regarding engineering requirements. • Report and make recommendations to Council as needed about STP requirements and policy changes that could become part of the official neighbourhood and community plans. • Ensure engineering improvements recommended in the School Travel Plan document are included in master municipal plans and budgets (e.g. signage and road crossing upgrades; walking, biking and traffic-calming built infrastructure). • Liaise with schools on ongoing basis to address new issues.
School district/board	• Approve school participation in the program (sometimes this involves a formal review by their ethics committee). • Provide information about current travel-related policies, e.g. bussing plans, parking and bike rack requirements for new school sites. • Provide school site plans and dot maps of where students live when possible. • Participate in monitoring and reviewing the School Travel Plan.
Geographic Information System (GIS) expert or mapping person if available	• Contribute required maps, e.g. for the baseline Family Survey, School Walkabout, and Traffic Count. • Help develop Best Route to School map education pamphlets.

Police/Bylaw Officers (Enforcement) & Safety Education Police Officers	• Provide crime and/or traffic statistics and information on local suspicious stranger reports. • Participate in Walkabout and highlight areas of concern in the neighbourhood. • Assist in the development of the Action Plan. • Participate in traffic safety education and/or personal safety education. • Train and monitor school traffic safety teams, e.g. school crossing patrollers.
Public Health	• Take part in the Walkabout. • Contribute ideas for the Action Plan. • Participate in education of parents and students regarding health, wellness, and safety benefits. • Help develop policies in school districts and regions.
Other local educators and community organizations	Organizations that have similar mandates to STP regarding children's health and well-being, physical activity or safety, may be useful to have on the Municipal Stakeholder Committee. For example, Block Parents, Community Policing volunteers, CAA, local university researchers, or local NGOs and ENGOs. These groups might carry out Action Plan items. In some instances, these groups may want to be involved in the STP process but not as part of the committee. In these cases, the Facilitator may meet with them one-on-one to "pick their brains", while also routinely sending them email information updates and including them on any relevant e-newsletter list.

School STP Committee member responsibilities

School principal or designated project lead	• Participate on the School STP Committee. • Supply information to the STP Facilitator for the School Profile. • Help with relevant aspects of data collection (e.g. distribution of surveys, reminders about deadlines, submission of finished surveys to STP Facilitator, participating in the Walkabout, communicating to parents). • Contribute ideas for the Action Plan. • Champion Action Plan initiatives. • Review the Action Plan. • Sign off on the School Travel Plan. • Communicate STP updates in school newsletters and websites.
Parent Council Executive or Parent representative(s)	• Participate in School STP Committee meetings. • Participate in the Walkabout and Traffic Observation. • Help conduct the Traffic Count if one takes place. • Contribute ideas for the Action Plan. • Champion Action Plan initiatives. • Provide STP updates for school newsletters and websites.
Other school staff	• Data collection, e.g. administer the Classroom Survey. • Link the program to curriculum, i.e. through math, geography, art, drama, writing, etc. • Distribute STP resources and communications. • Educate on safety, health and wellness and active travel benefits. • Strategic programs with students, involving art and healthy activity.
Students	• Graphically portray classroom survey data. • May partake in a Walkabout and Traffic Observation. • Develop and implement action items, e.g. lead Walking School Busses, organize active travel promotion and events. • Older students may participate on the School STP Committee.
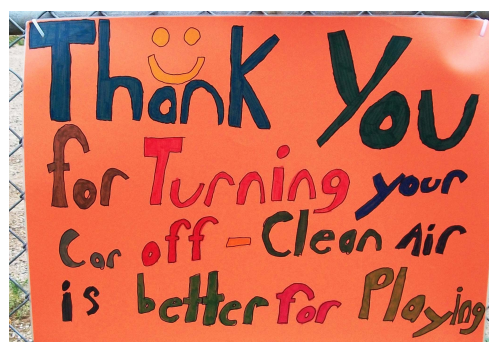
2. The Five Phases; Objectives and Recommended Steps

2.1 Set-up Phase

Objectives

The objectives of the set-up phase are to:

1. *Identify interested municipalities and establish a Municipal Stakeholder Committee in each.*

2. *Select schools and establish a School STP Committee for each.*

3. *Establish timeline.*

4. *Notify school community about project.*

Recommended steps

1. *Identify interested municipalities and establish a Municipal Stakeholder Committee in each.*

   - Choose potential municipalities and approach key decision makers to gauge the level of interest, commitment and resources available for the project. The key decision makers are likely to be transportation planning and engineering managers or municipal councillors. Resources available to assist with this step are a:
     - *Briefing for Decision Makers*
     - *Slide Deck for Stakeholders*

   - Select the municipalities that will participate in STP.

   - A municipality may have an existing committee, with similar active travel and health objectives such as an Active Transportation Committee or an Age-friendly Committee, that already involves the relevant stakeholders and into which the STP process can be incorporated.

   - Develop a list of relevant stakeholders for each chosen municipality. The following

stakeholder groups are critically important to the success of the project: transportation engineering, planning, police and bylaw services (enforcement and safety education), public health/community health, and school district/board (public and Catholic). Additional groups could include: elected officials, local environmental groups, Parks, Recreation and Culture departments etc.

- Make contact with stakeholders; provide information about the project including clarification of roles and responsibilities, and invite them to join the Municipal Stakeholder Committee. The *Introduction for Professionals* is a useful document. The *Child and Youth Friendly Land Use and Transport Planning Guidelines (Guidelines)* will be useful at this stage as well. The *Guidelines* make a strong case for keeping children in mind when we plan our communities. A distinct *Guidelines* document has been created for each province as well as one specific to rural communities. The documents can be found at: **www.kidsonthemove.ca**.

- If school boards/districts express concerns about the liability issues of being involved, you can refer them to the Risk Management webinar and pdf document *Liability for Active School Travel* found on the webinars section (under the "Resources" tab) of **www.saferoutestoschool.ca**.

- Secure stakeholders' commitment to the project with the signing of the *Municipal Committee Statement of Support*.

- Be sure to secure any approvals required from School Boards—this may require you to submit information for review by an ethics committee, which can be a time-consuming process. A useful template is the *School Board Ethics Committee Review Submission*.

- Identify the roles each committee member will play and develop the *Municipal Committee Terms of Reference*.

2. *Select schools and establish a School STP Committee.*

- Have the Municipal Stakeholder Committee members recommend schools that would benefit from School Travel Planning. Gather any pertinent information about the nominated schools to prepare for contacting the schools e.g. location (rural/urban), school type (French Immersion/Special Programs), existing travel issues.

SCHOOL SELECTION CRITERIA

The experience gained to date in Canada indicates that the STP process and tools described in this guide particularly suit schools that are:

- **Elementary or middle (K – grade 8)**
- **Enthusiastic about participating**
- **Prepared to contribute in-kind staff and parent time**
- **Have reasonable opportunities for getting children to use active transportation at least partway**; i.e. most of the students live within a reasonable distance (are not bussed)
- **Connected by routes to school that have the potential to be made safe**.
- **Located in municipalities that are prepared to commit to making STP a priority** and to provide funding for engineering measures that might be required.

Regarding language:

Schools that serve families who do not speak English or French will need to secure funds to translate surveys and parent communication materials for the process to be most effective. Alternatively, some schools that serve a population with many diverse languages address the situation by asking students to verbally translate materials for parents.

This guidebook and the STP Toolkit are available in English and French.

- Contact the principal at potential schools and discuss the benefits of participating in School Travel Planning.

- Share with the principal the *School Travel Plan* template to help explain the framework within which steps will be achieved. You may also provide the *Introduction for Teachers* and the *School Committee Terms of Reference*.

- Follow up with the principal to answer any questions and determine next steps in gaining commitment to the project, which may include an informal presentation to staff or parent council. Parents are critical stakeholders and the *Introduction for Parents* is prepared with that idea in mind.

- Once the principal has agreed to proceed, have her/him sign the *School Agreement*.

- Recruit members for the School STP Committee. At a minimum there will be at least one representative from each of the following stakeholder groups:
  - *School Administration (Principal or VP)*
  - *Teachers*
  - *Parents*
  - *Students*

- The School STP Committee may also include interested local residents, the local elected councillor, Block Parent representatives and/ or local NGO staff, but this may be in an occasional consultant role.

- Some of the approaches used by Canadian STP Facilitators to recruit School STP Committee members include:
  - *Present to established school groups, e.g. parent council.*
  - *Host an exclusive STP information session and promote it via the school newsletter.*
  - *Speak directly to school staff.*

- Finalize the *School Committee Terms of Reference*.

AT A GLANCE

TEMPLATES to use when establishing committees

To share with both committees
- *School Travel Plan*

For the Municipal Stakeholder Committee
- *Municipal Committee Statement of Support*
- *School Board Ethics Committee Review Submission*
- *Municipal Committee Terms of Reference*

For the School STP Committee
- *School Agreement*
- *School Committee Terms of Reference*

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Organization: Have a set agenda and circulate it and any necessary information before the meeting. Take detailed minutes (or have a designated minute-taker do so) and distribute the minutes promptly after each meeting, inviting meeting participants to advise you of corrections or omissions needed for the minutes. Because it can be challenging to schedule group meetings, it is advised that at the first meeting you set up a schedule for the rest of the year and send out a reminder closer to each meeting date.

Handling Interpersonal Conflict: In some cases, the School Travel Planning process is undertaken at a school where problems have been known for a long time but not addressed. Sometimes there are strong opinions about what needs to happen, and strong feelings about who is responsible for past inaction. STP Facilitators must, in such cases, act as a bridge between disparate stakeholder groups—helping overcome resistance and maintaining a positive group dynamic.

Preliminary Discussions: It can be helpful to have preliminary discussions with individual committee members so that they are well informed prior to group meetings. For example, if a report highlights the need for major infrastructure change, it is important to give the municipal traffic engineer time to prepare.

Refreshments: To keep everyone comfortable and happy, it can be a good idea to provide refreshments. If you do not have the budget to cover refreshments on a regular basis, you might find that stakeholders are happy to cover this expense, perhaps taking turns so that no single group incurs a large expense.

Follow up: Be sure to touch base with committee members before the next meeting to remind them of any outstanding action items.

3. Establish a timeline.

Experience has shown that the ideal timeline (Timeline 1) may be delayed; set up could take longer and in the meantime a school's circumstance could change, possibly resulting in a change to the STP timeline.

Use the Timeline of Main Tasks section in your School Travel Plan to set goals for when the main STP tasks will be completed. Planning the timing of the STP work up front ensures stakeholders are aware of when they will be needed to participate in tasks, and allows school events to be integrated into the process. For example, presenting at a planned parent-teacher evening ensures a maximum number of parents (and students) are involved.

There are certain times of year that are better for working with schools. This table looks at two possible timelines.

Possible Timeline Scenarios

			RECOMMENDED TIMELINE 1	EXAMPLE ALTERNATE TIMELINE 2
SET-UP • Municipal Stakeholder Committee established • Schools chosen • School STP Committees established • School Travel Plan started			April June - September	August October - November
BASELINE DATA COLLECTION • Classroom Survey • Family Survey • School Walkabout • Data analyzed, presented • Goals set • School Travel Plan finalized		**ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**	October November June	January February Fall term
EVALUATION • Follow-up Classroom Survey • School Travel Plan update • Further Action Items • Follow-up Family Survey • Data analysis and presentation • School Travel Plan Update			October November April	January February May

4. *Notify school community about project.*

This step is about informing the wider community of the School Travel Plan and the part they will play in its development (such as completing Family Surveys). Communication options include the following:

- *School newsletter and website.* Some schools will use their existing newsletter and/or website as the vehicle for informing parents about the School Travel Plan project. The ***Introduction for Parents*** can usefully be advertised this way and the ***School Newsletter Articles*** tool is a helpful reference. Some schools have active parent councils that maintain their own websites, newsletters and regular electronic bulletins that families subscribe to with password access.

- *Special meeting/presentation:* This can be useful to announce the project, introducing the goals and main components along with an outline of what to expect.

- *Regular school event (e.g. parent-teacher night, parent council meeting):* Piggybacking on an existing school event that involves parents can be a useful way to interact with parents and raise awareness of the project.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Take advantage of any opportunities that arise throughout the project to raise awareness of School Travel Planning. STP Facilitators have hosted booths at school social events or bike rodeos.

One key strategy for raising awareness of the STP project with the entire community is through press coverage. Be sure to submit press releases to your local or provincial/territorial media on a regular basis throughout the project, notifying key media contacts about what's going on, e.g. announcing the project launch, sharing baseline data highlights, and celebrating implementation successes. See ***Media Tips***.

2.2   Baseline Data Collection Phase

Objectives

The objectives of the data collection phase are to:

1. ***Complete the School Profile and establish a Timeline of Main Tasks.***

2. ***Use surveys to gather information about the school and its transportation and safety issues.***

3. ***Collate and analyze the survey information collected.***

4. ***Gather information on a Walkabout and have optional Traffic Counts.***

5. ***Incorporate key findings in the School Travel Plan, and share results.***

AT A GLANCE

TEMPLATES to use for:
Data Collection
- ***School Profile (in School Travel Plan)***
- ***Classroom Survey***
- ***Baseline Family Survey 2012***
- ***Walkabout Instruction and Checklist***
- ***Traffic Observation and Count***

Data Entry
- ***Classroom Survey Data Entry Tool***
- ***Classroom Survey Summary Graphs and Instructions***
- ***Online Data Collection and Entry Instruction***
- ***Family Survey Data Entry Tool 2012***
- ***Family Survey Data Entry Manual 2012***

Recommended steps

**1. Complete the School Profile and establish a Timeline of Main Tasks**

- In the *School Travel Plan* template:
  a. complete the School Profile with input from the school principal.
  b. include final baseline data collection dates on the Timeline of Main Tasks page.

2. Use surveys to gather information about the school and its transportation and safety issues.

- Customize the *Classroom Survey* for each school. This is a paper-based survey for ease of use in class.

- Have teachers conduct the Classroom Survey with a show of hands from their students over five consecutive days, tracking transportation mode **to** and **from** school.

- Decide if your families will have the option to answer a survey
  - *Online*
    or
  - *Paper only*

  Using an online method will reduce the amount of paper required and make data entry and analysis far less time-consuming because no manual data entry is required. If you choose to offer online and paper you must follow the online survey instructions. You will still save time because it is easy to enter the paper responses into the online survey.

- Customize the *Baseline Family Survey 2012* letter for your school. This survey provides important information about the distance students live from school, how they usually get to/from school, barriers to active transportation, parental attitudes on modal choice and safety concerns on common routes. Questions also explore the relationship between school transportation choice and happiness and well-being. NOTE: For the data to be comparable across the country, it is essential that you do NOT alter the wording of any questions and do NOT delete any questions.
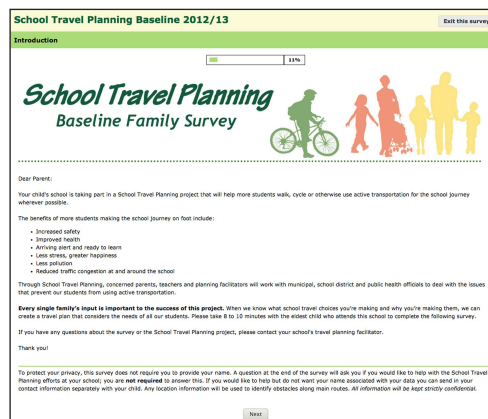
- ONLINE ONLY.
  a. Request your unique school online links for the Baseline Family Survey from Green Communities Canada (info@saferoutestoschool.ca). You will be sent three links.
    - *Parent Link, the ONLY link for public sharing.*
    - *Data Entry Link.*
    - *Administration Link.*
  b. TEST the Parent Link before you send it out on letters or distribute on school websites. Please ensure all online distribution occurs only on secured websites.

- Prepare a map that can be sent home and can be made available for downloading and printing from the school website. The map must provide an aerial view of the neighbourhood served by the school with the school's location clearly marked. It is important that the maps used are clear, detailed, and well-labeled. NOTE: The map must also have a scale bar for families to estimate the distance along their route to school. If your municipality or regional district is providing the map they might be able to add concentric distance rings that provide an easy distance-from-school visual. Otherwise, you might be able to get a map from your school board or find your own map online. Remember to add the scale bar!

- Have Baseline Family Survey letters and maps sent home to each family, asking they be returned to the school one week later. If you are providing the paper option of the survey, send that home too.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL SURVEYING

Make the process easy for schools: If you have the budget for it, offer to make the copies needed, although some schools may find it simple to do this themselves. A municipal stakeholder committee member might be able to provide a large map that can be displayed at the school upon which parents and students can draw their routes.

Advertise widely: Ensure parents are aware of where to find the online survey link, and remind them of this a few days before the due date. This will help ensure greater participation numbers and you'll have fewer paper responses to enter online.

Suggest schools offer incentives: To increase response rates for the Family Survey, suggest that schools offer an extra recess or a swim pass to a local pool if a return rate higher than 50% or 75% is achieved. Your municipal committee stakeholders can help suggest an appropriate incentive.

3. *Collate and analyze the survey information collected.*

   - Complete data entry and analysis of Classroom Surveys.

     a. Since it is a fairly quick task to enter the results of the Classroom Surveys and generate summary graphs, the STP Facilitators usually handle it. If volunteers are recruited, be sure they have great attention to detail, so that you can be confident your data is accurate. Enter the data into the Excel, *Classroom Survey Data Entry Tool*.

     b. Use graphs for easy sharing of mode share numbers with each school and municipal stakeholders. They are simple to generate using the Excel tool *Classroom Survey Summary Graphs and Instructions*.

     c. Place the summary graphs into the School Travel Plan.

     d. Submit completed Excel data-entry files for the Classroom Surveys to Green Communities Canada

(info@saferoutestoschool.ca) so that the data can be included in national-level analysis.

- Complete data entry and analysis of Family Surveys.

- ONLINE ONLY.

  a. Easy to follow steps are laid out in the *Online Data Collection and Entry Instruction*. This explains how and when to use the Data Entry Link and Administrator LInk provided to you by Green Communities Canada.

  b. If paper surveys were also collected, enter those responses using the Data Entry Link.

  c. After the due date for the online survey has passed and any paper surveys have been added online, the facilitator must request to have the Parent Link CLOSED. Email Green Communities Canada with your request (info@saferoutestoschool.ca).

  d. When the Parent Link is closed, you will then be able to extract information using the Administrator Link. Copy and paste your extracted information into the *Family Survey Data Entry Tool 2012* and safely file this so you can produce graphs; review the map-related answers; and, use again when processing the Follow-up Family Survey data at a later date.

- PAPER ONLY.

  a. Keep in mind that whoever enters the data using the paper-only method needs to be skilled in Excel. Allocate approximately one week to complete data entry if using the paper-only method of data survey collection; a task that may be done by municipal staff, senior high school or college students, school staff, parents or the facilitator.

  b. Provide the *Family Survey Data Entry Tool 2012* and *Family Survey Data Entry Manual 2012* to the assigned data entry person.

- The facilitator should monitor the process to ensure accurate data entry takes place. The completed Family Survey Data Entry Tool 2012

file will be recalled for entering Follow-up Family Survey responses at a later date.

- Extract graphs from the completed data, an easy process using the Family Survey Data Entry Tool 2012 that also allows comparison between baseline and follow-up data on the same graph. Particularly useful baseline graphs will be the ones your committees need to consider when creating an Action Plan. For example, you might want to use graphs that show:

    - *Comparison of transportation mode chosen in am vs pm.*
    - *Main reasons for driving.*
    - *Distance to school.*
    - *I would allow my child to walk to school if…*

- Place graphs into the "Baseline Data Collection - summary of findings" section of your School Travel Plan.

- Review your filed Family Survey Data Entry Tool 2012 for the map-related answers. The recorded information can provide an individual profile of use and problems on the roads and streets near the school. You can identify the:

    - *Problem intersections.*
    - *Other hazards or safety concerns.*

    a. Use a large map to feature:

    - *All the routes and intersection crossings currently used.*
    - *Problem intersections, hazards and safety concerns.*

    b. This information can be put towards developing Walking School Bus routes and a Best Routes to School map.

- To develop comprehensive Best Routes to School maps it is necessary to collect other information that helps determine the routes including: neighbourhood clusters of family homes; suitable walking and biking facilities for families; speed, volume and type of vehicle traffic on roads; personal safety considerations; air quality and a natural and interesting environment for children. For further information please see the section on Best Route to School Mapping in the *Action Plan Inspiration Guide*.

- Be sure to contact any parents who indicated a desire to be involved on Baseline Family Surveys, and determine how to meaningfully include them in the project.

- Record summary notes of the Walkabout findings in your School Travel Plan. It can be especially useful to include photographs in this section so that the information is of use to anyone who was unable to attend in person.

- Take the tabulation sheets from the Traffic Observation and Count and summarize the findings into your School Travel Plan.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Schools often choose to use the STP survey process as a learning opportunity for their students.

Senior students may gain much from a practical application of their knowledge when calculating averages, percentages and graphing responses by class and/or school-wide.

Students may also enjoy conducting their own Walkabout, or mapping out common routes and barriers based on the Family Surveys.

Students may also create artwork that addresses issues raised in the survey process such as traffic speed, idling vehicles, pedestrian safety, or that encourages driving families to walk all or partway to school.

Green Communities' Canada Walks strives to provide a strong base of carefully researched curriculum links that coordinate School Travel Planning activities and principles with curriculum outcomes for each province and territory. Our inaugural piece is available for all provinces and the Yukon as well as one version specially designed for rural and remote communities. See: *Sustainable Happiness and Health Education Teacher's Guide* available with companion resources at *www.sustainablehappiness.ca*.

4. ***Gather information on a Walkabout, and have optional Traffic Counts.***

- Conduct a Walkabout. This data collection tool is critical because it gets stakeholders to take the time to actually walk through the neighbourhood surrounding the school, viewing the journey through a child's eyes. By doing so, stakeholders develop a better understanding of the issues being faced by students and their families. The ***Walkabout Instruction and Checklist*** may be used for this event. Items for action are often identified on the day of the Walkabout and then they can be recorded along with a task person in the Action Plan section of the School Travel Plan.

- Conduct a Traffic Observation and a Traffic Count, which involve stationing people at each entrance to the school to track items such as: number of pedestrians/cyclists/vehicles arriving via that entrance, unsafe behaviour such as illegal parking or U-turns, unsafe crossing of roads by pedestrians, etc. Depending on the support personnel you have this may be a traffic observation exercise only or it may include a traffic count, on one or more days. Available to assist is the ***Traffic Observation and Count*** template.

- A full week-long traffic count yields extremely valuable information; however, even a 3-day traffic count (which would be the minimum recommended) is quite labour-intensive, requiring many people to observe and count for 30+ minutes at both the beginning and end of each school day. If you have the budget for it, you may want to offer honoraria to volunteers if available. Some STP Facilitators have had success recruiting eager college or university students studying geography, planning or environmental studies to help with this task. Municipal transportation departments will have established systems and forms for collecting traffic count information and may prefer to use their own approach.

5. ***Incorporate key findings in the School Travel Plan, and share the results.***

- Once you have reviewed the collected data, write a summary of the findings from all of the baseline survey tools. This will help determine each school's goals and guide the development of each Action Plan. Record summary findings in your School Travel Plan. Elements you could include are:

  - *Method. Outline the purpose, how the data was collected and the response rates.*

  - *Modes of travel. Summarize the various modes of travel and the percentage of children using each mode. Graphs work well for this.*

  - *Danger spots/key sites. Summarize the key locations of concern and describe the issues. Maps and photos are useful here.*

  - *Road safety issues. Summarize concerns from the perspective of children, parents/caregivers and other key informants.*

  - *Action points to be addressed. List suggested issues for the Committee to discuss and include in the Action Plan.*

- Circulate the summary findings section of the School Travel Plan to both the Municipal Stakeholder Committee and the School STP Committee.

- It is highly recommended that highlights, including key graphs documented in the baseline findings section are shared with parents through school newsletters, bulletin boards, etc. Making the summary findings available by request to interested parents is another option.

- If there are any stakeholders in the wider community who might have an interest in the school's transportation issues, they should also receive a copy of the summary findings along with an invitation to submit any feedback or Action Plan ideas for consideration. For example, nearby businesses that have parking issues with parents, or community centres nearby that use the same walking paths may have an interest.

- A Walkabout Summary example is in the *Community Samples* section of the STP Toolkit.

2.3   Action Plan Development Phase

Objectives

The objectives of the action plan development phase are to:

1. *Write an Action Plan.*

2. *Consult with stakeholders about the Action Plan.*

3. *Complete the School Travel Plan and have stakeholders approve it.*

Recommended steps

1. *Write an Action Plan.*

   - A customizable Action Plan for each school is found in the School Travel Plan you have started to compile. You are likely to have initiated an Action Plan at the stakeholder meeting held after the Walkabout. You will meet with the School STP Committee to brainstorm ideas for addressing the identified challenges to further develop the Action Plan. It may take a few meetings over a period of a couple of months to discuss the issues and fully develop the Action Plan. Be sure to arrive at any meeting prepared with detailed notes about Action Plan items that came up during previous meetings/discussions.

   - As a group, prioritize problem areas and potential solutions and choose the items that will be included in the Action Plan. To assist in solutions brainstorming we created an *Action Plan Inspiration Guide* that details real life examples from communities and schools across Canada.

   - As issues and solutions are determined by the committees, the STP Facilitator is expected to update the Action Plan section of the School Travel Plan.

   - Be sure to invite relevant members from your Municipal Stakeholder Committee to action planning meetings with the School STP Committee to provide specialist input at critical points. If your budget (and timeline)

permits, you might want to organize a regional symposium that brings together representatives from the Municipal Stakeholder Committee and representatives from multiple schools to network and brainstorm solutions together. Alternately, a local stakeholder might be able to arrange interactive webinars.

- The STP Facilitator should be familiar with existing organizations/programs that have goals that overlap with STP goals (e.g. health organizations, eco-school certifications) and to liaise with these organizations when it makes sense.

- Explore all possible solutions including engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and policy strategies. It is important to consider the broader community and road environment, and not to focus solely on the area immediately around the school.

- Make sure that Action Plan items are clear, measurable (if possible), realistic, address who is responsible, and have a deadline.

- Some facilitators have the capacity to take a very hands-on role in the schools, e.g. leading kick-off assemblies, coordinating student activities, conducting safety training, and/or overseeing student active transportation clubs. Other facilitators provide suggestions about these types of actions but leave the responsibility for implementing these ideas to others on the team. When a facilitator is very hands-on in the schools, often a lot of momentum builds because there is a motivated, knowledgeable individual devoting time to the project. With this approach it is necessary to identify school champions to continue momentum beyond the first year when the facilitator takes a less active role in STP at that school.

- When a facilitator cannot be strongly involved in schools, it is absolutely necessary to be in touch and provide resources so that momentum can build within the school. STP needs to be sustainable for the long-term. How much you are able to do will depend on how many schools you are expected to work with at any given time and on the travel time for getting to the schools.

2. ***Consult with stakeholders about the Action Plan.***

- Seek feedback from the school community and stakeholders on the Action Plan. This is an important step to gain buy-in and support from the entire school community. This step can be as simple as notifying the school community that the draft Action Plan is available and inviting interested people to request a copy and provide feedback. Alternately, a more structured approach can be taken—see "Ideas for Seeking Community Input" below for some feedback-generating options. A feedback period of three to four weeks is recommended.

- Continue to update the Action Plan section of the School Travel Plan as necessary, based on feedback from the school community.

3. ***Complete the School Travel Plan and have stakeholders approve it.***

- Once the Action Plan is finalized, your School Travel Plan is almost ready for sign-off by lead stakeholders. One more meeting might be required to discuss ongoing monitoring and updates in future years. For a sample of a completed School Travel Plan document, look under the STP Toolkit section ***Community Samples***.

- Circulate the School Travel Plan to committee members for review. Incorporate any feedback and obtain the committee lead signatures.

IDEAS FOR SEEKING COMMUNITY INPUT

Create an Action Plan summary and distribute it to all parents, interested businesses and school neighbours, encouraging them to provide feedback. For example, list key action items and place "YES" and "NO" check-boxes beside each to indicate support (or not) for the initiative.

Create a display using photos of key issues along with the recommended Action Plan items for dealing with the issues. Publicize the display and ideally showcase it during a school event such as a parent-teacher evening. Provide a simple feedback mechanism such as green sticky dots for agreement and red sticky dots for disagreement so that the parents can easily record their feedback directly on the display.

Remember to seek the input of all parents and the wider school community as well as any stakeholders that were not active in the development of the plan (but ideally should have been). It will be difficult to implement an Action Plan that contains tasks assigned to a stakeholder who has not agreed beforehand to carry out the tasks. Seeking buy-in at this stage is crucial to successful implementation.

2.4   Action Plan Implementation Phase

Objectives

The objectives of the implementation phase are to:

1. *Facilitate the implementation of Action Plan items.*

2. *Inform the school community of the impact of implemented strategies.*

Recommended steps

1. *Facilitate the implementation of Action Plan items.*

   - Implementation of short-term items such as signage changes, curriculum resource sharing and the set up of walk to school days may start very soon after baseline data has been collected. Ensure to communicate all actions to stakeholders, record implementation dates in the Action Plan section of the School Travel Plan, and create celebration opportunities where they are warranted and welcomed.

   - Announce the completion of the School Travel Plan, e.g. through school newsletters, bulletin boards, school website, presentations at parent council meetings, and/or media releases. Some schools choose to launch their plan to the community by holding an event (often during a regular assembly) with key stakeholders present to mingle with parents, residents and other community or business members impacted by the plan.

   - Oversee the implementation process.

   - Undertake any of the Action Plan items you are responsible to implement.

   - Coordinate ongoing committee meetings. The School STP Committee will need to meet regularly to monitor progress and discuss/solve any problems that have arisen with particular Action Plan items.

   - Identify and remove obstacles to Action Plan implementation—troubleshoot.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

Don't be discouraged if things do not proceed exactly as planned during implementation. It often takes longer than expected to implement some Action Plan items, particularly those tasks that require input from other groups such as municipal councils or school boards; for example, some municipalities have very long wait lists for new sidewalk construction. Be patient, but persistent.

Consider safety when prioritizing implementation. For example, do not begin encouraging walkers to use routes in need of safety-related infrastructure upgrades until that infrastructure work is complete. Safety is always the key consideration and some interim measures such as adult-led walking groups may help make a route safer than it was until built upgrades can take place.

As the end of year one approaches, it is integral to the School Travel Planning process that the STP Facilitator prepare the school to address future travel issues with less reliance on the facilitator's involvement.

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2. *Inform the school community of the impact of implemented strategies.*

   - Celebrating milestones in the implementation process can maintain visibility of and enthusiasm for the School Travel Plan and to retain interest by recognizing people's input. These celebrations can be large or small, e.g. an article in the school newsletter announcing the completion of a task, an article in the community newspaper, a special school event, or a large event involving a cluster of schools. In addition to describing any completed action items, be sure to emphasize the impact those changes will have on students, parents, school staff and the wider community.

2.5   Evaluation Phase

Objectives

The objectives of the ongoing monitoring phase are to:

1. ***Conduct follow-up data collection.***

2. ***Compile and analyze the data.***

3. ***Communicate successes locally.***

4. ***Communicate results and lessons learned.***

5. ***Update the School Travel Plan and monitor changes.***

Recommended steps

1. ***Conduct follow-up data collection.***

   - Have teachers conduct the Classroom Survey with their students over five consecutive days, tracking transportation mode to and from school (Use the same *Classroom Survey* template as in baseline). It is recommended this first follow-up Classroom Survey take place one year after baseline was conducted, in order to compare before and after numbers under similar weather conditions and school calendar events. This simple survey can be carried out again in subsequent years.

   - Decide if your families will have the option to answer a survey
     - ***Online***
       or
     - ***Paper only***

   - Complete the Follow-up Family Survey process.

     a. Customize the parent letter in the *Follow-Up Family Survey 2012* template for your school and ONLY edit the yellow areas. Unlike at baseline, this survey will not include a map.

     b. After a few Action Plan items have been implemented, send home the Follow-Up Family Surveys, due one week later. It is advised this take place after the Classroom Survey in order to allow a little more time for Action Plan items to have an effect and

so engage busy parents at a time that it is most worthwhile of their attention. Schools may want to consider offering an incentive or prize to improve response rates.

   - ONLINE ONLY.

     a. Request your unique school Parent Link to the online Follow-up Family Survey from Green Communities Canada (info@saferoutestoschool.ca). This is the link you will advertise via letters home and at secure school websites managed by the school or parent councils. You will also be provided with a Data Entry Link and an Administrator Link for data analysis of the Follow-Up Family Survey responses.

2. ***Compile and analyze the data.***

   - Complete data entry and analysis of Classroom Surveys.

     a. As at baseline it is a fairly quick task to enter the results of the Classroom Surveys and to generate summary graphs. STP Facilitators usually handle this task. Data from this survey may be entered into the Excel *Classroom Survey Data Entry Tool*.

     b. Create graphs showing key data for each school similar to those you created for the baseline data; but this time include comparisons between the baseline and follow-up results.

     c. Update your School Travel Plan Evaluation section with these graphs.

   - Complete data entry and analysis of Family Surveys.

   - ONLINE ONLY.

     a. As in the baseline data collection phase, refer to the *Online Data Collection and Entry Instruction*. This explains the use of the Data Entry and Adminstrator Links step-by-step.

     b. To access your data send a request to Green Communities Canada (info@saferoutestoschool.ca) to CLOSE the Parent Link. Do this after parents have

completed the online survey and after any paper surveys have been entered online.

c. By simple cut and paste, place the data into the filed Family Survey Data Entry Tool 2012 that already contains the school's baseline family data.

d. After you cut and paste the Excel data, follow the simple instructions to generate graphs that compare baseline data with this follow-up data.

- PAPER ONLY.

a. Assign someone skilled in Excel to enter the data manually into the Family Survey Data Entry Tool 2012 Excel sheet that already contains the school's baseline data. The person tasked with this can refer to the *Family Survey Data Entry Manual 2012* for instruction.

- Generate graphs, that compare baseline to follow-up, from the Family Survey Data Entry Tool 2012.

- Enter the most relevant graphs for your school's needs into the Evaluation section of the School Travel Plan.

- Use the graphs in presentations to Mayor and council, school boards, committees, school parent councils, and any other interested organizations.

3. Communicate successes locally.

Keep the school community informed about any key information that comes out of the follow-up data collection, i.e. through school newsletters, school websites or local media.

4. Communicate results and lessons learned.

- Completed School Travel Plans may be submitted electronically to Green Communities Canada (info@saferoutestoschool.ca) for use in research. They are only shared publically with permision of the school; the privacy of each school is maintained.

- When STP Facilitators have news to share, they are encouraged to submit ideas for articles for the national STP newsletter (info@saferoutestoschool.ca).

5. Update the School Travel Plan and monitor changes.

- Remember that a School Travel Plan is a living document that continues to evolve. Once the initial School Travel Plan is written, it will need to be revisited and updated on a regular basis. Regular, but less frequent, meetings will need to be held by the committees. Implementation will continue. Completed Action Plan items will be checked off with a completion date and new ideas will be added to the Action Plan.

- Follow-up data collection should ideally be conducted every year using the Classroom Survey. The Walkabout and Traffic Observation and Counts are also very useful to conduct periodically, perhaps once every other year. Ideally, by this stage, the Facilitator will have greatly diminished his or her role with this school and any ongoing data collection will be coordinated by the School STP Committee. In some cases the Facilitator will continue overseeing this task.

- Schools are encouraged to submit their data summaries from ongoing data collection to Green Communities Canada (info@saferoutestoschool.ca) for inclusion in national analysis.

3. STP Toolkit Resource List

3.1 Resources

On-line access for Toolkit documents (listed below) is at: **www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit**.

Program set-up

- Slide Deck for Stakeholders
- Facilitator Job Description
- Briefing for Decision Makers

Municipal Stakeholder STP Process

- Municipal Committee Statement of Support
- Municipal Committee Terms of Reference
- School Board Ethics Committee Review Submission
- Introduction for Professionals

School Stakeholder STP Process

- School Agreement
- School Committee Terms of Reference
- School Travel Plan
  This document includes:
    - *School Profile*
    - *Timeline of Main Tasks*
    - *Action Plan*
- Introduction for Parents
- Introduction for Teachers

Data collection and evaluation

Student

- Classroom Survey *for baseline and follow-up*
- Classroom Survey Data Entry Tool
- Classroom Survey Graphs and Instructions

Family

- Baseline Family Survey 2012
- Online Data Collection and Entry Instruction
- Follow-Up Family Survey 2012
- Family Survey Data Entry Tool 2012
- Family Survey Data Entry Manual 2012

Walkabout and Traffic Observation

- Walkabout Instruction and Checklist
- Traffic Observation and Count

Communication and education resources

- School Newsletter Articles
- Media Tips
- Action Plan Inspiration Guide
- Air Quality and Healthy Active Travel - understanding the connection and use of the air quality health index (AQHI) tool
- Active Travel Charter for Children and Youth
- Sustainable Happiness and Health Education Teacher's Guide

Community samples

- School Travel Plans
- Walkabout Summary
- Traffic Count Summary
- Policy

Lead organizations

Green Communities' Canada Walks is grateful to our many contributing partners and schools across Canada for their part in the development of School Travel Planning. Thank you to the **lead provincial and territorial organizations** of the Children's Mobility, Health and Happiness: A Canadian School Travel Planning Model project, listed below.

Alberta - Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere (SHAPE)

British Columbia - The Hub for Active School Travel (HASTe)

Manitoba - Green Action Centre, Active & Safe Routes to School program

New Brunswick - The New Brunswick Lung Association

Newfoundland and Labrador - City of St. John's Department of Recreation

Northwest Territories - Yellowknife Education District #1

Nova Scotia - Ecology Action Centre, Active & Safe Routes to School program

Nunavut - Government of Nunuvut, Population Health

Ontario - Green Communities Canada, Active & Safe Routes to School program

Prince Edward Island - Recreation PEI

Québec - Vélo Québec

Saskatchewan - Saskatchewan *In Motion*

Yukon - The Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon