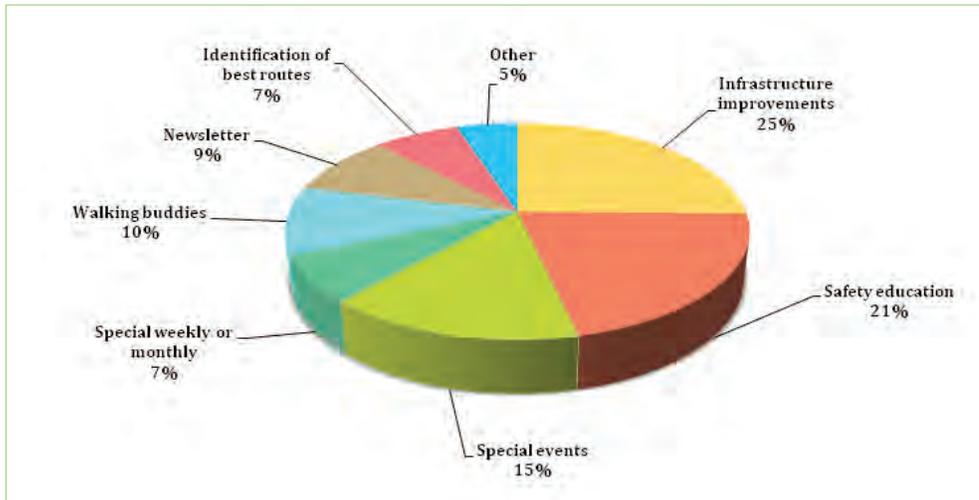




## Helping families choose active school travel

### CLASP project reverses trend, identifies best practices



Parents cite the top four STP interventions as infrastructure improvements, education, active travel events and walking groups, indicating these may be fundamental elements to increasing active school travel.

Final data from our *Children's Mobility, Health and Happiness: A Canadian School Travel Planning Model* project shows that **41% of children were driven to school** before we started School Travel Planning initiatives at participating schools.

After STP projects began to improve street infrastructure, increase awareness of the benefits of active travel and establish walking and cycling groups, the project saw a one per cent shift of children being driven to using active transportation. Increases varied significantly by school, ranging up to 20%, so the modest average national shift is encouraging considering the short time

frame in which many schools conducted the project. The effects of School Travel Planning will likely be better realized after longer implementation periods such as have been documented in New Zealand.

The data also revealed that over 1100 of the near 7000 families who responded in follow-up surveys have cut down their driving for the trip, reducing traffic congestion by as much as 28% around some schools.

Bruce Krentz, a parent at Westwood School in Thompson, MB, likes what School Travel Planning has done for his children. He says "Having them walk and

*Continued on page 3...*

### Wismer Public School reduces traffic by 28%

National data from the *Children's Mobility, Health and Happiness* project was crowned by results from Wismer Public School in Markham, Ontario, which saw a 28% decrease in car usage and a 20% increase in walking to school.

Public Health Nurse and acting STP Facilitator Sharon Delurey says that Wismer was ripe for the change. With a driving rate of 70-80% before STP interventions, there was much room for improvement. However, the 509 students at the school come from families that speak 35 different languages so on the surface, mounting a campaign to convince families to walk didn't seem like it would be easy.

Principal Dr. Debbie Donsky rallied teachers to help students understand the importance of active school travel. Students were encouraged to translate STP messages to their parents from English. It helped that STP was parceled with the Healthy Schools programs, says Delurey, "The school felt hugged. We took it seriously but we made it fun."

Part of the fun was a launch event that engaged the STP committee and got students excited about walking. The school called out the media and brought in dignitaries for a whole-school walk with healthy snacks and they had some

*Continued on page 2...*

### Provincial and Territorial Partners:

<b>Alberta</b> SHAPE Alberta	<b>Prince Edward Island</b> Recreation PEI	<b>Nunavut</b> Government of Nunavut	<b>Nova Scotia</b> Ecology Action Centre	<b>Québec</b> Vélo Québec
<b>British Columbia</b> HASTE BC	<b>Newfoundland &amp; Labrador</b> City of St. John's	<b>New Brunswick</b> New Brunswick Lung Association	<b>Saskatchewan</b> Saskatchewan <i>in motion</i>	
<b>Manitoba</b> Green Action Centre	<b>Northwest Territories</b> Yellowknife Education District No. 1	<b>Ontario</b> Green Communities Canada	<b>Yukon</b> Recreation and Parks Association / Yukon	

# Hurray for our top performing schools!

We celebrate the following schools' overwhelming success with the CLASP project.

## Greatest shift in walking on the way to school

- Wismer Public School, Markham, ON - 20%
- Queensborough Middle School, New Westminster, BC – 12%
- Woodlawn School, Steinbach, MB – 12%
- École Gron Morgan, Thunder Bay, ON - 12%
- St. Matthews Elementary, St. John's, NL - 10%

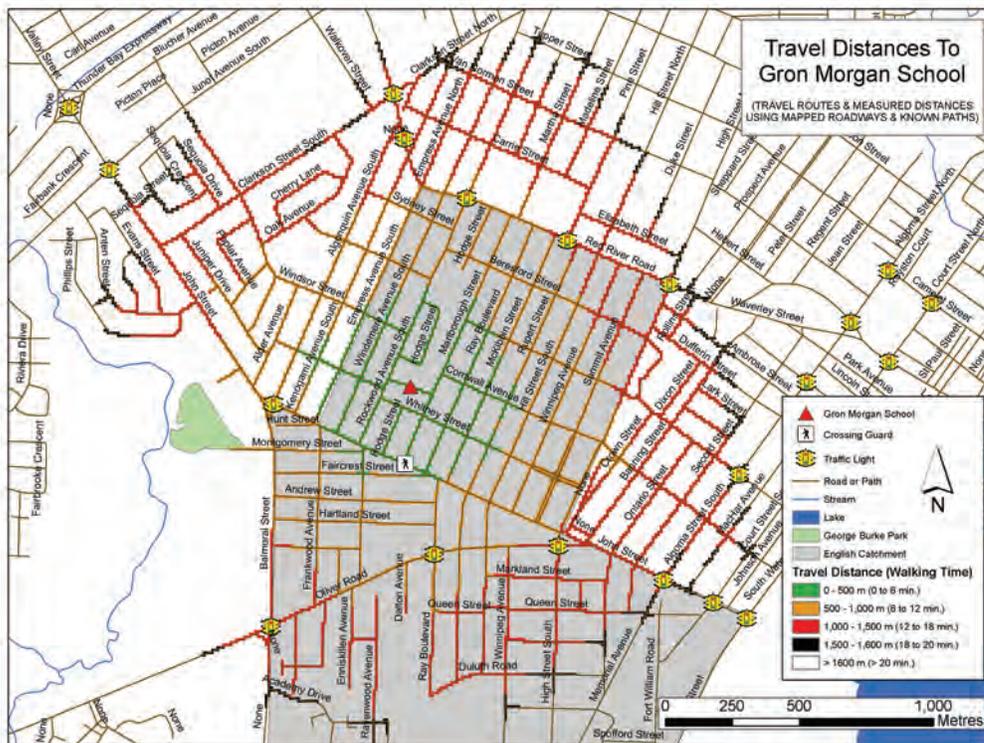
## Greatest shift in walking on the way home from school

- R.F. Downey Public School, Peterborough, ON - 21%
- Corpus Christi School, Thunder Bay, ON – 14%
- Wismer Public School, Markham, ON - 13%
- St. Matthews Elementary, St. John's, NL - 12%

## Wismer continued...

great giveaways donated by the Heart & Stroke Foundation. The excitement carried on for weeks afterward with Walking Wednesday themes, prizes and stickers that encouraged children to use active transportation.

For the future, Delurey plans to set a culture of walking with incoming students as quickly as possible. "Reaching out to Kindergarten students will be key," she says. "We just have to give parents some supporting data and ask them to let their children walk and cycle; the rest is easy and fun."



Each week, walking students at Wismer Public School put a different coloured dot on a giant catchment map at or near their homes. As the map changed colour each week, students began to figure out where others lived and began to make connections outside of school hours as well, adding to the community cohesion at this relatively new school.

**At left** - GIS software is used to produce a Travel Distances map that informs the development of Best Routes to School at School Travel Planning schools in Thunder Bay.

## Thunder Bay uses GIS for best routes mapping

Geographic Information System (GIS) software is being used to identify the best routes for Thunder Bay's first ever School Travel Planning (STP) project. ArcGIS software, developed by Environment Research Institute Incorporated (ESRI), is being used to assess both the distance and risks associated with routes between the homes of both students and teachers and their school. Layers of mapped data identify walking and biking facilities; traffic volume and speed limits; the presence/absence of both sidewalks

and traffic controls; and the level of slope along routes, which is especially important for cyclists.

In combination with feedback from the school families through the STP process, this layered mapping can help identify where planning efforts can be focused and allow partners to assess the effects of proposed infrastructure changes before money is spent to implement them.

We will follow the results of the Thunder Bay Best Routes Mapping

exercise. It will be interesting to see a quantified measure of risk associated with available routes children may use to travel to school.

If your STP team is interested in exploring the option of using GIS for planning exercises, ArcGIS software is available for free or at reduced cost to non-profit and educational institutions (visit [www.esri.ca](http://www.esri.ca) for more information).



# Health and transportation strategies include STP

**Nova Scotia** released a new *Thrive!* strategy to address childhood obesity and preventable chronic disease by focusing on healthy eating and physical activity. The strategy strongly supports active transportation for children and youth, especially under directive #4; "Plan and Build Healthier Communities." This strategy adds \$2 million in new funding to current provincial funding for healthy eating and physical activity for children and youth. For more information, see: <http://tinyurl.com/6uc6raj>.

In **New Westminster, BC**, STP Facilitator Mike Smith, Deanna Tan Francoeur (Fraser Health), and Jonina Campbell (NW School Trustee) recently got a motion passed with Board of Education to have support for School Travel Planning policy as part of the updated New Westminster Master Transportation Plan.

**Ottawa's** new comprehensive Transportation Demand Management strategy identifies School Travel Planning as its main tool targeting schools and commits to continued financial support through 2014. See <http://tinyurl.com/7gmn9je>.

In addition, **Ottawa Public Health** has released a new Healthy Eating & Active Living strategy that identifies active travel as a strategic priority. The strategy includes a commitment to roll out Active and Safe Routes to School initiatives at 30 schools and they are involved in STP school-level and municipal-level committees.

**Interior Health British Columbia** recently released an obesity fact sheet that specifies school travel plans as part of a strategy for creating and maintaining the conditions for healthy weight so that children can have the healthiest possible lives. See the fact sheet here: <http://tinyurl.com/cljmx7>.

## Resources

The Cool Routes to School program at Queensborough Middle School in New Westminster, BC was highlighted at a healthy community trade show in Vancouver in April. See the video at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3E5A1b4eL4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3E5A1b4eL4).

Walkscore has done it again! In addition to finding out a community walkscore, you can now find your bike score to gauge bikeability. Check it out at [www.walkscore.com/bike](http://www.walkscore.com/bike).

Will Stroet's songs and videos are great tools for getting students pumped about walking and cycling. See "I'm Going to Walk" at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=I49H01C6adQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I49H01C6adQ) and "Bike Safety Boogie" at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=dStGTWZIZHY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dStGTWZIZHY).



The Shatford Trail connector in Hubbards, Nova Scotia was officially opened on April 27, 2012. Congratulations to the group of dedicated volunteers who made it happen!

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## What we do...

### Canada Walks

works to change the current social paradigm so that walkable communities are the cultural and social norm in Canada.

### Green Communities Canada

is a national association of non-profit organizations that deliver innovative, practical environmental solutions to Canadian households and communities.

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*The views expressed herein represent the views of the Children's Mobility, Health and Happiness: A Canadian School Travel Planning Model project and do not necessarily represent the views of the project funders.*

*As a participant in Coalitions Linking Action and Science for Prevention (CLASP) strategic initiative of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, Green Communities Canada welcomes the news of a second mandate for the Partnership as announced on March 10, 2011 by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Working with the Partnership, we have already made excellent progress toward shared approaches to cancer & chronic disease prevention and look forward to an opportunity to work together in the future.*



COALITIONS LINKING ACTION  
& SCIENCE FOR PREVENTION