



School Travel Planning NEWS

News & information about the Canadian School Travel Planning Project

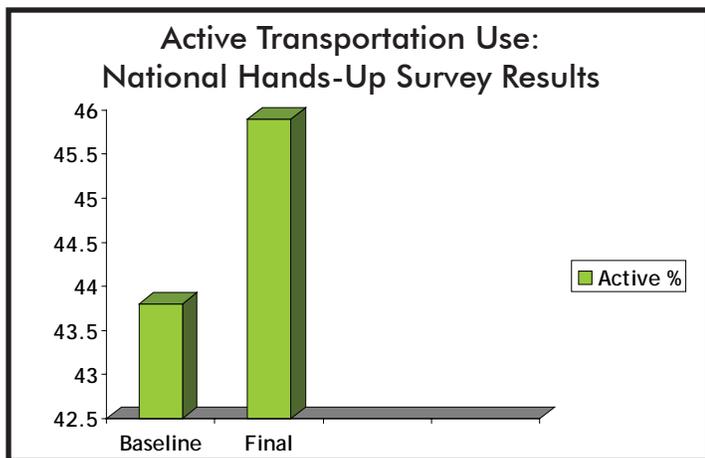
Pilot Project Results are In ... and STP Looks Promising

When year one of the School Travel Planning (STP) process wrapped up at the pilot schools in March 2009, follow-up data was collected at each of the 12 schools. That data was collected via a hands-up classroom student survey as well as a take-home family survey. Anecdotal data was collected about the project through interviews or focus groups with STP committee members. The results have been reviewed and they reveal that STP holds much promise to solve school travel problems over the long term.

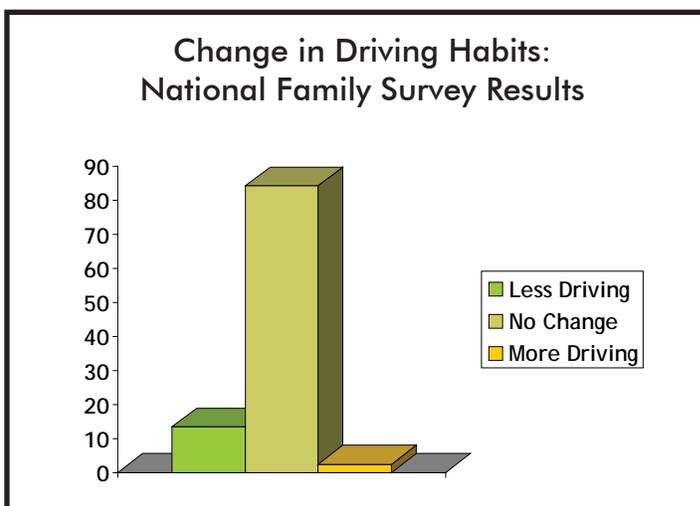
2008/09 Results Highlights

STP Has a Positive Impact on Changing Travel Behavior

- **2.1% overall growth in active transportation across Canada:** National hands-up classroom student survey results showed that rates of active transportation (walking, walking part-way or biking) increased from 43.8% during the baseline measurements to 45.9% during the follow-up measurements.



- **13% of families report driving less:** The family follow-up survey showed significant changes in driving behavior, with over 13% of parents reporting that they now drive less as a result of the STP project.



Other Qualitative Measures of STP Success Noted

- **Improved children's safety:** Increasing the numbers of children using active transportation is not always the key goal for School Travel Planning. At some schools, like John MacNeil Elementary School in NS, most of the students already walk (often out of necessity) but they face unsafe conditions that are addressed through the STP process.
- **Strong stakeholder involvement:** Each province was successful at bringing together most or all of the recommended key stakeholders to be part of the

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Provincial Partners:

Ontario

Green Communities Canada

Nova Scotia

Ecology Action Centre

Alberta

SHAPE Alberta

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan *in motion*

Manitoba

Resource Conservation
Manitoba

British Columbia

HASTE BC

Yukon

Recreation and Parks
Association of the Yukon

Pilot Project Results

process, resulting in broad representation on the STP committees. The pilot project was successful at building relationships between varied stakeholders and starting communities on a path toward collaborative problem solving that in the end will have many positive impacts on the students, their families and the surrounding community.

- **Integration of STP into school culture:** There are some early signs that culture is shifting at pilot schools in favour of active transportation. For example, at Riverview Park Elementary School in British Columbia, components of “walking to school” are now routinely included as part of staff meetings, and walk-to-school events are planned and promoted well in advance.

STP Provides Valuable Information that Facilitates Travel Pattern Improvement

- **Active school travel is more popular in the afternoon:** Across the board, use of active

travel is higher after school than before school. Family follow-up survey data showed that 37% are using active travel to get to school while 44% are using active travel to get home.

- **Parents cite many reasons for driving, not always distance:** When cross-nation results were combined, the family follow-up survey revealed that parents drive their children to school because of weather (21%); convenience/time pressures (18%); and parent already en route somewhere else (17%). There was consistency across all four pilot provinces, except Nova Scotia where distance and traffic danger (15%) were among the main reasons and BC where distance (22%) was the main reason for driving.
- **STP programming can further reduce driving:** Parents who currently drive reported that they would allow their children to walk if they were not alone (40%); or there were reduced traffic dan-

gers (22%). They also reported they would allow children to cycle if they were not alone (33%); or there were reduced traffic dangers (25%). These results indicate there is still great potential for further reducing driving by developing more walking school buses and walking buddies and improving route infrastructure.

STP Collects Data about What Works Best

- **Parents find widely varied STP activities effective:** According to family surveys, the three most effective STP activities are safety education (24%); special events (24%); and infrastructure improvements (19%).

These positive results were all achieved despite the project facing the challenge of working within the funding timeline rather than the recommended STP timeline which coincides with the school year. The 2009/10 school year has great potential to show even better results at the original pilot schools, as more action items are completed.

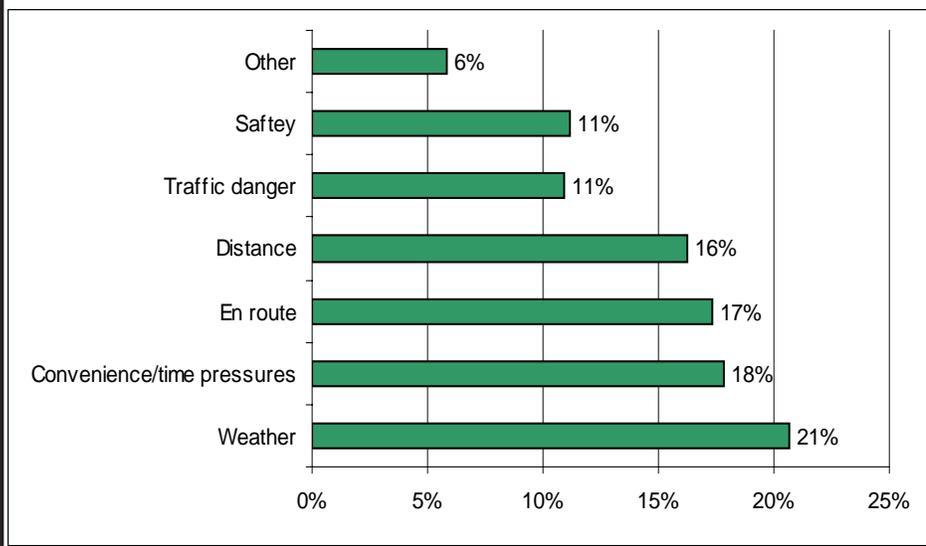
Participant Feedback

Feedback from Municipal STP Steering Committee and School STP Committee members was glowing.

Participants remarked:

- “I would recommend School Travel Planning to other schools because it gets results and brings awareness to all levels: students, parents, teachers, staff.”
- “School Travel Planning jump-started issues that have been on our school community’s mind for some time.”
- “Partnerships/info sharing has been valuable; helped provide clarification re: who to connect with in other stakeholder groups.”

**Main Reasons for Driving to/from School:
National Family Survey Results**



STP AT-A-GLANCE

For readers who are new to STP, this section provides an overview of what School Travel Planning is and how the process works. For more details, visit www.saferoutestoschool.ca/schooltravel.asp.

What is School Travel Planning?

School Travel Planning brings together community stakeholders to identify barriers to active transportation for each school and develop a written action plan for addressing those barriers. The flexibility of the School Travel Plan framework allows communities to customize their approach to fit local circumstances.

Through a five-step process, each school writes a School Travel Plan, with assistance from the community stakeholders, that includes an action plan describing steps they plan to implement such as:

- engineering improvements at or near school sites—e.g. pedestrian crossings, repairs/upgrades to sidewalks, signage;
- introduction of school infrastructure—e.g. bike shelters, bike racks, lockers;
- education—e.g. traffic safety education for pedestrians and cyclists, education about personal security;
- community mobilization—e.g. walking school buses, walking buddies, ride sharing;
- encouragement—e.g. celebrations of physical activity and environment, event days, recognition and rewards for walking/biking.

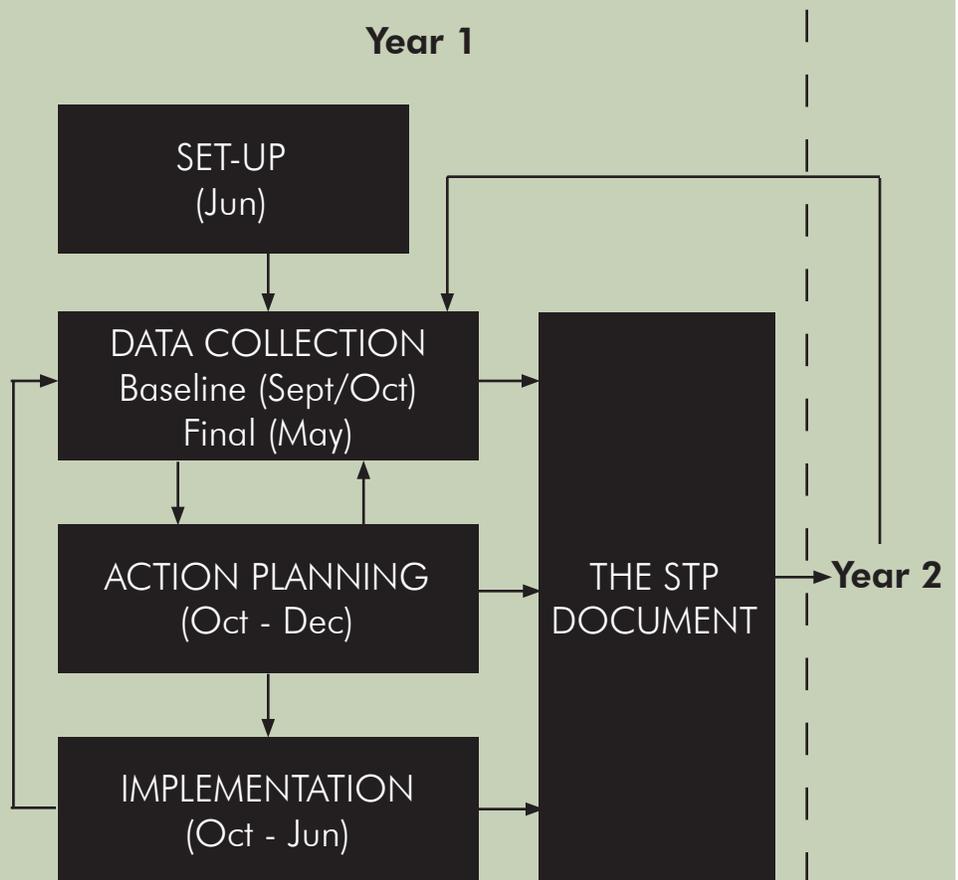


Overview of School Travel Planning Process: The Ideal Timeline

School Travel Planning involves five phases:

1. Program Set-Up
2. Data Collection & Problem Identification
3. Action Planning
4. Implementation
5. Ongoing Monitoring

Experience in the Canadian pilot test of School Travel Planning showed that the process does not, in practice, follow a linear progression. Instead, many of the steps take place simultaneously. The diagram below shows how the five steps of the STP process typically flow. It also notes the ideal timing for these steps—taking into account the best times of year for working with schools. What the diagram does not show is that the School Travel Planning process is ongoing—after year 2, the process continues with new data collection, revision of the plan and implementation of action items. The process is never finished, although certainly the bulk of the effort is needed in the first couple of years of the process.





Celebrating Success

Participating schools in BC, AB and NS enjoyed celebrations of their success before the end of the 2008/09 school year. For example, Alberta pilot schools held celebrations on Earth Day, April 22, during which each student received an "It's Cool to Walk to School" pencil and pencil case along with walk / bike safety pamphlets. Teacher champions received a travel coffee mug. Similar events were held in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, while Waterloo Region in Ontario has opted to hand out their promotional items during a kick-off event in September 2009. Congratulations and a warm thank you to all who took on the challenge of leading the way for School Travel Planning in Canada!

Building Opportunities for Active School Travel in Nova Scotia

One committed pilot school in Nova Scotia has been busy implementing their action plan over the summer. This news comes to us from Cheyenne Dickinson, STP Facilitator in NS.

Members of the STP Committee at Shatford Memorial Elementary School in Hubbards are breaking new ground in support of active school travel – or at least they will be soon.

Plans are in the works to build a connector trail from the school grounds to the existing Rails to Trails corridor that passes through the community – and while the manual labour hasn't begun yet, there has been a lot of hard work happening behind the scenes.

"We don't have the trail built yet," notes Gord Tate, one of the committed volunteers for the project, "but if success is defined as the ability to learn about the system, work within it and find talented and encouraging government employees to help, then we've been successful so far."

Following a June summit of project volunteers and representatives from Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), the Department of Health Promotion and Protection, the Department of Natural Resources, and the St. Margaret's Bay Area Rails to Trails Association, plans for the trail have moved full steam ahead. HRM Parkland Planning has offered to develop the construction and work plan details in-kind – a significant offer that will allow the committee to devote the funds it has raised so

far towards actual trail construction rather than to planning.

Bill Wiggins, Chair of the St. Margaret's Bay Area Rails to Trails Association, is quick to recognize the advantages that the new trail will provide. "The benefits of this route to Shatford Memorial Elementary are huge. It not only provides an avenue for safe travel, but also provides a host of health benefits from physical fitness and mental preparedness for the day ahead as students arrive awake and alert. This trail will not only add to more interaction between the local residents, but also add to community pride for being a com-

munity that promotes physical fitness and personal well being."

Other benefits clearly exist as well. "The utilization of the Rails to Trails corridor for active transportation purposes is paramount to the overall success of the Regional Trails Program," says Paul Euloth, HRM Trails, "and designing or retrofitting communities to promote physical activity in children is a key cornerstone." He continues: "The key to projects like this moving forward is the commitment and strength of the local volunteers. They are and will continue to be the main reason that this trail connection becomes a reality."



Strolling on the current pathway (which will be reconstructed)



PHAC Funding Extended & Corporate Funding Secured

Green Communities Canada (GCC) received news in mid April that the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) would provide a one-year extension of funding for the pilot project. This news came after final data collection had wrapped up at the original 12 schools, so rather than extend the intensive work of the STP Facilitators with existing pilot schools, this extension will be used to aid in the expansion of STP to additional provinces/territories in 2009/10, reaching more schools and students.

The additional year of PHAC funding has been combined with corporate funding received from George Weston Limited and Loblaw Companies Limited (see *School Travel Planning News* Spring 2009 issue for details about that corporate funding) to allow the expansion of STP to:

- At least 3 new schools in a new municipality in British Columbia, with the potential for 6 new schools in two municipalities (through a new partnership with HASTE BC)
- 3 new schools in one new municipality in Alberta (through the existing partnership with SHAPE Alberta)
- 2 new schools in Saskatchewan (through a new partnership with Saskatchewan *in motion*)
- 3 new schools in Manitoba (through a new partnership with Resource Conservation Manitoba)
- 3 new schools in Niagara Region of Ontario (one in each of three different municipalities in that region) plus the potential for 3 more schools in another new municipality (managed by Green Communities Canada)
- 2 new schools in Halifax Regional Municipality in Nova Scotia (through the existing partnership with Ecology Action Centre); STP work will begin with Basinview Drive Community School in Bedford and Westmount Elementary School in Halifax in September 2009.
- 3 new schools in Yukon Territory (through a new partnership with Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon)

Getting Active with New Partner Organizations

GCC welcomes the new partner organizations that have signed on to support STP programming across Canada.

HASTE BC (the Hub for Action on School Transportation Emissions in British Columbia) is a resource and networking centre that helps students, teachers and schools improve the health of individuals, communities and the environment. The hub facilitates learning about school transportation issues, taking action through programming, connecting with other experts and peers and showcasing the results of action underway all across British Columbia.

Saskatchewan *in motion* is a province-wide movement encouraging an increase in physical activity for health, social, environmental and economic benefits. The four key components of *in motion's* mission include building partnerships, raising awareness, mobilizing communities and monitoring and celebrating success.

Resource Conservation Manitoba provides practical information on active transportation, composting, waste reduction and resource conservation. This NGO has been working with partners and community networks to identify solutions to climate change, traffic congestion, overconsumption and waste since 1985.

Recreation & Parks Association of the Yukon works in partnership with Yukon groups, agencies and individuals to promote and support healthy, active lifestyles in the Yukon. Recreation & Parks Association of the Yukon is a non-profit organization established in 1993.

STP Guide & Tools Now Available Online

After the initial year of STP work with the pilot schools, GCC reviewed project feedback and finalized an STP Facilitator Guide; a step-by-step manual for implementing STP in new communities. This 24-page guide is supplemented by 28 appendices containing tools that were found helpful in the STP process. The toolkit is currently available in English, and will be available in French soon.

The English documents are available for free online at www.saferoutestoschool.ca/schooltravel.asp. (The toolkit is password-enabled; click on the toolkit and follow the easy prompts.)



NATIONAL EXPANSION



Regional Funding Allows Testing of STP Model by More Communities

As part of the expansion of the STP pilot project across Canada, GCC worked to find financial support at the local/regional level to allow the introduction of STP to several communities in Ontario.

The Ontario Heart & Stroke Foundation's SPARK Community Advocacy Fund is providing a two-year grant, allowing Ottawa schools to partake in STP programming (http://www.heartandstroke.on.ca/site/c.pvI3leNWJwE/b.5109503/k.AF5/Spark_Spark_Together_For_Healthy_Kids.htm). STP will be introduced to five elementary schools and two secondary schools in year one, and another five elementary schools and

two secondary schools in year two. Both French and English schools will take part in the Ottawa project.

Metrolinx, the City of Hamilton, and the Region of Peel are working together to bring a school-based TDM initiative to these areas through the innovative Stepping It Up pilot project. With funding from Transport Canada's ecoMOBILITY program and expertise from the University of Toronto, GCC looks forward to assisting with the STP portion of this 2.5 year pilot project. Metrolinx is the provincial agency working to provide an integrated multi-modal transportation network that will improve the travel experience across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

With a current population of over six million people, the GTHA spans York and Durham, through Toronto, Peel, Halton and onward to Hamilton. For more on this agency, visit www.metrolinx.com. To learn more about the Stepping it Up pilot project visit www.metrolinx.com/schooltravel.

The Halton District School Board and Halton Region Public Health are moving forward to expand last year's very successful six-school ASRTS pilot project. This year's effort will include a major focus on STP and will reach an outstanding 25 schools.

Ontario communities interested in exploring and implementing STP initiatives should contact Green Communities Canada at info@saferoutestoschool.ca.

2009-10 Timeline for New Schools

2009

Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal STP Steering Committee engaged and Terms of Reference finalized
Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools chosen, School Agreements signed and School Profiles completed School STP Committees established and Terms of Reference finalized Baseline measurements collected
Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data entered and summary report of hands-up survey results written Traffic / Pedestrian / Cyclist count completed at one school per region

2010

Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic / Pedestrian / Cyclist summary report completed
Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plans written (one for each school)
Apr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up data collected
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analyzed
Jun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Travel Plan document finalized

**Due to preliminary work done during the past school year, Nova Scotia will get an early start in September 2009.*

Staff Expansion

As programming continues to grow, so does the team that supports it. GCC welcomes Sandra Jones and Leslie Cook in the positions of National Training Coordinator and National Communications Coordinator respectively.

Spreading the Word

Jacky Kennedy, Director, Canada Walks, GCC, presented the results of the Canadian School Travel Planning pilot project at the U.S. Safe Routes to School national conference held in Portland, Oregon from August 19 to 21. The presentation capped Day One of the conference and was a valued part of a segment titled "A Step Up: Walking and Biking to School Policies." Conference results and/or full presentations will be posted soon at www.saferoutesconference.org.

Upcoming STP presentations include Walk21 New York City in October and ACT Canada's Canadian TDM Summit in November.



TRAINING NEWS

STP Facilitator Training Webinar To Be Offered This Fall

Sandra Jones, National STP Training Coordinator for Green Communities Canada, is putting the finishing touches on a new STP Facilitator Training Webinar. This webinar will help to familiarize new STP Facilitators with the recommended framework and various tools for taking a school through the School Travel Planning process.

The webinar is being offered at two times: Thursday September 24 from 2 to 4pm (ON time) or Tuesday September 29 from 2 to 4pm (ON time). Both dates will offer the same webinar, i.e. it is not a two-part series.

If you have any questions about or would like to participate in the webinar, please email Sandra Jones at scjones@telus.net.

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What we do...

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UPCOMING EVENTS

National STP Meeting Being Planned

Plans are being made to bring together the national STP team and the provincial/territorial partner organizations including STP Facilitators at a 1.5 day meeting in Toronto. The meeting is being planned for mid November.

Goals for the meeting include providing an opportunity for the team members to network with one another face-to-face, expanding on the training provided in September's webinars, and sharing best practice.

National ASRTS Conference Announced

Vélo Québec Association has announced plans to host On the Move in the Community, the first Active and Safe Routes to School National Conference, in collaboration with the Canadian Active and Safe Routes to School Partnership.

Whether you work in the school community, in the health sector, are a municipal stakeholder or are dedicated to promoting active transportation in your community, the conference will offer presentations and workshops

to get your whole community involved in creating a safer, healthier environment for your youth and their families.

The two-day conference will take place at the beginning of June 2010 during Montreal Bike Fest, a week of festivities that will end on Sunday with the famous Tour de l'Île de Montréal. You may want to plan to come early or stay for the weekend and enjoy Montreal's «joie de vivre».

Visit www.velo.qc.ca/onthemove later this fall for updated information.