



TORONTO STUDENT

ACTIVETRANSPORTATION

SUMMIT SUMMARY REPORT | NOVEMBER 20, 2013



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As part of the Feeling Congested? consultation exercise, the Toronto Student Active Transportation Summit was held to help inform policy development within the City of Toronto's Official Plan 5-Year Transportation Review, and to raise public awareness of active transportation issues.

TORONTO STUDENT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

The Toronto Student Active Transportation Summit, held in November 2013, was a collaborative effort to re-imagine the role of student active transportation as a key component of community-building. Students, parents, educators, and community partners came together to brainstorm both obstacles to - and solutions for - the successful implementation of student active transportation in Toronto's communities. The Summit was the latest initiative in a series of efforts undertaken in recent years to promote student active transportation.

EVOLUTION OF INITIATIVES IN TORONTO

- 1996 • Toronto Public Health and Green Communities Canada launch the Active and Safe Routes to School initiative.
- 2007 • The adoption of the Toronto Walking Strategy and the signing of the International Walking Charter recognize the contributions of the Active and Safe Routes to School initiative.
- 2008 • The Toronto Bike Plan supports cycling education in schools with its Bicycle Ambassador program.
- 2010 • Toronto District School Board hosts the Youth Bicycle Summit.
- 2012 • St. Cecilia CES completes School Travel Planning project.
 • Toronto Public Health's "Road to Health: Improving Walking and Cycling in Toronto" report recommends opportunities to increase partnerships and initiatives for school communities.
- 2013 • CultureLink Settlement Services and Cycle Toronto launch Bike to School project with high schools.
 • Share the Road hosts the first Ontario Youth Bike Summit for high school students in Toronto.
 • Toronto District School Board adopts "Active, Safe and Sustainable School Transportation Charter".
 • Toronto Catholic School Board approves draft "Transportation Demand Management Plan" for public consultation, including active transportation and safe routes to school.
 • School Travel Planning projects initiated with two additional Toronto schools: Our Lady of Lourdes CES and King Edward PS.
 • Toronto City Council initiates work on School Zone Safety to improve transportation options and safety in school communities.
 • Toronto is involved in developing shared Strategy Roadmap for Ontario-Wide Coordination on Active and Sustainable School Transportation, funded by Metrolinx and Ministry of Transportation.

SUMMIT ATTENDEES

Active Healthy Kids Canada

Jennifer Cowie Bonne

Canadian Automobile Association

Christine Allum

Central Commerce Collegiate Institute

Ajela Dipiazza

Eli Legere

City of Toronto

Councillor Peter Milczyn

Jennifer Keesmaat

Katherine Gardiner

Kelly Drew

Lori Flowers

Marg Metzger

Marko Oinonen

Mary Louise Yarema

Adriana Suyck

Ania Ksiazek

Barbara Taylor

Charissa Iogna

Cristin Lazier

Daniel Fusca

David Fitzpatrick

Dr. David McKeown

Sean Wheldrake

Silence Lai

Martha McDonald

Jerry Kaloet

Community Members

Anthony Humphreys

David Juliusson

Dylan Reid

Erhard Kraus

Eugene Chao

CultureLink Settlement Services

Ajith Aluthwatta

Kristin Schwartz

Cycle Toronto

Jared Kolb

Green Communities Canada

Jacky Kennedy

Metrolinx

Jennifer Lay

Leslie Woo

Becky Upfold

Omni

George Joseph

Arron Chatha

Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation

Rob Dubyk

People for Education

Jacqui Strachan

Public Good

Josee Jodoin

Ryerson University

Raktim Mitra

Amarpreet Guliani

Susana Gomez

Nadia Domingo

Andrew Kolinchuk

Share the Road

Justin Jones

TDSB Students

Ibrahim Kiyemba

Hamima Fattah

Suruchi Srivastava

Harlan Ferguson

Justin Ovejero

Sarah Nguyen

Richard Waines

Angela Dipiazza

Eli Legere

Toronto Catholic District School Board

Karen Dobrucki

Katie Andrachuk

Kevin Hodgkinson

Nick Biagini

Ann Andrachuk

Toronto Centre for Active Transportation

Nancy Smith Lea

Toronto District School Board

Beth Butcher

Chris Glover

Cathy Dandy

Diana Suzuki

Donna Quan

Gerri Gershon

Howard Kaplan

Howard Goodman

Mario Silva

Pamela Gough

Richard Christie

Ruby Chang

Sam Sotiropoulos

Toby Bowers

Toronto Police Services

Hugh Smith

Jeremy Brown

University of Toronto

Katie Wittmann

Lea Ravensbergen

Ron Buliung

Asya Bidodinova

George Mammen

Guy Faulkner

Tim Ross

Zachariah Summerhayes

Walk Toronto

Rebecca Goodwin

SPEAKERS ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SUMMIT



IBRAHIMKIYEMBA

Student Ambassador 10-12

"By biking to school most days I have fun and save \$50 a month in public transit fares. The knowledge I have acquired from bicycle education keeps me safe on the road."

AVIGAIL&ADELAIDE HUMPHREYS

Student Ambassadors K-9

"I think that the school should be doing more to encourage walking and cycling, and discouraging driving."



ANTHONYHUMPHREYS

Parent & Cycle Toronto Ward 6 Co-Captain

"It isn't just the streets that need to change to encourage more active transportation, we also need to transform the programming and education that happens within schools."

COUNCILLORPETER MILCZYN

Ward 5 Etobicoke- Lakeshore

"Active transportation is something we need to encourage among our students and families as Toronto continues to grow."





LESLIEWOO

Vice President- Policy, Planning & Innovation, Metrolinx

"The commitment by government, teachers, parents and student leaders alike is evidence that The Big Move vision of 60% of children walking and cycling to school can become reality."

JENNIFERKEESMAAT

Chief Planner & Executive Director, City of Toronto,
City Planning Division

"Walking to school is an adventure and rite of passage that teaches children to become autonomous adults."



DONNAQUAN

Director of Education, TDSB

"At the Toronto District School Board, we recognize the importance of physical activity for student health and its positive impact on learning."

DR.DAVID MCKEOWN

Medical Officer of Health, City of Toronto, Toronto Public Health

"Toronto residents living in walkable neighborhoods are more likely to know their neighbors, participate politically, trust others, and be socially engaged."





active brainstorming

Summit participants converged into five groups to share experiences and to brainstorm a series of implementable actions for encouraging student active transportation. The groups collectively explored strategies to support active transportation through public realm improvements, educational programs, by-law enforcement, and the evaluation of initiatives. Underlying these efforts was a common understanding of the value of student active transportation in advancing the sustainability, health, and overall quality of our communities.



- school training
- traffic calming
- part park
- Green Log
- Kiss n' Walk
- off-site
- mix school competition for
- partnerships, collaboration
- working, supporting

CRISIS
LITIGATION



CHALLENGES COMMUNITY & PERSONAL

The biggest challenges to implementing active transportation often confront us first thing in the morning; inclement weather, darkness, and perceptions of distance and safety. Some of these challenges are beyond our control, but others can be addressed by coming together as communities of like-minded individuals to organize actions and take back the tradition of walking and cycling to school.



harsh weather



long distances



“stranger danger”



working parents



lack of time

ACTIONS COMMUNITY & PERSONAL

1 parent involvement

Perceptions and information about crime rates, traffic fatalities, and “stranger danger” influence parents’ decisions about whether or not to allow their children to walk or cycle to school. Other concerns involve juggling work schedules with school drop-off and pick-up times, and ensuring before and after-school supervision. Parents can get involved by volunteering to monitor school sites, helping to organize groups of students to walk or bike to school, and by simply talking to their children about safety.

2 student leadership

More students need to become active transportation ambassadors and take a leadership role within their schools. Students can lead by making walking and cycling a part of their daily routines, collecting information about safe biking and walking routes to school, communicating with their elected representatives, and working collaboratively with each other to advance active transportation initiatives.

3 peer-to-peer discussion

Encouraging student active transportation should be an ongoing conversation that is held on a peer-to-peer basis; student-to-student and parent-to-parent. Collectively, these conversations will generate ideas and solutions to address key challenges within communities, and build a network and culture of active transportation.

4 active buddy program

Students of different ages can come together and form groups to walk or cycle to and from school. These relationships will help with socialization, discourage bullying, and reduce safety concerns among parents.

5 community network and education

To encourage discussions about walking and cycling, communities can form networks, like Block Parents, where students, parents, educators, and community partners are able to share important information and help develop solutions.

The participation of parents, students, educators, and community partners is critical to successfully encouraging student active transportation. Although habits and routines can be difficult to change, community collaborations and discussions about the perceptions of time, distance, and safety, are essential to overcome these challenges and move towards positive outcomes.



CHALLENGES EDUCATION

Schools are one of the most critical places where we can encourage and teach student active transportation. Beyond promoting active lifestyle choices at an early age, schools offer the opportunity to have discussions and share experiences about safely walking and cycling.



cultural barriers & outreach



supporter turnover



school size & location



perceived risks & liabilities



funding for programs & infrastructure

ACTIONS EDUCATION

1 school drop-off and pick-up / safe routes to school

Walking and cycling to school should be safe and natural daily activities. Increasing the number of crossing guards and implementing a school-zone safety patrol are simple measures that reassure parents and increase the safety of students. Managing school-zone traffic congestion and parking through the use of volunteer parking attendants could improve the accessibility and safety of cycling routes.

2 teach active transportation at a young age

Active transportation is a lifestyle that needs to begin at an early age. Providing skills and safety education in classrooms can encourage students to walk or cycle to school, and show how to do so safely. Learning these skills and adopting an active transportation lifestyle will provide lifelong returns to students and our communities.

3 include active transportation in curriculum

Active transportation forms a part of the current elementary and secondary curriculum through environmental, health, and physical education, but there are also strong connections with geography, languages, and media literacy. Educators and students can work with community groups to ingrain active transportation learning into the curriculum through initiatives (i.e. EcoSchools) that recognize and reward the adoption and promotion of active transportation.

4 add transportation questions to student census

The two following questions could be added to the TDSB and TCDSB censuses: "How do you travel to school from home?", and "How do you travel home from school?". Answers to these questions would provide a repository of data useful for organizing future active transportation programs.

5 interschool active transportation competition

Holding a city-wide, interschool competition would help recognize and reward "active schools". The competition could use existing technology, such as mobile applications on students' smartphones, to track trips and reward prizes.

Participants agreed that the challenges of initiative implementation vary greatly according to the sizes and locations of schools. Though smaller schools may be able to better facilitate a community discussion, larger schools possess more resources for implementing programs and can benefit from economies of scale.

Parents, teachers, trustees, students, and planners need to work to build meaningful and productive relationships that produce consensus and cooperation on issues pertaining to lifestyle changes and the promotion of active transportation.



CHALLENGES HEALTH

Physical activity is a crucial component of healthy lifestyles. Walking and cycling to school are simple, fun, and purposeful activities that are easy to integrate into students' daily routines and help build strong communities.



childhood obesity & sedentary behaviours



increase in stress levels



decrease in air quality



chronic disease prevention

ACTIONSHEALTH

1 active transportation as daily physical activity

Schools, community centres, and doctors' offices can play important roles in promoting active transportation as part of students' daily physical activities, and as part of living a healthy lifestyle.

2 school active transportation programs

As a part of promoting student health and learning, schools can receive support from their public health nurses to initiate school active transportation plans and programs. These programs often include examinations of the built environment, performing a community assessment, undertaking safety training, and raising awareness among the school community. Peer leaders and community partners should be involved in generating a broad buy-in of ideas.

3 take action to clear the air

School Boards and schools can work with community partners to improve air quality around schools through initiatives that reduce car traffic, such as; air quality monitoring during morning and afternoon drop-off and pick-up times, starting an idle-free campaign, enforcing no idling policies for cars and buses, and by making walking and cycling more convenient for students and families.

Active transportation to and from school should be a natural and fun part of childhood and young adulthood. School communities should look to health-promoting policies, planning, and programs to make walking and cycling a safe and convenient way to get daily physical activity.



CHALLENGES TRANSPORTATION & PLANNING

City Planning, Transportation Services, and School Boards must work together, and with parents and students, to implement the public realm improvements necessary to facilitate safe walking and cycling to school.



funding & space for active transportation



communication between 'experts & users'



traffic congestion



acquiring baseline data & monitoring progress



consolidation & closing of schools



drop-off points

ACTIONS TRANSPORTATION & PLANNING

1 actions to reduce vehicle use

School Boards and schools should examine their parking policies and infrastructures in order to introduce disincentives for vehicle use, such as paid parking or reducing parking availability.

2 review student transportation policies

Ensure that school bus routes are based upon need, and encourage students who live within a reasonable walking distance to use active forms of transportation.

3 connect schools to cycling

Cycling to school can be encouraged by using existing bike infrastructure more efficiently, such as by connecting schools to pre-existing cycling corridors (i.e. Green Loop in north Scarborough).

4 create school travel plans

School Travel Plans are a way for school communities to gather information, plan actions, and make changes that support student active transportation. Creating these plans requires participation from students, parents, educators, City staff, School Boards, community groups, and consultants. This planning process is grounded in the 5 E's for Safe Routes to School; education, encouragement, evaluation, enforcement, and engineering.

5 improve school zone safety

The City of Toronto could increase road signage, ensure school zone infractions are more rigorously enforced, and implement further traffic calming initiatives in proximity to schools.

In planning and introducing active transportation programs in our communities, collaboration between schools, School Boards, the City, and community stakeholders is essential. School Travel Planning provides an evidence-based model and toolkit to connect key partners and create a flexible plan for the school communities.



CHALLENGES PARTNERSHIP

Advancing active student transportation in a substantive manner requires the close collaboration of community partners, School Boards, City Divisions, Metrolinx, police services, and, most importantly, students, parents, and educators. Sharing resources and experiences allows for innovative solutions to problems of implementation and facilitation, and makes active transportation a community-wide undertaking.



shared ownership of student active transportation



policies, processes & procedures



coordination between multiple stakeholders



closing gaps



staffing coordination



leadership

ACTIONS PARTNERSHIP

1 create a formal active transportation network and working group in schools

Initiate formal active transportation networks and working groups in schools that will allow key representatives to form partnerships to implement shared action plans.

2 incorporate active transportation into current policies, procedures, and programs

Many of the organizations involved in student active transportation have different policies, programs, and procedures around the issue. They need to work together to remove any barriers to active transportation and make sure policies and procedures increase access to school by walking and cycling.

3 pursue corporate sponsorships

Corporate sponsorships and partnerships can provide financial and/or in-kind support to city-wide student active transportation initiatives, events and programs. Sponsorship can also help emphasize the importance of active transportation to a broader audience.

4 bring it up a level

Partners should have a voice in gaining support at the provincial level for the active, safe and sustainable school travel work happening locally in Toronto. This includes activities such as commenting on incoming policy from the health, transportation and education sectors, taking part in strategic planning processes and consultations, and helping share information and resources among the network on this topic.

Active transportation helps to build communities and connections. Students, parents, and educators must work together to realize the implementation and continued development of active travel. By also including additional private and public partners, active transportation can become a community conversation. This partnership will draw upon the resources and skills of multiple stakeholders to better overcome the physical and psychological barriers to successful implementation.

Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children & Youth

Creating healthy, sustainable communities where active travel for children and youth

I/We, the undersigned recognize that active travel for children and youth is integral to a healthy, happy, socially inclusive, sustainable community, and we acknowledge the right of children and youth to have safe environments for active destinations like school. We are committed to removing social and institutional barriers that limit children and youth from active travel. We will work with others to ensure that children and youth and their families choose to use active transportation.

- A successful community for children and youth is a successful one where the most common trip for children and youth, and merits specific attention.
- Children and youth have the right to safe environments for active travel. Communities should help identify barriers and opportunities related to active travel.
- Active travel contributes to sustainable happiness and well-being. Sedentary behavior has adverse effects on children and youth, and communities should encourage active travel.
- Community plans should make provisions for children and youth. When children and youth learn to be active travelers, they set habits for life.

Richard Waines

EE Logan
Dana Cooper
Abraham Kiyemba
Lea Ravensberg
Richard Waines
Angela Sica
Joshua
Asha Maker
Gina
Jacqui Stueben
Pamela Gaughan
Barbara Taylor
Rylee Reid
Michelle
Katie Wittmann
Howard Kipin
Helen Ferguson
James F. Kelly
Sandra
Canada WALKS
Green Comm

Abby

the charter

The Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children & Youth is a mutual agreement to foster awareness of, and support for, student active transportation initiatives in Canada.

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JENNIFER LYNN
METROLINK

Anthony





Welcome

Toronto Student Active Transportation Summit

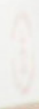
Toronto Student Active Transportation Summit

St. Lawrence Hall, Great Hall

Wednesday, 20 November 2013 from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM

City of Toronto Public Health

METROLINK
A Division of Metrolinx



FINAL WORDS

The Toronto Student Active Transportation Summit was an incredible success, and the level of conversation, passion, and energy that was present at St. Lawrence Hall during the event has left me truly optimistic about what we can achieve together. Collectively engaging with students, community groups, parents, School Boards, provincial organizations, universities and my peers at the City of Toronto provided an extraordinarily broad range of perspectives on student active transportation. How students move to and from school has such profound impacts on their health, education, and socialization. Active transportation for students also means a cleaner environment, less congested roads, and healthier communities; changes that will improve the quality of life for all Torontonians.

The conversation around student active transportation has been gradually building, and we appear to now be at a tipping point as long-advocated for principles are becoming adopted within a common discourse. In 2012, Toronto Public Health released “Road to Health: Improving Walking and Cycling in Toronto” that made clear the relationship between student active transportation and health. In late 2013, TDSB adopted the “Charter for Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation”, committing to support and invest in active transportation for students. At the same time, TCDSB released its “Transportation Demand Management Plan” that took a progressive approach to moving students to and from school. Metrolinx, a committed leader in this field, pulled together stakeholders into a series of workshops to generate the “Active and Sustainable School Transportation Strategy Roadmap Report”. From our end, I’m excited to announce City Planning will also be providing support to these growing ideas through the recent formation of an Active Transportation unit within the Transportation Planning Section.

Collectively, this common discourse around active transportation gives us the foundation to move from ideas to actions. There is a need to bring together the passionate individuals and organizations in this field into a unified front that can deliver tangible progress. In doing so, we must be sure to be strategic with our resources by working collaboratively, sharing information, and acting in a coordinated effort. Critically, key decision makers must continue to provide leadership on this issue by investing the time and energy needed to keep the momentum going. The Toronto Student Active Transportation Summit was an important step forwards, and I believe the first of many future collaborations as we begin to implement actions in support of student active transportation.

I look forward to continuing this conversation and working together to improve the ability of students in Toronto to walk and cycle to school. Let’s continue to build a great city, **TO**gether!



Jennifer Keesmaat

Chief Planner & Executive Director
City Planning, City of Toronto



PLANNING A GREAT CITY
TOGETHER



#walktoschool



www.toronto.ca/planning