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Ideas and Actions for a Walk Friendly Canada

www.canadawalks.ca / www.walkfriendly.ca / www.saferoutestoschool.ca



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Happiness
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Active and Safe Routes to School Website - www.saferoutestoschool.ca

Please note that we are currently updating our website to accommodate program changes, improvements to navigation, and mobile-friendly upgrades. Please bear with us through these changes - all will be completed by the end of August.



Follow us on
Twitter at
[@walkfriendlyON](https://twitter.com/walkfriendlyON)
and
[@CanadaWalks](https://twitter.com/CanadaWalks)

WALK Friendly Communities Showcase now online!



Green Communities' WALK Friendly Communities program encourages municipalities to improve the conditions for walking and create great places to walk by awarding Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum designations. Through the application process, communities benchmark their current walkability status and measure progress over time. The program gives walking a prominent profile in community planning and design, encourages engagement with stakeholders in walking, and enables municipalities to set targets for ongoing improvements.

Looking for inspiration? Check out our [Showcase](#) of highlights from communities that have achieved a WALK Friendly Community designation between 2013-2015.

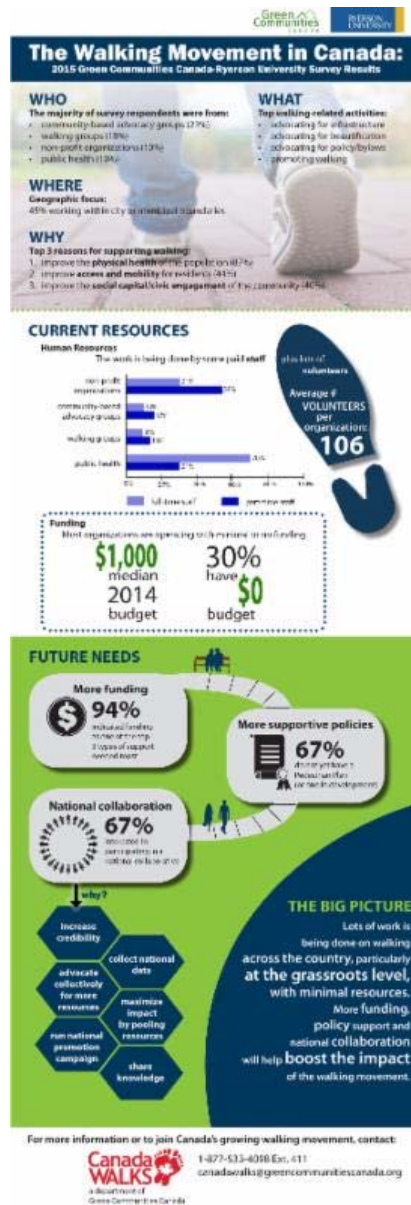
Applications Now Being Accepted

The WALK Friendly Communities application is now open! Applications will be accepted until September 30th, 2015. Communities interested in applying are encouraged to bring partners together now to begin the application process.

APPLY NOW!



State of the Walking Movement in Canada - Survey Results



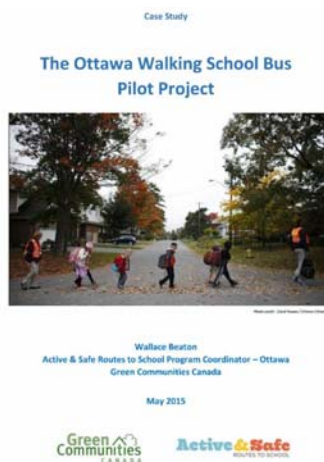
Canada Walks, with the assistance of Ryerson University, implemented a survey early in 2015 to learn more about the state of the walking movement in Canada.

More than 125 surveys were completed by groups and organizations from across the country who promote walking and plan for walkability.

The survey investigated the practices, resources, and needs of community-based advocacy groups, walking groups/clubs, non-profit organizations, public health units, and others.

The results of the survey are now accessible through a [summary report](#) produced by Graduate students within the School of Urban and Regional Planning.

Ottawa's Walking School Bus - A Case Study



Since 2010, GCC has introduced School Travel Planning (STP) to 24 elementary schools across the City of Ottawa (as of April 2015).

STP survey results at these schools consistently indicate that more parents would allow their child to walk to school if they did not walk alone.

In light of this, GCC conceived of the Ottawa Walking School Bus Pilot Project as a means to allow more schools to reap the benefits of a WSB by reducing some of the barriers to introducing and sustaining a WSB within school communities.

Watch the videos: [Ottawa Walking School Bus](#)

[video 1](#), and [Ottawa Walking School Bus video 2](#), made possible by Safer Roads Ottawa.

If you missed our Walking School Bus webinar held April 29th that featured the Ottawa Walking School Bus pilot and the Canadian Cancer Society's Trottibus projects you can listen to it [here](#).

Parents! share your Walking School Bus experiences on Twitter using the hashtag [#walktoschool](#).



photo by David Kawai, Ottawa Citizen

Active School Travel Stakeholder Survey Results

Green Communities Canada, on behalf of the Heart and Stroke Foundation, distributed a survey in February 2015 to Active & Safe Routes to School practitioners across Ontario. The survey included questions regarding the reach of active school travel programming in Ontario. The survey is part of a larger project that aims to encourage the creation of active school travel policies within key stakeholder groups. Funding for this work is provided to the Heart and Stroke Foundation by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Click on the infographic to read the report.

Active School Travel Programming in Ontario: 2015 Active School Travel Stakeholder Survey Results

Active School Travel (AST) =
walking, cycling and other active modes

Objective:
AST reaches all Ontario schools

AST delivered locally by school board, municipal and public health staff and volunteers

Supported for:
5+ years: 47%
3-5 years: 24%
0-2 years: 29%

Data Collection

72% collect data about AST programming, but type of data and frequency of data collection inconsistent

What is Needed:
Resources to ensure consistent data collection/analysis

AST Policies

43% have AST policies: charters, transportation plans

46% agree AST policies enhance commitment

What is Needed:
Provincial/municipal policies supporting AST for all Ontario schools

AST Resources

89% use www.saferoutestoschool.ca

94% find website useful

59% modify resources

What is Needed:
Sustained funding for website

For more information or to join Ontario's growing AST movement, contact:

Jacky Kennedy
Director, Canada Walks
Green Communities Canada
416-488-7263
asrts@sympatico.ca

Funding Resources

Few Ontario communities have dedicated resources to deliver AST

What is Needed:
Consistent funding for dedicated AST support - provincial, municipal and school boards

About the Research (published May 8, 2015)

Conducted by:
Alicia Luciani, M.Sc., & Guy Faulkner, Ph.D. UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF KINESIOLOGY & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Conducted for:
 HEART & STROKE FOUNDATION Green Communities CANADA

Funded by:
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An Agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

2015 ParticipACTION's Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth



The 2015 [ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth](#) is now available. The overall grade for Canadian children and youth remains at a D- for the third year in a row.

Overall, only 9% of 5-17 year olds are getting the 60 minutes of heart-pumping activity they need each day. And sadly, the grade for Active Transportation remains a D, with 24% of 5-17 year olds walking/wheeling to school and 62% being driven by parents or caregivers.

The 2015 Report Card reveals that kids move more when they are outside and have some freedom to roam unsupervised. But our tendency to constantly watch over them or keep them indoors to ensure they are safe from risk limits their opportunities for physical activity, endangering their long-term health.

Download resources, tips and tools from the [ParticipACTION Report Card website](#).

Round up of Spring Active School Travel Activities

Safe Kids Week

May 4-8 was [Safe Kids Week](#) across Canada and globally the week was designated as [Global Road](#)

Safety Week. It provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and implement School Travel Planning (STP) action items. Congratulations to the schools and communities who helped to make this a successful week.



Schools used a variety of activities in their Walk 'n Roll events to reach students and parents with safety messages and encourage all active modes. Many community partners participated to make the events really meaningful and fun. Activities included launching Walking Wednesdays, hosting walking themed assemblies, pedestrian and cyclist safety presentations, and creating promotional videos. Many student groups helped plan and implement activities, such as the 'Walking with Friends' club at Annunciation Catholic School. Representatives from Toronto Police, City of Toronto, Toronto Catholic District School Board, and Toronto District School Board's EcoSchools came out to partake in the fun and congratulate families on their active transportation choices.

Transit and Walk to School



King Edward PS is within easy walking distance from Bathurst subway station, yet many students travelling to school on transit will take the streetcar from the station, often making them late for school.

To encourage students to walk the short distance, two teachers went to the station on two Wednesday mornings where they handed out stickers to students who walked instead of taking the streetcar. Students with the stickers were rewarded with healthy snacks at school.

Bike to School Week





North Bay-Parry Sound District's BIKE WALK ROLL 2 SCHOOL Week

The week of June 15, the North Bay-Parry Sound District Health Unit challenged schools to promote biking, walking, or rolling to school for the entire week, with prizes awarded to the schools that could produce the largest improvement in their active travel to school (ATS) rates from Monday to Friday.

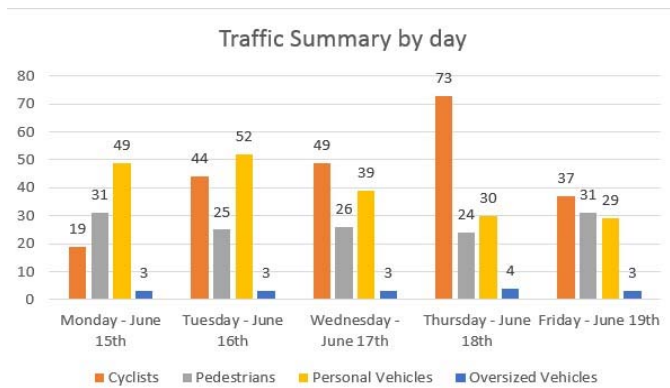
The two top prizes were 'bike-friendly makeovers' for the schools valued at \$1,000.

Each morning that week, field researchers from Nipissing University conducted a visual audit of student travel modes at our two STP pilot schools (Vincent Massey PS and Alliance French Immersion PS) using the Green Action Centre's [CounterPoint app](#) for iPad. All schools were also encouraged to log their student travel using the BikeWalkRoll web application. Here is what we observed at our two STP schools:

Vincent Massey PS - Traffic Counts

Greenhill & Janey Intersection

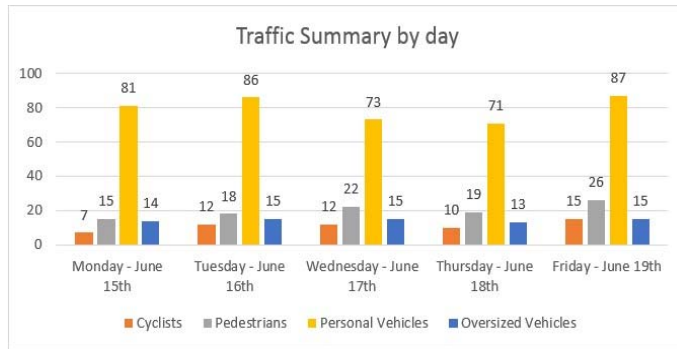
*All vehicle traffic counted was only included in traffic counts if there were children residing in vehicles.



Alliance French Immersion PS - Traffic Counts

Intersections - King & Stones St (8:15-9:00 am) AND Stones & Dale Ave (8:15-9:00 am)

*All vehicle traffic counted was only included in traffic counts if there were children residing in vehicles.



Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area Bike to School Week

Over 145 schools across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) celebrated the region's first [Bike to School Week](#), May 25-29, 2015. Seven Toronto STP Schools took part in celebrating this event by organizing various cycling events throughout late May and early June. For many schools, it was their first cycling skills event ever held. Congratulations to everyone who has made the first Bike to School Week a success! Keep walking and rolling forward!



Gateway's bike 'rodeo' planning team at Gateway PS

King Edward PS, Pierre Laporte MS, Gateway PS, Valley Park MS, Cassandra PS and St. Raphael CS held bike related activities including Bike Rodeos, fixing bikes and bike tune-ups, mapping routes to school, obstacle courses, skills training, and cycling safety presentations.

Ontario Cyclist Sarah Rasmussen inspired students and talked about the joy of cycling. The events were well attended by local dignitaries and community stakeholders.





Schools recognize parents for their commitment to active travel: Rolph Road PS held a 'thanks for walking' morning.



FUNDamental Movement Skills

Green Communities' has been awarded funding from the Ontario Sports and Recreation Community Fund for a new cycling project - LIFE Cycle: Inspiring Students to be Active Everyday. The project will take place in 6 to 8 Toronto schools starting in September. Life CYCLE will aim to increase the numbers of Grade 5-8 students regularly commuting to school by active modes as part of their daily life, with a strong focus on cycling. Participating students will increase their cycling activity through safety skills training, improved cycling proficiency, strategies for addressing community barriers and recognition of their achievements. Life CYCLE will provide a best-practice model that can be followed by other Toronto schools who wish to integrate increased active travel into school culture through improved student knowledge and emphasis on the connections between cycling for transportation, recreation, and sport.

As part of our Life CYCLE project, this fall we will be hosting a FUNDamental Movement Skills Community Leader Workshop in Toronto, led by the Coaches Association of Ontario. This workshop can take between 10 and 20 participants and we are inviting other organizations to register. The Workshop aims to help participant's members gain a deeper understanding of how to develop physical literacy and basic skills to be active for life in the target audience. Contact asrts@sympatico.ca if your organizations is interested in participating.

Bill 13 Declares June Bike Month in Ontario

The Ontario Legislature passed [Bill 13](#), put forth by MPP Eleanor McMahon, founder of Share the Road Cycling Coalition and MPP for Burlington, officially making June Bike Month across the province.

On June 2, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, [Bill 31](#), passed unanimously at Queen's Park. The bill includes safety measures such as a one metre safe passing law when passing people on bikes, allows for bike specific traffic signals, and increases fines for 'dooring' people on bikes.



Good news for all cyclists - all these changes make for safer cycle routes for all, but especially for

children and youth.

The Case for Reduced Speeds

In 2013, the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario released a report and recommendations on pedestrian deaths that occurred between 2010-12. The [Pedestrian Death Review, Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario](#) recommended the creation of a Walking Strategy for Ontario with specific actions for multiple ministries and municipalities. In particular, it recommended that the Ministry of Transportation amend the Highway Traffic Act to allow local municipalities to set the unsigned default speed at 40 km/h on residential streets, a decrease from the current 50 km/h. For Municipalities, the report recommended that a [Complete Streets](#) approach be taken and that consideration be given to reducing speed limits on residential streets to 30 km/h and to 40 km/h on other streets, unless otherwise posted.

Speed does kill, as highlighted by research documented in the [World Health Organization and the World Bank's World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention](#). Pedestrians have a 90% chance of surviving a car crash at 30 km/h or below, but less than a 50% chance of surviving impacts at 45 km/h or above. The probability of a pedestrian being killed rises by a factor of eight as the speed of the car increases from 30 km/h to 50 km/h.

Reduced Speeds in School Neighbourhoods



In Toronto, as part of a team of community, public sector, and university collaborators, GCC has received a seed grant from the [Healthier Cities and Communities Hub](#) to research and develop a "Guide to Safer Streets near Schools."

The goal is to enhance neighbourhood safety by creating an easy-to-follow guide to the City of Toronto's new warrant system for reducing speed limits and implementing safe intersection protocols.

The guide will be supplemented with research on similar processes in other jurisdictions, supported by syntheses of City of Toronto's collision data and best practices for crossings, developed with input from groups who have experience with the existing traffic-calming warrant system, and piloted by at least one school before wider dissemination. Parents at participating schools will be invited to share feedback on the draft guide and their pilot experience, and City staff and Councillors will be consulted throughout the process to ensure accuracy, value, and usability.

Research/In the News

* Brampton Kids on Bikes project has released their [final report](#). The project was led by BikeBrampton, a voluntary group of citizens who support, encourage, promote, and advocate for increased safe recreational and transportational cycling in the City of Brampton, and funded through the [Heart and Stroke Foundation's Spark Advocacy program](#). One recommendation in the report is for school board, municipal and provincial support for School Travel Planning.

* A research component of our School Travel Planning national project between 2010 and 2013 was [Sustainable Happiness](#), led by Dr. Catherine O'Brien of Cape Breton University. This resulted in the creation of a Sustainable Happiness resource for teachers, as well an understanding of how transportation choices impact well-being. The Sustainable Happiness and Health, Teacher's Guide was translated into Spanish by a 2014 participant in the Sustainable Happiness course, delivered at Dawson College in Montreal. Other exciting news from Catherine:

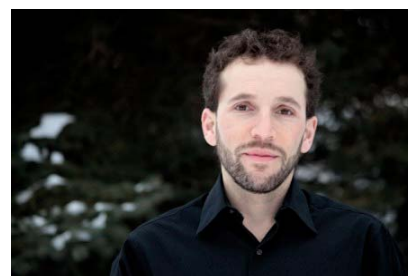


– Trails End Camp, Quebec, is integrating sustainable happiness into one of its camp themes,

through the creation of a sustainable happiness passport.

- Dawson College's Community, Recreation and Leadership Training program, in Montreal, is infusing sustainable happiness into three of their courses.
- Catherine has created a course of pre-service teachers and a complete description of Catherine's sustainable happiness course is now available in an e-book: O'Brien, C. (2014). Sustainable happiness: Assisting pre-service teachers to understand the relationship between sustainability education and well-being. Also in F. Deer, T. Falkenberg, B. McMillan, & L. Sims (Eds.), [Sustainable well-being: Concepts, issues, and educational practices](#) (pp. 157-172). Winnipeg, MB: ESWB Press.
- Sustainable Happiness goes to Mexico! Felicidad Sustentable! thanks to a participant from the 2014 Sustainable Happiness Certificate - it is scheduled for July 20-24, 2015.

* "Most mornings, my daughters and I walk to their school. It is half a mile from our house. Twelve hundred and fifty footsteps. It is often my favourite 15 minutes of the day." So says Dan Rubinstein in his inspiring book [Born to Walk: The Transformative Power of a Pedestrian Act](#). Recommended reading for all walking lovers - with lots of convincing arguments to strengthen your advocacy efforts.



* **Pembina report supports "compact development" for modal shift, carbon reductions** A new report from the Pembina Institute supports compact "location-efficient" development so people can live close to their daily destinations and travel by foot and transit. Pembina partnered with the Ontario Home Builders' Association on the report, [Make Way for Mid-Rise: How to build more homes in walkable, transit-connected neighbourhoods](#). The report complements earlier work by Pembina that identified an unmet demand for affordable housing in walk-friendly, transit-friendly neighbourhoods. Mid-rise is seen as more family-friendly than high rise. Policy changes are recommended to remove barriers and promote more mid-rise development. Retail should be carefully planned into these developments.

* *Individual and social costs of car travel more than six times those of cycling* so concluded the results of a cost-benefit study reported in the [Science for Environment Policy](#) weekly news alert. The researchers presented a cost-benefit analysis developed for Copenhagen, finding that cars resulted in costs of 0.50€/km in comparison to 0.08 €/km for bikes.

"Science for Environment Policy": European Commission DG Environment News Alert Service, edited by SCU, The University of West England, Bristol.

* [Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement](#), recently released at the International Physical Literacy Conference in Vancouver, BC, on June 13, 2015, features a definition of Physical Literacy. [ParticipACTION](#) is sharing the Consensus Statement in order to have organizations add their endorsements to the growing list who support the Statement (and in [French](#)). ParticipACTION will be creating resources to help spread the word about the new Consensus Statement.

* Check here for relevant research on safety related to walking and cycling to school: [U.S. Safe Routes to School National Partnership Research Compilation](#): The literature on bicycle and pedestrian safety suggests that as safety increases, so does participation in active travel. The research contained on this site identifies patterns of active transportation, injury, environmental attributes associated with pedestrian safety, as well as successful strategies to increase safety implemented by Safe Routes to School projects. Implications of this research suggest that infrastructure improvements, traffic education for students, and driver enforcement can provide positive impacts on overall pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Well worth a browse!

* Also from our colleagues in the U.S. details of a study of the impacts of [Safe Routes to School programs on walking and cycling](#).

International News



Walk21 Vienna 2015: Active School Travel Workshop Confirmed
Be sure to register for the [Active School Travel Workshop](#), part of the Walk21 Vienna pre-conference day on Tuesday, October 20th, 9am - noon.

This exciting workshop will provide opportunities for participants to share knowledge, brainstorm best and promising practices in active school travel, and hear inspiring presentations from around the globe.

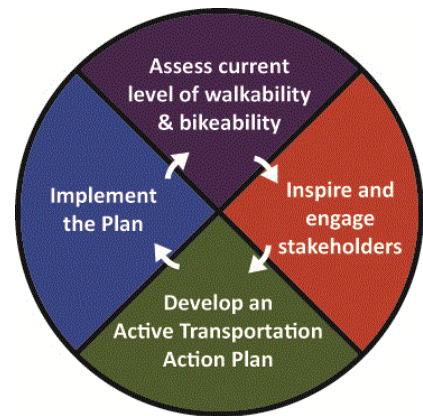
Come and be part of the walk to school movement and join the discussions. Or follow the event on social media at [@Walk21Network](#), hashtags [#walk21VIE](#) [#walktoschool](#), and follow along on Facebook at [Walk21Network](#).

Canada Walks Workshops

- Green Communities is offering a FUNdamental Movement Skills Community Leader Workshop in Toronto, led by the Coaches Association of Ontario in the fall of 2015. Contact asrts@sympatico.ca if your organization is interested in participating.

Canada Walks Workshop and Consulting Services

From convenient webinars, to half and full-day on-site workshops, to four-day intensive community visits, we customize our services to meet your needs.



Canada Walks was launched in 2009 as a division of Green Communities Canada to bring multiple walking projects and activities under one recognizable brand. We envision a Canada where everyone can enjoy, easily, and safely walk to school, work, play, shopping, and transit.

Our mission is to help communities be more walk friendly by:

- Raising awareness of the health, economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- Inspiring and celebrating success.
- Sharing resources and best practices on infrastructure, policy, and programs.
- Bringing partners together to make walking happen!

School Travel Planning training is also now available. The training is offered in a modular format so that each community can learn about topics that are relevant to their current level of experience with active school travel. Content is customized for each community.

[Contact us](#) to learn more.

Your Ideas Please!

If you have story ideas or walking news you'd like to share, please send to us at asrts@sympatico.ca. Be sure to include your contact details.

Donate Now

Canada Walks Walkolution News profiles actions across Canada undertaken by Green Communities Canada and our many local partners to help create communities where walking is safe, easy, enjoyable, and inviting. By making a donation to the Green Communities Foundation you can provide vital support for this work. Just click on the Donate Now button and indicate in the comments section that you'd like your gift to go to the work of Canada Walks.

Our Partners



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