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Report on the Active and Safe Routes to School Pilot Project Between the Region of Halton and The Halton District School Board

Sam Sherratt Public School's walking school bus in Milton

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March 2009

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Executive Summary

Obesity, including childhood obesity, has been recognized as an epidemic in many countries including Canada and the United States of America. Obese children are more likely to become obese adults and to suffer from chronic diseases early in life.

In Ontario, it has been found that 54 per cent of children and youth are not engaged in enough physical activity to keep themselves healthy. In Halton Region, less than 50 per cent of students aged 12 to 14 are physically active (for even 15 minutes every day) in their leisure time and 21 per cent of 5 year olds in Halton are overweight. *(Canadian Community Health Survey, 2005 http://www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/CP01/Details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=HR&Code1=3536&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=halton&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Health&Custom= Last visited April 2009)*

Active and Safe Routes to School is a national initiative that strives to create an environment that is conducive to, and supportive of, safe, walkable communities.

"Active & Safe Routes to School promotes the use of active and efficient transportation for the daily trip to school, addressing health and traffic safety issues while taking action on air pollution and climate change." Green Communities (ASRTS promoter and champion)

This nationally implemented, evidence based program has been around since 1997. It is comprised of eight initiatives (description of the initiatives can be found in project definitions):

- Walking School Bus
- Walking Wednesdays
- International Walk to School Day/Week
- Classroom Mapping
- Walk a Block
- Neighbourhood Walkabout
- Walking Buddies
- No Idling at school

The goals of the Active and Safe Routes to School Program are:

- Mitigate parent vehicular traffic at the school site (less parents driving)
- Improve air quality at the school site (less car emissions)
- Create safe walking routes to school (proper infrastructure in place)

- Increase the physical activity levels of youth by having them walk, bike or wheel (roller-blades, skateboards, scooters) to school instead of arriving in their parent's cars

Planning for the Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) program began in August 2007. In January 2008, the Region of Halton and the Halton District School Board began a one-year pilot project to assess the effectiveness of the Active and Safe Routes to School program in getting children to walk to school. Oversight for the program was provided by the ASRTS Steering Committee.

Eight schools were selected by the ASRTS Steering Committee to participate in the pilot project (Table A). Four of the schools were elementary (JK–5), two were middle schools (Grades 6, 7 and 8), and two were JK–8. All were in different parts of Halton Region, six being in more suburban communities and two in rural.

Table A: ASRTS Pilot Project Schools

North Halton			**South Halton**	
Milton	**Acton**	**Georgetown**	**Oakville**	**Burlington**
Sam Sherratt	McKenzie-Smith Bennett	Centennial	EJ James	Alexander's
Hawthorne Village			Maple Grove	Central

In the fall of 2008, the schools began implementation of the program. From September to December they ran Walking School Buses, promoted Walking Wednesdays and implemented other ASRTS initiatives. A parent survey and monthly student surveys took place culminating in December. The data was collected and data analysis started in January of 2009.

Highlights:

Student Survey

The Active and Safe Routes to School program may have had a positive impact on active transport behaviours in students living within the 1.6 km walking distance to the school by:

- influencing those who did not previously use active transport to do so
- supporting those who did walk or bike to school to continue to use various modes of active transport throughout the term

Weather is an important factor influencing active transport and it is not surprising that there was a general gradual decline in active transport from September to December. However one school was able to maintain an active transport level close to 100% even in December. This school's success may be attributed to several factors: motivated students, supportive physical environment around the school, as well as the extensive ASRTS programming in this school. This school also had a teacher champion who contributed to the success of this initiative.

Five schools maintained rates of active transport above 60% in November, of which two schools had rates above 100%. All schools still had approximately 50% of the eligible students using active transport in the month of December despite the declining weather.

Key Findings:

- Older students are more likely to walk
- Schools with intense programming were more successful
- A school champion was a key element for success

Parent Survey

Factors that enabled children to use active transport included living close to the school, a child's desire to use active transport, and having a suitable companion to walk with. The factors that prevented children from using active transport were related to parents' concerns over the safety of their children (personal and traffic-related). Weather and parental routines were factors that influenced daily use of active transport in those who walked/biked on some days of the week.

Close to three-quarters of those parents whose children used active transport on a daily or some-day basis had themselves walked/biked to school as children. Forty-two percent of parents whose children never used active transport, did not walk or bike to school when they were children either.

Key Findings:

- Parents are an important determinant of whether their children use active transport or not
- More students walk home than to school
- Student age affects active transport: older children are more likely to walk
- The closer students live to their schools the more likely they are to walk

- Walking companions vary: grade 3—adults; grade 5—adult or sibling; grade 6—sibling or other children
- Children are telling their parents they want to walk
- Parents' decision to allow their parents to walk are affected by:
    - Distance between home and school
    - Presence of sidewalks
    - Perceived benefits to child health
    - Children telling them they want to walk
    - Feeling their neighbourhoods are safe
- Parents' decision to not allow their children to walk are affected by:
    - Concern about strangers
    - Weather conditions
    - Speed of Traffic
    - Easier to drive
    - No adult to walk/bike with

Alexander's Public School's walking school bus in Burlington; on the way to school

The Need

Introduction

> *"I am alarmed to report, that in 2003, almost one out of every two adults in Ontario was overweight or obese. Between 1981 and 1996, the number of obese children in Canada between the ages of seven and 13 has tripled. This is contributing to a dramatic rise in illnesses such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension and some cancers."*
>
> *(2004,Dr. Sheela Basur, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister, Chief Medical Officer of Health Report-Healthy Weights Healthy Lives p. 2)*

The Twentieth Century saw a cultural shift. Lifestyles became more sedentary and driving replaced walking as the cultural norm. In a report released in 2008 by the Public Health Agency of Canada, only 37% of boys and 34% of girls in grade six were physically active five days or more over a typical week, for a total of at least 60 minutes a day. When reviewing the 7-day figures, the increases are minimal (42% boys and 37% girls). These same grade six students were reported to spend their time by watching TV (26% both boys and girls), doing homework (56% for boys and 61% for girls), and spending one or more hours a day playing on the computer (56% of boys and 51% of girls).(1) These are sobering statistics; our children are not meeting the daily levels of physical activity recommended by Health Canada (90 minutes a day).(2)

At the same time, reports on the need to improve air quality in Southern Ontario have been prevalent in the media. Links to negative health effects from poor air quality are well substantiated. Air modelling and air monitoring studies have revealed that cars and trucks are one of the main contributors. Due to the increase in car ownership, increasing reliance on cars, and increasing distances travelled, vehicle-related emissions continue to be a serious concern for human health, especially for children.(3)

Lifestyle changes need to occur now: obesity rates are rising, youth favour sedentary activity during their leisure time, and air quality is deteriorating. The population has become reliant on the automobile for its transportation needs.

This report presents a comprehensive, multi-sector, multi-component, project that involves a program with the potential to make behaviour change and shift culture. The Active and Safe Routes to School Program (ASRTS), which involves, simply, getting 'kids' to walk to school instead of being driven. It was adopted and piloted with eight schools across Halton Region. The following pages briefly outline project details and the results.

Project Definitions

Active and Safe Routes to School Program (ASRTS): Active & Safe Routes to School promotes the use of active and efficient transportation for the daily trip to school, addressing health and traffic safety issues while taking action on air pollution and climate change. The eight ASRTS initiatives are:

1. **Walking School Bus:** Parent volunteers walking a route, picking up children along the way and taking them to school.

2. **Walking Wednesdays:** One day a week is set aside as the day to walk to school. Friendly competitions between classes can act as incentives for the youth to participate.

3. **iWalk (International Walk to School Week and Day):** This is an annual event held during the first week of October where school and their surrounding community have to opportunity to learn about the many issues surrounding transporting children to and from school and to discuss alternatives.

4. **Walk a Block:** A drop off zone for parents and school buses is set-up a block (or more) away from the school to encourage walking. This also helps to decrease traffic congestion at the school grounds.

5. **Neighbourhood Walkabout:** A community group including the police, school staff, parents, public health nurse, and appropriate municipal/city employees conduct a tour of the of the school area looking for safe routes and appropriate infrastructure to support the walk to school.

6. **Walking Buddies:** Older students are 'buddied' with younger students for the walk to school.

7. **No Idling at School:** Initiatives are adopted to promote parents to turn engines off while they wait for their children.

8. **Classroom Mapping:** A program that is available to teachers to assist them in having the children map their neighbourhood to discover the enablers and barriers to active and safe transportation.

Active Transport: Use of foot, bike, skateboard, scooter, or in-line skates for transportation.

Deliverables: A product or service produced or provided as part of a project.

Eligible for bus: Students outside the 1.6km walking distance of the school and therefore qualifying for bus transportation.

Eligible to walk: Students who live within a 1.6 km walking distance of the school.

Statistical Significance: A result that reaches statistical significance would have had a very small probability of happening just by chance.

Walking School Bus: One of the eight initiatives of the ASRTS program in which an adult volunteer walks a route, picking up children along the way and taking them to school.

The Project

Project Initiation & Planning

Active and Safe Routes to School is a national initiative that strives to create an environment that is conducive to, and supportive of, safe, walkable communities.

"Active & Safe Routes to School promotes the use of active and efficient transportation for the daily trip to school, addressing health and traffic safety issues while taking action on air pollution and climate change." Green Communities (ASRTS promoter and champion)

This nationally implemented, evidence based program has been around since 1997. It is comprised of eight initiatives (description of the initiatives can be found in project definitions).

This project supports the Halton Region Corporate Strategic Plan; Health and Social Services Committee Plan, specifically the 2008 action plan, and addresses one of the priorities identified in the Healthy Weights; Halton Takes Action initiative.

In August of 2007, a multi-sector Steering Committee was established and a first meeting held to formulate a goal of getting the Active and Safe Routes to School Program into Halton Region schools.

Within a month of the August meeting, key staff at the Halton District School Board (HDSB) heard about the program and the Steering Committee's goal. An opportunity to present to the Halton District School Board Trustees allowed the virtues of the program to be realized. Several additional HDSB representatives joined the Steering Committee and planning began in earnest. The Halton Catholic School Board was also approached, but declined from participating in a pilot project. (See Appendix I for Steering Committee Members)

By December 2007, the Steering Committee determined a one-year pilot project would be the best way to integrate the program into the current school system. Project management would be the responsibility of the Halton Region Health Department (HRHD) with the Steering Committee providing guidance and assistance along the way.

Project timelines were determined to be January 2008 to December 31, 2008. Data analysis and report writing were slotted to occur post the project timeline. Project goals and objectives were written, key stakeholders identified, a work breakdown structure developed and project champions secured. All planning details were satisfied before the new year and the start of the pilot.

Project Execution:

The main deliverables of the project were (for more detail see Appendix II):

1. Identification of eight pilot schools
2. Kick-off Forum for involved pilot schools
3. Walkabouts at each school to assess their chosen walking route
4. Evaluation of the pilot
5. Communication about the project in the media

The project commenced with an invitation to key stakeholders from various sectors to participate in the pilot project. Transportation engineers from all four municipalities were contacted and asked to provide technical support towards the walking route portion of the initiative. Halton Regional Police Services were invited for police constable assistance with the walkabouts and safety information. Public Health Nurses with the Region's Community and Social Services Department were asked to lend their expertise and finally, HDSB staff were approached to be key contacts during the project.

Additional staff, such as a communication specialist and an epidemiologist were also recruited to lend their expertise to the project.

After pilot school selection, a Kick-off Forum was held. Following the Kick-off Forum, walkabout dates were identified for each school. Each school chose their own walking route(s), including how many routes and where in their community they would be located. Two types of maps were used to choose the walking routes. The first was an aerial map of the neighbourhood streets surrounding the school and the other was a student density map which plotted the location of the students living 1.6 km from the school. Using these maps, routes were developed according to student density, and street connectivity.

During the months of April and May all eight schools and relevant stakeholders came together to develop school specific action plans for their identified walking route(s). Activities in these action plans included such things as; improvements in infrastructure, additions to snow clearing operations, crossing guard warrants, education programs, supports in the schools, purchasing and movement of bicycle racks, development of paved walking pathways into the schoolyard, and ward/school newsletter submissions.

An evaluation scope and plan was developed. This included surveying both parents and students. Students were surveyed in June, to obtain baseline data, and then again each month in the fall when the program was being implemented. Parents were surveyed only

once, in the month of September. A communication plan was also developed for implementation in the fall.

The parent survey was finalized in September and the student survey was revised as per principal feedback. A Principal meeting took place at the beginning of September to deal with any last minute concerns or questions.

From this point forward all execution tasks were now the responsibility of the individual pilot schools as they promoted, organized and implemented their chosen ASRTS initiatives.

Interesting to the pilot, was news about school route signage being piloted by other regions that had been developed by Green Communities Canada and the City of Toronto. Two municipalities—Burlington and Milton— agreed to post these signs along their walking routes. It was determined there would be no evaluation connected with the use of these signs, as they were out of scope from the initial project plan.

The Active and Safe Routes to School Kick-off Forum, Halton Region Chair Gary Carr, Halton District School Board Trustee Gillian Tuck Kutarna and Halton Regional Police Services Chief Gary Crowell, standing with the starter kit

Project Monitoring and Controlling:

The following monitoring and controlling events occurred during the project:

- Regular meetings were scheduled with the school board project champion and health department project manager
- Five status reports were delivered, one every 2 to 2.5 months
- Principals were contacted personally or with group reminders (email)
- All principals who requested assistance with some aspect of the project were responded to and had some form of service set-up within 24 hours
- A principal meeting was held in September to inform and provide survey requirements for the next four implementation months
- Timelines and tasks involving communications and epidemiology were reviewed with the appropriate staff
- Difficult issues were brought forward to the Superintendent for assistance in resolving
- Budget accounting was tracked

The above allowed the project to progress smoothly and all tasks, deliverables and milestones were achieved.

The Kick-off Walkabout at Maple Grove Public School in Oakville

The Results

Project Evaluation

Evaluation is critical to health promotion programming. Accurate information is needed to know whether a program is making a difference. It provides accountability, quality assurance and influence.

In this pilot project, several methods were used to collect data:

- Student survey to assess the attainment of pilot goals and objectives
- Parent survey to identify parental enablers and barriers to student active transport
- Principal focus group to assess the implementation of the program at the school level
- Sector (stakeholder) surveys to assess their impressions of the program and their experiences of participating in the project

Purpose of the Evaluation: To evaluate the effectiveness of the ASRTS program in getting children who live within 1.6 km walking distance to walk to school.

Objectives of the Evaluation:

- To assess change in walking behaviour among students in "the eligible to walk boundary" (children who live within 1.6 km walking distance of the school) of the eight pilot schools, during the implementation phase of the project September to December 2008
- To assess the relationship between student walking behaviour and the school' implemented ASRTS program initiatives
- To assess parent's perceptions of barriers to allowing their children to walk to school

Student Survey (Sample of survey in Appendix II)

Method

The eight Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) pilot schools from Burlington, Georgetown, Halton Hills, and Milton areas participated in a 'Student Survey' to record the number of students arriving to school by active transport. The survey was conducted for one week each month, in June, September, October, November and December, during the same week in each of the eight schools. The number of students in the class arriving

by active transport was then compared with the number of students enrolled in the class who were considered eligible to use active transport, that is, who lived within 1.6 km of the school. Beyond this distance students were eligible to be bused.

Teachers recorded the number of students who arrived to school by the following modes of transportation: walking, biking, walking part-way, other ways of 'active transport' (e.g., skateboards), or non-active transport modes such as by car, by carpool or by school bus. This was done by a show of hands. For the numbers arriving by active transport, teachers were not able to distinguish between students who were eligible to walk to school and those who were not. We therefore made the assumption that all those students who arrived by active transport were in fact eligible to walk.

The weather conditions ('sunny', 'cloudy', or 'rainy') were also recorded each day. Friday (December 19th) was declared as a snow day in Halton Region. Therefore, a 4-day average was calculated in order to not include the outlier.

The timing of various ASRTS programs within the school was recorded for each school so that any changes in active transport of the students could be understood in relation to the programming. Comparisons were made within the school and between the pilot schools, but no comparisons were possible with schools not involved in the ASRTS pilot.

For notes on limitations and the weather details, please refer to Appendix III.

McKenzie-Smith Bennett Public School's Halloween walking school bus

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 shows the proportion of students arriving to school by active transport for each month, for the eight pilot schools separately. Each school was assigned an identification number to ensure its anonymity. Instances where proportions are above 100% indicate that all students identified as eligible to walk, plus some others (i.e., those not identified as eligible to walk) arrived to school by active transport. Some months are missing for some schools indicating lack of data for that particular school and month.

The student survey data collected in June was collected as baseline data before the main programming for ASRTS began. However, the grade levels and students for whom June data were collected are different from those students who participated in the student surveys conducted from September to December. Moreover, some schools chose to begin implementing ASRTS activities in spring, particularly school #1. For this school, the June data can no longer be considered as baseline data. This school had the highest active participation rates for June, possibly because of the programming.

School #5 had the highest percent of students arriving by active transport in September. Interestingly school #1, with the spring ASRTS programming, was a 'feeder school' for school #5. Specifically, about a third of the students who arrived in school #5 from three junior elementary schools arrived from school #1. It may be that the spring programming impacted positively on their active transport behaviours and that this impact was carried over in the fall when they transferred schools.

Weather is an important factor influencing active transport and it is not surprising that there was a general gradual decline in active transport from September to December. However school #8 was able to maintain an active transport level close to 100% even in December. This school may have very motivated students, or the physical environment around the school may be particularly conducive to active transport, or the success may be attributable to the extensive ASRTS programming in this school. During the month of September school #8 had weekly theme-based walking days, promotional items were distributed, and various incentives and prize initiatives were organized. October continued with the weekly theme-based days, implementation of 'International Walk to School Week' and prize draws. November and December continued with the weekly theme-based walking days and prize draws. School #8 had a teacher champion, which likely contributed to the success of this initiative. In addition, signs were posted around the surrounding neighbourhoods to mark the walking routes. Also, representatives of the school (students, staff and parents) were interviewed by a local TV station about the ASRTS program, further raising awareness among parents and the community.

School #5, already noted for the particularly high rate of active transport in September, also managed to maintain high rates throughout November, although active transport declined in December, along with programming terminating the first week of December (please note survey week in December was the 15th to the 19th). This school held weekly walking days and had weekly announcements as well as promoted the ASRTS program through the school newsletter. In addition, this school participated in a couple of theme-based walking activities.

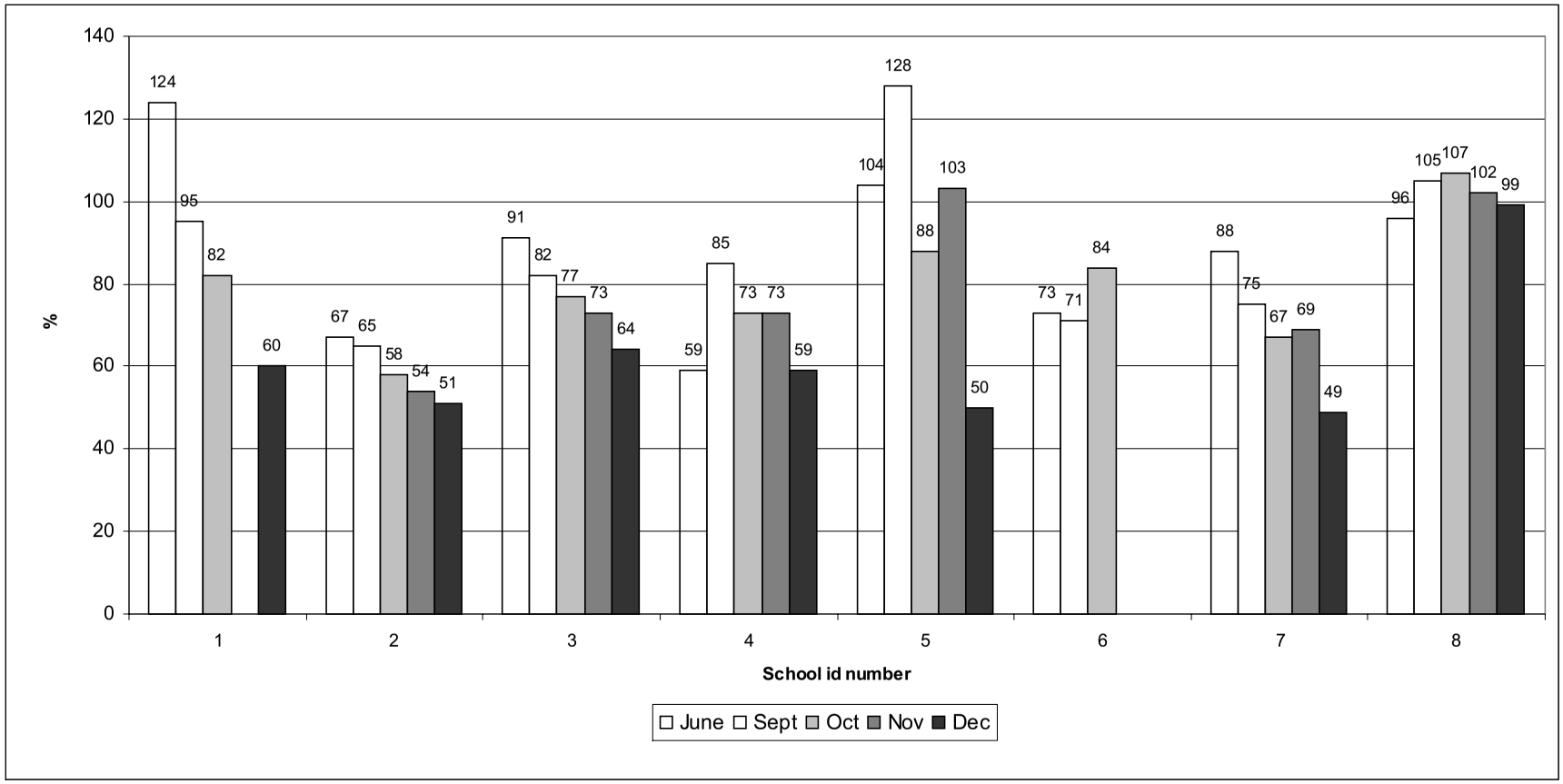

Figure 1: The percent of students identified as 'eligible to walk' arriving to school by active transport, June baseline and autumn survey months, all participating schools, 2008.

Note: proportions above 100% indicate that all those students identified as 'eligible to walk', plus some others (i.e., those not identified as eligible to walk) arrived to school by active transport.

November data were missing for two schools (schools #1 and #6). Of the remaining six schools, five maintained rates of active transport above 60% (3, 4, 5, 7, 8) in November including the two schools already mentioned where November rates exceeded 100% (5, 8). In December, despite the declining weather, approximately half the eligible students were still using active transport in each of the schools. Since there were no control schools we do not know to what extent this result can be attributed to the programming.

School #6, for which there were no data beyond October, was unusual in that October rates were greater than September rates, although this was not a statistically significant difference. Interestingly, a policy change was made in October (before the October survey) to allow students to skateboard to school.

The results show that weather has an important influence on active transport, but active transport does not necessarily have to dramatically decline with the weather during the fall if there are sufficient supports (e.g., ASRTS champion, walking school buses, promotion and events) and motivation for active transport, as seen in school #8 and to a lesser degree in some of the other schools that participated.

Detailed results, by grade, for each school have been provided back to the participating schools along with a detailed summary of the ASRTS activities.

The results support that the Active and Safe Routes to School program may have had a positive impact on active transport behaviours in students living within the 1.6 km walking distance to the school by influencing those who did not previously use active transport to do so and by encouraging those who did walk or bike to school to continue to use various modes of active transport throughout the term.

Key Findings:

- Older students more likely to walk
- Schools with intense programming were more successful
- A school champion was a key element for success

Parent Survey (See Appendix IV for Sample of the Parent Survey and Full Parent Survey Results with discussion)

Parents of children in the eight ASRTS pilot schools, in grades 3, 5 and 6, were selected for the Parent Survey if their child was identified as eligible to walk (i.e., living within 1.6 km walking distance of the school). Students took the surveys home to their parents and were asked to return the completed surveys back to their teacher within one week.

Of the 934 surveys distributed, 432 surveys were returned, resulting in a 46% response rate.

One hundred and thirty-nine (32%) of the parents had children in Grade 3, 122 (28%) in Grade 5, and 171 (40%) had children in Grade 6. Boys represented 53% of these students and girls 47%.

A 1.6 km distance between home and school is considered to be a reasonable distance for students to walk. Beyond this distance students are bused to school. However, we were also interested in how close to the school the child lived within the 1.6 km range.

Overall, 205 (48%) of the parents indicated that their children lived less than 0.5 km from the school. One hundred and forty-six (34%) indicated that their children lived 0.5 to less than 1 km from the school and 71 (17%) indicated that their children lived between 1 and 1.6 km from the school. There was an equal distribution of distance to school for all three grade levels.

Parents were divided into three groups: those whose children used active transport on a daily basis (to and from school), those whose children used active transport on some days of the week, and those whose children never used active transport. Of all parents who responded, 208 (48%) had children who used active transport on a daily basis, 168 (39%) had children who used active transport on some days of the week and 52 (12%) had children who never used active transport.

Results and Discussion

Fifty-four percent of all parents indicated that their children walked or biked to school five mornings a week and 62% of parents indicated that their children used active transport five afternoons a week. Only 18% did not use active transport any morning and 14% any afternoon.

The number of active transport trips a week is related to student age. These findings were similar for those students who used active transport on a daily basis and those who walked/biked on some days of the week. Specifically, the older the student, the more frequently he/she walked/biked to/from school. Distance also seems to play a role. Students who used active transport ten times per week were more likely to live closer to school. The further the distance from the school, the less likely the students were to use active transport on a daily basis. This was noted for all three grade levels. Very few students who lived close to school (less than 0.5 km) never used active transport during the week. Interestingly, 61% of the parents whose children never used active transport

indicated that their children had at one point told them that they wanted to walk or bike to/from school.

Parents of children who used active transport on a daily basis were asked to indicate who the usual companion was along the route to school. Some differences were noted by age of the student. For the Grade 3 students, an adult was the most likely companion. For Grade 5 students, both an adult and a sibling were listed as the most likely companions. For the Grade 6 students, siblings and other children were the most often cited companions. The same results were found for parents whose children used active transport on some days of the week.

The top five factors affecting parents' decisions to allow their children to use active transport on a daily basis were as follows: distance between home and school, presence of sidewalks, the perceived benefits to the student from active transport, the fact that the child wanted to/liked to use active transport, and the perception that the neighbourhood is safe. Around 40% of the parents indicated factors such as the safety of intersections and crossings, the fact that their child had a companion along the route to school/home, and the desire to lower air pollution. In addition, 31% or less indicated factors such as volume of traffic in the neighbourhood, the volume of traffic at/around the school, and the speed of traffic as a factor. Finally, 13% or less indicated the presence of bike paths. Similar reasons were noted by those parents whose children used active transport on some days of the week.

Parents of children who used active transport on some days of the week were asked to indicate factors which affected their decisions to not allow their children to use active transport on the alternate days. Three-quarters of the parents indicated weather as being a factor and close to half of the parents indicated their own or their child's routines (e.g., before and after school activities) played a role. Only 15% of the parents indicated that their children did not want to/like to use active transport to/from school.

Parents of children who never used active transport were asked to indicate factors which affected their decisions to not allow their children to use active transport at all. The number one factor identified by the majority of these parents was the worry over strangers approaching their children along the route to/from school, followed by weather conditions and the speed of traffic along the route to school.

Parents of children who never use active transport also worried their children might be bullied and were concerned that their children would be walking alone. Traffic-type concerns, such as too much traffic around the school, intersections and crossing on the route to school not being safe, too much traffic in the neighbourhood, and lack of crossing guards along the route were also identified as concerns.

Close to three-quarters of those parents whose children used active transport on a daily or some-day basis had themselves walked/biked to school as children, while 58% of those parents whose children never used active transport had themselves used active transport as children. This difference was not statistically significant.

In Summary, factors that enabled children to use active transport included living close to the school, the child's desire to use active transport, and having a suitable companion to walk with. The factors that prevented children from using active transport were related to parents' concerns over the safety of the child (personal and traffic-related). Weather and parental routines were factors that influenced daily use of active transport in those who walked/biked on some days of the week.

Key Findings:

- Parents are an important determinant of whether their children uses active transport or not
- More students walk home than to school
- Student age affects active transport—older children more likely to walk
- The closer students live to their schools, the more likely they are to walk
- Walking companions vary, grade 3—adults, grade 5—adult or sibling, grade 6—sibling or other children
- Children are telling their parents they want to walk

What affects parents' decisions to allow their children to walk?

- Distance between home and school
- Presence of sidewalks
- Perceived benefits to children's health
- Children telling them they want to walk
- Feeling their neighbourhood is safe

What affects parents' decisions to not allow their children to walk at all?

- Concern about strangers
- Weather conditions
- Speed of Traffic
- Easier to drive
- No adult to walk/bike with

Lessons Learned:

- Parents need to be encouraged to not drive their children to school and instead support their children to use active transport to school (e.g., walking, walking part-way, cycling, skateboarding, etc.)
- The more intense the program delivery, the better the results
- Sustained program activity results in sustained behaviour. Removal of the program is associated with a decrease in the number of students arriving by active transport
- School champion is a key ingredient for success
- Programming needs to address a variety of weather conditions
- Residual effects can be anticipated as students exposed to this program in their earlier years went on to be active in middle school

Process Evaluation: (Principal Focus Group and Sector Surveys)

Since the principals were the key contacts and school level managers of the pilot, a facilitated focus group was planned to garner relevant feedback on the project and its implementation. An outside agency was employed to lead and collate the focus group findings. A lengthy comprehensive review of the program, pilot, and project management took place. For full Principal focus group results see Appendix V.

A short survey was sent via email to the police constables, traffic engineers and public health nurses who participated in some aspects of the project. The purpose of the survey was threefold: to garner their impressions of the ASRTS program, to ascertain their feelings about their involvement in the project, and to find out if their disciplines should maintain involvement if the program were to expand. Full sector survey results are available in Appendix VI.

Despite each group belonging to a different discipline, all equally felt:

- The ASRTS program is important and necessary
- ASRTS should be supported by their discipline

Key Findings:

Principal Focus Group: Main themes

1. Schools do not need much time to plan for the program
2. To run the program, parents and staff are needed. These people need to be interested in, and dedicated to, the initiatives
3. Walking school bus drivers should be parents and/or school board staff (mixed response)
4. Walking school bus drivers could be a paid position
5. The walking school bus can be successful if there is community support; it needs back-up for illness, and works best with grades JK-5
6. Walking Wednesdays were successful and easy to implement
7. Walking route development was not difficult and should have a school staff person involved
8. To assist walking behaviour sidewalks need to be cleared of snow and ice
9. Management of this program, at the school level, should lie with the parent council or community
10. The program and its initiatives should not be represented as a policy to schools

Traffic Engineers (from all four Halton municipalities)

According to all:

- Schools should perform walkabouts when planning walking routes
- Traffic engineers should be involved in any school route planning and walkabouts to ascertain proper assessment of road safety and infrastructure

If the school board were to expand the program across the Region, the traffic engineers felt the following should be considered:

- Program needs to be promoted to parents and students
- Schools should be eased into the program
- Consideration needs to be made with the traffic engineers' time and the number of walkabouts needed in a school year

Halton Regional Police Constables

According to all:

- They can provide insight into safe routes from a traffic and crime perspective, especially in the walkabouts and the program allows officers to connect with the community

If the school board were to expand the program across the Region, the police constables felt the following should be considered:

- The police can promote the program in their work
- They can participate on a steering committee and in walkabouts
- Consideration needs to be made around resource availability and competing priorities when including their participation

The Region's Public Health Nurses (PHN)

According to all:

- They have existing relationships within schools which can aid in supporting the program and its sustainability

- They can support walkabouts by providing an unbiased viewpoint of the neighbourhood while providing understanding of challenges/barriers from a community perspective

If the school board were to expand the program across the Region, the PHN's felt the following should be considered:

- If the ASRTS program is expanded to a Healthy School, then the following assistance can be provided:
    - school community assessment
    - development of an action plan
    - implementation
    - evaluation

- For non-identified Healthy Schools, consultative support would be available, however not to the same degree as would be possible in identified Healthy Schools

What Is Next?

Project Closing

Lessons Learned

One of the advantages of running a pilot is the opportunity to evaluate the project/ program from many angles before embarking on an operational plan.

The following list was developed during the pilot. These lessons learned helped to shape the recommendations found in the next section of this report.

1. **Program needs to be endorsed and supported by the Halton District School Board's upper management with a formal announcement.** Although the program had support from one Superintendent and one Board Trustee, a formal in-house written announcement was not posted. An Announcement is important for informing staff about the importance of the project to the organization and the commitment by senior staff to see it to completion. This will relay to staff the expectation to follow through with the projects deliverables.

2. **Upper management needs to be visible (in person and by email) throughout the life of the project.** To help maintain project momentum and buy-in by all involved Board staff, the project sponsor or champion should attend all important events connected to the project along with the occasional business meeting. This can help lend authority to the project and its deliverables, which at times was lost during the lifecycle of the project.

3. **Schools chosen to engage in the pilot should have principals who will not be leaving the school for at least two years.** Two of the pilot schools had principals who retired at the end of the 2007–2008 school year. This change interfered with the knowledge gained in the spring when the valuable pre-implementation work had occurred. Also, competing priorities that principals experience when starting at a new school can overshadow the attention needed to run the program.

4. **Program needs to be led by Halton District School Board staff.** Despite the focus group feedback from the principals, for cooperation, buy-in, sustainability, credibility, feasibility and decision-making, an internal staff person, housed in the school board offices, should lead any further expansion of the program to other schools. The ability to influence and obtain deliverables is a challenge for someone outside of the Board.

5. **At the time that schools are chosen to implement the program, they should be free of any political issues in their areas.** One of the pilot schools had to withdraw from the pilot due to community pressures resulting from a Program Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) process and subsequent school closures. Upcoming decisions that could affect a school's (and its community's) receptivity to the program should be considered when choosing which schools to expand the program to.

6. **Having the schools attend the Kick-off Forum was a good way to start the pilot.** Schools planning to implement the program should attend an Active and Safe Routes to School workshop (ASRTS 101) before starting. The ASRTS program is a multi-pronged program that includes eight initiatives and a variety of resources. Staff who engage in starting up a program should receive uniform training. This will provide quality assurance, continuity in delivery, and an equal understanding of the programs goals. The Kick-off Forum provided a venue for schools to learn about the research behind the initiative, to network and to start to their planning process.

7. **Evaluation needs to be set up in a manageable way.** Feedback received from the Principal focus group stated the evaluation was cumbersome and confusing for most of the staff. Although evaluation was necessary, future evaluation should be organized in a way so it is convenient and understandable for the user. To mitigate misunderstanding and non-compliance, a half-day workshop should be set up with the following objectives: 1. Staff will understand the importance of the ASRTS program. 2. Staff will understand the need to evaluate the outcome of the program. 3. Staff will understand how to use the evaluation tools.

8. **Data required for evaluation should be established for the user ahead of time.** There was confusion for some teachers in knowing which students lived within the 1.6 km walking range. This information was important and required for both the student and parent surveys. If future surveys are to be applied, students living within the 1.6 km perimeter of the school should be prelisted for the teachers. Information needs to be organized by grade and classroom.

9. **Each school needs to identify an in-house champion for the program.** At the school level, there should be an identified School Board staff person assigned with the program as part of his/her portfolio. This staff person would be in charge of internal promotion, incentives and events. Ideally this should be someone other than the principal, although the principal needs to be engaged and supportive of the program. Parent councils should be involved but not wholly responsible for the program. To create longevity and sustainability, it needs to be a board driven program.

10. **Reliance on parent volunteers as Walking School Bus Drivers (WSB) is not sustainable.** Two schools ran into problems with key parent volunteers withdrawing from the program. Another approach to garnering participation needs to be developed. Consideration should be made of hiring walking school bus drivers.

11. **Schools need time to prepare and plan before implementing any ASRTS programming.** Schools were given three months to prepare for their fall implementation. This planning time was viewed positively by the school principals as it allowed the principals to digest the program, pick their walking routes and develop plans for implementation. A three-month planning period should be endorsed.

12. **Walking school buses are best implemented with grades JK–5.** The middle schools found their Walking school buses were not successful with grades 6-8 (ages 11-14). For obvious reasons, children in this age group are independent enough to walk to school on their own or with friends.

13. **Walking Wednesdays is a great way to start the program.** Administrators felt Walking Wednesdays were a great starting point for the program and reported they were well attended by the students.

14. **When a route is chosen it should be assessed via a walkabout.** Walkabouts with the appropriate stakeholders (school staff champion, traffic engineers, project lead, Councillors and police) should happen with all promoted walking routes. Infrastructure changes/ improvement, safety issues and needs (crossing guard warrants) can all be identified and dealt with to make the route as safe as possible.

15. **School Route signs were well received by the community.** Although not formally evaluated, anecdotal reports from school board staff suggested the involved communities (Milton and Burlington) reacted favourably to the school route signs posted along the walking routes. These signs should be considered for walking routes, pending buy-in from the appropriate municipality and its immediate community.

16. **Money to implement the program at the school level is not really needed.** All schools were given $1000.00 to use towards their fall implementation of the program. Not all schools used the money suggesting that start-up funds are not necessary to run the program. However, if the program is to become more organized, there would need to be consideration of cost (lead person, hiring of Walking School Bus drivers, promo materials and incentives).

17. **Media should remain a component of the program.** The communication plan developed for the program was received favourably by the school administrators. Schools should be highlighted for their efforts and the community informed of the initiative. Future rollout of the program should contain a media component that is overseen by the School Board's Communication Department and is outlined in a formalized plan.

18. **Student participation in the program lessened as the weather changed.** Whether it was due to the colder weather, darker mornings or the novelty of the program warring off, the participation rates across most of the schools declined. A strategy needs to be developed to promote the program through the winter to help motivate and maintain participation rates.

19. **Lessons learned from the ASRTS programming implemented by the schools: (as found in the Project Evaluation section)**

    - Parents need to be encouraged to not drive their children to school and instead support their children to use active transport to school (e.g., walking, walking part-way, cycling, skateboarding, etc.)
    - The more intense the program delivery, the better the results
    - Sustained program activity results in sustained behaviour. Removal of the program is associated with a decrease in the number of students arriving by active transport
    - School champion is a key ingredient for success
    - Programming needs to address a variety of weather conditions
    - Residual effects can be anticipated as students exposed to this program in their earlier years went on to be active in middle school

Recommendations to the Halton District School Board

The following recommendations are for consideration by the Halton District School Board (HDSB) staff and Trustees if they are to expand the ASRTS program into all elementary and middle schools.
These recommendations are from the Project Manager and stem from the survey results, lessons learned from the pilot project, and researched best practices.

Recommendation	Reason
At the Board Level	
1. Develop an active transport strategy. This strategy should be incorporated into an already existing corporate plan, and managed through the HDSB Transportation Department	A strategy will provide a defined comprehensive plan, a critical direction and guidance towards resource allocation. It will help determine the course of action, to accomplish, a goal or an objective
2. Approve a budget that supports the project ($200,000-$250,000)	A project of this size will need a budget. This budget will alleviate fiscal burden for individual schools and should cover the cost of the Project Manager
3. Assign a key HDSB staff person or hire a Project Manager for the strategy (1.0 FTE). This person should have authority and full responsibility for the strategy and its components. Project management, health promotion knowledge, and school board experience are needed for this position. He/she would work in conjunction with the Transportation Consortia in getting the program into the schools	Given the size of the project and the number of stakeholders involved, a dedicated staff person should be assigned to the strategy and its project
4. Secure senior management buy in. One methodology for achieving this is to develop a project charter which would announce the project champions and sponsor	Project charters formally recognize the existence of a project and provide the summary of the project objectives and management
5. Establish an internal working group of HDSB staff, containing key players who will be responsible for participating in initiation, planning, execution and evaluation of the strategy. Recommended HDSB staff for the internal working group are:	Given the size of the project, many internal stakeholders need to be involved, especially for project planning and execution o Principals to give school level direction and feedback

○ Principals ○ Curriculum Consultant ○ Facilities Department ○ Research Department ○ Transportation Consortia GM ○ Champion-Superintendent/Board Trustee ○ Communications Department	○ Curriculum Consultant to incorporate active transport into the curriculum ○ Facilities Department for infrastructure issues and decisions ○ Research Department to evaluate the project ○ Transportation Consortia GM to tie into the busing issues ○ Champion-Superintendent/Board Trustee to provide support and direction Communications Department to highlight program with the media
6. Form a community steering committee. This committee will both support and inform the project. Recommended stakeholders for the community steering committee are: ○ Health Department ○ All four municipalities and the Region (planning, transportation and traffic) ○ Halton Regional Police Services ○ Relevant community groups (those whose mandates match the projects) ○ Interested parents ○ Relevant HDSB staff (principals, teachers, curriculum consultant) ○ Transportation consortia ○ Board Trustee(s)	A steering committee will provide multi-sector guidance and direction. It will also assist in establishing the buy-in and co-operation needed from these sectors
7. Develop a multi-component, multi-year, multi-sector project plan	As shown in the work breakdown structure of the pilot project, a larger project would need to contain the same deliverables. Also, due to the number of elementary schools, this project would need to be expanded and 'phased-in' over a number of years
8. Consider the Walking School Bus (WSB) driver as a paid position. As established with the lunchroom supervisor positions, the WSB driver	Volunteering may not be as attractive as being hired. Hiring creates a natural responsibility to duty and incentive for

can be a recognized position at the school. This approach is the best way to engage the community in a sustainable manner. Consideration of HR policy, cost, legal and risk management evaluation will need to occur. Although, it may seem a large task at first, once established it can easily expand across the board. These positions could be filled by stay-at-home parents and interested seniors. Hiring removes the burden of volunteer recruitment and retention	participation. It also helps to meet sustainability requirements. This recommendation is strongly supported by the parent survey results. Parents reported adult supervision as a main factor for allowing their children to walk. Conversely, parents who do not allow their children to walk reported their number one reason for not doing so as their worries about strangers. Adult-run walking school buses could address this barrier
At the Project Level	
9. Secure evaluation as a component of the work breakdown structure. This must be headed by an evaluation specialist, who is either already internal to the board or will be hired for the project	To substantiate the provision of human and fiscal resources to the project, evaluation must be performed. This should be developed and implemented by an evaluation specialist
10. Secure communication as a component of the work breakdown structure. This must be headed by a communication specialist	To affect population awareness and behaviour change, the use of media can be very effective. The communities who utilize the HDSB schools need to know and understand the goals of the project and how they can benefit from them
11. Design an approach to address the decrease in winter active transport. The goal here is to help promote and maintain active transport despite the change in seasons.	The pilot project results revealed a decrease in active transport when the weather becomes colder. This issue needs to be addressed so that student behaviour doesn't change when the weather does. This recommendation is strongly supported by the parent data. Parents, who allow their children to walk some days or to not walk at all, reported weather as being a strong factor for their decisions
12. Design an approach to address parental barriers to active transport	The parent survey revealed 51% of the respondents allow their children to walk on <u>some</u> days or <u>not at all</u>. This data corresponds with the student

	walking rate data. In the end, especially with the younger children, the parent is the decision maker. Change in parental attitude can result in higher active transport rates
13. Develop tactics to mitigate parental car use. These tactics can include policies such as closing school parking lots to non-board staff, increasing police/by-law presence (actual ticketing), removal of Kiss'n'Ride systems, supportive infrastructure development for future schools, awareness raising, and system supports. Each idea needs to be researched for feasibility and impact before implementing	Since parents are the drivers, they need to be encouraged to let their children walk. Both the student and parent surveys revealed children are being driven instead of walking or taking the bus. Policy is effective in changing undesirable behaviours
14. Attend to sustainability factors and incorporate these into the framework of the school environment. Considerations need to be made around supportive policies and structures to maintain the desired behaviours	From the beginning, all planning and implementation must be done with the concept of sustainability in mind. This will ensure the continued viability of a behaviour or practice well into the future. It will help to avoid costly rework or repetition of action
15. Promote increased use of the yellow school bus to the population eligible for bus use. This needs to be incorporated into the project plan.	To decrease car traffic at the school, busing needs to be fully adopted by all eligible for its service. The survey results show uniformly that many of the children who are eligible to use the bus, are not, and are arriving to school in their parents' cars
16. Implement the ASRTS program uniformly in all schools, taking into consideration unique community needs and traits	A uniform application of the program can help with the following: o Quality assurance o Familiarity and recognition o Cost reduction o Networking and sharing
17. Review the strategy yearly for progress and revise as needed to keep on top of current trends	Lesson learned can help 'tweak' the project to create success
At the School Level	
18. Identify at each school an ASRTS champion to help coordinate the program at the school level	Evaluation revealed the most successful school had an ASRTS

	champion. This person was responsible for the promotion and implementation of the program for the whole school
19. Develop initiatives specific to the middle school age-group, independently of the elementary age-group	Given the maturity differences, different approaches need to be employed to attract both the students and their parents
20. Involve students in planning, promoting and supporting the active transport strategy	Best practice articulates student involvement for obtaining buy-in and adoption of behaviours. This can equate program success
21. Ensure each school has at least one walking school bus, expanding routes as needed	Walking school buses can help encourage active transport by providing security and safety for parents and socialization and belonging for students
22. Adopt at each school a school level policy that promotes and supports all modes of active transport (skateboards, roller blades, scooters, etc.)	If active transport is the goal then restrictions that limit active transport options need to be removed

Conclusion

The hardest sell in the world is behaviour change and the hardest task in the world is to change one's behaviour. We see this all around us. From weight-loss programs to smoking cessation tactics and fitness center memberships, people are constantly struggling to change something.

The culture shift from non-active to active transport is no different. A comprehensive approach needs to be taken when trying to change physical activity behaviour. According to behaviour change theory, the best approach is an ecological approach. In the past, much emphasis was put on the individual to change. Now theories promote a broader emphasis. These approaches place the creation of supportive environments (making healthy choices the easy choices) on par with the development of personal skills.

Society is starting to experience the outcomes of poor lifestyle behaviours and is realizing it is time to start making changes. The timing of this pilot, and any work stemming from it, is appropriate given the current societal shift from a norm of excessive car use and sedentary behaviour to the desire of a green culture that promotes active transportation.

This successful pilot, which included eight different schools across Halton Region, has provided many lessons learned and recommendations for decision makers to deliberate. To create active transport as the preferred choice by parents and students, an ecological approach paired with sustainability factors (policy, fiscal supports, and internal organizational structure) will bring about the best results.

For the Halton District School Board, the momentum has begun and needs to be continued in a planned and sustainable manner. The ASRTS program dovetails with the Board's 2007–2010 Strategic Plan's Mission Statement of creating safe, healthy and engaging environments and the Goal Area for students to provide safety and well-being.

With health promotion theory as the backbone of the strategy, project management its methodology, and multi-sector collaboration its matrix, HDSB is well positioned to become the first school board in Ontario to tackle and reverse the current culture of children not walking to school.

Good Luck to the Halton District School Board!

The Halton Region Health Department would like to thank the Halton District School Board for this unique opportunity to collaborate!

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Sandwich Board used at the Middle Schools: EJ James in Oakville and Centennial in Georgetown

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Appendix I

ASRTS Steering Committee Members

Name	Organization	Anticipated Role Responsibility	Contact Information
Jennifer Jenkins	Halton Region Health Department, Heart Health Cancer Prevention, Youth Physical Activity Health Promoter	Project Manager and Chair of Committee	1151 Bronte Road Oakville ON L6M 3L1 Tel: 905- 825-6000 x 7752 Fax: 905-825-8588 Jennifer.Jenkins@halton.ca
Trisha Leszczynski **(as required)**	Town of Oakville, Environmental Policy Coordinator Town Manager's Office	Consulting committee member (may have some take away tasks)	1225 Trafalgar Road Oakville, Ontario, L6J 5A6 Tel. (905) 845-6601, X 3948 Fax: 905-338-4188 tleszczynski@oakville.ca
Alison Hilborn **(as required)**	Neighbourhood Coordinator, Our Kids Network - Acton	Consulting committee member (may have some take away tasks) Link to the other Hub coordinators	St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School, 147 Mill St., W, ON L7J 1G7 Tel: 647-258-9763 actonhub@ourkidsnetwork.ca.
Fleur Storace-Hogan **(as required)**	Environmental Projects Co-ordinator City of Burlington	Consulting committee member (may have some take away tasks)	426 Brant Street, P.O. Box 5013 Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Z6 Tel: 905-335-7600 x 7580 1-877-213-3609 x 7580 Fax:905-333-3956 storace-hoganf@burlington.ca
Constable Laurel Barnett	Halton Regional Police Service	Consulting committee member (may have some take away tasks)	1151 Bronte Road Oakville, Ontario Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2700 Oakville, Ontario L6J 5C7 Tel: (905) 825-4777 X 5151 laurel.barnett@hrps.on.ca
Marnie Denton	Manager, Communications Halton District School Board	Consulting member	2050 Guelph Line, Burlington L7R 3Z2 Tel: 905 335-3665 X 2227 dentonm@hdsb.ca
Dr. Anthony Ford-Jones **(as required)**	Community Paediatrician	Consulting member	Tel: 905-634-1311 Drfordjones@cogeco.net
Linda Lambert	Halton Region	Consulting	690 Dorval Drive, 6th floor Oakville, ON

	Department of Social and Community Services , Children's Services, Child Health Team, Public Health Nurse	committee member (may have some take away tasks)	L6K 3X9 Tel: 905-825-6000 x 2550 linda.lambert@halton.ca
Beckie Jas	Environmental Health Specialist Halton Region Health Department	Consulting committee member (may have some take away tasks) Will not be available for every meeting	1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, ON L6M 3L1Tel: 905-825-6000 ext 7678 Toll Free: 1-866-442-5866 Fax: 905-825-8797 Beckie.Jas@halton.ca
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Ron Ballentine	Coordinator: Science and Technology; Environmental Education School Programs Department Halton District School Board	Consulting committee member (may have some take away tasks)	2050 Guelph Line Burlington ON L7R 3Z2 Tel: 905-335-3663 Ext 3297 Fax: 905-332-1891 ballentiner@hdsb.ca
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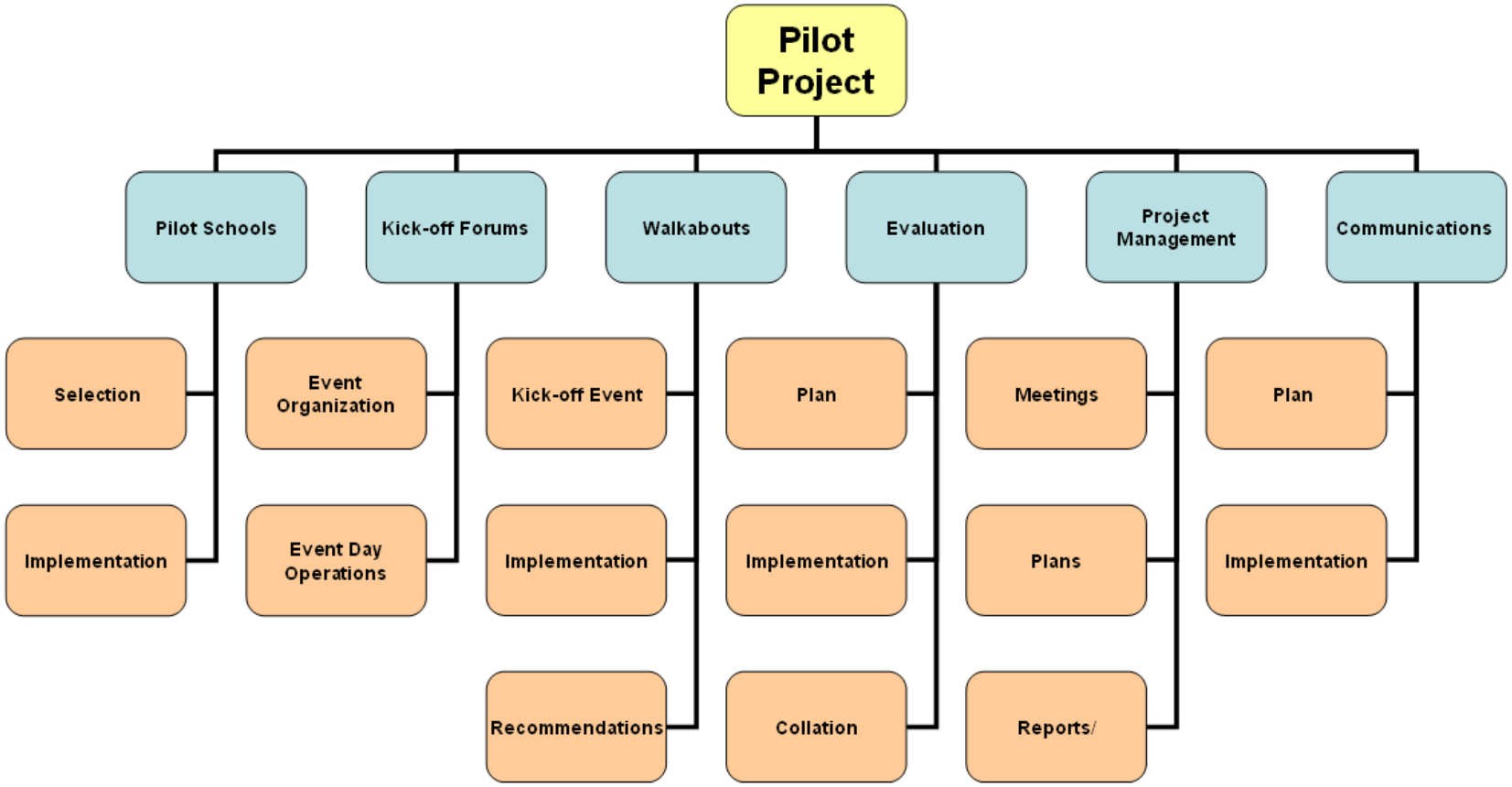
Appendix II

Work Breakdown Structure
Pilot Project 2008



02/03/2009 Updated

Appendix III

Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) Pilot Project

Student Survey

How did you get to school today? (Arrival only)

School Name: _____

Grade: _____ **Total Class Enrolment:** _____

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

How many of the students are in the walking distance of 1.6 km (are eligible to walk)? _____

(Your principal has this information for you)

Day	Total (number of students in class today)	# of students absent	Weather S=sunny, C=cloudy, R=rain	Walked (from home to school)		Walked part-way (parent dropped off at a corner)	School Bus	Came by Car (please define as not in a carpool)	Carpool	Bike		Other (skateboards, roller blades, scooters)	
				Eligible to walk	Not eligible to walk					Eligible to walk	Not eligible to walk	Eligible to walk	Not eligible to walk
Monday													
Tuesday													
Wednesday													
Thursday													
Friday													

Teacher Information: Protocol for the Survey

For the best evaluation results, please follow the instructions closely

Please do at the beginning of the school day

Prior to asking the students the question "How did you get to school today?" Please define for the class the following methods of transportation:

1. **Walked from home to school**: walked from your house to the school
2. **Walked part way**: Was driven part of the way by someone (parent, grandparent, neighbour, with a carpool), then dropped off and walked the rest of the way
3. **School bus**: Took the bus to school
4. **Came by Car**: Driven in a car from your home by a parent or grandparent
5. **Car Pool**: Met up or picked up by someone (neighbour, another mother/father) and was driven to school (there would be a friend or two in the car not just a brother or sister)
6. **Bike**: Came on your bike
7. **Other**: Skateboard, roller blades, or scooter to school

Instructions:

Once the students understand the definitions, it is probably easiest to start filling the survey out in this order

1. **Before you fill-in the chart, completely fill-out the top portion of the survey i.e. total class enrolment, the number of students eligible to walk (your principal has this information), etc.**
2. **Then each morning start with filling out the total number of students in class (that morning)**
3. **Fill-out the number absent (that morning)**
4. **Fill-out the weather (that morning)**
5. **Start to ask the students how they got to school today (by a show of hands) and fill in the appropriate boxes. Make sure the students know that they are to only put their hand up once.**
6. **Make sure you record the eligible to walk students separately from the others, without letting the students know (this is very important for our data collection)**
7. **Check that the items in red (below) happen each day**

Make sure your totals are equal (2 checks)

- **the numbers in all the columns (except the *Absent* column) equals the number in your *Total (number of students in class today)* column**
- **the number in the *Total* (number of students in class today) column and the number in the *Absent* column, when added together, equals the total class enrolment number**

If these instructions are unclear please call us. Jennifer Jenkins, Health Promoter and Project Manager for the ASRTS Pilot Project at the Health Department 905-825-6000 x 7752 or 1-866-442-5866 x 7752)

Thank you!
For more information, please contact
Halton Region
905-825-6000
Toll Free: 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866)
TTY: 905-845-2769
www.halton.ca

Student Survey Information

Limitations

A number of limitations need to be considered in assessing the results of this pilot project. These include:

- Control schools were not used. Therefore, it is difficult to truly assess the impact of the program activities on active transport.
- Results were evaluated at the school level. The impact of students' ages needs to be considered as younger students may be less likely to use active transport than older, more independent students. The proportion of younger to older students may therefore skew the overall results.
- Data quality. A number of discrepancies were noted in the Student Survey data that were collected each month.
- The June baseline data were collected on different students and in some cases different grade levels than in the autumn months.
- Each school offered a different set of activities. These varied by school and also by month within some of the schools.

Weather conditions during the survey weeks

During the survey week of September 22 to 26, the weather conditions for eight o'clock in the morning were recorded as ranging from a low of 12.3 °C (Monday) to a high of 16.0 °C (Friday). All mornings were recorded as being mainly clear with no precipitation (Environment Canada).

During the survey week of October 20 to 24, the weather conditions for eight o'clock in the morning were recorded as declining from a high of 8.6 °C on Monday to a low of -0.6 °C on Wednesday and increasing again to 4.3 °C on Friday. All mornings were recorded as being mostly cloudy with no precipitation (Environment Canada).

During the survey week of November 17 to 21, the weather conditions for eight o'clock in the morning were recorded as declining from a high of -1.4 °C on Monday to a low of -7.1 °C on Wednesday, increasing to -2.4 °C on Thursday and dropping again to -9.0 °C on Friday. Monday through Thursday mornings were recorded as being cloudy with snow showers on the Tuesday morning. Friday, the coldest morning of the week, was clear with no precipitation (Environment Canada).

During the survey week of December 15 to 19, the weather conditions for eight o'clock in the morning were recorded as rapidly declining from a high of 9.9 °C on Monday to -7.4 °C on Tuesday. The temperatures then hovered around -5 °C for the rest of the week. Monday morning was recorded as a rainy day, followed by cloudy days with snow on the Tuesday and Friday mornings. The Friday, December 19th, was in fact declared a snow day and therefore this day was excluded from the weekly analysis. As a result, a four-day average was calculated for the December student survey week.

Halton REGION

Health Department
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Appendix IV

Survey about Walking and Biking to School

- For Parents –

Dear Parents and Caregivers:

This fall the Halton District School Board is involved in a project with Halton Region Health Department that encourages students to be more physically active by walking and biking to school. Your school is one of the eight schools participating in this project. This project will be using initiatives from a program called Active and Safe Routes to School. This voluntary survey is one part of the project and is designed for parents of children in Grades 3, 5 and 6.

The survey is created to learn whether children are walking or biking to school as well as your thoughts about this. It will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. If there is a question that you are not comfortable answering, please skip it. Please ask your child to return your completed survey, in the envelope provided, to her/his teacher by Monday, October 6. Responses will be kept confidential. Your name and your child's name will not be associated with any of the results.

If you would like more information about the project or this survey you can call me at Halton Region Health Department at 1-866-442-5266 or contact me by email at jennifer.jenkins@halton.ca. You can also visit the Halton Website at www.Halton.ca/asrts.

I appreciate you taking the time to help us collect this important information.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Jenkins
Project Manager and Health Promoter
Halton Region Health Department

Here are some quick directions to help you complete this survey:

Please complete PART 1.

After you have completed PART 1 you will be directed to complete PART 2 *or* PART 3 *or* PART 4.

If you have more than one child in the Grades of interest for this survey (i.e. Grades 3, 5, and 6) - please select one child (from Grade 3, 5 or 6) for whom you will complete this survey. To do this, please select the child whose birthday falls closest to today's date. If you have twins (triplets etc.), please choose the child born first.

PART 1

School Name:_____

Your Street Name:_____

1. How far away from the school do you live?
   Less than 0.5 km (about 7 min walking)

   0.5 km to less than 1 km (about 15 min walking)

   Between 1 km and 1.6 km (about 25 min walking)

   D Don't know

2. This survey is about my child in Grade _____

3. Is the child (for whom you are answering this survey) Male or Female?
   D Male

   D Female

4. In a **typical school week (5 days),** how many days does your child use the following methods of getting *to* and *from* school? (Please write the number of days your child travels to and from school).

Trips **TO** School		Trips **FROM** School	
Mode of Transportation	**# days**	**Mode of Transportation**	**# days**
Walk to school		Walk from school	
Bicycle to school		Bicycle from school	
Ride the school bus to school		Ride the school bus from school	
Ride in a car to school with a parent or caregiver		Ride in a car from school	
Ride in a carpool to school (e.g. with neighbour, friend etc.)		Ride in a carpool from school	
Ride the public bus to school		Ride the public bus from school	
Other, please explain:		Other, please explain :	
Total should equal 5 days	5		5

If your child walks or bikes <u>to AND from</u> school <u>everyday</u>, please go to PART 2 (blue pages).

If your child walks or bikes <u>to OR from</u> school on <u>some days</u> , please go to PART 3 (green pages).

If your child <u>never</u> walks or bikes <u>to OR from</u> school, please go to PART 4 (pink pages).

PART 2: Child Walks or Bikes To and From School Everyday

5. **a) Did your child tell you that they wanted to walk or bike to/from school?**

Yes, my child told me in Grade #_____

R No

My child has always walked or biked to/from school

I don't remember

❑ **If you answered 'Yes' to question 5a, did you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school in that Grade?**

9 Yes

R No

6. **Who does your child usually walk or bike to/from school with?** (Please select all that apply).

1 a brother or sister

D an adult

another child/children their age

an older child/children who attend(s) their school

D alone

other, please describe_____

b) **In the table below, please indicate at which Grade you allowed your child the following choices.** (Please select all that apply by marking an X in the box under the Grade Level. If a choice does not apply to you, please select N/A)

At what Grade did you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school with :	Grade Level								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	not allowed	N/A
A parent or another adult related to your child									
An adult not related to your child (e.g. another child's parent, a relative)									
An older sibling									
A younger sibling									
An older student									
A younger student									
Alone									

7. **We would like to know which of the following affected your decision to allow your child to walk or bike to/from school.** (Please check all that apply)

T ☐ My child's school is close to our home

T☐ My child's before and after-school schedule or activities allow this (e.g. there is enough time)

T ☐ My child has an adult to walk or bike with

T☐ My child walks/bikes with other children

T☐ My child walks/bikes with an older sibling

T☐ My child wants/likes to walk/bike to/from school

T☐ The intersections and crossings on the route to school are safe

T ☐ The speed of traffic on the route to school is safe

T ☐ The volume of traffic in our neighbourhood is *not* a problem

T The volume of traffic at/around the school is *not* a problem

T ☐ There are sidewalks on the route to school

T ☐ There are bike paths on the route to school

T ☐ There is a crossing guard on the route to school

T ☐ There is playground supervision *before* school

T There is playground supervision *after* school

T There is a benefit to my child from walking/biking to/from school (e.g. health, fun)

T Our neighbourhood is safe

T We want to drive less to lower air pollution

T Other (please describe): _____

_____

_____

c) Did you walk or bike to your elementary school as a child?

9 Everyday

9 Somedays

Never – took a bus

Never – got a ride from parents

Thank you for completing the survey!

Please ask your child to return your completed survey to her/his teacher by Friday, October 3rd

If you would like more information about the pilot project or the Active and Safe Routes to School program, please contact the school principal or Jennifer Jenkins at the Halton Region Health Department (905-825-6000 ext. 7752 or 1-866-442-5866 ext. 7752).

Part 3: Child Walks or Bikes To or From School on Some Days

8. **a) Did your child tell you that they wanted to walk or bike to/from school?**

   Yes, my child told me in Grade #_____

   R No

   My child has always walked or biked to/from school

   I don't remember

❑ **If you answered 'Yes' to question 10a, did you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school in that Grade?**

   9 Yes

   R No

9. **On the days that your child walks or bikes to school, who do they usually walk or bike to/from school with?** (Please select all that apply)

   1 a brother or sister

   D an adult

   another child/children their age

   an older child/children who attend(s) their school

   D alone

   b – other, please describe_____

10. **a) On most days, does your child get to and from school in a different way (e.g. you drive them to school in the morning and they walk home at night).**

   9 Yes

   R No

   9 It depends

b) If you answered 'Yes' or 'It depends' to question 12a, please explain why:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

d) **In the table below, please indicate at which Grade you allowed your child the following choices.** (Please select all that apply by marking an X in the box under the Grade Level. If a choice does not apply to you, please select N/A)

At what Grade did you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school with :	Grade Level								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	not allowed	N/A
A parent or another adult related to your child									
An adult not related to your child (e.g. another child's parent, a relative)									
An older sibling									
A younger sibling									
An older student									
A younger student									
Alone									

11. **Which of the following affected your decision to <u>allow</u> your child to walk or bike to/from school on *some days*?** (Please check all that apply)

T The distance between our home and school

T My child's before and after-school schedule or activities allow this on some days only (e.g. there is not enough time)

T My child has an adult to walk or bike with

T My child walks/bikes with other children

T My child walks/bikes with an older sibling

T My child wants/likes to walk/bike to/from school on some days

➔ The intersections and crossings on the route to school are safe
T The speed of traffic on the route to school is safe

T The volume of traffic in our neighbourhood is *not* a problem

T The volume of traffic at/around the school is *not* a problem

T There are sidewalks on the route to school

T There are bike paths on the route to school

T There is a crossing guard on the route to school

T There is playground supervision *before* school

T There is playground supervision *after* school

➔ There is a benefit to my child from walking/biking to/from school (e.g. health, fun)

T Our neighbourhood is safe

T We want to drive less to lower air pollution

T Other (please describe):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. **What affected your decision to <u>not allow</u> your child to walk or bike to school on *some days*?** (Please select all that apply)

T The distance between our home and school

➔ My child's before and after-school schedule or activities do not allow this on some days (e.g. there is not enough time)

T My child would be walking/biking alone to/from school on some days

T My child does not want to/like to walk or bike to/from school every day

➔ My routine does not allow for my child to walk or bike to/from school on some days

T It is easier for me to drive my child to/from school on some days

T There is no playground supervision *before* school

T There is no playground supervision *after* school

T Bad weather (e.g. rain, snow)

T Other (please describe):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

e) Do you agree with the following statements:

True	False	N/A*	
R	**R**	**R**	The intersections and crossings on the route to school are safe
T	T	T	The speed of traffic at/around the school is good
T	T	T	The volume of traffic in our neighbourhood is *not* a problem
T	T	T	The volume of traffic at/around the school is *not* a problem
T	T	T	There are sidewalks on the route to school

T	T	T	The sidewalks on the route to school are in good condition
T	T	T	There are bike paths on the route to school
T	T	T	The bike paths on the route to school are in good condition
T	T	T	There are enough crossing guards on the route to school

N/A - does not apply*

f) Did you walk or bike to your elementary school as a child?

9 Everyday

9 Somedays

Never – took a bus

Never – got a ride from parents

Thank you for completing the survey!

Please ask your child to return your completed survey to his/her teacher by Friday, October 3rd

If you would like more information about the pilot project or the Active and Safe Routes to School program, please contact the school principal or Jennifer Jenkins at the Halton Region Health Department (905-825-6000 ext. 7752 or 1-866-442-5866 ext. 7752).

Part 4: Child Never Walks or Bikes to School

13. **Has your child ever told you that they wanted to walk or bike to/from school?**
Yes, my child told me in Grade #_____

R No

I don't remember

14. **What affected your decision to not allow your child to walk or bike to school? For each item where you select 'Yes', please indicate whether or not making changes or improvements would change your decision.** (You may indicate N/A if that issue is not applicable to you).

Which of these issues affected your decision to not allow your child to walk or bike to/from school?	Did this affect your decision?	*If yes, Would you let your child walk or bike to/from school if any of these issues were changed or improved?*			
		Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*	*N/A*
My child's school is too far from our home	☐ yes ☐ no				
My child's before and after-school schedule does not allow this (e.g., there is not enough time)	☐ yes ☐ no				
My child would be walking/biking alone to/from school	☐ yes ☐ no				
My child does not want to/like to walk or bike to/from school	☐ yes ☐ no				
My routine does not allow for my child to walk or bike to/from school	☐ yes ☐ no				

Please continue on the next page…

Which of these issues affected your decision to <u>not allow</u> your child to walk or bike to/from school?	**Did this affect your decision?**	***Would you let your child walk or bike to/from school if any of these issues were changed or improved?***			
		Yes	***No***	***Not Sure***	***N/A***
There are no adults to walk or bike with	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
It is easier for me to drive my child to/from school	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
I'm worried about strangers approaching my child	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
I'm worried about my child being bullied along the route	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
The speed of traffic along the route to school is fast	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
The intersections and crossings on the route are not safe	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
There is too much traffic in the neighbourhood	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
There is too much traffic around the school	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
There are no sidewalks on the route – or they need to be fixed	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
There are no bike paths on the route – or they need to be fixed	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
There are no crossing guards on the route to school	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
There is no playground supervision *before* school	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
There is no playground supervision *after* school	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
There is no benefit to my child walking/biking to/from school	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
Poor weather conditions (e.g. rain, snow)	☐ **yes** ☐ **no**				
Other, please describe:					

g) **In the table below, please indicate at which Grade <u>you would allow</u> your child the following choices.** (Please select all that apply by marking an X in the box under the Grade Level. If a choice does not apply to you, please select N/A)

At what Grade <u>would you</u> allow your child to walk or bike to/from school with:	Grade Level											
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Sometime in high school	Not allowed	N/A
A parent or another adult related to your child												
An adult not related to your child (e.g. another child's parent, a relative)												
An older sibling												
A younger sibling												
An older student												
A younger student												
Alone												

h) **Did you walk or bike to your elementary school as a child?**

9 Everyday

9 Somedays

Never – took a bus

Never – got a ride from parents

Thank you for completing the survey!

Please ask your child to return your completed survey to her/his teacher by Friday, October 3rd

If you would like more information about the pilot project or the Active and Safe Routes to School program, please contact the school principal or Jennifer Jenkins at the Halton Region Health Department (905-825-6000 ext. 7752 or 1-866-442-5866 ext. 7752).

Full Parent Survey Results

(Please note: This information represents all schools and is not school specific)

Eight schools participated in the ASRTS pilot project. In these schools, 934 Grade 3, 5 and 6 students were identified as 'eligible to walk' (i.e., living within 1.6 km walking distance of the school). These students were asked to take the Parent Survey home to their parents. Parents were asked to complete this survey within one-week and return it to their child's teacher. In total, 432 surveys were returned, resulting in a 46% response rate.

For the total pilot, one hundred and thirty-nine (32%) of the parents had children in Grade 3, 122 (28%) in Grade 5, and 171 (40%) had children in Grade 6. Boys represented 53% of these students and girls 47%.

A 1.6 km distance between home and school is considered to be a reasonable distance for students to walk. Beyond this distance students are bused to school. However, we were also interested in how close to the school the child lived within the 1.6 km range.

Overall, 205 (48%) of the parents indicated that their children lived less than 0.5 km from the school. One hundred and forty-six (34%) indicated that their children lived 0.5 to less than 1 km from the school and 71 (17%) indicated that their children lived between 1 and 1.6 km from the school. There was a similar distribution of distance to school for all three grade levels (Table 1).

Table 1: Distance to school, by Grade level, Grades 3, 5 and 6 students, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Distance from School	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total
Less than 0.5 km	66 (48%)	65 (54%)	74 (44%)	205 (48%)
0.5 km to less than 1 km	51 (37%)	38 (32%)	57 (34%)	146 (34%)
Between 1 and 1.6 km	21 (15%)	17 (14%)	33 (20%)	71 (17%)
Total	**139**	**120**	**168**	**427**

Parents were asked how many times a week their children arrived to school in the morning by walking or biking (active transport) and how many times they arrived home in the afternoon by active transport.

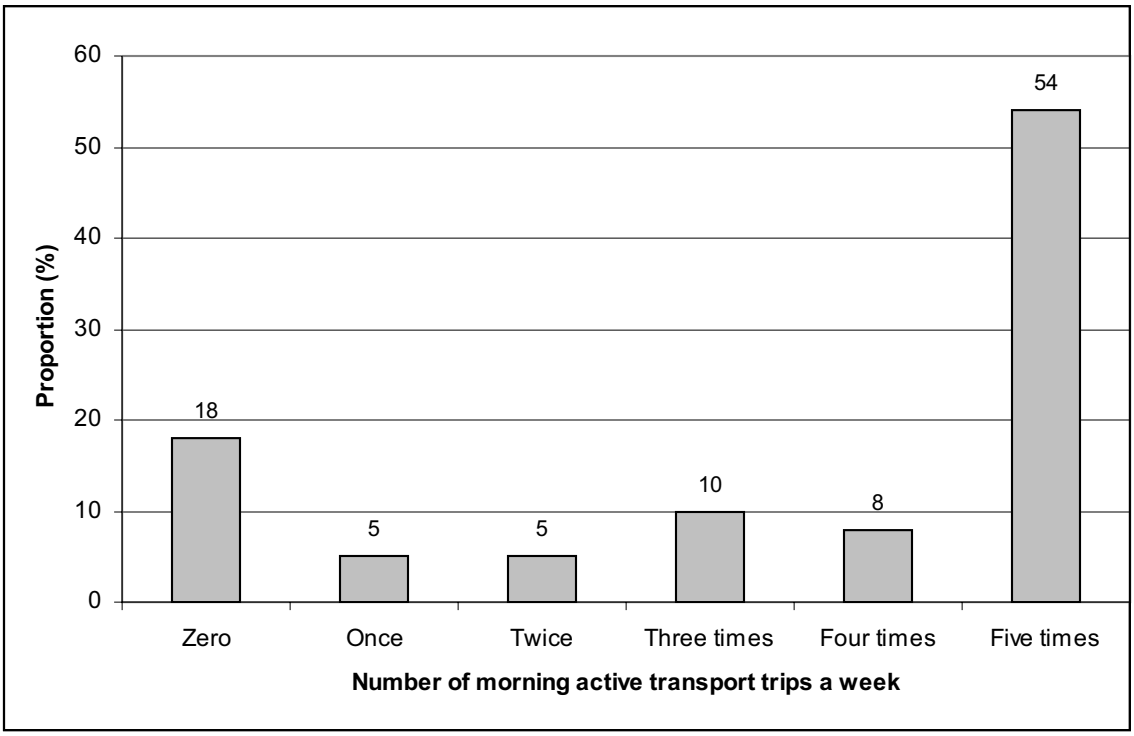

Figure 1: Proportion of students by number of weekly morning active transport trips to school, Grade 3, 5 and 6 students, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Overall, 228 (54%) of the parents indicated that their children used active transport every morning, and 77 (18%) indicated that their children never used active transport to school in the morning (Fig. 1).

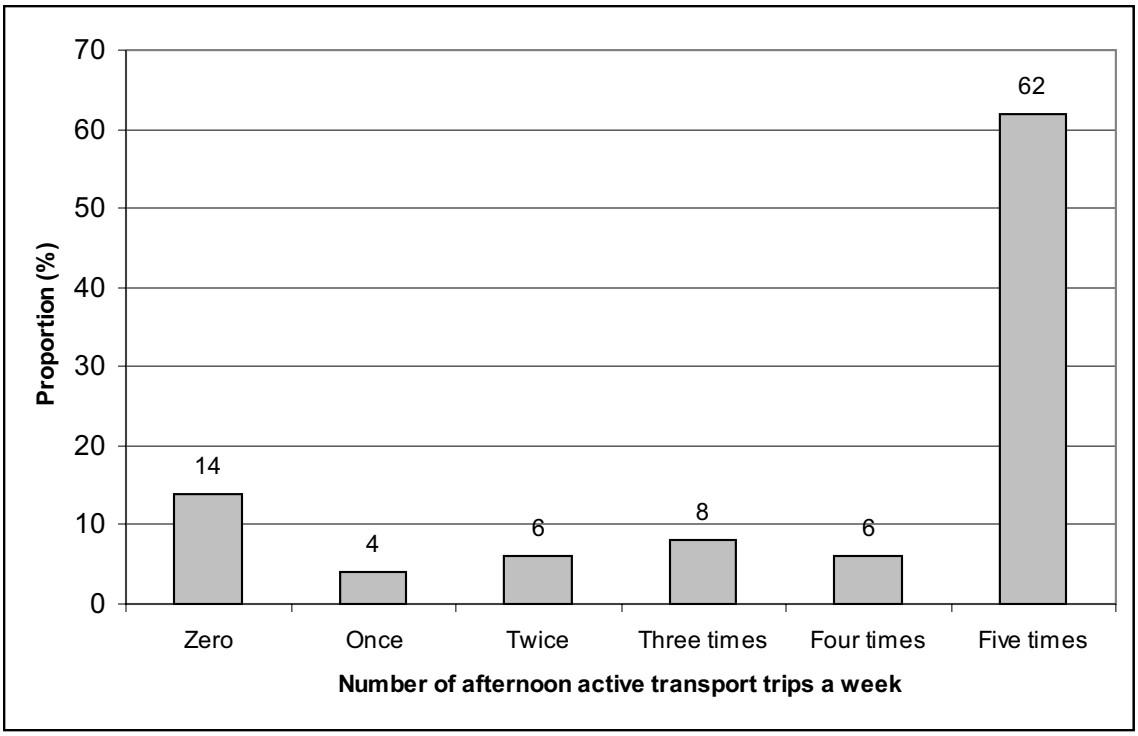

Figure 2: Proportion of students by number of weekly afternoon active transport trips to school, Grade 3, 5 and 6 students, October 2008 Parent Survey.

A slightly higher number of parents indicated that their children used active transport every afternoon after school (259, 62%) as compared to the morning trips. And, a slightly lower number of parents (58, 14%) indicated that their children never used active transport in the afternoons.

This information was used to create three levels of active transport: 1) those students who only used active transport weekly (i.e., 10 trips a week), 2) those students who used active transport on some days of the week (i.e., less than 10 trips a week), and 3) those students who never used active transport.

Close to half of the respondents (49%) indicated that their children walked or biked to and from school every day, while 12% indicated that their children never used active transport to or from school.

Figure 3 indicates the percentage of students in each active transport level by grade.

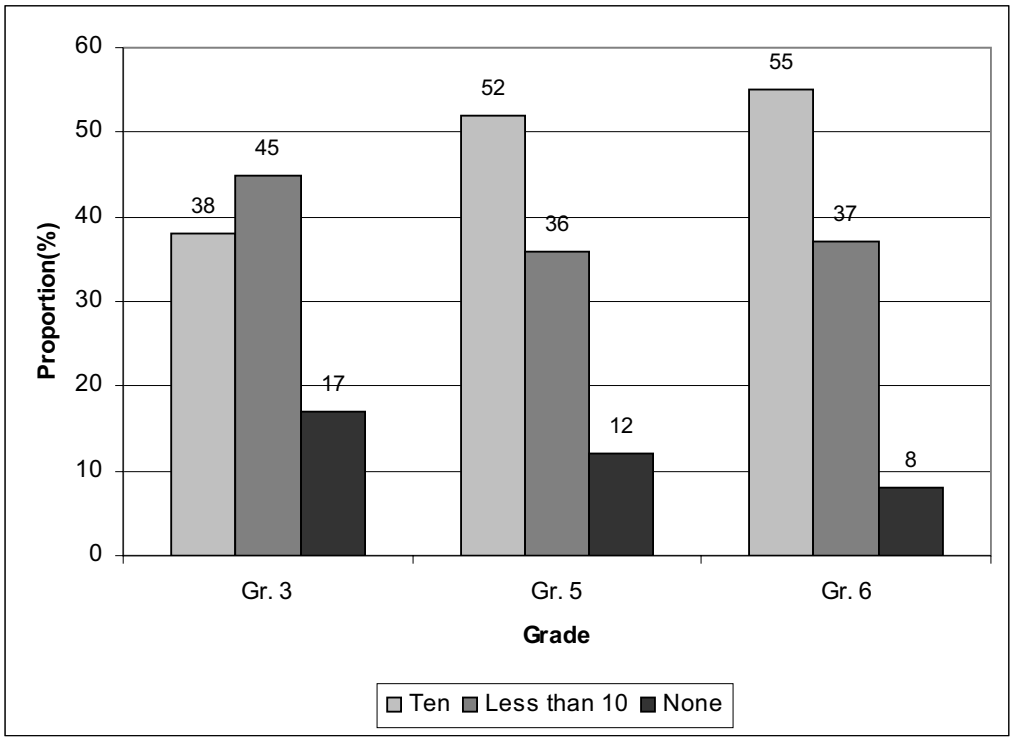

Figure 3: Proportion of students who arrive to and from school by active transport, by Grade level and number of weekly active transport trips, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Students in older grades were more likely to use active transport to and from school on a daily basis than their younger counterparts (Fig. 3). Just over half of the Grade 6 students (55%) used active transport on a daily basis compared to 38% of the Grade 3 students (Fig. 3).

Table 2 summarizes the distance to school by active transport level for each of the three grades.

Table 2: Distance to school, by grade level and number of weekly active transport trips, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Distance	Ten trips	Less than ten trips	None	Total
Grade 3 students				
Less than 0.5 km	58%	36%	6%	66 (48%)
0.5 km to less than 1 km	20%	52%	28%	50 (36%)
Between 1 and 1.6 km	19%	52%	29%	21 (15%)
Grade 5 students				
Less than 0.5 km	64%	34%	2%	64 (54%)
0.5 km to less than 1 km	45%	29%	26%	38 (32%)
Between 1 and 1.6 km	24%	59%	18%	17 (14%)
Grade 6 students				
Less than 0.5 km	71%	27%	1%	73 (44%)
0.5 km to less than 1 km	50%	43%	7%	56 (34%)
Between 1 and 1.6 km	33%	49%	18%	33 (20%)

Students who used active transport ten times per week were more likely to live closer to school. The further the distance from the school, the less likely the students were to use active transport on a daily basis. This was noted for all three grade levels (Table 2).

Very few students who lived close to school (less than 0.5 km) never used active transport during the week (Table 2). The older the students, the more likely they were to arrive by active transport despite the distance.

Student Interest in Active Transport to/from School

All parents were asked whether or not their children had ever told them that they wanted to walk or bike to/from school. Forty-eight percent of the parents stated their children expressed an interest in active transport, 33% stated that their children did not express such interest and 20% indicated that their children were already walking (data not shown).

Of those parents whose children indicated interest in active transport, 66% gave their children permission to use active transport in the grade in which they first expressed this interest.

These results were similar regardless of the current grade level of the child. The results were also similar for those who used active transport daily and on some days of the week.

Even amongst children who never use active transport, 61% of the parents indicated that their children told them they would like to walk/bike to and from school.

Parents whose children use active transport to and from school everyday

Parents (208) of children who used active transport to and from school on a daily basis were asked a number of questions. These pertained to their children's readiness to walk or bike to school, whether their children walked/biked alone or with another individual and the factors that influenced parents' decisions to allow their children to walk/bike to/from school every day.

Who usually accompanies the walking/biking child to/from school?

Parents, whose children use active transport to and from school on a daily basis, were asked to indicate whether their children had a companion or supervision on their trip to and from school. Table 3 indicates the proportion of parents who specified the type of usual companion for their walking/biking children on the route to school (categories are not mutually exclusive).

Table 3: The usual companion for the walking/biking child on his/her way to and from school, Grade 3, 5 and 6 students, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Usual active transport companion	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	% of all students using active transport on a daily basis (N=205)
Child's brother/sister	51%	51%	37%	45%
An adult	75%	49%	14%	40%
Another child/children of same age	16%	43%	48%	39%
An older child/children who attend the same school	10%	5%	11%	9%

Note: (*) These categories are not mutually exclusive.

Overall, around 40% of the respondents indicated that their children, who use active transport to and from school, walk or bike with other children or adults (Table 3). Nine percent of the parents indicated that their child walk/bike with older students from the school.

Only 8% of the parents (16) indicated that their children walk/bike to school alone. None of the Grade 3 students were permitted to walk/bike to school alone (data not shown).

Factors affecting parents' decisions to allow their children to walk/bike to and from school

Parents were asked to indicate which factors affected their decisions to allow their children to use active transport to and from school. Of the 208 parents who indicated that their children used active transport on a daily basis, 200 answered this question. Table 4 shows the proportion of parents, by the child's grade level, who specified the factors that affected their decisions to allow their children to use active transport to school.

Table 4: The proportion of parents who specified the factors that affected their decision to allow their child to walk/bike to and from school, by student grade level, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Factor	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total (N=200)
School is close to home	92%	93%	90%	92%
There are sidewalks on the route	63%	77%	64%	68%
There is a benefit from walking/biking	74%	72%	58%	66%
Child wants to/likes to walk/bike to school	61%	64%	60%	61%
Our neighbourhood is safe	67%	66%	53%	60%
Intersections and crossings en route are safe	51%	64%	52%	55%
There are crossing guards en route	49%	49%	46%	48%
Child walks/bikes with other children	27%	42%	55%	44%
Child has an adult to walk/bike with	67%	48%	19%	40%
There is playground supervision *before* school	37%	41%	38%	39%
We want to drive less to lower air pollution	49%	42%	30%	39%
Child's before and after school activities allow this	39%	31%	28%	32%

Volume of traffic in the neighbourhood is not a problem	29%	36%	29%	31%
Speed of traffic en route is safe	28%	39%	25%	30%
Child walks/bikes with older sibling	33%	40%	20%	29%
There is playground supervision *after* school	25%	30%	23%	25%
Volume of traffic at/around the school is not a problem	14%	20%	16%	17%
There are bike paths en route	12%	10%	10%	11%

Note: categories are not mutually exclusive.

More than half of the parents indicated the following factors as having a positive effect on their decision to allow their children to use active transport to school: the close distance from home to school (92%), existence of sidewalks (68%), the perceived health benefits of walking/biking (66%), the fact that their children want to/like to walk/bike to school (61%), the perception of safety in the neighbourhood (60%) and the perception that the intersections and crossings on the route to school are safe (55%). Between 29% and 44% of the parents indicated that their children having a companion along the route to school influenced their decisions to allow active transport (Table 4).

Other factors identified by parents included: the desire to drive less in order to lower air pollution (39%), the availability of playground supervision before school (39%), the fact that the child's before and after school activities allow for active transport (32%), and the availability of playground supervision after school (25%) (Table 4).

Some parents also provided additional input. Among the factors that they identified, the following themes emerged: students at a certain level are not bused to school; parents' own routines do not permit them to drive their children to school; and it is sometimes quicker to walk than to drive.

Parents own childhood experience with active transport

Parents of students who used active transport every day of the week were asked to indicate whether they themselves walked or biked to school as children. Seventy-three percent indicated that they used active transport 'every day', 11% indicated that they used active transport 'some days', and 13% were bused to school. Only 3% were driven by their parents (data not shown).

Parents whose children use active transport to and from school on some days

Parents (168) of children who used active transport to and from school on some days of the week were asked a number of questions. These pertained to their children's readiness to walk or bike to school, whether their children walked/biked alone or with other individuals and the factors that influenced parents' decisions to allow their children to walk/bike to/from school on some days.

Who usually accompanies the walking/biking child to/from school?

Parents, whose children use active transport to and from school on some days of the week, were asked to indicate whether their children had a companion or supervision on their trip to and from school. Table 5 summarizes the percent of parents who indicated each category of companion (categories are not mutually exclusive).

Table 5: The usual companion for the walking/biking child on his/her way to and from school, Grade 3, 5 and 6 students, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Usual active transport companion	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	% of all students using active transport on a daily basis (N=134)
Child's brother/sister	26%	42%	37%	34%
An adult	86%	45%	24%	53%
Another child/children of same age	8%	37%	44%	33%
An older child/children who attend the same school	6%	8%	9	8%

Note: These categories are not mutually exclusive.

Overall, more than half of the respondents indicated that their children, who use active transport to/from school on some days of the week, walk or bike with adults (Table 5). A third of the parents indicated that their children travel to/from school with their siblings or other children. In 8% of the cases parents indicated that older children from the school accompany their children to school.

Only 6% of the parents (8) indicated that their children walk/bike to school alone. The vast majority of these children were in Grades 5 and 6 (data not shown).

Parents were also asked whether their children used different modes of transportation in the morning than in the afternoon. Overall, 32% indicated this to be true and 43% indicated that this

depended on a number of factors. Twenty-eight percent of Grade 3 students, 32% of Grade 5s and 36% of Grade 6s arrived by different modes.

The common reasons provided for why the mode of transportation varied from morning to the afternoon included: parents' own work schedules and routines, after-school activities, childcare arrangements and younger siblings, and weather conditions.

Factors affecting parents' decisions to allow their children to walk/bike to or from school

Parents were asked to indicate which factors affected their decision to allow their children to use active transport to or from school on some days. Of the 168 parents who indicated that their children used active transport on some days, 135 answered this question. Table 6 summarizes the results.

More than half of the parents indicated the following factors as having a positive effect on their decision to allow their child to use active transport to school: the perceived health benefits of walking/biking (76%), the existence of sidewalks (75%), close distance from home to school (70%), their child wants to/likes to walk/bike to school (65%), and, the availability of crossing guards along the route (53%) (Table 6).

Table 6: Factors that affected parents' decisions to allow their children to walk/bike to or from school on some days, by student grade level, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Factor	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Proportion of all parents responding (N=135)
There is a benefit from walking/biking	82%	76%	70%	76%
There are sidewalks on the route	77%	71%	76%	75%
School is close to home	69%	71%	72%	70%
Child wants to/likes to walk/bike to school	65%	66%	65%	65%
There are crossing guards en route	43%	50%	67%	53%
Our neighbourhood is safe	45%	47%	52%	48%
Child has an adult to walk/bike with	63%	37%	33%	45%
Intersections and crossings en route are safe	35%	50%	50%	44%
We want to drive less to lower air pollution	49%	40%	39%	43%
Child walks/bikes with other children	14%	53%	63%	42%
Child's before and after school activities allow this	49%	40%	35%	42%
There is playground supervision *before* school	28%	37%	26%	30%
Speed of traffic en route is safe	20%	42%	28%	29%
Volume of traffic in the neighbourhood is not a problem	16%	32%	24%	23%
Child walks/bikes with older sibling	14%	26%	28%	22%
There is playground supervision *after* school	16%	21%	17%	18%
Volume of traffic at/around the school is not a problem	4%	21%	17%	13%
There are bike paths en route	10%	16%	15%	13%

Note: categories are not mutually exclusive.

Factors affecting parents' decisions to not allow their children to walk/bike to/from school

Parents were asked to indicate which factors affected their decisions to not allow their children to walk/bike to school on some days. Table 7 summarizes these findings.

Table 7: Factors that affected parents' decisions to not allow their children to walk/bike to or from school, by student grade level, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Factor	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total (N=130)
Bad weather conditions	72%	79%	83%	78%
Child's before and after school activities do not allow this	51%	50%	49%	50%
Parents' routines do not allow for active transport on some days	63%	38%	28%	44%
It is easier for the parent to drive their child to school	51%	44%	32%	42%
Child would be walking/biking on their own	22%	24%	32%	26%
The distance between home and school	18%	12%	32%	22%
Child does not want/like to walk/bike to school	12%	18%	17%	15%
There is no playground supervision after school	4%	0	6%	4%
There is no playground supervision before school	2%	6%	2%	3%

Three quarters of the parents identified poor weather conditions as affecting their decisions to not allow their children to use active transport sometimes (Table 7). For half of the parents, regardless of the age of the student, the participation in before and after school activities affected the ability of these children to use active transport due to time constraints and other related logistical issues. Parents' own routines affected mainly the younger students as parents prefer to accompany these children to/from school. Overall, only 15% of all the parents indicated that their children did not want to or like to walk/bike to/from school (Table 7).

A number of parents also identified additional factors which affected their decisions to *not* allow their children to walk/bike to or from school. These included traffic safety issues such as the absence of crossing guards, unsafe intersections, unsafe speed and lack of walking paths.

Parents' perceptions of infrastructure

Parents of children who use active transport on some days of the week were asked to indicate whether they agreed with a number of statements pertaining to traffic safety and the school zone infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, bike paths). Table 8 summarizes the findings.

Table 8: The proportion of parents who agreed with the following statements, by grade level of student, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Infrastructure Factors	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total
There are sidewalks on the route to school	100%	100%	100%	100%
Intersections and crossings on the route are safe	77%	77%	72%	76%
There are enough crossing guards on the route to school	70%	69%	64%	68%
The speed of traffic at/around the school is good	53%	60%	58%	57%
The volume of traffic in the neighbourhood is not a problem	41%	60%	54%	51%
There are bike paths on the route to school	35%	54%	47%	44%
The volume of traffic at/around the school is not a problem	10%	32%	41%	27%

While 100% of parents agreed that there were sidewalks on the route to school, it does not appear that there are any issues around the existence or condition of sidewalks. Only 44% of parents agreed that there were bike paths on the route to school (Table 8).

Three quarters of the parents indicated that they felt that the intersections and crossings on the route to school are safe and 68% felt that there were enough crossing guards. However only

about half of the parents felt that the volume of traffic in their neighbourhood was not a problem (51%) and that the speed of traffic at/around the school was (57%). Just 27% of the parents felt that the volume of traffic at/around the school was not a problem (Table 8).

Parents own childhood experience with active transport

Parents, of students who used active transport on some days of the week, were asked to indicate whether they themselves walked or biked to school as children. Sixty-six percent indicated that they used active transport 'every day', 15% indicated that they used active transport 'some days', and 17% were bused to school. Only 3% were driven by their parents (data not shown).

Parents whose children do not use active transport to or from school

Parents (52) of children who did not use active transport to or from school were asked a number of questions. These pertained to their children's expressed interests in using active transport and the factors that affected the parents' decisions to not allow their children to use active transport. In addition, they were asked to state whether they would change their minds if any of the issues identified by them were addressed and/or corrected.

Factors affecting parents' decisions to not allow their children to walk/bike to/from school

Parents were asked to indicate which factors affected their decisions to *not* allow their children to use active transport to and from school. Table 9 provides a list, in descending order, of the factors affecting the parents' decisions to *not* allow their children to use active transport.

Table 9: Factors that affected parents' decisions to *not* allow their children to walk/bike to and from school, by student grade level, October 2008 Parent Survey.

Factor	Proportion of parents (N=52)
I'm worried about strangers approaching my child	84%
Poor weather conditions	73%
Speed of traffic along the route to school is fast	65%
It is easier for me to drive my child to/from school	63%
There is too much traffic around the school	63%
There are no adults to walk/bike with	61%
Intersections and crossings on the route are not safe	61%
There is too much traffic in the neighbourhood	59%
My routine does not allow for my child to walk/bike to/from school	57%
School is too far from home	50%
My child would be walking/biking alone	46%
I'm worried about my child being bullied along the route	46%
There are no crossing guards on the route to school	42%
Child's before and after school activities allow this	35%
There is no playground supervision before school	34%
There are no bike paths on the route – or they need to be fixed	30%

There is no playground supervision after school	26%
There is no benefit to my child walking/biking to/from school	24%
There are no sidewalks on the route – or they need to be fixed	23%
Child does not want to/like to walk/bike to school	13%

Note: categories are not mutually exclusive.

The number one factor identified by the vast majority of these parents (84%) was the worry over strangers approaching their children along the route to/from school, followed by weather conditions (73%) (Table 9).

Along the lines of personal safety as well as the concern over strangers, worry over bullying and the fact that the child would be walking alone was identified by 46% of the parents (Table 9). Of traffic-type concerns, around sixty percent identified the following issues: speed of traffic along the route to school (65%), too much traffic around the school (63%), intersections and crossing on the route to school not being safe (61%), too much traffic in the neighbourhood (59%), and lack of crossing guards along the route (42%).

Between 57% and 63% of the parents indicated that their own routines made it easier to drive their children to and from school rather than allow for active transport (Table 9). Only 13% of the parents indicated that their children do not want to or like to walk/bike to school and 24% felt that there was no benefit to their children walking or biking to/from school (Table 9).

Parents' own childhood experience with active transport

Parents of students who did not use active transport to or from school were asked to indicate whether they themselves walked or biked to school as children. Fifty-eight percent indicated that they used active transport 'every day', 16% indicated that they used active transport 'some days', and 16% were bused to school. Only 9% were driven by their parents (data not shown).

Discussion

It appears that the number of active transport trips a week is related to student age. These findings were similar for those students who used active transport on a daily basis and those who walked/biked on some days of the week. Specifically, the older the student, the more frequently he/she walks/bikes to/from school. Distance also seems to play a role Students who used active transport ten times per week were more likely to live closer to school. The further the distance from the school, the less likely the students were to use active transport on a daily basis. This was noted for all three grade levels. Very few students who lived close to school (less than 0.5 km) never used active transport during the week.

Interestingly, 61% of the parents whose children never used active transport indicated that their children had at one point told them that they wanted to walk or bike to/from school.

Parents of children who used active transport on a daily basis were asked to indicate who the usual companions were along the route to school. Some differences were noted by age of the student. For the Grade 3 students, adults were the most likely companions. For Grade 5 students, both adults and siblings were listed as the most likely companions. For the Grade 6 students, siblings and other children were the most often cited companions. The same results were found for parents whose children used active transport on some days of the week.

The top five factors affecting parents' decisions to allow their children to use active transport on a daily basis were: distance between home and school, presence of sidewalks, the perceived benefits to the student from active transport, the child wanted to/liked to use active transport, and the perception that the neighbourhood is safe. Around 40% of the parents indicated factors such as the safety of intersections and crossings, the fact that their children had companions along their route to school/home, and the desire to lower air pollution. However, 31% or less indicated factors such as volume of traffic in the neighbourhood, the volume of traffic at/around the school, and the speed of traffic as a factor. Similar reasons were noted by those parents whose children used active transport on some days of the week.

Parents of children who used active transport on some days of the week were asked to indicate factors which affected their decisions to not allow their children to use active transport on the alternate days. Three-quarters of the parents indicated weather as being a factor and close to half of the parents indicated their own or their children's routines (e.g., before and after school activities) play a role. Only 15% of the parents indicated that their children did not want to/like to use active transport to/from school.

Parents of children who never used active transport were asked to indicate factors which affected their decisions to not allow their children to use active transport at all. The number one factor identified by the majority of these parents was the worry over strangers approaching their children along the route to/from school, followed by weather conditions.

Parents of children who never use active transport also worried their children might be bullied and were concerned that their children would be walking along. There were also traffic-related concerns, such as the speed of traffic, too much traffic around the school, intersections and

crossing on the route to school not being safe, too much traffic in the neighbourhood, and lack of crossing guards along the route.

Close to three-quarters of those parents whose children used active transport on a daily or some-day basis had themselves walked/biked to school as children, while only 58% of those parents whose children never used active transport had themselves used active transport as children.

Appendix V

Appendix V

Pilot School Principal Focus Group Results

First, general comments of program, pro's and cons

Pros

- Very detailed
- Good follow-up and directions
- Good reminders
- Good personal contact
- Made it as easy as possible
- Great job brining right people to the table
- Good action plan and central point
- Jennifer (strong leadership)
- Co-ordination of all parties involved
- Well resourced

Cons

- Routing
- Suggestion- limit your emails, overkill
- Difficult for middle school (had to be creative)
- J heard the P/VP concerns regarding management of paper work

SECTION ONE:
The process of the pilot project

Project management: Planning:

- Did you have adequate time to plan for the fall implementation—
  - Yes
  - Yes…We had a launch in the Spring and being allowed to bring teachers to the meeting helped with the planning
  - Having a fall meeting also helped with the start-up…It allowed the schools to share ideas.
  - Yes and no, because of a teacher change
  - Yes
  - In our situation no. Without a coordinator and just starting at the school there was not time

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2. Did you feel you understood the ASRTS program and the purpose of the pilot project? What was clear and what was not clear?

- Generally speaking, it was clear in terms of the program and purpose. The gray area was the scope of the concept—how many walking school bus routes, was it to build gradually from year to year? What were the expectations for staff involvement versus parent initiative?
- This could have been communicated better to the schools. We were nominated to be a part of this initiative with little information given ahead of time.
- Yes
- Yes
- I was provided an overview but was not part of the original set up.

3. How much time does a school need to get organized to run walking school buses and other ASRTS initiatives?

- If a school began in March or April to launch the concept at school council, follow up in newsletters to educate parents and get staff and parents on board to lead the initiative; that would be ample time
- Not much time…A meeting with parents who are willing to help. Communication with our school community is also necessary.
- Start/ plant seeds in June, Parents in May
- One to two months
- More important than time is the community buy in

4. What does a school need to plan and run the ASRTS program?

- Parents and staff willing to take on the range of roles and responsibilities of the project: communication with staff, community of dates for special events such as Walking Wednesdays; leading the routes; special assemblies to get kids excited; materials and resources such as one award (we created a white running shoe award that's mounted on a frame and the class with the greatest participation in Walking Wednesdays each month is the lucky recipient and this is announced at assemblies). I do not think you need to purchase prizes or gimmicks to get enthusiasm. Maps showing clusters of where students in walking distance are concentrated so routes can be formed. Community nurse to educate parent group at School Council meeting.
- We need parents who are willing to be a part of the walking school bus. We were able to recruit parents for the initiative. Without their support and commitment it would not have been possible.
- Teachers and parents buy – in – to walk.
- Key players
- Middle school club
- Time, champion, embracing community (teacher, parent, student, admin)
- Motivational incentives, committed community support.

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5. Did you have adequate information for implementing in the fall? What was missing and what was useful?

- Yes, the information was there but the people power was not—my school ran into a major snag when the parent who enthusiastically signed up our school for ASRTS decided to not be involved. Another parent was left with all the responsibility and no other parents stepped forward to assist. This was quite a burden on one parent and one staff member. People need to commit and stick with it!
- Yes we did. I would have preferred the Region come to the school and meet with the parents once we established the routes and times.
- Yes, money for motivation, sandwich board, how effective were the walking route signs?
- Yes, time guideline, principal check list

6. Was the Kick-off forum useful as the start to the school level involvement in the pilot?

- I'm not sure what you mean by this question. Sorry.
- No, it really has no bearing on the event. It was more of a "political" launch with the mayors and regional chair.
- Talking time was good, good to discuss the routes
- Walk about was good
- Yes

7. Should there be some sort of forum when schools are starting the program and what should be included in that forum?

- Definitely! The ASRTS initiative sounds intimidating. An information session with other schools sharing how they implemented would help new schools to understand how small and manageable they can make the scope of the project and get additional ideas. This could be done through a Family of Schools meeting with School Council Chairs and ARSTS reps.
- Yes…The forum should be relevant to the schools and how the project is going to be implemented.
- Yes, walk through the neighbourhood
- Should have students there
- Assembly/DVD at the school
- Cross over with environment club
- Bring school student leaders to the kick up
- Connect to other initiatives, i.e. Soles for Souls and Me to We
- Whole school walk-fundraiser
- Student council etc.
- Go global
- Yes, expert speakers and "champion" very helpful, full community representation, lateral integration

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8. Was having the project plan from Jennifer helpful?

- Yes.
- Yes, she was a great contact for the project and was accessible when we needed help.
- Yes
- Yes (overwhelming)

Monitoring and Controlling:

Rating the performance of the Project Manager

9. What did the project manger do well? What did the project manager not do well? Please explain and provide ideas on how to do better

- She communicated well with the group and got back to me when I needed help and support
- Limit emails, only those who pertain to your school
- Press coverage miss ups
- How do we manage catchment areas for bussing?
- Sector scans needed
- Email over load

10. Anything else the project manager needs to know in relation to monitoring and controlling the project

- She may want to get more involved with the schools…Perhaps visit the site on Walking Wednesdays to see how it was going. Parents would have appreciated this.
- Seasons. Snow, intramurals, different programs for different grade levels, large vs. small schools
- Media message regarding CO2, pollution, positive features of program
- Longer pilot project, i.e. one year
- 'Delays" are not failures
- Must understand that this is only one of a myriad of "priority" projects and that not all will fly.

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Execution:

11. Was there adequate timing of information (i.e. reminders for the surveys , email information from Green Communities etc)

- Yes, the calendars with key dates and email reminders were helpful.
- Yes, it was fine
- Yes
- Yes

Evaluation: Surveys

Student Surveys

12. What were some of the difficulties identified by the teachers? Do you have any suggestions for how the process could be improved?

- Yes, eliminate the surveys or have parents go into classes to complete them with the class. It was one more thing for teachers to do and remember. I had to chase down the surveys each month—one more thing for me to do and then the secretary had to send them in—one more thing for her to do each month.
- Surveys took far too long to complete. Questions were redundant…Although teachers did them; feedback was it took too much time from their instruction. This was a concern of mine.
- December very difficult to respond (teachers frustrated responding in Dec0
- Consider school cycles and P/VP input
- Information that could be determined by transportation (too much info required
- Was there irrelevant data collected?
- Simplicity less questions, what information is essential to make change into behaviour?
- Teachers hated it, one more thing to do
- Too many options
- Reduce # of options and how many times you actually do the survey
- Seen as a chore as we were surveying for a project that we were not "really" running Got pushed way to the back burner

Eligible to walk and not eligible to walk

13. Did you find any difficulties in identifying the number of students eligible to walk in each of the participating classrooms?

- No, but the number of times I was asked to provide this information to Halton Region and teachers was frustrating.
- No

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- Yes, wording very confusing for admin and students
- Yes, used Trillium to generate class lists with bus lists.

14. Did teachers understand what 'eligible to walk' meant?

- Yes, the teachers understood this completely.
- Yes, I explained it to them and we completed the survey for them to ensure reliability
- No, great confusion class to class, very frustrated, wording poor
- No
- Yes

15. Did teachers know which specific students were eligible to walk and were they able to keep this in mind when completing the daily student survey? Do you have any suggestions for how the process could be improved?

- I spent some time at the start of the year clarifying with teachers individually what this meant and they felt quite comfortable identifying who was eligible to walk for the survey.
- Yes, see above (14)
- Need to know bussing eligibility from board by class
- No
- Allowed "bus" kids to find a way to start of route and then walk from there
- Yes

Parent Surveys

16. Did teachers identify any issues around getting the parent survey delivered to the parents?

- The only issue was that not enough surveys were supplied to the school and we had to wait more than a week to get more from the Halton Region.
- No
- No problems with delivery
- No
- No

17. Did teachers identify any issues around getting the reminder cards delivered to the parents?

- No, not at all
- No
- No
- No

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18. Did teachers receive any questions from parents about the parent survey? If so, what were these and did the teachers feel equipped to answer them?

- My lead parent, as well as Stephen and Jennifer, received several (harassing) phone calls from parents once the parent surveys went home. Parents were not understanding, or chose not to understand, that the ASRTS pilot and the PARC process which had ended in July were not related. Instead, they saw ASRTS as salt in the wound because their "walk to school" would not be a "walk to school" after June 2010. Some parents declined to fill out the surveys because they were so upset.
- Not to my knowledge
- No, return rate 10% middle school and 60% K-8
- No (tracking info would be nice i.e., number of returns)
- No questions asked

19. Did you receive any questions from parents? If so, what were these and did you feel equipped to answer them?

- No one directly called me about the surveys but I was informed by my lead parent as well as Jennifer J. and Stephen that they were contacted.
- Other than saying it was a great initiative…No
- No
- No questions

General comments, under comments heading on this question

Would you or the teachers oppose having a more extended time frame with an additional reminder card sent home partway through the allocated time-period? How much extended time would be feasible?

- I do not have an opinion on this question. However, when implementing ASRTS, it is important to consider its feasibility for communities undergoing accommodation issues such as closures, high construction, etc.
- We regularly communicated the initiative to our parents through our newsletter
- Can we do it on-line? School board website?
- Or mass e-mail, synervoice-calling system?
- One-week turn around time was good.
- Surveys could have been done electronically
- This is assuming that not enough responses were received.

Appendix V

SECTION TWO:
The ASRTS program ***Start with a new numbering please.***

The eight initiatives (listed below):
1.a. Comment on each one please
1.b. Put a check mark beside which initiative should every school adopt? And why

Walking School Bus (WSB)— √√√√

- This works when there's a natural fit with cluster of homes and at home parents.
- Need back up parents for illness, etc.
- Pro – must be student/teacher driven, not parent driven, but we need parent support
- Created some good relationships
- Easier to motivate younger students
- Safer
- Con- middle school – no way parents dropped out, accommodation issue affected commitment
- Not cool for grades 6-8
- As a community supported project - yes. As a school "only" project – no.

Walking Wednesdays – √√√√

- We did this once a month and found it to be manageable on this scale. It also made it more special for all our students and they continued to get excited about it even in winter months!
- Easy to implement
- Kids very motivated
- Good starting point
- Middle school worked as a school club
- Easy to remember
- Con, not regular enough, M-F would be ideal)
- Easy way to provide walking focus

iWalk (International Walk to School Week and Day)— √√

- Different events whole week (around active lifestyles i.e.: relays, student run)
- NA
- Great first step
- Again, an easy way to provide focus

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Walk a Block

- Not implemented. Need more parents involved, more communication and more co-ordination and consensus.
- Link to another event/fundraising or a theme
- Not implemented

Walking Buddies—

- Kids cannot take on this responsibility at a school coordinated level due to illness, etc. However, parents could be encouraged to set this up themselves in their neighborhood.
- Yes, promotes healthy living
- NA
- Promoted as a safe way to and from school in general

No Idling at School—√

- This puts staff in a difficult position in the parking lot if it's meant to be enforced versus signage only
- Parent hostility
- Increase awareness
- **Con,** no decrease in number of idlers
- It would be great if all schools could enforce the no idling at their schools.
- How could this possibly be enforced?
- As part of a bigger No IDLE regional message

Neighbourhood Walkabout –√

- Not sure what this means
- Environmental
- Informative

Classroom Mapping—

- Not clear about this. If you mean a map with dots showing where all the kids live, that's useful because it could allow us to mail out to those parents specifically to get them on board. I think it should be a Halton Region responsibility to do the contacting of parents for something like this.
- N/A
- NA

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Other -

- Spring time ride your bike and helmet checks

Walking School Bus drivers

2. Who should be the WSB drivers?

- Parents with a police check—I don't' think parents would feel safe sending their child off to school with someone who did not have students at our school. It is too much to ask of teachers to take this on (unless they volunteer to do so).
- Parents and perhaps intermediate students
- Teachers/interested students (parents not to lead)
- "Popular" teachers, parents, responsible students (12 and up)
- Community members – not school staff

3. How should the WSB drivers be set-up (volunteer or paid position like the lunch supervisors?)

- Paid position!
- This is a possibility…Interesting concept. Especially for over populated schools
- Can only pay if a parent
- Paid would be preferred, but may still have problems as we do in finding lunch hour supervisors

4.a. Were there any concerns/comments from the WSB drivers?

- At Maple Grove, the WSB drivers were parents who were walking their students to school already. These parents are already involved in the school. They knew their neighbours and children. No concerns were given for those routes. However, concern was expressed about the lack of response to flyers; newsletter notices about beginning routes in other areas where we know students live.
- Are they liable for anything???
- Sometimes questioned validity of program, especially with low numbers

4.b. How can these concerns be addressed and solved?

- This is a difficult one to solve in my community because of the accommodation and program issues going on right now. However, if it were a paid position, someone would likely be motivated to take it on.

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- A letter to the Walking School Buses

Walkabouts:

WSB Route development:

5.a Was it difficult to plot a route?

- I was not part of this process last spring but I understand it was a natural fit for our school.
- Not at all…Especially with the maps that were provided.
- Some difficult
- Generate routes should come from planning
- Crossing a busy street
- Timing is an issue (late getting to school and timing of the street lights)
- No problems planning rates,
- Unknown – was not here for the process

5.b. What staff should be involved in planning the routes?

- Planning Department, School Council, Principal
- Parents and administration along with city staff
- Include someone from the municipality
- Involve parents and teachers and VP/P and (someone who knows the area best)

5.c. Did having the maps help (area map and student location map)? How many routes should a school identify and try to organize in their first year of establishing walking school buses?

- One or two routes would be appropriate and generate interest for expansion, possibly.
- Routes were great and it was helpful having the team meet at our school. We had three routes…We could have used a couple of more to get more families involved.
- One route best to start with
- Maps were helpful
- Multiple routes necessary if "incentives" involved, otherwise just pick 1 or 2 popular routes

Media Plan

6.a. Was the information provided at the September 12th meeting useful? Communications Plan, Posters, Q&A, sample letter)?

- Yes

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- Yes
- Yes
- It seems helpful but we still had no community support/response

6.b. how was it useful? .

- Posters were helpful No more was needed
- Yes, it was helpful…However; our success was the promotion in our newsletter. This is what parents read. Most parents do not enter the school on a regular basis.
- Posters useful,

6.c. Can you suggest additional communication tools that would have helped you promote the pilot?

- Perhaps provide a ½ day release for the teachers involved to ensure the surveys were completed correctly
- Common template

7. What were your experiences with the media's involvement?

- Media late/ missed events
- Jennifer followed up
- CHCH – good
- Nice to celebrate the teacher's efforts
- Jennifer very good at getting coverage/text (education matters; different newspapers, passing along articles)
- Suggestions to get media involved include having parents in charge of calling reminders
- When we had successful coverage it was because we were first school to call, Milton media excellent and on short notice, teacher involvement was huge
- Important to celebrate positives and a well balanced school educating the "whole" child (fits with wellness)
- Important to choose schools that can us PR boost
- Media took pictures but never released
- Was interviewed by local cable outlet, but I have no idea if it as actually aired or not
- Important to celebrate "all" positive events in schools, on a regular basis

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SECTION THREE: Start new numbering please
School Level Findings

Barriers

1.a. What was the number one difficulty in executing the program?

- Parent involvement to both lead routes and initiate new routes, to help with the organizational aspects of ASRTS (e.g., handing out popsicle sticks on Walking Wednesdays so we could keep track of how many laps around the track our bus students did, or for the walkers)
- Getting more families involved in the initiative. I think parents were apprehensive having other parents walk their child to school
- Middle school – small numbers of very involved parents
- Culture of "non-walkers", winter weather
- Culture of "safeness"
- Not having/finding a community coordinator

1. b. What were the other barriers and any ideas on how you would eliminate or lessen them?

- The barrier is participation in ASRTS from a parent perspective—so many parents drive their children to and from school because they are very protective or very busy each morning and don't have time to walk to school . However, community education takes time. I wonder how many families in my school truly changed their practices because of ASRTS? I suspect only a handful did change their practices and the rest were walking already. Eliminating the barriers would require a more personal intervention, a meeting with those who could walk their children but choose not to do so to find out what their barriers are.
- It has been difficult to do our initiative as our sidewalks have not been cleared with the snow…We have a lot of parents who walk with wagons and buggies.
- More busses added
- Finding teacher/staff to buy in

Enablers

2. a What was the number one enabler in executing the program-

- parent commitment
- Our parent volunteers…They were amazing and committed to the project. Every Wednesday, they met at the route location and walked students to school…GREAT!

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- P/VP and one key teacher at both schools
- Champion to run program
- Public appeared aware of it

2. b. What were the other enablers and any comments on them

- Support from the region if we needed it…
- $1000 for incentives
- Support from Jennifer

School pilot signs (Burlington and Milton only)

3.a. What was the response to these signs by the community and the students?

- Very positive It was a great way to promote the initiative.
- Signs promote awareness only
- Do not help engagement
- NA
- Parents commented on them at Council meetings

3.b. Do you recommend them for the walking routes? Yes/ No and Why

- Absolutely, it was a great way to promote the event.
- General feedback seemed to approve of the route, but without an active program impossible to evaluate

4. What is needed to run the program year round (through the winter)

- We ran it in the winter and kept it to walking Wednesday on the first Wednesday of each month. The students had fun walking around the track in the snow to get a number of popsicle sticks for their class Once a month was manageable.
- Clearing of snow on the sidewalks. Although I realize this may difficult.
- Promos - hot chocolate
- Need to cancel and notify parents if terrible weather (visibility)
- Make sure all routes are clear; (town communication)
- Hot chocolate available

5. a How would you feel about the ASRTS program becoming an operational norm for each school?

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- This is a tough one because schools are one of the main institutions for educating and changing societal norms. Clearly a shift needs to happen in society. Schools are part of solving the health and environmental issues. From a time and organizational perspective, it is a lot to ask of schools. From a philosophical and ethical perspective, I think it is the right direction to move in.
- Need to pay someone to do this if mandatory and if before school
- What would be the point of that?

5.b If this was to become part of the school culture and a requirement of schools how should it be set-up so that it is successful? (Who should be responsible for it at the school site?)

- Give the ownership to the parent groups such as School Council and let them run with it.
- I think that this type of initiative needs to be supported by schools and families. I do not think you could ever force parents to walk to school. Principal in charge, delegate accordingly
- This needs to be a community program that may access school resources but should not be a school program.

5.c. What would schools need to run this as part of operations? ($, teacher release time, paid positions?)

- Again, the paid position may be an incentive for some parents to do this role (depending on the community). Teachers should not be burdened with this role.
- Release time to help plan the event. Perhaps some money to purchase hats and t-shirts for WSB volunteers
- Involvement of parents, students and staff with heavy media involved
- I do not believe that schools should be the ones "running" the program. I believe it should be much like the Food For Thought program. It is run by parents and/or Council but not the school.

5.d. How should the board present this? Should it be a policy?

- No, this should not be policy. In some areas this would not get off the ground and the administrator would feel and appear to have failed. This is a huge expectation of administrators. This should be a recommended practice if it's supported and led by the parents.
- Not in my opinion
- No
- Better to encourage and promote
- Can't mandate teachers to do this
- What kind of policy?
- I do not believe it should be policy. This is a larger community health issue that is far "larger" than the schools – we just happen to have all of the children.

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6. What would be your words of wisdom to the other schools as they start this program?

- Review your community data before beginning (i.e., do you have stay at home parents that could lead the walking school bus or the program? Are there natural routes based on where your students live? Is there a lot of construction which would prohibit some from walking safely?) Determine whether community education has to occur before beginning the initiative. Start small and sustain before expanding the program. Get the commitment of several key parents before beginning (not just one or two).
- Start small…Encourage participation…Do not make it a competition…It has to be intrinsic for the school community
- Start small – choose one or two things
- Find champion teachers
- Need big student rally kick-off in a place for all schools to get excited about this (reps from each school)
- Student pledges "I am going to not take the bus"
- Has to be student driven (Student council, etc, class reps)
- Cross curriculum connections
- Think bowl
- Critical thinking day
- Carbon footprint, whole board focus, Student leaders, connect to Eco challenges, Board wellness, school
- Find a champion (use parent volunteer
- Get Jennifer involved
- Include incentives – apples etc, for staff/students/parents
- Keep it simple
- Money, pay like lunch supervisors
- Not to go ahead without strong, committed community support and organizers.

7. Anything else you would like to capture that has not been addressed yet?

- No.
- It was a pleasure to be a part of the initiative.
- See above
- Difficult and older student involvement
- Continuity of volunteers
- Package program as "Get out of your Car"
- Understand that your target group are students who should be walking that are currently in parent's car!
- Tie to "Board Wellness Program"
- Need trustee and administrative support
- I am surprised by the leap made in evaluating this pilot. With the questions in section 3 it leads one to believe that the decision has been made to expand the program before the data from the pilot has been evaluated. Our experience at Central would strongly suggest that without strong community support and organization, this would become a school task and responsibility that

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greatly exceeds the resources of the schools. I strongly support the general model of Halton Food For Thought where this valuable program is dependent on the commitment, time and energy of the school community.

Appendix VI

Sector Survey Results

Traffic Engineers: Active and Safe Routes to School Pilot Project
RESULTS

1. Was it a valuable experience for you to be part of the ASRTS pilot project? Yes/No and Why?

- Yes, it was good to be involved in the choosing of the route as we are aware of any traffic/safety issues in the area
- Yes – to be a part of the route decision making process was important for us
- Yes, the ASRTS pilot project provided insight to issues that might otherwise be missed

2. Walkabouts

a. Do you think Walkabouts are important for schools to engage in when planning their routes? Yes/No and Why?
   - Yes, same reason as above and also as we are aware of the surroundings and any issues out there
   - Yes – extremely important – they give you a visual of where and under what conditions the children would be walking. It also gives you an opportunity to change the route if necessary to another that may be better/safer etc.
   - Yes, walkabouts enable traffic professionals to focus on specific route issues

b. Do you think a traffic engineer should be involved in school route planning? Yes/ No and Why?
   - Yes, same reason as above
   - Yes – absolutely – due to safety issues and also if you are looking for infrastructure changes or signs to go up, we would need to be part of this decision
   - Yes, municipalities are responsible for deploying School Crossing Guards therefore a traffic professional should be involved in the school route planning

c. Should a traffic engineer attend a school's walkabout? Yes/No and Why?
   - Yes, same reason as above
   - Yes we would want to be part of this if at all possible – although depending this might not always be feasible

- Yes, for the same reason as per 2a

3. What are your overall impressions / comments on the ASRTS program?

- I thought it was an excellent pilot program and the 2 schools seemed very interested in being involved. Councillor was very pleased as well.
- We are very much in support of this program as it encompasses many things that the City is working on. We have the Anti-Idling by-law – which when people walk this assists in cars not idling at "drop-off" spots. Also, the City has a focus on the Environment and working towards things that we can change to positively affect our environment. Parks and Recreation also has a great focus on Healthy living – and this is what this is about – getting both children and adults out of their cars and walking to school.
- It was a good experience to work with all the stakeholders

4. If the HDSB were to expand the program from a pilot to an operational norm (for all schools) what would they need to consider when engaging your municipality and its traffic engineers?

- I think they would need to make sure that the schools that wanted to be involved are prepared to having parents involved as well. And they would need to promote the program to their students/parents as well, in order for it to work. We don't want to pollute the Town with signs if people are not going to participate in the program.

- They would need to think about timing. Schools would have to be eased into this program, with the implementation spaced out. It would be very difficult to implement 10 schools all at once with walkabouts, routes, signs etc. The board would also need to think about funding. They funded the signs to date, but we upgraded crossings, installed the signs and completed other tasks related to the routes. This would be difficult if everything was to be done over one year for the rest of the schools. An implementation plan would be very helpful in this regard.

- There are many issues involved, however , based on current developments in Georgetown South, it is best to address this question on a later date

5. Any additional comments?

1. It is a step in the right direction
2. It was a pleasure working with you and your staff member
3. Comment outside of the survey

In lieu of my survey, The Town (Oakville) feels that the ASRTS programs should continue to grow and expand within all areas of Halton. The successes you have achieved have not gone unnoticed (media releases, etc.), and the awareness of commuting to school by alternate modes has certainly increased. The goals and objectives of this initiative are embedded throughout the Town's Active Transportation Master Plan, Environmental Strategic Plan, and the Make your Move program, and the Town encourages the school board and Halton Region to continue their efforts with this project.

In regards to the walkabouts specifically, we feel continuing to have a Town staff representative involved in the projects is a benefit to everyone. There may not be a need to have Town staff involved in the walkabouts, however this may be necessary is some circumstances. The Town is definitely willing to participate, however resources and specific site locations that may determine the level of involvement from Town staff.

4. I conquer with Chris' comments. I think that Oakville Traffic Engineering can provide useful input in this process particularly on matters regarding traffic control devices, crossing guards (existing and future), and planned capitol projects. I fully support this program and feel that it contributes to the intelligent use of our road and sidewalk network.

Police Survey: Active and Safe Routes to School Pilot Project
RESULTS

Please take a few minutes to respond to this quick survey.

1. What are your overall impressions of the ASRTS program?

- It is a worthwhile endeavour to promote students to be active and have the community get involved and take ownership of the program. The schools are happy to promote fewer vehicles attending the schools as long as they will not be responsible for getting the students to school.
- I think the ASRTS is a much needed project. It was well run, and effectively implemented.
- A great project to promote healthy lifestyle and community

2. Is it important for the police department to be involved in this program? Yes/No and why

- Yes. It is important to reinforce the safety aspect for the children walking to school and motorist to be on alert for students. An example is the safe start program in the fall that targets school zones.
- I think that the police can give insights into safe routes from traffic and crime prevention perspective, and it gives the public a feeling of safety. Halton doesn't have any really

risky areas in the same way that other areas of the country might have, but the public often fells that it does.

- Yes, it is important to have police involvement. It allows for one more connection between police and community and it also provides a sense of safety for all involved

3. Should a police officer be involved in a school walkabout? Yes/No and why?

- If it is possible to have a resource officer attend. It will reinforce the ties to the community the officer can make with the students. It should not be expected for an officer to take part regularly
- Yes, sometimes we have unique insight into traffic and crime prevention issues
- The initial walkabout, absolutely yes. It is one more perspective that can be added to the program

4. Beyond the walkabout and steering committee did you do any other school support for the ASRTS program? Yes/No and explain.

- No
- When I was in the classrooms teaching my DARE program I encouraged the students to walk or get to school in other active ways
- No other involvement

5. If this program was to expand to all the schools in the Region, what kind of support could the police department supply?

- May assist with presentations or assemblies at schools to spread information about project
- Same as we already have done, walkabouts and representation on the steering committee
- That is not for me to say. I feel it is important to be involved but obviously the amount of time and resources the police can dedicate to the program is the question

6. Do you have any additional comments you would like to make?

- Being a school resource officer our days are very busy trying to meet the needs of our many schools. During the school year one officer may have time in mornings to assist while others may not. Therefore not all schools will be able to have the same assistance.
- Possibly a presentation for the HRPS from the coordinator, to more fully explain the benefits to the project and the HRPS
- Any project that can bet people excited, involved and bring community groups together is worthwhile. This project did exactly that. Great Job!

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Public Health Nurse (PHN): Active and Safe Routes to School Pilot Project
RESULTS

1. **Please list your involvement in the ASRTS pilot project. (roles, events etc)**
   - Attended an initial meeting with principal from school, key school champion and ASRTS project manager for information sharing and to discuss initial planning
   - Attended the initial forum with pilot schools taking part in the ASRTS
   - Connected with school to inform them that PHN was available to provide support as needed with the ASRTS project
   - Attended school walkabout and participated in the assessment of the route
   - Provided support with draft communications to school community
   - Offered and provided follow up consultation re: implementation, comprehensive school health approach, etc.
   - Plan to take part in the closing forum- March 26th.
   - Taking part in feedback evaluation – survey for PHN's.
   - Representation on Steering Committee. Tasks include:
     - Attendance and participation at steering committee meetings
     - Attendance at school review and selection process meetings to provide CH team perspective re school engagement
     - Attendance at the ASRTS forum
     - Planned attendance at the closing ceremony
     - Providing Child Health Management team and school team relevant and timely updates and communications re ASRTS project
     - Providing support to PHN's involved directly with ASRTS pilot schools

2. **If you were involved in the walkabouts please answer the next 2 questions if not skip and go to question 3**
   a. **Is it important for a PHN to be involved in a school walkabout? Yes/No and explain why**
   - Yes.
   - Assist in understanding challenges/barriers etc. from a community perspective.
   - Assist in understanding school culture, supports, school community and safety
   - Involvement in the initiative at the beginning assists with project planning
   - The Walkabout is part of the assessment piece of the project and all participants on the project should participate as may have different observations and perspectives.
   - As a community member, we provide an unbiased viewpoint of the neighbourhood.
   - Bring knowledge and expertise re: community development, child development, chronic disease preventions strategies, injury prevention strategies, parent involvement, school engagement, community resources.

b. How did you support the school after the walkabout? Please explain

- Offered consultation and support to all ASRTS pilot schools. Schools may not have utilized PHN support due to support provided by ASRTS project manager or supportive school/parent champions.
- Consultation re: community development, child development, chronic disease preventions strategies, injury prevention strategies, parent involvement, school engagement, community resources and comprehensive school health approach

3. If you were involved in another aspect of the pilot project please explain the role and how you contributed.

- Representation on Steering Committee.
- See tasks listed in question #1
- Value of Child Health participation on the steering committee related to facilitating group discussion, and knowledge of best practice related to: community development, child development, chronic disease preventions strategies, injury prevention strategies, parent involvement, school engagement, community resources and comprehensive school health approach.

4. Is it important for a Public Health Nurse to be involved in the ASRTS program? Yes/No and explain why

Yes

- Knowledge of best practice related to: community development, child development, chronic disease preventions strategies, injury prevention strategies, parent involvement, school engagement, community resources and comprehensive school health approach.
- PHN's have the knowledge and resources to facilitate action, support sustainability and encourage long term behaviour change.
- Supports Healthy Schools model
- PHNs assist schools in using ASRTS as one part of a larger school wide comprehensive approach to address whatever health issue the school has chosen to focus on (i.e. physical activity, eco-schools, bullying).
- Strength of existing relationships in the community and ability to link schools with appropriate community partners and resources.
- PHN's have existing relationships in schools. For example: health related school committees, safe school committees, school council. When implementing the ASRTS program, PHN's support a CSH approach by encouraging schools to build on existing school based health related initiatives. For example: Eco School initiatives, safe school initiatives, etc.
- Sustainability is key: PHNs can provide follow up support in assisting schools to sustain and build on ASRTS initiatives.

5. **If this program was to expand and adopt the pilot project process, what kind of support would the PHN be able to offer to a school?**
   - If ASRTS is implemented in an identified Healthy School, there is more PHN support available including:
     - School community assessment
     - Development of action plan
     - Implementation
     - Evaluation and celebration
   - For non-identified Healthy Schools, consultative support would be available however not to the same degree as would be possible in identified Healthy Schools.

6. **Is there any other comments/information you would like to make?**
   - The resources and tools available to schools were valued. For example: Green Communities web site, stats, walk about tool
   - Kick off event was a great way to bring stakeholders together and begin planning discussions.
   - Positive media coverage and program visibility
   - Program could have been implemented at a school level in a more comprehensive way, by including ASRTS in a larger school action plan.
   - There may have been more school buy-in if schools had self identified rather than having been selected by the school board. When schools self identify, it means that the issue is something that is important to the school community and the school is willing to invest the time and support required. The program would likely be more self sustaining if it is part of a larger plan (school effectiveness plan)
   - There seemed to be an overlap between the role of the Health Promoter and the role of the Public Health Nurse. Role clarification would have been beneficial. This may have impacted the utilization of the PHN by some schools, and sustainability of the project.
   - By building on the role of the PHN related to ASRTS, there may be increased school interest in the ASRTS program based on the relationships they have and can build at the school level
   - Continue to build relationship and communications with ASRTS project manger. For example: role clarification, sharing of communications to schools, sharing of evaluation tools and plans.
   - Early planning with meaningful Child Health involvement/input will help build continued success of program
   - Schools viewed ASRTS program manager as their key contact for ongoing support- good in short term but is this sustainable…how can PHN support
   - Ensure all community partners recognized in media- helps with relationship building
   - Value in having schools mentor other schools. Use a community school approach. An updated list available online of which schools are running a ASRT project would be helpful so that schools can directly network with others during venues like principal meetings, school council meetings etc.
   - Opportunity for increased community engagement and collaboration could be strengthened.