

# *Off on the Right Foot*

Active and Safe Routes to School in Manitoba Program Newsletter  
Spring 2009



## **In this issue:**

1. Clean Air Day – June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 – **REGISTER NOW!**  
[http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca/gci/CC/CC2009/schools/pdfs\\_09s/Registration\\_form\\_2009.pdf](http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca/gci/CC/CC2009/schools/pdfs_09s/Registration_form_2009.pdf)
2. Clean Air Day Poster Contest Winners Announced
3. Winnipeg Youth wanted to SPEAKUPWINNIPEG.com
4. The Canadian Active and Safe Routes to School Partnership is now online  
<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/partnership/>
5. Getting Active on Active and Safe Routes to School – training resources now available online at  
<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/partnership/resources.asp>
6. School Travel Planning Underway in Manitoba
7. Manitoba Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter  
[http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/newsletter\\_jan09.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/newsletter_jan09.pdf)
8. Bike Cages in St. James-Assiniboia School Division
9. A Resident's Guide to Creating Safe and Walkable Communities
10. Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card Day is June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.  
[www.activehealthykids.ca](http://www.activehealthykids.ca)
11. Other Canadian Newsletters
12. Articles and Resources

*Decline in walking to school blamed on safety concerns, urban design*  
*Walking To School: Incidental Physical Activity in the Daily Occupations of Australian Children*  
*Parents in Los Angeles take on Traffic Control Duties*  
*Canadian Safe Routes to School Program Struggles for US Style Funding*  
*Kids with freedom get more exercise; British Study; Research paves way for examining play environments*  
*Using Child-friendly Maps to Promote Active Transportation in Peterborough*  
*Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) Making the Case for Active Transportation*

## 1. Clean Air Day – June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 – REGISTER NOW

[http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca/gci/CC/CC2009/schools/pdfs\\_09s/Registration\\_form\\_2009.pdf](http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca/gci/CC/CC2009/schools/pdfs_09s/Registration_form_2009.pdf)



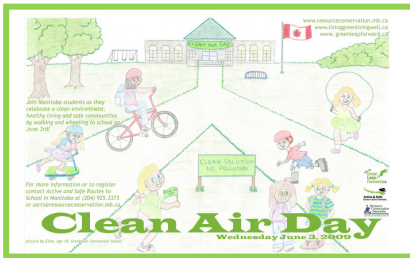
As the weather continues to get warmer, and as students begin to spend more time outdoors, it may become even easier to think and talk about **Environment Week**, and the upcoming **Clean Air Day Walk to School 2009** event on **Wednesday June 3, 2009**. This is a great opportunity to celebrate Environment Week, and encourage students to have fun walking, skipping, or wheeling to school on Clean Air Day, and on other days as well. There are also *great prizes to be won! Every school registered for Walk to School 2009 will be entered to*

**win one of three bike racks.** Individual prizes will also be available.

I would encourage you to make this an exciting event in your classroom, and remind your students that active transportation is fun, healthy, and helpful to the environment. Please watch the internal mail for a registration sheet. To receive your Walk to School kit early, you can also email [asrts@resourceconservation.mb.ca](mailto:asrts@resourceconservation.mb.ca) or call **(204) 925.3773** with your name and title, the name of your school and number of students, and your school's address, phone, and fax numbers.

Help us register more than 100 schools!

## 2. Clean Air Day Poster Contest Winners



Special Congratulations go out to Elise from Stonewall Centennial School who is the grand prize winner of this year's Clean Air Day Poster contest. Runners up include Camryn from Stonewall Centennial School and Ericka, Carlina, Tess, Hunter, and Amy from Stony Mountain Elementary Earth Club!

Images of the runners up can be seen at:

<http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca/gci/CC/CC2009/schools/poster.html>

## 3. Winnipeg Youth wanted to SPEAKUPWINNIPEG.com

Speakupwinnipeg.com is a public forum for all Winnipeggers to help with the creation of a new 25-Year Development Plan for Winnipeg. They are looking for input from all ages – and would like to get as much input from young people as possible. This is a great way to get students in your school thinking about what is important to them about where they live – how do they get around? Where do they live? What do they see? What do they like? What scares them? What makes them *happy*?

SpeakUpWinnipeg.com

Feedback can be given in many ways – through the interactive website and public forums, or through presentations at your school. If you are interested in having someone from speakupwinnipeg.com come to your school please contact Becky Raddatz or Jeff Pratte at 986-3107 or by e-mail at [braddatz@winnipeg.ca](mailto:braddatz@winnipeg.ca) or [jpratte@winnipeg.ca](mailto:jpratte@winnipeg.ca).

The process is ongoing from April 2009 – April 2010.

#### 4. The Canadian Active and Safe Routes to School Partnership is now online!

<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/partnership/>

The Canadian Active & Safe Routes to School Partnership is a national group working to increase the number of school-aged children who travel to school using active, sustainable and safe modes of transportation. It is made up of provincial Active and Safe Routes to School Programs across Canada and is advocating for and providing support for the independent movement for children and youth. Imagine in your community

- groups of children walking to school
- traffic and safety problems solved by community members and decision-makers
- more places for walking & wheeling
- cycling skills training programs - and more

Visit the partnership site for more information!



#### 5. Getting Active on Active and Safe Routes to School – training resources now available online at <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/partnership/resources.asp>

In March, the Canadian ASRTS Partnership hosted the first training workshop for anyone working on Active and Safe Routes to School Programs across Canada. The event was a success and lots of fun – with over 90 participants from the Yukon, BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia!

The presentations and materials have all been pulled together and they're available online for download at <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/partnership/resources.asp>. We hope that you find this information useful in your endeavours to promote active travel to school in your communities. Please share this link with others that you work with.

#### 6. School Travel Planning Underway in Manitoba

School Travel Planning brings together community stakeholders to identify barriers to active transportation for each school and develop a written action plan. Over the last two years Green Communities Canada has facilitated a national pilot project in Ontario, Nova Scotia, Alberta and BC, and in the 2009-2010 School Year the pilot is being expanded to Manitoba. We are excited to be working with Carpathia School (Winnipeg SD), Brooklands School (St. James-Assiniboia SD) and Ecole Howden (Louis Riel SD) as the pilot schools. Stay tuned for updates and information!

For more information about School Travel Planning in Canada please visit: <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/schooltravel.asp>

#### 7. Manitoba Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

[http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/newsletter\\_jan09.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/newsletter_jan09.pdf)

The ESD Newsletter is published by the Sustainable Development Initiative of Manitoba Education. There is a lot of great information about sustainability initiatives for students, school, individuals and divisions!

## 8. St. James-Assiniboia School Division installs Bike Cages at every Middle School

Every Middle School in SJSD will have a bike cage installed over the next few months to encourage cycling to and from school. Lincoln Middle School already has their cage set up, and kids are using it!



*Photos by Leonard Brisebois - April 15th, 2009*

## 9. A Resident's Guide to Creating Safe and Walkable Communities

Download the entire guide or sections at: [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/ped/ped\\_walkguide/](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped/ped_walkguide/)

A Resident's Guide to Creating Safe and Walkable Communities includes information, ideas, success stories, and resources to help neighborhood residents learn about issues that affect walking conditions; find ways to address or prevent these problems; and promote pedestrian safety. The Guide also contains fact sheets, worksheets, and sample materials that can be distributed or adapted to meet the needs of a community.

The guide contains 5 major sections:

Chapter 1: How can I identify problems with walking conditions in my neighborhood?

Chapter 2: Who can help me make my neighborhood a safer place to walk?

Chapter 3: How can the safety of my neighborhood be improved?

Chapter 4: I need more information!

Chapter 5: Resource Materials

## 10. Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card Day is June 2nd, 2009.

Every year, our Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth examines physical activity opportunities for kids all across Canada. Visit the website at [activehealthykids.ca](http://activehealthykids.ca) after release to download the Report Card and find out whether Canada's making the grade.

## 11. Other Canadian Newsletters:

**Ontario:** <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/newsletters.asp>

**Nova Scotia:**

<http://activeandsaferoutestoschool.cmail1.com/T/ViewEmail/y/9F4C9E3A008F2C9C/52529BBCD41A5EB50F8C96E86323F7F9>

## 12. Articles and Resources

### *Decline in walking to school blamed on safety concerns, urban design*

Tuesday, April 14, 2009; Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Poor urban design and safety fears are critical factors in determining whether children walk or cycle to school, say Australian researchers.

They say their findings can help inform public policy that will increase children travelling to school by foot or bicycle.

*'Policies that create safer routes to school and thus address parents' perceptions of pedestrian safety may have an important impact.'*— Dr. Clare Hume

In the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Dr. Clare Hume and colleagues report the proportion of Australian school children walking to school dropped from 37 per cent in 1985 to 26 per cent in 2001.

At the same time, the proportion of children cycling to school is now so low it is statistically too insignificant to be considered on its own, says Hume, of Deakin University's Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research.

Hume says the decrease in what is known as active commuting has occurred at the same time as obesity rates among children have increased.

The researcher says "it is drawing a long bow" to directly link the two, but the decrease in walking and cycling to school is part of the overall reduction in physical activity among children.

"[Active commuting] makes an important contribution to children's overall physical activity," she says.

"Therefore, programs that aim to increase active commuting throughout childhood and in adolescence may have a positive effect on children's accumulated physical activity."

### *Walk with a friend*

Hume and colleagues took a closer look at the factors that affect the amount of active transport among children and adolescents.

They tracked children and adolescents' mode of travel to school between 2004 and 2006.

During that period active commuting among the younger cohort, who were aged nine at the start of the study, increased significantly by 1.04 trips per week.

For the older adolescents (aged 14 at the start of the study) the increase was smaller with an additional in 0.65 trips per week.

Hume says there was no gender difference in the rates of walking to school.

"Although small, the observed increase in active commuting across the two years of the study might be attributable to age-related increases in independence and autonomy," Hume says.

### *Safety in numbers*

For the younger cohort, Hume says the study highlighted one factor as critical to whether the children actively commuted.

"Children of parents who reported that the child had many friends in their area were twice as likely as to increase their active commuting compared with other children [in terms of mean trips per week]," she says.

Hume says this is related to the children having someone to walk with to school, making the activity safer in parents' eyes.

For adolescents, whether they walked or cycled to school was related to urban design issues such as the presence of pedestrian crossings and traffic lights.

"These findings highlight the importance of the presence of pedestrian infrastructure within close proximity to schools," says Hume.

"Policies that create safer routes to school and thus address parents' perceptions of pedestrian safety may have an important impact on active-commuting patterns among youth."

Hume says changes to enable more children to walk and cycle to school will also have long-term benefits to the environment by reducing reliance on cars.

© Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2009

### ***Walking To School: Incidental Physical Activity in the Daily Occupations of Australian Children***

The aim of this pilot study was to examine the extent to which Australian children walked to and from primary school, and to survey parents to identify factors influencing this behaviour.

[http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv/UQ:8094/dw\\_oti\\_04.pdf](http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv/UQ:8094/dw_oti_04.pdf)

### ***Parents in Los Angeles take on Traffic Control Duties***

LOS ANGELES JOURNAL

Giving Lessons in Traffic Safety at Middle Schools

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/10/us/10crossing.html?\\_r=3&hpw](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/10/us/10crossing.html?_r=3&hpw)

**By Jennifer Steinhauer**

Published: April 9, 2009

LOS ANGELES — At 2:58 each weekday afternoon, the adults brace for traffic chaos at Florence Nightingale Middle School.

The bell sounds, and children dash to the left and right. Some bounce basketballs as they make their way to waiting cars — some parked illegally — backpacks swing perilously from side to side, and many pile into Metro buses idling two lanes deep. School administrators in bright orange vests move their charges gingerly through a crosswalk as the children try to hurl themselves toward burger joints across the street.

"You guys stink like moldy cheese," barked Mitchell Summer, the dean of students, as he struggled to move the masses across a busy intersection with a broken traffic signal. "Come on, let's go, let's go!"

Among the many worries of Los Angeles parents who pack their children off to school each day, traffic dangers have been looming larger in recent years.

The number of serious traffic incidents involving schoolchildren across the 900 Los Angeles public schools has significantly increased, particularly around middle schools, which are not staffed by crossing guards, school

administrators and law enforcement officials say. Last year, two eighth-grade girls in Wilmington, near the Port of Los Angeles, were hit by vehicles near school, and one girl was left partly paralysed.

The traffic dangers have become so widespread that the Office will soon begin training parents for volunteer traffic control and safety duty.

“The problem is that there are not enough resources,” said Michelle McGinnis, a prosecutor in the office. “And those resources are diminishing.” Financing for crossing guards has decreased steadily over 15 years, and there is a lack of applicants for the jobs, school district officials said.

From January to November 2008, there were 153 traffic-related injuries around schools, which Los Angeles public school officials said was much higher than five years ago, though they could not provide data for prior years.

In recent years, traffic has become among the top three safety concerns in schools, said Michael Hopwood, the central operations coordinator for the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Increased traffic around schools has vexed other major cities, too. Nationwide, roughly 21 percent of morning traffic is generated by parents driving children to school, said Raquel Rivas, a spokeswoman for [Safe Routes to School](#), a national organization formed to encourage walking and bicycling to school.

Traffic patterns around schools in Los Angeles have become clogged and often dangerous because of a large growth in student enrolment and an increase in the number of parents who ferry their children to and from school out of fear for their safety, Mr. Hopwood said. Especially in high-crime areas, parents are reluctant to let their children walk.

“It’s getting worse and worse each year,” said Brad Smith, an environmental health and safety officer at the school district, “because so many parents feel that they need to drop their kids at the front entrance of the school because they are concerned about harm.”

A school bus driver, Michelle Coleman, says middle schools are her biggest nightmare. “The parents park right here where the buses need to be,” Ms. Coleman said the other day outside Florence Nightingale, northeast of downtown Los Angeles.

Luz Bunacaba conceded that she was part of the problem. But with bus fare of \$5 a day and the distance too far for her 15-year-old son to walk, Ms. Bunacaba parks in the bus lane. “I have to,” she said, “it’s the only way.”

Part of the problem is that schools lack enough crosswalks, so students cross in the middle of the block, Mr. Hopwood said.

“We have sidewalks that are too thin,” he said. “At one high school, there are over 5,000 students on the sidewalks, and they get impatient with one another. We have lots of parents double parking. There is just not enough room, and there have been lots of incidents of students getting hit.”

Some parents try to intervene, sometimes through a school district program that trains them how to manage car-pool lanes during drop off. But unless parents are trained, that can lead to problems, Ms. McGinnis said.

At one middle school downtown, she said, parents stood on a corner for hours, studying officers for tips on directing traffic, and then tried to emulate them. But they did not have proper training or equipment, and ended up drawing the unhappy attention of the police themselves.

In studying the safety problems at the middle schools, the Los Angeles city attorney's school safety prosecutors were surprised to see that traffic was a pressing problem at nearly all of the nine most troubled schools.

So the office, using Los Angeles Police Department officers, came up with a training program and bought traffic safety equipment — bright vests, traffic cones — to try to “professionalize” parents and other volunteers.

The city attorney, Rocky Delgadillo, is also pressing the Police Department to enhance enforcement of traffic laws around schools. “It’s a small investment with a big return,” said Mr. Delgadillo’s spokesman, Nick Velasquez. “Making do with less in tough times.”

*A version of this article appeared in print on April 10, 2009, on page A12 of the New York edition.*

### ***Canadian Safe Routes to School Program Struggles for US Style Funding***

<http://www.momentumplanet.com/canadian-safe-routes-program-struggles-us-style-funding>

By Joel Gillespie

Most children would prefer to walk or bike to school. Unfortunately, it’s often not their choice to make. Short-sighted community planning built around the car, combined with overly protective parenting, results in most children being bussed or dropped off at school. According to the Safe Routes to School National Partnership website, “Today, fewer than 15 per cent of schoolchildren walk or bicycle to school.” Safe Routes to School programs in both Canada and the United States are trying to reverse decades of car-centric development by providing resources to communities to make children’s independent mobility a reality.

Safe Routes to School initiatives vary, depending on the local district’s needs.

Both Canada and the United States have vibrant and enthusiastic national programs run by passionate professionals. However, while the United States benefits from a solid backbone of federal infrastructure funding, Canada struggles to maintain viability in the face of budgetary cuts. The Canadian organization needs your help to make public officials understand the value of what they’re doing and put tangible resources toward their efforts.

In order to understand the difference in the two countries’ programs, you first need to “follow the money” to learn how they acquire their resources.

#### *Safe Routes in the US*

Margo Pedroso, policy manager for the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, contrasted Canada’s situation with the funding of the US program. “Congress authorized \$612 million over five years for the program, and it’s allocated to the states based on their population of children in grades K through eight,” Pedroso said. “Each state gets their formula allotment, and then each state is required to hire a Safe Routes to School coordinator within the

state's DOT. Then that coordinator administers the funds. So they hold the grant competition, and they figure out the best way to divide the funds.”

That's where the two countries' programs really diverge, because there are actually funds available in the US to make infrastructure changes happen.

“75 to 90 per cent of funding that goes to states is actually used for infrastructure, so it's building or repairing sidewalks, painting crosswalks, putting in signage about school zones, bike lanes, bike paths, all those kinds of things,” Pedroso explained. “You can also do traffic calming, restructure intersections – those are eligible as well.”

Longmont, Colorado, for instance, has seen tremendous improvement in active transportation through education and engineering improvements. Longmont used a combination of safety education; a raffle for students who walked or biked to school; and route maps, infrastructure improvements, and police assistance from the city. At one elementary school, students dropped off by vehicles were reduced from 189 to less than 15.

### *Safe Routes in Canada*

Jacky Kennedy, director of walking programs for Green Communities Canada, describes the funding arrangement for Canada's Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) program. “In Canada, the program is run by non-profit organizations across the country, all trying to get grants from the same people, and it's a challenge. It's been a real challenge for the past 12 years to keep this program going.”

Although Safe Routes to School began in 1997 in the Bronx, New York, Canada has been a centre for innovation in the program. “We have a fantastic model for Safe Routes to School in Canada,” said Kennedy. “We have an amazing program and it's ready to roll out to every part of the country. We just don't have the capacity to do it. After a while, you start beating your head against the wall and saying, ‘Why do we bother?’”

The ASRTS program has established itself well, but it's difficult to implement when there's no ownership of the program within the government. “This needs to be taken in by school boards and school districts and Ministries of Education as well as infrastructure, health; they all need to share,” Kennedy said. “This is really something that should be done at the municipal level with funding support coming from the provincial and federal governments.

“Although the US has modelled a lot of their stuff after us, I think we're at the point where if the federal and provincial governments don't recognize the value of this work very soon, it's going to disappear.”

Why doesn't the Canadian government value this work enough to invest in it? The way Kennedy sees it, “The problem is that the decision makers in education are making their decisions based on short-term thinking and short-term budgets. They're not thinking about all the other factors that go towards having healthy, well-educated children. School boards aren't recognizing that active transportation should be their business.”

### *What You Can Do*

The Canadian program needs a groundswell of public support in order to remain viable. The ASRTS website has dozens of examples of programs in place that are helping Canadian children travel to school safely, as well as a new site partially funded by the Public Health Agency. Familiarize yourself with these organizations and their mission, and link up with your local organization to help them work toward their goals. Then, let your school board, as well as your local, provincial and national governments know that that funding needs to be allocated to ensure their continued operation. After all, most children would prefer to walk or bike to school.

[www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)

[www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca)

[www.saferoutestoschool.ca/schooltravel.asp](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/schooltravel.asp)

## ***Kids with freedom get more exercise; British Study; Research paves way for examining play environments***

National Post  
January 27, 2009

Children whose parents give them more free rein to roam are also more physically active, new research from the United Kingdom shows.

Parents are becoming less and less likely to allow their children this kind of independence, Dr. Angie Page and her colleagues from the University of Bristol point out, and more research is needed on how to change the social and physical environment to allow parents to feel more comfortable giving their children more autonomy.

Page and her team looked at the independent mobility -- the degree to which the children were allowed to move around without adult supervision. An example would be allowing children to walk to school or to a friend's house without being accompanied by an adult.

Parents may be becoming increasingly reluctant to let their children wander on their own due to concerns about traffic dangers or the threat that their child might be molested, the researchers note, or they may also want to spend more time interacting with their children.

Research has shown that children with more independent mobility interact more with other children and their environments, while lower levels of independent mobility could "negatively influence children's emotional, social and cognitive development," and may lead to more sedentary behaviours, putting them at risk of obesity, Page and her colleagues write. Evidence is mounting, they add, that children are spending less time on their own outside the home, and more likely to travel by car when they go out.

To investigate the relationship between independent mobility and physical activity, they looked at 1,307 boys and girls, 10-to-11 years old, attending 23 different schools in a large city. Children wore a device called an accelerometer to measure their physical activity for a week. The researchers looked at both local and area independent mobility, and asked the children how often they were allowed to go to various places on their own or with friends.

Overall, the researchers found, boys had more independent mobility than girls. And the greater a child's independent mobility, the more active he or she was on weekdays. However, the researchers found no link between independent mobility and weekend physical activity.

"Understanding the factors that influence independent mobility is necessary to determine the optimum social and physical environment that encourages parents and adult carers to allow their children to be physically active outside unsupervised," the researchers say.

"This should be in addition to encouraging children [and parents] to be more physically active outside together. Both of these approaches may be important mechanisms to promote increased physical activity in young people," they conclude.

## ***Using Child-friendly Maps to Promote Active Transportation in Peterborough***

[http://www.ohpe.ca/ebulletin/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=10496&Itemid=78](http://www.ohpe.ca/ebulletin/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10496&Itemid=78)

--submitted by Jill Ritchie, BA (Hons), M. Ad. Ed., Health Promoter. Peterborough County-City Health Unit

I Introduction

II Identifying pedestrian infrastructure needs

III Gaining an understanding of family travel choices

IV Challenges and opportunities

V Call to action

### *I Introduction*

Every day children in Peterborough, a mid-sized city of about 75,000 residents, make the trip to and from school. Some of them walk or ride their bicycles. Others are driven in their family car and many of them ride a school bus. Active and Safe Routes to School - Peterborough (ASRTSP) is a partnership between public health, school transportation services, municipal transportation planning, environmental educators and local school boards. Our goal is to promote active and efficient transportation for a safer, healthier and greener community. Recently, we have been engaged in Students On The Move, an initiative to create child-friendly maps that assist families with planning their trip to school. This project is generously supported by Safe Kids Canada and FedEx.

### *II Identifying pedestrian infrastructure needs*

In 2006, the City of Peterborough began developing a Sidewalk Strategic Plan in consultation with local walking advocates including the ASRTSP partners. The purpose of this plan is to assist with prioritizing spending on sidewalks by ranking missing segments and ramps based on a consistent set of criteria that includes proximity to a school walking route. Through the consultation process, it emerged that students were being bussed within school walkout zones because of a lack of sidewalks. At two schools in the southeast end of the city, 285 students (45% of students eligible for bussing) who lived within the walkout distance where qualified for a school bus due to the absence of a sidewalk on collector roads adjacent to the schools.

Providing busing to these students places a financial burden upon local school board budgets. It is also an indication that the design of the neighbourhood is failing to provide children with opportunities for incidental physical activity such as walking or cycling to school.

In 2006, the sidewalk was built. The changes to school bus eligibility were scheduled for September 2007. ASRTSP recognized that there was an opportunity to assist families with choosing safer, greener, and healthier travel options.

### *III Gaining an understanding of family travel choices*

The purpose of the Students On The Move project was to gain a better understanding of how students at the two schools travel to and from school, to learn more about what factors influenced families' transportation choices, and to develop child-friendly maps of the community to assist with planning the trip to school. A research project was carried out that included a Student Travel Survey and a Family Survey.

From the Student Travel Survey which looked at travel to two schools, we learned that among the students who lived less than 1 km from school 22% of the students at one school and 63% of the students at the other school ride the school bus. We also learned that among the students who lived less than 1 km from school 31% at one school and 11% at the other school are driven.

From the Family Survey, we learned that weather, traffic, time and fear of bullies/abduction were the top factors affecting their choice of transportation on the trip to school. To the question, "what would make it easier for your child(ren) to walk or bike to school?" many parents answered that sidewalks were a major concern. A parent suggested it would be easier for their child to walk to school "if there were sidewalks on all the streets." Another respondent noted, "During the past summer, new sidewalks were completed - this makes it much safer for our child." Several families indicated that the presence of crossing guards would make it easier for them to let their

children walk to school. A preference for the school bus was also evident. One parent wrote "I think the bus is the best way. The bus guarantees they arrive at school safely and home again safely. I'd rather be certain of my child's safety rather than save money with bus cut backs and such."

Through neighbourhood walkabouts, consultation with municipal land information services and working with a graphic designer, ASRTSP developed a child-friendly map that features information such as safe drop-off zones, places to park and walk, local playgrounds, the location of adult crossing guards and posted speed limits.

#### *IV Challenges and opportunities*

The progress towards changing the school bus policy and improving the walkability of the local neighbourhoods was affected by some unexpected challenges.

##### *Walkways and crossing guards*

The changes to the school bus eligibility were to be supported by the improvement of a walkway along the edge of a cemetery. Parents were concerned about their children's personal safety along the walkway and wanted an adult crossing guard located at one end of it. The City determined that this location did not meet its criteria for an adult crossing guard. This dispute resulted in the bus changes and the walkway improvements being delayed for one year.

##### *Sidewalk debate*

The families also wanted a sidewalk to be built along an adjoining road. Since this sidewalk was also determined to be a high priority by the Sidewalk Strategic Plan, the City budgeted for its construction. Other local residents, however, raised concerns about the construction of the sidewalk. The City delayed construction of the sidewalk until public consultation could be completed. This delayed the busing changes and the walkway improvements again indefinitely.

##### *New policies*

The ongoing costs of busing the students and the conflict created by efforts to add needed sidewalks are a clear illustration of the importance of ensuring that infrastructure that supports active transportation is included when new developments are being designed and constructed. In March 2008, Peterborough City Council adopted an implementation schedule for the Sidewalk Strategic Plan and a new Provision of Sidewalk Policy that clarifies that sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street in all developments, including redevelopments and new developments.

##### *Distribution of maps*

The child-friendly maps are included in a full-colour glossy paper brochure called Route to School Planner. A unique map was created for each school. On International Walk to School Day (October 8), 2008, copies of the maps were distributed to every family at each school. Included with the map was a flyer encouraging families to use the map and provide feedback on the map through an online survey.

The responses to the online survey suggest that the Planner was well received and provided helpful information to some families. The respondents indicated a preference for receiving the Planner electronically and before that start of the school year. The Student Travel Survey was repeated in November 2008. Between November 2006 and November 2008, the percentage of students using AT increased from 28% to 33% at one school and from 12% to 21% at the other school. ASRTSP plans to create maps for two more schools in 2009.

#### *V Call to action*

The members of the ASRTSP learned about our community's readiness for changes to travel options. The school communities were not ready for major changes to the level of school bus service. More public consultation and time to plan for change may have helped them to prepare. There were, however, major improvements to

neighbourhood walkability which resulted in more students choosing to walk to school. The Student Travel Survey was repeated in November 2008. Between November 2006 and November 2008, the percentage of students walking or cycling to school increased from 28% to 33% at one school and from 12% to 21% at the other school. The analysis suggests that many of these students were bus riders.

### ***Making the Case for Active Transportation***

[http://www.cflri.ca/eng/story\\_details.php?id=98](http://www.cflri.ca/eng/story_details.php?id=98)

In celebration of Earth Month, the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) is excited to announce its newest resource: Making the Case for Active Transportation. This series of eight bulletins is intended for policy makers, health promoters, transportation planners, municipal decision-makers, NGOs, and the public. Check out the following to see how these bulletins can help you make the case in your community:

- Bulletin #1 – Health Benefits (available now)
- Bulletin #2 – Barriers (available now)
- Bulletin #3 – Economic Benefits (coming soon)
- Bulletin #4 – Environmental Benefits (coming soon)
- Bulletin #5 – Built Infrastructure (coming soon)
- Bulletin #6 – Safety (coming soon)
- Bulletin #7 – Increasing Social Capital(available now)
- Bulletin #8 – A Role for Municipal Decision Makers (available now)