



SUPPORTING OUR KIDS ON THE JOURNEY TO SCHOOL

A CAA School Travel Study



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TODAY'S SCHOOL JOURNEY

Every day, millions of Canadian families make a journey to and from their local school. Keeping our children safe is essential. The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA), has been leading on this issue for decades, advocating for school safety and supporting school safety patrol programs across Canada.

Evidence suggests the trip to school – primarily in and around school zones – remains unsafe for many. What can be done to turn this around?

A concerted effort is needed by all those entrusted with our children's safety on the way to and from school – provinces, municipalities, school groups and others – to make sure the journey is as safe as possible. We hope this report will serve as a resource for those efforts.

This first-of-its-kind study lays out best practices in school zone policies, design, and programs across Canada, showing who is doing what and giving practical examples of progress. The goal is to empower both policymakers and concerned community members with new facts and ideas that can lead to positive change. The study finds that Canadian jurisdictions could be doing more to support children on their travel to school and that other countries, such as the United States, do more in this area.

PARENTS RIGHTLY CONCERNED

- A previous CAA study showed that nearly 30% of drivers reported witnessing a near miss or collision in a school zone, more than half of which involved a child.
- A recent survey of 1,500 Canadian parents revealed that high volumes of congestion in school zones are a major safety concern – 49% of parents were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with road safety around schools.

HOW THIS STUDY IS ORGANIZED

The study opens with general recommendations, then examines provincial actions across four key areas:

Legislation, Policy, and Design

Legislation, policies, and design guidance in place to support planning, design, and road safety for children and youth in their communities, as well as inclusion of children in the planning process.

Resources & Education

Dedication of resources and planning priorities around children's mobility, and contribution to pedestrian and cycling education in schools.

Funding

Policies and practices related to accessing and providing dedicated funding to safe school travel and School Travel Planning initiatives.

Bonus Area

Celebrating leaders in children's mobility in Canada, focusing on practices, programs, and built environment improvements.

The next section highlights specific provincial initiatives, and ends with an explanation of the methods to improve policies and programs for safe school travel.

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE SAFE SCHOOL TRAVEL

Adopt best practices

There are straightforward, quick-win interventions that have been shown to improve road safety. These include:

- Adopting a 1-metre safe passing distance for cyclists to encourage more children to safely cycle to school and therefore reduce traffic congestion in school zones.
- Setting formal goals and targets for road safety, and applying consistent monitoring to track progress.
- Leveraging available federal funding, such as the Canada Community Building Fund, Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, and recently launched Active Transportation Fund to improve infrastructure systems that support safe school travel.



There are also a few longer-term best practices that provinces could consider, including:

- Adopting legislation that improves road safety for vulnerable road users, such as residential traffic calming.
- Coordinating efforts to ensure community engagement and consistency across local governments, while respecting jurisdiction of municipalities.
- Providing funding to conduct school travel planning (STP) to help address the safety concerns of families on the school journey.
- Providing funding for infrastructure improvements arising from the STP implementation plan.
- Collecting data on rates of active school travel and using this to measure the efficacy of various interventions.
- Creating a provincial staff position that is dedicated to supporting children's mobility and safety on the journey to and from school.



Step up at federal level

Following the example of the United States, the Government of Canada could provide funding for the creation of a national safe school travel partnership with the provinces, staff positions dedicated to children's safety and mobility, and infrastructure improvements arising from the school travel planning process. In 2021, the federal government adopted Canada's first National Active Transportation Strategy, but it did not include specific funding for safe school travel initiatives. The establishment of a national framework and dedicated funding for a safe school travel partnership would be welcome commitments to advance Canada's safety record.

STUDY AUTHORS

Two experienced Canadian urban transportation planners specializing in safe and active school travel authored this report:

Jamie Hilland is a Transportation Planner with Urban Systems, a former Program Director of the Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) program at Green Action Centre, and the current Chair of Active School Travel Canada. He also sits on the Expert Advisory panel of the CIHR funded CHASE (Child Active Transport Safety and the Environment) study at the University of Calgary, the Mobility Management Committee for the Transportation Association of Canada, and the Policy Committee for the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycling Professionals.

Shoni Madden is an experienced project manager and engagement professional with more than a decade of experience in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. She began her work in the transportation sector with the launch of School Travel Planning in Canada, an approach which focuses on addressing barriers to independent children's mobility. She joined Urban Systems in 2017 and works on active transportation and community planning/design projects across Canada.



THE CAA COMMITMENT

Supporting safety on Canadian roads has been a top priority for the CAA for over a century. Today, with increased traffic – from children walking and cycling, and automobiles and buses picking up or dropping off students – the CAA School Safety Patrol program is more relevant than ever. The program helps to ensure safer school zones and is CAA's oldest traffic safety initiative.

More than 50,000 children across Canada are involved in the program, helping bus drivers get their classmates to and from school safely and directing pedestrian traffic in school zones. In recent years, CAA has broadened its support to include the development of the School Zone Safety Assessment Tool, a web-based tool for community members to track behaviours in school zones. The Safe School Travel Study builds on CAA's commitment to improving safety for children on their active school journey.

PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL RESULTS

SAFETY IN ACTION

PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL RESULTS: OVERVIEW

The CAA Safe School Travel Study compares Canadian provinces and territories across 25 specific areas to support safer travel to school and provides real-world examples of safety in action within each jurisdiction. Canada's provinces and territories have responsibility for most aspects of school safety, from infrastructure rules and guidelines to speed limits. As such, the focus of the report is on provincial policies and actions. Many municipalities take further actions within the lines of provincial laws, and we have included some notable examples.

One of the biggest changes in trips to school has been the increase in driving. Often this is for good reason—such as after school sports or cultural activities. But the fact remains that increased vehicular traffic leads to more congestion and more danger in school zones. For that reason, this study includes measures to make walking and cycling to school safer as ways to increase school zone safety. Advances in this area will make it easier for some to choose to walk or cycle, leading to better outcomes overall.

All comparisons for this study were assessed through a combination of completed survey responses from provincial government staff, as well as an external review of current policy, funding, and design standards that were publicly available from each jurisdiction. Further details on the evaluation criteria used for this study can be found in the appendix.



	BRITISH COLUMBIA	YUKON	NORTH WEST TERRITORIES	NUNAVUT	ALBERTA	SASKATCHEWAN	MANITOBA	ONTARIO	QUÉBEC	NEW BRUNSWICK	PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	NOVA SCOTIA	NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
► Legislation, Policy, and Design													
<i>Policies & Guidelines</i>													
Have provincial AT design guidelines	X				X			X	X	X	X	X	
Design Guidelines ensure school zones built to 30 km/h speed	X								X				X
Have a provincial Vision Zero policy or road safety strategy	X		X		X		X		X		X		
Planning documents reference Complete Streets	X						X	X	X				
Planning documents identify children's mobility as a priority	X						X	X	X	X	X	X	
Provincial school siting guidelines encourage active travel to school							X		X	X		X	
<i>Provincial Legislation</i>													
Allows municipalities to reduce speed limits	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enable school zone speed reductions to 30 km/hr	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Requires vehicles to provide at least 1 m of distance when passing cyclists								X	X	X	X	X	X
Mandate demerits for speeding	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Requires drivers to stop for a school bus	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mandate demerits for failing to stop for a school bus	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
► Resources and Education													
<i>Provincial Support</i>													
Have dedicated provincial staff member focused on children's mobility									X	X		X	
More than one department works to improve active travel outcomes in youth	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

	BRITISH COLUMBIA	YUKON	NORTH WEST TERRITORIES	NUNAVUT	ALBERTA	SASKATCHEWAN	MANITOBA	ONTARIO	QUÉBEC	NEW BRUNSWICK	PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	NOVA SCOTIA	NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
Education													
Contribute towards pedestrian and cycling education in schools	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
► Funding													
Federal Funding													
Accessed ICIP funding for Active Transportation	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Bilateral ICIP agreement includes target to increase AT mode share	X		X		X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Accessed other types of federal AT funding		X				X		X	X		X	X	
Provincial Funding													
Have dedicated provincial funding for municipalities for AT	X				X				X		X	X	X
Provided funding to support AT network planning	X								X		X	X	
Have dedicated AT infrastructure funding	X					X			X		X	X	
Have matching provincial funding for municipal AT projects	X				X				X		X		
Provided funding for children's mobility programs	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
► Bonus Points													
Provincial Data													
Collects data on rates of active school travel province-wide	X								X	X			
Provincial Goals													
Adopted goal to increase walking and cycling mode shares	X								X				



Current practices

The Province of Alberta is working towards creating safer environments for youth to travel in an active and sustainable manner. The province contributes towards pedestrian, cycling, and school bus safety education in schools. Organizations such as Ever Active Schools links children's traffic safety to the Alberta Healthy Schools Curriculum.

The cities of Calgary and Edmonton both have "Safe Passing Bylaws" in place to help protect vulnerable road users, including children on bicycles. By law, the City of Calgary requires persons driving 60km/h or slower to provide a minimum of 1 metre when passing a person cycling. When driving faster than 60km/hr, the distance increases to at least 1.5 metres of space to pass. Failure to observe the minimum safe passing distance may result in a \$203 fine. In the City of Edmonton, the Safe Passing Distance Bylaw dictates much the same with vehicle drivers required to pass cyclists with 1 metre of distance (or more) when the posted speed limit is 60 km/hr or lower, or 1.5 metres of distance (or more) in areas with a posted speed limit of greater than 60 km/hr. While these are not province wide road safety bylaws, these bylaws do positively impact the over 55% of the Province's population that reside in these two cities.

Opportunities for further support

The province has several opportunities available to support municipalities and school communities to create safe, accessible, and active transportation options for children and youth. This could include creating a dedicated planning and infrastructure fund for active transportation, as well as financial support for children's mobility programs. Both initiatives would foster safe conditions for young, vulnerable road users, while legislative amendments such as the adoption of a safe passing distance for cyclists within the *Traffic Safety Act* would create safer conditions for those cycling to and from school. Updates are under way to several provincial design guidelines, which have the potential to positively impact school safety.

Safety in Action



School Zone Speed Reductions

The Province of Alberta has enacted legislation that enables the creation of 30 km/h school zones, in municipalities across the province. A comprehensive study undertaken at the University of Alberta in 2018 found that reducing speed limits from 50 km/h to 30 km/h in school zones had a significant impact on reducing injuries and death, including a 45.3 % reduction in fatal and injury collisions, and a 55.3% reduction in injuries. This study evaluated "the speed and safety impacts of introducing a 30 km/h speed limit within a city-wide group of 216 school zones. The analysis was conducted using data from the City of Edmonton, which, in September 2014, reduced the speed limit from 50 to 30 km/h around all elementary schools, with clear traffic signage."

The results of this study provide strong evidence that reducing speed limits to 30 km/h in school zones brings significant safety benefits by reducing vehicular speeds, resulting in a pronounced reduction in fatal and injury causing collisions, and that the adoption of this policy in the City of Edmonton dramatically improved the safety of children and families within these zones.



Current practices

The Province of British Columbia (BC) has taken significant steps to support active and safe school travel through the creation of its [Active School Travel Pilot Program](#) in the fall of 2020. This program is aimed at increasing the number of students using active transportation between home and school. The province has committed \$400,000 worth of funding over the next two years for delivery of this program, with 11 schools participating in the 2020-2021 school year, and another 12 schools participating in the 2021-22 school year. As of spring 2022, nine of the eleven schools from the initial cohort in 2020/21 continue to work the AST pilot program with smaller grants. While this program is an excellent start, few schools can participate at this time due to limited funding, and the impact of this program will be constrained due to a lack of funding being provided for built environment improvements. As studies have repeatedly shown, safe routes to school programs have the greatest results on mode share and road safety outcomes when supported by changes to the built environment.

BC has done very well by developing provincial active transportation design guidelines and adopting a province wide active transportation strategy, [Move. Commute. Connect.](#) The province regularly accesses federal funding and provides provincial funding to municipalities for the development of active transportation facilities and has a robust data collection framework in place to measure progress.

Opportunities for further support

Expanding the number of schools able to participate in the active school travel program and hiring a provincial staff member dedicated to supporting children's mobility initiatives would go a long way to further increase child safety. Developing school siting guidelines to encourage active school travel, enacting a 1-metre passing law, and providing funding for road safety improvements at or near schools and the surrounding community would help BC take safe school travel to the next level.

Safety in Action



Provincial Commitments and Key Partnerships Fund School Safety Improvements and Programs

BC's active transportation strategy, Move Commute Connect, includes a goal to double the percentage of active trips by 2030. The Provincial Road Safety Strategy is also rooted in the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries. The dedicated British Columbia Active Transportation fund, among others, is frequently used to make safety improvements in school zones. Key partners such as TransLink are developing a Youth Travel Strategy for the Metro Vancouver Region, which is transforming the school journey through rebuilding a culture of active and safe school travel. This year, as part of the implementation of the strategy, TransLink started a Walking School Bus Pilot in several Metro Vancouver communities.



Current practices

The Province of Manitoba makes investments to support school bus safety, and support active and safe routes to school programming through organizations like Green Action Centre and the Winnipeg Repair Education and Cycling Hub. These organizations support cycling education through the Manitoba Public Insurance funded Bike Education and Skills Training (BEST) program that is currently available to schools in Winnipeg. Manitoba Public Insurance also provides pedestrian and cycling safety education across the province.

Furthermore, since 1936, CAA Manitoba has been proud to offer the CAA School Safety Patrol® Program to local communities. They work closely with the province and local police services to deliver the program and to make sure that the program is up to date with changing safety needs. CAA Manitoba, with sponsorship from Manitoba Public Insurance, provides materials, training resources and equipment free of charge to schools.

Opportunities for further support

The province lacks a strategic and dedicated approach to safety in school transportation. There is a distinct lack of dedicated staff and financial resources at the Provincial level to support planning and infrastructure improvements, and in 2019 the province cut almost all core funding to a local non-profit (Green Action Centre) that operates a province-wide Active and Safe Routes to School program.

There are also legislative changes and policy adjustments that could be made to support increased safety for vulnerable road users, including amending the Highway Traffic Act to ensure a safe passing distance. The creation of an updated Provincial Active Transportation Strategy, with clear targets, supportive policies, design guidelines, and the required funds to support municipalities with these efforts would have a major impact to ensure children and youth are safe on the route to and from school.

Safety in Action



Land-use Planning Guide for School Sites Promotes Planning for Active Transportation

The land-use planning process related to school sites involves many partners including the province, the municipality, the Public Schools Finance Board, and school divisions. Historically, these decisions have not always prioritized active, safe, and accessible transportation connections for students, or considered before and after school needs such as childcare and recreational programming. The Province of Manitoba's [Planning Guide for School Sites](#) helps to identify some of these issues, and provides an accessible resource for stakeholders involved to better understand this critical planning process as well as the impact that these decisions have on the community.



Current practices

Nova Scotia takes pride in its efforts to create safe school transportation environments. A dedicated staff person in the Department of Public Works ensures consistency and collaboration across departments as well as implementation of the [Sustainable Transportation Strategy](#). Provincial policies and legislation, such as active transportation design guidelines and school siting guidelines, ensure that the built environment and mobility needs of youth are considered in planning and design. The province also provides funding to support child and youth active transportation promotion and policy, walking school bus initiatives, and cycling and pedestrian education programs. This includes support to non-profit partners such as Ecology Action Centre's active transportation programs, Bicycle Nova Scotia, and others.

Opportunities for further support

There are a few gaps that Nova Scotia could work to improve, such as updating their sustainable transportation strategy (currently 9 years old), establishing a dedicated Provincial Active Transportation fund to support municipalities with planning, and infrastructure improvements – specifically around schools. Additionally, supportive legislation and resources to help ensure school zones are signed and designed for driving speeds of 30 km/h would ensure safe transportation options for all road users. Note: This only applies to urban school zones that were previously 50km zones. Rurally located schools in 70+ km zones have 50km school zone signage.)

The revised EGCCRA (Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act) also includes establishing a Provincial Active Transportation strategy to increase active transportation options by 2023, and to complete core active transportation networks that are accessible for all ages and all abilities in 65% of the province's communities by 2030. This is an ambitious goal which requires strong partnerships and support from all participating departments. However, if implemented properly, these initiatives will increase safe school travel in all areas of NS.

Safety in Action



Matching Provincial Fundings

The Province of Nova Scotia provides matching funding for “Sustainable Transportation” projects through its Connect2 and Low Carbon Communities grant program. Since 2012, Connect2 has distributed over \$6.7 Million to 207 projects and counting in communities across the province not only for active transportation projects, but engagement, alternative fuels, fleet efficiency, and transit projects as well.

A part of their “Let's Get Moving” Strategy, the province also supports smaller Active Transportation projects through their Active Communities Fund. Since 2021, these funds have been made available to schools and regional centres for education programs to implement school-focused Active Transportation and Physical Activity initiatives. The province also has trail funding available to communities which can be used to support AT infrastructure initiatives - including safe routes to school for rural communities.



Current practices

New Brunswick has taken strides to improve safe school travel. Several departments work collaboratively to make improvements in safe and active travel and contribute to pedestrian and cycling education in schools. The Highway Traffic Act also requires drivers to provide a safe passing distance for cyclists. Notably, the province is one of few that are collecting data and monitoring transportation modes of students, so this information can be used to measure the impact of various initiatives.

Opportunities for further support

There is significant room for improvement as the province offers little to no financial support to municipalities to improve infrastructure in school zones and communities. The province also does not take advantage of federal funding resources to support these efforts. The creation of provincial Active Transportation and Road Safety strategies would go a long way to making infrastructure improvements, policy and legislation changes, and support encouragement/education initiatives that protect vulnerable road users on the route to school.

Safety in Action



Dedicated Staff

The Province of New Brunswick has provincial staff within the department of Education and Early Childhood Development that are dedicated to supporting children's mobility. Other departments involved in this work include the department of Transportation and Infrastructure, as well as school districts. Through these dedicated staff resources the Province of New Brunswick was able to develop school construction planning guidelines that support locating schools within walking and cycling distance of schools, and orienting schools so that they connect to the existing sidewalk and trail in these communities. School siting guidelines can help ensure that schools are constructed in a manner that supports walking and cycling, thereby reducing congestion and the risk of collision. Adopting these guidelines has helped the province design and build schools that more conducive to safe and active school travel.



Current practices

Newfoundland and Labrador have several pieces of the Highway Traffic Act that support safe school transportation. This includes requiring a safe motor vehicle passing distance of 1 to 1.5 metres (depending on the posted speed limit) for cyclists and pedestrians, as well as requiring drivers to obey the posted speed limit in school zones. It also ensures drivers yield to pedestrians at crosswalks.

Opportunities for further support

The province does not provide funding to support infrastructure improvements, education, or encouragement initiatives to ensure safe and active transportation to school. The adoption of an active school travel strategy, allocating dedicated funds for infrastructure improvements in school communities, as well as pedestrian and cycling safety education would significantly improve safety in school zones across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Safety in Action



Safe Passing Law

Newfoundland and Labrador's safe passing law, adopted in early 2019, requires drivers provide 1-metre distance when passing cyclists and pedestrians on highways with posted speed limits of 60 km/h or less, and 1.5- metres at speeds greater than this. This law ensures that in both low and high-speed areas, cyclists and pedestrians are given more space.

While the full impact of adopting this legislation will not be known for some time, recent [research](#) from the Transportation Research Center for Livable Communities found that "drivers' overtaking distances were significantly greater in locations with the five-foot (1.5 Meter) passing law than in other areas (without any passing law). (Source: *Effect of Safe Bicycle Passing Laws on Drivers' Behavior and Bicyclists' Safety*. Jun-Seok Oh, Valerian Kwigizile, Ron Van Houten, Ahmad Feizi, Majid Mastali. 2018)

In 2018, Newfoundland and Labrador reported one of the [highest fatality rates per 100,000 population](#) in Canada; this legislation is an important step in the right direction towards bringing those numbers down.



Current practices

Ontario has been among the best provinces in terms of its support for active school travel and has a long history of programming, that until 2018 was largely led and funded by non-governmental organizations. Ontario is well known as the birthplace of the Active and Safe Routes to School movement in Canada, and the initiator of School Travel Planning in this country. Several Ministries work to improve active transportation outcomes in the province including Education, Transportation, and Tourism, Culture and Sport through the [Ontario Cycling Strategy](#). The Ontario Traffic Manual has sections that provide design guidance for pedestrians and cyclists (Books 15 & 18).

There are also several external initiatives that support active transportation and safe school travel. For example, CAA teamed up with the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) and the Ministry of Transportation to develop the [Ontario Road Safety Resource](#), a bilingual online hub for road safety curriculum and resources for educators, applicable to kindergarten to grade 12. Created in 1929, the CAA School Safety Patrol program has run in partnership with police services, school boards, teachers, bus consortiums and student volunteers. The program was developed to protect and educate elementary school children on safe road-crossing practices. With more traffic than ever before in school zones, every year approximately 20,000 CAA School Safety Patrollers keep their peers safe in school zones and on school buses in over 900 schools across Ontario.

Opportunities for further support

From 2018-2022 the Ontario Ministry of Education, through its Ontario Active School Travel program, worked to achieve population-level change to reverse the decline of active school travel trips throughout the province. Unfortunately, the program (managed and delivered by Green Communities Canada) has not had its funding renewed as of spring 2022. These funds supported municipal partners and school communities to achieve local level behavior change and organizations to establish and support existing and new transportation initiatives. While the OAST program will continue in 2022, this loss of Provincial funding and support will significantly reduce its impact and hamper future efforts in the realm of safe school travel. A key opportunity is for the province to renew funding for the Ontario Active School Travel Program. This renewal should be for multiple years to allow for proper planning and strategic investments.

The province lags in some other critical areas. It does not have dedicated funding for road safety improvements such as the construction of active transportation facilities, no provincial staff are tasked with coordinating and improving children's mobility, no travel mode share targets, no data collection to monitor progress or impact of AST initiatives, and school travel plans are not fully supported with the critical funding needed to implement the identified infrastructure improvements. By making these key investments, Ontario would do much to improve the safety of families on the school journey.

Government coordination to support active and safe school travel

The Ontario provincial government made great strides by implementing legislative changes keeping those most vulnerable in mind.

This includes doubling of fines for speeding in Community Safety Zones and, through the applicable sections of Bill 65 (Safer School Zones Act, 2017) municipalities have greater liberty in setting speed limits within their borders and the use of automated speed enforcement systems and red-light camera systems.

In the Province of Ontario, two Provincial Departments contribute and support Active and Safe School Travel efforts:

- The Ministry of Transportation co-leads the development of the Ontario Cycling Strategy and the associated funding in support of this strategy.
- The Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries served as the other co-lead on the development of the Ontario Cycling Strategy and the associated funding.



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



Current practices

Prince Edward Island has a lot of momentum working towards sustainable and safe transportation options for children and youth. With an [Active Transportation Strategy](#) and dedicated fund in place, the Province supports municipalities through network planning, design improvements, and improved sidewalk connections, and prioritizes these funds to children's mobility projects. Soon to support these efforts is the adoption of Active Transportation Design Standards. Several departments collaborate on a Provincial Active Transportation Working Group, ensuring a coordinated effort. Pedestrian and cycling education are provided in schools, and the province funds a variety of encouraging events and initiatives.

Opportunities for further support

The adoption of formalized goals and targets, and consistent monitoring of transportation patterns related to children's mobility would help push PEI to the next level.

Safety in Action



Dedicated Active Transportation Fund

In late 2019, as part of the launch of their Sustainable Transportation Action Plan, the Province of Prince Edward Island announced the creation of a dedicated Active Transportation Fund. This fund provides \$5 million per year over five years for the construction of new walking and bike paths as well as paved shoulders. The fund is intended to better connect existing walking and cycling trails and improve and grow PEI's active transportation network. Funding is also provided to develop long term active transportation plans and to promote active transportation. Priority is given to projects that improve the safety of people using active transportation, among other criteria.



Current practices

The Province of Québec emerged as a one of the best in Canada for taking action to reduce the risk to children and families on the school journey. The province has staff dedicated to improving children's mobility and strong pedestrian and cycling safety education programs. The Province has an **Active Transportation Strategy** and design guidelines. Québec has also completed hundreds of school travel plans in addition to providing Provincial funds for active transportation infrastructure projects. As a result, Québec is a clear leader in safe school travel in Canada.

Opportunities for further support

While Québec has been a leader in supporting safe school travel, recent years have seen some of these efforts reduced in size and scope or abandoned altogether. There does not seem to be any further school travel planning processes underway, and provincial leadership in this area does not seem to be present. Collaborations with Transport Québec to improve traffic calming or provide sidewalks on provincial roadways has also been a challenge, which updated design guidance could improve. This could also be incorporated in the upcoming National Urban and Land Use Planning Strategy currently in development. Demonstration of a renewed commitment by funding safe school travel programs, appointing a provincial lead, and coordination of a concerted effort across multiple departments would help Québec regain momentum.

Safety in Action



Better results thanks to partnerships

The government of Québec doesn't act alone when trying to support safety in school zones. Interventions and practices implemented in the province happen thanks to partnerships and participations from multiple levels of government, school boards and organizations such as la Société de l'Assurance Automobile du Québec, Piéton Québec, Vélo-Québec, la Fédération des Transporteurs par Autobus, Lab-École, la Société Canadienne du Cancer and la Fondation CAA-Québec.

The Cycliste Averti cycling education program for youth is funded in a partnership of three different provincial Ministries: Transportation, Education, and Environment. Sponsorships also enable the program to provide fleets of bicycles to support the delivery of the program in schools across Québec.



Current practices

The province of Saskatchewan reduces congestion in school zones and improves active transportation by funding pedestrian and cycling education programs. The province also allows municipalities to reduce speed limits, and often accesses federal funding available for active transportation projects. Saskatchewan Government Insurance has a dedicated and ongoing community grants program that supports small improvements to infrastructure. The Provincial Traffic Safety Fund Grant helps communities manage speed, improves school zone safety and installs pedestrian crosswalks. As part of the grant application, communities are encouraged to use CAA's School Zone Safety Assessment Tool to assess the safety need.

Opportunities for further support

There are a few suggested opportunities to further support active school transportation in Saskatchewan. The province has no provincial design guidelines that dictate safe and separated infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, nor have they adopted design guidance around improved infrastructure in the vicinity of schools. Additionally, there are no provincially funded active and safe routes to school programs, no provincial active transportation strategy, and no dedicated fund for active transportation projects. While Automated Speed Enforcement Funds are distributed to municipalities, there is no requirement that these funds be spent on safety improvements for vulnerable road users - but the interest is there. One example was Saskatchewan In Motion, which promoted active journeys to school, but closed its office in March of 2021 due to a lack of provincial funding.

If Saskatchewan follows the lead of other provinces in adopting these measures, it will result in safer streets and reduced congestion in school zones. With a solid foundation of understanding the needs of vulnerable road users, Saskatchewan is well positioned to positively impact the safety of students through strategic investment and the adoption of policies that are known to improve road safety outcomes.

Safety in Action



Safe Systems Partnerships Prioritize School Infrastructure Improvements

The Ministry of Highways and Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) have joined other key partners in road safety to invest in built environment improvements in communities. This Safe Systems Strategy approach has significant impacts in school zones in communities of all sizes. The community grants program at SGI is supplemented with revenue from the automated speed enforcement program, and these funds are issued as community grants for infrastructure improvements that increase traffic safety. Investments are also made to support partners that deliver pedestrian, cycling, and helmet use education in schools.

CANADA'S TERRITORIES



Although Canada's territories have a unique community context, this presents an opportunity to reduce congestion and improve road safety as more families live within walking or cycling distance of their local school due to smaller community sizes. Minimal investments and no cost policy changes will have a positive impact. With a concerted effort, the territories will see immediate results through safer streets and healthier children and provide an example for smaller provinces to follow.

Current practices

In Yukon, several departments are working to improve active travel outcomes for youth. School zones have reduced speeds and municipalities are able to reduce speed limits. They have accessed federal funding for active transportation projects and provide funding for children's mobility programs. They have also recently undertaken significant school zone infrastructure improvements at five schools in the City of Whitehorse, as highlighted in the case study below, and the City has launched their first School Travel Plan this year.

The Northwest Territories has a road safety strategy in place, reduced speeds in school zones, and it has previously accessed federal funding for active transportation, so there are some positive initiatives underway. The territory also contributes towards pedestrian, cycling, and school bus safety education within schools.

In Nunavut, there are some efforts being made at supporting safe school travel by providing municipalities the legislative framework to set their own speed limits, requiring drivers to stop for school buses, and accessing federal funding in support of active transportation projects.

Opportunities for further support

With few initiatives in support of active and safe school travel, there is significant room for improvement in all three territories. In the Yukon, there are no guidelines or policies in place around complete streets, active transportation guidelines, Vision Zero policy or road safety strategy, no school travel planning processes underway, and no consistent effort at the territorial level to support active and safe school travel. Given the success of recent efforts to improve pedestrian safety and calm traffic in their school zones, Yukon should build on these initiatives and further invest in the development of policies, design guidance, and plans that support active and safe school travel.

The Northwest Territories does not have staff focused on children's mobility, does not conduct any school travel planning processes, and does not have dedicated funding for active transportation initiatives.

The territory of Nunavut has not demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting active and safe routes to school. As of fall 2021, the territory did not have a dedicated staff person, lacked a Vision Zero or road safety strategy, and did not provide funding for active and safe routes to school programs.

Federal Funds Used to Improve School Zones

In Yukon, the Federal Gas Tax Fund was used in 2021 to improve pedestrian safety and traffic calming near five elementary schools in Whitehorse. These improvements included:

- At Jack Hulland Elementary School in Porter Creek, a sidewalk was built on the west side of Fir Street between 14th and 12th Avenues, as well as a paved trail on the east side between 14th and 12th Avenues. Curb extensions at the crosswalk were built and an adjacent intersection was installed to calm traffic, reduce crossing distance, and improve sightlines.
- At Elijah Smith Elementary School in McIntyre subdivision, enhanced zebra markings were painted on the pavement at the east-west pedestrian crossing at the Hamilton Boulevard and McIntyre Drive roundabout.
- On Lewes Boulevard, enhanced zebra markings were painted on the pavement and pedestrian-activated LED pedestrian signs will be installed.
- On the south side of Wann Road, student drop-off at Holy Family Catholic Elementary School was prevented and pedestrian illumination was improved at the crosswalk. Curb extensions at the crosswalk were installed to calm traffic, reduce crossing distance, and improve sightlines. As well, a mini roundabout at Wann Road and Basswood Street were built to calm traffic and encourage student drop-off on the north side.
- At the crosswalk to Takhini Elementary School, enhanced zebra marks on pavement were painted on Range Road. Curb extensions at the crosswalk were installed to calm traffic, reduce crossing distance, and improve sightlines.



APPENDIX

EVALUATION CRITERIA

POLICIES & GUIDELINES

PROVINCIAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION DESIGN GUIDELINES

What is it?

Provincial Active Transportation (AT) Design Guidelines provide engineering guidance for the planning, selection, design, and maintenance of active transportation facilities. These types of guidance documents help to provide consistency in the design of active transportation facilities across a region and help ensure that these facilities are reflective of current best practice in road safety.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Design guidelines ensure that new projects consider best practices and provide specific recommendations for community type, size, and context - especially unique contexts such as school zones. Ensuring consistency in design also supports youth to develop familiarity with active travel infrastructure, supporting them to make safe and informed transportation decisions. AT design guidelines also support smaller communities in particular as they often will not have the in-house expertise needed to properly plan and design cycling and pedestrian facilities. Design manuals can help guide this process and ensure that new or upgraded facilities are developed and informed by prior study, practice, and research.



PROVINCIAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION DESIGN GUIDELINES RECOMMEND SCHOOL ZONES HAVE 30KM/H SPEED LIMIT

What is it?

The relationship between motor vehicle speed and pedestrian outcomes because of collisions is significant. Pedestrian collisions with vehicle speeds at or above 50km/h result in a survival rate of less than 15%. Roadway design is a much greater determinant of vehicle speed than signage alone, and research shows that the severity of collisions involving vulnerable road users and motor vehicles greatly increases with motor vehicle speed.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Designing roadways and school zones with speed limits of 30 km/h or less increases the survival rate in pedestrian/vehicle collisions to 90%. Through effective design (including narrower lane widths, curb bump outs, and the removal of slip lanes) the likelihood of speed compliance increases, the stopping distance for vehicles goes down, the comfort of children and families on foot or bicycle improves, and the risk of serious injury or death should a collision occur is greatly reduced.

A 2018 study from the University of Alberta demonstrated that in school zones with posted speeds of 30 km/hr “fatal/injury collisions were significantly reduced by 45.3%, and injuries to vulnerable road users were reduced by 55.3%”. In fact, for every 1 km/h reduction in mean speed, fatal/injury crashes were reduced by about 4%. The results of this study provide strong evidence that reducing speed limits to 30 km/h in school zones can bring significant safety benefits by reducing vehicular speeds and fatal/injury.”



ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY OR VISION ZERO POLICY

What is it?

Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. First implemented in Sweden in the 1990s, Vision Zero has proved successful across Europe, and is now gaining momentum in many major American cities. Vision Zero is an approach that is intended to bring together road safety partners towards a goal of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

In Canada, road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death among children and youth under 19. Committing to Vision Zero can help reduce these numbers over time, and involves the following strategies:

- Building and sustaining leadership, collaboration, and accountability – especially among a diverse group of stakeholders to include transportation professionals, policymakers, public health officials, police, and community members.
- Collecting, analyzing, and using data to understand trends and potential disproportionate impacts of traffic deaths on certain populations.
- Prioritizing equity and community engagement.
- Managing speed to safe levels.
- Setting a timeline to achieve zero traffic deaths and serious injuries, which brings urgency and accountability, and ensuring transparency on progress and challenges.
- Source: Vision Zero Network.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Ensuring there is good partnership, coordinated efforts, and open communication around road collision and fatality data for children and youth is critical, as well as ensuring strategies and policies are in place to prioritize action to reduce traffic related fatalities and collisions. Built environment improvements are shown to significantly improve the safety of vulnerable road users, including children.

A study from the Traffic Injury Research Foundation also highlights the need for evidence-based policies targeted towards occupant, cyclist, and pedestrian safety such as Graduated Driver Licensing, bicycle helmet legislation, pedestrian safety laws, and booster seat legislation to follow best practice guidelines and be standardized across Canada.

“Pedestrian collisions are more strongly associated with built environment features than with proportions walking. Road design features were related to higher collision rates and warrant further examination for their safety effects for children. Future policy designed to increase children’s active transportation should be developed from evidence that more clearly addresses child pedestrian safety.”

COMPLETE STREETS POLICIES - PLANNING DOCUMENTS

REFERENCE COMPLETE STREETS

What is it?

Complete Streets are streets that are safe for everyone: people who walk, bicycle, take transit, or drive, and people of all ages and abilities. A Complete Streets policy ensures that transportation planners and engineers consistently design and operate the entire street network for all road users, not only motorists. Complete Streets offer wide-ranging benefits. They are cost-effective, sustainable, and safe. Complete Streets Policies formalize a Province or Territory's intent to plan, design, and maintain streets that are safe for road users of all ages and abilities.

A community with a Complete Streets policy considers the needs of children every time a transportation investment decision is made. Roads near schools and in residential neighborhoods are designed and altered to allow children, the most vulnerable users of our streets, to travel safely. (Smart Growth America, n.d.)

How does it improve safe school travel?

Complete Streets provide children with opportunities to walk, bike and play in a safe environment. More children are likely to walk or bike to school when sidewalks or footpaths are present, when there are safe street crossings, and when school zones enforce a reduced vehicle speed.

When streets are designed only for cars, they become barriers for children, who cannot safely walk or bicycle along or across them. Unfortunately, these safety fears are well founded – pedestrian injury is a leading cause of unintentional, injury-related death among children, age 5 to 14. While 'stranger danger' is often cited as a primary factor, a 2014 [study](#) from the CDC found that traffic-related danger is a more common reason children did not walk to school.

Specific to Complete Streets, a 2016 [study](#) by Smart Growth America found that 70% of Complete Streets projects experienced a reduction in collisions, 56% experienced a reduction in injuries, the rate of collision among bicyclists decreased from 2.5 to 0.6 collisions per 100 bicycle trips, and the number of drivers "speeding excessively" decreased by 11 percent on average.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS IDENTIFY CHILDREN'S MOBILITY AS A PRIORITY

What is it?

The transportation needs of children and youth have been largely overlooked in transportation planning, with streets being built primarily to move vehicles as quickly as possible. Most transportation planning projects focus on the mobility needs of adults first, with little thought given to creating streets that include design elements that serve the unique mobility needs of children. Children and youth can have different needs from adults because they are smaller, growing, developing and dependent, and generally more vulnerable.

Having formal policies in place that specifically identify and prioritize the importance of children's mobility will help to ensure that children are consulted with as part of the planning process for all transportation projects, considered in the design and/or policy itself, and engaged with post implementation or adoption for further refinement and adjustment.



How does it improve safe school travel?

As vulnerable road users, children have very specific design needs from their streets. Ensuring policies are in place that require infrastructure to be designed in a manner that formally considers their needs is critical to ensuring the built environment supports children's safety and prioritizes independent mobility. A 2005 study by the Centre for Sustainable Transportation demonstrated that communities designed and built with children in mind show improvements in health, reduced congestion, and increased children's independence and mobility.

PROVINCIAL SCHOOL SITING GUIDELINES ENCOURAGE ACTIVE TRAVEL TO SCHOOL

What is it?

School Siting guidelines are land-use planning documents that are typically established by a province or territory to ensure that new schools are located, oriented, and designed in a manner that supports safe school travel by being located in an area with lower vehicle volumes, provides connections to existing pathways and sidewalk networks, and is within easy walking and cycling distance from the families it supports. These guidelines help ensure a consistent and supportive approach to the development or re-development of school sites by school boards.

How does it improve safe school travel?

When school districts face declining enrollment in centrally located schools, this can have a dramatic impact on transportation patterns, health, and community sustainability as families are forced to travel longer distances to and from school. A 2015 [study](#) by the International Journal of Sustainable Transportation found that *“students appear to walk and bicycle less not because of distance to school, but due to an apprehension about unsafe walking conditions.”* A Canadian [study](#) conducted in 2019 also concluded that “local planners and policy-makers should also consider children’s health, students’ engagement and academic achievement, community well-being, and environmental sustainability, when making decisions on school siting and transportation policies.”

School siting guidelines can provide recommendations on shared community uses of schools (for childcare, or other community services and needs), and recommend land-use needs that are sustainable and promote decreased pollution and traffic congestion.



PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

PROVINCE OR TERRITORY ALLOWS MUNICIPALITIES TO REDUCE SPEED LIMITS

What is it?

Residential speed limit reductions are a traffic calming measure that greatly reduce both the frequency and risk of collisions, be it between vehicles or with vehicles and other road users. As children have much smaller and more fragile bodies than adults, they are at an even increased risk of injury and fatality from collision than adults.

In many provinces, current legislation makes it difficult or even impossible for municipalities to set their own speed limits. Allowing municipalities to set their own speed limits allows for the creation of context specific speed limits and provides communities the opportunity to provide input and implement speed limits that reflect their needs.

How does it improve safe school travel?

A residential environment with slower speeds creates a safer environment for walking and cycling, provides drivers with a shorter stopping distance, and ensures that in the case of a collision, a fatality is not an absolute outcome. Providing municipalities with the ability to set speed limits without provincial oversight or approval being required allows for the rapid implementation of reduced speed zones, both near schools as well as in areas where children and families frequently travel.

ENABLED SCHOOL ZONE SPEED REDUCTIONS

What is it?

School zones are areas located adjacent to or near a school site with reduced speed signage and requirements. Provinces can differ as to how school zones are defined and implemented but enabling municipalities to implement reduced speed limits in school zones results in the widespread implementation of reduced speed areas near schools.

How does it improve safe school travel?

We know that when people are involved in vehicle collisions at speeds higher than 30 km/h that the likelihood of fatalities greatly increases. Ensuring slower speeds results in a safer more comfortable environment for all road users, reduces the risk and frequency of collisions, and provides drivers with reduced stopping distance and increased time to respond. A 2018 [study](#) by the Canadian Journal of Civil Engineering found that the presence of reduced speed school zones dramatically improves safety outcomes for vulnerable road users and that, *“for every 1 km/h reduction in speed, fatal and injury crashes were reduced by about 4%, making this an effective intervention for children’s mobility.”*

REQUIRES VEHICLES TO PROVIDE 1-METRE OF DISTANCE WHEN PASSING CYCLISTS

What is it?

A significant number of collisions between vehicles and cyclists occur when a vehicle is attempting to pass someone. Ensuring a safe passing distance can significantly reduce the frequency and severity of collisions, especially among children and youth who may react differently on the roadway or require more space to ride. Enacting legislation that requires drivers to pass cyclists at 1-metre or more helps give young cyclists the space needed to avoid objects on the roadway, provides a greater feeling of comfort and safety, and reduces the risk of collision and injury.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Provincial governments can require a safe passing distance within the Highway Traffic Act or Motor Vehicles Act. Requiring this passing distance ensures it is part of driver education training and helps drive behavioural change so that it is common practice to provide a safe distance when passing cyclists. The results from a 2021 [study](#) demonstrated that drivers' overtaking distances were significantly greater in locations with a 1.5 metre (5 feet) passing law than in other areas. Requiring a safe passing distance can help reduce the risk for children and families on the school journey.

MANDATES DEMERITS FOR SPEEDING

What is it?

Speed enforcement programs are effective when frequently conducted and supported by significant consequences such as demerits on the driver's license. Many of the issues that can make the school journey unsafe are related to dangerous and risky driving practices. By legislating the requirement of fines and/or demerits to drivers who are operating vehicles in an unsafe manner, this can serve as a strong deterrent to those considering engaging in these types of driving behaviour.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Significant fines and license fees help ensure that individuals think about the impact of their risky driving behaviour upon their personal finances. The SWOV Institute for Road Safety Research [conducted a study in 2012](#) which did a meta-analysis of 24 effect measurements in various European and non-European countries and showed a decrease of 15-20% in the number of crashes, fatalities, and injuries after the adoption of a demerit points system.

In several Canadian communities (most notably the City of Edmonton) the revenues from these fines does not go towards general revenues but is instead directed towards a separate fund aimed at improving safety at school sites through the implantation of built environment improvements. In turn, these changes make many of these risky driving behaviours very difficult, thereby improving the safety and comfort of families on the school journey – no matter their mode of transportation.



REQUIRES DRIVERS TO STOP FOR A SCHOOL BUS

What is it?

While school bus travel is very safe, injuries and fatalities happen more often outside the school bus as students are boarding and leaving the bus or crossing the street.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Requiring drivers to stop for a school bus helps provide a safe embarking and disembarking zone for students and reduces the risk of collision. By not having vehicles passing school buses when their lights are flashing, this helps improve safety in the “danger zone” - the area 10 feet in front of the bus, 10 feet behind it and 10 feet to either side of it. This is the area where children are most likely to be struck -either by the school bus itself or by a passing vehicle, even though it is illegal for a vehicle to pass a bus with its red light flashing.

MANDATES DEMERITS FOR FAILING TO STOP FOR A SCHOOL BUS

What is it?

Many of the issues that make the school environment unsafe are related to dangerous driving practices. By legislating fines and demerits to drivers who fail to stop for a school bus, this can help to reduce these risky behaviours, and improve the safety of children as they embark and disembark the school bus.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Significant fines and license fees increase the chance that individuals consider the financial impacts of their driving behaviour. In several communities the revenues from speeding and other driving infractions directed to improving infrastructure design at school.

PROVINCIAL SUPPORT

DEDICATED PROVINCIAL STAFF MEMBER FOCUSED ON CHILDREN'S MOBILITY

What is it?

The unique needs of children are often omitted or overlooked from planning and research activities. The large number of departments with a role to play in children's transportation often results in no one taking ownership or accountability, leading to inaction in this realm. A dedicated staff person demonstrates a concerted effort to improve road safety conditions for this vulnerable road user group and supports efforts to meet the physical and developmental needs of children and youth.

How does it improve safe school travel?

A dedicated staff person can ensure that there are financial, staffing, and programming resources prioritized to support safe school travel. This also ensures a dedicated perspective and internal advocate within a government body that comments on government research, policy, and plans with a child focused lens. This ensures a framework that improves inputs and outcomes for children's mobility. Dedicated children's mobility staff are also likely to have more expertise and capacity than staff whose time is divided among many areas.



MORE THAN ONE PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT WORKS TO IMPROVE ACTIVE TRAVEL OUTCOMES

What is it?

Provincial policy, funding, and resources that focus on supporting youth often happen in silos. Coordinated efforts by multiple government departments such as Education, Transportation, and Health ensure improved physical activity and mobility outcomes in youth. To properly and fully support the variety of active school travel initiatives that can be undertaken, a cross section of expertise and resources is required.

How does it improve safe school travel?

These resources can provide capacity for ongoing school and community-based education programs, the development of supportive policies, legislation, and design standards, increased collaboration with various stakeholders on the development of safe infrastructure, behaviour change programs, and resource allocation.

Research in both Canada and the United States show that investments in Active and Safe Routes to School Programs result in an increase in active school travel.





CONTRIBUTED TOWARD PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

What is it?

Confidence in their child's ability to safely walk or cycle to school is often identified as a barrier for parents and caregivers to permit youth to do so. Incorporating cycling education in school is critical for students to develop safe riding practices and confidence in their own abilities. The most effective programs often occur as part of physical education classes and include riding in real world conditions in Canadian cities. Incorporating a take home component has also proven to be effective in enabling children to practice these skills in their community and reinforces these abilities for their family/guardians. This practice ensures that at both at school and at home - young people are getting the time and instruction needed to develop safe road ridings skills, as well as develop lifelong active travel habits.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Having a school-based cycling education program ensures that a broad cohort of children develop this skillset, and that parents, caregivers and children have confidence in their training and abilities to safely walk or cycle to and from school. These programs also contribute to a culture where walking and cycling to school is supported, encouraged, and becomes normalized.

A [2016 study](#) showed that parents felt more confident in their children's abilities, with 55% indicating that they would permit their child to participate in an organized bike to school program. Parent's behaviours and attitudes also changed as a result of the program, with 50% of parents identifying a positive change in attitudes after their child's involvement in the program.

FEDERAL FUNDING

ACCESSED ICIP FUNDING FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

What is it?

The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) is a \$33 Billion federal funding program that is intended to “help communities reduce air and water pollution, provide clean water, increase resilience to climate change and create a clean-growth economy; build strong, dynamic and inclusive communities; and ensure Canadian families have access to modern, reliable services that improve their quality of life.” These funds can only be accessed through bilateral agreements between Infrastructure Canada and each of the provinces and territories. Under the *Public Transit* stream, provinces and territories can apply for the funding of projects to design and build new pathways and active transportation infrastructure.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Installing new sidewalks, pathways, and cycling facilities provides safe, separated infrastructure for all road users. A 2019 study from the *Journal of Transport & Health* found that bicycling infrastructure is significantly associated with fewer fatalities and better road-safety outcomes.

BILATERAL ICIP AGREEMENT INCLUDES TARGETS TO INCREASE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION MODE SHARE

What is it?

As part of bilateral funding agreements under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, provinces and territories can commit to specific transportation mode and greenhouse gas emission targets.

How does it improve safe school travel?

By reducing the number of vehicles on the roadways through increased investment in public transit and active transportation, provinces are reducing the risk to families on the school journey while also reducing the amount of congestion and traffic delays. The [Centre for Disease Control and Prevention](#) found that the elimination of hazards is at the very top of the chart as the most effective control, followed by substitution. By reducing the number of vehicles on our roadways (elimination) and replacing those trips by travelling on foot or bicycle (substitution), roadways become both safer as well as less congested.

ACCESSED OTHER TYPES OF FEDERAL AT FUNDING (I.E. THE FCM GREEN MUNICIPAL FUND OR OTHER GRANT FUNDING PROGRAMS)

What is it?

Accessing federal funding programs and grant opportunities provides provincial governments with additional financial resources to support communities wanting to develop active transportation infrastructure. In addition to the ICIP funding program, the Canadian government also announced \$400 million over 5 years to fund Canada's first ever [Active Transportation Fund](#), recognizing that federal investments play a key role in the development of safe built environments for walking and cycling. These funds can be used for the construction of active transportation facilities, including pathways, bike lanes, trails, and pedestrian bridges, as well as support Active Transportation planning and stakeholder engagement activities.

Additionally, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities provides funding for active transportation projects through its [Green Municipal Fund](#). This matching funding program supports projects intended to, *"reduce the number of vehicles on the road, the number of kilometres they travel, or the amount of time they spend transporting people or goods, and also get people to use their vehicles more efficiently or switch to less polluting forms of transportation."*

How does it improve safe school travel?

By accessing as many funding programs as possible, financial resources for safe school travel infrastructure improvements become more likely. These funds can also serve to support Provincial and Territorial governments in adding safe school infrastructure to rural areas, where schools and community destinations can often be found alongside main highways where vehicle speeds can be quite high.



PROVINCIAL FUNDING

DEDICATED PROVINCIAL FUNDING FOR MUNICIPALITIES FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

What is it?

Over the past few years, several Canadian provinces and territories have begun adopting Active Transportation Strategies. As part of these strategies, funding has been made available to support municipal active transportation projects. By dedicating funding towards active transportation projects, provinces can improve road safety outcomes for all road users through the creation of separated walking and cycling infrastructure.

How does it improve safe school travel?

The Public Health Agency of Canada funded a study in 2014 which found that while municipalities are responsible for building most active transportation facilities, *“provinces and territories can also play a key role by offering grants or cost-sharing mechanisms that help shift local priorities and encourage investment.”* By funding improvements to walking and cycling facilities, provinces can expand existing pedestrian and cycling networks, improve crossings, and construct complete streets that research has shown to improve the safety of all road users. A portion of this funding can also be specifically allocated for the design and construction of safety improvements in school zones.

PROVIDED FUNDING TO SUPPORT AT NETWORK PLANNING

What is it?

A critical and necessary initial step in any infrastructure project is facility planning and design. By collecting comprehensive background data, effectively engaging with the community (including children and youth), utilizing current design guidance to inform functional or preliminary designs, and developing preliminary estimates, communities are able to develop pedestrian and cycling facilities that are reflective of local context and needs, and are then able to allocate future capital expenditures accordingly, greatly increasing the likelihood of these projects becoming reality.

How does it improve safe school travel?

By providing funding for active transportation network planning, Provinces can support the informed development of new or improved cycling and pedestrian amenities. When these new facilities (hopefully separated) facilities are installed in the vicinity of schools, they directly reduce the risk of collision and injury by separating vulnerable road users from moving vehicles.

DEDICATED ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

What is it?

Similar to investments in highways and roadways, Provinces provide dedicated funding for road safety improvements through the creation of separated infrastructure for vulnerable road users on foot and bicycle.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Funding for new pathways, sidewalks, and bike facilities helps to separate children and families from roadways and provides more opportunities to reduce the number of vehicles in the vicinity of schools through more people walking or cycling to and from school.

The World Resources Institute & Global Road Safety Facility concluded that a Safe System approach would provide basic road design changes to ensure that children are protected, and these efforts reduced child deaths from traffic crashes in South Korea by more than 95% between 1988 and 2012.

MATCHING PROVINCIAL FUNDING FOR MUNICIPAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

What is it?

Municipalities often face budgetary challenges due to restricted revenue generating capacity. As a result, limited transportation budgets are often primarily focused on building and maintaining vehicle roadways. With much greater capacity to generate revenue, provinces can greatly accelerate municipal efforts at planning and constructing safer streets by providing matching funding for projects that separate vulnerable road users from moving vehicles.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Having a matching provincial funding grant program to cover planning and infrastructure costs enables many communities to make improvements to the built environment that they otherwise would not be able to afford. Many communities apply for safety improvements near school sites, or for improvements to the safety of routes to school in the wider community. These funds often provide financial resources on sliding scales, providing an increased percentage of funding to smaller communities, including Indigenous communities that might not have the capacity to make these investments on their own.

PROVIDED FUNDING FOR CHILDREN'S MOBILITY PROGRAMS

What is it?

Children's mobility programs can include initiatives such as School Travel Planning (STP), school streets programs, walking and cycling education, events such as walk and bike to school month, bike rodeos, and grants to support encouragement activities.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Funding children's mobility programs improves road safety through increased education, removing vehicles from the immediate vicinity of schools through school streets programs, and encouraging more families to walk or bicycle to and from school, thereby removing the hazard of high vehicle volumes.

The [United Nations Child Health Initiative](#) found that "for every 286 children whose schools participate in a SARSAL (School Area Road Safety Assessments and Improvements) program, one road traffic injury is prevented annually." This children's mobility program has several interventions, including infrastructure improvements, road safety education programs, distribution of helmets, and supporting and encouraging the use of non-motorized modes of transport.

FUNDING FOR SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION (INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROGRAMMING)

What is it?

A main objective of the School Travel Planning process is to create an implementation plan to address the barriers to active school travel. Providing funding for successful implementation is critical to ensuring positive outcomes.

How does it improve safe school travel?

Most school travel plans include recommendations for safety improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure in the community where children and families travel, and the implementation of supportive programs that help with skill building and education – both essential elements of improving road safety.

The [Institute for Transportation & Development Policy](#) suggests that local governments should aim to allocate one third of their total spending on transport initiatives to non-motorized travel projects.

PROVINCIAL DATA

PUBLISHED DATA ON RATES OF ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL PROVINCE-WIDE

What is it?

At present, there are significant knowledge gaps in terms of how children and youth travel to school and other key destinations such as parks, stores, and recreation facilities. As provinces are responsible for transportation, health, and education, they have a prominent role and responsibility to collect this data regularly through a variety of approaches, including through health, education, and transportation surveys. To set transportation mode targets and goals around the trip to and from school, a critical first step is having a reliable measure of how students are currently traveling.



How does it improve safe school travel?

Knowing this data will support communities in considering children's travel modes when deciding where to build new schools, addressing areas where active school travel rates are low due to perceived safety risks, and developing programs that support a reduction in vehicles around schools.

In 2018, [BMC Public Health](#) found that interventions including both educational activities and infrastructure changes resulted in greater increases in AST than interventions using only one of these strategies. The study relied heavily upon data collection to determine the efficacy of various interventions, without which it would have been impossible to determine.

PROVINCIAL GOALS

ADOPTED GOAL TO INCREASE WALKING AND CYCLING MODE SHARES AT SCHOOLS

What is it?

Many provinces are looking for opportunities to improve children's health and well being, meet climate change goals, and improve safety outcomes for vulnerable road users. Setting goals and targets to increase active travel on the trip to school is a great way to achieve multiple objectives in the realms of health, climate action, and road safety.

In 2005, the City of Hamilton released a study that found setting transportation targets is important for a number of reasons, including:

"To provide direction on how transportation can become more sustainable, to set the general directions for infrastructure decisions and to identify what improvements may be required to achieve a desired future state for the transportation system; and To help identify future funding needs and priorities, especially the magnitude of investment needed to achieve a desired outcome."

How does it improve safe school travel?

A 2020 study by the City of St. John's shows that setting a target for how each mode will serve the overall transportation mix in a community and also implied that other capital and operational decisions will follow these targets. Setting goals and targets to increase active transportation mode share on the school journey helps to reduce the risk to all families by reducing the number of vehicles in the vicinity of the school at morning and afternoon peak travel times.



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