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Dear Janet:

Would you like to:

- reduce the number of vehicles around your school at drop-off & pick-up times;
- improve local air quality;
- create safer streets for young pedestrians and cyclists; and
- increase the level of physical activity and well-being of students?

If you answered yes to the above questions, then Clean Air & Safe Routes 4 Schools program would be a great fit for your school.

The Clean Air and Safe Routes 4 Schools program in the Central Okanagan is a combination of the tool kit "School Travel Plan (STP)" created by Green Communities Canada and the toolkit "Cleaner Air 4 Schools" developed by the City of London, England. The development of the School Travel Plan combined with the implementation of school programming has proven effective, in Canada as well as other parts of the world, at getting more children to walk and bike to school (thereby reducing traffic congestion at schools, improving air quality, decreasing climate change impacts, and improving students' physical fitness and mental well-being). An exciting project is underway to introduce School Travel Planning to all provinces and territories in Canada and Black Mountain Elementary has been selected as a potential candidate.

We are seeking motivated schools that are ready to tackle their traffic issues systematically and comprehensively and solve problems once and for all, using a collaborative approach that engages all relevant stakeholders. No more band-aid solutions. School Travel Planning deals with the root causes of school travel problems, be they attitudinal, infrastructural or otherwise. The school will receive the assistance of an STP Facilitator.

Only two schools will be chosen to participate for the 2017-2018 school year in the Central Okanagan so be sure to review the enclosed School Travel Planning Information Sheet soon to decide if you might be interested in participating.

We'll be glad to present the Clean Air and Safe Routes 4 School program to the school PAC at your convenience. If you have any questions in the meantime, please call or email me at any time or visit [Clean Air and Safe Routes 4 School](#) in the RDCO website for more information.

Sincerely,

Dave Gibson
School Travel Plan Facilitator
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School Travel Planning Information Sheet

School Travel Planning is a community-based approach that has been used with success to increase the number of children choosing active transportation modes to get to and from school.

What is School Travel Planning?

School Travel Planning addresses the issues of sustainability, safety and health associated with 'the school run' using a collaborative community-based approach. Key community stakeholders (school boards, municipalities, police/bylaw services, public health professionals, parents, educators and children) work together with an STP Facilitator to identify and solve their school transportation problems.

While the physical and attitudinal barriers to walking, cycling and other environmentally-friendly modes of travel are addressed, all aspects of how children travel to and from school are investigated and documented. A key emphasis is placed on determining the extent to which a community allows for the independent mobility of children. Each school writes a School Travel Plan which includes an Action Plan section describing steps they plan to implement such as:

- Introduction of school infrastructure—e.g. bike shelters, bike racks, lockers;
- Education—e.g. safety training for walking and cycling, awareness raising;
- Community mobilization—e.g. walking school busses, walking buddies, ride sharing;
- Encouragement—e.g. celebrations of physical activity and environment, event days, recognition and rewards for walking/biking; and
- Engineering improvements at or near school sites—e.g. pedestrian crossings, adult crossing guards, repairs and upgrades to sidewalks, signage.

Benefits of School Travel Planning

School Travel Planning aims to decrease the number of car trips and increase the number of children walking and cycling to and from school resulting in:

- Improved health, fitness and happiness of the students;
- Improved safety for all community residents;
- Reduced traffic congestion and less principal time spent dealing with traffic issues and complaints;
- Positive environmental impacts: reduced pollution, improved air quality, fewer greenhouse gas emissions that impact climate change; and
- Potential cost savings: opportunity for parents to reduce expenditures on gas, chance for school boards to reduce bussing costs (in cases where children are bussed due to safety, i.e. lack of sidewalks or need to cross a busy street, rather than distance), chance for schools to save staff time in the long term as recurrent safety issues are dealt with and parent complaints decline.

How does the School Travel Planning process work?

A dedicated School Travel Plan Facilitator leads schools and the wider community through five steps (which do not flow in a linear order, but often overlap, e.g. implementation usually begins before action planning is complete):

1. *Program Set-up* – A municipality is selected and a Municipal STP Steering Committee is established with representation from all key stakeholder groups; committed schools are chosen; a School STP Committee is established at each school comprised of school staff, parents, interested community members and students; project timeline is determined.
2. *Data Collection & Problem Identification* – Classroom Hands-up Survey, Family Survey, School Site Visit & Walkabout and Traffic/Pedestrian/Cyclist Count are conducted; collected data is analyzed; summary of issues is written.
3. *Action Planning* – School STP Committee designs an Action Plan for dealing with challenges identified and achieving stated goals (including initiatives, timeline and assignment of

responsibility for each task). STP Facilitator compiles the written School Travel Plan document that summarizes background information and outlines the detailed Action Plan.

4. *Implementation* – Action items are carried out.
5. *Ongoing Monitoring* – Follow-up data collection is done to evaluate progress toward goals. The plan is tweaked as necessary. A School Travel Plan is intended to be a living document that becomes part of school policy and is revisited and updated on a regular basis.

School Responsibilities

Schools are expected to contribute the following to the project:

- *Staff Time*: The principal and/or at least one teacher will participate in all School STP Committee meetings and may be asked to occasionally attend meetings of the Municipal STP Steering Committee (to discuss higher-level municipal concerns related to their school). Additional staff time will be needed during data collection and implementation of action items.
- *Parent Time*: Parents play a key role in School Travel Planning, e.g. as part of the School STP Committee, and as decision makers about travel choices.
- *Meeting Space*: The school will provide use of a room to hold School STP Committee meetings.
- *Enthusiasm and Commitment*: The success of School Travel Planning relies on school champions that lead the school's effort, setting a positive tone about the project for the rest of the school.

Student Time (optional): The STP process can benefit from having student representation on the School STP Committee. Some schools may also wish to use School Travel Planning as a learning opportunity, linking aspects of the process to the curriculum, e.g. having students administer and tabulate surveys as a math exercise or map out their community and routes as a geography exercise.

Support

Participating schools will enjoy the support of a dedicated School Travel Plan Facilitator who will guide the process – providing expertise, coordinating project activities, answering questions, liaising with community stakeholders, etc.

The STP Facilitator will organize the assembly of a Municipal STP Steering Committee made up of representatives from all key community stakeholder groups such as district school board, police, public health and transportation engineering. This Steering Committee will provide valuable expertise and resources to schools during all phases of the School Travel Planning process.

The STP Facilitator will link schools with any resource materials needed, e.g. sample school travel plan(s), data collection tools.

For more Information, please contact: Dave Gibson

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