



Let's work together to re-ignite a culture of walking and wheeling to school

The Problem

You've probably noticed...fewer students are walking/wheeling for the school journey

Across Canada, we are facing a modern-day challenge. Car culture is taking over and fewer kids are using active modes of transportation (i.e., walking, cycling, rollerblading, scooting) for their school journey. When students are driven to school instead of walking or wheeling, they miss the opportunity for much-needed physical activity, fresh air and quality interaction

with parents, caregivers and friends; and driving increases school zone congestion, which in turn makes conditions less safe for those who do walk or wheel, and adds to air pollution. Also, school staff frequently waste valuable time dealing with traffic issues and complaints.

A Solution

School Travel Planning is a proven approach for addressing this problem

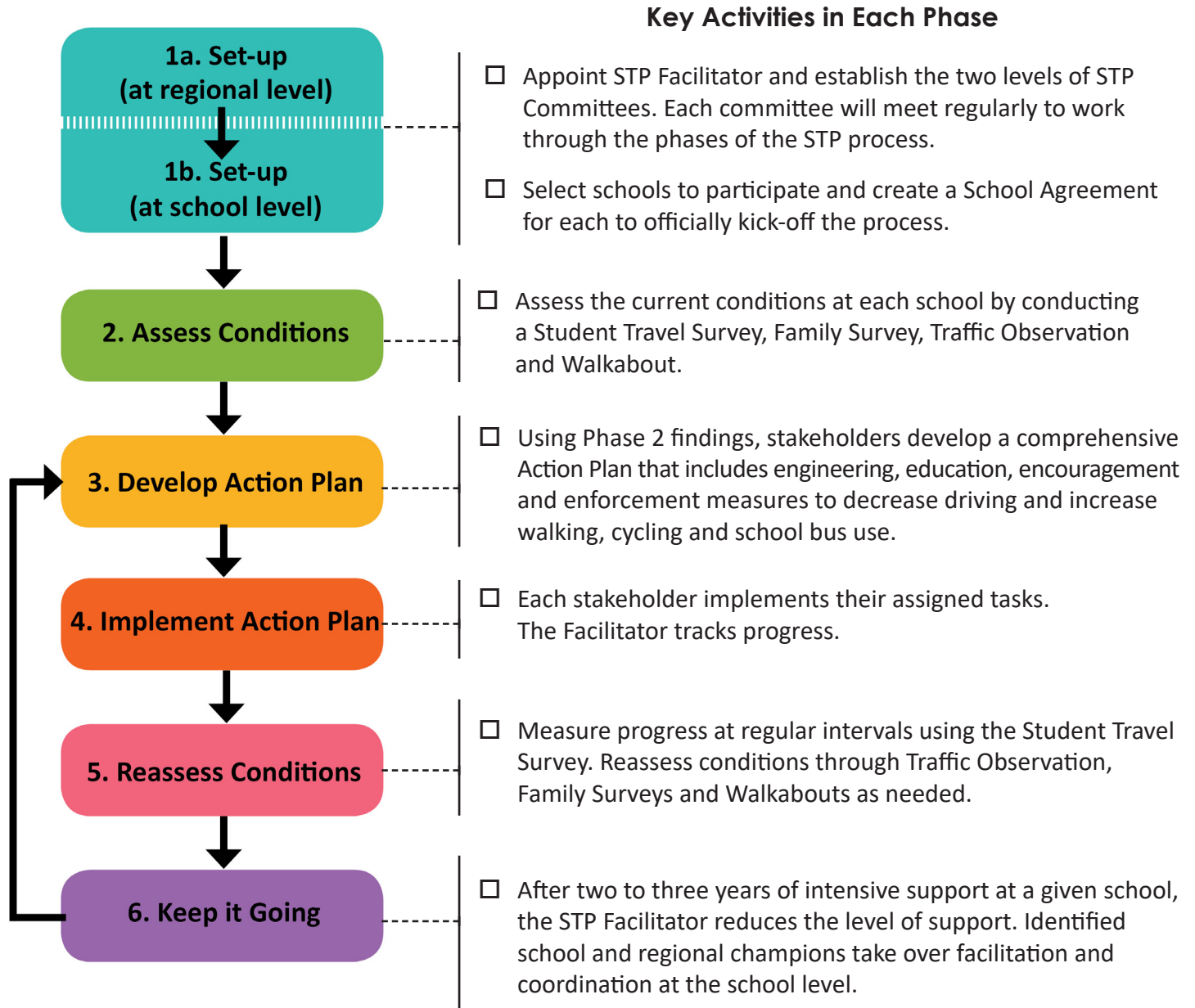
School Travel Planning (STP) is a process that involves diverse stakeholders at the school and regional levels in the development and implementation of a

comprehensive plan to get more students using active transportation. To date, individual STP schools have experienced shifts toward active travel of over 20%!

How it Works

The STP Process

School Travel Planning flows through a six-phase process (see diagram below) over an initial period of two to three years. The process is guided and supported by an STP Facilitator who brings everyone together, coordinates activities, and uses the **STP Toolkit** to compile a School Travel Plan.

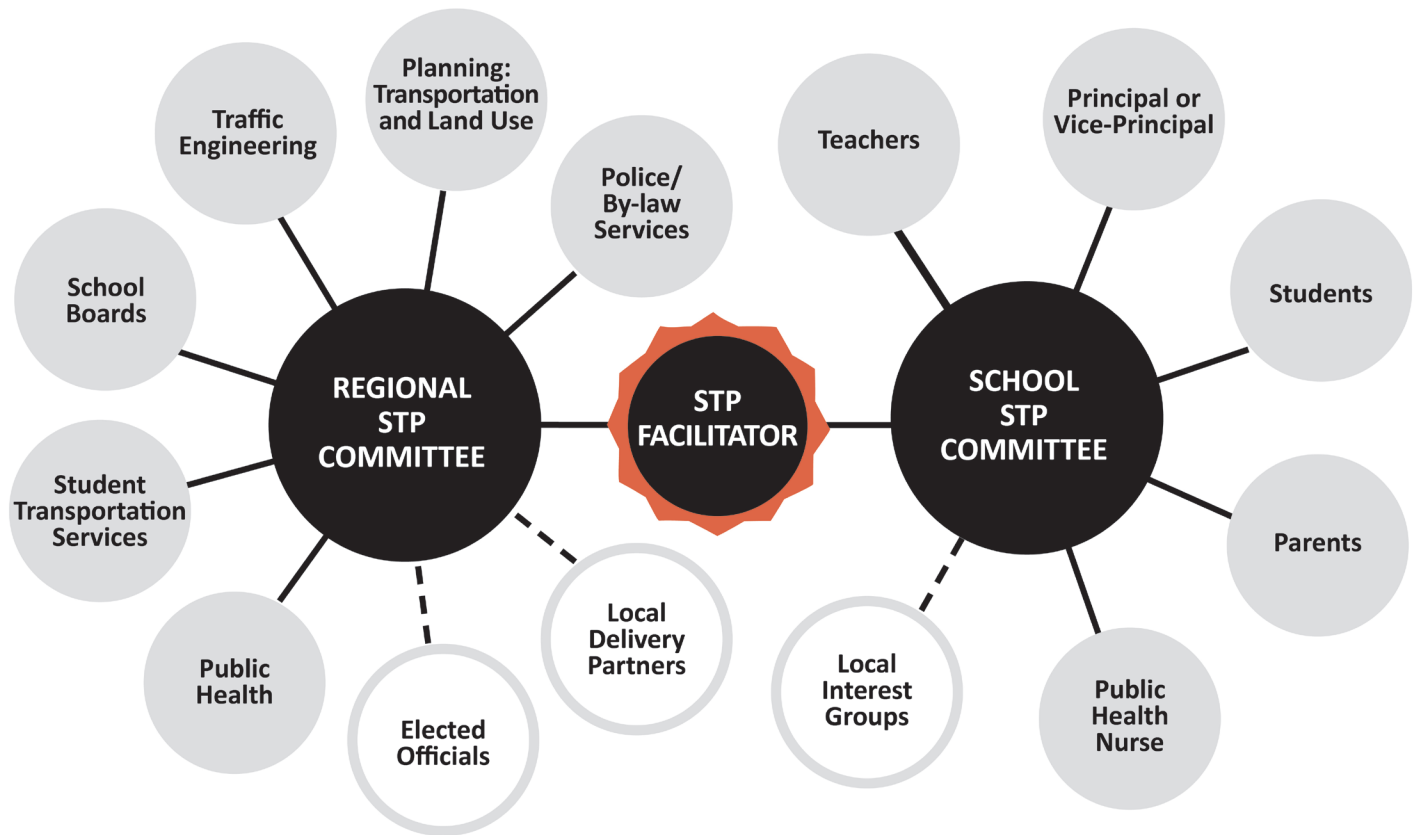


Examples of STP Actions Schools Have Implemented Include:

- Classroom learning activities about active transportation
- Improved signage and crosswalks
- New bike racks and cycling skills training
- Walking and cycling route maps
- Park and walk campaigns
- Fun walking events
- Ticketing campaigns
- Traffic-calming in school zones
- Winter maintenance of active travel routes

Who is Involved

It takes a diverse group of community-wide stakeholders to solve the problems related to traffic congestion at/near schools, and change families' travel habits. Schools cannot do this on their own. One of the keys to STP success is involvement of stakeholders at both the school and regional/municipal levels. This is accomplished through establishing two STP committees, as shown below.



The diagram above shows the key stakeholders for each committee in solid grey circles. The stakeholders shown in white circles are helpful but not essential. The exact stakeholders that are essential will vary by community, e.g., not all schools have an assigned public health nurse.

Two Levels of Committees

Regional STP Committee: A steering committee is established at the regional or municipal level, depending on the make-up of local government and how the school boards are organized in the area. This committee is referred to as the Regional STP Committee in the STP toolkit but the actual name used may differ by community. It is a high-level group of stakeholders that contributes to the STP process for multiple schools within a geographic region. It may be set up as a standalone committee or as part of an existing group responsible for active transportation and/or traffic safety.

School STP Committee: One School STP Committee is established per school. This committee meets regularly throughout school year to help with goal setting, data collection, and action planning and implementation. Sometimes this committee is set up as part of an existing health or environmental committee within a school. A group of neighbouring schools can work together to coordinate strategies and save time.

So Many Benefits!



Healthier Children

- Active school travel helps school-aged children meet the recommendation to accumulate at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, which is associated with improved physical and mental health.



Safer School Zones

- Reducing traffic volumes creates safer school zones and saves school staff time. Improving walking and cycling routes to school also enhances the safety, connectivity, and quality of life for the community as a whole.



Less Traffic and Pollution

- Reducing the number of children being driven to school reduces greenhouse gas emissions and particulate air pollution around the school; this improves air quality and reduces associated risks of lung and cardiovascular diseases.



Better Academic Performance

- Increased physical activity specifically associated with the school journey increases alertness and attention during the school day.
- Physical activity supports healthy brain development, which can lead to improved learning and academic outcomes.

Positive Feedback

"I feel proud of the work we accomplished. Families were eager to change their habits and my students ended the year with a sense of pride and a greater understanding of what it really means to be healthy and environmentally friendly...I have also noticed less traffic out my window this year. I think our message brought positive change to our community."

Elizabeth Kim, grade 4/5 teacher



Get Started Now

For more information about School Travel Planning, visit www.ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/school-travel-planning.