



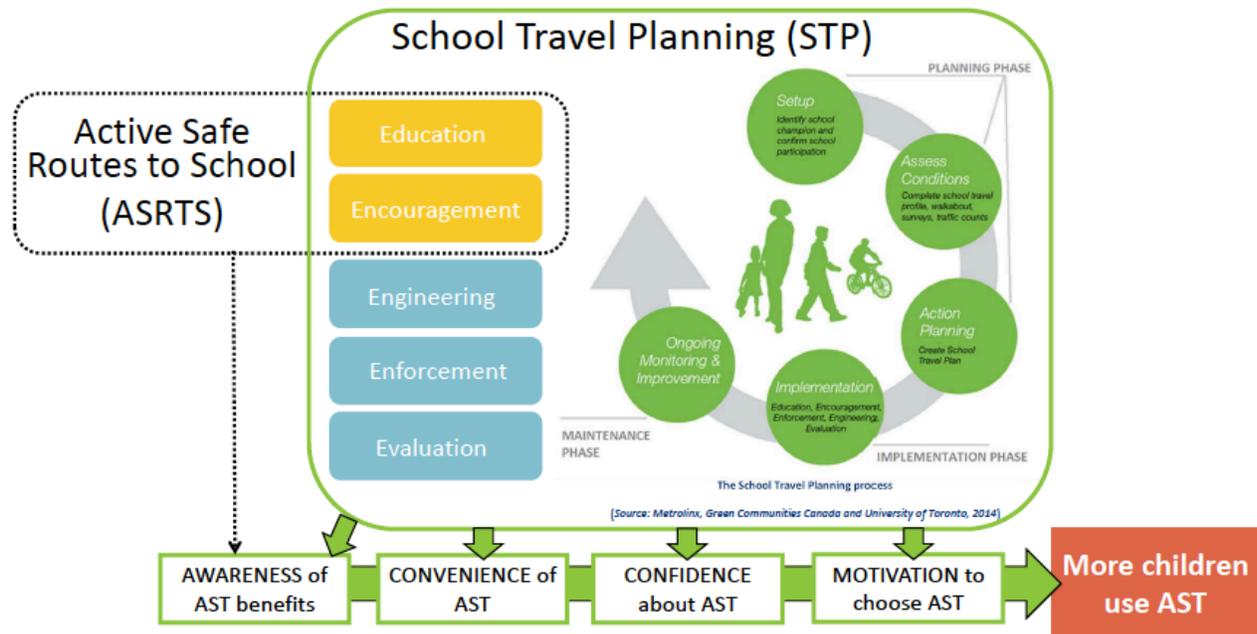
Banff Elementary - School Travel Plan Executive Summary

In October 2017 the Community Cruisers entered into a contract with the Town of Banff to conduct a School Travel Planning project for Banff Elementary School.

Across Canada, rates of walking and cycling to school have reached all time lows, as it has become the norm for parents to drive their children to school. This contributes to low levels of physical activity for students, lack of independent mobility, poor local air quality and traffic congestion in the immediate vicinity of the school that often leads to unsafe conditions for those not in a vehicle.

Using the Canada Walks tried and tested School Travel Planning model, data was collected from classroom surveys, family surveys, traffic observations/counts and a walkabout of the school neighbourhood. The wealth of data collected allowed us to develop a detailed and extensive action plan to improve the active school journey.

Active School Travel (AST)





A Municipal Stakeholder Committee was formed at the outset of the project, to involve various decision makers that can work together on education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement, and evaluation activities that will address active school travel issues and improve the journey to school. The committee includes the school principal and a parent volunteer, the facilities consultant for Canadian Rockies Public School, municipal staff from the planning, recreation and bylaw departments and by-law, representatives from the Bow Valley Primary Care Network, and the RCMP. The committee is chaired by the School Travel Planning Facilitator, provided by the Community Cruisers.

The classroom survey revealed that in December 2017, 32% of students walked to school, 4% walked part way, 2% cycled, 2% took public transit, 26% were bussed and 33% were driven to school. The top three reasons cited by parents for driving their children to school were:

- Parents were on their way somewhere else (e.g. to work)
- Convenience/time pressures
- Distance from home was considered too far

Fifty-four per cent of respondents to the family survey indicated they would allow their child to walk to school if they did not walk alone.

When parents were asked what the main concerns were for allowing their children to walk or wheel to school the most pressing issues were:

- Driver behaviour – failing to stop and yield to those walking and wheeling at crosswalks, stop signs and traffic lights; speeding; distracted driving (85 comments)
- Lack of infrastructure – lack of sidewalks; lack of connectivity of sidewalks and trails connecting from neighbourhoods to the school; lack of bike lanes; challenging intersections

Based on all the data collected, the stakeholder committee created an ambitious nine-page action plan to address the barriers to active school travel. From the action plan, the following are priorities that if acted upon, could have a substantive impact on improving rates of active school travel to Banff Elementary School:



1. Complete a key walking/cycle route to school by connecting the trail that ends at the canoe docks to the school, along Wolf St. (Engineering)
2. Temporarily exclude vehicle drop-off/pick-up and car parking from street sections around the school. (Engineering)
3. Reduce speeds on residential roads to 30 kph (Engineering/Education/Encouragement/Enforcement)
4. Walking School Bus and/or Walking Buddies program (Encouragement)
5. On-going provision of messaging to parents and students about the benefits of active school travel (Education)
6. Law enforcement blitz to modify driver behaviour (Enforcement/Education)
7. Use bikewalkroll.org to regularly measure how students travel to and from school (Evaluation)

With the set-up, assessment and action planning phases of this project now complete, the next step is to begin to implementation of the action plan. Some of the action items are short-term in duration and can be implemented in the near future while others are long-term and requiring municipal approval, policy creation or changes and budget commitment. The final phase of school travel planning is the maintenance phase of on-going evaluation on a regular basis by repeating the data collection and monitoring for improvement, modifying the action plan as necessary.