



Active School Travel & School Street Test Programs

April 11, 2022
Development Services Committee



Background

- The proportion of students driven to school in the GTHA has increased from 15% in 1986 to 34% in 2016.
- York Region has the highest school driving rates in GTHA
- Student and traffic safety concerns at many elementary schools
- Greater effort is needed to encourage students to walk or cycle to/from schools in Markham



Typical Traffic Issues at Public Schools



Disrupted school bus access



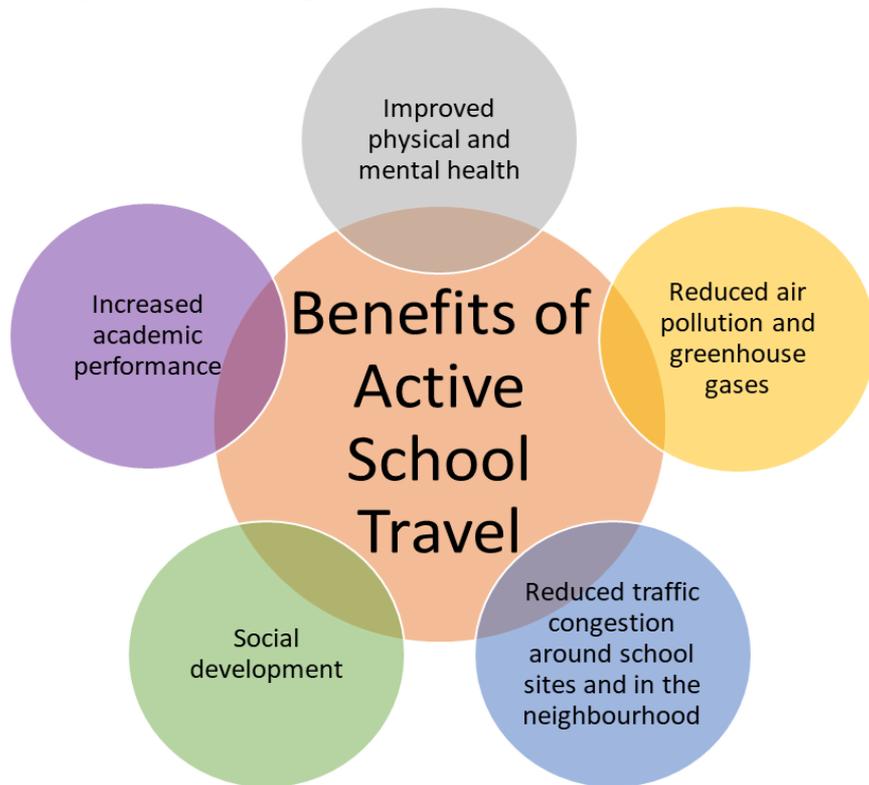
Traffic congestion and chaotic traffic flow





Active School Travel

- Originated from injury prevention efforts from public health agencies
- Introduced to support students walking, cycling and scootering to and from school
- Also to address issues of increasing driving rates on public health
- Benefits are holistic to the local community





Active School Travel Program in Markham

- Initiated in 2018 by York Region District School Board, in partnership with the York Catholic District School Board, York Region, and City of Markham.
- Funded by Green Communities Canada, the program ran from May 2019 to June 2021, at 9 Markham elementary schools.

Initiatives included:

- Pedestrian wayfinding signage
- Traffic and pedestrian safety enhancements
- Sidewalk stencils
- Parent connection (group walking)
- Marketing and outreach
- School classroom competitions





Active School Travel Program in Markham



What are School Streets?

- Temporary, full road closure of the streets in front of schools during peak drop-off and pick-up times to create car-free zones
- Originated in UK and recently piloted in Toronto, Ottawa and Kingston
- Benefits:
 - Reduces traffic congestion and car access around schools
 - Improves air quality
 - Promotes physical activity and healthier lifestyles
 - Fosters community connections
 - Facilitates active independent mobility





School Street Test Proposed at John McCrae P.S.

- Funded by a Green Communities Canada grant to the school boards for AST initiatives
- “Proof of Concept” test on a quiet street to understand how it could impact AST in a suburban context
- Stricker Avenue (Hammersly to Fred McLaren) will be closed between 8:15am – 9:15am; 3pm – 4pm; on Wednesdays, May 4, 11, 18, 25)
- A traffic control plan has been prepared:
 - Vehicular access permitted only for 15 homeowners, school buses/staff and emergency & service vehicles
 - Closure at either end will be operated by a qualified contractor
- Traffic and vehicle emissions monitoring will occur during the pilot



Major Mackenzie		Highway 48
 McCowan Bur Oak		
	KEY MAP	

Closure Times

AM: 8:15 – 9:15
 PM: 3:00 – 4:00
 May 4 ,11, 18, 25

John McCrae PS
 School Streets Closure


 Engineering Dept.
 April 2022



John McCrae P.S. School Street - Consultation

- Stakeholders involved in development of pilot:
 - John McCrae P.S. principal, staff and parents
 - York Regional Police
 - City Operations and Corporate Communications departments
 - Cycling and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (CPAC)
 - Ward 6 Councillor
- Comprehensive consultation and communications plan for the pilot has been developed
 - Information letters to local community, school parents
 - Road-side mobile signs
 - Social media marketing and website (www.Markham.ca/schoolstreets)
 - Before and after surveys



Report Recommendations

- That the staff report titled “Active School Travel & School Street Test Programs” be received; and,
- That the School Street Test Program be approved and, as part of this pilot, the temporary, full road closure of Stricker Avenue between Hammersly Boulevard and Fred McLaren Boulevard be approved; and
- That the City contributes \$3,500 from project #21025 (Cycling & Pedestrian Advisory Committee) to the School Street Test Program; and
- That staff report back on expanding the Active School Travel Program beyond this pilot;