Part 2: ASST Action Toolkit for Parents

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Part 2: ASST Action Toolkit for Parents

Introduction

Active & Sustainable School Travel (ASST) emphasizes the importance of walking, wheeling, and busing. More students using ASST means less cars on the road, less pollution, improved safety, and increased physical activity.

The City of Hamilton, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), and Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB) are committed to ASST as shown in the signed 2015 ASST charters: HWDSB ASST Charter and HWCDSB ASST Charter. The ASST Charter goal is to promote a safe, healthy, and sustainable communities where everyone can use active and sustainable travel modes. A key initiative under the ASST Charter is School Travel Planning.

School Travel Planning (STP) is a 5-step, community-based approach that aims to increase ASST and to reduce car travel to and from school. Key community stakeholders (school boards, municipalities, police, public health professionals, parents/guardians, administrators, educators, and children) work together to identify and to solve their school transportation needs.

The ASST Action Toolkit for Parents is designed for parents, students, or community members to learn more about how they can make their school communities walking and wheeling friendly. While many of the actions are collaborative, this toolkit was created because you have the power to influence change. Through the STP process (Figure 1), the toolkit is used to help you increase education and awareness about ASST, improve pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, and influence ASST supportive policy. The toolkit is designed to help you act.

How to Use This Toolkit

This Toolkit is made up of actions that are divided into three key themes: advocacy, infrastructure, and awareness. Each theme has several actions for you to consider. We do not expect any one person to do every action, but rather that you will choose to implement the actions that are important to you and your goals for ASST in your
community. **Integrate the toolkit actions into your action plan developed through the STP process.**

**Table 1: ASST Actions Categorized by Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Common Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Advocacy     | 1) Get involved in your child’s School Council  
2) Volunteer with a Local Organization addressing the built environment  
3) Enlist the help of your School Board Trustee or City Councillor | • Improve school and neighbourhood design  
• Influence policies and programs |
| Infrastructure | 1) Request City Street Improvements  
2) Request Signs and Lines on School Property  
3) Add Bike Parking at your school | • Improve school and neighbourhood design |
| Awareness    | 1) Organize a walk or bike to school group  
2) Add ASST information to your school’s newsletter  
3) Host an event at your school  
4) Create “Slow-Down” signage with Students  
5) Become an Ontario EcoSchool  
6) Bring the Fresh Air for Kids Program or Ride Smart Program to your school | • Promote ASST activities and education in your community  
• Practice ASST through walking and wheeling  
• Encourage community safety |

When going through the actions, each page includes a short description of what it is and how it relates to ASST.
- The “Before You Take Action” section highlights some things you should know before deciding to implement the action.
- The “Take Action” section outlines the key steps you need to take to implement the action.
- Many of the pages incorporate links to resources or useful information. Some of the pages also include blue boxes with a toolkit graphic — this indicates that there are specific resources for you to reference to implement the action. The additional resource material can be found at the end of the document following the action ideas pages.

**Tips for Success**

The following sections are here to help you make the most impact when acting.
Engagement Tips

We encourage you to get others involved in your ASST actions. Whether it is advocating, planning and event, or submitting reviews for safety about your neighbourhood streets, more people asking for the same thing is louder, and can be more effective than trying to accomplish something on your own.

Some other people you may want to engage in your actions are parents. Below is a list tips to help you get parents involved in your actions:

- Give parents flexible options to get involved in your actions (e.g., Do they have to physically be somewhere to support the action, or can they be helping over phone or email?)
- The easiest place to connect to parents who may be interested in your action is at the school! Hang around in the morning or after school and talk to other parents in school yard and tell them about your ideas. You can do the same by attending school events.
- Most parents know about the benefits to ASST, but do not participate because it is difficult to fit into their routine. Share your story and the strategies you’ve implemented to practice ASST with your children without causing guilt!
- If facts and figures do not resonate with parents, try pulling at their heart strings. Talk about the safety risks, pollution, and environmental risks related with car travel. Below are some messages you can use:
  - ASST can fit any lifestyle! There are lots of ways that you can participate, like walking or biking to school once a week, parking and walking block to the school, or taking transit together! Every small step can make a difference.
  - You do not need to always practice active transportation to support active transportation! The toolkit has actions for you to help your school community become more ASST friendly for you and other families in your community travelling to and from school, and beyond.
  - Less cars on the road lead to safer streets, and safer kids. We have all witnessed a close call in on school property. Walking and wheeling to school with your children teaches them safety skills that they will practice for life.
  - Children in Hamilton are not receiving the amount of physical activity that they need to be healthy. If more people walked, biked, or walked a block to the school, children would be happier and healthier!
  - The City of Hamilton has declared a climate emergency. Schools are the second biggest car trip generator in the morning commute, which results in higher greenhouse gas emissions. By using sustainable modes like transit, wheeling, or walking, you can support a cleaner environment for your family
- Respect another parents’ decision to not participate in ASST.

Key Contacts

As you may have noticed by now, creating a culture towards active school travel cannot happen alone! Below are a list of key people and groups you may need to contact to
help implement actions, and how to reach them. **Start with the ASST – School Travel Planning Team.**

**ASST – School Travel Planning Team**

Information about School Travel Planning can be found at [https://smartcommute.ca/hamilton/schools/school-travel-plan/](https://smartcommute.ca/hamilton/schools/school-travel-plan/)

### Table 2: ASST – School Travel Planning Team Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools East of James St./Upper James St.</th>
<th>Schools West of James St. Upper James St.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Kelly.Scott@Hamilton.ca">Kelly.Scott@Hamilton.ca</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Amal.Osman@Hamilton.ca">Amal.Osman@Hamilton.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>905-546-2424 ext. 1309</td>
<td>905-546-2424 ext. 7153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School Council**

To find the contact information for your school's council, follow the steps outlined in Table 3 below.

### Table 3: How to Find School Councils' Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For HWDSB Schools</th>
<th>For HWCDSB Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The school board website has a web page dedicated to School Councils with additional background and resources.</td>
<td>- Go to the school board's website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To contact your child's School Council, you will need to submit a membership form. The form can be found on the left of the page, by clicking the &quot;Membership Submission&quot; tab.</td>
<td>- Select your child's school under the &quot;Schools&quot; tab.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Once you are on your child's school's web page, click on the &quot;School&quot; tab again, and select &quot;Catholic School Council&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- On this page, some School Council's will have contact information for parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- If there is no contact information, call your child's school to ask for more information, or ask at reception the next time you go in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School Principal**

To find the contact information for your school’s principal, please follow the steps outlined in Table 4 below.

### Table 4: How to Find School Principal’s Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For HWDSB Schools</th>
<th>For HWCDSB Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Your school's/principal’s contact information can be found by clicking on your child's school in the School Board's online list of elementary schools or list of high-schools.</td>
<td>- Go to the school board's website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Select your child's school under the &quot;Schools&quot; tab.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For HWDSB Schools
- On the top of school’s web page beside the search bar, click the “Contact” button.
- Some school contact pages are more thorough than others. The school phone number will be there, and so might be the principal’s email.

For HWCDSB Schools
- Once you are on your child’s school’s web page, click on the “About” tab, and select “Contact”
- Some school contact pages are more thorough than others. The school phone number will be there, and so might be the school’s general email.

School Board Trustee
First, identify what Ward you live in by typing in the address of your child’s school into the map pop-up on the City’s website. Trustees represent one or more Wards, and the various schools within that Ward. Next, you will need to find the contact information of your School Board Trustee. Follow the steps in Table 5 below based on your child’s School Board.

Table 5: How to find School Board Trustee Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For HWDSB Schools</th>
<th>For HWCDSB Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Check out the online directory of the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board’s Trustees.  
• Scroll through the page to find your School Board Trustee by Ward and use their contact information to get in touch with them. | • The Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board has a list of their School Board Trustees at the bottom of the Trustees and Committees page of their website.  
• Scroll down the page to find your School Board Trustee by Ward or by school and use their contact information to get in touch with them. |

Funding Resources
Some actions related to promoting walking and wheeling may have costs associated with them (e.g., events, bike racks, signs). School Councils do have a budget for parent engagement and events, but if your action has not been budgeted for, or is more than the $500 they have, then you will need to consider other resources. Some other funding available and fundraising ideas are outlined below.

Ward Funding
Ward funding can be accessed through your City Councillor’s office. Each Councillor has a budget to do projects within their Ward Boundary. To access the funding, you will need to schedule a meeting with your Councillor to discuss what you would like to see happen and see if it fits within their budget.

Finding your City Councillor
First, identify what Ward you live in by typing in your address into the map pop-up on the City’s website. Once you know which Ward you live in, click on the name of your
City Councillor on the online councillor directory, and you will find all their contact information including phone, address, and email.

Neighbourhood/Community Association Funding
Some neighbourhood/community associations may be able to support or co-sponsor events if they have funding available. Search online or talk to friends and family to find out if your neighbourhood has a community organization.

Parents Reaching Out Grants
Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants are offered by the Ontario Ministry of Education and are valued at up to $1000. The PRO Grant specifically supports School Councils who are trying to help more parents get involved in their child’s success at the school. To learn more about the grants, check out the Ministry of Education’s Flyer promoting the grant.

Other Provincial Parent Engagement Funding
The Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (Ontario), Federation of Home and School Associations, Parents Partenaires en éducation, and People for Education receive annual funding to enhance parent involvement. Depending on the school, you may be able to apply for funding from one or more of these groups!

Remember you don’t need to go it alone. Although the ASST-Parent Engagement Strategy & Action Toolkit are designed to increase parental ownership regarding school travel, the STP process and STP Team are in place to help.

ASST Action Ideas & Supporting Resources

Whatever stage of School Travel Planning you are at, the Action Ideas & Supporting Resources will help you create an effective and engaging action plan to help facilitate a measurable increase in walking and wheeling.

Get started now: Explore the ideas presented below to select the actions that best suit your school community. Remember if these action pages spark new and innovative ideas at your school, be sure to share by emailing Kelly.Scott@Hamilton.ca.
Volunteer with a Community Organization Related to Active and Sustainable School Travel

There are many groups working on projects related to active and sustainable school travel. By volunteering with other groups, you can be more involved in these projects, and expand your network for potential partnerships for later!

Before You Take Action

Take some time and reflect on what aspect of active and sustainable school travel you are most passionate about, and how you want to contribute. Some questions to consider include:

- What skills do you have to offer to an organization?
- How often do you want to volunteer? i.e. Monthly, weekly, occasionally, etc.
- What experience do you want to gain from volunteering? i.e. Doing hands-on work, meeting to discuss strategies, planning events, etc.

If you do not have a lot of time to volunteer, there are likely other ways you can support local groups doing active and sustainable transportation work. Check out the list of local organizations (Appendix A) and see if you can become a member, subscribe to e-newsletter, donate or follow them on social media!

Take Action!

Review the list of active and sustainable school travel-related organizations and look through their websites, programs, and mandates.

Once you see something that you may be interested in, contact them and let them know you’re interested in volunteering! You can either be specific about what program or event you would like to volunteer for or let them know what you care about and ask how you can help!

A list of organizations you may consider volunteering with or joining, as well as a list of neighbourhood groups that you can get involved with can be found in Appendix A!
Get involved in your child’s School Council

Each school in Hamilton has a School Council/Catholic School Council for parents to share ideas, concerns, and work together to give students the best possible school experience. Joining your child’s School Council will give you the chance to meet other parents, share your concerns about active and sustainable school travel, and talk about how you can work together to make walking and rolling a safer option to get your child to school.

Before You Get Started
School Councils meet about once a month at the school. To get involved, you can do one of three things:

1. Attend a meeting and listen
2. Ask to present an idea or issue at a meeting
3. Join the Council as a member

More information on the role of School Councils can be found on the HWDSB website and HWCDSB website.

Take Action!
To learn more about getting involved in any of the three ways above, you will need to contact your School Council. Instructions on how to do this can be found in the “Key Contacts” section of the toolkit.

Anyone can attend a School Council meeting to listen and learn more. To present an idea or share an issue at a meeting, you will need to ask to be added to the meeting agenda (the list of topics they are planning to discuss at the meeting).

To formally join the Council and vote on things that come up at meetings, you will need to be elected to the Council. Elections for School Councils happen within the first 30 calendar days of the school year. You can find out more about elections from your school’s principal.

A sample presentation about ASST can be use for a meeting discussion (Appendix B).
ADVOCACY

Speak with your City Councillor

Your City Councillor is to represent the interests of the people who live, work, and play in their Ward, or the section of the City that they govern. City Councillors have an influence over the decisions made in the City through meetings with staff, City Council, and committees by advocating for your interests.

Before You Get Started
Think about what you want to ask your Councillor to do, and how you can get them to agree with your point of view.

There are a few ways that you can speak with your City Councillor. In order of most impactful to least impactful:

1. Meet with your City Councillor by requesting a meeting
2. Call and ask to speak to your City Councillor
3. Email or send a letter to your City Councillor

Take Action!
First, you will need to find out who your City Councillor is and find their contact information.

It is the City Councillor’s job to meet with community members and listen to their concerns. Use the email template (Appendix C) as a guide for whatever conversation you want to have with your Councillor.

Advocating to your City Councillor, or anyone else, takes time. It is often an on-going conversation and will depend on what you are asking for.

If you think other parents, community members, businesses or students would be interested in what you are advocating for, consider teaming up with others to build critical mass for your cause.

An email template, which you can use for contacting your City Councillor, featuring prompts and talking points may be found in Appendix C!
Speak with your School Board Trustee

School Board Trustees are elected officials that are responsible for student achievement, community engagement, and fulfilling the education policies of the provincial government. Part of their job includes consulting with parents in their community. School Board Trustees have an influence on the School Board’s strategy, policy development and implementation, and overseeing the School Board's budget.

Before You Get Started
The HWDSB and HWCDSB each signed an ASST Charter. Some things that you can discuss with your Trustee include:

- The School Board’s commitment to the ASST Charter
- School infrastructure and safety
- Staff resources
- Funding for projects at the school

Take Action!
Similarly to City Councillors, your School Board Trustee will represent the Ward that you live in. You can find your School Board Trustee’s contact information in the “Key Contacts” above.

Using the actions in the HWDSB/HWCDSB ASST Charter for reference, think about what you want to ask your Trustee to do, and how you can get them to agree with your point of view.

Keep in mind that while Trustees have a responsibility to consult with parents, it is not their full-time job, and they do so while balancing other commitments. Be mindful of their availability, and do not lose hope if action takes time!

An email template you can use for contacting your School Board Trustee, featuring prompts and talking points can be found in Appendix D!
Request a School Zone Review to Assess Street Design to Improve Safety

Are you concerned for your child’s safety when walking or biking to school because of traffic? You can try to influence traffic safety in your child’s school neighbourhood through the School Travel Plan process. Note – this is not for signs on school property!

Before You Get Started

Think about how you want to make your school’s neighbourhood safer for your child and other students who want to walk or bike. By requesting a review of a street or intersection, you can ask for any of the following:

- New traffic signs
- Pavement markings
- Crosswalks
- Speed limit changes
- Dynamic speed signs
- Other safety improvements

Take Action!

Ensure this recommendation is captured in your action plan for your STP. Have periodic meetings with the School Travel Planning Team to ensure this action is addressed.

The information you will need to provide on your STP action plan includes

1. A description of the location (either a street name or intersection name);
2. A summary of the nature and reason(s) of your concern(s) (for example, excessive speeds, your child’s safety, limited visibility, etc.);
3. The time of day that the problem(s) happens most; and
4. The type of infrastructure that you are requesting to address your concern(s).

If possible, take photos to document your concern and attach them to your STP!
Add Bike Parking on School Property

Is there a lack of bike parking at your child’s school? If you have a School Travel Plan, you may be eligible for some seed funding to help with the cost!

Before You Get Started

It is recommended that you connect with your School Council and/or principal before implementing this action.

Schools may apply for the one-time Bike Rack Seed Funding of up to $600 from the City of Hamilton. Schools must (1) have completed Step-3 of STP, (2) read and agreed to the requirements, and (3) completed the application form. Schools may require additional funds for this project. You may need to investigate potential fundraising opportunities or to request funds from the School Council’s budget.

Take Action!

1. First, consider where it makes sense to put a bike rack at the school. Through the application process, a City of Hamilton staff will visit the school to complete a site assessment.
2. Get a quote on what it would cost to order a bike rack based on where it would be installed. To get an accurate quote, try to find the cost of the rack, potential delivery costs, and taxes. Try to do this for 2-4 bike rack options/suppliers.
3. Report back to your principal/School Council and select which bike rack best fits your needs and your budget. You should also discuss where the remaining funding will come from (the School's budget, School Council Budget, fundraising, or corporate sponsorship).
4. Bike rack installed – celebrate and use!
INFRASTRUCTURE

Request Additional Signs and Lines on School Property

If you would like signs to address parking, idling, and other traffic concerns on school property, you will need to go through your school and school board.

Before You Get Started
Think about what safety concern you want to address, and what type of infrastructure change would best address your concern. Some examples include stop signs or anti-idling signs, changing traffic flow, adding crosswalks, or eliminating or distancing vehicle drop-off locations.

Take Action!
First, you should propose the idea to the school’s principal. You can get in touch with them by calling the school and requesting to speak to the principal. See the “Key Contacts” section of the toolkit to find this information.

The principal may require School Board permission to address your concern. This type of action may require additional time to complete.

Continue to follow progress about this action through regular STP meetings or addressing the issue during School Council meetings.

The process to take action above has been adapted from the HWDSB (Appendix E) and HWCDSB (Appendix F) Guides to Address Parent Concerns.
Organize a Walk or Bike to School Group for Children Going to You Child’s School

Are you interested in having your child walk or bike to school, but cannot commit the time to walk them to or from school every day? Consider organizing a “walking school bus” or “bicycle train”. A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults, and a bicycle train is the same idea, but everyone is on a bike. This can also apply for getting students to the bus stop.

Before You Get Started
Organizing a group can be as structured as you want it to be - an agreement with your neighbours to take turns walking the children to school at a specific time, or a clear meeting point with a regularly rotating schedule of parents and/or other volunteers (older siblings, grandparents, etc.) who are responsible for walking the children to and from school.

This action does not need to be big or complicated. Try starting with a small group, and/or trying to walk or bike together once a week. It may also help to start by reaching out to the parents of your child’s friends in the neighbourhood and other people you already know.

Take Action!
First, invite families who live close to you to walk or bike together.

Next, pick a route and take a test journey together. To help you pick a route that you are all comfortable with, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is there room to walk or bike? Are there clear sidewalks or paths?
- Is it easy to cross the street? Is there too much traffic?
- Do drivers behave well? Are they yielding to walkers/cyclists and obeying the speed limit?
- Does the route feel safe? Are there loose dogs around?

Once you’ve determined a route, decide how often the group will travel together and when/where to meet each other. Then start walking or biking to school!

This is a great opportunity to teach your children about street safety. Check out the City of Hamilton’s Walking and Biking Safety Sheet, and Walk Safely Sheet!
Add Active and Sustainable School Travel Information in the School Newsletter

Think about how your school shares information with you. Is it a printed newsletter every month? Do you go online to check posts or emails? Whatever it may be, there may be a way to add information in this channel about walking and biking to school.

Before You Get Started
First, think about how often you want to share information. Is it a one-time message, or do you want to share different information in every newsletter? This is an opportunity to promote fundraisers, remind parents who drive not to idle in front of the school, or let parents know about an upcoming Walk and Wheel Day! If capacity is a concern, consider joining forces with your child’s School Council.

Take Action!
To find out who manages the school’s newsletter, contact the school’s principal. You can either call them by calling the school and requesting to speak to the principal or sending them an email.

Create a schedule for the messages you would like to feature in the newsletter that aligns with how often it is posted. This should be presented to the school principal, and you should specify who will be writing the messages, and how far in advance you will need to submit them to the principal.

When drafting the text for your ASST messages, make sure they are clear messages. The text will need to be approved by the principal.
Host an Event Promoting Active and Sustainable School Travel at Your Child’s School

Events are a great way to share information and get others involved in active and sustainable school travel in a fun way. Popular events in Hamilton include: Walk n’ Wheel Wednesdays, Wear Yellow Days, and Bike Days.

Before You Get Started
Hosting an event at your school is a great idea to get momentum on active and sustainable school travel, especially if it is a new conversation for your school community. This event will require lots of time and coordination with the school, and it is recommended that you contact the school’s Parent Council to share your idea and seek their support with planning. Think about the kind of event you want to host, when it would take place (before or after school, what month, etc.) and what it may cost. The Parent Council has a budget, but it is likely that some fundraising or sponsorship may be needed.

Take Action!
Once you have an idea of the type of event you want to plan, call the school and ask to speak to the principal. The event planning checklist (Appendix G) will have conversation tips to help you share the importance of the event. Note, you will need the principal’s permission to plan the event.

You may also reach out to the Parent Council or other parents who may be interested in either participating in or planning your event. You can also talk to your child’s teacher(s) and see if they are supportive of the event, and perhaps they can advocate for you. If you still do not get support for your event, start asking how you can get the event to be part of the next school year’s schedule, and continue to talk to parents about your idea so that you have lots of support for the next time you try to plan the event!

Once you have approval for the event, follow the steps in the event planning checklist to plan your event.

In the toolkit you will find examples of past school events hosted by different parents from other Hamilton Schools! You’ll also find a detailed event planning checklist (Appendix G) to guide you through planning.
Bring Green Venture’s Fresh Air for Kids Program to Your Child’s School

Are you interested in raising awareness about the importance of active and sustainable school travel? Green Venture’s Fresh Air for Kids (FAFK) program is a great way to get your school community talking about the need for active ways of getting students to school.

The FAFK program is a free, in-class program, delivered over 4 sessions. Two champion classes (in grades 5-8) will learn about the causes and impacts of air quality in the neighbourhood of their school. They will then develop and implement a campaign to educate about the effects of idling car engines (at school drop off/pick up times) on student health. Students will develop social prompts (i.e. rear-view mirror hangers, keychains, etc.) to remind drivers of this message.

Before You Get Started
Fresh Air for Kids runs each Spring and Fall and delivers the program to up-to four different schools each season. Before you take action, find two teachers who teach Grade 5, 6, 7 or 8 who want to do the program together. It may be helpful to join forces with your School’s Parent Council on this action.

Take Action!
1. Contact Green Venture to express your interest and ask when the next available FAFK session will run. You can email education@greenventure.ca or call 905-540-8882.
2. Identify two teachers in Grades 5-8 who would be interested in participating in the program together.
3. Ask for permission from the school’s principal and have the principal and two teachers sign a Letter of Agreement.
4. Submit the signed Letter of Agreement to Green Venture (education@greenventure.ca).
5. Depending on availability, Green Venture will either schedule the first session, or put your school on a waiting list.

The Appendix H has an information poster for teachers that you can share, and the Letter of Agreement is also in the toolkit for when you need it!
Become a Parachute Pace Car Community

**Parachute** is a national, charitable organization dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives. One program (of many) offered through Parachute is the Pace Car program. The program aims to get community members to sign-up as Pace Car drivers. Pace Car drivers sign a pledge to drive the speed limit and are given official emblems to be displayed in car windows. A small percentage of vehicles acting as Pace Cars can calm traffic in school zones and throughout the neighbourhood.

**Before You Get Started**
As outlined in the Pace Car Community Guide – any individual or organization can initiate the Pace Car Program. However, the program should be a partnership with the municipality, with clearly defined roles for all parties. Consider how you’d like to be involved (e.g., Would you like to initiate the program on your own, or as a member of a group? Would you like to assist in recruiting other Pace Car drivers?). Keep in mind that, as a Pace Car Community, you have responsibilities (including hosting events, program evaluation, etc.) as outlined by Parachute. Pace Car is a year-round program, which launches in the fall.

**Take Action!**
1. Decide if/how you’d like to initiate a Pace Car program for your school community. Connect with other parents and gauge their interest in the program.
2. Once you’re ready, you can register your community and order your free Pace Car Window Clings. You can also sign up for more information if you aren’t quite ready to commit.
3. Contact Kelly Scott by emailing kelly.scott@hamilton.ca or calling 905-546-2424 extension 1309, to discuss potential partnership with the City on this initiative.
4. Review the resources provided and start promoting the program at your school!

Visit the [Pace Car program webpage](#) and review the available program tools. Check out the [Pace Car Community Guide](#)!
Create “Slow Down” Signs with Students

Do you want to empower students to take traffic safety into their own hands? Consider speaking to your school’s principal about starting a street art project – to create “slow down” signs. This is a fun and interactive way to get students involved in improving the safety of the area surrounding the school. Handmade signs remind drivers to slow down, making it safer for those who walk, bike or roll.

Before You Get Started
Consider what type of project you would like to propose to your school’s principal (i.e. Which grades will be involved? Will it be a group or individual project? Will there be a contest involved? What should be included on the signs?). You might also want to consider how/where the art will be displayed, the number of signs, how they will be mounted, etc. It might make sense to get students to design their signs on 11x17 paper, with selected signs being enlarged and printed for display.

It might be helpful to provide recommendations to the principal on how the signs would be funded (i.e. Can you approach your child’s School Council? Is there a local printer that would provide a donation?). Considering these types of questions ahead of time will make it more likely that your school’s principal will be onboard!

Take Action!
1. Contact your school’s principal about starting a street art project. If you cannot post the art anywhere, consider continuing with the project but having students hold the signs during school pick-up and drop-off times.
2. Contact local printers for quotes. (Printers can also advise on the best size and material for the signs).
3. Investigate potential funding sources.
4. Work with school staff to organize the logistics of the project. (Consider when/where the students will design their signs, what supplies they will use, etc.).
5. Work with school staff to print the selected sign(s).
6. Consider having an assembly to unveil the sign(s) once posted.

Students from Queen Victoria School designed this safety sign, advising students to stay off train tracks.
Become an EcoSchool

EcoSchools Canada is a voluntary certification program, which recognizes and celebrates schools for their environmental learning and action. The EcoSchools program has tangible impacts – leading to positive changes in individual environmental behaviour at school and at home.

Each year, certified EcoSchools are asked to share their insights on the program. “Active transportation” was identified as the #1 school board priority that connects to the EcoSchools program.

Before You Get Started
Visit the EcoSchools website to see if your child’s school is certified. All certified EcoSchools are shown on this map. While parents can advocate for their school to become a certified EcoSchool, remember that certification must be led and completed by school staff. More information on certification is available here.

EcoSchool certification goes far beyond active transportation, and provides resources for energy conservation, waste minimization, school ground greening, and more.

Take Action!
Talk to the school administration (principal and/or vice-principal) to share your interest in becoming an EcoSchool. Once you have support from the school principal, you can let your School Council know.

With the help of the school administration, identify and meet with a teacher or school staff member who will act as a champion. You can have one or more champions! If you as a parent want to be more actively involved, talk to the champion(s) about how you can support the EcoTeam.

Once you have confirmed your school’s champion(s), follow the Steps to Certify section of the Ontario EcoSchools website to get your school certified!