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*Biking in Brampton  
Builds our Community*

# Brampton Kids on Bikes Project



## **Final Report**

Dayle Laing, David Laing

May 29, 2015

## Executive Summary:

*“If all my friends were getting to school via active transportation, then I would as well”*

Secondary school student,  
Brampton Teen Library Council Focus Group, Nov 12, 2014

Only a small percentage of children in Brampton’s primary and secondary schools use active transportation alternatives to travel to and from school. That percentage has been dropping over the past number of years. Inactivity leads to significant health related issues for Brampton’s youth. Current programs aimed at encouraging active transportation lack overall coordination, are aimed at a small percentage of the youth population and are focused on a school by school basis.

The ultimate goal is to reverse the trend of car usage as the primary transportation option for youth and dramatically increase the use of Active Transportation (AT) options in lieu of travel by car. To accomplish this, the Brampton Kids on Bikes project team believes, a more holistic approach is warranted than has been tried to date. This project has been designed, after having reviewed the literature, to scope the approach and lay the preparatory groundwork that will lead to achievement of the ultimate goal as part of a future implementation plan.

Since the City of Brampton is part of the Region of Peel, and the School Boards are regional, this report, although called, “Brampton Kids on Bikes”, is actually focussed on a strategy for the entire region, including Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. It draws upon learning from the successes achieved in the GTHA (Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area) and beyond.

The result of this research has led to the conclusion that Peel needs to move from *TRANSACTIONAL CHANGE* to *TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE*. Success should not be measured by school travel planning at individual schools, when the possibility of failure can hinge on the departure of a single champion from a school. Distribution of bike racks to schools cannot be considered successful if half of the racks have not been installed one year later, or if racks are installed in the field far from the school front door and parents fear their children’s bicycles may be stolen. Success requires the ‘big picture’ transformational change can be only be achieved by a combination of both top-down and bottom up strategies.

The primary top-down strategy that this report recommends is to call on the Region of Peel to establish a senior leadership taskforce with representation from both of the School Boards, the Region, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. This can be done in the context of the existing Peel Safe and Active Routes to School Committee but with a revised mandate. The mandate should define the vision for change along with bold yet achievable targets and timelines that will drive the change for school active transportation aggressively yet sustainably throughout the Region across both School Boards. The benefit of this strategy is that it would engage and unify all stakeholders, ensuring appropriate resources are available for project implementation and minimizing program overlap. This strategy can also be enhanced by an Ontario provincial mandate requiring school travel planning and / or by municipal by-

laws focused on providing safe travel access for school-aged children.

Bottom-up strategies recommended include:

- Expanding school travel planning through a Peel Safe and Active Routes to School (PSARTS) Subcommittee which would scale up the work currently being done at individual schools to incrementally increase the number of schools covered. The newly created Youth Engagement Workshop focusing in high-school implementations is an example of this strategy.
- Additional presentations to parent groups (go to where the parents are) to create parent support for STP and discover additional parent champions at individual schools.
- Designing and implementing a multi-media marketing message to the parents and children that has been agreed upon by Region of Peel, the Municipalities, both School Boards and Peel Police. The messaging should endorse school active transportation and overcome the barriers of perceived lack of safety and convenience. Messages should include safety statistics and support for a “good parents allow active transportation” cultural shift, “improved academic performance” to appeal to both parents and School Boards, and “cycling and walking are cool” to appeal to students. It is recommended that provisions need to be made for safer active transportation infrastructure (safe routes) in each community.
- Working with Ontario EcoSchools, make modifications to the EcoSchools scoring system that would create a greater incentive for EcoSchools applicants to include active transportation initiatives.

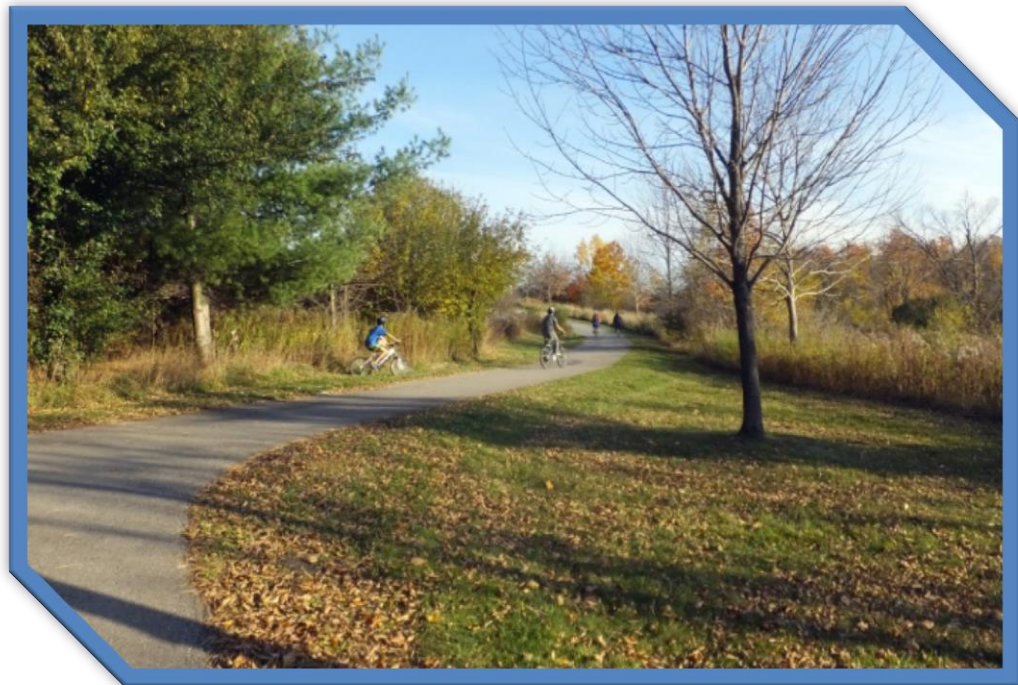


Figure 2 - Kids cycling on Etobicoke Creek Trail, 2014

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## Project Background:

### BikeBrampton

BikeBrampton, also known as the Brampton Bicycle Advisory Committee (BBAC), is a voluntary group of citizens who support, encourage, promote and advocate for increased safe recreational and transportation cycling in the City of Brampton. BBAC was started in April 2013. Brampton is in the process of creating an official Committee of Council, called Brampton *Cycling* Advisory Committee. BikeBrampton has many ongoing projects:

***Biking in Brampton builds our Community.*** <http://bikebrampton.ca/>

As well as the Brampton Kids on Bikes Project, BikeBrampton has also been championing the following initiatives:

- Bike Clinic Project (with partner Region of Peel) – pilot project recently completed
- Community Bike Centre Brampton – partnering with Region of Peel and Community Environment Alliance to repair bikes in BikeWrX program and mentor riders in PedalWise program
- Bike the Creek – annual signature family cycling event – next event: June 20, 2015 (partnered with City of Brampton, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Town of Caledon and Title Sponsor Region of Peel)
- Monthly Brampton Critical Mass bike rides – last Friday of every month – leaves from Gage Park at 6:30pm
- Downtown bicycle revitalization project including updated signage, bicycle parking, downtown signed bike routes, & 8-80 Cities Doable Neighbourhood Pilot Project
- Bramalea CycleFest – June 27, 2015 (partnered with All Peoples Church to bring cycling event to community and raise money for Hospital for Sick Children)
- Advocacy campaign to change City of Brampton’s “curb-cut” policy to provide accessible pathways for all
- Advocacy to update City of Brampton’s roads and pathways through a prioritized list of infrastructure projects
- Advocacy for traffic calming (have Heart Lake Road become a Cultural Heritage Landscape listing)
- Advocacy to have Brampton become a “Bicycle Friendly Community” ([Share the Road Cycling Coalition](#))
- Awareness presentations at local service organizations, rate payers associations, Environmental Advisory Committees of Ontario symposium, Punjabi Community Health Services Melé, Council for Canadian Urbanism (Tactical Urbanism CanU 6 Summit)
- Participant in Ontario Cycling Advocacy Network (OntarioCAN) – presentation at Ontario Bike Summit
- Participation in City of Brampton community events to raise the profile of cycling (Celebrampton BikeFest, Bike to Work Day, FUSE program, Peel Environment Youth Alliance (EcoBuzz and Amazing Green Race), GO Transit Bike Fest, community picnics (Snelgrove, Loafers Lake, Gage Park Rotary Rib n Roll))
- Planning with Region of Peel Public Health to develop cycling education and safety programs
- Participation on Peel Safe and Active Routes to School (PSARTS) Committee
- Participation on Peel Police’s School Safety Committee



## BikeBrampton Brampton Kids on Bikes Project Team

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## Project Support

This project has been financially supported with a Spark Advocacy grant from the **Heart and Stroke Foundation**. Brampton Kids on Bikes Project team thanks Melissa Yule, Senior Specialist, Heart & Stroke Foundation, for her support and encouragement. Thanks also to Bill McBain, Health Promotion Specialist, Heart & Stroke Foundation, who has moderated our workshops. Thanks to Denise De Campos, Health Promotion Specialist, Heart & Stroke Foundation, who has built on the work that Melissa did, with her encouragement. Brampton Kids on Bikes team also acknowledges special appreciation to Vince D'Elia, Project Manager, Etobicoke & Mimico Creek Watersheds, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, for his ongoing support and assistance.

## Literature Review Summary

[Link to 65 page report](#)

Literature and statistics from Brampton, Mississauga, Peel Region, the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, Canada and beyond are documented and sources are cited.

Similar to many communities across Canada, the Region of Peel is facing a youth health crisis fueled significantly by inactivity. A student health survey by Peel Public Health (2011) measured the heights and weights of more than 7500 Peel students and found that 37% of boys and 27% of girls were overweight or obese. A Peel Region Health study (2012) found that 1/3 boys and almost ½ of Peel grade 9 girls failed their cardiorespiratory fitness scores. The GTHA Medical Officers of Health described Type II Diabetes as “an economic tsunami” in their 2014 report.

Increasing the participation of school-aged children in active transportation to and from school is the most efficient and cost-effective method of combating this crisis. Yet despite efforts by numerous agencies over the past 10 years, the rate of participation in active transportation continues to decline.

The Brampton Kids on Bikes Project aims to discover why, and then develop advocacy messages aimed at key decision-makers who can drive the changes required to begin to reverse these trends.

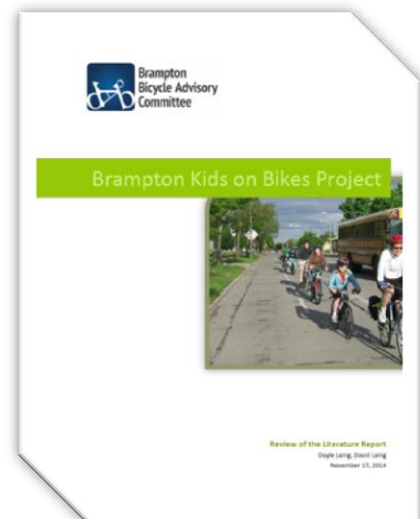


Figure 3 - Review of Literature Report cover

This document provides a review of the current literature. It documents the scope and magnitude of the health crisis and looks at the research which indicates inactivity as a primary cause. It then looks at the research documenting the benefits of active transportation as a potential solution to this health problem and the best practices for implementing change within the school system.

- The volume of literature, research and reports on the topic of student active transportation is quite frankly, staggering.
- There are already comprehensive suggestions about how to fix this problem. (*See Opportunities, page 40*)
- There are many ‘moving parts’ – many stakeholders that must coordinate actions to be successful.
- The current Boards of Education focus on mathematics could be enhanced by students arriving at school alert and energized due to active transportation. The link to academic performance and exercise is well-documented in the literature.
- While a good majority of pre-school children are performing well (84%), the levels of physical activity for most Canadian children 5 and older are abysmal (7% kids 5-11yrs; 4% kids 12-17yrs).
- ‘Waiting for the perfection’ of bicycle infrastructure should not be an excuse to avoid changing the ‘status quo’ culture. Reducing the damage being done to children’s health should be the prime imperative. Lack of demand can be viewed as a reason not to invest in bicycle infrastructure. This should be a case of “build it and they will come”.
- Specific targets should be agreed upon by stakeholders, measured & incentives applied.
- Schools are not all equal in their opportunities for active transportation. Targets for schools could allow for percentage point improvements rather than actual numbers.

Changing the current situation for active transportation for children travelling to school will likely take a shift in the current cultural norm, which may occur quickly because parents are conflicted!

## Project Research

This section forms a large effort by the project team with results that while at first were disappointing, later became unexpectedly positive during the Brampton Kids on Bikes Project. The research is instructive in that it does support the extensive literature review and does point out the challenge to changing active transportation behaviour.

## Parent Focus Group Sessions

A series of 3 parent focus group sessions were organized during the fall of 2014 at the **Bramalea Community Health Centre**. Despite extensive promotion through flyers, BikeBrampton website, Peel Public Health, the Health Centre, community meetings and local schools (300 flyers at 1 school alone), there was **zero** parent attendance.

Another community focus session was organized for 20 mothers at **Momz in Motion**. It was subsequently cancelled by the group with the explanation that mothers have children too young or currently being bussed and who are not interested in active transportation. The organizer said that there



were only 2 women “whose children attend a school within walking distance”.

While engaging parents in discussion during unrelated events, the Brampton Kids on Bikes project team heard one Brampton mother comment:

*“I think the suburban moms are the ones that are hyper-sensitive about safety, schedules, work, etc.”*

Another mother commented that she wanted her children to walk to school but that she felt peer pressure to not do so.

### Conclusions about Parent Focus Groups:

The focus group aspect of this research may indicate that parents either:

- do not view active transportation as an issue,
- know it is an issue but have objections to changing their behaviour,
- have time constraints that prevent them from participating in focus groups, or
- to avoid discussion on a topic for which they know their actions are not justified.

This particular approach to engaging parents is apparently not an effective means for analyzing and creating an advocacy message, without first addressing the need for a cultural shift or engaging champions and community leadership support. (See p.45 in [Literature Review Report](#))

### Student Focus Group Sessions

While the number of participants was very low, the responses and especially the comments give an indication of the type of active transportation opinions held by Brampton youth.

A student focus group session was set up with the help of Librarian Katrina Doktor, for the **Teen Library Council Group** at Cyril Clark Library, Brampton Public Libraries. The 8 students were interviewed for their opinion pre and post education about school active transportation, health and performance research information.

### Summary of Answers to Initial Group Questions:

- None of the students currently rode their bicycles to school, while 7/8 own bikes
- 1 student’s bike needs maintenance in order to be useable [opportunity for our Bike Clinic]
- 3 students took more than 20 minutes to get to school by car
- 2 were frequently late for school

### Initial Student Comments:

- “walking in a group, you can talk with your friends”
- “I am scared I am going to fall [if I ride my bike]”
- “some [other students] lock their bikes to the fence”
- “Cut the technology. Go back to flip phones [speaking about students’ distraction]”
- “[we need] more crossing guards”
- “if people knew how to drive properly”
- “City needs to time lights better. not enough time to walk [across the intersection] before the

light changes” example mentioned: Bovaird & Kennedy near Notre Dame Secondary School

- “if all my friends were getting to school via active transportation, then I would as well”

#### **Answers to Questionnaire & Comments prior to Educational presentation:**

- 2 males & 4 females were 12-15 years; 2 females were 16+ years old
- Distance from school: 2 students live <1km; 1 lives 1-3km; 5 live 3-7km
- 7 responded regular exercise to stay healthy is “very important”; 1 said “somewhat important”
- All 8 responded that cycling to school as part of their daily exercise was “not important”
- All 8 students responded that they do not cycle to school

*[Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for youth 12 – 17 YEARS: at least **60 minutes** of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily, including vigorous-intensity activities at least 3 days per week, and activities that strengthen muscle and bone at least 3 days per week.]*

- When asked how many minutes of medium-high level activity they get in a day, 3 responded 21-30 minutes; 3 responded 31-60 minutes; and only **2/8 students get over 60 minutes per day**.
- When asked how many minutes are enough to ensure a healthy mind and body, 5 responded 21-30 minutes; 2 responded 31-60 minutes and 1 said over 60 minutes.

#### **Comments about regular exercise:**

- “It lets you live longer”
- “Helps mental health”
- “Most people would say it’s important, but most people don’t do it”

#### **Comments about how you know if you are overweight or obese:**

- “pressure points in knees are weak”
- “heavy breathing / out of breath quickly when doing simple tasks”
- “food consumption habits”
- “check out your body mass index”

#### **Comments about cycling to school:**

- “distance too far”
- “running late”; “out of time” “in a rush”
- “cycling around 5 km is twice as difficult”

#### **Barriers to cycling to school were:**

- 4 responded “time”
- 3 responded “road safety”
- 2 responded “bike security at school”
- 4 responded “weather”
- 1 responded “bike availability”
- 1 responded “riding ability / skill”
- 2 responded “not willing” – reason: “can’t carry stuff”

- 4 responded “distance to school” – what is too far? “about a 20 minute drive”
- 1 responded that they “prefer walking – close to school”

### **Answers to Questionnaire & Comments after educational presentation:**

All 8 responded that their opinion had not changed as a result of the presentation. However, their subsequent responses to the same questions as Questionnaire #1 had changed, indicating a positive shift as a result of educational information. At the very least, the responses changed for the better, even if this study does not indicate that actual behaviour would change as a result of this focus group.

### **Cycling Behaviour Responses:**

- 2 responded they would now cycle to school; 2 responded once in a while; and 4 still would not cycle

### **Comments about why they would cycle to school:**

- “faster”
- “proven to be healthy”
- “environmental benefits”

### **Comments about why they would not cycle to school:**

- “prefer walking”
- “preparing for the ride is too much time”

### **Comments about under what conditions they would cycle to school:**

- “Good weather, warm”
- “enough time”

### **Importance of Regular Exercise:**

- All 8 students responded that regular exercise to maintain health is “very important”. (7/8 said “very important” and 1 said “somewhat important” before the presentation.)
- All 8 students responded that cycling to school as part of their daily exercise was “somewhat important”. (All 8 had previously responded “not important” to the same question.)

### **Comments about Regular Exercise:**

- “[regular exercise] to keep us really healthy”
- “[choosing] walking over cycling”

### **Importance of Leadership in Encouraging Cycling to School:**

- Leadership from parents was chosen as “very important” by 4 of the students; “somewhat important” by 1 student; and “not important” by 3 of the students.
- Leadership from teachers and principals was chosen as “very important” by 1 of the students; “somewhat important” by 3 students; and “not important” by 4 of the students.
- Leadership from school boards or city/ regional councils was chosen as “very important” by 1 of the students; “somewhat important” by 1 student; and “not important” by 2 of the students.



Figure 4 - youth cycling Bike the Creek - June 2014

(No response from 4 students --- possibly indicating lack of comprehension of the question?)

### *Comments about Leadership encouraging Cycling to School:*

- Parents: “encourage physical activity”
- “Parents have the most influence on the children (power of decision)”
- Teachers and Principals: “These are the people we’re supposed to look up to, and they’re supposed to guide us, so if they, as well as parents, tell us that it is important, then kids / teens are going to start doing it, as long as they have the resources.”
- School boards or city/regional councils: “These people also have influence over people’s decisions, because they make the conditions / rules we live under.”

### *Cultural Group Identification:*

- All 8 responded “no” to describing themselves as part of a particular cultural group.
- One student commented that “parents would be happier if we started biking”

### *Final Suggestions from Students:*

- “Make the driving age older – (21+ years)”
- “Surprise treats for those who walk / bike” 😊

### *Student visits to BKOB Display Booth:*

Brampton Kids on Bikes Project team was invited to participate with a complimentary display booth at the **Brampton East Youth Advisory** event in the winter of 2015: “Pathways; Careers & Volunteering”. This invitation came as a result of the BKOB’s David Laing’s presentation the day before at the Brampton Springdale Network. The team spoke with several dozen students about active transportation and used the opportunity to engage youth with signing up for potentially volunteering at the Bike the Creek event, on June 20<sup>th</sup>. Seven newcomer youth also agreed to receive newsletters that will have active transportation content.

### *Conclusions about Student Focus Groups:*

Although only small groups of students were studied, a few conclusions can be suggested for an advocacy message, which were supported in the literature review:

- Students can be influenced positively by their peers, their parents and by role models in the school.
- Students can be influenced by educational messages
- Students have opinions and should be engaged in the decision making for active transportation.

- Students need access to safe, functioning bicycles and a perceived safe cycling infrastructure for active transportation to be successful.

## Community Group Meetings

Community group meetings were initially used by the Brampton Kids on Bikes Project team to enlist participants for the organized focus groups. While this goal in itself was not successful, the positive outcome was engagement of community leaders and parents for safe and active transportation choices for their children.

The BKOB project team participated in the **Punjabi Community Health Services** autumn 2014 tree planting and BBQ at Wildwood Park, Malton. 50 flyers promoting the focus group sessions were distributed 50 flyers, which netted no parent commitments for appearing at the focus groups.

**‘Great Start’ Peel District School Board School Council Conference** was attended in the fall of 2014 with a project team Brampton Kids on Bikes booth. Many sympathetic and interested parents stopped to discuss, but this approach netted no focus group participants. Parents mentioned their perceived barriers to active transportation. Of interest was the response from an admitted environmentalist who described her objection as safety avoidance of perceived “creepers” [strangers].

Brampton (and all of Peel) is noted for the faith of its residents and a variety of places of worship abound. Engaging the faith-based community was considered part of community outreach for the Brampton Kids on Bikes project team. Starting late fall 2014, the team met for **Community Meetings with Pastor Finu Iype, All Peoples Church**, Finchgate Blvd. & Queen Street. Team members made a presentation about active transportation and discussed possibilities with Pastor Finu. The result was the planning of a June 27, 2015 church community ride called **Bramalea CycleFest**.

**A Community Meeting with Uzma Irfan, Community Development Coordinator, Punjabi Community Health Centre** was held in December 2014, where the team presented Brampton Kids on Bikes active transportation concepts. Discussion ensued about connecting with South Asian media, and Malton & Brampton school officials. Each discussion and presentation has built on the previous for contacts and engagement in the community.

Attendance at the community leaders’ **Youth Collective Impact Seminar** led project team manager David Laing to being invited by Ms. Irfan to speak at the **Brampton Springdale Network** at Louise Arbour Secondary School, Brampton in February 2015. The Brampton Kids on Bikes Project was presented to this group of 30+ service providers, which holds monthly meetings. Included in the audience were: Region of Peel, City of Brampton, Brampton Safe City, Bramalea Community Health Centre, Peel District School Board, Punjabi Community Health Centre, youth groups, immigrant groups and provincial politicians. The presentation was well received, with questions and a request to post the slides onto the BikeBrampton website. Suggestions were made for the team to attend other events and make presentations at workshops. The CEO of Punjabi Community Health Centre, Mr. Baldev Mutta, endorsed the presentation, said he himself had walked to school, his children had walked to school, and that he wanted David to present at their upcoming spring Mele 2015 and the September/October tree planting.

Promotional business cards were distributed to all attendees. People were directed to the website to learn more from the literature review, and were invited to attend the BKOB project's upcoming stakeholder workshop on April 20<sup>th</sup> at Century Gardens, Brampton.

At the next Brampton Springdale Network meeting in March 2015, the Brampton Kids on Bikes project team received a testimonial:

*"You changed my life after your [Brampton Kids on Bikes] presentation. My kids walk to school now. I was the parent who would have driven my children to university. I want to start a walking school bus program at my kids' school."* - Parent, Brampton Springdale Network Meeting, March 26, 2015

The Brampton Kids on Bikes project team attended the '**We are Cities Roundtable**' meeting on March 22, 2015. This was another opportunity to network and engage Peel stakeholders and residents in the concepts of school active transportation, which led to more valuable connections in the community.

BKOB project lead researcher Dayle Laing was invited to speak at **Brampton Northwest Connects** meeting at Cassie Campbell Recreation Centre on April 1, 2015. Attendees included Peel Public Health Nurses, School Principals, parents, Brampton Recreation staff, YMCA and the Brampton Kids on Bikes project team. The presentation was again well received.

One of the parents present at Brampton Northwest Connects was inspired to make contact to organize a meeting at **Brisdale Public School** in Brampton on May 5<sup>th</sup>. David Laing from BKOB project met with the Peel Public Health Nurse, teachers, students, parents and the Principal, as the students 'brain-stormed' ideas to increase cycling to their school. The enthusiasm was inspiring. Brisdale PS also signed up for Bike to School Week.



Figure 5 - Bike racks at Brisdale Public School, 2015

David Laing from BKOB was requested to meet with the Shop Teacher from **St Thomas Aquinas Secondary School** on May 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss how a bike mechanic program could be started in the school.

This concept ties into the BikeBrampton collaboration with the Region of Peel and Community Environment Alliance which has recently started a [\*\*Community Bike Centre Brampton\*\*](#), that aims to provide access to reconditioned bikes to families while providing bike mechanics training and opportunities for personal growth through bicycle related activities. The Centre provides a supportive,



non-judgmental and community friendly space for anyone interested in cycling to learn, explore, build a bike, or mentor a new rider.

**BikeWrx** is the Community Bike Centre's program designed to empower the community to cycle efficiently and economically by providing basic bike mechanics skills. Pre-owned cycles will be reconditioned as per industry standard to make them roadworthy. The retrofitted bikes will also be available for purchase at reasonable prices.

**PedalWise** is Community Bike Centre's community focused program that promotes a fun, active and healthy lifestyle with biking. Riders are paired with mentors to build community connections while exploring ways to make shorter trips (less than 5km) by bicycle. The 50 registered participants will be able to borrow bicycles and safety equipment.

### Conclusions about Community Group Meetings:

Cultural values and norms that influence behaviour, such as barriers to active transportation were discussed on pp.19-20 of our [Literature Review Report](#). Engaging with different groups in the community is an important step in developing the advocacy message to specific groups. These interactions are aligned with the strategy of TCAT (Toronto Centre for Active Transportation), who presented at the November 17, 2014 BikeBrampton meeting. TCAT had been hired by the Region of Peel to set up a [project](#) to employ **Community Based Social Marketing** to achieve local success for active transportation. The Community Bike Centre is the result of this project.

*"Community-based social marketing 'is based upon research in the social sciences that demonstrates that behavior change is most effectively achieved through initiatives delivered at the community level which focus on removing barriers to an activity while simultaneously enhancing the activities benefits.' Doug McKenzie-Mohr"*

Participation and meeting with community groups has had a **domino effect** for making other productive connections and to acquire credibility, and create champions within the community. This will be essential to affect cultural change, to break down the resistant to erroneous safety concerns and enlist the support of the community leaders and champions.

## Stakeholder Meetings

### School Board Trustee Meeting:

An informal meeting was held with **Suzanne Nurse, Trustee and Vice-Chair of Peel District School Board** in November 2014. Active Transportation issues and barriers were discussed. Trustees spend an inordinate amount of their time on issues of student transportation and congestion, and safety concerns around the school arriving and leaving times. Addressing these concerns would be of enormous benefit to students, their parents and by extension, the trustees. There are 3 identified 'hot spots' in Ms. Nurse's ward that require focus and coordination with staff from Brampton traffic and the School Board.

### Peel Safe and Active Routes To Schools (PSARTS) Meetings:

The Brampton Kids on Bikes project team were invited to attend their first **Peel Safe and Active Routes**

**to Schools (PSARTS) meeting** in November 2014. There were 20 attendees at the meeting and absent at that time were representatives from Peel District School Board and Dufferin Peel Catholic School Board. A chart showing the status of the 11 different stakeholders was distributed, showing the status of various projects. Gains on active transportation had been modest, with activities directed at a school by school approach without an overall strong and joint mandate or targets from the highest levels of Peel Public Health or either of the School Boards. A subcommittee called the “Youth Engagement Workgroup” was formed with the objective of engaging secondary school youth to promote AT, with plans to meet monthly, starting in January 2015.

### **Youth Engagement Workshop (Subcommittee of PSARTS):**

The BKOB project team attended this initial meeting in early January 2015. Barriers to AT were discussed and the need to have School Boards and Peel Public Health mandated to work together. In Peel, student engagement is one of the five pillars. Principals are open to peer-encouragement regarding AT, however, liability issues are raised as an obstacle. A marketing campaign to target parents about the overly exaggerated perceived safety issues was discussed.

In late January, the Brampton Kids on Bikes project team attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. The idea of engaging youth through making cycling ‘cool’ and presenting a positive image of students who cycle was the main focus. Various strategies were discussed and liability issues dominated the rationale for not considering certain options.

### **Region of Peel Stakeholder Meeting:**

A meeting to discuss upcoming December 4<sup>th</sup> webinar and workshop and December 11<sup>th</sup> Metrolinx HUB meeting was held with attendees: David Laing, Pauline Thornham, Dayle Laing (Brampton Kids on Bikes Project, BikeBrampton); Erica Duque & Wayne Chan (Peel AT); Sharanjeet Kaura & Catherine Sim (Peel Public Health); Lorenzo Mele (Peel Public Health Consultant).

The project team was encouraged to send their workshop objectives to Jennifer McGowan at Metrolinx for possible incorporation into her December 4<sup>th</sup> webinar presentation. Discussions occurred about who else should be invited to attend the webinar/workshop.

There was also explanation about Peel District School Board specialty school policy and how this specialization negatively affects active travel to neighbourhood schools and increases bussing. Residents move into a neighbourhood expecting a nearby local school, and have been reported to be surprised to find their local school has been converted into a specialty school that requires all the local children to now rely on bussing outside their neighbourhood to another school.

### **Stakeholder Webinar & Workshop: “Solving the Physical Inactivity Health Crisis in Peel through Active Transportation”**

This workshop was organized to coincide and immediately follow the **Metrolinx and Green Communities Canada webinar teleconference** presentation on December 4, 2014 at the offices of Brampton Safe City Association, 16 George Street North, Brampton.

This webinar and workshop was jointly organized by BikeBrampton’s Brampton Kids on Bikes (David



**Figure 6 - Stakeholder Webinar & Workshop, Dec 4, 2014**

Laing, Dayle Laing, & Pauline Thornham) and Heart & Stroke Foundation (Melissa Yule & Bill McBain). David Laing & Bill McBain were the co-facilitators.

**Attendees:** Suzanne Nurse (Peel District School Board); Kathy McDonald (Peel District School Board); Monica Irwin (Peel Health); Catherine Sim (Peel Health); Erica Duque (Peel Active Transportation); Wayne Chan (Peel Active Transportation); Larry Zacher (Brampton Safe

City); Michele Robinson (City of Brampton Public Services); Kevin Minaker (City of Brampton Infrastructure Services); Patti Comeau-Young (Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board); Lorenzo Mele (Peel Region Health consultant); David Laing (BikeBrampton); Dayle Laing (BikeBrampton); Pauline Thornham (BikeBrampton); and Bill McBain (Heart & Stroke Foundation)

### Background Report: “Brampton Kids on Bikes Literature Review Report”:

Participants were supplied with a link to the [Literature Review Report](#) prior to the event. The report was written to provide a complete picture for those unfamiliar with active transportation and to provide a convenient review for those already well versed on the subject.

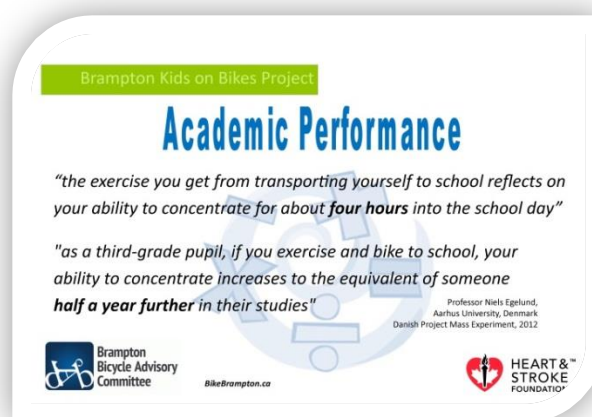
### Webinar: “Promoting Active Transportation by Sharing Lessons from the 2014 Report Card on Children’s Physical Activity”

During the one hour webinar which preceded the workshop, **Melissa Yule from the Heart & Stroke Foundation** provided an overview. **Jacky Kennedy from Green Communities Canada** presented how “Active Transportation interventions have great potential to increase overall physical activity levels among kids and the ways in which Canada can improve our grade based on success stories from other communities.” **Jennifer McGowan, from Metrolinx**, shared the local GTHA “Strategy Roadmap for the Implementation of Province-Wide Coordination on Active and Safe Sustainable Transportation that Metrolinx created in collaboration with stakeholders”. Posters of the Metrolinx Roadmap were displayed around the meeting room.

**Figure 7 - Academic Performance Poster (1 of 10)**

### Workshop Posters:

A series of 10 reusable posters 20”x30” were displayed around the meeting room to stimulate workshop discussion. Statistics from the Literature Review Report were selected for the design and preparation of the series. Several participants took photographs of the posters. A link to a [pdf of the posters](#) was posted to [bikebrampton.ca](http://bikebrampton.ca).



## **Workshop #1 Problems, Programs and Opportunities:**

A [summary of the workshop results](#) was compiled and posted to the bikebrampton.ca website and all participants were emailed a follow-up note with the link. The following summarizes the workshop tasks and outcomes.

### ***Background for the Workshop:***

*We know that:*

- over 90% of school aged children in Peel Region are insufficiently active
- this inactivity contributes significantly to serious health challenges and risks for our youth
- cycling and/or walking to school can contribute significantly to daily activity levels
- the number of children engaging in active transportation continues to decline
- there are tools and programs which have been used successfully to reverse the trend
- it will take resources and sustained commitment to achieve long-term significant and sustainable results.

### ***Description of the Problem:***

The problem we are trying to solve is that we have inactive children and a culture of inactivity; we have engineered away activity from our lives. A number of perceived / real obstacles prevent parents from allowing their children to use AT to go to school.

### ***Perceived Obstacles***

- Lack of amenities in the built environment,
- Lack of safety,
- Peer pressure among parents,
- Lack of time.

### ***Real Barriers***

Changing lifestyles over the last forty or fifty years mean it is now more common for both parents to be working outside the home, making students' school travel compete with parents' commuting. A whole culture shift in activity levels is needed, through a conscious effort, to improve the health of our children and our society.

### ***Priority for solving the problem:***

LOW: 0 " MEDIUM: 0 " **HIGH: 2 groups\*** **CRITICAL: 1 group**

\* the rating was not "critical" in one group, because it is perceived there are not present deaths, but only predictions of future early deaths.

### ***One major action to solve the problem:***

We are gathering to address a strategy amongst the important stakeholders, to develop programs that are sustainable and that will become a way of life, with long-term goals and outcomes.

Evidence is being collected and collated from literature by various agencies and organizations, to show recent health and AT trends, and to report on best practices.

The Region of Peel is running a School Travel Planning pilot program. **It was agreed by those present, that this would be the most valuable first step for all schools.**

### *Is there enough being done to solve the problem?*

YES: 0" **NO: 3** - all groups agreed that not enough is being done

### *Best opportunity to solve the problem:*

The best opportunity to solve the problem is to develop coordination and collaboration to “break the wall”, as exemplified in the anti-smoking campaign. Many small actions done by many different groups, will chip away at the problem until, like the Berlin Wall, it suddenly crumbles.

### *We need both top-down AND bottom-up strategies:*

#### *‘Top Down’ Strategies:*

**Ontario Government**, the residents of Ontario need to make it a policy to mandate cooperation among stakeholders. For a start, have the Ministries of Health/Education make it a priority. Secondly, we need a provincial policy that schools develop and implement school travel plans.

**Municipal Governments**, It is noted that the major factor in reduction of smoking was the enactment of municipal bylaws, so the **municipal level is a key driver in changing social behaviour.**

#### *‘Bottom Up’ Strategies:*

Various **local organizations and stakeholders** need to **link AT to academic success**, in the minds of all of the stakeholders, in order to help give it the emphasis it requires. If we also create a financial link to using AT, in the minds of the public, it may give a further incentive to make the necessary changes in activity and lifestyle. We need to educate the public re safety concerns, emphasizing the positive value of AT, versus the risks.

We need to **include a student voice in our organizations**, to make sure that the concerns and barriers of youth are addressed, for example: “My bike will be stolen.” “Wearing a bike helmet isn’t cool.” “Where I park my bike, the school door is locked.”

**These actions will begin to normalize AT, and make it sustainable.**

### *Barrier Identification Priorities:*

The three top priorities that are standing in the way of achieving a sustainable long-term solution to the problem:

- I. It is **too convenient for parents to drive their children to school**, and the alternatives are not convenient enough. Time is a large part of convenience, and hurried parents want to be assured that their children are getting safely to school. Their view is that it is easiest to drive them there themselves.
- II. There is a **general lack of understanding of the level of risk of AT, versus its rewards.** The

REAL rewards and risks of AT haven't been shared with the public.

- III. **Parental perception of the safety of using AT** to get to school is a big barrier to AT. The perceived risks have been heightened by media reporting of incidents.

**Action planning for high-level tasks to resolve the 3 prioritized barriers:**

**Note: Who are those stakeholders who aren't represented at this meeting?**

- Students
- Ward Councillors for the municipalities
- School Principals
- School board staff – PDSB, School Board Trustees -- DPCDSB

**What Can We Do?**

- We can reach out to students, to inform them about the virtues of AT, as well as the health and other issues around vehicular travel to school. Then the students will be able to influence their parents about making healthy lifestyle choices in getting to school.
- We can address faith groups, who have a large influence in Peel Region, both in numbers and ability to change behaviour.
- We can call for school travel plans at all schools in Peel Region.
- We can make contact with school councils, with the intent of speaking directly to parents about the virtues of AT.
- We can investigate the Trillium Foundation's program of giving bikes to kids, as an incentive.
- We can arrange focus groups with parents, through schools, community organizations or faith groups to help communicate risks vs benefits of AT, the importance of AT, the link between AT and academic performance as well as health and the economic impact of both.

**ONE SINGLE THING:**

We will form a subcommittee of Peel Safe and Active Routes to Schools (PSARTS), to focus on AT to school, including representatives from the school boards, faith groups, students and parents.

Reconvene as this group in April, 2015.

**Workgroup Comments:**

- "The school principal is the 'gatekeeper'."
- "All change comes through the parents – get support from school councils."
- "Make driving inconvenient."
- "Most of my time is spent in dealing with phone calls about school traffic congestion."
- "90% of Peel students own bikes."
- "Normalize active transportation." "Cycling is cool."
- "I loved the workshop. I can't believe it went so fast. It was so interesting and could have been



longer.”

## **Metrolinx Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) Active and Sustainable School Transportation (ASST) Regional HUB Meeting**

The first meeting of the HUB on January 23, 2015 was organized to advance the progress made by various stakeholders and to build on events such as the December 4<sup>th</sup> webinar & discussion.

Attendees: The Brampton Kids on Bikes project team plus approximately 50 stakeholders from around the GTHA. There were a broad range of attendees from those who were highly experienced, with successful active transportation outcomes in their areas, to those brand new to the field. There was representation from planning, traffic, recreation, administration, public health, school boards, advocacy groups, AT consultants, provincial transit and academia.

### **Presentation by Ron Builing, PhD., U of T:**

Professor Builing spoke about the state of active sustainable transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area from 1986-2011. He has authored much research on this subject and has mentored many more researchers in the field.

- Multibillion dollar congestion problem in GTHA (\$3,347 million annually)
- Children are the commuters of the future (Toronto’s decision to offer free transit to those under 12 is wise policy)
- **Society needs to “have confidence that children can move around freely”.**
- “In older neighbourhoods, children take on independent mobility earlier than in newer neighbourhoods.”
- **Children have 7 times the rate of death in automobiles that they have as pedestrians**
- **Trips to school in Peel make up more than 70% of daily vehicle trips**
- Active transportation statistics are higher travelling home from school in the afternoon. Why is it “okay to have your child walk home but not in the morning”? – This is an opportunity
- “Bussing policy is a Pandora’s box.”
- “People who live closer are driving more [to school] than they did in the past.”
- “Girls are less likely to travel actively than boys.” (Media communicates the relatively rare incidents of violence against young girls.) “We need to be having a conversation about gender.”
- “Children are more likely to identify bullies and parents are more likely to identify strangers.” [during a walk with children to school]
- “Look at anti-idling policy” – opportunity for enforcement
- **“This is not a politically attractive thing [active transportation].”**

### **Summary of Meeting highlights:**

- **20% of peak hour traffic in GTHA is connected to school travel, according to Metrolinx**
- Metrolinx objective: by 2031, 60% of children will walk or cycle to school
- In some areas of the GTHA, there is a stigma associated with transit use
- More support from the public and the politicians is required to lower the perceived risk of active transportation

- One jurisdiction is funding increased pedestrian safety through revenues from red light cameras!
- Parents driving children to school occurs even in a new community designed with school planning infrastructure! – education opportunity to address that safety is being touted as an excuse that masks a cultural or convenience objection
- Participants from municipalities with successful active transportation are willing to share their strategies with others in the group.

The Brampton Kids on Bikes project team made contact with participants from York Region who have been successful with their active transportation goals for schools, and with a doctoral candidate researcher from the University of Toronto. These experts were subsequently invited to present at the next Peel stakeholder workshop on April 20, 2015 to share their expertise and success.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting Metrolinx ASST HUB, March 5, 2015

The Brampton Kids on Bikes project team were in attendance with 35 participants plus 2 by teleconference. There was representation from Region of Peel Active Transportation and Public Health, however no representation from City of Brampton or any of Peel's School Boards. Terms of Reference were identified. The cities of Brampton, Mississauga and Region of Peel are to each be a voting member on the HUB.

Both Halton and Durham have regional committees that are looking at the ASST Roadmap and how it can fit into their communities. Town of Ajax has a new Active Transportation Coordinator starting next week. Most communities have an **Active Transportation Master Plan** that becomes the policy document for municipal decisions.

Metrolinx, as a Crown corporation, cannot advocate; however Green Communities Canada can, and is currently working with Heart & Stroke on provincial advocacy.

The project team met with the York Region and U of T experts to further discuss and arrange a conference call for the April 20<sup>th</sup> stakeholder workshop.

The opportunity to affect policy at the provincial level makes attendance at HUB meetings critical to ongoing success at local municipal levels.

### Peel Police's School Safety Committee:

This committee was convened to address **the severe school congestion problem** and lack of enforcement success in the Region of Peel. The Brampton Kids on Bikes project team was invited to attend the first meeting on April 1, 2015, along with representatives from: Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, Peel District School Board, Region of Peel Active Transportation, Safe City Mississauga, CAA South Central Ontario, City of Mississauga Traffic, City of Mississauga Parking Enforcement, City of Brampton Recreation, City of Brampton Crossing Guard, City of Brampton Traffic Engineering Services, Switzer Carty Transportation, Region of Peel Public Health, Bike Brampton, Brampton By-Law, Brampton Safe City, City of Mississauga Corporate Service Department, Insurance Bureau of Canada, 11 Division NPU, 12 Division NPU, PRP Road Safety, PRP Field Support Services, 21 Division Administration, Youth

### Peel Police Statistical Highlights:

- In 2014, **1003 collisions in Brampton and Mississauga occurred within 50 meters surrounding a school lot/parcel**
- 263 schools were identified, of the schools identified; most (38%) only had one collision occur within the specified buffer.
- **Most collisions occurred during a weekday from 8am – 9am and from 3pm – 4pm**
- Further examination of collisions during peak times (which more accurately addresses the issue of child pick-up/drop-off) reveals the following: 215 collisions occurred in proximity to 114 schools during peak periods (pick up/drop off times), 21 involved a non-fatal injury

### School Safety Committee challenges identified:

- Most of our efforts are reactionary, as a result of traffic complaints. Enforcement alone is not the answer.
- Population density, speeds and congestion in school zones
- Some parents will park on school lot for hour and a half before pickup times
- Parents must escort Kindergarten students into the school creating congestion in Kiss & Rides
- Most schools were not designed for parent drop off/pickups, they were bus only schools
- The problem is systemic, need to have a more collaborative solution
- Are students attending the appropriate schools? No real form of regulation. A lot of choice due to specialized programs
- There needs to be a culture shift, get parents more involved, representation at the table. Go where they are, churches, Kindergarten orientation
- Need to have parents volunteering at Kiss & Rides
- Schools have limited staff for Kiss & Rides
- The message need to get to the parents have them engaged, appropriate literature, PowerPoint presentations
- Parents are concerned for the safety of their children, ie: abduction, need to change that mindset through education. Work with the media to get the message out. 6% children walk to school
- We need champions from the School Boards to work with parents and students
- Reduce transportation to schools with walk/bike to school programs
- High rates of obesity/diabetes among young people due to inactivity. Further promote active living
- By-Law enforcement at 90 schools in 2015, no improvement
- Need safety messages through social media.
- Increase profile beyond our Region, “ParticipACTION” pulling in established programs
- Walking school buses
- Bus and driveway supervision, active school boards
- Engineering site plan issue and modification to schools.

- Extreme weather conditions add to the problem
- Need to develop educational signs that are clearly visible

### School Safety Committee 2015 Campaign Development key focus:

- Education – Fear/Promoting Healthy Life Style/Alternatives to Drop off/Pick up
- Messaging
- Parental Involvement
- New Solutions
- Kiss & Ride Management

### School Safety Committee Subsequent Meeting:

On May 6, 2015, the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the School Safety Committee was attended by Brampton Kids on Bikes project team along with other stakeholder representation. Subcommittees were identified and formed: Video/Presentation messaging, Print-messaging and Events. Brampton Kids on Bikes is participating on the Video/Presentation subcommittee to prepare three targeted message categories: road safety, health benefits, academic & discipline benefits.

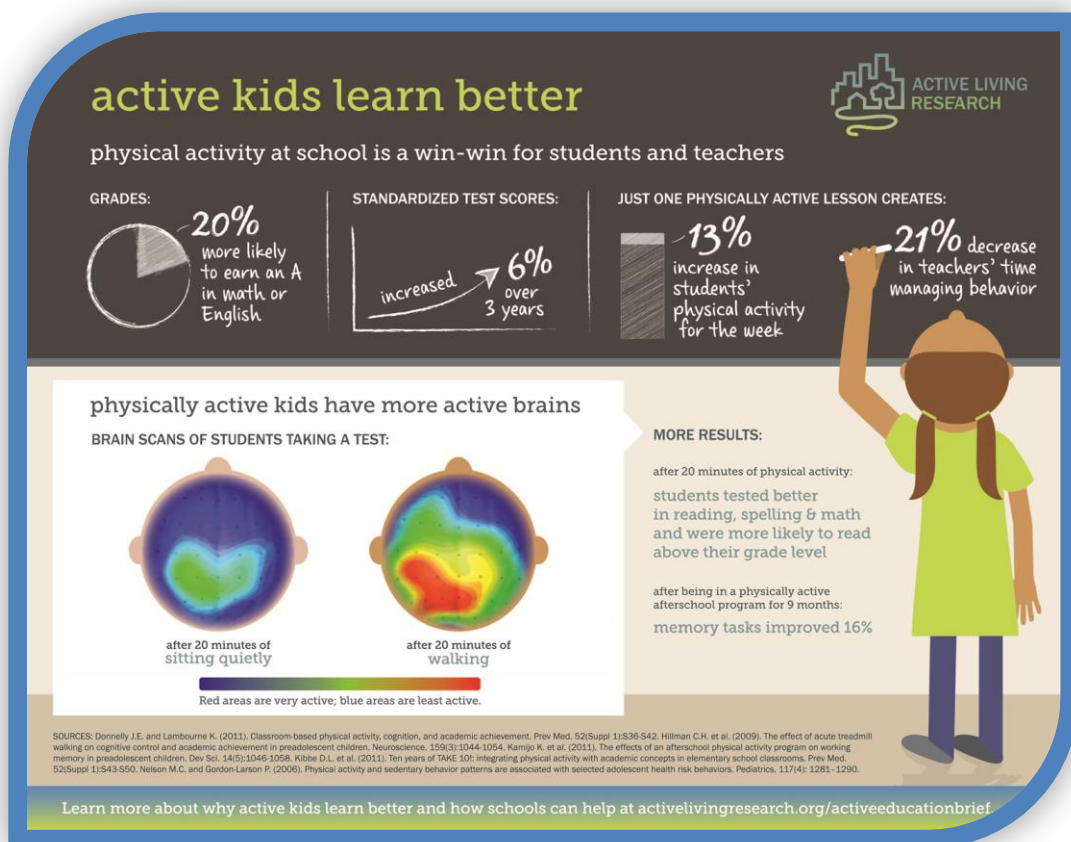


Figure 8 - Academic Performance & Behaviour poster

## Moving Peel Kids Safely School Travel Planning Workshop

Stakeholders from the Region of Peel including those who attended our December 4<sup>th</sup> webinar / workshop were invited for a follow up [workshop](#) on April 20, 2015, at Century Gardens in Brampton. The Metrolinx HUB event created contacts with stakeholders in a variety of fields from across the GTHA, several of whom were contacted to aid in this next seminar/workshop. BikeBrampton's Brampton Kids on Bikes project team shared the link to the Review of Literature, which has been downloaded multiple times since the December 4<sup>th</sup> event and the Metrolinx meetings, promoting sharing collaboration intended by the HUB group.

**Workshop Agenda:** [Link to workshop poster](#)

**Attendees:** Joanna Boudreau – Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board, Steve Kotulak - Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board, Yasemin Sarraf – Peel District School Board, Sharanjeet Kaur - Peel Health, Suzanne Smith – Peel Health, Catherine Sim - Peel Health, Jocelyn Cann – Peel Health, Caren Heramchuk – Peel Health, Lorenzo Melé - Peel Health, Wayne Chan - Peel Active Transportation, Erica Duque - Peel Active Transportation, Michelle Shaw -Brampton Safe City, Nelson Cadete - Brampton Infrastructure Services, Andria Oliveira – Brampton Planning, Violet Skirten – Brampton School Safety Council & Brampton Crossing Guards, Adam Nugent - Brampton Public Services, Vicky An – EcoSchools Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Rachel Stewart – EcoSchools Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board, Tracy Appleton – EcoSchools Peel District School Board, Jacqueline Hunter – Mississauga Active Transportation, Sheelagh Duffin – Mississauga Crossing Guards, Heather Andrews – Peel Police, Deborah Wood – York Region Community and Health, Teija Cumming – York Region Community and Health, Sonia Sonita – York Region School Boards, George Mammen – University of Toronto, David Laing – Bike Brampton, Dayle Laing – Bike Brampton, Pauline Thornham – Bike Brampton, Bill McBain – Heart and Stroke Foundation, Denise De Campos – Heart and Stroke Foundation.

### Workshop Presentations:

**Introduction & Moderation** by Bill McBain, Health Promotion Specialist, Heart and Stroke Foundation

**Brampton Kids on Bikes Backgrounder** by David Laing, Chair, BikeBrampton & Team Manager, Brampton Kids on Bikes Project [Presentation PDF](#) David presented highlights of the [Brampton Kids on Bikes Literature Review](#), referenced the [10 posters](#) around the room, reviewed the [results of the December 4<sup>th</sup> workshop](#), joked about Elizabeth Renzetti's timely weekend Globe and Mail column on ["Get over the Stranger Danger"](#). The stage was set for the current workshop.

**Evidence on School Travel Planning: Findings over 4 years of STP Research**, by George Mammen, University of Toronto Doctoral Candidate. George urged us to using existing materials to build the culture, one message at a time, funded over multiple years, using quality facilitation at multiple meetings with stakeholders from across each school community. He urged that substantial and sustainable results were only achieved when there was an ongoing commitment to the program over several years and that one year was insufficient to properly judge results.

**York Region's Experience**, by Teija Cumming, York Region Community and Health Services (Public Health Nurse) and Sonja Sonita, YRDSB & YCDSB (School Travel Planning Coordinator). Teija and Sonja

reported that their ASRTS (Active and Sustainable Routes to School) Committee was formed and that success took place gradually over several years with school travel planning being included in official regional and town policies. They cited an example of success in a Markham school with a shift from 70% driving to 70% walking in the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 weeks of the program. One school in Aurora had a 93% walking rate in February. This is despite the fact that more than 35 languages are spoken in the region. They agree that housing ASRTS within healthy schools or within eco-schools can both be successful. Metrolinx highlighted their success as being an example of a “can do” attitude. Sonja and Teija concluded that it is essential to have 3 partners: the school boards, health departments and the municipalities/region. By learning from successes such as theirs, results could be reasonably expected to be achieved in a much shorter timeline.

## **Background - December 4<sup>th</sup> workshop yielded the following:**

### **Statement of problem:**

- Childhood inactivity is a serious issue requiring urgent priority focus
- Increasing student active transportation (AT) adoption has the potential to substantively address childhood inactivity
- Current actions in Peel Region aimed at increasing student active transportation participation are inadequate to achieve **transformational change**
  - AT is only one initiative under the healthy schools program (others are healthy eating, tobacco reduction)
  - Small capacity programs
    - Walking Wednesdays
    - Bike Rack installations
    - School Travel Planning (STP) pilots
  - One-way mandate from Peel Public Health to individual schools
    - Dependent on either in-school or parent champions

### **Statement of Objectives:**

- That expanding STP to all Peel Region schools is likely the most valuable first step for sustainably changing school transportation habits
- That the PSARTS committee has the potential to be the operational focus for STP implementation in Peel Region, but requires:
  - Clearer mandate
  - Targets and timelines supported by all key stakeholders
  - Representation on the committee from all key stakeholders

### **Strategies for achieving objectives:**

- Changing transportation habits will require both a top-down and bottom-up strategy
  - **Top-down Strategies**
    - Prioritization from the Ontario Ministries of Health, Education & Transportation
    - Provincial policy mandate for schools to develop and implement STP
    - Municipal Government bylaw support



- **Bottom-up Strategies**
  - Stakeholders need to create more awareness of:
    - the AT link to academic performance
    - the economic cost of the current situation
    - changing public attitudes toward child risk
      - Change risk avoidance to risk management
  - Stakeholders need to communicate the benefits of AT and the risks of the current situation to youth and parents
  - Create a PSARTS sub-committee to focus on AT to schools including representatives from school boards, faith groups, students and parents

### **Consensus on Areas where teams differ from Dec 4<sup>th</sup> workshop conclusions:**

- Previous workshop group did not have mandate or authority to define realistic targets
- Concern expressed over ensuring that **all** key stakeholders are participating in the process to enable success
- Objective targets were too aggressive (100% AT in 2 years) – based on ‘discussion-encouraging’ poster presented at Dec 4<sup>th</sup> workshop and currently displayed on the workshop wall
- Discussion whether focus should be on elementary, secondary or both school levels (develop positive AT habits early, versus parental support for older children’s participation)
- Stranger-danger perception requires parent engagement & education with statistics
- Eco-School program is across all schools in DPCSB but in only 1/3 of PDSB – eco-schools can use active transportation to obtain eco-points, but AT is not mandated in the program
- Overcome the PDSB declaration of “no new mandates this year” to reflect the critical nature of this issue for the benefit of improved academic performance, health and safety
- School Travel Planning (STP) should be better referred to in the Dec 4<sup>th</sup> conclusions as “Active and Sustainable School Travel” (ASST) to reflect the ongoing sustainability required for success
- Adjust Dec 4<sup>th</sup> conclusions from “subcommittee of PSARTS” to “expand participation in PSARTS to include” to reflect the importance of the program required to effect **transformational change**

### **Consensus on Steps for achieving Objectives:**

#### **Active Transportation Linkages for Success:**

- Link Targets to performance criteria to ensure a measureable success
- Link Active Transportation goals to academic performance and student behaviour in the classroom, citing well-documented research and statistics, delivered with authority by educators
- Link Active Transportation to more effective use of school staff / administration time
- Link Active Transportation to more effective use of municipal staff / police traffic management time to lessen congestion, lessen road construction and lessen maintenance
- Link Active Transportation to better health and safety outcomes for Peel children
- Link Active Transportation to better environmental outcomes for all Peel residents, including children ( reduce traffic exhaust air pollution)
- Link school travel planning into Eco-School program and/or into Ontario Physical Education

Association ([Ophea](#), Healthy Schools Healthy Communities)

- Link together Healthy Schools pilot into Eco-Schools model and scoring system

### Education:

- Educate using resources from PSARTS (Peel Safe & Active Routes to School) Committee, Peel Public Health, Peel Police, and Municipal Road Safety – use the Peel’s existing School Travel Planning (STP) toolkit, teach drivers & cyclists to share the road, teach children how to ride and cross the road safely, etc.
- Unify the safety message amongst Region of Peel Health, Peel Police, Road Safety and various stakeholders to alleviate unwarranted safety concerns of parents
- Employ events to educate and achieve goals: ‘WOW’ walking & wheeling Wednesdays, car-free days, closed parking lot days, awards for students, etc. --- programs for behaviour modification coordinated through PSARTS, Peel Public Health, School boards, school principals, volunteers, municipal traffic and Peel Police

### Workshop Testimonial:

*“You changed my life after your February Brampton Kids on Bikes presentation. My kids walk to school now. I was the parent who would have driven my children to university. I want to start a walking school bus program at my kids’ school.”*

- Michelle Shaw, Brampton parent

### Next Steps:

- Use one common central website for active transportation information: [Walk+Roll Peel](#)
- Collaborative Meeting(s) amongst Peel Medical Officer of Health, School Board Directors, Superintendents and School Trustees – formalize process with key contacts identified & responsibilities outlined This could be within the context of the existing Peel Safe and Active Routes to Schools Committee but with a revised mandate to agree on targets, timelines and implementation strategy to drive region-wide change.
- Requirement for School Boards to lead the collaboration, with representation from the highest levels (Directors, Superintendents and Trustees)
- Requirement for School Travel Planner resource person(s), with School Boards sharing resource (as done successfully in York Region), with engagement of school boards
- Municipal Political support – Regional Council to approve and fund long-term active and sustainable school travel planning (ASST) initiative based on STP pilot results which are scheduled to be presented to Council before end of 2015 (It was Municipal governments that created the ‘tipping point’ for the tobacco issue)

### Action Items:

- Establish a committee to strategize on fulfilling “Next Steps”, as outlined above. Committee volunteers from workshop participants: Michelle Shaw – Brampton Safe City, Denise De Campos – Heart and Stroke Foundation, Steve Kotulak - Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board
- Stakeholders from Peel Health, Peel AT, Bike Brampton, Brampton & Mississauga Traffic,

Brampton & Mississauga Planning, Peel District School Board, Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board, Brampton Safe City and Peel Police to participate in Peel Police School Safety Committee to prepare educational messages to address the goal of promoting safety for school travel while reducing congestion at the schools.

- David Laing, Chair of Bike Brampton to delegate to Region of Peel Council to request that Peel Region establishes a senior leadership taskforce with representation from both of the school boards, the Region and the 3 Peel municipalities. He will request that the task force mandate should define the vision for change along with bold yet achievable targets and timelines that will drive the change aggressively yet sustainably throughout the Region

## Stakeholder Advocacy Messaging – Guidelines

Results from the literature review, focus groups, and stakeholder meetings have suggested a need for



Figure 9 - Moving Peel Kids Safely Workshop, Apr 20, 2015

different messaging designed for the different stakeholder groups, with the following guidelines:

### Students:

- We can reach out to students, to inform them about the virtues of AT, as well as the health and other issues around vehicular travel to school. Then the students will be able to influence their parents about making healthy lifestyle choices in getting to school.
- Normalize active transportation. Make cycling cool, for both girls and boys for peer influence.
- We can investigate the Trillium Foundation's program of giving bikes to kids, as an incentive, for the balance 10% who do not currently own bikes. We can coordinate with our BikeBrampton Bike Clinic initiative with Peel to help students repair (and learn to repair) their own bikes.

### Parents:

- Parents are reluctant to engage in focus groups due to not perceiving this as an issue, having

objections to changing their behaviour, not having the time to consider the issue, or avoid discussion on a topic for which they know their actions are not justified. Parents put pressure on school trustees to bus their children ever shorter distances and make travel by car easier for them despite the congestion, in the misconception that this makes them better parents. Parents can be a good parent while letting their child travel actively to school. In fact, letting the child have the required daily exercise is essential to their short and long term health. Reducing the damage being done to children's health should be the prime imperative.

- We can address faith groups, who have a large influence in Peel Region, both in numbers and ability to change behaviour. This is an example of 'Community Based Social Marketing'.
- We can make contact with school councils, but even more likely to success, places where parents gather such as school concerts, with the intent of speaking directly to parents about the virtues of AT.
- Changing the current situation for active transportation for children travelling to school will likely take a shift in the current cultural norm, which may occur quickly because parents are conflicted!
- The current board of education focus on mathematics could be enhanced by students arriving at school alert and energized due to active transportation. Focus messaging on academic performance linked to exercise, with emphasis on the ease of incorporating active transportation into the daily 60 minute requirement for students. This messaging needs to be focussed at both parents and school boards with links to the robust research already available
- 'Waiting for the perfection' of bicycle infrastructure should not be an excuse to avoid changing the 'status quo' culture. Lack of demand can be viewed as a reason not to invest in bicycle infrastructure. This should be a case of "build it and they will come". We can make driving inconvenient and enforce no idling and no parking bylaws. We can request that municipalities spend an appropriate amount on cycling and pedestrian infrastructure as per their official plans and strategic plans and make wiser use of tax payers' dollars without considering only automobiles.

#### **Community Stakeholder Engagement next step:**

- To achieve the cultural shift necessary to overcome obstacles to active transportation, Brampton Kids on Bikes team to continue to engage key community leaders and seek out other champions in the community
- Brampton Kids on Bikes to participate in Peel Police School Safety Committee and Video subcommittee to assist with messaging for maximizing success at moving Peel students from cars to active transportation
- Brampton Kids on Bikes to continue to participate in Metrolinx HUB committee for sharing information and influencing at the municipal and provincial levels.

#### **Municipal Staff, Politicians & School Boards:**

- We need agreement from all stakeholders on the severity of the problem, which has been well and extensively documented, with comprehensive suggestions about how to fix this problem. Pilot projects are no longer necessary and are a waste of money

- We need agreement from stakeholders that ‘silos’ are inefficient and the wise use of limited taxpayer money is essential. There are many ‘moving parts’ – many stakeholders that must coordinate actions to be successful. Coordinated action mandated from the highest levels is required.
- We can ensure local government and politicians understand the economic impact of congestion and the unnecessary extra school travel trips. The costs are borne on our road construction, road repair, pollution, and wasted resources for staff & trustees dealing with rush hour chaos.
- We can call for sustainable school travel plans at all schools in Peel Region. Public and separate school boards can share AT planning resources as they do in some other areas of GTHA.
- A city and a regional councillor, and school trustee from each board needs to be identified and targeted for championing policies and action
- Specific targets should be agreed upon by stakeholders, measured & incentives applied. Schools are not all equal in their opportunities for active transportation. Targets for schools could allow for percentage point improvements rather than actual numbers.
- David Laing delegated to Region of Peel Council on May 14, 2015. See [link](#) for agenda and p. 5.1-2 to 5.1-22 for his presentation slides. He took the action item from the April 20<sup>th</sup> workshop to request that Peel Region establishes a senior leadership task force with representation from both of the School Boards, the Region and the 3 Peel municipalities. He requested that the task force mandate should define the vision for change along with bold yet achievable targets and timelines that will drive the change aggressively yet sustainably throughout the Region.
- David Laing delegated to Peel District School Board on May 26, 2015 and is scheduled to delegate to Dufferin Peel District Catholic School Board on June 8, 2015 with the same for senior leadership task force request.

## Conclusions:

Although the Brampton Kids on Bikes Project is complete as per the Heart & Stroke terms of reference, the important work begun on this project is well under way and needs considerable effort to effect change to make sustainable active routes to school and active transportation behaviour the norm in the Region of Peel. It is time for all the stakeholders to continue with this momentum. It is time to create transformational change for the sake of our children and the sake of the community in which we live, work and play.

The Brampton Kids on Bikes Project team challenges everyone to work together to make this happen now!