Families and Educators for Safe Cycling:

Engaging School Communities in Cycling Infrastructure Projects

A Guide for Families, Educators, City Staff, and Cycling Advocates

November 2020

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Contents

Why Engage Schools in Cycling Infrastructure Projects?

School communities are full of voices that are important in our conversations about safe streets, including parents, teachers, administrators, school board staff and trustees, and most crucially the students themselves.

For students, cycling is not only a fun activity and a way to get exercise, but also an important travel option that builds independence and equity. Studies have shown that students who walk or bike to school experience reduced stress, increased happiness, decreased depression and anxiety, and increased attention and alertness during the school day (Lambiase, 2010; Iancovich, 2015; Ramanathan, 2014; Martinez-Gomez, 2011). More students biking also means less traffic congestion and less pollution around schools. Making these benefits available to all students is a matter of justice and equity.

Concerns about safety on the streets, however, are a major barrier. The concerns often influence parental decisions about whether to encourage their children to bike independently. Safe, protected cycling infrastructure designed for all ages and abilities is a crucial enabling ingredient, along with other key considerations, such as access to bicycles and cycling education.

Despite the enthusiasm for cycling among young people, school communities are generally not engaged in public discussions about new or potential cycling infrastructure projects. Municipal transportation staff are unlikely to have a relationship with local schools, and project schedules may not allow sufficient time to build these relationships or adapt engagement materials to a school audience. For their part, students, parents and educators have limited resources and many demands on their time. As a result, it is difficult to effectively engage young people in cycling infrastructure consultation processes, and the voices of children, youth and school communities are often missing from conversations that impact their neighbourhoods.

To bridge this gap, the Families and Educators for Safe Cycling (FESC) project piloted different approaches and strategies for engaging school communities with cycling infrastructure projects in Toronto, over two years (August 2018-July 2020). The project was led by CultureLink Settlement and Community Services, in partnership with Cycle Toronto and the Toronto Cycling Think and Do Tank. We have worked together over several years to offer cycling education programs in schools around Toronto reaching over 40,000 students since 2016. FESC project activities involving students during the school day were governed by a formal partnership agreement.

FESC executed **55 educational engagements** reaching a total of **1114 school community members**: 210 school staff, 361 students, and 543 parents. We recruited and mentored **33 School Cycling Champions,** who engaged with decision-makers on 10 cycling infrastructure campaigns.

> Schools are key, but they can be impenetrable. Without buy-in from a principal or a vice principal, you pretty much have no chance of succeeding in that school. I've seen it: you might have great teachers saying yes and yes, but without buy in it's going to be difficult moving forward. So NGOs and community organizations, they really help as they give voice to these parent teacher councils who don't have this expertise.
>
> – Parent Cycling Champion

Our work was focused on the cycling infrastructure projects planned for four major corridors: Bloor Street West, Finch Avenue West, Eglinton Avenue East and Danforth Avenue. We saw significant progress on three of these plans. Protected bike lanes on Bloor West and Danforth – which will serve 30,000 students who attend school along those corridors – were implemented in summer 2020. The bike lanes planned for Eglinton Avenue East were upgraded from painted lanes to protected lanes, and are scheduled for implementation in 2022. While schools were engaged in conversations around the Finch West project, this project has a longer timeframe (scheduled for 2023), and little progress was made towards implementation during the span of our project.

In the areas surrounding all four major corridors, we worked with school communities and local cycling advocates to identify several **bicycle boulevard** routes that would run perpendicular to the protected bike lane route, connecting several schools to the upcoming high quality major cycling routes. There was significant progress on three routes serving 13 schools.

Based on this experience and record of success, we have distilled a four-step model[1] for engaging schools in cycling infrastructure projects, which is outlined in this guide. Cycling projects have great potential to make the whole community safer and benefit students in particular. We found that networking and relationship building are key to success. This guide is intended for parents, teachers, cycling advocates, city staff, and anyone looking to facilitate student voices being heard by the decision-makers in their community.

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[1] This guide can be viewed as a companion to the Guide to Safer Streets near Schools, published in 2016 by The Centre for Active Transportation. It guides school councils through the process of requesting street improvements to slow the speed of vehicles, calm traffic, and make it safer to cross the street, focusing mainly on pedestrian safety

The Main Actors in Cycling Infrastructure Projects

Engaging school communities in cycling infrastructure projects is meaningful for the school communities themselves and city as as a whole. In this guide we refer to several actors who together bring cycling infrastructure projects to life.

Cycling advocates are residents organize communities in support of safe and accessible cycling infrastructure. Your work in schools will be helpful to them, and they will be eager to support you with resources, advice, and even volunteers.

Elected officials represent residents, make decisions on issues, and give directions to city staff. They may be allies, and they are often interested in connecting with young people and helping them engage with their city.

City staff are professionals who plan, design, and implement cycling infrastructure projects, and run public consultations about them. They are interested in the specific needs of school communities, and may want to bring an official consultation into a school classroom.

Community partners can include social service agencies, non-profit bike hubs, bike shops, cycling education providers, and more. They may become your allies, and may be able to offer cycling resources and support to you and the school community.

Your goal is to connect the people in the school community to the people working on a project, making sure the voice of the school is heard by the decision-makers.

FIGURE 1: THE MAIN ACTORS IN CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS. IN THIS GUIDE WE REFER TO SEVERAL ACTORS WHO TOGETHER BRING CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TO LIFE: CYCLING ADVOCATES, ELECTED OFFICIALS, CITY STAFF, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS. YOUR GOAL IS TO CONNECT THE PEOPLE IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY TO THE PEOPLE WORKING ON A PROJECT, MAKING SURE THE VOICE OF THE SCHOOL IS HEARD BY THE DECISION-MAKERS.

Engaging Schools in Cycling Infrastructure Projects: A Step-by-Step Model

Between 2018 and 2020, we piloted different approaches to engaging school communities. We recognize that students, parents and educators have limited time and resources. We have distilled our experience into a four-step model to help school communities have a voice on cycling infrastructure projects.

STEP
01
Finding the
Right Project

STEP
02
Researching
Local Schools

The
STEPS

Engaging the
School Community
STEP
03

Giving the School
Community Voice
STEP
04

FIGURE 2: ENGAGING SCHOOLS IN CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS: A STEP-BY-STEP MODEL. BASED ON OUR EXPERIENCE EXECUTING THE TWO-YEAR FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS FOR SAFE CYCLING PROJECT, WE HAVE CREATED THIS FOUR-STEP PROCESS FOR ENGAGING SCHOOLS IN CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.
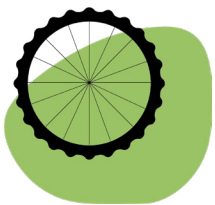
STEP 01
Finding the Right Project

Engaging schools in a cycling infrastructure project begins with finding a project that will have an impact on the school communities that surround it. Two criteria are particularly important – the project's contribution to transportation equity and how a proposed project will make streets near school schools safer. If a project is already planned, you have an opportunity to ensure it serves the school community. If there are no planned projects, you may want to propose one. In either case, you should be able to answer the following question: "Why should a school community care about this project?"

In this section we guide you through our research process, concluding with a summary of our analysis of the Bloor Street West and Finch West projects. See **Example: Project Analyses** on Page 12.

Transportation Equity

In many cities, on-street cycling infrastructure has been installed primarily in the urban centre, where the network of streets is more tight-knit and there are more destinations (retail, services, employment) within a bikeable distance[2]. In many cases, including Toronto, housing prices and rents are also higher in the core, and cycling infrastructure projects have tended to benefit higher income residents most. These wealthier neighbourhoods usually have a lower percentage of visible minority residents. Investigating opportunities to improve cycling infrastructure in under-served areas can advance transportation equity, which should be a top priority in choosing where to focus your energy.

To understand transportation equity issues, start by doing some research. Federal census data can tell you useful information about neighbourhoods, such as median individual income and percent of a population that identifies as visible minority. Some school boards publish data on students' external barriers to learning, such as the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB)[3]. You can also look for local rates of active transportation (walking, biking) and public transit use; many cities report this data and publish it on their website. Communities most in need of improved transportation equity are ones that combine poor access to transportation options with other measures of social inequity, such as low median income and high percentage of racialized residents.

Once you have identified communities that could benefit most from improved cycling infrastructure, reach out to community organizations that have local knowledge and relationships with the people that live and work in the area, such as settlement organizations or community services agencies. Find out about the local cycling culture. Are people already biking in your area despite a lack of safe infrastructure? Is the cycling rate low, perhaps due to lack of cycling infrastructure? Who is cycling in your area? Is it for recreation or transportation? Does your area have a community bike repair hub? Do local schools provide cycling education? Remember, networking and relationship building are key to success.

> In order to achieve a more equitable understanding of what the community needs, you really need to go to people and also provide more opportunities for people to speak their minds.
>
> – Community Partner Cycling Champion

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[2] Bikeable distance is generally defined as 5-7 km for adults. It may be less for children and youth.

[3] The LOI ranks each of the 473 elementary schools and 105 secondary schools in the TDSB based on measures of external challenges impacting student success. The school with the greatest level of external challenges is ranked number one and is described as highest on the index.

Make Streets Near Schools Safer

People prefer cycling infrastructure that separates them from heavy, high speed motor vehicle traffic and noise (Cycling in Cities, 2017). Studies have consistently found this type of infrastructure to be safer (Cycling in Cities, 2020; Lusk, et al., 2011). When cycling with children, these factors carry even more importance (Aldred, 2015).

The City of Vancouver has published an excellent resource describing "All Ages and Abilities" cycling infrastructure[4]. FESC focused on these types of infrastructure which are **accessible to children and families:**

Protected bike lanes (cycle tracks) are bike lanes that are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic (National Association of City Transportation Officials, 2014). These are often implemented on main streets. Types of physical separation include plastic bollards, planter boxes, concrete curbs, raised curbs, and jersey barriers. Protected bike lane projects are important to communities and municipalities, as they involve a significant change to a major street.

Example: Conlins Road in Scarborough has a protected bike lane. People biking are separated from people driving by a low concrete wall.

Bicycle boulevards (neighbourhood greenways) are streets with low motorized traffic volumes and speeds, designated and designed to give bicycle travel priority. Bicycle Boulevards use signs, pavement markings, and speed and volume management measures to discourage through trips by motor vehicles and create safe, convenient bicycle crossings of busy arterial streets (National Association of City Transportation Officials, 2014). These simple routes have the potential to improve students' daily trips, since many schools are located on local streets, not major arterials. The best bicycle boulevards run perpendicular to a protected bike lane, so the two routes amplify one another's impact, and the "T" shape provides a good foundation on which to build a complete cycling network grid throughout the neighbourhood.

Shaw Street in Toronto's west end is an example of a bicycle boulevard. While the street is one-way for people driving, the contra-flow bike lane allows people on bikes to ride in both directions.

Mutli-use trails (MUTs) are paved paths for cycling and walking. They are usually implemented along linear green spaces or high-speed roadways, where maximum physical separation is desired. Many people consider trails to be the most child-friendly form of cycling infrastructure, but research shows they are the site of crashes (Cycling in Cities, 2020), and they are often used more for recreational cycling than transportation. Safety along these routes can be improved through better sightlines, the removal of obstructions, and better lighting.

The Martin Goodman Trail in downtown Toronto is one of our newest multi-use trails. It is located at sidewalk level, separate from motor vehicle traffic on Queens Quay.

Dedicated and protected intersections are intersections designed to provide safety and comfort to people on bicycles. Dedicated intersections give dedicated space to cyclists within the intersection, usually marked with coloured paint, while protected intersections feature dedicated space for cyclists that is physically separated from motor vehicles at the corners (National Association of City Transportation Officials, 2019).

The Bloor cycle track features dedicated intersections, where space for people on bikes is clearly marked within the intersections. There is some physical protection, but not enough to be classified a protected intersection.

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4 See Transportation Design Guidelines: All Ages and Abilities Cycling Routes (Version 1.1) published by City of Vancouver, March, 2017

Unsafe cycling infrastructure that is not accessible to children includes painted bike lanes on arterial streets, especially with parked cars, and shared-lane markings (sharrows) on streets that do not have low motor vehicle speeds and volumes (Cycling in Cities, 2020).

Sidewalk riding can seem like a safe option for children. However, it is associated with injuries and collisions due to drivers turning into driveways and onto side streets (Cycling in Cities, 2020). The fact that adults are generally required to ride in the street means that parents cannot legally ride alongside their children on the sidewalk.

A Nearby Project Is Planned

Many municipalities have a **cycling network plan or active transportation plan**, which outlines how they will increase cycling infrastructure over a period of months or years. Start by consulting these plans for a project located close to schools in your neighbourhood. Is the planned project **accessible to children and families**? If so, great! Your work can focus on building support for the project within school communities. Or is the project **inaccessible for children and families**? In this case, in addition to working to build support, you should look for opportunities to upgrade the proposed infrastructure to include enough physical protection for a child and parent to feel safe and comfortable riding. Stay updated on a project by signing up for the relevant email lists: project update notifications (if available) and the local city councillors' newsletters.

Research the **project timeline**, ideally by contacting your city's cycling infrastructure staff (in many municipalities, you can access city services by calling 311). Find out who is implementing the project—municipality, regional transportation authority, other[5] — and if there is an upcoming **public consultation** period for the project. This is your best opportunity to help school community members express support for the project. After the public consultation is complete, it is more difficult for community members to have a voice.

No Project Is Planned, But One Should Be

If not project is planned for your area, you may want to suggest new projects. Identify possible cycling routes to fill the gaps in the future cycling network and serve local schools. Look for a quiet street that connects neighbourhoods across physical barriers, such as railroad tracks or rivers, and has traffic signals at major intersections; this could become a bicycle boulevard. If none exists, a protected bike lane on a major street may be your best option.

Analyze each route's strengths and weaknesses. How well does it connect residences to destinations? How well does it connect to the rest of the cycling network? Seek input from community members on which route would work best for them.

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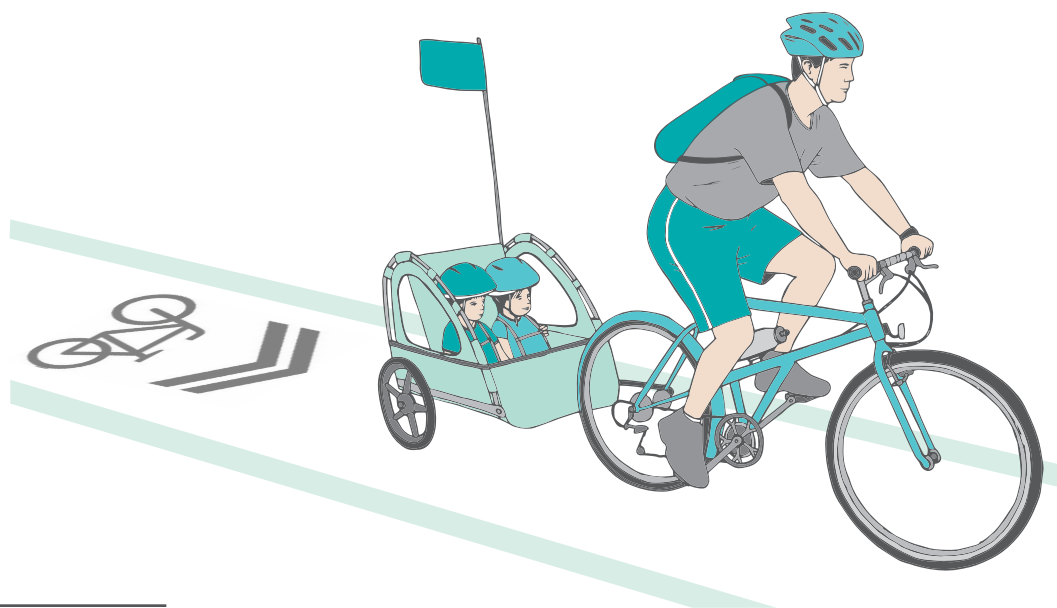
[5] Among our four projects, two were managed by the City of Toronto, two by Metrolinx. The Metrolinx projects had very long timelines—consultations began in 2010—with fewer opportunities for input on the design of the cycling infrastructure by the time we engaged with the project. However, City of Toronto staff have influence over the design of bike lanes, and we were able to engage with them.

Example: Project Analyses

	Finch West LRT	Bloor West Bikeway Extension
Transportation Equity	The neighbourhoods along the Finch West corridor tend to have highly racialized populations and median household income (City of Toronto, 2017), poor to medium access to mass transit, and poor access to on-street cycling infrastructure. Schools tend to rank very high on the TDSB's Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) (Toronto District School Board, 2020). The combination of limited transportation options and low income results in transport poverty.	Most of the neighbourhoods along Bloor St W (Shaw St to Runnymede Rd) have less racialized populations and slightly lower median household income (with a few exceptions) (City of Toronto, 2017), than the Toronto average. They have good access to mass transit, and fair access to on-street cycling infrastructure. Cycling for transportation is common in many neighbourhoods, and several already have bicycle boulevards. Schools tend to rank in the middle of the LOI (Toronto District School Board, 2020).
Protected Bike Lanes	Finch Avenue West is a major suburban arterial with very high volumes of motor vehicle traffic (including high heavy truck traffic). Robust protection such as jersey barriers or a concrete boulevard is required for the bike lanes to feel safe.	Bloor Street West is mostly a typical Toronto "main street", with high concentration of destinations and high volume of motor vehicle traffic. Protection such as a concrete curb is required for the bike lanes to feel safe for the average person, and especially for children.
Bicycle Boulevards	Several small to medium perpendicular streets would make great bicycle boulevards.	While this corridor has a few perpendicular bike routes, several network gaps exist, some of which could be filled with a bicycle boulevard.
Already Planned	Metrolinx's Finch West LRT project includes plans for a raised cycle track. Expected completion 2023 (Metrolinx, 2019).	A short pilot project along one section of Bloor St was installed in 2016. A project to extend the cycle track further along Bloor was launched in 2019.
Public Input	This massive light rail transit project is run by Metrolinx and has a very long timeline. The main consultations happened in 2010. City staff and local councillors have some power to influence the design of the cycling infrastructure. Local transportation advocate Darnel Harris has created a high-quality alternative plan for an off-street "greenway"—a multi-use trail that incorporates environmental features, such as stormwater management and green spaces. For details, see www.ourgreenway.ca	This project is run by the City of Toronto and there will be multiple stages of consultation. Because it is an extension of an existing bike lane that was studied extensively, ample information about the potential benefits is available. Several organisations, including Cycle Toronto, have been advocating for bike lanes on Bloor for decades and organizing the communities into local ward groups.
Opportunities	Help an emerging cycling culture develop. Partner with CultureLink's Bike Hub at 15 Tobermory.	While these neighbourhoods are already fairly bike-friendly, this facility will allow more people to feel safe enough to start riding.

STEP 02
Researching Local Schools

Once you have picked a project to focus on, you are ready for Step 2: Researching Local Schools. This will help you make a good impression and be more effective when you approach students, parents and educators in Steps 3 and 4.

Even if you already know which school(s) you want to engage with, try to collect information about all the schools along your project's route. This will help you communicate how many school communities and students will benefit from your project. Then, dig deeper. Schools are unique places that can seem like the centre of the world for their students and families. It's important to understand each school's culture and characteristics. Look for overlap between your interests, and the interests in the school community.

Schools 101

In Ontario, public schools are organized within school boards. There are generally four boards operating in any jurisdiction: English "public" (non-religious), English Catholic, French "public" and French Catholic. Each school board maintains a website with contact information and basic information for all their schools, and links to the school websites.

Independent schools (or "private schools") are not part of the publicly-funded boards of education. They are funded primarily by student fees. Regardless, they may all be good sites for this work as well.

In Ontario, elementary schools serve students from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 8. Secondary schools ("high schools") serve students from Grade 9 through 12.

School Statistics

When researching the schools near your project, record important information in a spreadsheet including the **total number of schools** and the **total number of students** along your project's corridor. We were surprised at how high these numbers were for our projects, and so were several decision-makers—one of our corridors serves 33 schools and 24,000 students! These numbers are helpful for cycling advocates, city staff, and city councillors to communicate the need for hearing from schools and providing safe cycling infrastructure for students. See **Example: School Statistics** on Page 14.

You can learn **basic demographic information** about a school's students from the published results of the student assessments administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (https://www.eqao.com/en/assessments/results). These assessments are carried out in Grades 3, 6 and 9. Reported results include the total number of students at the school, the number of students with special needs and the number of English Language Learners or students new to Canada. This information can give you an idea of whether you may face language barriers when reaching out to parents.
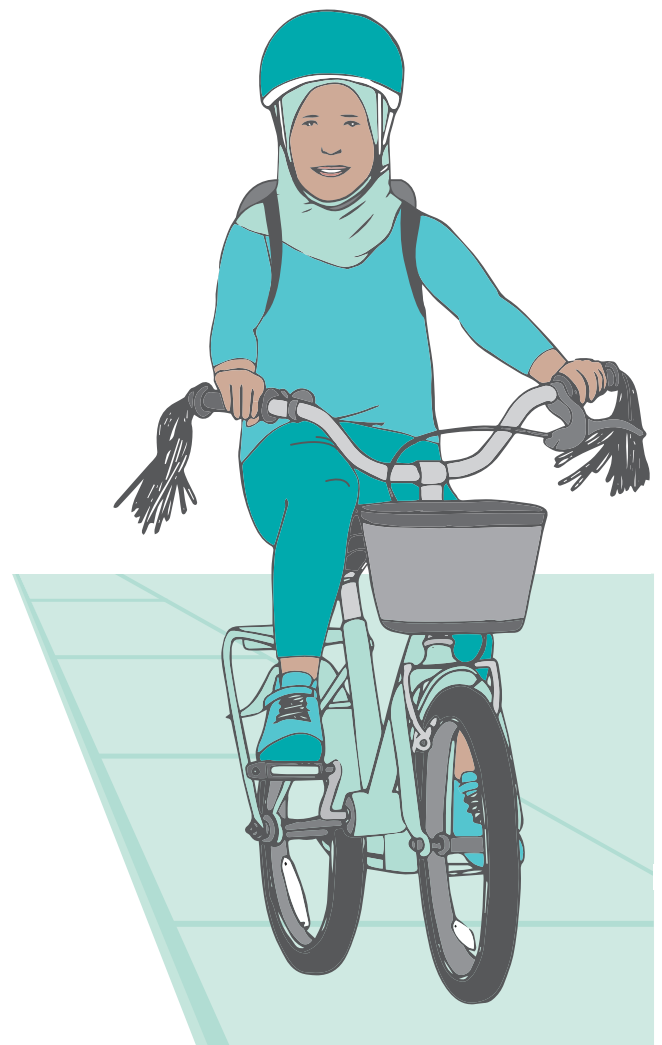
Example: School Statistics

Near Finch Avenue West	Schools	Students
Elementary	16	6112
Secondary	4	1690
Middle	4	2356
Total	**24**	**10 158**

Near Bloor Street West	Schools	Students
Elementary	13	6794
Secondary	1	120
Middle	5	4366
Total	**19**	**11 280**

School Characteristics

While public schools generally serve all students, some schools invest more in particular program areas (e.g. sports, science, or the arts). This will be highlighted on the school website. In secondary schools, the full list of teachers and classes may be available online. Make a note of classes and teachers that might welcome a classroom presentation. See adjacent **Information Box: Classes That Work Well for Cycling Infrastructure Engagements**.

Extracurricular programs may also be a point of pride for a school and can include after-school or lunch-time clubs. In Ontario, an **EcoSchools club** (sometimes called a "Green Team" or similar name) may be a place where bike-friendly students and teachers meet each other.

Ontario schools are required to have a **School Council**, where parents formally give input on school operations and priorities. School councils tend to be more active in elementary schools than in intermediate and secondary schools, and sometimes struggle with engaging the full diversity of families served by the school. Nevertheless, they are important places to meet parents and guardians who are active in the school community, and to learn about upcoming events or school priorities. A school website will often include information about school council meetings. See **Example: School Spreadsheet Entry** on Page 15.

Classes That Work Well for Cycling Infrastructure engagements

Teachers often welcome outside presenters to their classrooms. We developed the Complete Street Design Project for the Grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course and have provided the lesson plans in Appendix A and B of this guide. These lesson plans can be adapted for the Grade 9 Geography course, Grade 9-12 Technological Education courses, Grade 5 Social Studies (The Role of Government and Responsible Citizenship), Grade 1 social studies (The Local Community), and others.

In addition, the following lesson plans link cycling and active transportation to expectations in the Ontario curriculum:

Active and Sustainable School Travel Lesson Plans by Metrolinx and CultureLink for Grade 1 Science, Grade 5 Social Studies, and Grade 9 Health and Physical Education

The Ontario Road Safety Resource developed in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Ophea and the Canadian Automobile Association

Guide to Ride, including 10 lesson plans (Grades 4-6) by PHE Canada

For URLs, see **Recommended Resources** on Page 26.

Example: School Spreadsheet Entry

School Name	Central Toronto Academy
Grade at School	GR. 09-12
Phone Number	(416) 393-0030
Principal	Iwona Kurman
Vice Principal	Timothy Seabrook
Vice Principal	
Name of School Council Chair	David Wong, Ed Van Hooydonk
Number of Students	627
Potential Barriers to Engagement	Possible language barrier due to high population of newcomer students. Possible access barrier due to long student commute distances.
Relevant Academic or Athletic Programs	Active bike club
Relevant Extracurricular Activities	Active bike club

Student Commutes

Many school boards, or schools themselves, publish online maps of the school boundaries, the geographic area served by the schools.

Elementary schools (usually JK-8) generally serve students who live within a few kilometres of the school, which is usually considered a reasonable "walking distance". Walking distance, however, works differently with children. A five-minute walk for an adult can take much longer for a child, due to differences in speed and distraction, both of which cycling can help alleviate. As you study the school boundary maps, think about how cycling could make commuting easier for not only students who live far away from the school, but also students who live close. While younger children can legally ride on the sidewalk, on-street cycling infrastructure is safer for everyone (Cycling in Cities, 2020), and is especially important for students in Grades 5-8, who need safe spaces to practice on-street riding.

Secondary schools (9-12) are generally larger and fewer in number than elementary schools, and so attract students from a much wider area. Furthermore, in Toronto, "open enrollment" policies allow secondary school students to enroll in a school of their choice regardless of where they live, resulting in long commutes for many students. Since Toronto requires people age fourteen and over—most high school students—to bike on the street, they require safe infrastructure.

Some neighbourhoods have **middle schools**, usually for students in Grades 6, 7 and 8. Like secondary schools, middle schools attract students from a wide area, and biking can be an important transportation option.

Try to identify barriers to cycling to school. Look for major arterial streets—which are dangerous to travel on and across—and steep hills[6]. Bike around the neighbourhood and imagine yourself as a younger, more vulnerable cyclist or pedestrian. Look for nearby parks, retail areas, and other amenities too. Think about possible benefits of the cycling infrastructure projects you've decided to focus on for the families and staff at each school. See **Example: Student Commutes** below.

At some schools, many or most students are driven to school by their parents. Some schools really struggle with congestion during the morning "drop-off" and afternoon "pick-up" times. These difficulties may prompt the creation of **Active School Travel (AST)** committees or campaigns. Other schools start such initiatives to advance goals related to physical activity, environmental sustainability, or because of planned changes to school bus routes. Connecting with an existing Active School Travel initiative or champion in a school is an important step if you are seeking support for improved cycling infrastructure.

Active School Travel (AST)

The goal of active school travel initiatives is for more children to walk, wheel (bicycle, scooter, skateboard, wheel chair) or take the school bus or public transit for all or part of their journey to and from school each day. A school AST initiative will often include education and encouragement activities to raise awareness and to celebrate the benefits of active school travel, while also involving local decision-makers to improve the environment for active school travel on the school property, and in the neighbourhood. In Ontario, Green Communities Canada is the leading proponent of Active School Travel. Visit www.ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca for more background and ideas.

Example: Student Commutes

Secondary School Near Finch Ave W	Secondary School Near Bloor St W
• School is located fairly centrally within its school boundaries • Most students live within a 15 minute walk of the school • The students who live farthest away from the school face 45 minute walk each way. This is reduced to under 15 minutes by bicycle. • Streets are very wide • Some students have to cross major arterial streets to access the school • Many students have to travel along a minor arterial street (has a painted bike lane) • The area has a fair amount of on-street cycling infrastructure • Some commutes may include crossing a deep river valley, including a fairly steep climb	• School is located centrally within its school boundaries • Most students live within a 15 minute walk of the school • The students who live farthest away from the school face a 30 minute walk each way. This is reduced to under 10 minutes by bicycle. • Mix of local streets, minor arterials, and major arterials • Some students have to cross several major arterial streets to access the school • Many students have to travel along a major arterial street without cycling infrastructure • The area has a fair amount of on-street cycling infrastructure • No major geographic barriers

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[6] Mapping a cycling route with online mapping software such as Google Maps will show changes in elevation.

STEP 03
Engaging the School Community

Now that you have picked your project, and learned about the neighbourhood schools, it's time to meet the students, parents and educators in those school communities. Connecting with schools is the biggest challenge of the entire process. School communities tend to focus on issues within the school walls, such as access to technology, school events, and so on. Asking a school community to engage with an issue located off school property will likely be perceived as an unusual request. Where to start? Remember, networking and relationship building are key to success. See **Example: Building Broad Support in Thorncliffe Park & Flemingdon Park** on Page 19.

Every adult in a school community is busy. Teachers and administrators are often overwhelmed by what's expected of them. School board trustees represent a large number of schools and often serve in that role as volunteers. If parents are working outside the home, they may already feel they have less time than they want to spend with their families. Many parents experience stress about providing for their families. If you hope to engage with school communities, you have to go to the school rather than inviting families or educators to come to you.

Your first goal is always to identify and connect with a potential **school cycling champion**. In our experience, this is usually a teacher or administrator who is sympathetic to cycling. School board trustees can also be engaged. A parent who is involved with the school council, or who is active in their community on cycling or a related issue, can be an excellent champion. Finally, community partners, such as do-it-yourself (DIY) bike repair hubs and community service agencies, may welcome opportunities to connect more closely to a school through this project, while advancing goals they share with you.

Take a Complete Streets Approach

Complete streets are streets that are designed to be safe for all users of all ages and abilities. They should be safe and comfortable for people to walk, wheel, bike, take transit or drive. The complete streets approach considers cycling infrastructure within a broader analysis of street dynamics and design. Complete streets design concepts are easy for students, parents and teachers to learn and understand quickly. Most importantly, a complete streets approach engages everyone in a conversation about priorities and trade-offs, whereas a "we want bike lanes" approach can promote divisiveness between users of different modes.

"No, Thank You"

It's important to give school communities and individuals the option to say, "No, thank you". Your work should be opt-in, meaning that no one is pressured to participate if they don't want to. School cultures are unique. Some communities will be eager to work with you; some will prefer to stick to traditional school topics; some will simply be too busy to take on a new project. If a person or community declines to work with you, just say, "Thank you for your time. I hope we can work together at some point in the future."

Engaging with people who are new to cycling advocacy means accepting their ideas and feelings about how streets should work, even if they are opposed to yours. Your focus should be on providing information, making it as easy as possible for them to see the benefits of cycling infrastructure projects, and supporting them in navigating the decision-making processes to have their voices heard. Generally speaking, it is best to introduce your request by speaking to a shared value, e.g., "I want to ask for your help with a children's road safety issue."

School Administrators

Start at the school office. You will be directed there by signs, when entering through the main doors. Go in person and ask to speak with the principal or vice-principal for 5 minutes at their convenience. It's good to arrive in the morning, after

the start of the school day, when all the students are in their classrooms. (School start time information is generally available on the school website.)

Offer the school something valuable: print resources, such as cycling maps and cycling safety handbooks; a free school council presentation; a free in-class activity. Try to connect what you are offering to the school priorities you learned about during your research in Step 2. Emphasize that these resources have been used in other schools, and that you are ready to deliver them at the school's convenience.

Ask if any teachers bike to school or are "into bikes". Sometimes it's a simple as that!

Ask how to connect with the School Council and whether you might be able to get a few minutes on the agenda at an upcoming meeting, or whether there are other upcoming opportunities to connect with parents (see some suggestions below.)

When your meeting wraps up, make sure to find out whom to follow up with at the office, if you have any questions in future. Sometimes the principal will introduce you to another administrator or office staff. Make a note of all names; it's easy to forget.

> All public spaces might be seen [by youth] as being owned by somebody older than them, or more powerful than them, definitely richer than they are. I like contesting that and making them think...why did it ever come to be, how did it get there, why is it in good condition, why is it in great condition. I think having kids look at public spaces as participants gets to our definition of what a citizen is.
>
> – Teacher Cycling Champion

Teachers

Teachers can support your cycling infrastructure project in many ways. They may invite you to their classrooms to engage students. They may lead or support a student club, which can get engaged in your project. They may have a role in an Active School Travel campaign, a special event for Bike to School Week or "Walking and Wheeling Wednesdays", or a Family Fun Fair.

Teachers spend most of their working day in the classroom, with just a few periods during the week for preparation and otherwise only small breaks. It's important to be considerate of their time. Some use email, but many prefer quick phone calls, in-person meetings, or text message exchanges.

Parents

There are various opportunities to meet parents and guardians, ranging from formal to informal. The easiest way to connect with a parent cycling champion is to reach out through community cycling groups, such as a cycling education program or advocacy group like Cycle Toronto, and ask if any of their members or partners are parents of students in the area.

School council meetings are generally held monthly at the school in early evenings. A vice principal or principal can invite you or may refer you to a parent who serves as the School Council chair or secretary. We found that some councils were interested in a 10 minute safe cycling presentation.

Curricular nights and **parent-teacher interview nights** are held in fall and spring. Setting up a table with information on cycling and cycling infrastructure projects can be a great way to engage parents in conversations about safe streets. Ask an administrator for information about getting involved.

Outdoor **fun fairs**—carnival-like events for students, staff, and families, usually organized by the school council—may be held in fall or spring. Again, offer an information table.

Once you have built up a few relationships at the school, you can meet more parents during **pick-up and drop-off** times, which are posted on the school website. It is best to be accompanied by a parent at the school when doing this. Make sure to position yourself on the sidewalk outside the school, not on the school grounds. These interactions will be very short, especially during the morning drop-off, so have a few concise questions prepared and make a few quick "asks", such as signing a petition or taking an information card.

Example: Building Broad Support in Thorncliffe Park & Flemingdon Park

We worked with several schools in the neighbourhoods of Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park. The neighbourhood is close to Eglinton Avenue East and had several bike lanes implemented on neighbourhood streets in fall 2018. We reached out to the schools' administrators via email, but got little response. Undeterred, we visited the schools in person, delivering packages of print cycling resources (e.g., bike maps, handbooks, and stickers). This approach worked much better. We were referred to teachers known to be passionate about cycling that then gave us the opportunity to run a Complete Streets Design Project with students in the classroom.

We were invited to present at several upcoming school council meetings. We delivered more cycling resources, gave presentations on how cycling infrastructure makes streets safer for everyone, informed the parents and administrators of upcoming cycling infrastructure projects in their area, and offered to help them connect with decision-makers so they could express their support for the planned projects or suggest new projects. One parent we worked with was elected trustee, and brought her interest in active school travel to her new role.

We also worked with two community partners: the Gateway Bike Hub, a DIY bike repair space in Flemingdon Park, and the Women's Cycling Network, a volunteer club where newcomer women help each other learn to bike for recreation and transportation. We helped our partner organizations speak up in defense of recently installed bike lanes, saving them from being removed, and gain an invitation to bring their cycling education work into a local school.

Because we engaged multiple members these school communities, they were able to show broad support for multiple cycling infrastructure projects.

School Board Trustees

School board trustees are elected to represent their "ward" on the board. This is a demanding but largely volunteer role. Some school board trustees have ambitions to run for municipal, provincial or federal office, so it is great to establish relationships with them to advocate for cycling and active school travel.

First, find their website. Read online newsletters and minutes of past meetings to find out about their priorities. Talk to people who know them. Then ask for a meeting. You can also ask for an invitation to their regular **ward council** meetings, which bring together school council representatives from several schools in the area, along with parents in general. These meetings can be a great opportunity to meet more parents and learn better how to connect your issues with school concerns.

School board trustees also serve on committees of their boards[7]. We have found that presenting to these committees was a great way to advance active school travel.

Community Partners

Organizations or clubs that promote cycling, physical activity, and/or health in general, such as a DIY bike repair space or a community health centre, make great potential partners for engaging schools with issues of cycling and cycling infrastructure. Try approaching them with the idea of helping them bring their existing work into school communities, which is often a challenge.

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[7] For example, TDSB trustees sit on the following committees which are relevant to school communities engaging in cycling infrastructure projects: Parent Involvement Advisory Committee, Program and School Services Committee, Environmental Sustainability Community Advisory Committee, and Toronto Student Transportation Group.

STEP 04
Giving the School Community Voice

Once you've engaged the schools and identified your champions, the next step is to find opportunities for students, parents, and educators to raise their voices at the right time in a collective manner. School communities tend to be overwhelmingly supportive of street safety initiatives, but may not know how to express their opinions to decision-makers. Your goal is to facilitate well-informed civic engagement that amplifies the voices within the school community.

You're asking a busy person to engage in a complicated process, so make sure you support them throughout the process. There are many ways to amplify the voice of school communities, with our suggestions listed below. We recommend starting with actions at the top of the list as these are the least demanding for the school community. Then, build upon them with actions from the middle and bottom of the list. And remember, networking and relationship building are key to success. On Page 24 we share the story of school community engagement in the campaign for protected bike lanes on Danforth.

> We really had traction with the schools like I had never seen before in the Danforth Campaign... This is the first time I heard the voice of the students and I'm not sure I would have heard that if it had not been for Sam and his enthusiasm, really organizing us to make the schools part of it.
>
> – Parent Cycling Champion

Incorporate School Statistics into Existing Campaigns

A powerful way to give voice to a school community is to incorporate the basic statistics on the schools along a cycling infrastructure project corridor you compiled in Step 2 into a project campaign. Communicating how many schools and how many students will be served by the project can have a significant impact on decision-makers. Highlighting how many children, schools and families will be made safer makes it more difficult to oppose the project for the sake of traffic throughput and speed.

Participate in an Online Consultation

Community consultation is an important component of cycling infrastructure projects. Most include both in-person and online options to give feedback; online feedback is often easier for schools than attending evening events. Fill out the form yourself so you're familiar with the process and feel comfortable leading others through it. Online feedback can fit into many different types of engagements, including school council meetings, in-class presentations, and curriculum nights. The easiest way to do it is to use a device with an internet connection so you can help folks fill out the form on the spot. If this is not an option, you can share the feedback form with community members using printed information slips or posting in an online forum pertaining to the school community.

Sign a Petition or Pledge

If a petition already exists for your project, the best way to ask school community members to sign it is to do outreach near the school during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. Many parents walk with their children to the door of the school and may have a few

seconds to learn about a project or lend support to it. Speed is the key, as parents' time can be very tight, especially in the morning. It's best to avoid introducing an external petition inside a school, as schools need to remain free from lobbying. However, the school curriculum does support students engaging in democratic processes. A balanced approach is to help students create their own petitions on an issue, which gives them valuable experience not only supporting a cause, but also organizing one. This can happen in a classroom, or a school's eco club, or similar venue. The petition should clearly include: a statement with the "ask", the people it is directed toward, and space for signers to write their name, email address, postal code, and date.

Send a Letter of Support

Group letters of support are an easy and powerful way for groups within a school community, such as school councils, student councils, bike clubs, and eco clubs to support a cycling infrastructure project. The letter should be less than two pages and clearly communicate the following: to whom it is addressed, the issue, the proposed solution, and the impact the solution will have on the community.

For prominent individuals in a school community—such as passionate teachers, administrators, and trustees—individual letters of support emphasize their representation of a community of people. Individual letters should include everything a group letter includes, plus the personal story of the direct impacts the issue and the proposed solution have or will have on the school community.

Run an In-Class Complete Streets Design Project and Consultation

Engaging students with cycling infrastructure projects can be an impactful experience in citizenship education: educating students to be informed, active citizens. While **citizenship education** is a fundamental goal of education systems in democratic societies, authentic civic engagement is often a struggle for teachers to achieve in the classroom. Informational presentations from community members are a good start, but your goals should be to facilitate the students actively engaging in the project and to enable them to express their opinions about it to decision-makers. **Appendix A** provides lesson plans for a one-class and five-class Complete Street Design Project. **Appendix B** provides worksheets for executing the Complete Street Design Project[8].

> We really had traction with the schools like I had never seen before in the Danforth Campaign...This is the first time I heard the voice of the students and I'm not sure I would have heard that if it had not been for Sam and his enthusiasm, really organizing us to make the schools part of it.
>
> – Parent Cycling Champion

Attend a Public Meeting

Public meetings for cycling infrastructure projects are important events where the community gathers to express opinions about the proposed changes. Attendees are generally either extremely supportive or extremely against the project. Bringing members of school communities to the events can help fill in the middle ground, while still providing support. Meetings usually happen on weekday evenings, so it can be challenging for school community members to attend, especially administrators and staff who may not live near the school. You can help get parents out to the meeting by printing slips with meeting details and distributing them to parents and students during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. We combined this outreach with a petition and they worked well together. Another approach is to connect with grade 10 Civics teachers and ask if they'd like to invite their students to attend the event.

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[8] The Complete Streets Design Project is adapted with permission from materials by Maximum City.

Join a Campaign Working Group

Local cycling advocates often organize working groups focused on a particular cycling infrastructure project. These groups help coordinate efforts to build support for the project. It can be difficult for them to engage with school communities. If you can help a passionate local parent, teacher, or even student join a campaign working group, it will help the group in a variety of ways, including providing a connection to schools and representing parents and families, a group that is often missing from these conversations, but whose input is valued by decision-makers.

Another way to approach this type of civic engagement is to help existing members of cycling advocacy groups who also are members of school communities express their full identities in their communications with decision-makers. Since the "local bike advocate" is expected to support cycling infrastructure, their voice can be perceived as biased by decision-makers. The voice of the "local parent" or "local teacher", however, is less likely to be perceived as biased and may carry more weight on these issues. We helped people who were engaged in projects as a "bike advocate" expand their self-identification to include other roles and express this "three dimensional" identity in communications with decision-makers.

Join a Project Stakeholder Group

City consultation staff often organize project stakeholder groups comprised of representatives from important segments of the community to give feedback at special meetings, which usually occur a week or two before the larger public meetings. These stakeholder meetings provide an opportunity to give detailed, in-depth feedback about a community's needs and opinions. Often, stakeholder groups for cycling infrastructure projects include representatives of residents' associations, business associations, and local cycling groups. In our experience, simply requesting that a representative of school communities—a parent, teacher, administrator, or student—be included as a stakeholder is enough to get the ball rolling. Then you just have to recruit a school cycling champion and support them through the process.

Make a Deputation

Making a deputation—speaking for five minutes to a committee of several city councillors and city staff—is one of the most powerful ways to express support for a cycling infrastructure project. It can also be an extremely empowering experience for individuals. There are several challenges to overcome: signing up to speak, preparing to speak, freeing up time on a weekday, travelling to City Hall, and public speaking. Support is usually available from your local cycling advocacy group, such as Cycle Toronto.

Here are a few tips:

- Sign up for your city's infrastructure committee newsletter, so you get the meeting agendas right when they come out.

- Read the agendas and look for items that pertain to cycling infrastructure.

- Bring the item(s) to the attention of a school cycling champion who is already engaged in the issue/project.

- Help them sign up to speak on the item via the committee website.

- Help them prepare to answer questions. Usually councillors have a chance to ask deputants follow-up questions after they've finished their five minute deputation.

Example: Giving Danforth School Communities Voice

We worked to connect schools with the existing Danforth Loves Bikes campaign (see danforthlovesbikes.ca), which was organized by local cycling advocacy groups, asking for pilot protected bike lanes on Danforth Avenue, from Broadview Avenue to Dawes Road.

Our first engagement step was **incorporating school statistics** into the campaign: 33 schools serving 19,000 students. We shared the stats with cycling advocates, city councillors, and city staff.

Next, we helped a school community located beyond the project's eastern boundary **express support** for extending the project to their neighbourhood. As a result, the cycling advocacy team expanded their "ask" from 3.8 km to 5.9 km, a 33% increase. Importantly, this extension will bring the protected bike lanes to several neighbourhoods that are racialized and low-income, and have poorer access to public transit and cycling infrastructure.

We executed a five-day **Complete Street Design Project** (see Appendices A and B) with a grade 10 Civics class at a high school near Danforth Avenue. Fifteen students redesigned a section of Danforth Avenue and several gave permission for their work to be shared with decision-makers.

Later, leading up to a big vote at city council, we helped a teacher and parent write **letters of support** to their schools' local councillors in support of the project. We also helped a local trustee write a letter of support to city council in support of the largest cycling infrastructure rollout in the history of the city.

In the weeks leading up to the two Danforth public meetings, we partnered with cycling advocacy groups to execute several **outreach events to school community members**. We simply stood outside local schools during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, asking parents to sign a pledge of support for the project and consider attending the upcoming public meeting. Thousands of people were engaged in conversation, hundreds **signed the pledge of support**, and **public meeting attendance** was extremely high.

We helped a local cycling advocate and parent of two young girls gain **a seat on a project stakeholder group** organized by the councillor, where he represented the interests of families and schools. Crucial to his success was emphasizing his role as a "parent", rather than a "bike advocate".

We invited a local principal to **attend a public meeting**. She engaged a local councillor in conversation about why the councillor needed to make Danforth Avenue safer for the good of her students.

The Danforth Loves Bikes campaign was successful. Pilot protected bike lanes are scheduled to be installed summer 2020.

Going Forward

Cycling for transportation is undeniably a powerful solution for many pressing social and environmental problems. With the Families and Educators Safe Cycling Project we hoped to contribute to wider adoption of cycling. Of course, the climate crisis and increasing social and economic inequality demand more from all of us. Fostering active citizenship and engagement around matters of importance to children and youth is critical for their future health and wellbeing.

We developed this guide for parents, teachers, cycling advocates, city staff, and anyone looking to amplify the voices of school communities in public conversations about street design.

We hope that our four-step process helps you to take action on issues related to active transportation by focusing on projects that will benefit children and youth, learning about local schools, engaging school communities, and helping students, parents, and educators have a voice. In every step, we found that networking and relationship building are key to success and we encourage you to explore the opportunities to improve your community in partnership with others. Visit culturelink.ca/biketoschool for the latest news on our ongoing work and to get in touch with your questions and ideas.

Recommended Resources

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Appendix A: Lesson Plans

Contents

Safe Family Cycling Presentation

Lesson Plan: Complete Street Design Project: 1 class period

Lesson Plan: Complete Street Design Project: 5 class periods[8]

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[8] The Compelete Streets Design Project is adapted with permission from materials by Maximum City.

Safe Family Cycling Presentation

OBJECTIVES

- School Council members—parents, administrator(s) and teacher(s)—learn how cycling infrastructure can benefit all road users by making major streets safer and more comfortable.

- School Council members learn that their voice can be powerful in public conversations about street safety and complete streets.

- School Council members learn the specific action(s) they can take— facilitated by the School Cycling Advocate—to support the cycling infrastructure project.

- School Council takes action(s) to support the cycling infrastructure project.

MATERIALS

- Cycling resources: cycling handbooks, bike maps, cycling posters, bike stickers, etc.

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Introductions & gift of cycling resources

- Presentation

    1. Bike lanes and related cycling infrastructure make streets safer for EVERYONE.

        - In one heavily-studied case, one year after the Bloor Pilot Bike Lanes were implemented, driver-pedestrian conflict dropped 55%; driver-cyclist conflict dropped 61%; and, driver-driver conflict dropped 71%.

    2. Plans are not enough.

        - Cycling infrastructure plans are often held back by a few negative voices. They require community engagement in order to reach implementation.

    3. The voice of school communities is important.

        - As School Council members, your support is a powerful positive force in public conversations about street safety and complete streets.

    4. You can show your support right now.

        - Give examples of different methods school communities can use to have a voice in cycling infrastructure projects. You can draw from Step 4 of this Guide and your own experience or ideas of what is needed at the moment.

- Q&A

LESSON PLAN:
Complete Street Design Project
(1 Class Period)

These lesson plans are designed for the Grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course, but can also be adapted for the Grade 9 Geography course, several Grade 9-12 Technological Education courses, Grade 5 Social Studies (The Role of Government and Responsible Citizenship), Grade 1 social studies (The Local Community), and others.

OBJECTIVES

- Students understand the principles of complete street design.
- Students assess the current design of the street.
- Students create a new design for the street.
- Students assess the plans for the redesign of the street.
- Students have the opportunity to give official, informed feedback to city staff on redesign plans via feedback form, online survey, community meeting or other outlet.
- Students have the opportunity to share their work with municipal representatives, the cycling advocacy community and/or the local community.

MATERIALS

- **Introduction to Complete Streets** – *Handout*
- **SWOT Analysis Tool** – Worksheet
- **Design Brainstorm and Refinement** – Worksheet
- **Feedback Form**
- *Optional: The Complete Streets Game: tcat.ca/resources/complete-streets/game*
- *Optional: Devices with internet access to use Streetmix: streetmix.net*

LESSON PLAN

- Introductions

- **Presentation:** Introduction to Complete Streets

- **Activity:** Analyze the current street
    - Complete SWOT Analysis Tool worksheet and share results

- **Activity:** Redesign the street
    - Complete Design Brainstorm and Refinement worksheet
    - *Optional: The Complete Streets Game*
    - *Optional: Streetmix*
    - Share results

- **Presentation:** City's plans for street redesign

- **Activity:** Give feedback on City plans
    - Fill out Feedback Form

- Consolidate and wrap up

The Complete Street Design Project is adapted with permission from materials by Maximum City

LESSON PLAN:
Complete Street Design Project
(5 Class Periods)

This 5 class period version of the Complete Street Design Project allows students to pursue their design ideas in depth, using multiple learning modes. It includes hands-on, tactile activities including model-building, and a presentation project to foster student skills in communication and public speaking.

OBJECTIVES

- Students understand the principles of complete street design.
- Students assess the current design of the street.
- Students create a new design for the street.
- Students assess the plans for the redesign of the street.
- Students have the opportunity to give official, informed feedback to city staff on redesign plans via feedback form, online survey, community meeting or other outlet.
- Students have the opportunity to share their work with municipal representatives, the cycling advocacy community and/or the local community.

MATERIALS

- **Introduction to Complete Streets** – *Handout*
- **SWOT Analysis Tool** – Worksheet
- **Design Brainstorm and Refinement** – Worksheet
- **Feedback Form**
- *Optional: The Complete Streets Game: tcat.ca/resources/complete-streets/game*
- *Optional: Devices with internet access to use Streetmix: streetmix.net*

DAILY PLANS

Day 1

- Introductions
- **Presentation:** Introduction to Complete Streets
- Site walk (if possible)
- **Activity:** Analyze the current street
    - Complete SWOT Analysis Tool worksheet
    - Share results

Day 2

- **Activity:** Redesign the street
    - Complete Design Brainstorm and Refinement worksheet
    - Share results
- **Student Workshop Time:** build physical and digital models; create slide deck presentation
    - Share progress

Day 3 and 4

- **Student Workshop Time:** build physical and digital models; create slide deck presentation
    - Share progress

Day 5

- **Student Presentations**
- Teacher and guest instructor feedback
- **Presentation:** City's plans for redesign
- **Activity:** Give feedback on City plans
    - Fill out Feedback Form
- Reflections
- Consolidate learning
- Request permission to share students' work with decision-maker

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Appendix B: Black-line Masters

Contents

Introduction to Complete Streets – *Handout*

SWOT Analysis Tool – *Worksheet*

Design Brainstorm and Refinement – *Worksheet*

Feedback Form

Complete Streets Definition

Complete streets are streets that are designed to be **safe for all users**: people who walk, bicycle, take transit or drive, and people of varying **ages** and **levels of ability**. They also consider other uses like sidewalk cafés, street furniture, street trees, utilities, and stormwater management

Complete Streets Goals

The City of Toronto's complete streets vision for our approach to street design is: Streets for people, placemaking and prosperity.

1. Streets for People

    a. **Improve safety and accessibility:** Streets should be safe and accessible for people of all ages, genders and abilities, especially the most vulnerable — children, older adults, and people with disabilities.

    b. **Give people choices and connected networks:** Streets should be designed to create connected networks for a variety of trStl modes and give people choices for how they move around the city, whether on foot, bicycle, on transit, or in a motor vehicle.

    c. **Promote healthy and active living:** Streets should help promote healthy and active lifestyles by making streets more comfortable and inviting for people to walk and bicycle and be physically active.

2. Streets as Placemaking

    d. **Respect local context:** Streets should respond to the local area context, current and future land uses, and the relationships with adjacent buildings. There is no one-size-fits-all design approach. Streets should fit comfortably within the built and natural environment and reflect local identity and priorities.

    e. **Create vibrant and attractive public spaces:** Streets should strive to be vibrant and attractive public spaces where people want to spend time engaging in social, civic, and recreational activities. Streets should be beautiful, attractive and inviting spaces that encourage investment, and promote a sense of civic pride.

    f. **Improve environmental sustainability:** Streets should improve the city's environmental sustainability by enhancing the tree canopy and landscaping, reducing urban heat island effects, reducing stormwater runoff, reducing energy consumption, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

3. <u>Streets for Prosperity</u>

g. **Support economic vitality:** Streets should support the city's economic vitality by helping move people and goods efficiently and by supporting local neighbourhood shopping areas. The quality and vitality of a street influences and reflects the quality and vitality of economic activity along it.

h. **Enhance social equity:** Streets should be developed to remove barriers so people of all incomes, races, ages, genders and abilities can safely use and benefit from Toronto's streets. Toronto's streets should be inclusive for everyone and help provide people with opportunities to thrive.

i. **Be flexible and cost-effective:** Streets should be flexible and able to adapt to the city's changing needs and priorities over time. The design of complete streets should consider economic, social, and environmental benefits and costs, as well as construction, operations, and maintenance.

Resources:

- Complete Streets in Ontario: https://www.tcat.ca/ontario-becomes-canadas-first-complete-streets-province/

- Complete Streets for Canada: https://www.completestreetsforcanada.ca/

- Maximum City Street Design Challenge: https://maximumcity.ca/streets/

- Streetmix: www.streetmix.net/

- Toronto Complete Streets: https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/streets-parking-transportation/enhancing-our-streets-and-public-realm/complete-streets/

CultureLink
Your new Canadian life starts here.

bike to school

MAXIMUM CITY

The Complete Street Design Project is adapted with permission from materials by Maximum City

Name: _____   **Date :**_____
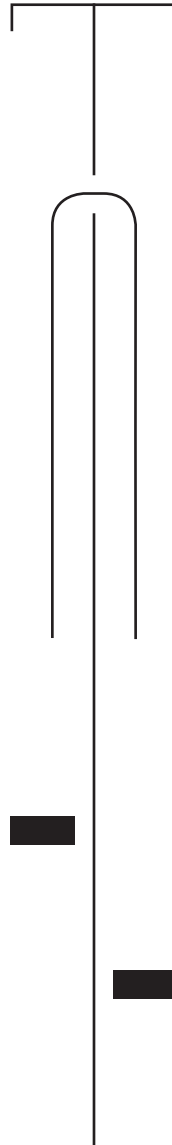
STRENGTHS

What is **good** about the street *now*?

WEAKNESSES

What is **bad** about the street *now*?

IDEAS BANK:

Safety, accessibility, health, vibrant/attractive spaces, social equity, diversity, flexibility, sustainability, economy, sidewalks, bike lanes, transit lanes/tunnel, driving lanes, benches, bike parking, transit shelters/access points, car parking, pick-up/drop-off space, quality of infrastructure, child-friendly, senior-friendly, accessible for people with disabilities, small businesses, schools, public spaces, sports/activity spaces, trees/bushes/flowers, patios, stormwater management, garbage & recycling, urban heat island, GHG emissions, etc.

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1 SWOT ANALYSIS TOOL

bike to school

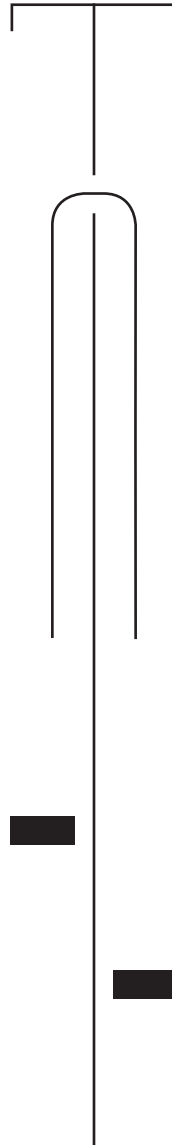Name: _____   Date :_____

OPPORTUNITIES

How could the **weaknesses** improved to become **strengths**?

THREATS

How could the **strengths** be lost to become **weaknesses**?

IDEAS BANK:

Safety, accessibility, health, vibrant/attractive spaces, social equity, diversity, flexibility, sustainability, economy, sidewalks, bike lanes, transit lanes/tunnel, driving lanes, benches, bike parking, transit shelters/access points, car parking, pick-up/drop-off space, quality of infrastructure, child-friendly, senior-friendly, accessible for people with disabilities, small businesses, schools, public spaces, sports/activity spaces, trees/bushes/flowers, patios, stormwater management, garbage & recycling, urban heat island, GHG emissions, etc.

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Name: _____   **Date :**_____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Brainstorm your ideas based on your SWOT. Use **lists, sketches**, or **anything you feel like**. Try to get **all** your ideas on paper, whether they are good or bad. Save judgements for the next step.

DESIGN IDEAS...

IDEAS BANK:

Safety, accessibility, health, vibrant/attractive spaces, social equity, diversity, flexibility, sustainability, economy, sidewalks, bike lanes, transit lanes/tunnel, driving lanes, benches, bike parking, transit shelters/access points, car parking, pick-up/drop-off space, quality of infrastructure, child-friendly, senior-friendly, accessible for people with disabilities, small businesses, schools, public spaces, sports/activity spaces, trees/bushes/flowers, patios, stormwater management, garbage & recycling, urban heat island, GHG emissions, etc.

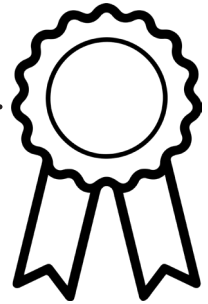**Name:** _____

Date : _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Choose your best ideas from your brainstorm and write/draw them here.

BEST DESIGN IDEAS...

Name: _____   **Date :**_____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please give feedback on the proposed design for the street.

You can use sentences, point form, sketches, etc.

FEEDBACK...