

Active School Travel Pilot Program Summary



MOVESMART





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Active School Travel is an Ontario-wide program dedicated to children’s mobility, health and happiness. Municipalities across the province adopt this program to encourage students and their families to use any form of human-powered travel, such as walking or wheeling (including the use of assistive mobility devices), cycling, rollerblading or skateboarding, to get to and from school.

The City of Vaughan’s Active School Travel pilot program was launched in partnership with York Region District School Board, York Catholic District School Board, York Region, York Region Public Health and York Regional Police.

Eight elementary schools across Vaughan’s five wards were asked to participate in the pilot from May 2022 to June 2023.

Although the program is run daily by the participating schools, the City’s role is to support using a combination of tools and activities (such as wayfinding signs and planned monthly initiatives) to get students and the community involved.

In schools that adopted the pilot program, there were increased participation rates in active school travel and reduced speeds in school zones. Through presentations led by the program partners, students were educated on the benefits of active school travel and the associated increase in-road safety. Key factors that contributed to the pilot program’s success included strong stakeholder collaboration with community partners, dedicated staffing resources to develop program initiatives and support and engagement from school administrations.

Through the City’s Safer School Zones Plan, staff recommended expanding the Active School Travel program to enhance road safety in school zones.

This report summarizes the City’s Active School Travel pilot program, learnings, successes and challenges, and provides recommendations for next steps.

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Vaughan’s Active School Travel pilot program launched in May 2022 and concluded in June 2023. Five public and three Catholic elementary schools across all of the City’s wards were strategically selected to participate based on different criteria. This included but was not limited to:

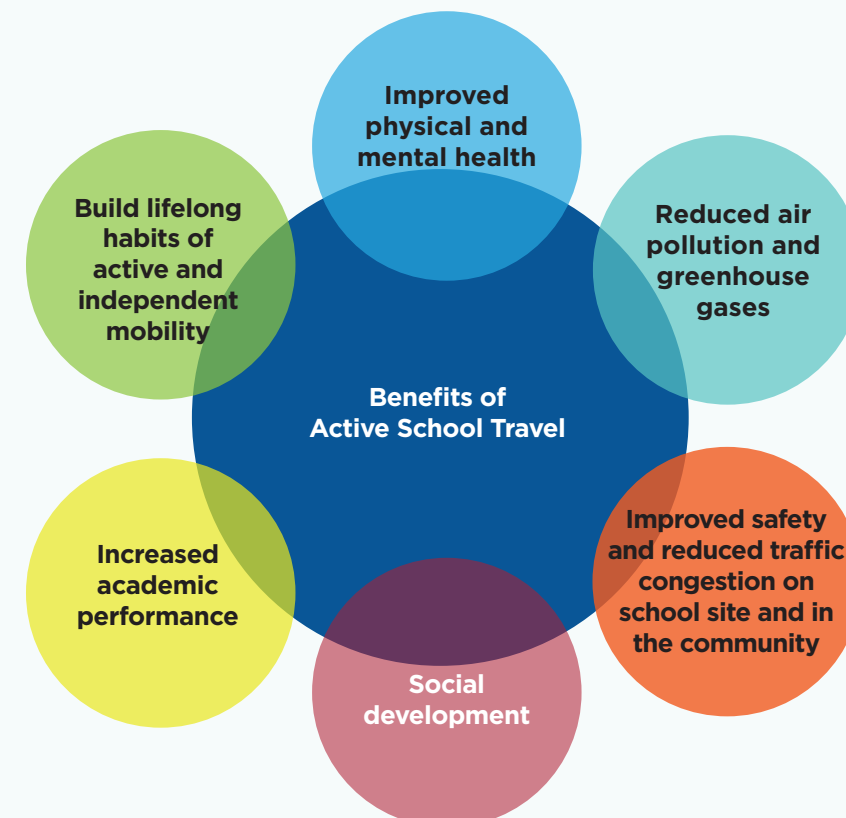
- existing neighbourhood infrastructure
- neighbourhood walkability
- student population
- resident concerns
- schools serviced by a school crossing guard
- school administration support

The purpose of the pilot was to promote and encourage active and sustainable transportation methods among school-aged children. The pilot also determined the level of intervention and on-the-ground support required to increase road safety in school zones and students’ modes of active and sustainable travel.

Several neighbouring municipalities – including the City of Toronto, City of Hamilton, City of Mississauga, City of Markham and the Town of Newmarket – have similar programs. When City staff launched Vaughan’s program, best practices were taken from how the City of Markham and the Town of Newmarket implemented their programs.

2. ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL AND MOVESMART MOBILITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

With thousands of businesses and more than 344,000 residents, Vaughan is one of Ontario’s fastest-growing municipalities. To keep up with the increase in travel demand, the City initiated the MoveSmart Mobility Management Strategy (MoveSmart).





As one of the 29 initiatives identified under the Sustainable Mobility Program, the City initiated the Safer School Zones Plan. The main goal of the Safer School Zones Plan is to enhance road safety for elementary and secondary school students. Part of the project scope included a review of the City’s Active School Travel program and recommendations were made to expand the program across the city.

MoveSmart’s Sustainable Mobility Program aims to support the development of active and sustainable transportation options and ensure these options focus on the safety of all road users. This includes school-aged children walking to and from school every day. Through the Active School Travel program, the City is working with students, school staff and families to educate, promote and encourage safe and sustainable transportation.

Active School Travel is directly aligned with the objectives of Vaughan City’s School Crossing Guard program. With 124 supervised crosswalks across Vaughan, school crossing guards ensure students get to and from school safely. As the Active School Travel program expands and sustainable transportation continues to be adopted, crossing guards are essential in supporting the movement towards safer school zones. Based on historical growth, the School Crossing Guard Program is forecasted to expand by an average of three locations per year.

The Active School Travel program is also supported by the City’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, which outlines an approach for increasing the number of people choosing to walk or wheel (bicycle, scooter, skateboard, wheelchair) to get to where they want to go through the provision of active transportation infrastructure and supporting awareness and education programs for people of all ages and abilities. Through school zone infrastructure improvements and in-school promotion, the Active School Travel pilot program has empowered thousands of students and their families to choose walking or wheeling to get to and from school. The pilot has also contributed to creating a transportation system that serves everyone, including children, which is a city-wide vision outlined in the 2023 Vaughan Transportation Plan.

3. PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

The City and local school boards worked to identify which schools to invite to participate in Vaughan’s Active School Travel pilot program.

Beginning in January 2020, the partners had three working meetings. Each meeting reviewed tasks to assist with school selection and program development. One important action item was to develop school selection criteria. Once finalized, this included:

- walkability potential
- existing neighbourhood infrastructure and built environment
- residents who expressed traffic and road safety concerns
- municipalities that addressed schools in some form of traffic calming measures
- previous engagement in school travel planning
- potential school support/champions
- equitable representation in each ward

A summary of the working sessions are listed in the table below:

Session	Topics covered
Working Session #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed Active School Travel pilot programs in neighbouring York Region municipalities • Reviewed existing traffic calming measures being used in school zones • Reviewed schools in Vaughan based on those that have been involved in student travel planning • Began developing school selection criteria
Working Session #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed schools based on crossing guard locations • Developed and reviewed schools against criteria
Working Session #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invited York Regional Police and York Region to further narrow down schools • Continued discussion of potential tools • Short-listed schools



Eight schools were selected to participate in the pilot:

School	Address	Ward	School Population 2022	Walkability
Pope Francis Catholic Elementary School	15 Secord Ave., Kleinburg, ON L4H 3Z3	1	748	68 per cent
St. Stephen Catholic Elementary School	451 Napa Valley Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4H 1Y8	2	427	65 per cent
Lorna Jackson Public School	589 Napa Valley Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4H 1R1	2	431	55 per cent
Guardian Angels Catholic Elementary School	200 Lawford Rd., Woodbridge, ON L4H 0Z5	3	642	91 per cent
Johnny Lombardi Public School	350 Lawford Rd., Woodbridge, ON L4H 4C3	3	771	65 per cent
Anne Frank Public School	431 Ilan Roman Blvd., Maple, ON L6A 0X2	4	568	78 per cent
Viola Desmond Public School	25 Farrell Rd., Maple, ON L6A 4W7	4	426	48 per cent
Yorkhill Elementary School	350 Hilda Ave., Thornhill, ON L4J 5K2	5	349	59 per cent

4. PILOT PROJECT COMPONENTS

The City developed and launched tools and activities to involve students and the community in the pilot program.

Traffic Calming Measures

Traffic calming includes speed management tools, such as textured crosswalks, pavement marking edge lines, in-road flexible signs, speed display signs or warning signs. These tools act as a visual guide for motorists and effectively reduce traffic speeds. The City installed additional traffic calming measures, such as wayfinding signage, flex posts and pavement markings, in participating schools.

Wayfinding Signage

More than 60 wayfinding signs were installed across Vaughan. York Region, the City's program partner, funded the signs.

Wayfinding signage aims to help students and families identify and follow safe walking and cycling routes to get to school. The signs can also be used as a drop-off point to support park and walk-a-block, an initiative that encourages group walking.

All signs were strategically placed on streetlight poles in local neighbourhoods. Each sign was unique to the school name and how long it would take from that location to bike or walk to school. Wayfinding signs also alert drivers to be vigilant and look out for students along popular active transportation routes.



Locations of the signs were determined through the following process:

1. Review of school boundary, catchment area and home address distribution maps that were categorized based on three radiuses around the school (300 metres, 600 metres and 900 metres)
2. Review of sidewalk network
3. Review of main walking and cycling routes to the school (e.g. highly visible areas and existing poles to attach the signs to)
4. Development of a sign installation plan

The City aimed to provide three to four signs per radius, per school.

City staff referred to the Ontario Traffic Manual Book 5 to guide the development of the signs. This included their size, where signs should be placed and how to make them stand out from standard traffic signs.

Each school was provided with a walking map showing the location of each sign to bring awareness to families and students about this new tool (an example of a walking map can be found in Appendix A).

The table below shows how all 67 signs were distributed among the eight pilot schools.

Table 1: Wayfinding Signage Distribution

School Name	Anne Frank Public School	Guardian Angels Catholic Elementary School	Johnny Lombardi Public School	Lorna Jackson Public School	Pope Francis Catholic Elementary School	St. Stephen Catholic Elementary School	Viola Desmond Public School	Yorkhill Elementary School
Number of five min./300 metre signs	5	5	4	3	4	3	4	2
Number of 10 min./600 metre signs	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	4
Number of 15 min./900 metre signs	0	2	2	3	1	3	1	0
Total signs	7	10	9	9	9	9	8	6



Other Traffic and Pedestrian Enhancements

Radar message boards were installed in high-volume areas of every school zone to alert drivers of their speeds. The signs were on a two-week rotation schedule in all school zones across the city.



New “slow school zone” pavement markings were implemented on the roads fronting each school. These are meant to alert drivers to the high volume of children and remind them to treat the area with special care and attention.



In-road flexible speed signs (also known as flexi posts) were installed in the centre and sides of the road, between opposing traffic lanes, and are designed to withstand impacts. These signs have a narrowing effect on the lane or roadway, giving drivers the perception of the need to slow down.



Centre line, edge line and bike lane pavement markings were refreshed. Clear and visible road markings help guide drivers and cyclists, reducing the risk of accidents and collisions.



Ladder crosswalk upgrades were completed at supervised crossing locations. Ladder or zebra crosswalk markings are more visible to approaching vehicles and strive to improve yielding behaviour for drivers.



In October 2021, Vaughan Council approved the #SlowDownVaughan lawn sign campaign, encouraging the public to slow down while driving on City roads. Approximately 500 #SlowDownVaughan lawn signs were distributed throughout the pilot program.

Each school was provided with signs and asked to display them around the perimeter of the school property. They were also distributed at school events to parents and at on-the-ground public engagement initiatives.



Additionally, the City deployed a toolkit of educational initiatives, such as school assembly walk- and bike-to-school day supports and promotions, and engaging students in different activities during school visits to stay active and choose alternative modes of transportation. Section 5.0 titled “Monthly Initiatives” provides a more in-depth overview of these efforts.

Alongside these activities, significant emphasis was placed on promotion and awareness of the program and school zone safety. Transportation and Fleet Management Services staff worked with the City’s Communications, Marketing and Engagement department to develop the Active School Travel webpage, customize promotional items like gym bags and t-shirts and design and install mobile signs at major intersections surrounding the schools.

York Region District School Board also created a dedicated Active School Travel webpage with a section featuring Vaughan’s program. Participating schools received a custom-designed Active School Travel banner, funded by York Region, which they placed at the front of the school to further promote the program.



Since the program's launch in May 2022, 27 public service announcements about school zone safety (Active School Travel, the school crossing guard program, #SlowDownVaughan and back to school safety) have been created and distributed by the City's Communications, Marketing and Engagement department.

In 2023, three school zone safety videos about pedestrian safety, cycling safety and school zone parking were created as part of the City's back-to-school safety campaign. The video links were shared with staff at York Catholic District School Board and York Region District School Board to be shared with students and parents. The link to each video can be found below:

- **Pedestrian safety**
- **Cycling safety**
- **Parking safety**

5. MONTHLY INITIATIVES

From May 2022 onward, program partners from the City and school boards met weekly to develop monthly initiatives to keep the momentum of the program going. This section provides a detailed overview of what each month's activity entailed.

September: Back to School

In September, custom content was provided to each participating school, including:

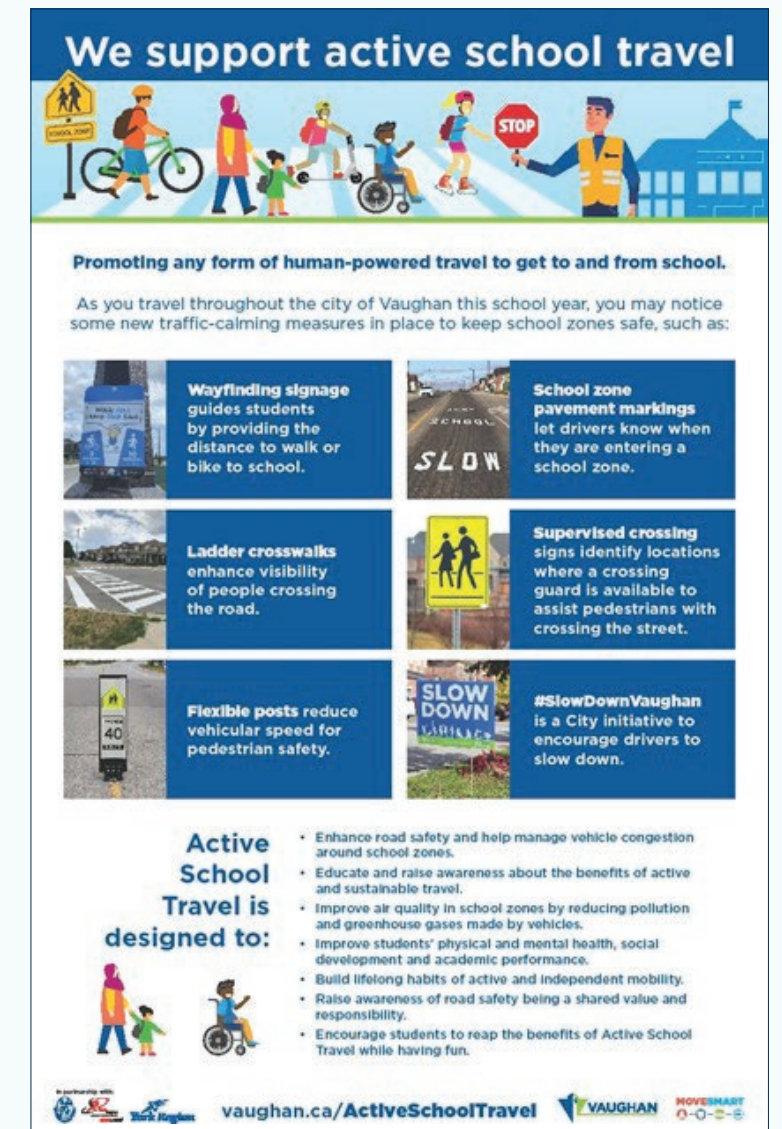
- a letter introducing the pilot program and traffic calming tools for families and staff (Appendix A).
- a walking map highlighting the five, 10 and 15-minute zones around the school zone (Appendix A).
- a poster showcasing the traffic calming tools installed in the community.

October: International Walk to School Month (IWALK)

Schools were provided with a poster and were invited to celebrate Walk to School Day on Oct. 12, 2022. All schools were given IWALK-branded stickers as an incentive to hand out to students on the morning of the celebration.

In addition, the Transportation and Fleet Management Services team worked with the Communications, Marketing and Engagement department to develop a customized colouring sheet, which had a section for students to explain the importance of active school travel.

A random draw was conducted for those who participated to get a chance to win a free skate or swim voucher from the Recreation Services department. City staff attended a few of the school's IWALK celebrations to show their support (Appendix C).



A poster showing the traffic calming tools installed in the community

November: Pizza Party Contest

All schools participated in a pizza party contest funded by the City in November 2022. The goal was to motivate students to walk as often as possible during November with a chance to win a class pizza party. To evaluate the winning class, the team requested that all schools conduct an additional two days of data collection using the hands-up survey to determine which class had the highest participation rates. A poster was created by the City's Communications, Marketing and Engagement department for schools to post and promote the contest.

December and January: Presentation

The City developed an Active School Travel presentation in collaboration with all program partners. The presentation was delivered to participating schools throughout December and January. The goal was to inform students and staff of the pilot program and educate students on the benefits of walking, cycling and riding the bus to and from school. The following stakeholders participated in the presentations:

- City of Vaughan staff
 - » Animal Services
 - » By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services
 - » Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management
 - » Transportation and Fleet Management Services
- York Catholic District School Board staff
- York Region District School Board staff
- York Region Public Health
- York Regional Police

The presentations were held in the school gymnasiums, with many prizes and giveaways handed out to engage students. In total, more than 4,000 students were engaged throughout the presentations.



January: Winter Walk Month

In January, a Winter Walk Month contest was held at each school. Students were invited to design their school's winter walk poster. The City provided each school with instructions, requirements and a judging rubric for the contest. After the contest, schools were encouraged to hang the posters around the building. In addition, a custom poster with winter tips was provided to schools to further educate and motivate families to choose active school travel.

February: Winter Walk Challenge

All schools were invited to participate in a Winter Walk Month challenge to celebrate Winter Walk Day (Feb. 1, 2023). The goal was to motivate students to walk as often as possible during February for a chance to win a Jeopardy game and hot chocolate party for their class.

All schools were asked to collect two days of data through the hands-up survey to assess which class had the highest participation rates. In March, City staff, in collaboration with York Region District School Board's Active School Travel Co-ordinator, visited the winning classes at each school to conduct a game of Jeopardy (active school travel-themed) and provide hot chocolate.

In addition, City staff attended St. Stephen Catholic Elementary School on Feb. 1, 2023, to celebrate Winter Walk Day. Using the funding provided by a grant from Parachute Canada, the school purchased hats and mitts to distribute to students as they arrived at school.



A poster with winter tips provided to schools



April: Bike Mural

The City developed a custom bike-shaped mural to be displayed in a high-traffic area in the school. For this activity, students were provided with a sticker and asked to write down what active school travel meant to them by reflecting on what was discussed during the City's presentation.

A special Earth Day celebration with the St. Stephen community featured a Walk with the Mayor of Vaughan. Students were asked to gather at Humber Valley Parkette approximately 30 minutes before the school bell. Mayor Steven Del Duca kicked off the morning with a speech. Custom t-shirts were handed out to all students who participated. This event was funded by Parachute Canada and the City.



May: Bike to School Week

In celebration of Bike to School Week, City staff asked schools to conduct a launch event to help kick off the week. Step-by-step instructions on how to plan, prepare and conduct the launch were provided to school staff, and giveaway items were provided. In addition, City staff provided schools with trivia questions for the week. At the launch event, students and parents/guardians were encouraged to bike to school and arrive 20 minutes before the morning bell to participate in activities.

6. PROGRAM EVALUATION

It was important for City staff to develop key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the program's effectiveness. The four primary methods of evaluation used were the hands-up survey, speed analysis, participant feedback and level of engagement. This section provides greater detail on each method.

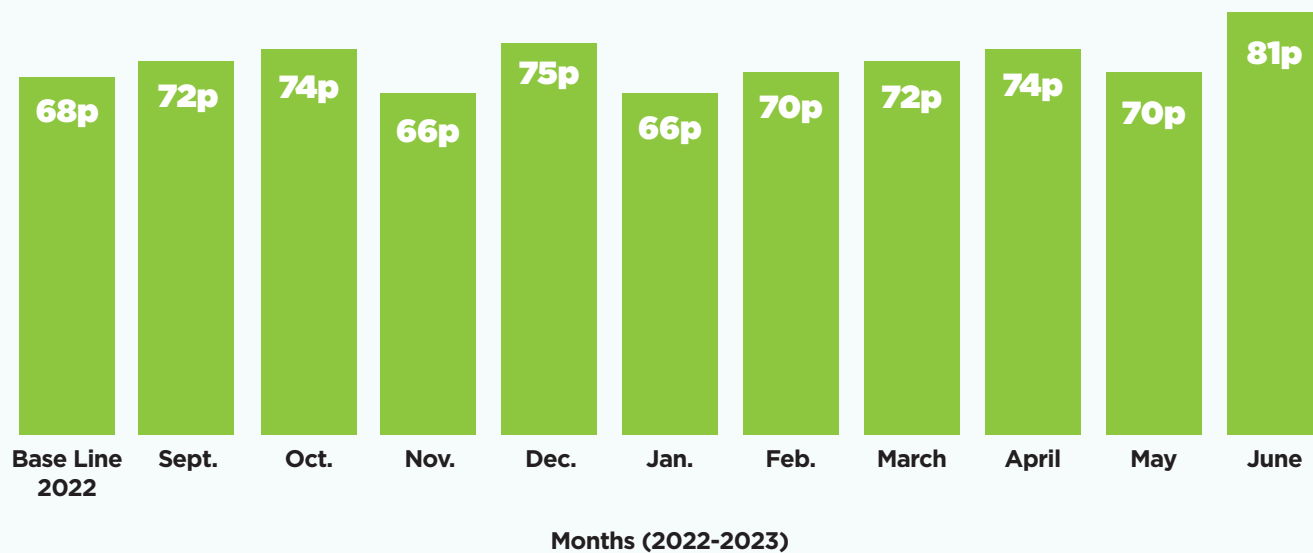
Hands-up Survey

The Active School Travel team conducted a hands-up survey at all pilot schools to assess the success of the implemented measures as part of the pilot program. The hands-up surveys were conducted twice a month (scheduled for the last Wednesday and Thursday of each month) throughout the pilot. This survey measured the percentage of students that participated in active school travel, which included any form of human-powered travel, such as walking or wheeling (including the use of assistive mobility devices), cycling, rollerblading or skateboarding to get to and from school.

The percentage of students using active modes of travel at pilot program schools can be seen in the chart below. The data includes results from May 2022 (baseline) to June 2023. The highest student participation was recorded in June, which was expected by City staff as this was the warmest month in the dataset. The remainder of the months continued to be at a steady rate of participation, which is a good indication that students were still choosing active travel to school through the winter.

As the hands-up survey depends on school administration and staff support, a strong program champion and culture in the school was expected to lead to a greater data collection response rate. The upward trend provides a positive indication that the program has had some impact on the school communities.

Percentage of students using active modes of travel at pilot program schools



Speed Data

Speed Data was collected before and after the launch of the pilot program. Automatic Traffic Recorder counts were scheduled during the following times:

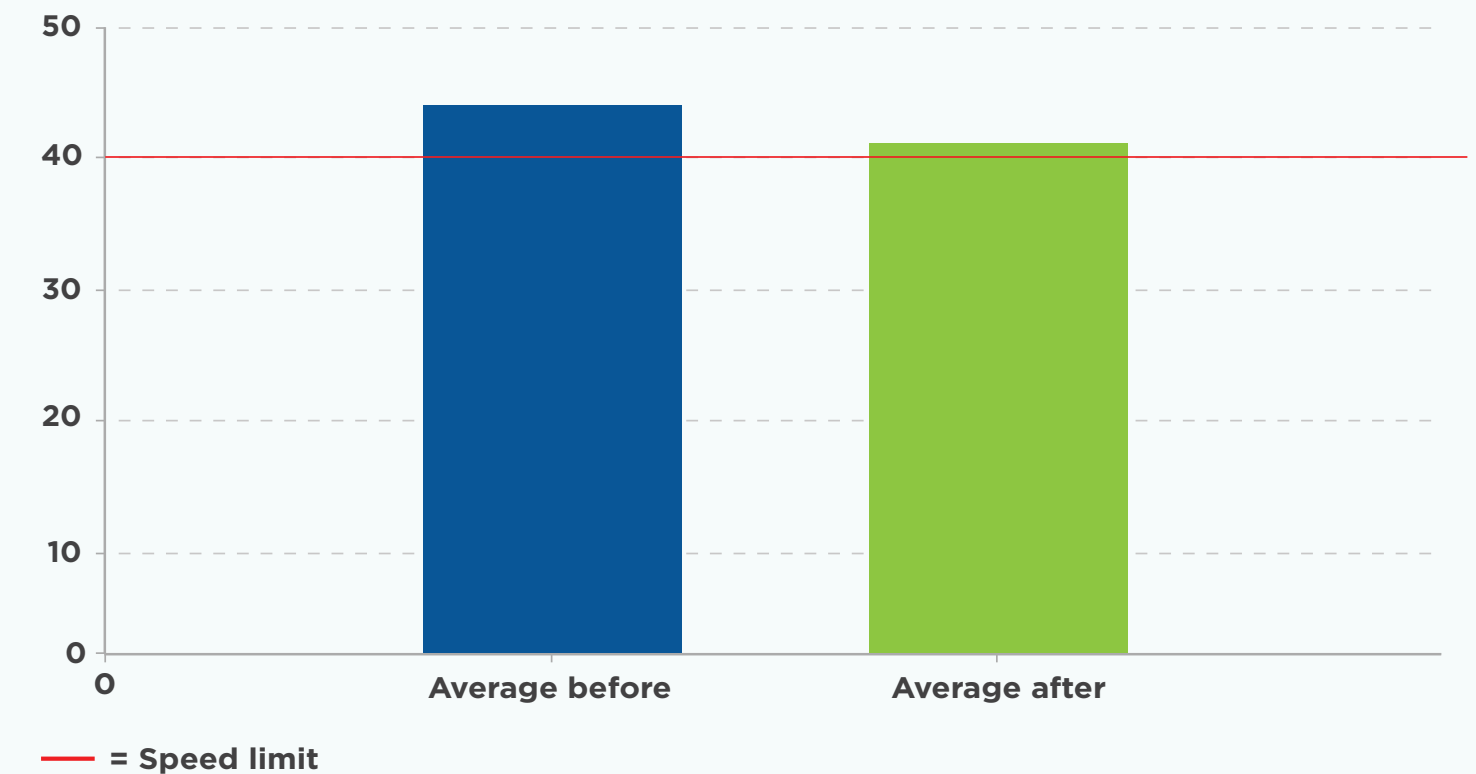
1. **Spring 2022** (pre-program launch)
2. **Fall 2023** (post program)

**Pending budget and staffing resources, City staff intend to cyclically collect data at these locations to continue monitoring the effectiveness of program measures.*

Automatic Traffic Recorder data was collected to determine if the newly installed traffic calming measures, coupled with the educational initiatives deployed in the Active School Travel program, had a positive impact on speed reduction in the pilot neighbourhoods.

Average speeds have decreased to 41 kilometres per hour after traffic calming measures were implemented in Active School Travel pilot.

Average speed at Active School Travel locations



Participant Feedback

An important component of the pilot was to gather feedback from key stakeholders. In addition, as part of the City's Safer School Zones Plan, a review of the pilot was conducted to determine whether to expand the program. A robust stakeholder engagement plan, which included input from the school councils and principals, was developed. This section of the report highlights the feedback obtained during these engagement sessions.

School	Level of Engagement	Number of Participants
Anne Frank Public School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in school council interview 	5
Guardian Angels Catholic Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed 	0
Johnny Lombardi Public School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in school council interview Participated in principal workshop 	3
Lorna Jackson Public School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed 	0
Pope Francis Catholic Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in school council interview 	2
St. Stephen Catholic Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in school council interview 	2
Viola Desmond Public School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed 	0
Yorkhill Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in principal workshop 	1

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the pilot program and recommendations for expanding Active School Travel across the city. Here's what City staff heard:

What worked well?

- On-site public engagements and communications, directly interacting with students.
- Traffic calming measures, particularly flexi posts, pavement markings and fluorescent crosswalk signs.
- Strong school administration ambassadors for the program who directly engaged with students and their families.
- Incentives for participating in activities such as pizza parties.
- Road safety education for students.



What improvements could be made?

- More frequent and direct communication with families regarding active school initiatives to encourage involvement. Suggestions from school staff and councils included:
 - » Engaging families by providing progress updates through monthly newsletters.
 - » Conducting more pop-up and engagement activities at school events where families are present, such as curriculum nights, parent-teacher nights and welcome barbecues.
 - » Organizing community activities involving families, such as a walking school bus, scavenger hunts on active travel routes and mindfulness-focused walks.
- Targeting families within a certain radius of the school, focusing on those facing the least barriers to adopting the behaviour.
 - » Develop communication plans and tactics for students living within different radiuses.
- Further communication with families and school councils about steps taken to address road safety concerns raised by the community.
- Some participants said they had not noticed certain traffic calming measures implemented in their school zone (like the wayfinding signs installed near Pope Francis Catholic Elementary School).
- Increasing the presence of York Regional Police officers and officers from the City's By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services in school zones to enforce rules related to parking and turning.
- Flexi posts are removed during winter, resulting in a regression to speeding in the spring.
 - » A winter substitute for flexi posts should be implemented to sustain positive behaviour change.
- Positioning more signs to address illegal stops, turns and speeding issues while improving the visibility of existing signs.
- Adding more crosswalks in school zones will enable more direct pedestrian travel routes to school.
- Increasing designated parking spots in front of schools to prevent illegal parking and congestion on main and side roads.
- Physical barriers between opposite lanes of traffic should be installed to prevent passing, and physical barriers should be placed near crosswalks to calm traffic and reduce potential collisions with pedestrians.
- Each school has its own culture; therefore, for the program to succeed, it must be integrated with its existing culture and goals.
- More education and engagement on road safety and safe driving behaviour are needed in secondary schools. Focus on Grade 8 and Grade 9 could yield positive results as they are more likely than younger students to engage and participate in the program.
- Secondary school students should be encouraged to continue active school travel behaviours developed during elementary school. However, secondary school students may prefer to drive themselves to school and be less willing to adopt active travel due to being more set in their routines.
 - » Incentives related to food are more motivating than swag items like stickers or frisbees for securing engagement among secondary school students.
 - » Social media is a key communication channel for reaching secondary school students.
- Increasing the availability and visibility of bike parking at schools while organizing school events, such as bike repair workshops, would help encourage biking.
- Video and digital communications can be more engaging than paper notices.
- Communication materials should be translated into prevalent first languages in the adjacent neighbourhood to meet local language needs.
- Partnering with other community stakeholders to deliver educational programming and promote active school travel.
 - » The presence of local politicians and York Regional Police helps to amplify messages at events and activities with the community.
 - » Local businesses can help sponsor incentives for initiatives promoting active school travel.
- Recruiting "Parent Champions" from each school to help liaison with the community about initiatives.

What barriers were experienced when trying to get students and their families involved?

- A significant barrier was fear some families had of allowing their children to participate in active school travel due to road safety concerns.
- Students living far away from their school might be unable to commute to school by active school travel or public transit in a timely or efficient manner.
- Similar bell times at adjacent schools can heighten congestion and other barriers to active school travel. Bell times often depend on student transportation services (busing) shared across schools and school boards.
- It could be more difficult to participate in active school travel with young children, which can reduce the willingness of families and siblings to participate.
- Multiple participants indicated that direct communication with families has been lacking.

Takeaways

- Expand the City's Active School Travel program through continued collaboration with vested internal and external stakeholders.
- Ensure the program is adequately staffed to support the program expansion.
- Continue directly engaging and involving families and school councils through targeted communications and attendance at school events.
- Continue developing and presenting at on-the-ground public engagement initiatives for participating schools.
- Continue working with school administrators and staff, identifying and leveraging active school travel champions at each school.
- Offer incentives and events for students participating in active school travel, in line with school board policies and procedures.
- Develop consistent programs and communications specific to secondary school students that build upon the messaging received in elementary schools, recognizing each audience's unique needs and preferences.
- Develop communications according to the unique culture and goals of each school community.
- Provide communications materials in multiple languages in line with the school board's translation protocols, reflecting the demographics of the local school community.
- Explore and leverage existing partnerships to support implementation (e.g. York Regional Police, York Region Transit, EcoSchools).



7. INTERNAL OBSERVATIONS

After the completion of the pilot, City and school board staff analyzed the experiences with each of the eight pilot schools and observed the following challenges and opportunities for growth:

Successes

- Partnership among all the stakeholders provided the opportunity to build lasting relationships, continued collaboration and a strong sense of community.
- Garnered interest and excitement around active school travel among students.
- Consistent resources contributed greatly to the pilot's success in each school — both staffing and financial resources.
 - » Commitment and follow-through of school staff with monthly activities with students.
 - » Consistent staffing resources (school board/City staff) allowed the program to flourish and expand.
 - » Strong stakeholder collaboration – weekly meetings between the City and school board to keep momentum going.

Challenges

- Co-ordination with multiple stakeholders and ensuring consistency with presentations and attendance.
- Completion of data collection; it can be difficult to represent participation and success in schools accurately.
- Competing priorities and high workloads in schools can make it challenging for schools to prioritize this work, among other demands.
- Schools and families can receive a high volume of communications. Ensuring the community is well-informed about this program can be challenging.
- Securing available staff or volunteers to be on the ground on the day of events before or after school.



8. FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPACTS

Grants and Partnerships

In December 2020, the City — in partnership with the school boards — applied for the Ontario Active School Travel Funding Grant to support this program. The funding grant application requested \$60,000 to help implement the City's pilot program. Unfortunately, the City's application was not chosen.

The City allocated funds to purchase customized program materials, mobile advertising signs and banners, and supplies for the monthly initiatives. The funds were used from operational road safety and sustainable mobility accounts. Overall, the cost implications were nominal. York Region funded the wayfinding signage and outdoor banners. Parachute Canada has been working with two schools in York Region on an Elementary Road Safety program. This national pilot program is designed to make school communities safer by implementing evidence-based solutions that address issues within each community. St. Stephen Catholic Elementary School was one of the two schools selected to participate. From 2019 to 2020, the school was provided with additional resources to enhance the school zone, including a \$10,000 grant. Some of the funds from this grant were used to support the Active School Travel program initiatives.

City Resources

Two permanent full-time City staff spent approximately 405 hours (58 working days) developing the Active School Travel pilot program. The breakdown of the working hours was as follows:

Project administration: 110 hours

- » Weekly 30-minute meetings with school board partners
- » Development of an after plan for the program's next steps
- » Preparation of summary report

Communication planning and promotion: 63.5 hours

- » Virtual meetings with school principals and school councils
- » Development of Active School Travel webpage on vaughan.ca, in partnership with the City's Communications, Marketing and Engagement department
- » Development of family and staff communications
- » Development of public service announcements, led by the City's Communications, Marketing and Engagement department
- » Research and ordering customized incentives
- » Development of various materials for monthly initiatives

Traffic calming measures administration: 30 hours

- » Development of an implementation plan for wayfinding signs
- » #SlowDownVaughan sign implementation and delivery
 - » Consulting with the traffic team on various traffic calming measures, such as radar message boards, school zone pavement markings and flexi posts
- » On-site promotion and engagement: 202 hours
- » School morning and afternoon bell visits to promote the program
- » Various on-the-ground visits for monthly initiatives

9. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Although the City’s pilot program concluded in June 2023, the Active School Travel team has developed an “after plan,” which is a toolkit of initiatives that will allow the momentum of the program to continue. The goal is to have schools lead in promoting active school travel. The City’s team will still be available to provide support when requested, but the level of on-the-ground support will decrease as the program rolls out into new schools.

The after plan includes a full year of pre-planned activities and communications from September 2023 to June 2024. These materials are available to each school administration. The planned initiatives differ from month to month and include activities such as planned group walks, winter walking education, safety campaigns, bike-to-school week celebrations and more.

In August 2023, the City’s team met with each principal to summarize the program results at their respective schools. During this meeting, a briefing of the after-plan was also provided. Monthly reminders will be sent to each school champion through the 2023-24 school year to monitor how the after-plan is progressing.

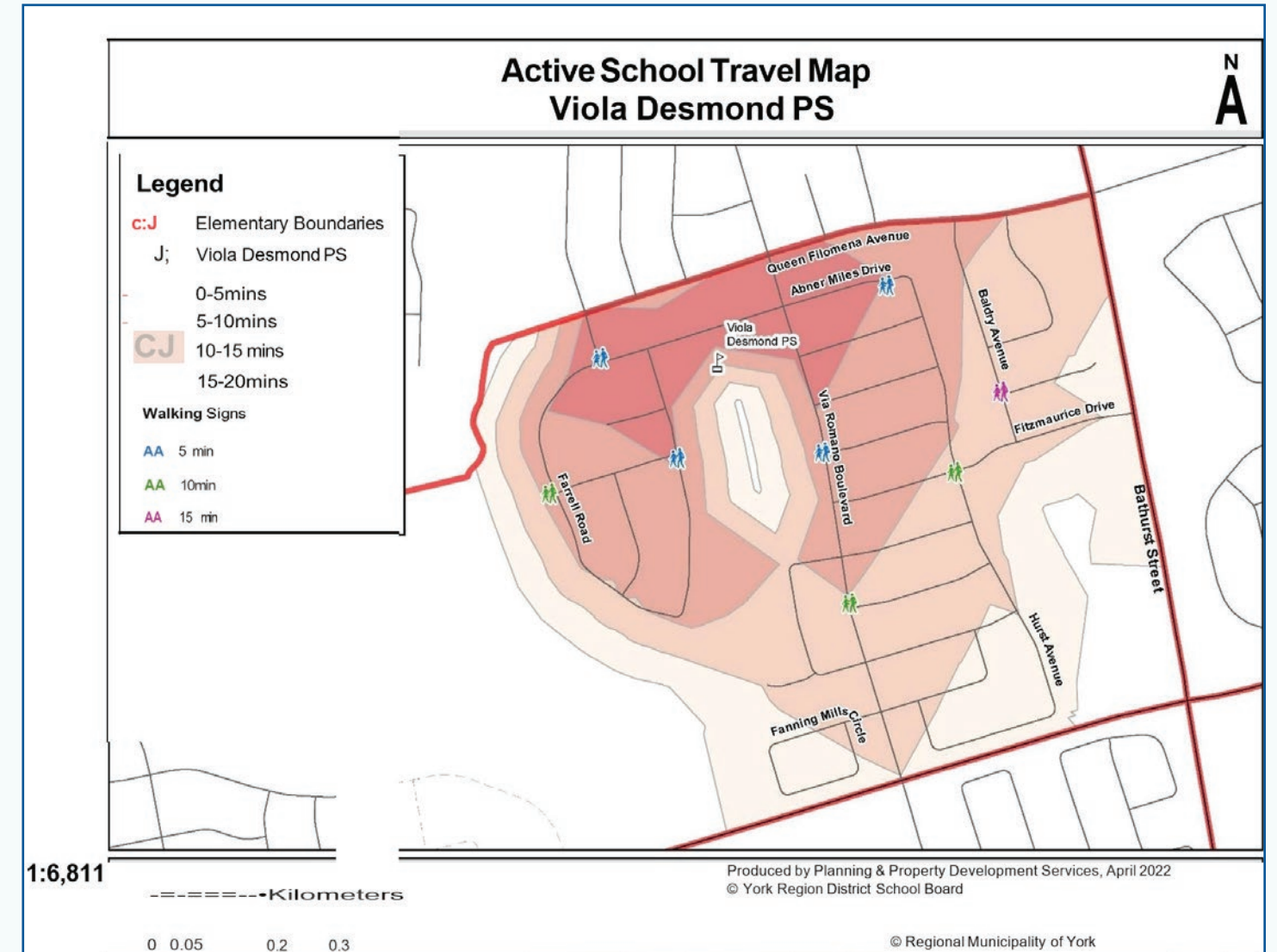
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
BACK TO SCHOOL	IWALK
NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
SAFETY CAMPAIGN	WINTER PREPAREDNESS

Throughout the Active School Travel pilot program, City staff learned the primary driving factors of success included dedicated staffing resources, strong stakeholder relationships and school administration support. Active School Travel is a strong link to the Safer School Zones Plan in supporting sustainable mobility initiatives as identified under MoveSmart.

Active School Travel maintains and fosters community partnerships and works to spread awareness about active and sustainable travel and road safety. Shifting youth’s mindsets about active transportation requires time, consistency and the collective effort of all stakeholders. Changes in behaviour may appear incremental at first, but as noted with other municipalities, continuous engagement is key to changing culture and learned behaviours.

10. APPENDIX

Appendix A: Walking Map Sample



Appendix B: Family and Staff Program Introduction Communication

FAMILY COMMUNICATION – PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

September 2022

Promoting school zone safety and supporting our school’s health and well-being through Active School Travel.

– Pilot Project Participation –

Dear Families,

In May 2022, our school began participating in the Vaughan Active School Travel Pilot Program. The goal of this program is to improve traffic safety in our school zone and support our school community’s health and well-being by encouraging active school travel.

The Active School Travel pilot program is relaunching starting Wednesday, September 7, 2022, which will be our first Walking Wednesday and will end in June 2023. The program is a partnership between the York Region District School Board, York Catholic District School Board, City of Vaughan, Region of York and York Regional Police.

To support this program, we are encouraging all families and students to choose active modes of transportation (walk, cycle and scooter) or take the school bus (where eligible and possible) when travelling to and from school as often as possible. Active school travel has many benefits including:

- Improves student academic performance by making students more alert and better prepared to learn.
- Improves both physical and mental health.
- Reduces traffic congestion and improves safety for everyone in school zones and around our school community.
- Improves air quality.
- Encourages social interaction and improves social skills.
- Promotes life-long habits that foster independence and active lifestyles, preparing children for their future.

As part of this program, various programs and tools will be coming to your school:

Education and Marketing

- Assembly for students on benefits of active school travel and safety skills.
- Mobile signs and school banners with Active School Travel messaging.
- School-led programs and initiatives (look out for more information).

Walking Wednesdays

This program will restart on September 7 and continue for the entire school year. All students and families are encouraged to walk and cycle every Wednesday for the entire school year.

Wayfinding Signage

Within your school community, signs encouraging active school travel have been installed along various routes. These signs indicate five, 10 and 15-minute distance points from the school. See map and poster attached.

Traffic Calming Tools

Several traffic calming tools have been installed to improve school zone safety including:

- radar message boards (Spring 2022)
- “Slow Down Vaughan” signs around the perimeter of the school
- refreshed edge lines and bike lanes
- flexi signs (flexible posts are a traffic calming tool typically used to create a narrowing effect on roads with the goal of slowing down traffic) installation on Via Romano Boulevard
- Edge line pavement refreshed
- all crosswalks to be painted with ladder crosswalks
- warning signs near playgrounds installed
- study in progress for 4 ways stop at Ilan Ramon Boulevard and Horse Rake Road
- 40 km/hr school zone signs are in place on Via Romano Boulevard

We understand that some families live far or have limited time in the mornings. If you must drive, you are encouraged to please consider parking your car a few blocks away and walking the rest of the way. If you drive, remember to obey all street signage, obey rules of the road and watch for children who are walking or cycling.

School Zone Safety is a shared responsibility. If we all work together, we can create an environment that is pedestrian friendly for all. We all have a part to play!

Sincerely,

School Principal
YRDSB Active School Travel Team

STAFF COMMUNICATION – PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

September 2022

Promoting school zone safety and supporting our school's health and well-being through Active School Travel

– Pilot Project Participation –

Dear Staff,

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To support this program we are encouraging all families and students to choose active modes of transportation (walk, cycle and scooter) or take the school bus (where eligible and possible) when travelling to and from school as often as possible. As a staff member, if you happen to live in walking distance, please consider participating. Active school travel has many benefits including:

- Improves student academic performance by making students more alert and better prepared to learn.
- Improves both physical and mental health.
- Reduces traffic congestion and improves safety for everyone in school zones and around our school community.
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Staff Help

We ask all staff to inform their students about the program and benefits and provide weekly reminders on Tuesdays about Walking Wednesdays for the remainder of the school year. Each class is asked to conduct a hands-up survey electronically on the designated dates noted below. The form will be emailed to you and is electronic. We request you complete it after morning attendance on the designated days noted below.

2022	2023
Sept. 28 and 29	Jan. 25 and 26
Oct. 26 and 27	Feb. 22 and 23
Nov. 23 and 24	March 29 and 30
Dec. 14 and 15	May 24 and 25
	June 21 and 22

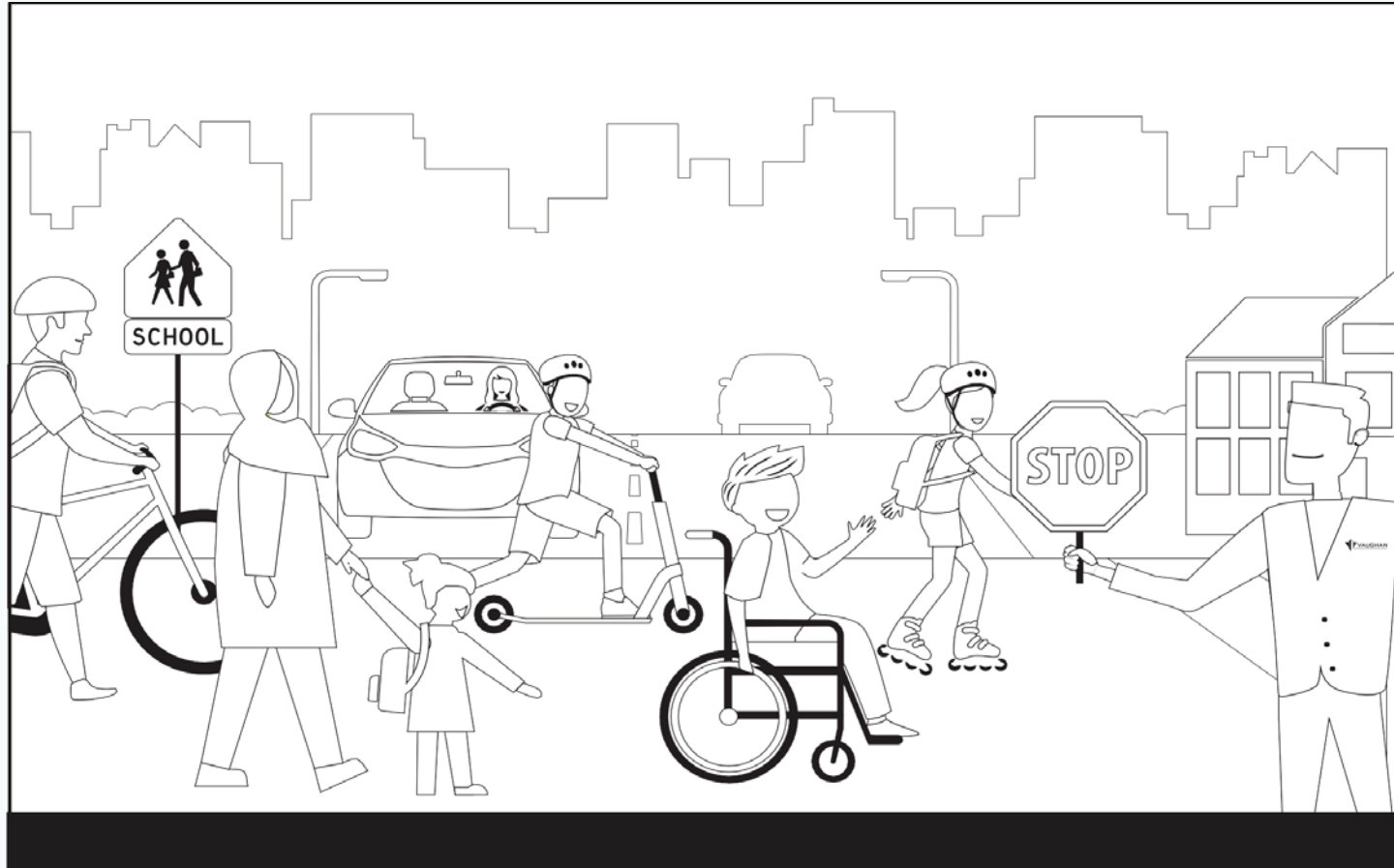
If you want to get involved or have any suggestions for initiatives to boost active school travel please reach out!

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

School Principal
YRDSB Active School Travel Team

Appendix C: IWALK Colouring Template



Prepared by:

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City of Vaughan

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