Active & Sustainable School Travel

St. Luke
Catholic Elementary School

School Travel Plan

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Acknowledgements

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School Travel Plan—St. Luke Elementary School

1. Introduction

Active & Sustainable School Travel (ASST) emphasizes the importance of walking, cycling, and public transit. More students using ASST means less cars on the road, less pollution, improved safety, and increased physical activity. School Travel Planning (STP) is a community-based approach that aims to increase the number of children choosing ASST to get to and from school.

Key community stakeholders work together to identify, and to solve their school travel problems. These stakeholders include school boards, municipalities, police, public health professionals, parents, educators and students.

School Travel Planning involves five steps:

1) Program Set-up: Establish a STP Committee comprised of the principal, teacher(s), parents/ guardians and other champions to manage the STP process at the school level.

2) Data Collection & Problem Identification: Use objectively measured (Geographic Information System [GIS] mapping and traffic counts) and self-report (student surveys, family surveys, and walkabouts) to translate into a complete picture of school travel and feeds directly into step 3.

3) Action Planning: The STP Committee designs a plan of action for dealing with challenges identified and achieving goals stated. At this stage a written document is compiled that summarizes background information; and outlines the detailed action plan that includes initiatives, timelines and assignment of responsibility for each task.

4) Implementation: Action items are carried out over the short-, medium-, and long-term.

5) Ongoing Monitoring: Post-implementation data collection is done to evaluate progress toward goals. The plan is tweaked if necessary. A STP is intended to be a living document that becomes part of school policy and is revisited and updated on a regular basis.

2. Rationale for participating in the Active and Sustainable School Travel Certification process

- Only 8% of Canadian children & youth meet the minimum physical activity requirements of 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity[1]
- Thirty-two percent of Canadian children & youth are overweight (20%) or obese (12%)[2]
- Health benefits of physical activity and reduced sedentary behaviour (decreased motorized transport) associated with walking or cycling to school include the following:[3,4,5]
  - Promotes healthy growth and development
  - Improves fitness
  - Improves academic performance
  - Provides social opportunities with friends and family
  - Improves self-confidence
  - Reduces stress and anxiety
  - Helps maintain a healthy body weight
  - Reduces greenhouse gas and air pollution
- Currently, only 28% of Canadian children & youth walk or cycle to and from school[6]
- Walking and cycling to school daily can add 15-20 minutes (about 1.6 kilometres) of physical activity[3], which contributes to the 60 minutes of daily physical activity needed for overall health[4]

3. School and School Neighbourhood Profile

St. Luke Elementary School (C.E.S.) was opened in 1975. The school serves 350 students from JK to Grade 8. School bell times are at 8:50 a.m. and 3:10 p.m. According to data from the Hamilton Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS) about 56% of students are within walking distance (≤1.0 km JK/SK, ≤1.6 km Gr. 1-8) to and from school. The remaining 44% of students are in the bus zone.

<Describe the school site design including the following details # of floors, shape, location (close to street front or set back from street), number of street frontages, green space, paved area, walking paths on site, number of entry points onto the school site from public sidewalks, bike racks available/location, amenities such as benches or other landscape enhancing features, etc.>

The school offers 1 on-site parking lot for staff and visitors with <#> parking spots. Parking in the school lot is free and no parking permit is required. <At times, staff are required to use their vehicles during work hours for business purposes.> The HWCDSB

is a Smart Commute Employer; however, there are <no> formal programs to promote car-pooling for staff or parents. Parents dropping off and picking up children by motorized vehicle use <the parking lot, designated kiss-and-ride, adjacent streets, other — provide description>.

There is a school bus stop in a bus lane in front of the school, and this area has been designated a "no stopping" zone for other vehicular. There are two full size busses. St. Luke C.E.S. also has 1 special needs bus, dropping-off and picking up children in the bus lane.

Public transit is available through the Hamilton Street Railway www.hamilton.ca/CityServices/Transit. The HSR11 bus travels along Mt. Albion Road and Parkdale Avenue. The nearest bus stop is located at Mt. Alboin Rd and Albright Rd intersection; 2 minutes from the school. During peak hours, frequency for the buses is every 30 minutes. During non-peak times, the 11 bus arrives every 40 minutes. Some of the closest bus stops are located at traffic intersections with traffic controls and crosswalks. Go Transit or future LRT is also within 8.4 kilometres of the school at Hunter and Hughson Streets. Staff or students <seldom> use public transit.

St. Luke Elementary School (E.S.) is a suburban school located within Hamilton's Red Hill neighbourhood. The boundaries for the Red Hill neighbourhood include Red Hill Valley Parkway (west), Red Hill Creek (east), Mount Albion Rd (south), and King St E (north). See **Appendix A** for the school boundary. Listed below are findings from the Ward 5 community profile developed by the City of Hamilton:[7]

- Compared to Hamilton, the proportion of seniors age 65 years and over is slightly higher in Ward 5 (18.9% vs. 15.6%)
- Lone parent families with children under 18 is higher in Ward 5 (23.2%) than for the City of Hamilton (18.9%)
- Compared to Hamilton, the proportion of immigrants is higher in Ward 5 (36.1% vs. 24.5%)
- Similar to Hamilton, the most common mode of transportation to and from work by employed residents is by a car, truck or van as a driver (74.4% vs. 76.4%)
- Home ownership is lower in Ward 5 (54.1%) than in the City of Hamilton (68.4%)
- The poverty rate in Ward 5 is higher than for the City of Hamilton (21.9% vs. 15.7%)
- Ward 5 has an almost an equal share of primary land use area between residential and open space (30% and 27% respectively).

The Red Hill neighbourhood has a number of assets including Red Hill Neighbourhood Park (**Figure 1**), Hixon Road Park (**Figure 2**), and Glen Castle Park (**Figure 3**). Other significant features include Elizabeth Bagshaw School, HWDSB School District Office and CCE Red Hill Learning Centre.

Figure 1: Red Hill Neighbourhood Park

Figure 2: Hixon Road Park

Figure 3: Glen Castle Park

The majority of this neighbourhood was built after 1960.[8] Loops and lollipops are the characteristic street design for this era.[9] The longer winding street design and cul-de-sacs present a maze-like pattern with limited route choice.[9,10] The intention of this design was to limit through traffic, thereby increasing privacy and safety within the neighbourhood.[9,10]

The streets within the Red Hill neighbourhood and the school boundary are largely local roads with the exception of Mount Albion Rd and Greenhill Ave (collector road).[11] See **Table 1** for road classification description. Conversely, the roads surrounding the school catchment include a minor arterial (King St E), and an expressway (Red Hill Valley Parkway).[11] Additionally, there are informal pathways that provide shorter walking distances to the school that are devoid of vehicular traffic on the land where St. Luke E.S. is located.

Table 1: City of Hamilton Road Classification Basic Description[12]

Road Type	Traffic Volume	Vehicles/Day	Speed Limit
Major Arterial Road	High	> 10,000	60-80 km/hr
Minor Arterial Road	Moderate	5,000-20,000	50-60 km/hr
Collector Road	Moderate	< 8,000	50-60 km/hr
Local Road	Low	< 1,000	40-50 km/hr

4. Baseline Data Collection

The collection of baseline travel data to and from St. Luke Elementary School occurred through the use of the following methods:

- An in class student hands-up survey
- A take home family travel survey
- A school site and school neighbourhood walkabout

4.1. Student Travel Survey

All classes participated in a student hands-up survey for one full week to collect information about how students travel to and from school. The survey was administered during November 2018. The results of the survey are shown in **Figure 4** and **Figure 5** below.

Figure 4. Student travel TO school

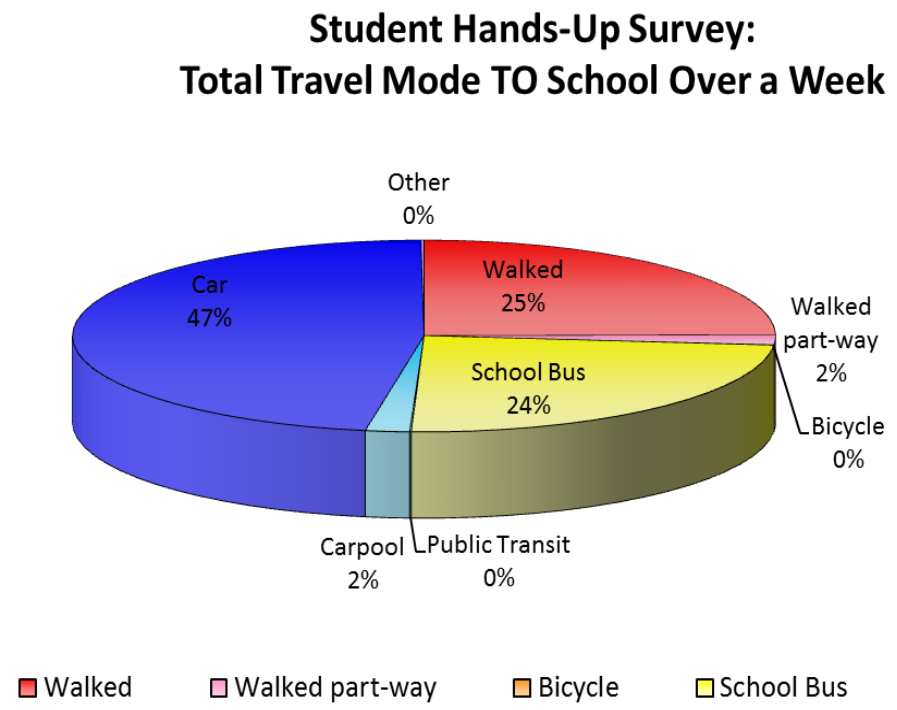
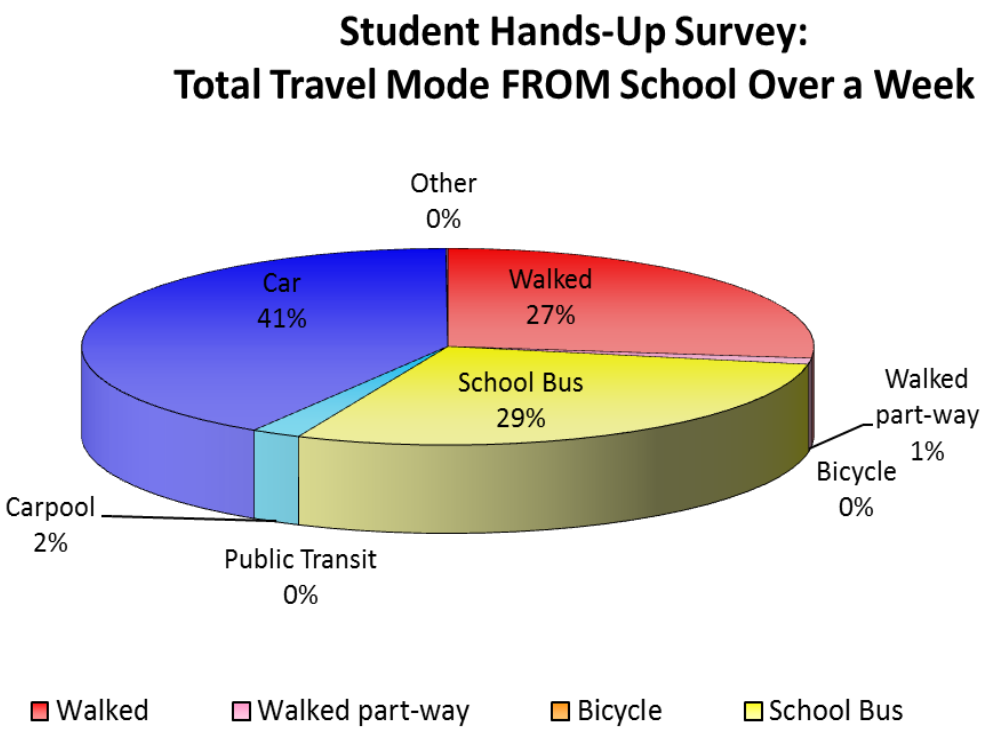


Figure 5. Student travel FROM school



The proportion of students and their families that should be walking or cycling to and from school is much lower (27.5%) from the hands-up student travel survey data compared with the data from the HWSTS (56%). The proportion of students that should

be riding the school bus is lower (27.5%) in comparison to the data from the HWSTS (44%). Consequently, on average about 44% of students that should be using active or sustainable travel modes are commuting by car, which translates into about **<number> additional cars** at the school site during arrival and dismissal. These students and their parents will be a key target group as the school moves forward with their school travel plan.

4.2. Family Travel Survey (not yet complete)

A family travel survey provided information on travel habits of children and their families to and from school. The family travel survey was completed over a two week period in <>. Of the <> families surveyed <> families (<>%) returned surveys. This represents a <> response rate, thus only anecdotal observations can be drawn from the data. A more accurate picture of student travel patterns may be gained with a higher response rate on subsequent surveys.

Notable findings from the family travel survey include

- <> percent of students live within 1.6 km of the school
- Of those in a walkable distance, <>% of students walk to school and <>% of students walk home from school
- Top three determinants of travel mode choice are <> (<>%), <> (<>%), and <> (<>%)
- <> percent of parents worry about <> during the trip to or from school
- <> percent of parents agreed that their child would like to walk to and from school
- <> percent of parents felt that their child needs <>
- The top three changes necessary to increase walking and cycling to and from school
  - <> (<>%)
  - <> (<>%)
  - <> (<>%)

Below, **Figures 6 to 16** depict graphically the responses of questions 1 through 11 of the family travel survey, and **Table 2** summarizes the results of question 12.

Table 2: Highlights of Question 12 Please write in the sections below to describe any concerns in your neighbourhood

Concern/Comment	Location
Traffic volume	

Traffic speed

Driver behaviour

Pedestrian/Cyclist behaviour

Crosswalks & Crossing Guards

Signage

4.3. **School Site and School Neighbourhood Walkabout**

On November 28, 2018, the St. Luke STP Committee and community stakeholders met at 8:20am to observe the school's travel challenges. First, the group watched arrival time at the school site noting pedestrian, cyclist, and driver behaviour and interaction. Then the group walked a short distance into the school neighbourhood observing common walking routes to and from school (see **Appendix B)**.

Key highlights from the walkabout include:

- 2 bike racks out front of school
    - Used more in the spring
- Crossing guard at Albright & Mt. Albion
- Crossing guard at Harrisford & Albright
- Cars moving very fast on Albright
- Cars stopping on Albright and causing traffic issues
- Students crossing mid-block on Albright
- Main student drop offs are at the church parking lot next door and on Harrisford
    - Church lot was extremely busy with cars idling
        - Parent and staff noted that there can be aggressive situations with parents in the parking lot because there

- Parent was concerned about the dangers of students who walk through the lot to get to the school

5. Goals

According to the vision of the future for the GTHA, by 2031, 60% of students will walk or cycle to school13. St. Luke E.S. currently has 27.5% of students walking or cycling to school which means that to achieve the goal it needs a 2.5% increase per year on average.

The goal for St. Luke E.S. is to increase in 32.5% the number of students walking and cycling to and from school.

In order to increase the chances of a successful school travel plan, a secondary goal consists of completing 100% of the action items listed by the end of the implementation stage (step 4).

6. Action Plan

Through the baseline data collection, and in particular the school walkabout, the action plan for St. Luke Elementary School is outlined in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: St. Luke Elementary School Action Plan

Location	Issue	Action	Assigned to
Albright Rd. (front of school)	Speeding	Investigate about additional traffic calming measures. Dynamic speed signs	Traffic Engineering
Albright Rd. (front of school)	Parking/Stopping in no stopping zone	Investigate signage along Albright and have officers present to warn violators	By-law
Albright/Harrisford	Parking/Idling/traffic issues	Investigate potential areas for a Walk-a-Block program	STP Coordinator
Albright Rd. (front of school)	Students crossing mid-block from field across from school entrance	Provide education materials about safe road crossings	PH

Kindergarten playground, Church lot	Cars idling	Install anti-idling signs along the fence of the playground	School
Day care drop off	In fire/bus lane	Move to a better location away from front of school	School
School grounds	Walking/rolling to school	Sign up and promote Wear Yellow Day	School/STP coordinator
School grounds	Cycling education	Provide information about Ride Smart program	STP Coordinator
School grounds	Air Quality	Provide information about the Fresh Air for Kids program	PH- Air quality
Harrisford St.	speeding	Investigate instillation of speed bumps or other traffic calming measures	Traffic Engineering

7. Next Steps

With the completion of the school travel data collection and action plan development, the school is well positioned to commence implementation over the remainder of the <> school year and beyond. The plan should be re-evaluated annually in May and adjustments will be made as necessary in preparation for the next school year.

Regular STP meetings will help with the sustainability of ASST momentum and with the setting of targets for each successive school year. The STP committee can continue to track progress through monitoring the completion of action plan items. As the school completes their recorded action items, new action items may be added to the plan to further ASST. Periodic use of the student hands-up survey will help track changes in travel behaviour and record progress toward the school's target. The shift from motorized vehicles helps to address important issues of sustainability, safety, and health associated with the school run.

8. Consensus

This school travel plan has been reviewed and approved by

Adrian De Tullio, Principal, St. Luke Catholic Elementary School
Signature
Date signed
Callaway Johnson, Hamilton ASST Hub representative
Signature
Date signed

Annual Update

Year	**<name>, Principal**	**<name>, Hamilton ASST Hub representative**
Year	**<name>, Principal**	**<name>, Hamilton ASST Hub representative**
Year	**<name>, Principal**	**<name>, Hamilton ASST Hub representative**
Year	**<name>, Principal**	**<name>, Hamilton ASST Hub representative**
Year	**<name>, Principal**	**<name>, Hamilton ASST Hub representative**

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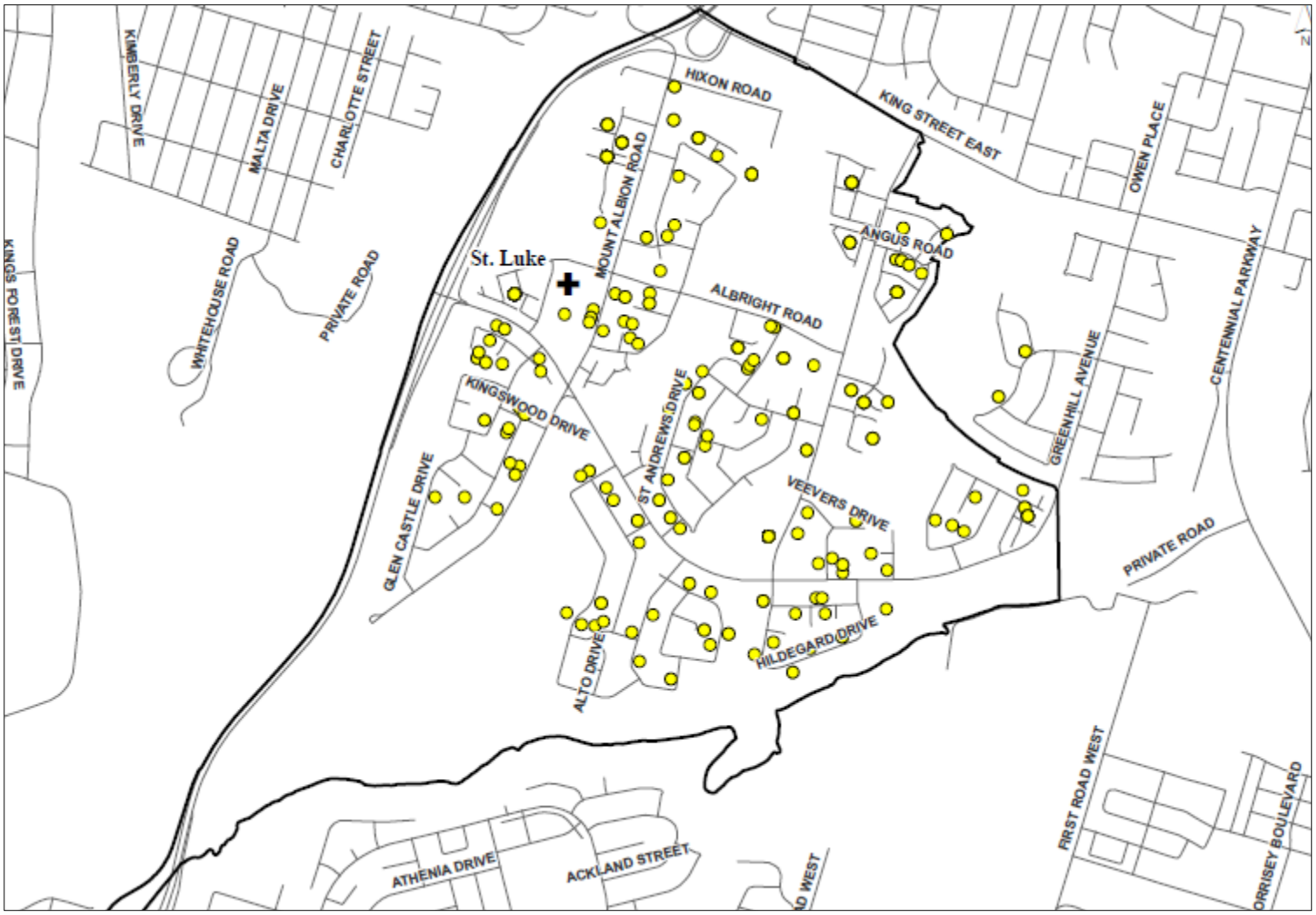
Appendix A: St. Luke Elementary School Catchment Area Map and Walking Boundaries 2017-2018[14]



Appendix B: St. Luke Elementary School walking routes to and from school