

# School Travel Planning

## Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School



1515 Tenth Line Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K4A 2J3

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June 2011



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*The project is supported by a number of local partners:*



## Introduction

School Travel Planning (STP) aims to increase the number of students choosing to commute to and from school using active modes of transportation. An increase in the number of students walking, cycling, skateboarding and carpooling to school helps to address important issues related to physical activity, traffic congestion, air quality and neighbourhood safety.

STP is a community-based, comprehensive approach to dealing with travel related issues at schools. The program brings together key community stakeholders to identify and solve transportation problems around schools. Stakeholders include school board representatives, municipal transportation planning professionals, public health nurses, police, school administrators and teachers, parents and students.

The 2010-11 school year has been a pilot for high school participation in School Travel Planning. At the high school level, the project focuses on youth engagement and is not as structured as the elementary school model. For high schools, School Travel Planning involves three steps:

### 1. Program Set-up

- (a) The STP Facilitator investigates whether or not the school has a lead teacher and a group of students who would be interested in participating in STP
- (b) Participating schools sign a two-year letter of agreement to ensure that they are committed

### 2. Peer-to-Peer Transportation Survey

The STP Facilitator helps students create, administer and analyze a transportation survey of their peers.

### 3. Action Planning & Implementation

- (a) Based on the results of the survey, students devise a two-year Action Plan containing at least 5 actions.
- (b) With the help of the STP Facilitator and the lead teacher, students implement the actions in their action plan.

## School Overview

### *The School*

Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School is located on Tenth Line Road in Orleans. The school serves approximately 1070 students in grades 9 through 12. The school offers a wide range of programs including core and immersion French, a comprehensive Cooperative Education Program, a pre-engineering program, Specialist High Skills Major programs for Construction and Communications and a Leadership course. The school adjoins the Ray Friel Community Recreation Centre, which houses a wave pool, fitness centre, ice rink and meeting rooms.

### *Location*

The school draws its student population from a wide geographic area, which continues to expand as new developments emerge throughout Orleans. The school is located on a busy arterial road which links Innes Road to the highway. However, many of the local streets in the surrounding neighbourhood are wide suburban streets with low levels of traffic. Students to the North, East and South can access the school through Ray Friel Park and there is a traffic light at the Tenth Line Road entrance for students coming from the West. OC Transpo route 136 runs along Tenth Line Road from Place d'Orleans to Innes and stops in front of the school. The school is about a 25 minute walk away from Place d'Orleans, a major transit hub and shopping centre. Sir Wilfrid Laurier is not served by school buses.



Figure 1. Location of the School



Figure 2. Bike racks at rear of the school

### *Parking*

Sir Wilfrid Laurier has a large parking lot to the North of the school where students, teachers and visitors can park. On an average day, this lot is not filled to capacity. Two smaller rows of parking are available in front of the school's main entrance, in which the spaces are primarily reserved for administration and visitors. Both of these parking lots can be accessed off of Tenth Line Road.

Although the school has several bike parking areas at the front, side and back of the school, there are not enough racks to safely store all of the bikes that arrive at the school during the

peak cycling seasons. The bike racks at the back of the school are the most frequently used racks (Figure 2). Only a small rack is provided at the front of the school, and it is generally full. The bike racks provided at the side of the school are rarely used as they can only accommodate bikes with small front tires. Several cases of bike vandalism have been reported by students who have locked their bikes to the racks at school.

### The Committee

The school’s Live It Up committee signed up for the STP project in February 2011. Live It Up is a project of the City of Ottawa’s Public Health Department and is coordinated by the school’s public health nurse and a lead teacher. City of Ottawa staff recommended the school to Green Communities Canada for the STP project because the committee was conducting a neighbourhood traffic count for the City.



Figure 3. Students advertise the Earth Day Pancake Breakfast for walkers and cyclists

The Live It Up committee consists of about 25 students and the weekly lunch hour meetings are well attended (usually by 12+ students each week). Meeting time has been shared equally between School Travel Planning and Live It Up and the committee has been able to successfully address both projects simultaneously. The meetings are generally facilitated by the lead teacher, the public health nurse or the School Travel Planning Facilitator.

### Peer-to Peer Transportation Survey

The committee developed and administered a peer-to-peer transportation survey in March 2011. The complete survey can be found in Appendix 1. The survey was distributed to select classroom teachers across all grades and was completed by students in class. Two-hundred and sixty-nine students completed the survey. The data was inputted by three volunteers from the committee and was analyzed by the group during a committee meeting.

Some interesting survey results include:

#### Demographics of respondents (Figure 4)

- Grade distribution of respondents is fairly even across grade 9, 10 and 11 students, however grade 12s represent only 12% of respondents. Since grade 12 students will only be at the school for 2 more months, this is not of great concern
- Gender distribution of respondents is almost even (51% female, 47% male)

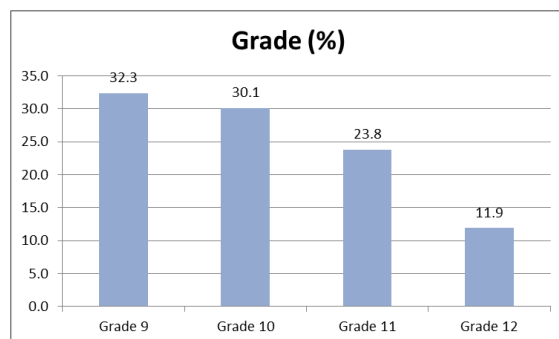


Figure 4. Grade distribution of respondents

**Transportation Behaviour (Figures 5 & 6)**

- 45% of survey respondents arrive by car
- 37% of survey respondents use active modes of transportation (walking or cycling)

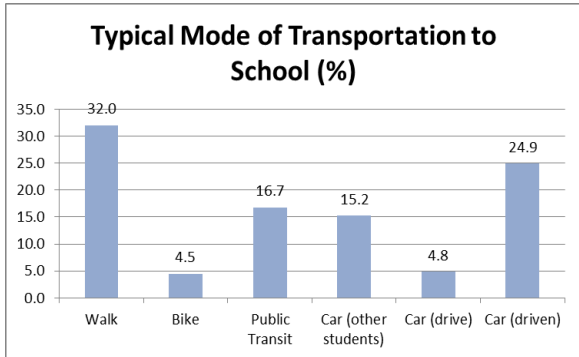


Figure 5. Current Modes of Transportation

- 17% of survey respondents arrive by public transportation
- Students who do not cycle to school report a variety of barriers, including not having a bicycle (14%) and living too far away from school (14%). Although limited bike parking at school and dangerous cycling conditions are often highlighted by students as important barriers in conversation, only 3% of respondents chose those responses in the survey

- 40% of respondents indicated “Other” reasons for not cycling to school, these included disliking biking (19 respondents), too lazy to bike (12 respondents), bad weather (11 respondents), bikes in need of maintenance (7 respondents), preference for driving (7 respondents), preference for walking (7 respondents) and not having a bike lock (5 respondents)

**Potential for Change (Figures 7 & 8)**

- 38% of survey respondents agreed that efforts should be made to reduce car trips
- 28% of respondents indicated that they are open to using active modes of transportation (while 39% of respondents indicated that they already use it)

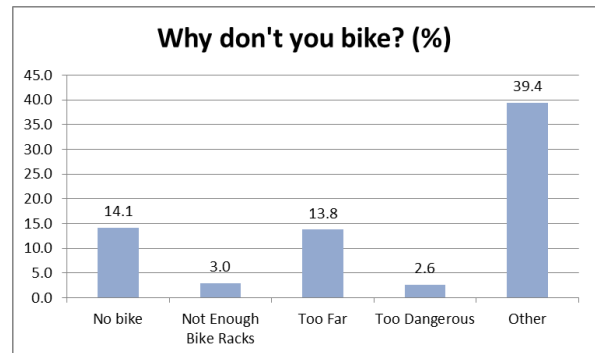


Figure 6. Reasons for not cycling to school

- When asked what could be done to encourage them to walk to school more, students highlighted their desire to walk with someone else (29%). Committee members found this particularly interesting and are trying to think of how to help students meet walking buddies
- When asked what could be done to encourage respondents to bike to school more, 36% said that they would never bike to school. Others who were more open to cycling stated the need for secure, sheltered bike racks

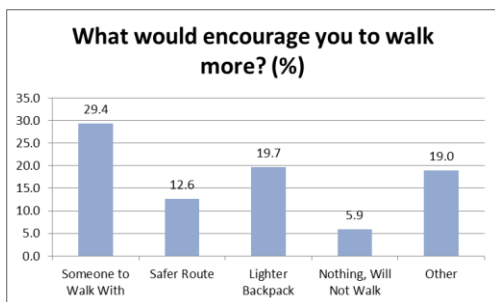


Figure 7. How to encourage more walking

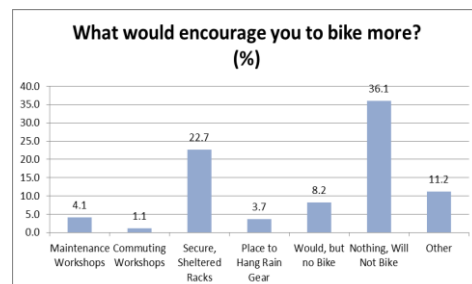


Figure 8. How to encourage more cycling



## Action Plan

In early May 2011, the committee created a two-year Action Plan to encourage students to commute to and from school using active modes of transportation. The Action Plan is comprised of 8 Actions that were chosen based on (1) the committee's interest in organizing them and (2) the results of the transportation survey.



Figure 9. Slow Bike Race

During the 2010-11 school year, the committee organized a pancake breakfast for students arriving by active modes of transportation, a slow bike race in the rotunda (Figure 9) and a traffic count of cars parked in the bike lane along Merkley Drive.

The committee plans to begin the 2011-12 school year by launching a "Best Routes Walking/Cycling" map for grade nine students and organizing a large Cycling Trip for all students. The detailed Action Plan can be found below in Table 1.

Table 1. The Action Plan

Actions	Responsibility	Timeline	Status	Estimated Cost and Source
<b>Action #1: Active Transportation Pancake Breakfast (first 50 students to arrive by active modes)</b>				
<i>Goal: Provide an incentive for students to walk and cycle to school on Earth Day</i>				
Advertise event with posters and "Synervoice" announcements	Poster: Mitchell Announcements: Sam	One week prior to event	COMPLETE	
Purchase Food	Mme Vincent	Wednesday, April 20	COMPLETE	\$50
Prep dry ingredients the night before	Live It Up Volunteers	Wednesday, April 20 (meet at 3:20 in kitchen)	COMPLETE	
Prepare food before school on day of event	Live It Up Volunteers	Thursday, April 21 (starting at 7:30am)	COMPLETE	
Count students arriving by active modes and collect "carbon tax" donations	Live It Up Volunteers	Thursday, April 21	COMPLETE	
Clean up kitchen	Live It Up Volunteers	Thursday, April 21	COMPLETE	
<b>Action #2: Traffic Count on Merkley Drive</b>				
<i>Goal: Provide City of Ottawa with data on the number of cars parked in the bike lane</i>				
Organize student volunteers to count parked cars over a 3 week period	Mme Vincent	February & March 2011	COMPLETE	
Count Cars	Student volunteers (volunteers hours)	February & March 2011	COMPLETE	
Compile data and send it to the City of Ottawa	Mme Vincent (?)	April 2011		



<b>Action #3: Cycling Trip for Students (30 to 50 students)</b>				
<i>Goal: To familiarize students with cycling on roads and paths and to encourage students to participate in fun outings by bike</i>				
Advertise the event with posters and announcements	Live It Up Committee members	September 2011		
Distribute permission forms	Mme Vincent (they can be picked up at her office)	September 2011		
Recruit adult/teacher volunteers to help lead the outing	Mme Vincent	September 2011		
Invite a CANBIKE instructor to give a safe cycling overview before departing	Committee member	September 2011		
Plan the routes (based on the cycling experience of participants)	Mme Vincent & Live It Up Committee	September 2011		
<b>Action #4: Bike Mechanics Workshop</b>				
<i>Goal: To help students learn the basics of bike maintenance and to ensure that bikes are in good condition</i>				
Book a mechanic to lead the workshop	GCC: Jamie Orleans Cycle	Fall 2011 - mechanics are too busy fixing bikes to participate in the Spring/Summer	Established contact with Orleans Cycles, contact again in the Fall to confirm date	
Advertise the event with posters and announcements	Live It Up Committee members	Fall 2011		
Secure a space at school for the workshop to take place	Mme Vincent	Fall 2011		
<b>Action #5: Slow Bike Race</b>				
<i>Goal: To promote the Live It Up Club and to demonstrate that cycling doesn't have to be about going fast with a lot of gear</i>				
Get prizes for participants	Kathryn (Live It Up water bottles) & Mme Vincent (gift cards from Booster Juice and Subway)	Prior to June 8	COMPLETE	\$30
Book music stand from Students Council		Prior to June 8	COMPLETE	
Ask Principal Pritchard to participate in the introductory race	Mme Vincent	Prior to June 8	COMPLETE	

Create a promotional video for the announcement	Committee members to meet after school on May 31		COMPLETE - tape was broken and video could not be retrieved in time	
Arrange to have at least two bikes and helmets at school for the race	Mme Vincent and Sam	June 8	COMPLETE	
<b>Action #6: Best Routes Mapping</b>				
<i>Goal: Encourage grade 9s to walk and bike to school by providing them with a map of safe routes to school</i>				
Research & discuss the best routes	Live It Up Committee	September 14, 2011		
Create the map	Live It Up Committee	September 2011		
Print Copies of the Map	Jamie/Mme Vincent	June or September 2011		\$\$\$
Distribute the map to grade 9s on "Clubs Day" at the Live It Up booth	Live It Up Committee (2 volunteers)	September 2011		
<b>Action #7: Walking Club (targeting grade 9 students)</b>				
<i>Goal: Familiarize students with the neighbourhood by getting them out walking together during lunch and after school</i>				
Find a more appealing name for the club	Live It Up Committee	October 2011		
Promote the Club during Clubs Day and with announcements	Live It Up Committee	October 2011		
Plan Different Walking Routes	Live It Up Committee	October 2011		
<b>Action #8: Winter Walk to School Day</b>				
<i>Goal: Promote walking to school throughout the winter months with an engaging activity for students</i>				
Organize a Winter Walk to School Day Activity (TBD)	Live It Up Committee	Fall 2011		

## Appendix 1. The Transportation Survey

Please answer ALL questions & choose only one response per question. Completing this survey should take about 5 minutes. Thanks!

### About You

1. Grade (a) grade 9 (b) grade 10 (c) grade 11 (d) grade 12
2. Gender (a) female (b) male
3. Do you have your driver's licence? (a) yes (b) no

### About Your Trip to School

4. How do you typically get to school?  
(a) walk (b) bike (c) public transit (d) car with other students (carpool)  
(e) car - I drive (no other students) (f) car - I am driven (no other students)
5. How long does it take (*or would it take*) for you to **walk** to school?  
(a) less than 10 minutes (b) 10-20mins (c) 20-30mins (d) more than 30mins
6. How long does it take (*or would it take*) for you to **bike** to school?  
(a) less than 10 minutes (b) 10-20mins (c) 20-30min (d) more than 30mins
7. How many buses do you take (*or would you take*) to get to school?  
(a) one (b) two (c) three or more
8. Is the OC Transpo bus a convenient option for you?  
(a) Yes (b) No - it's too expensive (c) No - there are no convenient routes  
(d) No - both too expensive and no convenient routes
9. Do you have (or have access to) a **bicycle**? (a) yes (b) no
10. If you don't bike, why not?  
(a) I don't have a bike (b) not enough bike racks (c) too far  
(d) too dangerous (e) other \_\_\_\_\_

### About what we can do to reduce car-trips to school

11. If you **had to stop commuting by car**, how would you get to school?  
(a) walk (b) cycle (c) transit (d) I already do not commute by car
12. Do you think that we should try to **reduce the number of car trips** to school?  
(a) yes (b) no (c) don't know
13. Would you be open to using active modes of transportation more often to get to school?  
(a) yes (b) no (c) I already walk/bike/take transit regularly

14. What is your greatest **safety concern** on your commute to or from school?  
 (a) fast traffic      (b) reckless/inconsiderate drivers      (c) poor condition of sidewalk  
 (d) lack of traffic lights for crossing major streets      (f) bullying  
 (g) being alone      (h) dark alleys/hidden corners      (i) generally not feeling safe
15. What would encourage you to **walk** to school more often?  
 (a) having someone to walk with      (b) a safer route      (c) a lighter backpack  
 (b) nothing, I will not walk      (e) other \_\_\_\_\_
16. What would encourage you to **bike** to school more often?  
 (a) bike maintenance workshops      (b) bike commuting workshops (traffic safety)  
 (c) secure, sheltered racks to lock bike      (d) place to hang wet raingear (not my locker)  
 (e) I would like to cycle to school but I don't have a bike  
 (f) nothing, I will not bike to school      (g) other \_\_\_\_\_
17. What would encourage you to take **transit** to school?  
 (a) more frequent buses      (b) fewer transfers (ie. more direct route)  
 (c) rain shelters at the bus stop      (d) a more affordable bus pass  
 (e) bus schedules and route information posted at school  
 (f) nothing, I will not take transit      (g) other \_\_\_\_\_
18. What would you be interested in doing to help **reduce the number of cars coming to school** (circle as many options as you like for this question)?  
 (a) joining a cycling/walking group      (b) competition with another school  
 (c) carpooling or encourage carpooling      (d) bike or walk for a pancake breakfast  
 (e) nothing      (f) other \_\_\_\_\_