

Stepping It Up

May 1, 2013

Webinar Transcript





Landmark Designation

The program described in this case study was designated in 2012.

Designation as a Landmark (best practice) case study through our peer selection process recognizes programs and social marketing approaches considered to be among the most successful in the world. They are nominated both by our peer-selection panels and by Tools of Change staff, and are then scored by the selection panels based on impact, innovation, replicability and adaptability.

The panel that designated this program consisted of:

- Mark Dessauer, Active Living by Design
- Nathalie Lapointe, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- David Levinger from the Mobility Education Foundation
- Lorenzo Mele, Town of Markham
- Geoff Noxon, Noxon Associates
- Chuck Wilsker, U.S. Telework Coalition
- Phil Winters from CUTR and the University of South Florida
- JoAnn Woodhall, Translink

This transcript covers a webinar held on Wednesday, May 1, 2013. Additional materials about this program can be found at: <http://www.toolsofchange.com/en/case-studies/detail/664>.

Introduction by Jay Kassirer

Welcome to today's webinar on Stepping It Up. I'd like to start by briefly acknowledging the organizations that helped us to promote this webinar and also because today's webinar has to do with active transportation. I've put in some slides in your deck about our newest Canadian association, Canada Bikes, the national voice for commuter touring and recreational cycling.

This is the fourth, the last of this year's transportation case studies. We have two waste ones that we're doing in collaboration with Keep America Beautiful over the next month or two. Today's case study was designated a Landmark case study by our peer selection panel (see p. 2 of this transcript), based on individual and overall impact innovation, replicability to other locations, and adaptability of the approach to other behaviour.

I'm going to give you a few tips on what to look for in today's case study. When scoring, the selection panel noted that Stepping it Up is a coordinated, highly replicable institutionalized approach, which is somewhat unusual for these kinds of programs. It's detailed and well thought out.

The panel wanted to know more about some of these points, which I understand they will cover today. In terms of the stages of planning a social marketing program, you'll see some good information on their formative research, partnership development, and how they worked to overcome the barriers that they identified.

Finally in terms of evaluation, note that they recorded baseline levels of activity and looked at impacts over one and two years out and further; because they used a number of impact measures, they were able to compare what they found with each to make sure they were getting a consistent picture, a process that's often called triangulation, and it gives you more confidence in what you're finding if everything agrees.

We have two speakers today. The first is Jennifer Lay, Program Advisor for School Travel at Metrolinx. She joined Metrolinx in 2009 to lead school travel initiatives including the Stepping It Up School Travel Planning Project. Before joining Metrolinx, Jennifer worked at Smart Commute North, Toronto, part of a formal Metrolinx-funded network with a focus on workplace travel planning.

Kelly Scott is a physical activities specialist at the city of Hamilton. Among her other roles for the city, Kelly chairs the Hamilton Active and Safe Routes to School steering committee and facilitates the Stepping It Up project in Hamilton with 16 schools. Kelly continues to facilitate Active and Safe Routes to School initiatives in Hamilton with a focus on policy and partnership development.

Jennifer Lay, Program Advisor for School Travel, Metrolinx

Kelly and I are extremely pleased to be sharing the information from the Stepping It Up project as well as what we've done since, as it was many years of intensive work. We're also happy to invite all of you to work with us in future, so this is an open invitation to all of you to work with us on this work in future.

We have a couple polls to start us off. The first question here is, if you're an individual click on your main area of profession, and if you're in a group listening in, click on however many areas your group represents. For the second poll, could you again select your areas of experience there represented (school travel planning, workplace travel planning, Safe Routes to School, or similar initiatives) and select however many your working in.

Looks like we have quite a few working in both planning and public health engineering and quite a few people also directly working in the areas of school travel planning or workplace travel planning, etc., so that's great to know people have that background.

In Canada, there's a grassroots movement that's been championed by Green Communities Canada Walks Team and many community partners, and it's called Active and Safe Routes to Schools. This movements supports children to travel more actively and safely on their daily trip to and from school. The movement began in the mid-1990s in Toronto and has since grown to reach every province and territory. In Ontario alone, over 40 communities are involved in some form.

Schools, despite these strong grassroots efforts that I've mentioned, are the second biggest car trip generators in the morning peak period second only to work trips. The school run adds about a third more traffic volume to roads during the morning peak, and it's commonplace to see lineups of cars outside of schools in the morning and afternoon rushes. You've probably seen this in your communities.

[Slide] The graph on this slide shows data from the Transportation Tomorrow Survey, which has been completed at intervals over a 20-year period in the greater Toronto-Hamilton area, an area in Ontario of about 7 million people. The graph illustrates the steady change in students' method of elementary school travel and you can see that there has mainly been a shift from walking to being driven. The Transportation Tomorrow Survey was completed again in 2011-12, so we'll soon see if there's further change in that trend in our area. The quotes on the slide were gathered through our work in Hamilton and shows the issues that children, parents, and school administrators experience at the ground level, which really support what's shown by that graph.

The reasons for the trend are complex and include, for example, longer distances to schools as community schools are sometimes closed down. Also a culture of driving has been supported at many schools. For instance, we do see student drop-off areas for cars, which can cost up to \$250,000 per school. They're now required in many areas and in some cases, students are discouraged to come to school by bike, for instance, if there's a

lack of bicycle racks at schools and even sometimes walking, critical links for walking like sidewalks or pathways might be missing.

In Canada there's no national or provincial funding in Ontario to support active and sustainable school travel, but based on the work of Green Communities Canada in partnership with public health, municipalities, schools, parents, teachers and students, there is this grassroots movement which is growing every year.

[Slide] We calculated an average elementary school's footprint from carbon dioxide equivalent because this webinar, at the end, we'll be calculating what our own savings are, and this shows the that the footprint from the school is really 57, about almost 60 tons per year, and this includes the student population travel and staff population.

When you think about it, there are a few hundred students at a school and a few dozen staff at schools normally. This is really due to the distance traveled as students are traveling much shorter distances, while staff are traditionally traveling much longer distances. You can see that impact even though at schools we mainly focus on student travel because at schools, we mainly focus on the student and their education, but with the Stepping Up Project we looked at both student and staff travel, which was a unique aspect of the project.

[Slide] A really quick flag on the case for investing in Active and Safe Routes to Schools—basically, from the prevention of greenhouse gases and air pollutants to improved daily physical activity levels and better physical and mental health to better academic achievement. Each of these points on the slide are backed by peer-reviewed studies and I have the references to all those. Definitely, please feel free to add any additional links or evidence for this case that you know.

To lay out our vision in the greater Toronto-Hamilton area and Ontario, we have our regional transportation agency, that's my employer, Metrolinx, for our area and the regional transportation plan called the Big Move. This plan envisions that 60% of children will walk or cycle to school by 2031 and again, the quotes on the right [slide] were gathered by the Stepping It Up Project and reflect how this broad vision translates at the ground level.

[Slide] Getting into the project itself, it was lead and coordinated by Metrolinx in partnership with the City of Hamilton, Region of Peel, University of Toronto, and Green Communities Canada. We also worked with 30 elementary schools in Hamilton, Mississauga, and Brampton over 2009-2011 to test and refine the Canadian school travel planning model that was developed by Green Communities Canada in combination with the Smart Commute Workplace model, which was developed here in the greater Toronto-Hamilton area and is a program funded by Metrolinx. Both of these models are evidence-based models geared to shifting behaviour away from personal motorized travel to more active and sustainable modes of transportation.

[Slide] I'll talk about the partnership structure for the project. In the green, you'll see that our project partners – we had a series of legal agreements to develop, deliver, report on

and evaluate the project. Those in the green formed the core members of the Stepping It Up steering committee. Metrolinx was the umbrella organization coordinating and reporting back to our federal funding agency, Transport Canada. Peel Region and the City of Hamilton dedicated staff whose role was that of a school travel planning facilitator, and these staff implemented the project with schools in their respective areas. Green Communities Canada provided expertise and connections throughout the project, and the University of Toronto focused on data analysis, and that was the group that assisted was the Built Environment and Active Transport group.

In the yellow, you can see our municipal school travel planning steering committee, which supported the project and made it a priority in their work plans. In Hamilton, each of these committees had been preexisting to the project for many years, so they were on board and ready to support, and they provided in-kind staff time and expertise and connections in the community. For example, in Hamilton this committee included McMaster University, Settlement and Integration Services, the City of Hamilton, many departments from that, and of course parents.

In the blue, we have school boards, which gave formal approval through their research and ethics process. For their elementary schools to be approached for participation, we needed approval from three school boards, the Hamilton public and Catholic boards and the Peel public board. Stepping It Up elementary schools were selected based on a set of criteria.

Most importantly, each school had a champion to lead the project and 50% or more of their students living within walkable distance of the school, which we said was about 1.6 km. This allowed an opportunity for behaviour change and the selected elementary schools signed a brief agreement with the municipal partner to participate in the project, and received an honorarium for their participation of \$1,250 upon completing their baseline data collection and another \$1,250 upon completing their follow-up data collection. Many schools chose to spend their honorarium on implementing elements of their school travel plans, and I'll get into what a school travel plan is in a moment.

Still in the blue, each school formed a school travel planning work group as part of their participation. This work group was either part of an existing school committee or it was a new group, and that group was supported and guided through the project at the school level. This included a school champion and teachers, parents, students, community members, and the school travel planning facilitator, which came from either the City of Hamilton or Region of Peel, and was linked into the work of that school group. They either had greater or lesser involvement depending on each school's needs.

I'd just like to mention the project budget. The line items in our budget consisted of in-kind time from staff, so salary and benefits, about 0.5 or one FTE from each partner. We had overhead, again in-kind, such as office administration, programming for schools, so we had a few thousand dollars for incentives like pencils or reflective tags, communications materials such as banners, workshops for cycling safety, bicycle helmet, money for the programming aspects, and the school honorarium, which I mentioned was a total of \$2,500 per school.

We also had data collections budget, which we budgeted about \$2,000 per school for baseline data collection and \$2,000 for follow-up data collection, but we estimated the actual need was about \$1,500 per phase of data collection.

The other part is the in-kind services or infrastructure for each school. If the municipality or the school board implemented signage, crossing guards, sidewalk improvements, this was all in-kind and part of existing services or infrastructure that they would be offering anyway, so it was not charged back to the project or the school, but we did end up tracking it.

[Slide] As I noted earlier, the school planning facilitators in each area of Peel and Hamilton worked with their local project teams to recruit schools with appropriate champions, then collected data and assessed the transportation conditions at and around each school. Using the data collected, facilitators worked with each school community to create and implement a school travel plan, and those school travel plans included short-, medium-, and long-term actions to reduce car traffic around the school. Those actions were designed to create safer, healthier, and generally more supportive conditions for students, families, and staff to walk, cycle, and use other active and sustainable modes of transportation.

By incorporating the Smart Commute program into the school travel planning model (school travel planning has traditionally just looked at student travel), schools also had the opportunity to include actions related to staff travel.

Our goals were, as I mentioned, to work with 30 elementary schools by the end of the project. Our project model was to phase in five schools in each area over each year of the project, so ten schools began in the 2009 school year, ten more in the 2010 school year, and ten more in 2011 school year. Each school cohort were at different stages of implementation when we analyzed our final project data. Based on the schedule we had, 30 schools had collected baseline data and 20 collected follow-up data. Twenty schools had school travel plans by the end of the project and, associated with those school travel plans, our target was to have 30 actions from the school travel plans implemented, so at least one or two actions per school within the time frame. We did meet all those goals, despite some major setbacks such as the H1N1 epidemic in the fall of 2009.

[Slide] Our overall mode share targets for the projects were to measure a decrease in the footprint of travel by car transporting students to and from school. Our target was a 5% decrease. We also wanted to decrease the footprint of travel from school staff traveling alone to and from work by 3%, and, by shifting mode share away from car trips, we were aiming to increase physical activity levels. We wanted to help obtain a minimum of 20 minutes per day of physical activity, which is mandated by the Ontario government through more walking or cycling to school. We also wanted to create awareness of programs and support what was already available to help make a change in habits related to school travel, and we wanted to also help improve positive perceptions of active transportation and also of a sense of community and safety by putting more eyes on the street.

[Slide] A little bit about the data collection process. At each school, we collected the baseline data through surveys of students and staff, traffic counts around the schools, and school site assessments. In some cases, students were involved in leading surveys in classrooms, counting traffic in the morning, and using what they found towards the school's action plan. The baseline data was incorporated into the school travel plan, which laid out those short-, mid-, and long-term priority actions from among what we call the five Es: Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, and Evaluation. Again, those actions were developed by each school and based on the school's needs.

We then collected follow-up data to measure the change in travel behaviours and perceptions. We did aim to collect baseline data in all schools in the fall towards the beginning of the school year in October or early November and then collect the follow-up data towards the end of the school year in May or early June. This helped to minimize differences from seasonal variations and it also helped to ensure time in between for implementation of the actions from the school travel plan. Of course, sometimes that schedule was difficult to adhere to and we had to be flexible based on the context of the schools.

[Slide] I want to highlight some of the results now. Nearly 100 actions were implemented within the project time frame across 20 of the pilot schools, so that is well beyond our target of 30 actions. There were 47 actions in Hamilton and 48 in Peel, and these are just measures that were reported to us. There are likely more actions that were undertaken during the project. School travel plans definitely had additional actions in them which could not be carried out in the time period of the project, but schools are continuing to work on their medium- and long-term actions.

You can see that the activities and events were the more common and popular actions based on this slide. Schools likely chose these measures because they were cheap, fun, and engaged most students, parents, and staff at the school. Some of these activities were recurring on a weekly basis such as walk on Wednesdays, climb tests, and walking school buses; others were more occasional to kick-start behaviour each season. The infrastructure improvements were really made possible through the partnerships with the municipalities involved, and the school board in some cases if they were implemented on school property. There were a number of things that were planned but could not be implemented in the time period, such as sidewalk additions and improvements, and that's based on whether or not these can be prioritized by the municipalities in their own budget cycles.

Education measures were also fairly common but were fairly limited to visual displays and instruction. Lastly, enforcement measures were less common but when implemented, they were quite effective, for example, putting in a crossing guard and a proper crosswalk markings. They tend to change the whole climate of walking around the school, make parents feel more comfortable, increase orderly and safe crossings, and slow down vehicle traffic around schools.

We measured results through our baseline and follow-up classroom surveys. A decrease in per travel mode share of 7% to school and 3% decrease in car travel home from school,

so we've got to school and from school measured separately as they're very different. We measured also equivalent increases in walking to and from school. This translates to nearly 750,000 additional minutes of physical activity among students at these schools each year. You can see the reduction in vehicle kilometers traveled, greenhouse gas omissions, and air pollutants that come along with that shift from car travel to walking.

Parents also said they saw an increase in the amount of physical activity their child was getting and they saw an increase in the convenience and safety of walking to school as well as an increase in awareness among drivers of children walking to school. While schools did not choose to focus a lot on travel planning for school staff, we were successful in formally signing up one of our school boards as a Smart Commute partner and to profile the carpool behaviour of a number of staff as well. We learned a lot about staff, as it's a little known population in the world of travel planning, from all the data we collected. I think we've broken new ground with this work and I've previously done a webinar on the data we gained on staff travel to school, so I'd be happy to share that with anybody that's interested.

I'm now going to pass it over to Kelly Scott from the City of Hamilton to talk in more depth about the actions implemented with the project in Hamilton.

Kelly Scott, Physical Activities Specialist, City of Hamilton

With the help of community partners and stakeholders and within the short time of the project from March 2010 to December 2011, the Stepping It Up schools participated in nearly 100 activities.

[Slides] For the first slide, participating in National Walk To School events, this very full tree of participation with students used to show the physically active ways they use to get to school. The next slide, students using new bike racks through funding from the City of Hamilton; bicycle maintenance workshops for students and their families in partnership with New Hope Community Bikes; students promoting walking school buses at a parent open house; students getting directly involved at looking at their local community along their walk to school and raising those issues through the student Vote to Voice and determining how to address the issues that they saw; and the last one is students getting directly involved in creating educational resources like the Stepping It Up videos. These videos have received over 2,000 views and have been shared for use internationally.

Other actions in the project included crossing guard services and marked crosses; installing walking route signage and speed limit signs; parking enforcement and parking lot changes; identifying walking routes; and campaigns about active school travel. Many other great actions are still in the works.

I'll now share some of the larger results, which were not quantitative. These are messages that also resonated with elected officials at the municipal and school board levels and with parents and students. [Slide] This is a quote from a grade eight student who participated in the Stepping It Up video. It really demonstrates how kids can be

ambassadors for this work. Kids can make things happen if they are empowered as leaders.

Through the project, we learned that many parents are open to having their children walk. With the proper supports, such as crossing guards and crosswalks, maintained walkways, and adult accompaniment for their children, most parents say that they would prefer their children to use the active modes of travel. Kids can influence their parents' behaviour by teaching them about what they've learned.

We spoke to staff who carpooled regularly with a colleague. They said that carpooling is not only helping them save a lot of money but that it gives them companionship and even some time to do lesson planning in the car. It is amazing what a change you can see in just one day when you get kids excited about something as simple as walking. I think we can leverage this energy to more sustainable changes. Of note, we received the 2012 Community in Motion Advocate of the Year Award from the city of Hamilton for this project.

The feedback we received from school administrators and staff demonstrated strong engagement in this issue, that there's a collective desire to see this work grow further to other schools and that this issue is not just limited to any one school. It is bigger and requires a more forward-thinking and widespread set of actions and solutions.

When students, teachers, and administrators are seeing eye-to-eye and working together, it's a very powerful and inspiring thing. [Slide] Here are a few resources developed through the project including videos, a teacher's activity guide and our final report.

Jennifer Lay: [Slide] I'd just to highlight three key success and sustainability factors that we've seen across the work of our Stepping It Up schools as well as what we found from a study that we did since Stepping it Up of ten Ontario communities who did school planning projects.

First, stakeholder engagement and commitment – that's illustrated by the quote in the orange box on this slide. Each community that we worked in and studied assembled a school travel planning stakeholder group, which is really multi-faceted team or committee. These groups include representation from public health, municipal transportation, traffic planning, recreational and police, also schools and school boards, student transportation services, counselors, local not-for-profits, parents, and students.

Secondly, dedicated facilitator support as illustrated by the green box on this slide. This means that one or more people in a given community are dedicated to coordinating and advancing school travel planning processes. Facilitators provide that essential link between the school, the stakeholder group, and the wider community. Who handles the role of the school travel planning facilitator and where that position is housed and how much time that person dedicates to this work and how the position funded varies from community to community.

For example, in Halton region, there was a project manager of the Active and Safe Routes to School program housed within the Halton district school board. In York region, we have a school travel planning facilitator housed within the transportation services consortium and they manage the work for both schools. In the town of Ajax, there was an Active Living coordinator within the recreation department doing school travel planning. In the region of Waterloo, the work is jointly managed by Public Health and transportation staff.

The third thing we noted is that there's a need to make connections with existing programs and initiatives and that's illustrated by the blue box on this slide. If something done as often as school travel planning fits well with environmental education, health, and physical education curriculum in existing programs and objectives such as in Ontario, we have Equal Schools programs, Healthy Schools, and Safe Schools Initiatives, and this works quite well in all of these. It supports the work already being done in schools.

Last but not least, you need enthusiastic champions, and all the boxes on the slide illustrate that. Internal champions are needed at each school, school board, and in each community to lead and sustain the work, ensuring it's embedded into policy, planning, and programming.

[Slide] This slide illustrates what's happened since the Stepping It Up Project, which ended in December 2011. Basically, we have seen a lot of sustainability in Hamilton. There was a Hamilton Celebration Envisioning Workshop at which all the schools and many community organizations got together and developed the next steps in Hamilton, what our focus was going forward. Kelly Scott, who continues to be the school travel planning facilitator in Hamilton is working with more schools. They're looking at high schools, as well, and there is a focus on policy and how to create supportive policy to support this work.

The recent Rapid Ready Report (http://www.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/1EF0629C-3003-4FC2-A286-8ECACE07BB0E/0/RR1_Rapid_Ready_Report.pdf) embeds school travel planning into the expanding mobility choices in Hamilton, and a school siting and site design for healthy community workshops was led last year in partnership with the school board. Secondly, the Healthy Kids Panel is a provincial panel in Ontario that led a report to our Minister of Health in long-term care on a provincial childhood obesity prevention strategy. We put together a joint submission with 36 organizations providing endorsement letters and we asked that school travel planning and active transportation be made a priority in the recommendations; what came back is actually that active transportation was given quite a few areas of focus in the recommendations for that.

Beyond that, we've created some school travel planning in action case studies, which profile ten Ontario communities. We're also conducting a school travel planning cost-benefit analysis that uses the mode share and cost data from Ontario communities to model the benefits and cost and we'll have that to share later this spring.

In terms of public awareness, we're doing a social media campaign in Ontario. Right now we're doing a mini campaign on Twitter and Facebook until June 11 and we're showcasing one case study a week. This campaign is being run out of the @SmartCommute Twitter account, so please tune in and help share that information. We're also planning a bigger social media campaign for the 2013-14 school year featuring a series of infographics on school travel, so please stay tuned. Last but not least, we're engaging a strategy consultant to work with over 50 stakeholder organizations to develop a collaborative strategy road map for active and sustainable school travel in Ontario, so a provincial strategy road map.

[Slide] To close off the presentation, I'd like to refine this vision we see for supporting children's mobility in Ontario. We found through Stepping It Up that a school-by-school approach can be effective but it's certainly not enough to change the broader culture. There's a top-down and bottom-up model that was endorsed by 36 organizations throughout Ontario, as I mentioned, and this model calls for a provincial lead to facilitate multi-sector committee at the provincial level and that this committee would champion the initiative, develop policies, and monitor progress, and that we have school travel planning facilitators at the community level. These would be point people working within municipalities, regions, and school boards to jointly share this mandate

We'd like to see regional and municipal multi-sector committees, again coordinated by these school travel planning facilitators, but that these committees would create formal partnerships and steer efforts regionally along with school boards and many other partners. What we'd really like to see is that every school in Ontario have a school travel plan with actionable targets, deadlines, etc., to increase daily physical activities and that these be supported by policy at the higher level to make this happen.

They're doing something very similar to this in our neighboring province of Quebec as school travel planning receives considerable funding for a 10-year period and they expect that all schools in the Province of Quebec will have school travel plans by 2015, so if they can do it, I think we can do it as well.

Q&A

Q: The focus of the study appears to be about reducing car travel. Are school buses included as cars or are they considered separately?

Jennifer Lay: The reason we focused on car travel is because this is where the problem lies in terms of the line-ups around schools and also where students who could be getting physical activity by walking or biking to school are actually missing those opportunities by being driven. We focused on the car travel because it is the problem.

What we have done and seen done in some areas is that this work can support school bus travel because we've identified that there are students that are being driven rather than taking the school bus service that's available to them. We can help encourage parents and students to use that school bus service that they're eligible for, hence getting them out of the car that way, and there's also programs whereby students taking the school bus could

participate in walking. For instance, if the school bus drops off half a kilometer away at a staging area and students are then able to walk in and get that physical activity.

Kelly Scott: In Hamilton there are a little bit more suburban rural type areas, originally when the schools went in, so there wasn't a lot of connection and many students wouldn't be within walkable distance. There weren't sidewalks or they were having to go out onto rural highways. Since that time, we now see some connecting pathways to the school from those neighborhoods. Now we're trying to get those students to get off the bus and walk now that they're within a five-minute walk. A little change for some parents because they're used to seeing the bus, but it'd be really nice to see those kids also walking, and just the money savings, if we could somehow leverage that money in Ontario, it'd be great.

Q: Are there any aspects of the program that encourage students to use the bus provided to them?

Jennifer Lay: Yes, as I mentioned, we do try to identify that group of parents and students who are using cars instead of the existing school bus service and look for ways to encourage that bus use as well as have students who are taking the bus participate in some of the walking programs. That is part of the program and it happens differently at each school depending on how many students are actually being driven who could be using the bus. It's tailored to each school.

Jay: What's the figure for average distance walked by students?

Jennifer Lay: We're focusing on what is the walkable distance. When you think of a student who's in elementary school up until age 13, there is a variation there in how much distance they could be walking, but around here we usually use the 1.6 km (1 mile) as the walkable distance. A cyclable distance could be a bit longer, for instance maybe up to 2 km, but we do find that the most manageable distances are ½ km to up to one and a half, so that's what we consider the average. That's what we're actually observing.

Q: Regarding ride matching for the staff, how did you manage that?

Jennifer Lay: Smart Commute has had a ride-matching system for many years and it's online. We create a group for the particular workplace that is signing up, and those staff are able to go online, click on the link to get into that group. They sign up, provide their information, and they're able to either match with people only in that group or a wider public group that exists. CarpoolZone.ca is where that ride-matching platform is.

Q: Can you talk a little bit about the tactics you used to get the school boards and districts engaged.

Kelly Scott: A number of things: making initial contact through our school board liaison committee here, so Public Health and the school board have a committee that meets regularly, so we started the conversation there. As you make contacts, doing presentations to staff at schools, going to some of their environmental committees, etc.,

talk to them, meet with principals, even just through email and sending links to let them know about some of the activities and things that are happening with Active and Safe Routes to School in other municipalities. Sometimes they're scared to try it and compete and get more involved themselves.

Q: Where is funding coming from beyond the project and what are the costs of doing school travel planning?

Jennifer Lay: As I mentioned, each municipality kicked in in-kind staff time. They appoint one or two FTEs [full-time equivalents] to provide their time towards this initiative in their community, and that can happen both from the municipality and from the school board level. If the municipality is a regional municipality, the region will have a point person and then each municipality in that region will also have a point person as well. If there's multiple school boards, there can either be a school board appointee in each board or one person, for instance, at the transportation department who works jointly between all boards. I'm really talking about the model that exists in York region currently in our area and that's how it worked there. It's really in-kind staff time.

In terms of the budget, we did provide honorariums, as I mentioned, but that's really just a bonus to get schools to incent them to participate. We didn't find it was necessary. Schools weren't demanding honorariums, but it is a nice bonus. Really it's being able to provide a bit of priority to schools in your budget in terms of fixing those infrastructure challenges, providing some services like crossing guards, and things that may already exist in your community but maybe just putting a little priority because it is a school zone and there's children involved. A lot of these are in-kind resources existing in communities that just need to be allocated towards this issue.

Jay Kassirer: You mentioned that the schools didn't ask for those resources, but over time I've noticed that programs have gradually included incentives for the schools. I'm assuming that's because it makes a big difference to the schools?

Jennifer Lay: In the Halton region, they did a project with 20 schools on school travel planning and provided much smaller honorariums of \$500 and even the facilitator that worked on that project seemed to say we didn't really even need to provide that honorarium. In some cases, schools really do like programming incentives like stickers, prizes and give-aways and in some cases, they don't want those. It really depends on the schools.

Kelly Scott: That's the same that we're hearing here and, at least from our Catholic school board where the students wear uniforms, when we do some of our "wear yellow" day walking events, part of their incentive is that they don't have to wear their uniform and they get to dress in yellow. That's motivating them to participate.

Q: What role can the universities play in this work or what do they play in this work?

Kelly Scott: Here in Hamilton, McMaster University has been involved through their geography department and has really helped out with some of the mapping of our cycling and walking routes.

Jennifer Lay: The University of Toronto helped analyze and evaluate our data from the Stepping It Up Project, so bringing all the data from the students, staff, and family surveys together and looking for trends and overall themes. Also, university students helped support some of the initiatives such as the Vote to Voice project that Kelly mentioned and also looking at collision or injury data at schools and helping with walking school bus pilots. There's really many opportunities there.

Q: I'm interested in how you address parent concerns regarding the safety (fear of abduction) of letting their children walk.

Jennifer Lay: Parents are involved throughout the School Travel Planning process. The goal is for parents to work together with the school, municipality, police and many other community partners to overcome the challenges they have, such as safety concerns. One way to help alleviate fears of letting children walk alone, is to have children walk in a group (e.g., a Walking School Bus), which is led by one or more known and trusted adults from the community.

There are many ways to alleviate fears and the first step is to have parents come together to discuss those fears and the actions they can take to improve the issues – this is what the School Travel Planning process does – the parent survey (available here: www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit) captures those issues. Parents also participate in a walkabout of the school, and help develop and implement actions in School Travel Plans. It is a proactive way of addressing those concerns. There are lots of positive things parents have to say about active school travel – check out parent testimonials here: <http://activesafe.nonprofitwebsites.ca/sites/default/files/Parent%20Testimonials.pdf> and at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XUyslpUCb4>.

Q: I recently attended a community association meeting in my neighbourhood. A police officer made a presentation on crime, etc. and stated that he would never allow his son to walk to school until he was at least 12 years old. How do you handle the police (and other government influencers) when you want to encourage cycling and walking to school by children?

Jennifer Lay: It is important to recognize that there will always be opinions of this nature. It is unfortunate to see a community leader (police) publicly stating that crime cannot be addressed to make a child's walk to school safer. In fact we found with Stepping It Up, that the School Travel Planning process can help students become leaders in making their neighbourhood safer. The children we worked with in Hamilton experienced all sorts of issues on their walk to school – crime, prostitution, graffiti, abandoned buildings, garbage – and they stepped up using photovoice to help identify those issues and brainstorm solutions to them. Students are currently working with the

City of Hamilton to help revitalize their neighbourhood and the police in Hamilton are a partner in this as they have the CPTED program (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). The Hamilton STP Photovoice process is very inspiring – check out the video here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KG4e5txF1r8> and the report here: <http://www.smartcommute.ca/media/uploads/pdf/HamiltonStudentPhotovoice2011.pdf>.

Jay Kassirer: Thank you very much for coming to today's webinar, we hope you enjoyed it.