



REPORT TO

## CORPORATE SERVICES, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

### TCDSB STUDENT TRAVEL PLANNING AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

*"For he will command his angels you to guard you in all your ways." Psalms 91:11*

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B. Leporati, Sr. Manager, Planning  
M. Iafrate, Sr. Coordinator, Capital Renewal  
J. Volek, Acting Comptroller, Planning & Development  
J. Yan, Sr. Coordinator Communications

#### RECOMMENDATION REPORT

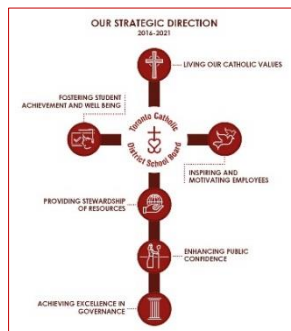
##### **Vision:**

*At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.*

##### **Mission:**

*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.*

*We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*



Rory McGuckin  
Director of Education

D. Koenig  
Associate Director  
of Academic Affairs

M. Puccetti  
Acting Associate Director  
of Planning and Facilities

L. Noronha  
Executive Superintendent  
of Business Services and  
Chief Financial Officer

## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Toronto Catholic District School Board works collaboratively and proactively with our community partners at the Toronto Police Service and the City of Toronto to ensure the safety of students and community members in school zones.

At the January 11th, 2017 Student Achievement and Well Being Committee, the Board of Trustees directed staff to undertake a feasibility study for a “Kiss and Ride”, including implementation protocols at TCDSB schools of this and other active transportation strategies such as “Walking School Buses” in an effort to help reduce traffic congestion, and improve student safety.

This report provides background information on the Board’s ongoing School Travel Planning (STP) program and involvement with the City of Toronto initiatives designed to achieve these goals.

To build upon the experience and knowledge gained since the 2011 introduction of the School Travel Planning (STP) in TCDSB schools, and to support a feasibility study regarding further STP programs at schools, it is recommended that the Board consider funding an expanded STP Facilitator role for fall of 2018.

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 20 hours*

## **B. PURPOSE**

Trustees approved the following motion at the Student Achievement and Well Being Committee meeting on January 11, 2017:

*“That staff undertake a feasibility study for a “Kiss and Ride” program including implementation protocols, review of capacity for drop off and walk areas in close proximity to the school and recommendations for drop off for Primary grade students at school. The study would also include protocols for the “Walking School Bus”, already taking place as a special annual event in a number of schools, with recommendations for implementation for communities wishing to initiate such a program. Implementation of a “Kiss and Ride” and/or the “Walking School Bus” would be determined through*

*discussion and consultation with the local community by the school CSAC. Support and guidance would be provided by the Board as required.”*

This report reviews Board investments to date and the continuous efforts undertaken with community partners at the Toronto Police Service and City of Toronto to highlight student safety in school zones, implementation of alternative student transportation strategies, and behavioural changes aimed at reducing traffic congestion around school sites.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

1. The City of Toronto began pilot testing Active and Safe Routes to School activities in 2011. As part of this initiative, the City selected Green Communities Canada to partner with both school boards to introduce the School Travel Planning (STP) model to Toronto schools.
2. The School Travel Planning (STP) model was designed to be administered by a Facilitator for two (2) to three (3) years before a school community can be deemed ready to implement and operate the program independently.
3. In collaboration with the Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG), the Board released its Transportation Demand Management Plan and Active Transportation Travel Charter in December 2013. These documents supported the implementation of STP at TCDSB schools.
4. Over the past five years, with the assistance of the a Facilitator from Green Communities Canada, STP has been introduced at a number of TCDSB schools with selection criteria based on school enrolment and utilization rates, the number of students residing within a 1.6 km walking distance, limited parking and traffic congestion issues.
5. In July 2016, Toronto City Council unanimously endorsed a five-year Road Safety Plan with a vision to eliminate road fatalities and serious injuries. Following consultation with TCDSB and TDSB staff, the City officially launched the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan in January 2017. The plan introduced over 50 safety measures including improved street signage, traffic calming measures, increased Police patrols and more by-law enforcement officers.

6. In September 2017, Toronto Police Service hosted a “Back to School” media event at D’Arcy McGee Catholic School to emphasize safe driving in school zones, parking considerations when dropping off and picking up children at school, and working cooperatively with the school community to ensure a safe environment for our children.
7. For the 2017-18 school year, \$25,000 was budgeted to support STP facilitation at five (5) additional schools, increasing total participation to 11 TCDSB schools (see Table 1) since 2011. Total budgeted investments in STP activities is \$51,000 from 2014-2018.

School	School Travel Planning Implementation Year						
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<b>St. Brendan</b>							
<b>St. Cecelia</b>							
<b>Our Lady of Lourdes</b>							
<b>Annunciation</b>							
<b>St. Raphael</b>							
<b>St. Anselm</b>							
<b>St. Thomas Aquinas</b>							
<b>St. Eugene</b>							
<b>St. Fidelis</b>							
<b>St. Mary Portugal Square</b>							
<b>St. Nicholas of Bari</b>							

*Table 1- STP Implementation at TCDSB Schools by Year*

8. Due to recent fatalities in and around school zones, student travel-related safety issues remains a priority for all school boards. As an example, TDSB has hired a full-time School Travel Planning Facilitator to work exclusively with their communities.
9. With the assistance of a dedicated School Travel Planning (STP) Facilitator, TCDSB Planning and Facilities staff seek to implement a periodic review of

the feasibility of implementation of Kiss and Ride and other school zone safe travel options upon the request of local school communities.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

1. There is growing interest in STP at TCDSB school communities not yet selected for the program. Board Staff continue to provide advice, online toolkit resources and best practices support to assist all school communities with their safety and traffic congestion challenges, however, demand remains greater than the resources available to deliver. The slow rate of STP adoption (11 schools over 7 years) reflects this reality as shown in Table 1.
2. Approximately 1/3 of TCDSB elementary schools feature “Kiss and Ride” loops. Some have implemented local plans to alleviate congestion and enhance safe student travel measures, demonstrating an uneven level of STP measures across the Board that specifically address safe school zone issues.
3. Due to historical reasons related to previous Catholic ratepayer-based funding, the majority of our elementary schools are situated on small 2.0-acre sites (Ministry of Education elementary school benchmark is 4.5 – 6.0 acres), making it virtually impossible to implement “Kiss and Ride” zones in all school communities. Adding to the challenge is the reality that most of our schools are in high-density urban environments, where streetscapes limit options to integrate drop-off and pickup areas on or near school sites. A feasibility study would not only help to identify potential school sites, but support the development of a customized approach based on local profile information to ensure optimal STP and safe travel protocols are established at each school.
4. As a necessary first step to initiating a feasibility study, a comprehensive survey is being developed by Board Staff. The survey will be completed by principals in collaboration with the CSPC and school community. Information gathered would help identify and prioritize a school’s needs relative to the type of STP safe travel initiative that may be required.
5. A STP Facilitator would be the ideal coordinating resource to help compile, review, and analyse the survey data. The cataloguing of existing shared experiences and initiatives would create an invaluable STP database of best practices and implementation protocols, adding to what has been identified to date by staff for both **Kiss and Ride** and **Walking School Bus** program solutions (see Appendix A).

6. When initially introduced, the School Travel Planning (STP) model was designed to be administered by a Facilitator for two (2) to three (3) years before a school community would be considered to be ready to operate the program independently. This lag time between introduction and implementation reinforces the necessity of central coordination by a STP Facilitator.
7. If approved, the role of the STP Facilitator will be reviewed annually to ensure the most efficient and cost-effective means of providing maximum support to TCDSB school communities.

## **E. RECOMMENDATION**

1. That Board staff continue to communicate and gather school-based best practices and protocols related to Student Travel Planning (STP) to ensure safe school zone and travel environment for students.
2. Board staff develop and conduct a comprehensive school-based survey as part of a feasibility study
3. That the Board consider, as part of the 2018-2019 budget setting process, the strategic investment of \$50,000 to fund an expanded STP Facilitator role to assist in completing the feasibility study and undertaking implementation of school-specific action plans designed to address traffic safety problems and promote sustainable modes of travel in TCDSB communities.