

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2013

Item 8, Report No. 9, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on March 19, 2013.

8 ACTIVE TRAVEL CHARTER FOR CANADIAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Community Services, dated February 26, 2013:

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, Director of Recreation and Culture, and Manager of Environmental Sustainability, recommends:

1. That the Mayor, on behalf of the City of Vaughan, be authorized to sign the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth, as shown on Attachment 1.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions Vaughan Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan, Goals 3 and 4:

- 3.1 To develop and sustain a network of sidewalks, paths and trails that supports all modes of non-vehicular transportation.
- 3.3.2 Work with partners to develop and implement a trip reduction/active transportation strategy for the community including such transportation demand management initiatives as the Active & Safe Routes to School.
- 4.1 To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.
 - 4.1.1 Develop an implementation plan for the initiatives described in the City's Active Together Master Plan through a phased and budgeted program.

Economic Impact

Funding for the activities and events indicated in this report is included in the 2013 base operating budget.

Site specific improvements coordinated by the Engineering departments, will be identified following a site visit/audit and consultation with the school, and funded from the approved Capital Budget (DT-7108-13) for School Travel Planning Measures. These could include infrastructure improvements to slow traffic, pedestrian improvements, new signs, pavement markings and educational materials.

Communications Plan

Recreation and Culture will distribute information on the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth and Vaughan's Active Routes are the Way to Go program to all schools in Vaughan through a number of methods including meetings, information packages and the Healthy Schools newsletter. Further a toolkit for the Vaughan's Active Routes are the Way to Go program will be posted on the City's website.

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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to authorize the Mayor to sign the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth on behalf of the City of Vaughan and present an update for the Active Routes are the Way to Go program.

Background - Analysis and Options

Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth

As the number of children being driven for short trips grows, community streets and spaces where children gather bear greater congestion and traffic safety issues; air quality where children play suffers; and many children are denied the opportunity for exercise, fresh air and independence. Built on extensive discussions with experts throughout Canada, the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth, details how we can create a culture where children choose to use active travel. The Charter may be signed by any individual, organization, authority or neighbourhood group that supports its vision and strategic principles regardless of formal position and ability to independently progress implementation.

City of Vaughan Active Routes Are the Way to Go Program

The City of Vaughan in its strategic plan, Vaughan Vision 2020, is committed to Service Excellence through enhancing and ensuring community safety, health and wellness. The Active Together Physical Activity Strategy initiatives, such as the Active Routes are the Way to Go program, will help achieve the objective of community health and wellness and supports the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth.

The City believes the development of a more physically active community enhances the quality of life of its residents, that physical activity levels are a critical economic, environmental, health and social issue for the community, and that participation in physical activity is a key requirement for individual physical and mental health and well-being.

The Active Routes are the Way to Go program is also a priority and strategy in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (PBMP), and the recently approved Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which was adopted by Council in Fall 2011. This plan outlines the long term future and sets out the "New Path" for the evolution of the transportation system serving the entire City. In regard to schools, the "New Path" is about making investments in the health and well-being of our children by providing more sidewalks and bicycle facilities. The new TMP also recommends that the City develops and implements School Travel Plans at both the elementary and secondary school levels.

School Travel Planning promotes active and sustainable modes of school travel; Successful programs in Ontario have reduced car traffic

School Travel Planning uses "Active and Safe Routes to School" programming combined with Transportation Demand Management principles to encourage active and sustainable modes of school travel for students, families and staff" (Green Communities Canada, 2012). School Travel Plan actions and measures are aimed at reducing car traffic at schools and creating safer, healthier conditions for students, staff and families. Actions and measures are drawn from among the 'Five Es', depending on the school (Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement and Evaluation).

As one example, Halton District School Board's Active and Safe Routes to School Program has successfully implemented a School Travel Planning program. After working with 23 schools, 940

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students participated in activities such as Walking School Buses, which saw a reduction in car traffic of 25-30% at targeted schools after four weeks of the program (Metrolinx, Stepping It Up – Final Report, June 2012).

In October 2012, staff launched the Active Routes are the Way to Go program at a pilot school – St Michael the Archangel

On October 10, 2012, the City of Vaughan launched its first “active route focused” school. St. Michael the Archangel, located at 161 Via Campanile in Woodbridge, has been designated a “active route focused” school because of the implementation of the Active and Safe Routes to School comprehensive action plan which overcomes barriers to children’s active school travel by mobilizing children and families one step at a time. The York Catholic District School Board, York Region Planning and Community Health Services staff, Green Communities Canada, Heart and Stroke Foundation, York Regional Police, and various City Departments have all collaborated to launch the school travel action plan. The community partners noted above have come together to identify key areas of need for school travel planning and have put together an action plan to implement initiatives and events to support the broader initiative to stop traffic jams around schools, increase physical activity levels and get students walking and cycling. To evaluate the success of the program, traffic counts will be collected at the end of the school year, which will be analyzed and compared to the baseline counts.

In Spring 2013, schools will be invited to apply to participate in the 2013-14 Active Routes are the Way to Go program

Building on the success of the pilot school, the City of Vaughan, in collaboration with the York Catholic District School Board and York Region District School Board, will be asking schools to submit an application in the spring of 2013, to determine their interest and readiness to participate in the Active Routes are the Way to Go program. All schools will be able to access an online toolkit to get started, including checklists, samples, and resource materials. Schools requiring a more in depth approach and support will need to be reviewed by City Staff, York Region staff and school board representatives. The City intends to support up to two schools per year.

The Vaughan School Travel Planning Working Group supports the Active Routes are the Way to Go program in collaboration with the School Boards and Public Health

To be successful at the community level, School Travel Planning requires the support and participation of many stakeholders. The Vaughan School Travel Planning Working Group consists of the following stakeholders:

- City of Vaughan Recreation and Culture
- City of Vaughan Development/Transportation Engineering
- City of Vaughan Engineering Services
- City of Vaughan Environmental Sustainability Office
- City of Vaughan Enforcement Services
- York Regional Police
- Heart and Stroke Foundation
- York Region Public Health
- Vaughan Community Health Centre
- York Catholic District School Board
- York Region District School Board

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The roles are organized as follows:

School Board

- Represent York Catholic District School Board & York Region District School Board with respect to Active and Safe Routes to School programs;
- Support the community partners in implementing the Active and Safe Routes to School Program;
- Assist in developing school site and travel plans;
- Collaborate with community partners in monitoring and reviewing of School Travel Plans as needed;
- Provide school specific data;
- Promote Active and Safe Routes to School within the community.

Public Health

- Participate in School walkabout;
- Contribute to policy development that supports active travel;
- Contribute ideas for Action Plan;
- Educate and campaign to parents and students.

City of Vaughan

Recreation and Culture

- Chair of Vaughan School Travel Planning Working Group;
- Develop School Travel Plan Action Plan in collaboration with Healthy Schools Committee;
- Implement Action Plan measures.

Recreation and Culture, Development/Transportation Engineering, Engineering Services, Environmental Sustainability Office and Enforcement Services

- Participate in Vaughan School Travel Planning Working Group and assist with actions and measures;
- Help with data collection;
- Provide historical data and maps;
- Participate in School walkabout;
- Contribute to Action Plan development and research;
- Liaise with Recreation and Culture and Healthy Schools Committee on actions and measures;
- Plan Capital budget to incorporate recommended engineering improvements (Development/Transportation Engineering);
- Design and implement engineering improvements (Engineering Services).

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, this report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:
Service Excellence – Providing service excellence to citizens
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health and Wellness.

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This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

Staff from the Regional Municipality of York Region is supportive of the Active Routes are the Way to Go program and will continue to provide staff resources to the project.

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan is taking a proactive approach to improve the health and active lifestyles of its citizens by supporting the Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth and the Active Routes are the Way to Go program. By working in collaboration with a number of City departments, and community partners Vaughan will increase the number of residents walking and cycling to school. As an initiative of the Physical Activity Strategy of the *“Active Together” Master Plan For Parks, Recreation, Culture And Libraries*, the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan*, *Transportation Master Plan* and *Green Directions Vaughan Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan*, the Active Routes are the Way to Go program will help achieve the objective of improving environmental sustainability and community health and wellness.

Attachments

1. Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth and background information

Report Prepared By

Lisa Lavery, Manager Traffic Services, ext. 8143
Heather McLean, Active Living Coordinator, ext. 7438
Elizabeth Linley, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator, ext. 8426
Geoffrey Haines, Transportation Specialist, ext. 8026

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – FEBRUARY 26, 2013

ACTIVE TRAVEL CHARTER FOR CANADIAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Recommendation

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Respectfully submitted,

Marlon Kallideen
Commissioner of Community Services



Active Travel Charter for Canadian Children and Youth

Creating healthy, sustainable communities where active travel for children and youth is the norm

I/We, the undersigned recognize that active travel for children and youth is integral to a healthy, happy, socially inclusive and sustainable community, and we acknowledge the universal rights of children and youth to have safe environments for active travel to destinations like school. We are committed to reducing the physical, social and institutional barriers that limit children and youth's active travel. We will work with others to create a culture where children and youth and their families choose to use active travel by supporting this Charter and the following strategic principles:

- 1. A successful community for children and youth is a successful community for all*
- 2. Children and youth have the right to safe environments for active travel*
- 3. Active travel contributes to sustainable happiness and well-being for all*
- 4. Community plans should make provisions for children and youth as active travelers*
- 5. The school journey is the most common trip for children and youth, and merits specific attention for active travel plans*
- 6. Children and youth can help identify barriers and opportunities related to active travel*
- 7. Motorized transportation has adverse effects on children and youth, and communities should strive to reduce it*
- 8. When children and youth learn to be active travelers, they set habits for life*

Signed _____

Name _____

Position _____

Date _____

Introduction

As the number of children being driven for short trips grows, community streets and spaces where children gather bear greater congestion and traffic safety issues; air quality where children play suffers; and many children are denied the opportunity for exercise, fresh air and independence.

Built on extensive discussions with experts throughout Canada, this Charter details how we can create a culture where children choose to use active travel. The Charter may be signed by any individual, organization, authority or neighbourhood group that supports its vision and strategic principles regardless of formal position and ability to independently progress implementation.

Please support this Charter by signing it and encouraging friends, colleagues, school officials, government bodies, and national and local organizations to work with you to help create a nation where active travel for children and youth is the norm.

Background

Active travel is an approach to transportation that focuses on physical activity like walking or cycling as opposed to motorized and carbon-dependent means. Active travel is a fundamental and universal right; yet as a nation we do not work with children and youth to develop active travel skills and few from this vulnerable population enjoy its benefits. Active travel has ceased being routine for children and youth and is becoming more of an anomaly even though active travel is a pleasurable, socially connective and environmentally responsible choice.

The Active Healthy Kids Report Cardⁱ repeatedly ranks Canadian children's activity low. As a direct result of inactivity, Canadian children are suffering from record levels of obesity, depression, heart disease, anxiety, and social isolation.

Active travel offers health, happiness and age-appropriate independence for our children and youth. It has the ability to build and preserve physical and emotional health while at the same time providing social connections and self-confidence.

Vision

Canada is a nation where children and youth walk and cycle regularly.

This vision will be realized when citizens and leaders alike:

- Recognize the value of active travel for children and youth
- Make a commitment to healthy, happy and sustainable communities
- Work together to overcome the physical, social and institutional barriers that limit children and youth from using active travel.

Principles and Actions

This Charter identifies the needs of children and youth who use active travel and provides a common framework to help authorities refocus existing policies, activities and relationships to create a culture where active travel for children and youth is the norm.

The actions listed under each principle provide a practical list of improvements that can be made in most communities. All communities are encouraged to add to this list to respond to local needs.

1. *A successful community for children and youth is a successful community for all*

Enrique Peñalosa, former Mayor of Bogota and active travel supporter, refers to children as a sort of indicator species of the health of a community. He says; “One common measure of how clean a mountain stream is, is to look for trout. If you find the trout, the habitat is healthy. It’s the same way with children in a city...If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people.”

ACTIONS

- a. Prioritize the needs of children and youth in land-use and transport planning – the special needs required to accommodate this population also makes active travel possible for other vulnerable populations such as senior citizens.
- b. Improve land-use planning, ensuring that new housing, schools, after school program facilities and public transport stops are located and designed so that children can reach them easily on foot

2. *Children and youth have the right to safe environments for active travel*

Car-centric communities discriminate against any population that cannot drive, including children. This sort of culture idealizes motorized mobilization, in turn creating a social stigma against active travel. It encourages our youth to yearn to get behind the wheel of a car as soon as possible at almost any cost and it prevents our elders from hanging up the keys before it becomes dangerous for them to drive.

ACTIONS

- a. Put children’s mobility at the heart of urban planning

3. *Active travel contributes to sustainable happiness and well-being for all*

Sustainable happiness is happiness that contributes to individual, community and/or global well-being and does not exploit other people, the environment, or future generations. Active travel is a good example of sustainable happiness because it is light on the earth, increases personal health and well-being, and contributes to a sense of community. A child can develop independence, appreciation for natural surroundings and community connectedness through active travel that can contribute to his or her personal well-being.

ACTIONS

- a. Create beautiful, interesting, clean spaces along routes commonly used by children
- b. At appropriate stages of development, allow children and youth the independence required to travel actively with a buddy and on their own

- c. Connect with a child or youth by joining him or her for an active travel journey

4. *Community plans should make provisions for children and youth as active travelers*

Children and youth deserve supportive land-use planning policies that make active travel to everyday destinations like school and after-school activities possible.

ACTIONS

- a. Identify where children and youth want to go or need to go
- b. Assess those routes and ensure they are safe and suitable for them as possible
- c. Align sidewalks used by children and youth away from heavy traffic, perhaps with trees and other vegetation
- d. Ensure that sidewalks are suitable for tricycles, bicycles (of younger children) and strollers
- e. Ensure that cyclists are well provided for at intersections and have sufficient priority for forward movement
- f. Provide secure, convenient bicycle parking at destinations
- g. Make transit safe, welcoming, affordable and easy for children and youth; and ensure a parent with a stroller can easily navigate transit vehicles and waypoints

5. *The school journey is the most common trip for children and youth, and merits specific attention for active travel plans*

Keeping in mind that the choice to use active travel is impacted most by the environment directly outside the home, a network of connected, direct and easy to follow walking routes that are safe, comfortable, attractive and well maintained should prioritize the linking of homes to schools. An active travel culture can be achieved through education and supportive programming.

ACTIONS

- a. Endorse school policies and practices that favour active travel for the school journey
- b. Support active school travel programs that provide tools like walking school buses
- c. Act to reduce the time children spend in school buses
- d. Post speed zones of 30 km/h near schools

6. *Children and youth can help identify barriers and opportunities related to active travel*

When children and youth are formally involved in planning their community, they are connected with the larger community and gain empowerment through voicing their concerns. Since they travel the routes, they can often enlighten planners to the real issues at stake and may create the best solutions because they see the problems up close.

ACTIONS

- a. Designate someone as responsible for bringing the perspectives of young people to consideration during transport and land-use planning decisions
- b. Invite children and youth to planning meetings/walkabouts
- c. Survey groups of children and youth to identify problem areas and solutions

7. *Motorized transportation has adverse effects on children and youth, and communities should strive to reduce it*

Children and youth are more vulnerable to traffic pollution impacts. Reducing the adverse effects on children can impact long-term health outcomes on whole communities.

ACTIONS

- a. Work to reduce the volume of motorized road traffic
- b. Post lower speed limits in high active-travel traffic areas
- c. Act to reduce children's in-car time to reduce in-car pollutant effects

8. *When children and youth learn to be active travelers, they set habits for life*

Active travel habits do not emerge naturally when whole generations have lost the regular practice. In-school education and encouragement can re-establish a culture where walking and cycling for short trips is the norm.

ACTIONS

- a. Support Active and Safe Routes to School events and education in schools
- b. Provide for a designated staff person who can focus on bringing the right stakeholders together to discuss children's active travel and who can facilitate in-school programming

Additional Actions

Please write actions for your local needs or circumstances in the space below.

Green Communities' Canada Walks is grateful to our many partners across Canada for their assistance with the production of this Charter, and to you for your personal commitment to helping create a nation where active travel for children and youth is the norm.

For more information on Active & Safe Routes to School and School Travel Planning, visit www.saferoutestoschool.ca or email us at info@saferoutestoschool.ca.

ⁱ <http://www.activehealthykids.ca/>