

# Active and Sustainable School Transportation in Ontario: Policy Context

## Abstract

Metrolinx, the regional transportation authority for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), is working with stakeholders to support active and sustainable school transportation (ASST) in Ontario. To support this initiative, this document has been prepared to identify and map the existing policy context for ASST in Ontario.

As shown in FIGURE 1, this policy review is structured around nine key issues that influence ASST. These issues are categorized into two groups—those related to the communities in which schools are located, and those related to schools themselves. The report's sections address these nine issues in turn. Each section begins with an overview of the issue's scope and importance, and a status summary of Ontario's relevant policy framework. Specific policies of note are then identified; these include provincial policy documents that apply across Ontario, as well as examples of municipal and/or school board policies that have a more local application.

An appendix to this review contains a table summarizing the cited documents. The table identifies the name of the responsible agency, the name of the document, the type of document (i.e. law/regulation, policy, strategy, guideline

or charter), the topics of interest, the agencies affected by it, and whether the adherence of those agencies is required or voluntary.

### About active and sustainable school transportation (ASST)

Transportation to and from schools is a major traffic generator, and has real impacts on the environment, the economy, our health and our communities. Automobiles use fossil fuels, emit greenhouse gases, contribute to smog, and create congestion, delays and safety hazards around schools. Public transit vehicles and school buses, which move people more efficiently, are safer than cars and promote physical activity, are more sustainable. Active transportation is even more desirable—kids who walk or bike to school use their own energy, and they minimize wear and tear on public infrastructure, while getting physical activity that helps them develop and stay healthy. **Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS)** and **School Travel Planning (STP)** are increasingly common ASST initiatives in Ontario.



School celebration of ASST culture during an organized Walk or Bike to School Day at St. Martin of Tours Catholic Elementary School in Hamilton, ON

FIGURE 1: Issues addressed in this review

Community issues	School issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Land use</li> <li>▪ Transportation infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Transportation services and operations</li> <li>▪ Health services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School planning and design</li> <li>▪ School closing and consolidation</li> <li>▪ Curriculum</li> <li>▪ Student transportation services</li> <li>▪ Active and sustainable transportation programs</li> </ul>