

Safer Streets Advocacy

Engage families in advocating for safer streets for walking and cycling

Theme: **Education, Engineering** • Audience: **Broader Community, Municipality, Parents, School Board** • School Grade: **1-3, 4-8, 9-12, Kindergarten** • Mode: **Car, Cycle, School Bus, Scooter, Skateboard, Transit, Walk, Wheelchair** • Issues: **Lack of Data, Routes to School, School Site, Traffic Problems**

Purpose:

To bring road safety issues to the attention of decision makers and advocate for improvements that make streets safer for walking and cycling.

Description:

Students and their parents/caregivers have extensive knowledge and experience of their neighbourhood streets through their daily school journeys. As a result, they can have an important role in making sure municipal staff and elected officials are aware of local traffic safety and accessibility concerns, and in advocating for improvements. The key steps in safer streets advocacy involve:

Connecting with others

Find other passionate individuals in the school and surrounding community. Discuss your concerns about traffic and infrastructure problems affecting walking and cycling and your vision for the neighbourhood.

Gathering information

Conducting a [Family Travel Survey](#), a neighbourhood [Walkabout](#), [Bikeabout](#), [Traffic Count](#) and/or [Traffic Observation](#) are some of the ways to gather input from the community.

Advocating for improvements

Engage local elected officials (e.g. municipal councillor, school trustee) in the discussions as early as possible as they can advise on potential solutions, whether improvements are already planned, and how to request changes. It is best to write to officials and request to meet with them in person or by phone. When requesting improvements, be specific about the locations and problems, but keep an open mind about the types of solutions that might be best suited to address them.

What you will need:

A group of individuals who share an interest in improving street safety, tools and materials to gather and present information about local concerns.

Help:

Teachers, students, parents and caregivers, public health nurses, municipal transportation planning staff, school board staff, elected officials (e.g. municipal councillor and school board trustee), police or bylaw services, community support workers.

Resources:

The Centre for Active Transportation “[Guide to Safer Streets Near Schools](#)”

Share the Road Cycling Coalition “[Advocacy Toolkit](#)” and “[Advocacy Templates](#)”

[Road Safety Training](#) by the Ottawa Safety Council