Greening Tree

Use visual art to track and celebrate active and sustainable school trips

Theme: **Education**, **Encouragement** • Audience: **Parents**, **Students**, **Teachers** • School Grade: **1-3**, **4-8**, **Kindergarten** • Mode: **Cycle**, **School Bus**, **Scooter**, **Skateboard**, **Transit**, **Walk**, **Wheelchair** • Issues: **School Culture**

Purpose:

To recognize and celebrate students who travel by active and sustainable modes in a highly visual way, to encourage them to continue, and to inspire others to do the same.

Description:

The Greening Tree is a large image of a tree trunk with many branches, painted on a large sheet of paper, with individual paper leaves attached—one for each student who travels to school using active or sustainable modes (i.e., walking or wheeling for all or part of the school journey, or taking the school bus or public transit). You might want to individually recognize students who use active and sustainable modes by having them write their name on a leaf before adding it.

If done as a school-wide activity, one Greening Tree can be displayed in a central location at the school, such as the front foyer or the school gym. Or, this could be done as an activity in individual classrooms. It can be done as part of a Walk and Wheel Day event or a Weekly Walking/Wheeling program, or as a creative and engaging way to show the results of your Student Travel Survey.

If you repeat this activity throughout the school year, or make it an annual activity, you'll be able to see if your active and sustainable school travel promotion activities are making a difference in how students travel to school. Ideally, over time, you'll see the number of leaves on the tree grow.

To spread the excitement of this activity to parents/caregivers as well, be sure to take pictures of your tree and share with families on social media or your school newsletter, or invite families to come see the tree when they are at the school.

The Greening Tree can also be used as a unique learning opportunity for students, making links to math, language, science and social science (see Resources below for ideas).

What you will need:

– For the tree and leaves: scissors, butcher paper and paint, construction paper, sticky tack or tape.
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To determine how many leaves to create: clipboards and blank paper, or copies of the [Student Travel Survey](#).

Help:

Teachers, parent/caregiver volunteers, students.

Resources:

[Greening Tree Activity Kit](#) by Green Communities Canada