

Background

Date: November 27, 2017, 2-4PM

Weather: Sunny, dry, high of 4°C, low of -9°C

To start off the school travel planning process, stakeholders at St. Eugene CS did a walkabout to identify challenges and opportunities for active school travel. While walking, the key issues noted by stakeholders were congestion at St. Eugene CS and Valleyfield JS during the pick-up period, speeding and lack of visibility on Saskatoon Drive at Westroyal Road, and maintenance concerns in the Alex Marchetti Park. After walking around the neighbourhood, participants discussed their observations, priorities in the school community, and existing programs, initiatives, and efforts that could help address these challenges. This walkabout will be used to guide the development of an action plan to promote active school travel at St. Eugene CS.

The Walk

Route



Observations

1 Westroyal Road/Kroll Avenue at Saskatoon Drive



Speeding and visibility concerns

Facing West

- 2-way stop, no crossing lines
- Sidewalks go east-west but not north-south
- Visibility issues: Saskatoon Drive east of Westroyal is curved and slopes downward towards the east. This makes it difficult to see drivers going westbound on Saskatoon Drive
- Speeding

2 Alex Marchetti Park



Tripping hazard



Water flows to path



Trees blocking walkway, need for more lighting



Steep stairs leading to Sherin Court



Winter Maintenance Concerns

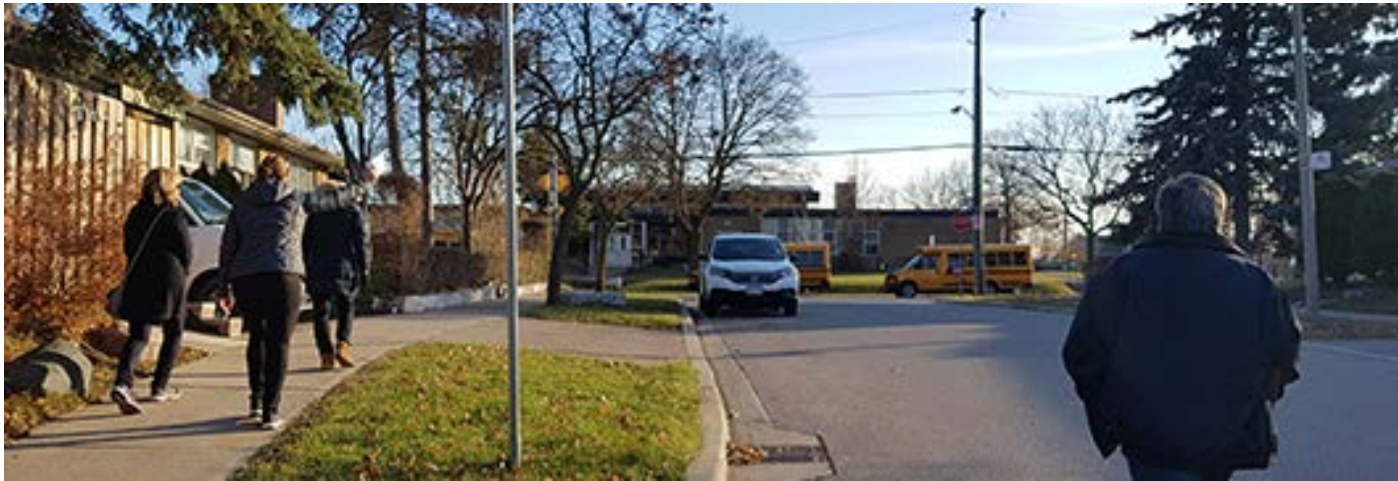
Narrow bridges connecting Emery Circle to the park



Narrow bridges connecting Dixington Crescent to the park

Other concerns brought up: coyotes and off-leash dogs, common to hear screaming

3 Valleyfield Junior School Bus loading and pick-up areas



Benbow Road, Facing Saskatoon Drive
3 buses and a few parents parked on Saskatoon Drive



Crossing Benbow Road at Saskatoon Drive coming from Sherin Court

- Drivers not looking for pedestrians at the crossing
- Saskatoon Drive is also narrow
- Another pedestrian crossing is located on the south side of Benbow Road at Winnipeg Road



Benbow Road, facing North
Bus loading area along Benbow Road, south of Valleyfield JS



End of Sturton Road, Facing southeast
Parents parked in a small area at the back entrance to St. Eugene CS

4 Westroyal Road by St. Eugene Catholic School



Westroyal Road, facing northeast

Long line of cars and school buses on a narrow street



Sometimes the parked cars block the school buses from entering the loading area

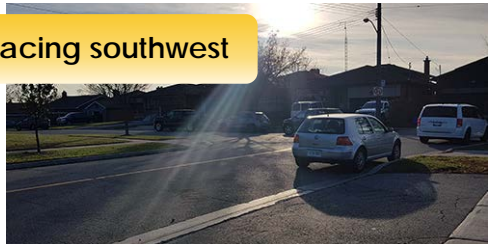


Street parking on a narrow road right by a school bus loading zone enables traffic

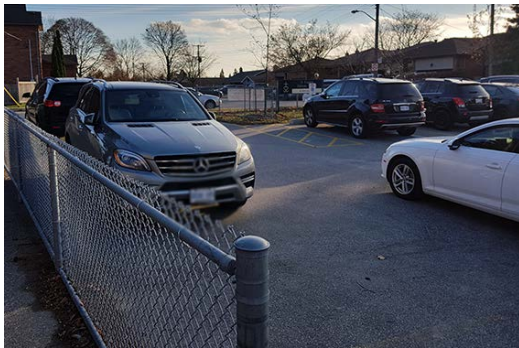


Westroyal Road, facing southwest

Narrow street with large buses and cars parked on both sides, making it difficult for other drivers to get through



Narrow street with a sharp curve and cars parked on the side, making it difficult for large vehicles to get through

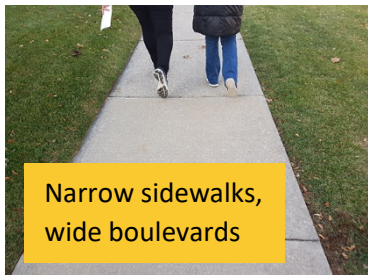


School parking Lot
Not enough parking for the teachers hired this year



Sharp tripping hazard between the school building and the bus loading area

Other observations throughout the neighbourhood



Narrow sidewalks, wide boulevards



Deep lots, long walkways



Hilly roads*



Large, unused space at the school

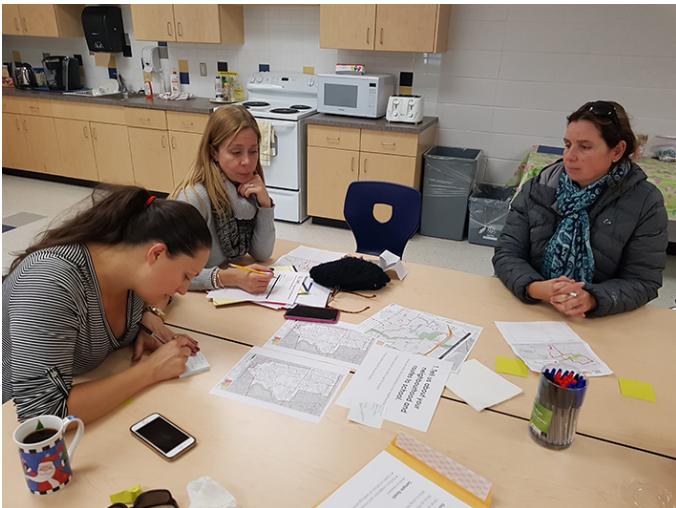
*This photo was taken before the walkabout.

The Discussion

After the walk, participants wrote down their key observations and did activities to guide the development of an action plan. Participants were split into two groups. One group consisted of representatives from the school community (Principal and CSPC members). The other group consisted of stakeholders external to the school, specifically representatives from the City of Toronto (Public Health, Transportation Services), the Toronto Student Transportation Group, and Councillor Campbell's office. The group with representatives from the school community outlined their key goals and priorities as well as existing efforts available at the school. The group with external stakeholders listed programs, initiatives, resources, tools, and other efforts that can be used to help St. Eugene CS promote and enable active school travel.

Setting Goals and Priorities

To help bring improvements that benefit the community, participants in the school community identified key destinations, routes, and priority areas. The school community participants then wrote a set of goals and ideas for solutions.



Key Destinations

- Starbucks
- No Frills
- Metro Plaza Library

Priority Areas

- Saskatoon Drive and Westroyal Road (need to reduce speeds)
- Saskatoon Drive at The Westway
- Alex Marchetti Park
- Nearby arterial roads

Goals

- Create safe, comfortable walking routes* by:
 - improving maintenance (such as repairing the bridges) and visibility (such as through street markings and crossing guards)
 - Reducing speeds and traffic volumes
- Bring more people on the streets

Ideas from the School Community

- Eco club
- School use of local parks to encourage neighbourhood use
- Walking school bus

*Walking routes includes sidewalks, trails, and other walking paths.

Existing Programs



To help identify feasible solutions, the group of external stakeholders talked about existing programs, initiatives, resources, tools, and other solutions that needed further investigation.

Potential Solutions

Councillor Campbell's Office can look into:

- Park path improvements
- Bus loop advocacy
- Support at walking/wheeling events

City of Toronto Transportation Services can provide the following services:

- Review traffic controls and parking in the area
- School zone safety review
- Watch your speed sign
- Review putting a 4-way stop at Korol Avenue and Saskatoon Drive (in progress)

Toronto Public Health can provide the following types of support related to active transportation, pedestrian and wheel safety and physical activity (Sharon)

- Curriculum supports
- Support with education/encouragement campaigns
- Work with student leaders
- Parent education and
- Anti-bullying resources (Edie).

Toronto Student Transportation Group can provide assistance in the following areas:

- Information on school bus routes and capacity
- Routes to school mapping (can also be done by TCDSB)

Other Considerations

- Both St. Eugene CS and Valleyfield JS have French Immersion programs attracting students living beyond 1.6km away from the school.
- The French Immersion program at St. Eugene CS is open to 5-6 different school communities
- St. Eugene CS did walk to school events in the past but did not have much participation.
- Students with autism are handheld to the school bus.
- There was a recent shooting in the neighbourhood.
- There were red light cameras at Dixon Islington. Red light cameras move around to different locations. Parent council representatives have noted that traffic has gotten worse since they were removed.



Walkabout at St. Eugene CS

Thank you to all our participants!



St. Eugene CS Principal: Kirstin Kelly

Valleyfield JS Principal: Michelle Drimmie Miller

St. Eugene CSPC (Catholic School Parent Council) Representatives:

Jennifer Di Francesco

Jennifer Smith

Gabriela Berloni

Councillor John Campbell's Office: Amber Morley, Constituency Assistant

City of Toronto Transportation Services: Kevin Akins

City of Toronto Public Health: Sharon Bain

Toronto Student Transportation Group: Mona Pielot

Green Communities Canada: Armi de Francia, School Travel Planning Facilitator