

May 5, 2022

Kevin Morse, Health Promotion Specialist, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention  
Windsor-Essex County Health Unit  
1005 Ouellette Avenue,  
Windsor, ON N9A 4J8

**Sent via email to:** [kmorse@wechu.org](mailto:kmorse@wechu.org)

**Re: Endorsement of Active School Travel Charter for Windsor-Essex County**

Dear Mr. Morse,

On behalf of the Corporation of the County of Essex, I am writing to express our support for the Active School Travel Charter for Windsor-Essex County.

At the May 4, 2022 meeting of Essex County Council, Council passed the following resolution:

**098-2022**

**Moved By** Tom Bain

**Seconded By** Marc Bondy

That Essex County Council endorse the Active School Travel Charter for Windsor-Essex County.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the betterment of our communities through the development of active transportation programs and systems.

Sincerely yours,



Gary McNamara  
Warden, County of Essex

Cc: Municipalities of Essex County Clerks Offices

 519-776-6441 ext. 1327  
TTY 1-877-624-4832

 360 Fairview Ave. W.  
Suite # 314 Essex, ON N8M 1Y6

 [countyofessex.ca](http://countyofessex.ca)

May 4, 2022

**RE: Essex County Council Endorsement of Active School Travel Charter**

Warden McNamara and Members of Essex County Council,

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU), along with the Windsor-Essex County Active School Travel Regional Committee, is seeking Essex County Council's endorsement for the implementation of an Active School Travel Charter. This charter, along with many other active school travel initiatives, was part of a successful grant application awarded to our community in November 2020 by Green Communities Canada for the Ontario Active School Travel (OAST) fund. This fund supports the development, promotion, and implementation of active school travel across communities in Ontario. A regional Windsor-Essex County Active School Travel (AST) Committee was formed to lead these various activities, and initiatives and includes the following community partners:

- The Greater Essex County School Board
- The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board
- Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence
- Windsor Essex Student Transportation Services
- The City of Windsor
- Windsor Police Services
- Bike Windsor Essex
- County of Essex

Active school travel (AST) plays an important role in increasing students' activity levels and is associated with improvements in mental and physical health. Common modes of active school travel include walking, cycling, skateboarding, wheeling/rolling, and scootering to and from school. Students using these modes of active transportation can help accumulate the recommended 60 minutes of daily activity to meet the Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines. When more families use active travel, there are also fewer vehicles accessing the school zone, which can lead to improvements in road safety and air quality within the school community.

Adopting an AST Charter will help to further strengthen regional coordination and collaboration between schools, school boards, municipalities, student transportation services, and other community partners, to allow for safer and more accessible active transportation in our local communities. The AST charter also supports and emphasizes the key principles of the County Wide Active Transportation System (CWATS) such as equity, health and well-being, environmental sustainability, and community safety. An endorsement of the Active School Travel Charter would be another essential step in recognizing the importance of coordinated programs and policies to support the active transportation infrastructure within Windsor-Essex County.

We look forward to your response and commitment through the endorsement and adoption of a regional Active School Travel initiative in Windsor-Essex County.

Thank you,



Eric Nadalin  
**Director | Public Health Programs**



# Ontario Active School Travel Grant

Endorsement of the AST Charter for Windsor-Essex County



# Active School Travel (AST)

## What is AST?

Human powered modes of transportation to travel to and from school

## What are the benefits?

Increases children's physical activity levels, enhances academic performance, and reduces air pollution and traffic in school zones





# Ontario Active School Travel (OAST) Grant



## OAST Grant

- Overseen by Green Communities Canada (GCC)
- Increases resources available to support AST related initiatives
- WECHU received \$60,000 in OAST funding in December 2020
- Funding allocated to AST initiatives with 6 pilot schools until June 2022



## Community Partners

An AST regional committee was formed with vested community partners including:

- **GECDSB**
- **WECDSB**
- **Csc Providence**
- **Windsor-Essex Transportation Services**
- **The City of Windsor**
- **Windsor Police Services**
- **Bike Windsor Essex**
- **County of Essex (CWATS)**

# What Has Been Done?

## Progress to Date:

Hired an AST planner

Created a Terms of Reference and AST Charter

Selected 6 pilot schools and on-boarded a working group lead at each school

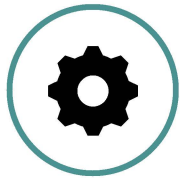
Conducted AST baseline surveys with pilot schools

Conducted walkability and bikeability checks of common school routes

Active and Safe Routes to School Toolkits have been updated and shared with all schools

# What's Next?

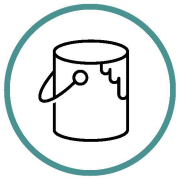
Future project initiatives and activities will involve:



Installing equipment storage (e.g., bike racks)



Delivering bike safety seminars



Implementing AST activities (e.g., crosswalk painting)



Promoting universal AST initiatives (e.g., walking school bus programs)



# Importance of an AST Charter



Strengthens regional coordination and collaboration

Leverages our collective resources and capacity to support program sustainability

Serves as a set of principles to encourage more active transportation in our local communities

# How Can Municipalities Support the AST?

**Collective endorsement** of the AST Charter from local municipalities will **highlight the importance of active transportation**-enabling policies and programs in Windsor-Essex County



# Benefits of Endorsing the AST Charter

- Further demonstrates a commitment to active transportation in alignment with other municipal mandates (e.g., CWATS)
- An avenue for municipalities, community organizations, and local school boards to collectively pursue opportunities to ensure long-term program sustainability







# ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL CHARTER

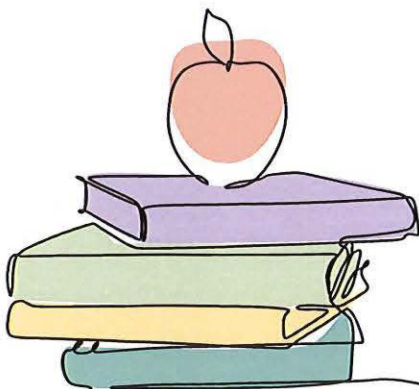
Active transportation is any human-powered form of transportation such as walking, cycling, wheeling, rolling, and using mobility devices.

School community members who choose active transportation benefit from:

- Lifelong habits of physical activity.
- Improved mental well-being.
- Heightened independence.
- Stronger community connections.

Reducing personal automobile use around schools by prioritizing active transportation modes, school buses, or public transit, improves air quality around schools.

Additionally, the reduction of traffic in school zones creates a safer environment for all users. Normalizing and promoting active and sustainable travel as the preferred choice of transportation reflects the principles of Ontario's Foundation for a Healthy School. Furthermore, it creates a culture where active transportation is the norm.



To ensure active modes of transportation are safe, convenient, and widely utilized, the WEC Active School Travel Committee recognizes the following principles:

### PHYSICAL & MENTAL WELL-BEING

Utilizing active modes of transportation promotes physical and mental well-being.

### EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY

Active modes of transportation are universally affordable, which promote independence and accessibility for all users. These modes provide the community with direct access to schools.

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

Using active modes of transportation for school travel strengthens one's awareness of their surroundings and feelings of safety and comfort in our neighbourhoods.

### LEARNING

Daily physical activity, including active school travel, prepares students to learn more effectively.

### COMMUNITY COHESION

Using active modes of transportation together creates a supportive environment that builds strong connections in our school communities.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Active transportation relies on human power, creating less impact on the environment, and can reduce carbon emissions when practiced by a majority of the community.





# ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL CHARTER

The WEC Active School Travel Committee recognizes the importance of ensuring our school communities are accessible for active transportation and the promotion of such modes. Utilizing these modes has personal, environmental, and community-wide benefits. This charter reflects the principles of the Ontario Ministry of Education's Foundations for a Healthy School, as well as Windsor-Essex County Health Unit's strategic plan for a healthy community.

This charter serves to inform a long-term commitment to providing support, resources, and education towards active school transportation. We will work together to encourage safe, healthy, and sustainable routes to school through our commitment to the aforementioned principles and the execution of the below actions.

- Develop and support the implementation of school policies that promote active transportation.
- Incorporate active transportation policies when making municipal and school facility planning decisions.
- Conduct multi-stakeholder active transportation audits and assessments of school travel plans and neighbouring communities for safety and accessibility.
- Advocate for safety enhancements and infrastructure to encourage all modes of active travel.
- Support, promote, and participate in regional and international active travel and road safety events to encourage active transportation.
- Educate school communities about the physical and mental well-being, learning, and environmental benefits of active transportation.
- Complete annual scans of active transportation policies and resources to provide community partners with updated information and best practices.



Ontario Active  
School Travel



Green  
Communities  
CANADA

Ontario

