

# Active and Sustainable School Transportation Strategy Roadmap Report



**Implementing Ontario-Wide Co-ordination for  
Healthier Communities through Active and Sustainable School  
Transportation (ASST)**

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In Canada, the percentage of children walking to school has steadily declined over the past few decades and the percentage cycling has remained very low, all while the percentage of children being driven to school has more than doubled. A broad spectrum of stakeholders in Ontario have been working for many years on active and sustainable school transportation (ASST) initiatives beginning in the mid-1990s as a grassroots initiative which has been growing gradually in scope and in level of coordination and resources. There is a recognized need and desire to accelerate these initiatives. There is also broad recognition that this is a shared societal issue – it is owned by no one organization or government agency, but its impacts are felt right across the spectrum. This was the starting point for the development of a Strategy Roadmap – a project funded by Metrolinx and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, with the support and participation of many partner organizations and stakeholders

Global Vision Consulting Ltd. was retained to work with stakeholders to create a Strategy Roadmap for the implementation of province-wide coordination on ASST for healthier communities. The Roadmap is a management tool for implementation providing an integrated framework for priority setting, project chartering, and assignment of accountability for actions and outcomes, and performance measurement. This report summarizes the project background and process and describes the resulting Strategy Roadmap. It also identifies areas of current activity by participating organizations, and their views regarding the highest priority implementation areas.

This project involved a significant review of available documentation and a number of individual interviews from a wide spectrum of stakeholders with various perspectives on ASST. It was also delivered by the interactive participation, in a series of workshops, of a substantial number of individuals representing organizations that will be vital to the successful future implementation of their co-created Strategy.

The Strategic Goal was agreed by stakeholders to be that:

- More children walk, bike or roll to school.

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Progress towards realizing this goal will be made as three key enabling outcomes are realized:

- More families make ASST a lifestyle choice
- Communities and schools have the required infrastructure, programs, resources and regulations in place to make ASST a viable option
- Delivery agents have the supports they need to implement ASST initiatives that are aligned with local needs and realities

Stakeholders also identified that Ontario-wide coordination between delivery agents – to create and foster a supportive context for the effective implementation of ASST at local and regional levels across the province – is needed to realize the above strategic goal and key enabling outcomes.

Stakeholders reached consensus regarding the system wide core capabilities necessary to achieve these goals and outcomes. These include:

- Promoting Community and Parent Awareness and Confidence in ASST,
- Increasing Child and Parent Motivation to Choose ASST,
- Creating an Ontario-wide Coordination Function,
- Increasing Community Capacity to implement ASST,
- Providing Supports to Help Manage Risk,
- Promoting Plans, Policies, Regulations, Standards and Infrastructure Assessments that Support ASST Implementation,
- Encouraging Public and Political Support for ASST, and
- Identifying and Promoting Financial Models that Result in Sustained Funding for Local, Regional and Provincial ASST Initiatives.

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The individual, local, regional and provincial impacts of ASST are broad and substantial. The strategic impact and ultimate benefit is that Ontario has healthier communities. A number of community-wide benefits will also occur – not all of which are solely within the control of the suggested Ontario ASST network.

An exercise to identify areas of current organizational activity in ASST initiatives, as applied to the completed Strategy Roadmap, clearly demonstrated the number and breadth of actions being undertaken by participating organizations. All of the actions in the Roadmap have one or more of these organizations already active.

When asked to identify their views about the highest priority areas for action, stakeholders identified the following as the top three:

- Establish an Ontario-wide coordination hub with a clear mandate and charter,
- Recruit champions and leaders at all levels, and
- Communicate the benefits of ASST to political leaders.

With the Strategy Roadmap completed, stakeholders have co-created a collaborative strategy for Ontario-wide coordination of Active and Sustainable School Transportation with high level goals and actions. Moving forward on this initiative will require implementation of this collaborative approach, driven by partnerships, formal networks, and local communities and community groups that have a shared vision and commitment to collective action.

The objective is to create a supportive context where children and families feel comfortable and safe with Active and Sustainable School Transportation and more children walk, cycle or roll to school. The individual, local, regional and provincial benefits are broad and substantial. The ultimate benefit is healthier communities.