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Report No. 05-14-2332

**TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD****CHARTER FOR ACTIVE, SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN****TO** Program and School Services Committee 28 May 2014**RECOMMENDATION** **IT IS RECOMMENDED that the report be received.****STRATEGIC  
DIRECTION**

Form strong and effective relationships and partnerships.

Build environmentally sustainable schools that inspire teaching and learning.

**RATIONALE**

At its 13 November 2013 meeting, the Board received the Charter for Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation as shown in Appendix A.

At its 9 April 2014 meeting, the Board received a report on the funding of bicycle racks that committed to including a recommendation for installing and paying for bicycle racks in 2014/15 and beyond as part of an implementation plan for the Charter.

The purpose of this report is to outline an implementation plan to support Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation (ASST).

In preparation of this report, staff reviewed input from the Bike/Sustainable Transportation subcommittee of the Board's Environmental Advisory Committee who recommend that the Board undertake action in the following five areas:

1. Develop a dedicated active, safe and sustainable school travel budget and staffing;
2. Develop a formal working group and protocol for supporting schools;
3. Work toward a school travel plan for every school;
4. Support the collaborative efforts to gain provincial support for active, safe and sustainable school travel; and
5. Support programs/curriculum availability, infrastructure, and enforcement (including a communications plan), delivered in partnership with external organizations.

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### **The Challenge**

In the course of a single generation, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of students walking and cycling to school.

A 2009 survey conducted by Metrolinx found that “71% of Greater Toronto Hamilton area parents said they walked to school when they were in elementary school and 10% said they were driven to school in the family car; 40% of parents said that their child walks to school and 37% said their child is driven.”

A study published in Preventative Medicine found that the proportion of children driven to school between 1986 and 2006 in Toronto doubled from 14% to 28%, while the number of walkers dropped by 8%.

In addressing ASST, the Board is up against a strong social trend that will not be easy to reverse, particularly at a time when the Board’s financial resources are limited.

The ASST implementation plan presented in this report attempts to focus the Board’s limited resources strategically so that it can make meaningful progress within a financial framework that is affordable.

### **ASST Implementation Plan**

The following implementation plan focuses on a manageable set of quick-starts, which are actions that the Board will take in its first full year of implementation starting in September 2014.

Rather than trying to do too many things at once, the following set of quick-starts is designed to focus our limited resources strategically and to take steps to build the capacity to achieve greater success in the future.

### **Quick-starts**

In the 2014/15 school year, the Board will:

#### **1. Leverage the power of its EcoSchools program more fully to support active, safe and sustainable transportation**

The TDSB created the EcoSchools program ten years ago. This year, the Board will certify more than 400 of its schools as bronze, silver, gold and platinum EcoSchools. More than 250 of

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the 400 schools are expected to achieve gold or platinum levels, a high level of achievement.

EcoSchools is a proven system for supporting local school teams undertaking significant change in schools. Rather than create another separate set of initiatives to support ASST, more effort needs to be put into leveraging the Board's current investment into its EcoSchools program.

EcoSchools will be leveraged by:

**a. Featuring Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation (ASST) at the annual EcoSchools kick-off workshops**

Kick-off workshops are held from late September to mid-November every year. At the elementary level, certified schools are invited to send teams of up to five members for half-day workshops. Most schools send two teachers and many schools send principals, vice-principals, head caretakers and various other kinds of support staff. At the secondary level, full-day workshops are held for teams of 10 made up of 9 students and one teacher.

Incorporating ASST into the workshops will be a powerful way to raise the profile of the Charter for Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation and to engage schools in taking future action, much more effective than sending out promotional materials to schools electronically or through inter-office mail.

**b. Creating a new section 5 in the EcoSchools Program that focuses more on ASST**

EcoSchools is a certification program with five sections or areas of focus: (1) Foster Leadership and Teamwork, (2) Reduce Impact on the Environment (Energy Conservation and Waste Minimization), (3) Care for and Create Vibrant School Grounds, (4) Improve Student Achievement through Ecological Literacy and (5) Contribute to Healthy, Safe and Caring School Communities.

In the existing Section 5, there is a small component on sustainable transportation. This section will undergo a major revision so that it focuses more fully on ASST, including ideas for promoting walking, cycling and other active forms of get-

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ting to and from school. Particularly for schools seeking advanced levels of certification, they will need to undertake work in this section to be successful.

In addition to adding new guiding questions, a streamlined version of school travel planning will be incorporated. School travel planning provides a consistent and transparent method of collecting data and establishing a baseline, identifying barriers and opportunities, forming a school action plan, implementing that plan and then monitoring it along the way.

The Sustainability Office in Facility Services and the Teaching and Learning department will work collaboratively to ensure that curriculum connections to ASST are made explicit within the forthcoming changes to the EcoSchools program.

**c. Adding new tools to the EcoSchools Toolkit to support the new Section 5 focusing on ASST**

The EcoSchools Toolkit provides school Eco Teams with concrete, tangible, up-to-date resources that they can draw upon when implementing the program. The Toolkit is designed to dovetail with the five sections of the program. To complement the development of a new Section 5 in the program focusing on ASST, a new section of the Toolkit will be created that will provide schools with ideas for promoting active transportation, such as Walking Wednesdays and the Walking School Bus. The Toolkit will also include materials designed to help educate parents which will also be made available in multiple languages.

Again, the Sustainability Office in Facility Services and the Teaching and Learning department will work collaboratively to ensure that curriculum connections to ASST are made explicit in the changes to the Toolkit.

**2. Create a new ASST Support Program modelled on the Board's existing Large Tree Program**

Schools that want to make active, safe and sustainable transportation a larger part of their culture need help, particularly with the procurement and installation of bike racks and with resources to help support walking and cycling programs.

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Schools with students living in poverty in particular need help to find creative ways to provide their students with access to bikes so that they can learn to ride.

For these reasons an ASST Support Program will be developed that will provide schools with bike racks at no charge and will also help with the cost of other kinds of supports that will be determined in consultation with schools. The program, modeled on the Board's existing Large Tree Program, will include an application process with clearly defined selection criteria.

**3. Partner with the City and local communities to create more safe pedestrian and bicycle routes to schools**

Schools not only need help procuring and installing bike racks and in paying for other kinds of in-school support, they also need help ensuring that there are safe places for students to walk and ride their bikes within their communities. Even though the Board has limited influence outside of its own property boundaries, it can take a leadership role in bringing together key stakeholders, such as the City of Toronto, the Toronto Police Service and community groups to work collaboratively on creating safer pedestrian and bicycle routes in school communities.

**4. Work on opening up new sources of revenue to support ASST**

As shown in the Resources section of this report, existing resources are being allocated to support the implementation of this plan. However, the resources currently available to support ASST are limited when compared to the challenge of combating the social trends working against students walking and cycling to school. For this reason, efforts must be made to seek new funding to support ASST.

The Board will seek additional resources to support ASST by:

**a. Partnering with the City of Toronto and Toronto Hydro to install 500 bike racks in the next two years**

Business Development, in collaboration with Teaching and Learning and the Sustainability Office, are in advanced discussions with the City and Toronto Hydro on a joint program that would result in the installation of 500 bike racks over the next two years.

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Toronto Hydro plans to launch a new and innovative fund-raising initiative in partnership with the TDSB. This program will help raise up to \$250,000 which will be dedicated to supporting the installation of 500 bike racks.

The City of Toronto's contribution to the 500 bike rack program will be in the form of a donation of racks.

As outlined in the Resources section below, the TDSB will also commit resources to making the installation of 500 racks possible.

By working together, and pooling resources, we will be able to support more cycling in Toronto than if each organization were working independently. The bike racks will be allocated to schools through an application process with clearly defined selection criteria.

**b. Exploring the feasibility of renting parking spaces to car sharing companies**

Over the last decade, car sharing has become common in the city, particularly in the more densely populated areas. If successful, renting parking spaces to car sharing companies would be a way to bring in significant new and sustainable revenue to support ASST. To make this work, some schools would have to volunteer to give up a small number of parking spaces, the City would have to allow this commercial activity in schools that are zoned as residential properties and car sharing companies would have to want to rent the spaces. Staff will further explore the feasibility of this idea with the goal of opening up a new revenue support for ASST. Any revenue earned would be directed into the Board's Environmental Legacy Fund and used to support ASST programs in schools.

**5. Encourage staff to participate in the TTC's Volume Incentive Program and investigate the feasibility of allowing staff to pay for Metropasses through automatic payroll deductions**

The TTC's Volume Incentive Program (VIP) is one component of the Metrolinx/City of Toronto Smart Commute Program. The TDSB has been implementing Smart Commute at three of its administrative offices: 5050 Yonge Street, 140 Borough Drive and 1 Civic Centre Court.

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The VIP program offers a 10% discount on Metropasses to the employees of participating organizations that can guarantee a demand of at least 50 Metropasses per month.

To study the feasibility of running the VIP program at the three administrative offices running Smart Commute, a survey was conducted to gauge the interest among employees in participating in the program. The survey results show that there are about 247 willing participants in the program and at least 147 Metro-pass purchases in any given month across all three locations surveyed.

To streamline the collection of money from employees for the Metropasses, the Board will investigate the feasibility of using its payroll system to make automatic deductions from employees participating in the program.

**6. Develop a new policy and procedure that would allow telecommuting for selected staff under the right circumstances**

An increasing number of organizations are offering their employees opportunities to telecommute. Benefits of telecommuting include helping employees and their families reduce stress, reducing gridlock and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Even though telecommuting would not be appropriate for a lot of Board staff because of the nature of their work in schools and with students, there are groups of staff for whom telecommuting might be a viable option. For this reason, the Board will strike a committee to develop a policy and procedures for telecommuting that will be subject to the normal approvals process.

**RESOURCES ASST Implementation Plan, Quick-starts 1 to 6**

The new ASST Support Program will be funded from the Environmental Legacy Fund up to an annual maximum of \$100,000. If additional revenue can be generated for the Environmental Legacy Fund through car sharing, then the annual maximum will be increased accordingly.

The Board's contribution to the 500 bike rack program outlined above in 4(a) will be drawn from the \$100,000 allocated to the ASST Support Program. At this time, it is anticipated that the Board's contribution to the procurement and installation of 500 bike racks will be about \$50,000 a year for two years.

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In addition to \$100,000 in funding for the ASST Support Program, the 6 quick-starts outlined above can be implemented provided that (1) the Board's longstanding partnership with Evergreen is renewed in future years, and (2) the TDSB's outdoor education program takes over responsibility for the auditing of platinum EcoSchools from the Sustainability Office. In doing so, the Sustainability Office would have the capacity to assume responsibility for the implementation of the plan, albeit working in collaboration with Program Coordinators and Instructional Leaders in Teaching and Learning as needed.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

### **ASST Implementation Plan & Quick-starts**

1. a) ASST will be featured at the Kick-offs from September to November 2014  
b) Changes to Section 5 will be phased starting in September 2015 over a three year period  
c) The Toolkit will be modified over the same time period – September 2015 to September 2018
2. The ASST Support Program will be developed between September 2014 and December 2014 and will be launched by January 2015.
3. Working with partners to create safe pedestrian and bike routes to schools will start by January 2015, but by its nature, needs to be a long-term commitment that takes place over many years.
4. a) Staff aims to finalize an agreement with the City and Toronto Hydro by the end of June 2014 and launch the program in the autumn of 2014. The goal is to install 500 bike racks by August 2016.  
b) Further exploration of the feasibility of car sharing as a new source of revenue will start upon the approval of the ASST Implementation Plan.
5. Exploring the feasibility of automatic payroll deductions to support staff participation in the TTC VIP program will begin upon approval of the ASST Implementation Plan.
6. A committee will be struck to work on a telecommuting policy and procedures in the 2014/15 school year.



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**APPENDICES**    Appendix A:    Charter for Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation

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## APPENDIX A

### TDSB Charter for Active, Safe and Sustainable Transportation

The TDSB will:

- invest resources to support active, safe and sustainable transportation to and from school, including efforts made within the school itself;
- identify and remove barriers to getting to and from school actively by partnering with stakeholders to work as a coordinated team;
- connect students' active transportation to and from school to their learning in health, environmental, technological, and physical education, and other curriculum areas;
- collaborate with internal and external partners to facilitate the implementation of school travel plans and road safety education along with other measures to expand on existing programs within schools and;
- increase students' overall physical activity and mental health through positive interactions with peers, parents, and staff.