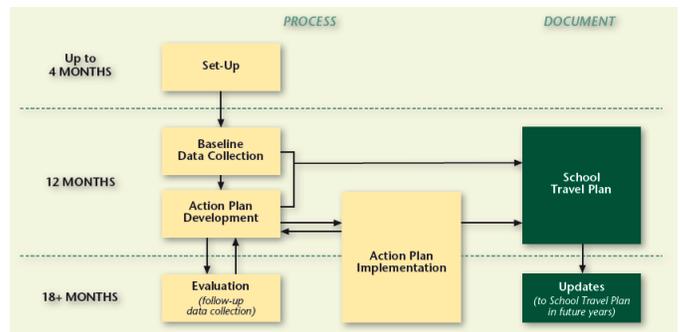


Bringing communities together

In many of our communities today, planning for cars has become commonplace. This results in more reliance on vehicles to get around, less active lifestyles, increased health concerns such as obesity and heart disease, and decreased safety on our streets. But is another reality possible? Can we plan our communities to support more active forms of transportation? And can we help our children grow up understanding the value of being active? School Travel Planning (STP), is based in the belief that the shift toward more active lifestyles is possible for any community. Across Canada, and around the world, schools and their communities engaged in the STP process are reaping the benefits of more active children. Benefits include decreased pollution and traffic issues around their schools, increased mental alertness in the classroom, increased safety, and children who are happier, healthier and more excited to learn!

Overcoming active travel barriers with a comprehensive, flexible process

School Travel Planning gets the whole community working together to remove physical and attitudinal barriers to active school travel and establishes strategies that encourage the use of active transportation. With STP, active school travel becomes a realistic choice for a greater number of families, while educating citizens and pooling community resources efficiently. Under the guidance of an STP Facilitator, the STP process flows through five phases (see diagram to the right):



Multiple stakeholders cooperate to take action

All community stakeholders come together to work on School Travel Planning:

- School board representatives
- Transportation planning/engineering professionals
- Public health professionals
- School administrators and staff
- Parents/caregivers, students and local community members
- Police departments



STP brings together school and community stakeholders to identify barriers to active transportation for each school and develop a written action plan. By carrying out the action plan, school communities can reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, increase safety for walking and wheeling students and increase physical activity levels among children and youth. No one organization is solely responsible for ensuring students can easily and safely use active transportation to school. It is the responsibility of many including school boards, municipalities, the province, public health and others. By providing support to staff members of these organizations, who add STP to their job descriptions, we will build a culture of support for active school travel, one that is eventually built into their day-to-day operations. Two STP Coordinators will identify and provide training and support to STP facilitators within various stakeholder groups across NS.

School Travel Planning in Nova Scotia

The STP process has been offered in 24 schools across Nova Scotia since 2007. For details about STP in Nova Scotia, visit www.saferoutesns.ca (click School Travel Planning). STP is offered through the Ecology Action Centre and supported by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia.