



Park & Stride GUIDE



ecosuperior
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

walk or wheel
WOW
thunder bay



**Thunder Bay District
Health Unit**

Contact WOW TBay:

TBDHU ☎ 625-5900

EcoSuperior ☎ 624-2140

What is a Park and Stride?

A Park and Stride is an active transportation initiative providing additional school drop off and pick up locations to families for their children. The Park and Stride sites are located within a 5 to 10-minute, safe and accessible walk to the school. Parents and Guardians can either park and walk with their child or drop them off to walk independently and with other students.

The Park and Stride is intended to relieve vehicular congestion in “Kiss and Go”s and around the school in general. The program can be customized based on local school needs and goals.

What are the benefits of a Park and Stride?

There are many benefits to a successful Park and Stride program including:

- ▶ A short burst of physical activity before class, providing mental and physical health benefits
- ▶ Opportunity for children to gain independence, socialize with classmates and get to know the community around their school
- ▶ Improves air quality and traffic safety for all road users near school drop off areas
- ▶ Saves time for parents by avoiding the drop off loop line ups
- ▶ Opportunity for parents and children to walk together at the start or end of the school day

How can your school start a Park and Stride?

To implement a Park and Stride, a school needs:



Designated location(s)



Participants



Promotional Materials and School Support



Students celebrate Winter Walk Day outside of the Lakehead Public School Board Office, 2019.



Designated Locations

- ▶ Choose one or more Park and Stride locations around your school. These locations should have parking and be within a 5 to 10 -minute walk along a safe and accessible route to school.
- ▶ Consider more than one location in different directions to the school. Parents are unlikely to drive by the school to get to their designated location.
- ▶ Potential locations include parks, trailheads, recreation centres, church parking lots, or private businesses. If the location is on private property (i.e. a church or a business) be sure to contact the landowner before promoting the location to parents and guardians.

Participants

- ▶ Parents and Guardians – use Park and Stride locations
- ▶ Students – walk from Park and Stride locations
- ▶ School – supports and promotes the initiative
- ▶ WOW TBay – provides support and resources
- ▶ School District and Municipality – promotes the program
- ▶ Local Businesses and organizations – provide Park and Stride locations

Promotional Materials and School Support

There are a number of ways to promote the initiative including:

- ▶ Email
- ▶ Signs
- ▶ Posters/flyers
- ▶ Newsletters
- ▶ Assemblies and presentations
- ▶ Neighbourhood Maps

Schools are encouraged to adapt and use the appendix templates for their individual programs.

Park and Stride Options

The program can be as small or as big as you want. It can be passive (designate location(s) and promote) to active (signs, volunteers, and celebration stations). You can run it once in a while (Park and Stride Fridays, Earth Day Celebrations) or every day of the school week.

OPTION 1:

Full Staff and Parent Support

The Park and Stride program has the ability to build community at your school by getting everyone involved! This first option looks like school staff and/or parent volunteers greeting students at the designated drop-off/pick up location (if there are more than one designated drop-off locations, coordinate staff and/or parent volunteers at each). Together, the adults and the students walk together to the school. This can also be referred to as a Walking School Bus! Here are some suggested steps to this option:

1. Map out 5-to-10 minute walk locations from the school

The first thing to do is to determine several areas that are a 5-to-10 minute walk from the school, and are safe and convenient places for parents to drop-off and pick-up their children. Parents can either do the mapping themselves along with their children, and present it to the school, can work with the school, or teachers can do the mapping with their classes.

WOW TBay can also assist with mapping appropriate locations and routes. **Contact WOW TBay for help with this option.**

These locations should be located in areas that:

- ▶ Have ample room for parking
- ▶ Are convenient for parents (are in the direction of where students live)
- ▶ Are not inconveniencing anyone else (such as neighbours or businesses, permission is required if on private property)
- ▶ Are safe (low vehicle traffic and well lit)

The routes from each location should be safe:

- ▶ Sidewalks or paths
- ▶ Safe street crossings



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TIP!

Through the communication resources at your school, reach out to your school community and survey their interest in developing a Park and Stride. The survey can be presented at Parent Council meetings, or through email or apps used by the school. In the survey, include a list of possible locations and routes, and ask the parent community to also recommend other locations and routes that weren't mentioned. This is also a great way to recruit parent volunteers. A survey is also a great way to introduce the idea to the school community too. See Appendix A for an example survey.

2. Create and post Park and Stride signs

Once you've engaged the school community, chosen drop-off locations and mapped out safe routes, it's time to order your Park and Stride signs! Park and Stride signs are posted along each school route. They can be helpful for individuals learning the route, counting down the minutes left in the walk, and celebrating. WOW TBay can assist schools with creation of Park and Stride signs as well as assist with installing the signs along the route. **Contact WOW TBay for help with this option.**

3. Organize the Park and Stride schedule

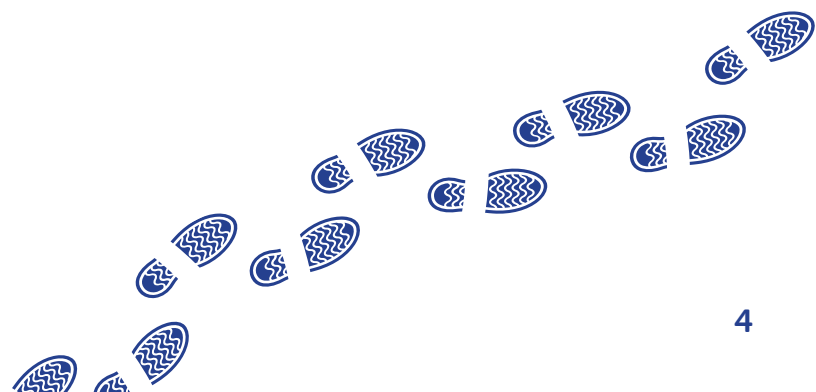
How often you gather together to park and stride is unique to each school. Perhaps your school has an active school travel champion that is able to walk with students every morning. Twice a week, once a week or on special occasions! Remember that the schedule can flex and grow as needed.

- ▶ Analyze survey results to see how many interested parent volunteers there are
- ▶ Discuss with school staff who has capacity to support a park and stride
 - Perhaps one day a week a staff member is the adult walker and another day of the week it's a parent volunteer.

4. Celebrate!

Putting in the effort to intentionally incorporate active school travel in your child's/student's day is no small potato. Find ways to promote and celebrate the establishment of the Park and Stride.

- ▶ See Appendix B for a draft email to parents for Option 1.
- ▶ Encourage teachers to find time in their class schedule to walk the routes as a class
 - Take pictures!
- ▶ Walk the routes as a parent council meeting
- ▶ Walk the routes as part of a staff meeting
- ▶ Use Active School Travel events to promote and celebrate these routes
 - Every October is International Walk to School Month, aka Walktober
 - The 1st Wednesday in February is Winter Walk Day
 - April is known as Active April!



OPTION 2: Drop-off & Pick Up Greeters

For schools that have strong school and parent support for a Park and Stride program, but lack capacity for school staff or parent volunteers to walk with the students, add greeters! Greeters are parents who are able to meet students and parents at the designated Park and Stride location, to ensure the students all start off on the right foot.

- 1. Follow steps 1, 2 and 4 of Option 1**
- 2. Parent greeters at each designated Park and Stride location**

Fifteen minutes before school starts, have parent volunteers located at the drop-off/pick-up location of the Park and Stride. This is a nice way to promote the program and to get parents comfortable with the idea of dropping their kids off at locations 5-to-10 minutes from the school. If possible, also have volunteers at these locations again after school; this way students can have a trusted adult to wait with them until their parents arrive at the designated pick-up location.

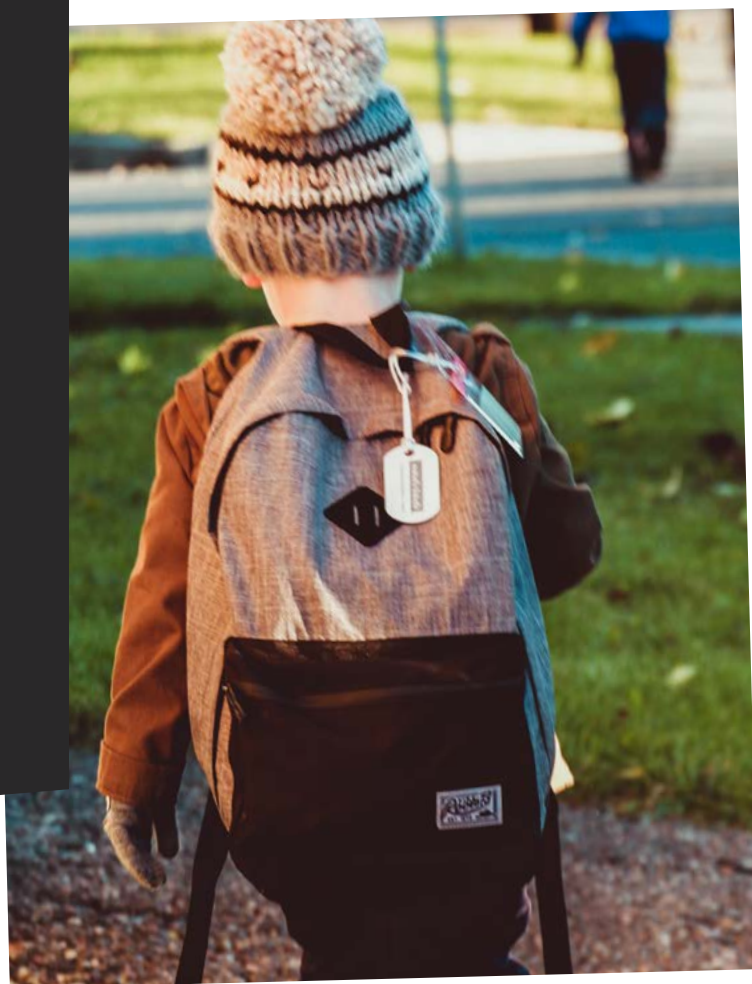
Older students participating in the Park and Stride program can be mentored in leadership roles within the student walking group (also known as a Walking School Bus).

OPTION 3: Mapping and Signs

For schools that cannot commit much staff time to a Park and Stride program, a simple version of the program involves mapping out five to ten minute walking locations from the schools, putting-up signs and sending out encouraging emails.

- 1. Follow steps 1, 2 and 4 from Option 1.**

See Appendix B for a draft email to parents for Option 3.



OPTION 4: Just an email

For schools that cannot commit any staff time to a Park and Stride program, the easiest thing to do is send out an email to parents informing them that if they need to drive their children to and from school that they are encouraged to add some activity into their school journey. Invite them to drop-off and pick-up their children at locations about a 5-to-10 minute walking distance from the school. For older students, the students can walk on their own. For younger students, the parents can park and walk with their children.

See Appendix C for a draft email to parents for Option 4.



Contact WOW TBay for assistance with:

- ▶ Selecting Park and Stride locations
- ▶ Determining best routes to walk to school
- ▶ Creating Park and Stride maps
- ▶ Designing Park and Stride signs
- ▶ Recruitment of parent volunteers
- ▶ Safety equipment for volunteers
- ▶ School safety patrol training
- ▶ And more! See Appendix D for more WOW TBay Programs





APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Survey to Parents

June, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian:

RE: Active School Travel Family Survey for our school

(School Name) is taking part in an Active School Travel project that will improve school journeys for our students. Working with WOW TBay, parents, students and school staff will work with municipal, school board and public health officials to reduce congestion, address traffic safety issues and encourage more students to walk and cycle for the school journey.

Please complete this **5-10 minute** Family Survey with your **eldest child** who attends this school. **Your input is important to the success of this project.** Knowing what travel choices families are making and why they are making them will help the school create a travel plan that considers everyone's needs.

The survey can be completed at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WOWTBayFamilySurvey> or scan the QR Code at the bottom right of this page with your mobile device. Your responses are anonymous.

Name

Principal, (School Name)



Family Survey

- Select the grade level of your eldest child that attends this school:
☐ JK ☐ SK ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8
- Is your child eligible to ride the school bus?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
- How does your child usually travel **to** school? (*check one*)

Mode	
Walk	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walk partway (at least one entire block)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scooter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Transit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carpool (Two or more families sharing)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car (Just my family)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please Specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>

- How does your child usually travel **from** school? (*check one*)

Mode	
Walk	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walk partway (at least one entire block)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scooter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Transit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carpool (Two or more families sharing)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car (Just my family)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please Specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Why does your child usually travel to/from school in this way? (*check all that apply*)

Reasons	TO school	FROM school
Enjoyment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exercise (e.g., from walking or wheeling)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age of child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distance to school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Convenience (e.g., school on route to work, bussing available)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time constraints (e.g., bus pick-up time does not fit family schedule, do not have time to walk or cycle)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Before/after school activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before/after school care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limited/restricted parking around school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic safety/danger on route	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal safety (e.g., bullying, crime)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helps develop child's independence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability/specific mobility needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus stop not suitable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please Specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. How long does it usually take your child to travel **to** school? (*check one*)

Time	
10 minutes or less	<input type="checkbox"/>
11-20 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
21-30 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
31-60 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 60 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. How long does it usually take your child to travel **from** school? (*check one*)

Time	
10 minutes or less	<input type="checkbox"/>
11-20 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
21-30 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
31-60 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 60 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Which of the following would encourage your child to **walk or wheel** to/from school?
(*check all that apply*)

- ☐ Others to commute with
- ☐ Once child is older
- ☐ Safety and skills training
- ☐ Improved sidewalks and crossings
- ☐ Access to equipment (bicycle, helmet, lock)
- ☐ Secure storage at school
- ☐ Cycle-friendly routes (e.g., segregated cycle lanes)

- ☐ Reduced traffic volume and congestion in school zone
- ☐ Traffic calming in school zone (e.g., lower vehicle speeds, more careful drivers)
- ☐ Crossing guards
- ☐ Not applicable, child is eligible to ride the school bus
- ☐ Other reasons described below:

9. Are there any locations of concern along your child's trip to/from school?

- ☐ No locations of concern.
- ☐ Yes. Please describe the location(s) and reasons for your concerns.

Location	What is your concern about this area?
E.g., on ___ Rd near ___ St	E.g., Cars turn right without looking for pedestrians
1.	
2.	
3.	

10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your child's school journey?

A park and stride is an active school travel program for families who live too far from the school to walk or cycle to school. Students are dropped off at a designated location 5 to 10 minutes from the school and walk to school. This initiative reduces traffic congestion in the school zone during drop-off and increases physical activity opportunities for students.

11. a) Is your family interested in a park and stride program at (School Name)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

b) Why, or why not?

12. a) If (School Name) had a park and stride, where would you like the drop off location to be?

- ☐ Location 1
- ☐ Location 2
- ☐ Location 3
- ☐ Location 4
- ☐ Location 5
- ☐ Location 6

b) If none of the above, do you have a starting location in mind?

13. Would your child (in Grade 5 or older) lead a walk to/from school?

☐ Yes ☐ No

	TO school	FROM school
If yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Are there any other suggestions you have for active transportation activities that you or your child might be interested in?

If you have any questions about the survey, or would like to learn more, or help with active school travel efforts at your school please contact April Hadley at 625-5970 or april.hadley@tbdhu.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SURVEY BY DATE.

APPENDIX B:

Email to Parents (Option 1, 2 & 3)

New message

To

Subject

Dear parents,

Our school encourages all students to get to and from school in active ways. There are many benefits for students to walk, cycle and roll to school – including both physical, mental and environmental health benefits. There are many resources available on our school website under the 'Parents' tab to support parents with their efforts to help their children get to and from school in active and safe ways.

Having said this, we also understand that some parents do need to drive their children to and from school. We are excited to announce our new "Park and Stride" approach! A Park and Stride is an opportunity for parents to add in some active time in their child(ren)'s journey to school. This program has identified safe and accessible drop-off and pick-up locations that are roughly a 5-to-10 minute walk from the school. The routes are signed, and planned out using the safest walking infrastructure available (i.e. sidewalks or paths, safe street crossings).[.

These locations are:

- location 1
- location 2
- location 3

[OPTION 1 add in: Parent greeters will also be present at the locations and additional parent volunteers will walk the students to and from the "Park and Stride" locations.] [OPTION 2 add in: Parent greeters will be present at which ever location works best for you. For older students, they can walk on their own from the drop-off location, building confidence and independence. For younger students, parents can park and walk with their children.]







[OPTION 3 add in: We would love to have parent volunteers to either be greeters at each location, and/or commit to walking with students once or twice a week! If you have this time and capacity available, we'd love to hear from you.]



Taking a "Park and Stride" approach to getting students to and from school prepares students for learning in the morning and boosts their mood. Walking and cycling also makes for safer and more connected communities, because we get to know neighbours and other families, and we reduce traffic congestion around the school, an air quality benefit! It is also excellent bonding time when parents walk or cycle with their children to and from school.

Thank you for supporting our students to get to and from school in the safest and healthiest ways possible.

Sincerely,

Send





APPENDIX C:

Email to Parents (Option 4)

New message

To

Subject

Dear parents,

Our school encourages all students to get to and from school in active ways. There are many benefits for students to walk, cycle and roll to school – including both physical, mental and environmental health benefits. There are many resources available on our school website under the 'Parents' tab to support parents with their efforts to help their children get to and from school in active and safe ways.







Having said this, we also understand that some parents do need to drive their children to and from school. We are excited to announce our new "Park and Stride" approach. A Park and Stride is an opportunity for parents to add in some active travel time in their child(ren)'s journey to school. Parents are encouraged to determine a safe location roughly a 5-to-10 minute walk from the school where they can drop-off and pick-up their children before and after school. For older students, they can walk on their own from the drop-off location. For younger students, parents can park and walk with their children.



Taking a "Park and Stride" approach to getting students to and from school has many benefits. Students experience both physical and mental health benefits from the additional 10-20 minutes of exercise they will receive each day. Walking and cycling also makes for safer and more connected communities, because we get to know neighbours and other families, and we reduce traffic congestion around the school. It is also excellent bonding time when parents walk or cycle with their children to and from school.

Thank you for supporting our students to get to and from school in the safest and healthiest ways possible.

Sincerely,

Send





APPENDIX D: WOW TBay Programs



Since 2018, WOW TBay has successfully increased walking or wheeling to school in Thunder Bay.

For the 2021-2022 school year, WOW TBay continues to provide support to schools interested in Active School Travel for better physical health, mental health, environmental health, and community safety.

All schools that choose to participate in WOWTBay will have access to the following supports:

- Challenges and Contests
- Campaigns and Promotions
- Best Routes Maps
- Winter Clothing Subsidy Program



A select number of qualifying schools will also receive:

- High-capacity bike racks
- Support to implement a Park and Stride program
- Best Routes Wayfinding signs
- CAA School Safety Patrol



For more information, contact:
Thunder Bay District Health Unit
Healthy Living
625-5900

WOW TBay is supported and co-led by EcoSuperior and the TBDHU and is made possible through financial support from Green Communities Canada and the Government of Ontario.