



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **REBUILDING A CULTURE OF ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL IN NORTH BAY**

North Bay, ON- The City of North Bay will soon see a major boost in active transportation with a new project designed to encourage students to walk and wheel to school. The two-year project will work with up to 10 schools across local school boards. It will encourage families to choose active transportation to and from school as a viable option for their children, as well as address road safety through infrastructure improvements and skills development.

“To improve overall health, school-aged children are encouraged to get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day,” says Maxime Comeau, Community Health Promoter at the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (“Health Unit”). “Active school travel helps kids meet this goal, and will also reduce traffic and pollution, create safer school zones, increase academic performance, and improve children’s health.”

The Health Unit has initiated partnerships with school administrators, teachers, parents, and the municipality to implement an active school travel program from May 2018 to June 2020. This project is being supported through a \$100,000 grant from Ontario Active School Travel, a Green Communities Canada program that is made possible thanks to a three-year, \$3.5 million transfer payment with the Government of Ontario.

“In recent decades we have seen a significant decline in walking to school among children across the province,” says Kate Berry, Program Director with Green Communities Canada. “This initiative, including Ontario government funding and rich local partnerships, is a great opportunity to reverse this downward trend and rebuild a culture of active school travel. We look forward to collaborating with and supporting our local partners in North Bay to implement this exciting project.”

Parents are encouraged to get involved in the school-led initiatives by joining the school travel planning committees, and identifying safety hazards around schools to guide improvements.

For more information, call the Health Unit at 705-474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808, or learn more at [myhealthunit.ca](http://myhealthunit.ca).

## Quick Facts

- Active school travel works toward enhanced partnerships, capacity building, policy change, resource commitments, and on the ground activities.
- Project elements include school travel planning, education and encouragement activities like the walking school bus, seasonal events like Winter Walk Day, cycling education, communications, and infrastructure investments like wayfinding signs and bike racks.
- For more information on the program, visit [www.ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca](http://www.ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca)

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