

May 4, 2022

RE: Essex County Council Endorsement of Active School Travel Charter

Warden McNamara and Members of Essex County Council,

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU), along with the Windsor-Essex County Active School Travel Regional Committee, is seeking Essex County Council's endorsement for the implementation of an Active School Travel Charter. This charter, along with many other active school travel initiatives, was part of a successful grant application awarded to our community in November 2020 by Green Communities Canada for the Ontario Active School Travel (OAST) fund. This fund supports the development, promotion, and implementation of active school travel across communities in Ontario. A regional Windsor-Essex County Active School Travel (AST) Committee was formed to lead these various activities, and initiatives and includes the following community partners:

- The Greater Essex County School Board
- The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board
- Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence
- Windsor Essex Student Transportation Services
- The City of Windsor
- Windsor Police Services
- Bike Windsor Essex
- County of Essex

Active school travel (AST) plays an important role in increasing students' activity levels and is associated with improvements in mental and physical health. Common modes of active school travel include walking, cycling, skateboarding, wheeling/rolling, and scootering to and from school. Students using these modes of active transportation can help accumulate the recommended 60 minutes of daily activity to meet the Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines. When more families use active travel, there are also fewer vehicles accessing the school zone, which can lead to improvements in road safety and air quality within the school community.

Adopting an AST Charter will help to further strengthen regional coordination and collaboration between schools, school boards, municipalities, student transportation services, and other community partners, to allow for safer and more accessible active transportation in our local communities. The AST charter also supports and emphasizes the key principles of the County Wide Active Transportation System (CWATS) such as equity, health and well-being, environmental sustainability, and community safety. An endorsement of the Active School Travel Charter would be another essential step in recognizing the importance of coordinated programs and policies to support the active transportation infrastructure within Windsor-Essex County.

We look forward to your response and commitment through the endorsement and adoption of a regional Active School Travel initiative in Windsor-Essex County.

Thank you,



Eric Nadalin
Director | Public Health Programs