2.1 - Data Collection Methods and Tools

Data Collection Methods:

The classroom survey

- A student hands-up survey conducted by teachers or older students in class each day for one week; once in October and once in May
- Collects information from students on how they get to and from school each day (e.g. walking, biking, rolling, bus, car)
- It is important to note that weather can factor into how students get to and from school

The family survey

- An electronic survey completed by parents at home in the fall
- Collects information on parental perceptions related to the school journey
- This survey will help the facilitator and committee understand what barriers the parents see to active school travel and reasons for their behaviour related to the school journey

Traffic Observation

- An in-person observation of traffic behaviour and unsafe driving in school zones; will occur in October
- This will give the facilitator and the committee an idea of each school's traffic-related issues

School Walkabout

- A walking tour of the school grounds and surrounding areas to assess current conditions on the routes to school and any infrastructure issues
- This will occur in November or December by both the Executive and School Committees
- Presence and behaviour of delivery or maintenance vehicles

Checklists:

Traffic Observation Checklist:

- Vehicles stopping in marked no-stopping or no-parking zones
- U- and 3-point turns where not permitted or unsafe
- Rolling stops at intersections
- Drivers failing to yield to walkers
- Jaywalking; walking in or crossing traffic lanes
- Real or potential conflicts between vehicles, bikes and/or walkers
- Visibility/sightline/mobility problems (e.g., parked cars, overgrown vegetation, no curb cutout, etc.)
- Presence and behaviour of delivery or maintenance vehicles

If the same or similar behaviour is observed more than once, simply use check or tick marks to record each repeated occurrence. When you arrive at your location, familiarize yourself with existing conditions and rules (e.g., no stopping restrictions) and position yourself to be as discrete as possible.

Once the observation period has begun, do not draw attention to yourself or stop to chat with a passerby. Also, do not interfere or otherwise attempt to change any behaviour you are observing except to prevent imminent injury to a walker or cyclist.

Data Collection Tools:

Walkability Checklist:

<u>At the School Site</u>

Parking lot, or on road parking at school
- Is there potential for vehicle and pedestrian conflict?
- Is traffic flow clearly signed? (on ground and on signs)
- What is the parking and driving behaviour of driving parents and staff?
- How do children access the school from parked vehicles? (Do they use a crosswalk, is one available?)
- Is there parking lot supervision?

Facilities for walkers on the street next to the school site
- Number and position of safety patrollers or crossing guards (adult and/or student), if any. If there are none, are they needed?
- What are the sightline distances from school crossing to road curves, blind corners, or school and transit bus zones?
- How is the placement of the school crossing in relation to driveways and bus loading zones?
- Are there sidewalks?
- Are there curb ramps?

Walking paths to the school
- Where are the access points for students?
- Is there potential conflict with vehicles?
- Is the lighting adequate along walkways?
- What is the maintenance of walkways, i.e., snow and ice removal; mud, puddles; holes needing filling?
- Can routes from back fields or adjacent parks be used year-round?
- Are paths accessible to those using bike trailers and wheelchairs?

Bicycle/Scooter facilities
- Bike racks: do they exist? Are they secure, sheltered?
- Is there potential for conflict with vehicles to access the bike storage area?
- Scooter racks: do they exist? Are they secured inside the school?

School bus/after school care loading zone

- Where do students wait for buses and for how long? What type of supervision is employed?

- How many buses, vans and special needs transportation vans/buses access the school?

- Are there ramps, any special entrances or accommodations for disabled students?

Further items to look for
- Emergency vehicle access

- Location of garbage dumpsters and other school maintenance equipment

- No-idling signage

- For waiting students and families:

  o Shelter from inclement weather/shade

  o Play area

  o Natural landscape

In Areas Surrounding School Site:

Walking facilities and traffic observations

- How far do sidewalks extend around the school and into the surrounding community?

- What is the type, volume and speed of traffic on surrounding streets—perceived and real (the municipality might have volume and speed counts).

- Are there heavy trucks? Are there problem areas where a heavy truck might mount the sidewalk to turn at an intersection?

- Are there on-street signs that indicate to drivers they are approaching a school zone? Are they visible?

- Timing of traffic lights? Do they allow enough time for small children to cross safely?

Alternative safe parking locations

- Is there an area away from the school to suggest for distant driving families to safely park to take part in a walk-a-block-or-two scheme?

Bicycle facilities

- Are bike paths or lanes suitable for families?
- Are best cycle routes identified?

Non-traffic related items to consider

- What types of buildings surround the school: residential, recreational, commercial, industrial?
- What other public spaces are located near the school: parks, community centers, libraries, churches?
- Are there shade trees on are on the streets?
- What is the proportion of green space vs. concrete space?
- Is there graffiti on buildings?
- What is the physical state of the sidewalks?
- How wide are the sidewalks?
- Is there garbage along the routes to school?
- Are there obstructions on the sidewalks? If so, describe.
- Is this a Block Parent or Neighbourhood Watch community? If so, where are Block Parents located?
- Are there potential or known areas where crime, bullying, loitering or intimidation is possible?

Surveys:

It is important to note that there are many individual variables affecting school travel mode. One of those variables is weather; while it could be a cold and/or rainy morning where parents choose to drive their kids to school by car, the afternoon could be sunny and/or hot where parents choose to have their kids walk or wheel home from school.

Other variables include kids' sleep schedule and screen time, which can affect their ability to wake up and get ready in the morning. Kids are rushed in the morning to get to school, whereas after school there is no pressure to get home at a certain time, allowing them to take their time and walk or wheel home from school.

School Travel Survey Instructions:

- One survey sheet per classroom.
- Teacher completes information at top of sheet.
- Teacher conducts survey with their class, once every day throughout the week (suggest during morning attendance).
- Survey works best as a 'hands-up' survey, asking the question and requesting students raise their hand for the travel mode answer that applies to them e.g. "How did you get to school today—Put your hand up if you walked all the way to school this morning?"
- Record the number of responses for each travel mode and check that: the total # of responses + # absent students = total # students in the class
- Repeat for question 2
- Return completed survey sheet to school office at end of week

Classroom Survey

Grade: _____ Teacher: _____ Room: _____ Total # of students in class: _____ Date: <u>week of</u>

Q1: Ask the class: "How did you get <u>*to*</u> school this morning?"

Day	Biked (all or most of the way)	Walked (all or most of the way)	Rolled (includes skateboards, wheelchairs, scooters, etc.)	School Bus (includes any shared vehicles for students only)	Public Transit (all or most of the way. Includes trains, buses, etc.)	Car	# Students absent today	Total
Mon								
Tue								
Wed								
Thu								
Fri								

Q2: Ask the class: "How will you get home <u>*from*</u> school this afternoon?"

Day	Biked (all or most of the way)	Walked (all or most of the way)	Rolled (includes skateboards, wheelchairs, scooters, etc.)	School Bus (includes any shared vehicles for students only)	Public Transit (all or most of the way. Includes trains, buses, etc.)	Car	# Students absent today	Total
Mon								
Tue								
Wed								
Thu								
Fri								

Completed Example:

Student Travel Survey: Sample School

Grade: __4__ Teacher: ____**Mrs. Example**____ Room: __101__ Total # of students in class: __22__ Date: <u>week of</u> __Oct 2, 2017__

Q1: Ask the class: "How did you get to school this morning?"

Day	Biked (all or most of the way)	Walked (all or most of the way)	Rolled (includes skateboards, wheelchairs, scooters, etc.)	School Bus (includes any shared vehicles for students only)	Public Transit (all or most of the way. Includes trains, ferries, buses, etc.)	Car	# Students absent today	Total
Mon 2nd	7	3	3	5	0	3	1	22
Tue 3rd	8	4	4	4	0	2	0	22
Wed 4th	8	1	2	7	0	3	1	22
Thu 5th	7	2	1	8	0	2	2	22
Fri 6th	9	0	2	10	0	1	0	22

Repeat process for Q2: "How will you get home <u>from</u> school this afternoon?"

Family Survey

1. Select the grade level of your eldest child that attends this school:
   ☐JK ☐SK ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 ☐8

2. Is your child eligible to ride the school bus?
   ☐Yes ☐No ☐Don't know

3. How does your child usually travel to/from school? (check one in each column)

Mode	TO school	FROM school
Walk	☐	☐
Walk partway (at least one entire block)	☐	☐
Bicycle	☐	☐
School Bus	☐	☐
Public Transit	☐	☐
Carpool (Two or more families sharing)	☐	☐
Car (Just my family)	☐	☐
Other (Please Specify):	☐	☐

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

Reasons	TO school	FROM school
Enjoyment	☐	☐
Exercise (e.g., from walking or cycling)	☐	☐
Age of child	☐	☐
Distance to school	☐	☐
Convenience (e.g., school on route to work, bussing available)	☐	☐
Time constraints (e.g., bus pick-up time does not fit family schedule, do not have time to walk or cycle)	☐	☐
Before/after school activities	☐	☐
Before/after school care	☐	☐
Limited/restricted parking around school	☐	☐
Traffic safety/danger on route	☐	☐
Personal safety (e.g., bullying, crime)	☐	☐
Helps develop child's independence	☐	☐
Disability/specific mobility needs	☐	☐
Bus stop not suitable	☐	☐
Other (Please Specify):	☐	☐

5. How long does it take your child to travel to/from school? (check one in each column)

Time	TO school	FROM school
10 minutes or less	☐	☐
11-20 minutes	☐	☐
21-30 minutes	☐	☐
31-60 minutes	☐	☐
More than 60 minutes	☐	☐

6. Which of the following would encourage your child to **walk** to/from school? (check all that apply)
   - ☐ Others to walk with
   - ☐ Once child is older
   - ☐ Pedestrian safety training
   - ☐ Improved sidewalks and crossings
   - ☐ Reduced traffic volume and congestion in school zone
   - ☐ Traffic calming in school zone (e.g. lower vehicle speeds, more careful drivers)
   - ☐ Not applicable, child is eligible to ride the school bus
   - ☐ Child already walks
   - ☐ Other reasons described below:

   _____
   _____
   _____

7. Which of the following would encourage your child to **cycle** to/from school? (check all that apply)
   - ☐ Others to cycle with
   - ☐ Once child is older
   - ☐ Cycling safety and skills training
   - ☐ Access to equipment (bicycle, helmet, lock)
   - ☐ Secure bicycle 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)
   - ☐ Not applicable, child is eligible to ride the school bus
   - ☐ Child already cycles
   - ☐ Other reasons described below:

   _____
   _____
   _____

8. 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.	

9. Before completing this survey, did you know that the School Travel Planning program was being offered at your child's school?
☐Yes ☐No

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

If you have any questions about the survey, or would like to learn more or help with School Travel Planning efforts at your school please contact <insert school committee member or STP Facilitator contact info>

**Thank You For Your Time. Please Complete This Survey
And Return It To School By <Insert Deadline>**

Response Rate

Sending out a lot of reminders to schools, and through more than one route (ex. School newsletter, Facebook, Twitter etc.) was crucial in getting a higher survey response rate. Explaining to parents why completing the survey was so important and how their input could drive change for the better made parents want to provide feedback.

It is also important to note that some schools simply have higher parent engagement than others, and that affects the response rate as well.