



SCHOOL

TRAVEL

PLANNING

HANDBOOK AND RESOURCE GUIDE

A program to engage children
and youth in safe and active
travel to and from school.



As a parent in the neighbourhood for more than five years, it is great to see such a positive impact resulting from efforts made to make our community safer for our children. I see many students walking to school with their parents causing much less congestion in the area around our school.

SURREY PARENT

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My kid shares everything at school with me when we walk home from school.

SURREY PARENT



HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Children who walk or cycle to school are happier, more alert, and have better concentration in class.

The School Travel Planning Handbook and Resource Guide is a tool for teachers and parents to use as they develop and promote walking and cycling to school programs with children and youth.

In this handbook, you'll find information about the City of Surrey's School Travel Planning (STP) program, which the whole school can participate in. From team building, to getting to know your environment, to setting goals and evaluating success, School Travel Planning is a fun and supportive way to encourage walking and cycling to school.

The program is flexible, with both student-led and parent/teacher-led initiatives available to fit the needs of the school and its students. Each school will work with a trained facilitator to guide you through the program.

Find more information about the City of Surrey's Safe and Active Schools Program, and read about the commitment to active travel made by School Travel Planning alumni at www.surrey.ca/transportation.



What is the Safe and Active Schools Program?

The Safe and Active Schools Program promotes a safe, friendly, and cooperative environment for children and youth to walk or cycle to and from Surrey's schools.

We encourage kids to walk and bike to school through School Travel Planning, infrastructure improvements, bike education, and special events that celebrate and encourage active travel.

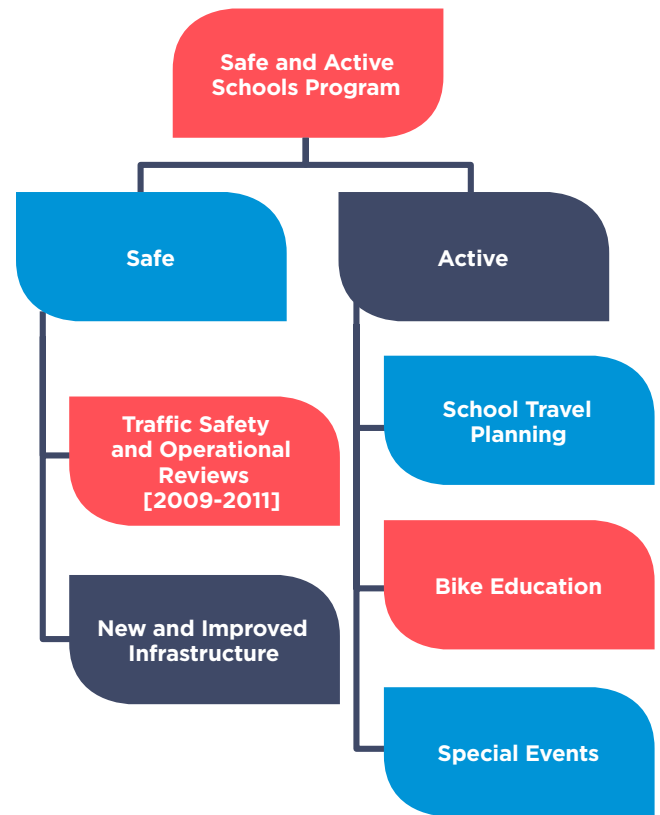
Why?

We want to build a healthier and more engaged community. Walking and cycling helps families stay active and healthy, and kids arrive focussed and ready to learn.

What is School Travel Planning?

School Travel Planning (STP) is a component of the Safe and Active Schools Program. Through this program, the City and its facilitators work one-on-one with elementary schools to promote walking and cycling, improve road safety, and overcome barriers to active travel. We work with each school for at least a year, and sign up new schools in May or June for the following school year.

Active travel can create healthier communities for generations to come.



What is the STP Facilitator's Role?

The STP facilitator is hired by and works on behalf of the City of Surrey to coordinate School Travel Planning. The facilitator guides your school through the STP process, and will

- ▶ **organize and chair meetings,**
- ▶ **give suggestions,**
- ▶ **coordinate surveys,**
- ▶ **analyze survey results, and**
- ▶ **provide a knowledge base of successful STP initiatives in other schools.**

Most STP tasks are coordinated by the facilitator.

THE BENEFITS OF SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANNING



Healthier Kids

School Travel Planning helps students get more physical activity. The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that children get at least one hour of physical activity a day. A 15-minute one-way trip helps children meet that goal. Parents benefit, too!

Safer Communities

More people walking and cycling means there are more “eyes on the street,” which helps keep our communities safe. It’s an opportunity to get to know your neighbours and make new friends on the way to school. Also, schools tend to be located near parks, so infrastructure improvements benefit the broader community.

Reduces Traffic Congestion

About 20% of daily vehicle trips in Metro Vancouver are to or from school. STP schools generally report a decrease in car travel to school, helping to not only reduce congestion in front of schools, but on all of Surrey’s roads.

Alert Learners

Studies have shown that children who walk or cycle to school are happier, ready to learn, and have better concentration in class.

Reduces Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs) and Air Pollution

Transportation is responsible for the majority (59%) of GHG emissions in Surrey, and transportation emissions from personal vehicles are the single largest source of GHGs. Fewer trips made by car means fewer GHGs and air pollutants, which benefits us all.

Creates Healthy Habits that Stay with Children Forever

Teaching children the value of walking and cycling, and how to walk and bike safely, helps create a safe and healthy community for generations to come.

“

I talk to other parents whose kids are taking the same path to school to meet there so our kids can share the walk to school, and it encourages them to go to school in the morning.

SURREY PARENT

”

THE SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANNING PROCESS



CREATE YOUR TEAM



ASSESS THE SITUATION



DETERMINE YOUR VISION AND GOALS



IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT ACTION STEPS



TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Summary of Tasks & Timelines

CREATE YOUR TEAM

TASKS	1. STP facilitator and school administration meet	TIMELINES	September to October
	2. Introduction of STP to the Parent Advisory Council		
	3. Form STP team		
	4. Workshop for new STP schools and STP alumni		

ASSESS THE SITUATION

TASKS	1. Family survey	TIMELINES	October to December
	2. Classroom survey		
	3. STP team meeting to discuss survey results		
	4. Walkabout		

DETERMINE YOUR VISION AND GOALS

TASKS	1. STP team meeting to develop a vision and goals (can be combined with the survey results meeting in Assess the situation)	TIMELINES	November to December
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IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT YOUR ACTION STEPS

TASKS	1. Write your Action Plan	TIMELINES	January and Continuing
	2. Plan your action steps		
	3. Have fun implementing your action steps!		

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

TASKS	1. Conduct “after” family and classroom surveys twelve months after the “before” surveys	TIMELINES	Ongoing
	2. Conduct a second round of “after” family and classroom surveys twenty-four months after the “before” surveys		
	3. Complete your School Travel Plan		
	4. Document participation levels for all action steps		
	5. Participate in the STP workshop annually		
	6. Review your Action Plan, goals, and vision annually		



CREATE YOUR TEAM

Once the School Travel Planning facilitator has registered your school, you can get to work creating your school's STP team. The team should consist of anyone who is interested in increasing walking and biking or reducing traffic around your school and community. The most important thing is to have a core team of people who are passionate about the work and who see opportunities for improvement.

Your team can consist of:

- ▶ **School principal/vice-principal**
- ▶ **School staff**
- ▶ **Parent Advisory Council**
- ▶ **Parents/guardians**
- ▶ **School crossing guard**
- ▶ **School neighbours**
- ▶ **Students**

In addition, there is a Resource Team consisting of agencies and organizations in Surrey who care about safe and active communities and who are able to help your school. Your STP team can draw on these resources to help develop and implement your School Travel Plan.



The STP Workshop

Each September, the City and its facilitator run a workshop for school administration and all new STP schools, STP alumni, and schools who are interested in participating in STP in the future. The workshop provides an introduction to STP, and a refresher for alumni schools. It includes information on the City's role in STP, an update on STP initiatives at alumni schools, and information on the support and resources that the City and resource team are able to provide.

TASKS

1. **STP facilitator and school administration meet**
2. **Introduce STP to the Parent Advisory Council**
3. **Form STP team**
4. **Attend workshop for new STP schools and STP alumni**

TIMELINE: September to October



ASSESS THE SITUATION

Before you choose new activities to implement, it's important to understand existing behaviour and attitudes in your school. This helps to identify opportunities for walking and cycling to school, and see if there are existing policies or programs at your school that support your work.

Here are some basic data to collect:

- ▶ **Number of students who currently walk or bike**
- ▶ **An assessment of the physical environment (e.g. crosswalks, overgrown hedges, parking restrictions) around the school, including any barriers to active travel**
- ▶ **An assessment of traffic behaviours (e.g. adherence to parking restrictions, U-turns, speeding) around the school**
- ▶ **Whether there are bike racks**
- ▶ **Whether there are crossing guards and where they are posted**
- ▶ **Attitudes about walking and biking to school**
 - **What are the major reasons people do or don't walk and bike?**
 - **Why do they use particular routes?**
 - **What parts of their journey do they appreciate?**
 - **What concerns do they have?**
- ▶ **Existing school policies, such as health or physical activity requirements**
- ▶ **Number of out-of-catchment students and scatter maps of where students live**

Family Survey

The family survey helps measure attitudes about walking and cycling, and what routes families use to get to school. It is taken home and completed by parents.

The STP facilitator prepares and prints the survey forms. The school is responsible for distribution and collection. The facilitator picks up the completed surveys from the school and analyzes the results.

Classroom Survey

The classroom survey records what travel mode (e.g. walking, cycling, carpooling, driving with family only, school bus) each student used to get to and from school that day. It is usually conducted every day for a week by classroom teachers.

The STP facilitator prepares and prints the survey forms. The school is responsible for conducting the survey. The facilitator picks up the completed surveys and analyzes the results.

Walkabout

The walkabout is an opportunity for the resource team and the STP team to explore the school neighbourhood, review well-used routes to school, and brainstorm action steps to encourage walking and cycling. It's important for school administrators and parents to participate.

TASKS

1. **Family survey**
2. **Classroom survey**
3. **STP team meeting to discuss survey results**
4. **Walkabout**

TIMELINE: October to December



DETERMINE YOUR VISION AND GOALS

Vision

A vision statement describes what your school will look like once you have achieved success.

To help set a vision, ask your STP team what the school community will look like after success has been achieved. You can decide how far into the future to go. Five to ten years is a good time range to choose from. Look for common themes the team agrees on, and then have one person refine the statement for the team to approve.

A vision statement is usually one to five sentences and written in the present tense. Good vision statements are:

- ▶ **Attractive**
- ▶ **Bold**
- ▶ **Compelling**
- ▶ **Doable**
- ▶ **Energizing**

Goals

Goals are stepping stones on the way to achieving your vision, and usually project out one to three years.

To set your goals, review your survey and assessment results to find your school's greatest opportunities to increase active travel, and the barriers you'll need to overcome. Choose three to seven specific, measurable goals that reflect your school's situation and will help achieve your vision.

Questions to Help Guide Your Goal-Setting:

- ▶ **What are the biggest opportunities for increasing walking and cycling to school, e.g. partnerships, getting people involved, physical assets (pathways, community meeting points, crossing guards)?**
- ▶ **What would encourage more people to walk and cycle?**
- ▶ **What motivates your school community? Health? Academics? Sports? The environment? Road safety? Community safety?**
- ▶ **What are the opportunities to connect walking and cycling to other school goals and programs?**
- ▶ **What are the biggest barriers to walking and cycling to school, e.g. attitudes, information, physical barriers? How can you overcome them?**

TASKS

1. **STP team meeting to develop a vision and goals (can be combined with the survey results meeting in Assess the situation)**

TIMELINE: November to December



IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT ACTION STEPS

Think Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, and Evaluation.

For each goal, identify a number of action steps that will help you achieve the goal. The action steps will form your Action Plan, a list of tasks and activities including timelines for your school community. The facilitator will compile the Action Plan and help you plan your action steps.

The Action Plan should be reviewed and revised each year, so it stays current, relevant, and useful. Make sure you identify who is responsible for each of the action steps.

When thinking about road safety, make sure you consider the five E's: education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement, and evaluation. These are the ingredients for a successful School Travel Plan. You don't need to cover all five E's for each goal, but it's important to have a balance across all of your goals and action steps. Each of the five E's supports the rest, and a well-balanced and comprehensive strategy will make your program more sustainable and become a lasting part of how your school community functions.

It's also a good idea to balance ongoing activities and one-off events. One-off events are a perfect way to raise awareness and celebrate walking and cycling, but ongoing activities tend to lead to lasting change.

TASKS

1. Write your Action Plan
2. Plan your action steps
3. Have fun implementing your action steps!

TIMELINE: January and continuing

It's better to walk than drive because there are not enough places to park the cars near the school.

SURREY PARENT



Before STP, I honestly considered removing the bicycle racks last year; no one was using them. Now if this keeps up, I'll be calling the school district instead to add more.

SURREY PRINCIPAL



TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Evaluation is a very important part of successful School Travel Planning programs. How do you define success for your efforts, and how can you measure or document your progress? Evaluation includes both quantitative information, such as counts of how many students are walking and cycling, and more qualitative information, such as success stories from families who have chosen to walk and bicycle more.

Tracking your progress will help you know when you've met your goals, and help you choose new goals, to keep you on track to achieving your vision.

School Travel Plan

Your School Travel Plan is a report that documents your school assessment and Action Plan, and is used as a guide to help you continue implementing your action steps so you can achieve your goals over time, even as school personnel and STP team members come and go.

TASKS

1. Conduct "after" family and classroom surveys twelve months after the "before" surveys
2. Conduct a second round of "after" family and classroom surveys twenty-four months after the "before" surveys
3. Complete your School Travel Plan
4. Document participation levels for all action steps
5. Participate in the STP workshop annually
6. Review your Action Plan, goals, and vision annually

TIMELINE: Ongoing

Resources


EDUCATION

ENCOURAGEMENT

ENGINEERING

ENFORCEMENT

EVALUATION



It is fun for my kid to cycle to school since he received bicycle safety training.

SURREY PARENT



EDUCATION

Education is a key part of STP: Education about STP and why it matters, but also education to improve safety. Education helps build support and buy-in among students, parents, and teachers.

To craft educational messaging, first identify your goals and audiences. Are there informational barriers to overcome before more families choose to walk or bike? Do people need to know more about the benefits of walking or cycling? Do they need tips so they can walk and bike safely? Do a lot of parents drive to school and wait in their cars for their children with the engine idling?

There are many ways to spread the word about active travel:

- ▶ **School website and newsletters**
- ▶ **Whole-school assemblies**
- ▶ **In-class discussions**
- ▶ **Morning announcements**
- ▶ **Poster campaigns**
- ▶ **Presentations or events for parents**

Best Routes to School Maps

Best Routes maps provide recommended walking and cycling routes to school, helping parents and children choose their best route to school. Using the information gathered in the school assessment, the STP facilitator will create maps for distribution in the late spring, and again in the following September. Poster-sized copies of the map will also be printed and available for use in the classroom or school foyer as part of an informational display.

Bike Training

The City of Surrey will fund in-class and on-bike training for several classes at your school. The program teaches bike safety and helps build confidence in young cyclists. Your school will be contacted by the City's cycling education facilitator to schedule the training.

Youth Leadership Program

In this integral part of STP, a facilitator works with a group of intermediate students to teach leadership skills through promoting road safety and the importance of active travel. This program runs in the springtime, and includes eight to ten in-class sessions with the students. Students learn about active travel and plan a school assembly or other event to help inspire change among their schoolmates. The facilitator will contact you to schedule the sessions.

School Road Safety Brochure

The City has a brochure that helps explain how everyone has a part to play in keeping our school zones safe. It includes safety tips for walking, cycling, and driving, and provides reminders about the meaning of traffic and parking signs around schools. It's available online at www.surrey.ca/transportation, and hard copies are available by contacting the City at transportation@surrey.ca or (604) 591-4853.

ICBC Road Safety Curriculum

Available from ICBC are curriculum packages, including lesson plans, worksheets, and DVDs, that teach pedestrian, cyclist, and passenger road safety for elementary school students. More information is available at www.icbc.com/4teachers.

TravelSmart for Schools Transportation Workshop

TransLink's TravelSmart program provides free 90-minute workshops for grades six and seven students that explain how to use transit and plan trips, and information on the importance of sustainable transportation options such as cycling, walking, carpooling and transit. Call (778) 375-7790 or e-mail info@travelsmart.ca for more information or to book a workshop.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement is closely tied to education, but is more focussed on raising awareness, getting people to try walking and biking to school, and celebrating and rewarding people's efforts.

Examples of encouragement campaigns include:

- ▶ **Participating in the Metro Vancouver Bike to School Week (last week of May)**
- ▶ **Participating in Surrey's Walk and Roll Week (in October)**
- ▶ **Creating a Walking Wednesday program, where incentives are used to encourage walking and cycling**
- ▶ **Forming Walking School Buses or Bike Trains, where a group of students walk or bike to school together, supervised by one or more adults**
- ▶ **Holding a bike rodeo or parade**
- ▶ **Having interdivisional challenges**
- ▶ **Tracking how far a class has collectively walked or biked over the course of a week, month, or year**

In addition to the suggestions above, you can find lots of ideas that other schools in Canada and the USA have used at:

- ▶ www.saferoutestoschool.ca
- ▶ www.saferoutesinfo.org
- ▶ www.walkbiketoschool.org

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My children enjoy walking to school; even in the rain they put their rain boots on and take an umbrella.

SURREY PARENT

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ENGINEERING

Engineering strategies include planning and implementing physical improvements that improve safety and make it more attractive to walk and bicycle to school. Infrastructure improvements can vary widely in scope—from adding a “No Parking” sign to building a sidewalk—which have very different costs and implementation timeframes.

Engineering improvements tend to work best in combination with other strategies from the five E’s. For instance, drivers are much more likely to obey a “No Stopping” sign if they understand (a) what it means and (b) why it was installed. It’s important to understand that sometimes improving pedestrian safety can lead to inconvenience for drivers, for example by restricting parking or stopping. However, a key message is that children’s safety is more important than personal convenience.

Implementation

Before making any infrastructure changes, the City conducts an engineering evaluation, as sometimes installing things like all-way stops and crosswalks, in locations where they’re not warranted, can actually lead to a reduction in road safety.

Larger engineering infrastructure projects can also take several years to install, as they tend to be very expensive. For instance, a new sidewalk and curb on a local road costs around \$1000 per metre.

Requests for New Infrastructure

Usually requests for infrastructure improvements come up during the family survey and the walkabout. Upon receiving the request, City staff will conduct an engineering evaluation (which may take several weeks or months) and determine the level of intervention needed, and any associated timeframe. The facilitator will forward your questions to the City, but your principal can also contact the Transportation Division directly by telephone at (604) 591-4225 or by e-mail at traffic@surrey.ca. Information on parking signage, crosswalks, sidewalks, and traffic calming is also available at www.surrey.ca/transportation.

Road Safety Advisory Committee

Part of the mandate of the City of Surrey’s Road Safety Advisory Committee is to plan and facilitate school-related safety measures, programs, and initiatives for all travel modes. School concerns, such as jaywalking issues, the provision of crossing guards, and crosswalk requests, are regularly reviewed by the Committee. The Committee includes representatives from the City’s Transportation Division and By-law Enforcement Section, the RCMP, the Surrey School District, and ICBC.

City of Surrey Service Requests

You can submit service requests to fix road or park maintenance issues, such as potholes, burned-out street lights, or litter or dumping issues from your smartphone. The Surrey Request app is available for iPhone and Android, and online at cosmos.surrey.ca/apps/servicerequest for other devices. To submit a request by phone, call (604) 591-4152.

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement strategies help reduce unsafe behaviours by all road users, and encourage all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely. Enforcement can also help improve community safety and personal security. However, enforcement is very time-intensive and costly, so it is best used strategically in conjunction with the other strategies from the five Es.

BCAA School Safety Patrol

BCAA provides training and equipment to enable students, under the supervision of an adult, to patrol a crosswalk within the school zone. This program helps draw attention to the school zone and crosswalk, supports road safety, and helps teach road safety and responsibility to students. More information is available at www.bcaa.com/road-safety.

Adult Crossing Guard

Volunteer adult crossing guards can be requested from the Surrey School District. They are typically stationed at busy crosswalks in sight of the school during the morning school arrival and afternoon dismissal times. Requests for crossing guards should be sent to the School District, and are usually evaluated by the City's Road Safety Advisory Committee.

Speed Watch

Speed Watch checks are operated by trained volunteers, who use radar to measure vehicle speeds and display them on large electronic boards. The volunteers record the speeds and forward them to the RCMP and ICBC. Speed Watch is very good at drawing attention to school zones, and promoting slower speeds.

More information is available at surrey.rcmp.ca or by calling the Crime Prevention Coordinator at your local RCMP district office:

City Centre/Whalley
604-502-6287

Guildford/Fleetwood
604-502-6509

Newton
604-502-6560

Cloverdale/Port Kells
604-502-6265

South Surrey
604-599-7862

Parking Enforcement

Before asking for enforcement of parking restrictions along your school frontage, especially if the restrictions have just changed, it's a good idea to remind parents of what the restrictions mean and why they're in place. Then, after a suitable grace period (typically four to six weeks) for parents to get used to the restrictions and find alternatives, the City's By-law Enforcement Section is able to attend, at the school principal's request, to enforce the signage. Because of high demand, enforcement officers aren't able to attend each school frequently. Request parking enforcement by phone at (604) 591-4352 or by e-mail at parkcomplaint@surrey.ca.

Block Watch

Block Watch is a program run by the Surrey RCMP to help neighbours watch out for neighbours. It aims to get citizens involved in discouraging and preventing crime at the local level.

More information is available at www.blockwatch.com or by calling the Crime Prevention Coordinator at your local RCMP district office:

City Centre/Whalley
604-502-6287

Guildford/Fleetwood
604-502-6509

Newton
604-502-6560

Cloverdale/Port Kells
604-502-6265

South Surrey
604-599-7862

Observe it. Report it.

Reporting crime matters. Sometimes people question whether it's worth reporting minor incidents or potential incidents, but the RCMP need that information to be more effective. They analyze and assess all reported crimes to identify crime trends and public safety issues, which allows the police to make informed decisions on resource deployment and crime reduction initiatives. Report a crime by calling 911 (for emergencies), (604) 599-0502 (for non-emergencies), online at www.surrey.rcmp.ca, in person at any RCMP office, or anonymously at www.solvecrime.ca or 1-800-222-8477.

Unsightly Properties

Unsightly properties include those with an accumulation of junk, discarded materials and garbage, dead landscaping, uncontrolled growth of landscaping, or deterioration of fences and buildings. If you're concerned about unsightly properties in your neighbourhood, you can file a complaint with the City's By-law Enforcement Section by phone at (604) 591-4370 or on the Surrey Request app on your iPhone or Android, and online at cosmos.surrey.ca/apps/servicerequest for other devices.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is built in to the STP process, through conducting “before” and “after” family and classroom surveys, but be sure to keep track of the results of each of your action steps, too. Pictures are a great way to record, celebrate, and advertise for next year’s events!

Here are some questions to guide the development of your evaluation plan:

- ▶ **What numbers (quantitative information) do we want to collect?**
- ▶ **What stories (qualitative information) do we want to collect?**
- ▶ **What are the best collection methods for our community?**
- ▶ **Which action steps had the biggest impact on walking and cycling?**
- ▶ **How often should we measure our progress?**
- ▶ **How will we keep track of and communicate our progress?**

Here are some statistics from past Surrey STP schools:

- ▶ **14% increase in walking and cycling to school – K.B. Woodward Elementary**
- ▶ **10% reduction in daily driving to school – Fraser Wood Elementary**
- ▶ **23% of parents drive to school less often – Hazelgrove Elementary**
- ▶ **Carpooling increased from 5% to 12% of students – Berkshire Park Elementary**

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My child and I walk to school every day. It takes fifteen minutes from home to school by foot. We can breathe fresh air and enjoy the beautiful view along the road. It’s always happy things for us.

SURREY PARENT

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Thank you for everything. There have been great changes to our school to increase student safety and community.

SURREY PARENT

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STP has heightened awareness in our school community that traffic is everyone's issue and that the best way to solve it is to become an active traveller.

SURREY VICE-PRINCIPAL

A COMPONENT OF:



**safe &
active**

**SCHOOLS
PROGRAM**

CITY OF SURREY

www.surrey.ca/transportation

