



April 20, 2022

Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
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Toronto, ON
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Bonnie Crombie, MBA, ICD.D

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Dear Minister Lecce,

In the City of Mississauga, local schools have become safer, healthier, and more sustainable thanks to support from the Ontario Active School Travel (OAST) program.

As you are aware, the OAST program is led by Green Communities Canada, with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Education. The OAST Program includes a [Fund](#) that directly invests in local communities, offering grants that increase opportunities for students to travel by active modes, support safe accessible schools, improve student transportation services, and reduce traffic congestion in school zones.

Since 2017, OAST has invested \$2.8M into 61 communities, including here in the City of Mississauga. We are thankful for these previous rounds of funding which has allowed active school travel initiatives to be coordinated across Peel Region.

In the most recent round, OAST has invested in Mississauga's upcoming [School Streets Pilot Program](#), which has brought together local communities, the Peel District and Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Boards, the City and other partners to deliver an innovative program in two City Wards to create car-free spaces in front of schools to illustrate the benefits of walking and using other active modes to get to and from school. The combined impact of local projects across the province has established Ontario's reputation as a North American leader in active school travel promotion. The Government of Ontario has been a champion of this important work, and our community has been the direct beneficiary.

We have received an indication that funding for OAST has not been included in the 2022-2023 Ministry of Education Budget. **We strongly urge the Government of Ontario to please recommit funding for this program as a high-impact and high-visibility investment in children's health and safety.**

Our local School Streets project is leveraging a \$30,000 investment from the Ministry into a project with a total investment of over \$100,000, between City financial and in-kind contributions. Even prior to implementation, the School Streets pilot has sparked considerable momentum for active school travel prioritization in Mississauga; we anticipate this to increase further after the pilot is delivered. We know COVID-19 has increased rates of driving for the trip to school and decreased rates of active school travel and school bus ridership. As we work to reverse this trend and support schools to safely return to normal operations, your ongoing support for OAST is vital. This support is needed now to ensure that critical momentum and local capacity is not lost.

We are requesting that funding for the Ontario Active School Travel program be included in the Government of Ontario's upcoming 2022-2023 budget. Without your support, the delivery of these critical programs are at stake.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to learn more about the positive impact this program has had in our community.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Crombie
Mayor, City of Mississauga



Chris Fonseca,
Councillor for Ward 3 and Chair of Mississauga's Cycling Advisory Committee

CC:

Sheref Sabawy, MPP Mississauga-Erin Mills
Natalia Kusendova, MPP Mississauga Centre
Hon. Kaleed Rasheed, MPP Mississauga East-Cooksville
Rudy Cuzzetto, MPP Mississauga-Lakeshore
Deepak Anand, MPP Mississauga-Malton
Hon Nina Tangri, MPP Mississauga-Streetsville