



March 7, 2016

Chair, Board of Education,
Near North District School Board
963 Airport Road
P.O. Box 3110 North Bay, ON
P1B 8H1

Re: New K – 12 School (Parry Sound)

Dear Chair of the Near North District School Board:

We are writing to ask that site selection and configuration of the new K – 12 school in Parry Sound be designed to maximize safe pedestrian and bicycle access for parents, students and staff. Development of a new school is a great opportunity to prioritize the current and future health and safety of children, youth and families.

School location and design choices can encourage active school travel. By walking or biking to school, students integrate physical activity into their daily routines and develop healthy life-long habits. Regular physical activity is not only necessary for health and well-being but has also been shown to improve academic performance. At the same time, parents, schools, school boards and municipalities can all realize savings in time as well as operating and capital costs by reducing motorized school travel.ⁱ As such, we would like to make the following recommendations:

- Include active transportation principles in the criteria used to select a location for the new school
- Create designated drop-off zones 300 – 500 metres from the school to alleviate the health and safety issues of traffic congestion around the school
- Provide end of trip facilities (e.g. equipment storage and bicycle racks, sidewalks and shaded areas)
- Require bicycle racks be placed in high visibility areas (e.g., in front of principal's office at entrance of school)
- Work with local municipalities to establish safe active transportation corridors to and from school
- Support the development of School Travel Plans for every school
- Support programs that facilitate active school travel (e.g., Bike Train, Walking School Bus)
- Advocate for speed limits of no more than 30 kph in school zones

We have enclosed information on our committee. Please feel free to contact us for more information on any of the above suggestions. We would be pleased to work with the school community to make active travel to and from school safer and more convenient for more families. We also look forward to student involvement in the ongoing planning and implementation of active transportation initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wendall Fisher".

Wendall Fisher

Cc Members of Parry Sound Site Selection Committee

ⁱ Green Communities Canada