

Bike Bus

Standard Operating Procedure



Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region
School Travel Planning
www.stswr.ca/walkzone

VERSION: 0.0.1

DATE: September 7, 2023

PARTY RESPONSIBLE: School Administrator, Teacher, or Parent

DOCUMENT INFORMATION			
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RESPONSIBLE PERSON	School Administrator	SIGNATURE	
SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT(S)	Leslie Maxwell, Ashley Cullen, Landon Chan	SIGNATURE	
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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Bike Bus allows elementary school children to bike to school together, accompanied by trained and screened adult volunteers.

Like a school bus, a bike bus has a predefined route with departure and arrival points, and scheduled stops along the ride. Unlike a conventional school bus, the scheduled stops are meeting points for the participants to join the group ride.

Tips & Tricks for Bike Bus organizers

- A.** You will have a better chance to get your Bike Bus running if a teacher/parent runs it.
- B.** It is important to have someone familiar with the neighbourhood or city/town to be involved in planning a safe route.
- C.** Get the kids involved in planning the Bike Bus and get their feedback on how it can be improved. Encourage them to promote the Bike Bus to their friends and classmates.
- D.** Welcome ALL modes of active transportation!



PURPOSE:

This SOP will describe the process the School Administrator, Teacher, or Parent would follow as well as tools and resources available to schedule and organize a Bike Bus at an individual school.

DEFINITIONS:

Class 2 safety vest: A CSA Class 2 safety vest has full coverage of the upper torso (front, back, sides and over the shoulders) with stripes/bands composed of retro-reflective or combined performance materials. School crossing guards commonly wear class 2 safety vests.

Lead Patrol: Position in front of the bike bus, lead the ride while watching for incoming cars and double-check intersections. Slowest riders will be behind the lead patrol to set the pace of the bike bus.

Left Patrol: Position to the left of the bike bus in the middle of the pack. Ride on the middle portion of the road and ensure that all other riders are to the right. Will need to speed up as the bike bus approaches a busy intersection. Check both sides that drivers have visual contact, and their cars are stopped. Left marshal will then go into the intersection and signal all traffic to stop. Signal the bike bus to go through.


Right Patrol: A tricky position because the marshal rides near the curb. Usually rides with the lead marshal then accelerates if the bike bus is approaching a busy intersection. Same safety responsibility and actions in crossing intersections as the Left Patrol.

Sweep/Back Patrol: Stays at the back of the bike bus. At the start of the ride, count the number of ALL participants. Counts the new riders that join the bike bus. Monitors that no riders are left behind. Informs the patrol or parents in the ride to relay a message to the lead marshal to slow down.

Family Bike: It is an option where children are accompanied by their family members. These family members are responsible for guiding and supervising the little ones during the journey from their home to school, guaranteeing their safety. This option allows families to have an active role in the journey to school with their children, providing security and peace of mind.

Bike Bus with Volunteer Caregiver: The volunteer caregiver will accompany the children on their way to school, guiding smaller riders who cannot be supervised closely by the Bike Bus Patrols who are responsible for the larger group.

Bike with Monitors or External Volunteers: In this type of bike bus professional escorts receive remuneration to provide additional monitoring.



Mixed Bike Bus: A combination of family members, volunteers, and contracted personnel is used to provide a broader and safer service to students in cases where more accompaniment is needed.

The Autonomous Bike Bus: Participants organize how to get to school by bike. Preferential routes are established to avoid traffic and a basic schedule is established to ensure the safety of the group. The objective is to promote the use of bikes among students to encourage autonomy and good sustainable mobility habits. It may be more common at secondary education levels.

PROCESS:

To take part, a School Administrator must:

1. Contact STSWR to ask a School Travel Planner about the Bike Bus.
2. Connect with the school community and create a core planning group.
3. Clearly define roles and responsibilities within the core planning group.
4. Recruit volunteers to lead the Bike Bus. Can deploy a survey to recruit and gather school travel data.
5. Work with the core planning group to **develop bike bus route(s)** and consult with City partners / Board stakeholders.
6. Promote the Bike Bus through communications home, and school announcements regularly throughout the life of the Bike Bus.
7. Send permission forms to parent(s) / legal guardian(s).

Develop Bike Bus Route(s)

Analyze where future participants live.

To establish the bike bus routes, we propose to carry out an analysis of the school routes following these steps:

- First, map the families interested in participating in the bike bus.
- Second, evaluate if the route that can be taken by any of the families driving the project (especially those that live further away) can be used by the rest of the families in that area.
- Third, consider the safest routes for bicycling, and determine the approximate number of lines that should be laid, or if a bike bus route will weave throughout the streets to pick up everyone on one bus

Decide the most appropriate route based on safety and ease.



Regarding security, we will consider the following types of routes in order of priority:

1. Dedicated bicycle paths separated from main vehicular traffic and wide enough to allow the group to pass safely.
2. Exclusive areas for pedestrians and bicycles (with Spanish S-28 signage or equivalent in other countries)
3. Streets where vehicles have lower priority (inverted priority streets or 30 zones)
4. Signposted streets to share between bicycles and cars (sharrows)
5. Streets with light vehicular traffic (sharing the road)
6. Streets with intense vehicular traffic (sharing the road)

Regarding the “ease” we will consider:

1. Minimize slopes (both going up and down). It is better to go a little further than to follow a more direct itinerary but with steep climbs.
2. Avoid dismounting the bicycle to cross pedestrian crossings or overcome architectural obstacles to maintain greater safety and fluidity on the route.

RESOURCES:

- STSWR website
- CycleWR website
- Bike Bus Kit (En)
- Recruitment postcards, posters, and, or survey
- Volunteer training session(s)
- Route map
- Permission form
- Safety vests

Communications required

- Recruitment emails, survey, communications home, and school announcements
- Permission form

Equipment/tools available from STSWR

- Bicibus.eu Bike Bus Kit
- Recruitment support
- Route selection support
- Map creation support
- Safety vests

Links

- STSWR website:
<https://www.stswr.ca/walkzone/school-travel->

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- CycleWR website:
<https://cyclewr.ca/superpower/>
 - Bike Bus Kit (En):
<https://bicibus.eu/en/kit/>

SAFETY AND SUCCESS PROVISIONS:

1. Volunteers are trained and screened through a police record check.
2. Volunteers wear class 2 safety vest and helmet.
3. Additional volunteers are recruited when needed.
4. Safe environment to ride bike to, and from school.
5. Support from school Administration and staff.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

- School Injury procedure for any injury.

EXPECTED RESULTS:


- Students enjoy adult supervision on the active trip to school when their own parents are busy.
- Positive and rule-bound cycling examples for students to model.
- Demonstration of proper cycling infrastructure use.
- Parent engagement in producing a safer journey to school.
- Fewer cars at school.
- Increased student ability to safely use cycling infrastructure and behave safely when cycling in the neighbourhood or to school.

Goals

- A. To increase the number of students and parents safely biking to school.
- B. To increase the activity level of students by biking to school and starting the day with a physical activity that also benefits their overall well-being.
- C. To decrease the number of parents driving their kids to school.

Benefits

- A. The community benefits with more students and parents biking to school which will result in less car traffic and less pollution (Environment).

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- B.** Healthier students and parents who actively bike to school (Health and Well-being).
 - C.** Safer neighbourhood near schools because of less vehicle traffic (Safety).
 - D.** Savings for families because of lower car-related costs (Lower cost).

Associated SOPs

- Bike Rodeo
- Trailblazers
- Walking Clinic
- Active Transportation Celebration Event
- Walking School Bus