

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 2/25/2022 5:22:37 PM

Subject: School Streets Program Update

Attachments: Memo - School Streets Program Update.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire regarding School Streets Program Update. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- Staff researched School Street closures in peer cities across Canada and deemed the existing volunteer model the best fit for re-launching the program this spring.
- Four schools have been successfully selected to run School Streets on all school days from May 9 to June 3, 2022 (4-week period like the original pilot last spring).
- Participating schools have confirmed they have the volunteer capacity to ensure success.
- Lord Roberts Elementary continues to successfully operate its School Street daily with a committed volunteer base.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

February 25, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Paul Storer, Director, Transportation

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: School Streets Program Update

RTS #: N/A

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to advise Council that the School Active Travel Planning Team within the Transportation Division will be relaunching the School Streets Program beginning May 9, 2022.

Background

Established in 2012, the School Active Travel Planning Program consults with school communities and stakeholders to identify transportation-related challenges and opportunities, improve safety, and increase the number of children walking, cycling and rolling to school.

In November 2020, City Council approved the Climate Emergency Action Plan including direction to develop a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Action Plan. The TDM Action Plan includes an expanded School Active Travel Program, which includes a number of actions to help build and sustain an active travel culture in schools, including the pilot implementation of School Streets.

School Streets Pilot Program Summary

A School Street is a car-free block beside a school open to walking, cycling and rolling during drop-off and pick-up times for up to 60 minutes, depending on the location. No motor vehicles are permitted to enter or exit the block when School Streets is in effect, except in an emergency.

School Streets has been implemented in many other jurisdictions, particularly in the UK, and has been shown to create a safer environment for children, increase active travel, improve safety and air quality, reduce congestion and support physical distancing needs. In partnership with the Vancouver School Board (VSB), the City of Vancouver piloted a School Streets program from April 12, 2021, to May 7, 2021 (4 weeks) at three participating schools.

Parent and community volunteers led the day-to-day implementation of School Streets by setting up and taking down barriers at the end of each block (morning and afternoon), and interacting with interested residents and parents. During the pilot, schools were provided a stipend and parent advisory councils actively recruited and scheduled volunteers. The City program coordinator was the primary contact if any issues or concerns arose.

Pilot Outcomes

During the pilot, feedback was collected from residents, parents, volunteers and school staff. Parents and school staff were also surveyed to help understand program impact. One-day traffic counts were conducted before and during the pilot on the streets surrounding each school. Highlights of the pilot included:

- 29% of families reported driving less
- 32% of families reported walking more
- 231 families tried active travel to school for the first time
- 76% of parents support School Street to continue in the future

To read the full program report, please visit vancouver.ca/School-Streets

2021-2022 School Streets Program

Building upon the success of the initial pilot, all three pilot elementary schools expressed interest to continue the School Streets program for the duration of the 2021/2022 school year (from September 2021 to June 2022, on school days). In addition, the City planned to launch School Streets at an additional seven schools for a three-month pilot from April – June 2022.

Based on feedback from the pilot, the City hired a consultant to lead all aspects of volunteer management for the 2021/2022 school year. The program launched on September 8, 2021 at the three returning schools. Within the first few weeks of the program, it was evident that recruiting daily morning and afternoon volunteer shifts was a challenge at some of the schools for a number of reasons. Key volunteer recruitment lessons learned include engaging school staff and stakeholders early in the process, providing flexible scheduling options, promoting volunteer opportunities from within the school channels and being aware of how changing COVID policies and contexts may impact participation.

As a result, the School Streets program was put on hold at two out of the three schools in an effort to review lessons learned and re-evaluate how to best move forward with the program in the spring of 2022. Lord Roberts Elementary continued to operate its School Street daily with a committed volunteer base.

Spring 2022 Re-launch

Since the temporary pause of the School Streets program, staff have conducted extensive background research into how School Street road-closures are supported in similar settings across Canadian peer cities. Research shows that the volunteer model is the primary approach used by most programs across Canada, operating for varying lengths of time from one week to a full school year. As a result, staff support the continuation of the existing volunteer School Streets model and have deemed it to be the best fit for Vancouver as it ensures school and community buy-in, is relatively quick to implement at a low cost, and has been successfully tested in Vancouver over the initial four-week pilot.

By implementing the lessons learned through program delivery and ensuring schools have sufficient buy-in and capacity to participate well in advance of the program, staff are confident that the program will be ready to re-launch successfully in spring 2022. The Vancouver School Board continues to be an important program partner and is supportive of the re-launch plan.

From August to December 2021, the City of Vancouver received interest from 22 schools to take part in the program. All schools were invited to complete a formal expression of interest, which ensured they had the necessary support and capacity to implement the program successfully. Schools were selected for participation based on a number of factors including school capacity and support for active travel initiatives, street makeup and feasibility, traffic safety, and equity considerations.

As a result, three new schools and two returning schools have been selected to participate in the re-launch of the program in spring 2022 including:

- Lord Roberts Elementary (ongoing)
- Hastings Elementary (returning)
- Kerrisdale Annex (new)
- L'Ecole Jules Quesnel (new)
- Lord Nelson Elementary (new)

All participating schools will be operating daily School Street closures during pick-up and drop-off for a period of 30-60 minutes from May 9, 2022, to June 3, 2022 (4 weeks). Lord Roberts will continue to operate their School Street program daily until the end of the school year. Barriers and signage at each end of the School Street will keep it safely closed to traffic. The barriers will be set up and maintained by school volunteers with guidance from the City.

Participating schools will contact parents directly with detailed information about the pilot. Notification letters to all residents within a two-block radius of the participating schools will be delivered approximately one month prior to the program launch.

Next Steps

The program will be evaluated through traffic counts, parent and staff surveys, student engagement and resident feedback. A report summarizing all of the feedback and monitoring results will be published on the website in August 2022. Additional information can be found at vancouver.ca/School-Streets

Please contact me directly if you have any further questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lon LaClaire', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering Services

604.873.7336 | lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca