

**From:** ["Levitt, Karen" <karen.levitt@vancouver.ca>](mailto:karen.levitt@vancouver.ca)  
**To:** ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
**Date:** 8/11/2023 10:04:35 AM  
**Subject:** Memo - School Active Travel Program Update  
**Attachments:** ENG - Memo - School Active Travel Program Update.pdf

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Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire on **School Active Travel Program Update**. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- Staff are developing a 2025-2030 [School Active Travel Program](#) (SATP) Action Plan to expand and prioritize program actions as part of the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP).
- Key education and encouragement initiatives taking place include: [Walk Bike Roll Mini Grants](#), [the Walking School Bus Program](#), [School Active Travel Education](#), the [Mobi Community Pass for High School Students](#) and [Play Streets](#).
- Key infrastructure and safety initiatives happening include [School Travel Planning](#), the [Speed Reduction Pilot](#), [School Streets](#), and [Comox Year-Round School Street](#) engagement.
- [This video](#) highlights how one school used its Walk Bike Roll Mini Grant to start a “bike bus” and [this video](#) showcases our first School Street at a high school.

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

Thanks,

Karen

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**Karen Levitt**, Deputy City Manager (she/her)  
[karen.levitt@vancouver.ca](mailto:karen.levitt@vancouver.ca)

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm/Musqueam, Sḵwxwú7mesh/Squamish and səliłwətaʔ/Tsleil-Waututh nations.

## MEMORANDUM

August 10, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC  
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk  
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office  
Trevor Ford, Interim Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Paul Storer, Director, Transportation

FROM: Lon LaClaire  
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: School Active Travel Program Update

RTS #: N/A

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this memo is to update Council on the School Active Travel Program (SATP).

### **Background**

Established in 2012, the [School Active Travel Program](#) is a partnership with the Vancouver School Board (VSB) to improve safety and increase the number of children walking, biking and rolling to school.

### **Key Work Underway**

#### **Strategic Planning**

- **SATP Action Plan** – Staff are developing a 2025-2030 SATP Action Plan to expand and prioritize program actions as part of the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP). This will be the City's first action plan focusing on school active travel. We will begin engaging with school communities and stakeholders in October of 2023, with the aim of a fall 2024 completion date. An additional memo highlighting progress will be sent in early 2024.

## Education and Encouragement

- [Walk Bike Roll Mini Grants](#) – We distributed 27 x \$500 mini grants to schools for active travel projects in 2023. [This video](#) highlights how one school used its mini grant to launch a “Bike Bus”. Other projects included week-long walk and roll events, bike repair workshops and active travel assemblies, with a total of 4,152 students reached.
- [Walking School Bus](#) – We will be re-launching the Walking School Bus Program at 3 schools in September 2023 in partnership with TransLink.
- [School Active Travel Education](#) – 2,138 students at 22 schools received the course this spring. This program now reaches all grade 6/7 students over a 2-year period and includes on-road cycling training.
- [Mobi Community Pass for High School Students](#) – 78 students at Britannia Secondary signed up for a discounted annual Mobi pass during the 2022-23 pilot. We are working with Mobi to expand the \$20 pass to more high schools in fall of 2023.
- [Play Streets](#) – We partnered on 16 Play Street events this spring, transforming our School Streets into thriving public spaces with many activities including a scooter and bike course. This initiative received widespread support from students and families.

## Infrastructure and Safety

- [School Travel Planning](#) – Four new schools joined the program in 2023. Each year we install new infrastructure around schools to support walking and cycling including crosswalks, new sidewalks and curbs, curb ramps, bulges, and flashing beacons.
- [Speed Limit Reduction Pilot](#) – In spring of 2023, we launched a pilot to reduce speeds on collector and arterial streets adjacent to nine schools. We’ll report back to Council in spring 2024 with the data and public feedback.
- [School Streets](#) – The four-week program was expanded to seven schools in 2023, with 92% of elementary students saying they felt safer with a car-free block during drop-off and pick-up. [This video](#) showcases our first participating high school. Staff are currently exploring how to expand the program year-round at select schools.
- [Comox Year-Round School Street](#) – Lord Roberts Elementary School has implemented a daily School Street for the past two years but it will not continue in September 2023 due to lack of volunteer capacity. In spring of 2023, we asked area residents and the school community for feedback on the possibility of a permanent car-free Year-Round School Street. In fall of 2023, we plan to consult with the community again to gather more feedback on additional potential design options. More background and information on these two design options can be found in Appendix A.

Please contact me directly if you have any questions with respect to this information.

Sincerely,

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](mailto:lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca)

## **Appendix A: Update on the Comox Year-Round School Street Proposal**

### **Background**

The Transportation Division is considering transforming the 1600-block of Comox Street, between Bidwell and Cardero Streets, into a year-round School Street. Due to the help of volunteers, Lord Roberts Elementary was able to continue the School Streets Program daily during the 2021/22 and 2022/23 school years. The Program relied on volunteers to place barriers at the intersections to set up the School Street twice daily each school day during pick-up and drop-off times. Vehicles could not enter or leave the block except for emergency services.

A significant reliance on volunteers is not a sustainable approach over the long-term for the school. As a result, the School Streets Program at Lord Roberts Elementary School will not continue in September 2023 due to the lack of volunteers.

### **Comox Year-Round School Street Consultation**

In spring 2023, the City asked area residents and the school community for feedback on a year-round School Street proposal. A year-round School Street was imagined as a car-free space at all times of the day throughout the year. People walking, biking, rolling and playing could use the street to access the area. Parking and vehicle access would not be available, except for emergency services. The goal of the year-round School Street was to create a safe and welcoming car-free public space for the school and community to enjoy.

During phase one of public engagement, staff heard from over 749 people through emails, surveys, and pop-up information sessions. We heard support for safe active travel options as well as a concerns around impacts to accessibility, parking, sanitation and safety.

### **Fall 2023 Engagement**

The information collected has helped staff explore different design options. In the fall of 2023, staff plan to consult with residents and the school community again to gather more feedback.

Staff are preparing options that will improve comfort and safety for families using active travel along Comox Street, including:

- Refining the original year-round School Street concept to address feedback about how the space is programmed
- An alternate proposal that maintains parking and one-way vehicle circulation while providing enhanced separation for people cycling and rolling

### **Next Steps**

Families are encouraged to continue to walk, bike or roll to school when possible – this makes our streets healthier and safer for everyone. For the safety of students and to reduce vehicle traffic on Comox Street during drop-off and pick-up times, staff will install a '*No Stopping Anytime*' zone on the south side of the street as an initial measure.

Following additional engagement, staff anticipate refining a preferred option. While there may be opportunities to implement some changes during the upcoming school year, more substantive measures will more likely be installed next summer.