

SCHOOL STREETS PROGRAM REPORT

AUGUST 2022



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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwx̱ wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.





About School Streets

Introduction



We expanded our School Streets Program to five local elementary schools in the 2021-22 school year. The purpose of the program is to improve safety around schools and promote and encourage active transportation (walking, biking, rolling and transit) to and from school in support of the [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) goal of having two-thirds of daily trips be taken by active transportation and transit by 2030. School Streets is a popular program in many jurisdictions around the world and is growing in popularity in cities across Canada due to the reported benefits of creating a car-free street in front of schools.

During drop-off and pick-up times one street adjacent to each school was closed to motor vehicle traffic and open to walking, biking or rolling for 30 to 60 minutes. Daily implementation of the School Street was led by school volunteers who put out road barriers to prevent motor vehicles from entering or exiting the street. The program was delivered in partnership with the Vancouver School Board as part of our [School Active Travel Program](#).

Did you know?

The School Active Travel Program offers a variety of initiatives to improve safety around schools, educate students, and encourage active travel to and from Vancouver schools.

Learn more at: www.vancouver.ca/schoolactivetravel

A School Street

is a car-free block beside a school open to walking, biking, and rolling during drop-off and pick-up times. No motor vehicles are permitted to enter or exit the street.

2021-22 Participating Schools



Lord Roberts
Elementary

Returning pilot school
2021-22 school year



Hastings Elementary

Returning pilot school
May 9 – June 3, 2022



Ecole Jules Quesnel

New program school
May 9 – June 3, 2022



Kerrisdale Annex

New program school
May 9 – June 3, 2022



Lord Nelson
Elementary

New program school
May 9 – June 3, 2022

About School Streets

Accessibility

To ensure those who needed to drive had access to the school, all other blocks around the school, apart from the School Street, remained accessible for motor vehicles. Where necessary, designated drop-off areas for parents or students with disabilities were put in place in advance of the program. To minimize impacts on residents, we chose streets without driveways and where residents had alternative access to their homes through alleys.

Engagement



City staff engaged each school through presentations to principals and Parent Advisory Councils in advance of the program. A School Streets Working Group was assembled with committee members from all five participating schools to support planning and implementation efforts. To notify the community about the program, all residents within a two-block radius of the participating schools were mailed letters one month in advance of the program starting. Additional notifications included on-street signage, banners, and online promotion.

Volunteers



Over 130 volunteers across the five participating schools supported the program this year, many of whom were parents of students. These volunteers implemented and monitored the School Streets to ensure safety for students and their families. Ninety-two per cent of volunteers rated their experience as positive and 85% said they would volunteer again if the program continues.

“My experience as a volunteer with School Streets has been fantastic! I have met so many parents, seniors and people in the neighbourhood who have all commented on what an important program this is.”

- Lord Roberts School Street Volunteer

About School Streets



Active Travel Encouragement

To further promote active travel during School Streets, various complementary initiatives took place at schools. All eligible schools received City-funded Active Travel Education delivered by HUB Cycling for grade 6 and 7 students. The Active Travel course includes four lessons that teach students walking and cycling safety theory and on-bike skills through school ground training and group rides around the neighbourhood. In addition, all schools received \$500 to support promotional activities of their choosing, including inviting a local bike mechanic to provide complimentary tune-ups at a school event, hosting a bike parade, and providing hot chocolate on School Streets launch day to students as they arrived. The final week of the spring program also overlapped with Bike to School Week, which provided a celebratory end to the program.



About School Streets

Play Streets

This spring, we partnered with the [Society for Children and Youth of BC \(SCY\)](#) to offer Play Streets at our School Street locations on select days and times. Play Streets are temporary street closures with play activation through simple programming and resources. They are designed to promote safe active outdoor play for children and families, and to promote community connection.



The Play Streets were co-designed with kids via in-person workshops and an online survey facilitated by SCY. Activities included a scooter course with ramps, street hockey, badminton, a quiet zone with chalk, bubbles and hammocks, and building blocks. During the final week of the program, [Kids on Wheels](#) joined Play Streets to set up a balance bike course for younger siblings of students at participating schools.

Play Streets transformed our School Streets into thriving public spaces where families could play and connect outside after many months apart due to the pandemic. The collaboration received widespread support from students and families.



About School Streets

Play Streets Cont'd

SCY ran pop-up engagements at all school sites to ask for feedback on the initiative. Over 100 people answered their survey questions, 93% of whom were children.

70%

think School Streets should always include Play Streets

91%

would like to see more Play Streets in their neighbourhood

86%

reported that they are physically more active with Play Streets than they would be on a regular day

91%

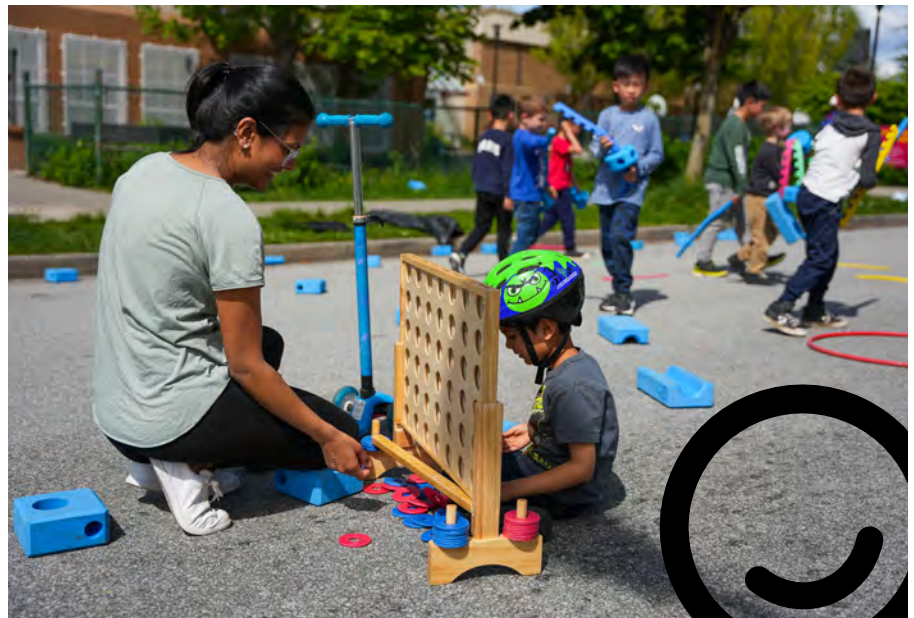
reported feeling more connected to their community with Play Streets

“I have loved the atmosphere during the play streets on Friday. It has been like a kid focused block party every week. Coming out of COVID with so many of us not feeling that connected to the school it’s wonderful.”

- Lord Nelson School Parent

“Amazing idea! Especially the playing on the street and meeting new kids and families. I drive less as parking was harder to find and the kids wanted to stay more and play due to the space and novelty of playing in the road.”

- Hastings School Parent



CONGRATULATIONS TO LORD ROBERTS ELEMENTARY

After participating in our four-week pilot in 2021, Lord Roberts Elementary was the **first Vancouver school to run their School Streets Program for an entire school year.**

The program was supported by a dedicated group of volunteers who implemented the daily closures from September 2021 until June 2022.

In year two of the program:

84%

of parents reported they would like to see the program continue

*Staff are currently exploring the feasibility of implementing a permanent School Street at this location.

About School Streets

Evaluation

A number of monitoring tools and feedback methods were used to gather data and better understand the impacts of the School Streets Program.



454

Parent Surveys completed online (representing 28% of student population)



62

School Staff Surveys completed online (representing 25% of all staff)



53

Volunteer Surveys completed (representing 40% of volunteers)



211

Students participated at in-person Engagement Pop-ups at school



4

Schools received traffic counts on the streets surrounding the school before and during the program



School Streets Program Impacts



All report figures reflect data compiled from all five participating schools.

Impacts on Active Travel

The School Streets Program encouraged more families to use active travel more often to get to and from school during the program.

31%
of families reported
WALKING MORE



25%
of families reported
BIKING MORE



20%
of families reported
ROLLING MORE*



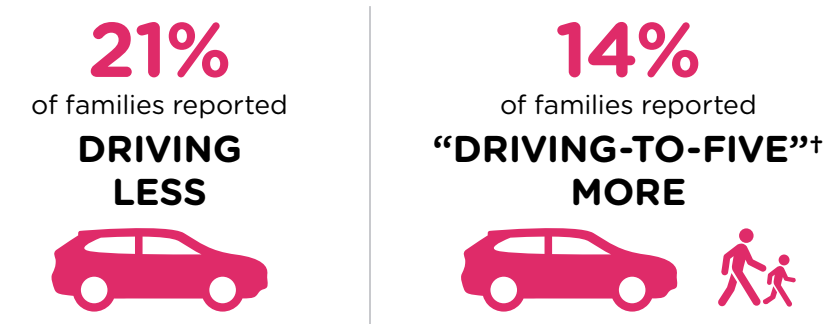
308
families tried
walking, biking or rolling to
school for the first time

80%
of students want to walk, bike,
or roll to school more often now because
of the School Street.

* Wheelchair, skateboard or scooter

School Streets Program Impacts

The program also encouraged families to drive less, or drive and park a five-minute walk away from the school, which assists with reducing congestion during drop-off and pick-up times.



A reduction in overall motor vehicle volumes was observed on the streets adjacent to the schools during the program‡



We asked parents and teachers whether they faced any challenges travelling to school as a result of the School Street and 15% reported they did. Individuals cited difficulty finding parking, increased congestion on adjacent streets and challenges navigating the closure adjacent to other construction projects as their primary concerns.

“My 7 year old daughter feels safe riding her scooter and to cross the street on her own. It’s great for building her confidence.”

- Lord Roberts School Parent

“School Streets has contributed to a growing culture of active travel in our community.”

- School Staff

“Definitely makes us think about bike/ walk commuting and reducing air pollution and increasing safety with less vehicles in the vicinity of the school.”

- Hastings School Parent

† Drive-to-Five is an initiative that encourages parents to drop their children a couple blocks away from the school instead of directly beside the school. Children can then complete the rest of journey on foot either accompanied by their parent or unaccompanied.

‡ Manual traffic counts were conducted on all streets surrounding four of the participating schools one day before the program as well as one day during the program during drop-off and pick-up times. Overall, motor vehicle volumes on the streets directly adjacent to the participating schools decreased during the program compared to before the program. It is important to note that a number of variables can impact traffic counts including weather, school population changes, and school drop-off and pick-up patterns related to COVID-19.

“Before the school street program, my child found it stressful to walk to school because of the cars blocking the crosswalks. The program ensures a safe and enjoyable commute to school.”

- Jules Quesnel Parent

Impacts on Safety and Well-being

The majority of students, parents and teachers reported feeling safer during the School Street program.

96%

of students felt safer on the School Street compared to when there were cars

90%

of school staff felt that the School Street had a positive effect on children’s well-being

67%

of parents reported the street felt safer

79%

of school staff reported the street felt safer



Here's what people had to say!

“This option has made the school a much safer area. Children can be more independent, the school grounds are less crowded and it helps foster the community. I believe this should be a permanent fixture.”

- Lord Roberts School Parent

“Loved it, it made drop off and pick up much more positive, safe, and encouraged relationships and play between families!”

- Jules Quesnel School Staff

“Love it! Being able to reclaim a small section of street by our school entrance was empowering for our kids.”

- Lord Nelson School Parent

“I think it is a good small step toward prioritizing pedestrians and children in our neighbourhoods but there is a long way to go.”

- Hastings School Parent

“The vast majority of kids walk/roll to [our school], so it was great to see their needs as pedestrians prioritized by the School Streets Program.”

- Lord Nelson School Parent



Lessons Learned

The second year of our School Streets Program has been a great success. We will continue to integrate lessons learned into future program implementation strategies. A few key takeaways for 2022 include:

1. Additional measures are needed to reduce the number of parked vehicles requesting to leave during School Street closures.

Recommended actions:

- Create additional parking signage to ensure people are aware of the closure.
- Continue to work with Evo car share to mitigate challenges of vehicles getting booked within School Street times and locations.
- Consider starting afternoon closures 10 minutes earlier to avoid parents parking in advance of the closure.

2. As program implementation relies on the support of volunteers, having a strong volunteer management strategy is key to its success.

Recommended actions:

- Continue to recruit Volunteer Coordinators embedded within the school community to champion the program and lead recruitment efforts.
- Work collaboratively with schools to explore new volunteer tactics such as dispersing volunteer requirements across different classrooms and integrating student volunteers into the program.
- Set realistic program timelines with schools to ensure the program grows at a sustainable rate which aligns with volunteer capacity.
- Explore alternative approaches to implementing street closures, including permanent road space reallocation (where feasible and applicable).

3. While participants report feeling safer as a result of School Streets, the program does not alleviate all safety concerns related to school drop-off and pick-up times.

Recommended actions:

- Continue to provide a thorough parking review at participating schools, including updating signage as needed and sharing parking maps with the school community.
- Continue to integrate safety messaging into School Streets information sent out to families and students in advance and during the program.
- Invite the Vancouver Police Department's Community Road and Education Safety team (CREST) to lead safety talks in advance of the School Streets Program.
- Continue city-wide efforts to provide safety improvements around schools for those walking and cycling.

Thank You!

Special thanks to the Vancouver School Board, school communities, members of our School Streets Working Group and all the School Street Volunteers. Without your support, this program would not be possible!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Please have this translated

RENSEIGNEMENTS IMPORTANTS

Prière de les faire traduire

重要資訊 請找人為你翻譯

重要资讯 請找人为你翻译

MAHALAGANG IMPORMASYON

Mangyaring isalin ito

ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ

ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਵਾਓ

TIN TỨC QUAN TRỌNG

Xin hãy dịch sang tiếng Việt

INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE

Busque a alguien que le traduzca

중요정보 번역해주세요

اطلاعات مهم
لطفا درخواست کنید که این
اطلاعات را برای شما ترجمه کنند

معلومات مهمة
البحث على الترجمة



City of Vancouver
Engineering Services
Community Transportation

SchoolActiveTravel@vancouver.ca
vancouver.ca/School-Streets