

City launches pilot project to create safer routes to schools

(Penticton, BC – May 29, 2023) – The City of Penticton has launched a pilot project in partnership with two local elementary schools to identify traffic issues and create safer routes for children to walk or roll to school.

“The purpose of the Safe Routes to School initiative is to improve safety for all road users surrounding each school, while promoting an environment for students to walk, wheel and roll to school wherever possible,” says Deputy Mayor Helena Konanz. “By implementing new measures and creating safe routes to travel, the school community will have more confidence to use active modes of transportation, which offers many health benefits and results in fewer cars on the road.”

The City is working with Carmi and Uplands Elementary schools on the pilot project, with the goal of extending the program to other schools. This process involves engaging with the school community and leveraging expertise from Engineering, Bylaw and RCMP to assess existing traffic impacts and transportation infrastructure and identify opportunities for improvement.

City staff and consultants have now conducted site visits at both schools, meeting with parents, students, educators and PAC groups to examine well-used routes and brainstorm opportunities to increase active travel to and from school.

“This might include new infrastructure such as traffic calming, road crossings or new sidewalks, and can also include actions relating to programming and education, such as ‘walking school buses’ or bike safety education,” says Kristen Dixon, General Manager of Infrastructure. “These plans will be living documents that we can review annually with the schools to determine if the changes are having the desired results, and to reflect any new challenges and opportunities.”

The project aligns with goals identified in the Transportation Master Plan and the Climate Action Plan, both of which support active transportation as a means to reach the City’s climate goals.

“School District No. 67 appreciates the partnership with the City of Penticton. Ensuring our students travel safely to and from school is a key priority for the board,” says School District No. 67 Board Chair James Palanio. “The Safe Routes to School Initiative will offer an action plan that will be based on feedback from parents and students, which is a critical component of this work. We look forward to the continued partnership and seeing the draft plan later this year.”

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