

City working to create safer routes to schools

(Penticton, BC – Oct. 7, 2024) – The City of Penticton is expanding its 'Safe Routes to School' program to two additional schools as it continues its focus to create safer routes for students to walk or roll safely each day.

The program started last year, with studies completed at both Uplands and Carmi Elementary schools. Now, the City is now turning its focus to Columbia Elementary and the future Skaha Elementary schools.

The process involves working with the school district, staff, students, parent advisory committees and caregivers to learn more about how children are travelling to school – and how to create more opportunities to encourage active transportation. It also involves leveraging expertise from Engineering, Bylaw and RCMP to assess existing traffic impacts and transportation infrastructure and identify opportunities for improvement.

"The goal is to complete two schools each year until we have working plans for every elementary school in Penticton," says Kristen Dixon, General Manager of Infrastructure. "These studies will suggest everything from traffic safety upgrades to other programs or initiatives each school can implement to ensure students have safe routes to travel to and from school."

With many changes coming to the [school district](#) next year, in which middle schools will become elementary schools, this work will also help students transition from Parkway Elementary to the new Skaha Elementary school.

"The SD67 Board is grateful for the ongoing collaboration with the City on the Safe Routes to School initiative and excited to continue this partnership with school and district staff, students, school PACs, and parents and guardians to make sure that we are all working together to ensure the safe travel of students to and from our schools," says James Palanio, SD67 Board Chair.

"This work not only helps ensure safety during school days, but also builds additional community awareness around how we all need to be aware, and drive with additional caution in school zones at all times, as our playgrounds are used every day of the week."

Some new initiatives that may be implemented include adding sidewalks or improving crosswalks, traffic calming, addition of 'Kiss & Go' zones, which is a designated drop-off area that keeps the flow of

vehicles moving or encouraging active transportation concepts such as a 'Drive to Five' or walking/riding school bus. More details about these initiatives can be found at penticton.ca/safe-routes.

This work aligns with goals identified in the City's Transportation Master Plan, which seeks to create a safe transportation system that supports all ages, abilities and modes of transportation. It's also an important step to achieve the targets set within the Community Climate Action Plan, which strives to reduce vehicle emissions.

-30-

Media Contact:

250-490-2339

communications@penticton.ca