

NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BUSINESS COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING

INFORMATION SHEET

DATE: May 10, 2023
TO: Business Committee
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer
Pete Sabo, Executive Director Planning & Operations
Jacquie Poulin, Assistant Superintendent Elementary
SUBJECT: Active School Travel Update

Background:

The District continues its work with municipal and regional partners with the aim of addressing safety issues for active and safe transportation to schools. This Information Sheet outlines current work associated with Active School Travel (AST) as well as future initiatives.

Discussion:

New Plan Updates

Uplands Active School Travel Plan has recently completed public consultation sessions and the final document of the plan will be made available through the City of Nanaimo and District website.

We have now moved into Phase 4, Implementation. This stage has 4 main parts:

1. Promote the AST Plan
2. Implement action items
3. Track progress
4. Celebrate and share successes

A detailed description of Phase 4 in the AST Guide: [https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/transportation-and-mobility/19205---ast-guide-\(2022-jan-28\).pdf](https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/transportation-and-mobility/19205---ast-guide-(2022-jan-28).pdf). Each stakeholder is responsible for updating their own Action Plan Items as they are addressed. The City has offered general support and will be working on its own Action Items as time, capacity, and resources permit. The City/NLPS are discussing how to formalize a monitoring/evaluation process (Phase 5 of the AST Process) and the current direction is that NLPS/City/School administration/PAC should come back and discuss how plan implementation is going after about a year. A key item to note is that this is a living document, meaning while changes may occur over time and adjustments may need to be made, the document as a whole can remain intact.

Follow Up on Existing Plans

In accordance with Board direction, the District (inclusive of the City), has been engaging in a review of the most recent AST Plan for Randerson Ridge. Urban Systems was retained to complete a two-phase approach. Work to date on phase 1 included, but not limited to:

- detailed review of original AST for the school,
- visiting to the site during pick up and drop off times and gathered data,
- meeting with school administration to understand current understanding of issues,
- confirmed with City previous recommendations (for work on city property) and status
- confirmed city plans for future improvements and general development in the area,
- visited drive-to-5 locations,
- met jointly with PAC (which included the originator of the current concern), school staff, NLPS staff and city staff.
- submitted report on activities.

Phase 1 information gathering is complete with a report submitted. Based on the Phase 1 report, Urban Systems has recently submitted a Phase 2 proposal for consideration. This proposal includes consulting fees as well as detailed deliverables/tasks. Facilities is currently reviewing the proposal.

The District continues to support the City of Nanaimo in its review of some community concerns with respect to Frank J Ney traffic issues. City staff have indicated this process has begun and expected to conclude in the 2023/24 school year. The resulting report will support future action items.

Works supporting Ecole North Oyster Traffic Safety have been completed and previously reported to the Board. The school has requested consideration for a second movable dynamic speed limit sign and reports positive results of the single sign currently in use (sign is moved periodically to the other direction).

Stemming from the Departure Bay AST in 2018 the City and NLPS implemented improvements at the entry of the school and on the walking shoulder on the south side of Departure Bay, west of the school. This was to provide walking connectivity from a drive to five location to the school. Part of the project was the installation of bollards on the narrow shoulder. Evidence that these bollards are important is illustrated by the damage they have taken since installation. Proceeding from other discussions on the Departure Bay AST, the City has completed a traffic calming project on Bay Street (two raised crosswalks and one speed hump) to improve walking safety to this school.

Future AST Plans

The District continues its work towards a clear process for school site selections in regards to a formal Active School Travel. This process would consider information provided by the City (or authorities having jurisdiction) on community concerns and school-based concerns on active travel. The planning is essentially in two parts - A) Schools within the City of Nanaimo where the City is an active partner in the creation of plans and B) Schools in other jurisdictions where NLPS takes more of a lead in selection of sites.

Future Planning (City of Nanaimo and other Jurisdictions)

NLPS and City staff continue to work on refining a prioritization process for the development of formal active school travel plans. Plans for schools outside of the City of Nanaimo will take into consideration enrolment pressures, effects of reopening of schools, effects of major capital projects affecting catchments, concerns raised by school stakeholders, preplanning for growth area, district resources, etc.

School activities

District staff continue to refine the idea of Tier One type activities – assisting schools with AST activities that could be considered and put in place by schools without a formal AST Plan in place. These actions are ones that schools can take to promote active school travel and are determined by the City and District to be activities within control of the school. Examples of activities could include, but are not limited to:

- Activities to better inform school community of AST base concepts without making any structural changes e.g. hands-up surveys to better inform current means of travel to schools by students.
- Ongoing promotion of walking and biking to school.
- If schools are promoting AST and require some minor structural changes on school sites, a process will be provided to outline who to contact to receive assistance in implementing such changes.

Grant Activity

The District has been monitoring applicable grant opportunities. The District worked with the City to apply for a Vision Zero in Road Safety Grant which provides funding for projects that improve the safety of roads in communities. A grant request was approved for a raised crosswalk on Georgia Avenue.

Recently completed supporting schools

While Cilaire was in the swing space at Woodlands, the City took the initiative to install new dynamic school zone signage on Departure Bay Road which includes speed indicators that correlate with school zone times. Further, the school zone was shorted to ensure compliance with regulations, enforceability under the motor vehicle act and to achieve better driver compliance.

NLPS staff have participated in the Nanaimo Traffic Safety Committee for over a decade, which currently includes District staff (Director of Planning and Operations and Transportation Manager). This has facilitated a collaborative approach in improving safety in and around schools. Recent discussions have been around making school zones more conspicuous which should increase compliance and enhance safety.

École Quarterway worked directly with City staff to have an in-street crosswalk sign installed.

Work in progress

The City has undertaken a traffic calming project on Extension Road and Cranberry Avenue, which if implemented, should have a positive impact on Chase River Elementary.

Conclusion:

Active School Travel remains a priority for NLPS and its committed partners. Future success of the program is dependent on availability of staff time (both NLPS and partners), and on funding.

