

City takes steps to improve safety around schools and playgrounds

(Penticton, BC – Wednesday, May 22, 2024) – The City of Penticton is rolling out new traffic safety measures and programs geared to make streets safer for kids walking, wheeling or playing.

The City is making a number of traffic safety improvements and encouraging other initiatives after completing two 'Safe Routes to School' studies at Carmi Elementary and Uplands Elementary. For Uplands, this includes installing additional sidewalks on Middle Bench Road, a review of the Westminster Ave E corridor, addressing u-turning in front of the school through installation of centre line delineators, and improved crossings, among other initiatives.

As for Carmi Elementary, the City is in the process of designing changes to the Manitoba Street corridor. Since the plan was completed, the school district has adopted its long-range facilities plan, which will see the closure of the school, with children redirected to a new KVR Elementary. However, many of the suggested improvements will be relevant for both schools and the broader neighbourhood.

In addition, school zones and playground zones throughout the City will become permanent 30km/h speed zones, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These changes will be in place ahead of the new school year, with signs being updated in late summer.

"Throughout the summer, and in the evenings and weekends, we see kids at the fields or playgrounds past the typical school zone hours. We want to keep our kids safe – and reducing speeds to 30 km/h is one of the steps we can take to slow drivers through these zones where children are playing," says Kristen Dixon, General Manager of Infrastructure.

To review the full results of both studies, visit penticton.ca/safe-routes.

The 'Safe Routes to School' study process involved working with the school district, staff, parent advisory committees and the greater school communities to learn more about how children are travelling to school – and how to create more opportunities to encourage active transportation. Next, the City will conduct studies at Columbia and the future Skaha Elementary.

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. And thirdly, this project meets three of Council's strategic priorities: supporting a safe and resilient environment, a livable and accessible city, and a vibrant and connected community.

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