

City of Kamloops

# Safer School Streets Report



DECEMBER 2023

Canada's Tournament Capital



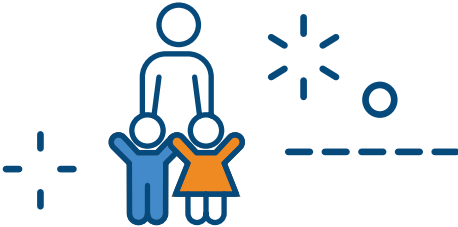
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# About Safer School Streets

## Introduction

Safer School Streets\* is a worldwide program that aims to improve safety around schools and encourage active transportation. The Safer School Streets program creates a safe environment for active transportation in front of schools by restricting motor vehicle traffic during school pickup and drop-off hours. Safer School Streets originated in Italy in the 1990s and has since been implemented globally. Cities across Canada, including Vancouver, Victoria, Surrey, Winnipeg, Hamilton, and Kingston, have implemented Safer School Streets programs. Kamloops is the first city in Interior BC to implement a Safer School Streets pilot program.

Data and feedback from other municipalities and the recent Safer School Streets pilot program demonstrate the program's benefits, including:



### IMPROVED SAFETY

Restricting vehicle access during key times protects vulnerable road users, including children.



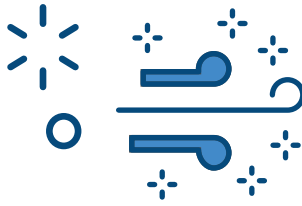
### ENCOURAGING HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES

Safer School Streets promote daily physical activity for youth by encouraging active transportation.



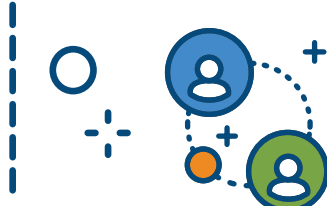
### INCREASED SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

Safer School Streets fosters lifelong positive attitudes towards sustainable transportation modes.



### IMPROVED AIR QUALITY

Reducing vehicle emissions improves the air quality around schools.



### FOSTERING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Activities during the closure build a sense of community.



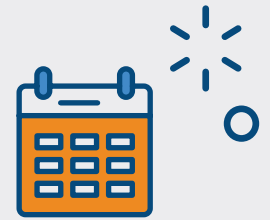
### REDUCED CONGESTION

By reducing vehicle trips, Safer School Streets help alleviate congestion during the morning rush hour.

\*The Safer School Streets program is commonly known as School Streets in other jurisdictions.

# Safer School Streets for Kamloops

To assess the feasibility and impact of a local Safer School Streets program, the City of Kamloops, School District No. 73, and Interior Health collaborated on a two-week pilot program at Arthur Hatton Elementary. During the pilot program, vehicle traffic was restricted on Schubert Drive and Chestnut Avenue. To enhance safety and ensure compliance with the closure, qualified traffic control persons attended the barricades that marked the closure. These barricade attendants permitted vehicles that needed to enter the closure area (e.g. students with accessibility needs) at a walking pace.



## PILOT DATES

SCHOOL DAYS  
MAY 29–JUNE 7, 2023



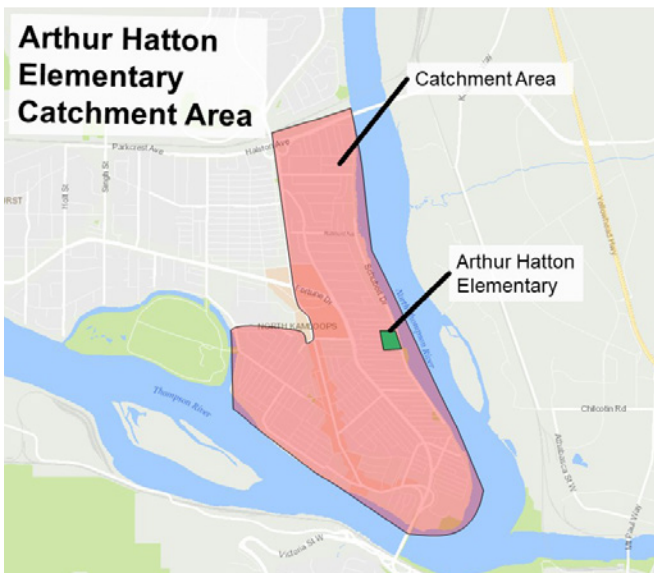
## MORNING CLOSURE

7:45–8:45 AM



## AFTERNOON CLOSURE

2:00–3:00 PM



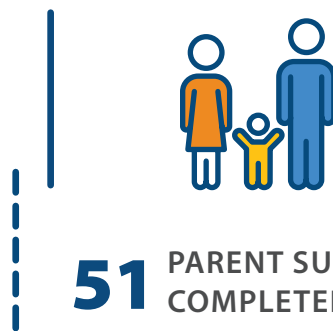


## Community Engagement and Notification

The City of Kamloops, School District No. 73, Interior Health, and Arthur Hatton Elementary staff collaborated extensively while planning the pilot program. Arthur Hatton Elementary parents, teachers, and staff were engaged on the program, and notification letters were delivered to residents near the closure area. Arthur Hatton Elementary provided information on the program to parents through newsletters and emails as well as during a Parent Advisory Council meeting, where the program was discussed. Additional engagement included a City press release, media opportunities, online notices, social media promotions, traffic impact notices via Kammute, physical signage on site, and a post-pilot program City Story on Kamloops.ca. The school principal worked with School District No. 73 and City staff to host a kick-off event that explained the reason for the Safer School Streets pilot program to students. This event was an important way to inspire students to collectively build excitement for starting and taking an active role in the program.



**138** LETTERS DELIVERED TO RESIDENTS



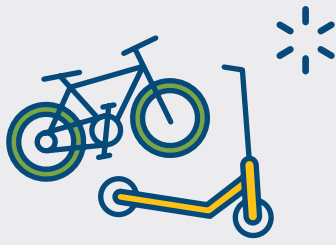
**51** PARENT SURVEYS COMPLETED



**10** STAFF SURVEYS COMPLETED



**90%** OF SURVEYED PARENTS AND STAFF KNEW THAT THE PROGRAM WAS OCCURRING BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF THE CLOSURE.



**4 BIKES  
10 SCOOTERS/  
SKATEBOARDS**

GIVEN TO STUDENTS  
AS GRAND PRIZES



**250 OTHER PRIZES**  
GIVEN TO STUDENTS



**APPROXIMATELY  
7 HOURS**  
OF STREET HOCKEY  
(AND OTHER ACTIVITIES)  
IN THE CLOSURE AREA

## Program Activities

Recreation opportunities and the promotion of active transportation were key elements of the pilot program.

The pilot program was timed to align with the first week of GoByBike Week to build on the heightened awareness around active transportation. A GoByBike Week celebration station was located in the closure area, with volunteers distributing prizes for students using active transportation. Canadian Tire, Red Tomato Pies, Runner's Sole, Dearborn Ford, and School District No. 73 also generously donated various prizes to Arthur Hatton Elementary for students who used active modes to get to school.

Before school each day, Arthur Hatton Elementary staff organized games and activities in the closure area, including street hockey, sidewalk chalk, and jump rope. On one morning, emergency service providers, including the Kamloops RCMP, BC Ambulance Service, and Kamloops Fire Rescue, were invited to the closure area to showcase their vehicles and engage with students.

“My kids loved playing street hockey in the mornings. They were more eager to get ready and go to school in the morning, so they had time to play with their friends.”

~ Arthur Hatton School Parent



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# Pilot Program Evaluation

## Evaluation Tools

The City of Kamloops, School District No. 73, Interior Health, and the University of British Columbia (UBC) collaborated to collect a variety of data to evaluate the various impacts of the pilot program. Eleven teachers volunteered to conduct “hands-up” surveys in their classrooms by asking students which transportation modes they used to get to school and documenting the results. The parent surveys, hands-up surveys, and school staff surveys were funded through a UBC Health Innovation Funding Investment Award.



PARENT SURVEYS



TRAFFIC AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION COUNTS



“HANDS-UP” SURVEYS



CITY OF KAMLOOPS CALLS FOR SERVICE



SCHOOL STAFF SURVEYS AND FEEDBACK



CITY STAFF OBSERVATIONS



“The traffic controllers were wonderful, pleasant, and cheerful every day. Having the crossing guard at Fortune and Chestnut was very appreciated.”

~ Arthur Hatton School Parent

## Safety and Mode Share Impacts

The survey results showed that the majority of parents and staff perceived an increase in safety on Schubert Drive and Chestnut Avenue during the closure period. The results of the hands-up surveys showed that significantly more students chose to use sustainable transportation modes during the pilot program. Importantly, students continued to use sustainable transportation modes after the pilot program.

“The program was wonderful. The school speed zone is not observed properly very often along Schubert and it was a great relief not to have to worry as much about it when the kids are travelling to and from school.”

~ Arthur Hatton School Parent

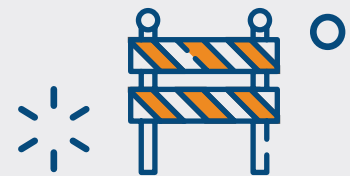
“My son was very excited about the program and we enjoyed walking together. It was nice seeing him eager to participate and open up discussions around physical health and protecting the environment.”

~ Arthur Hatton School Parent



**53.7%**

of parents agreed that Schubert Drive and Chestnut Avenue felt safer during pickup and drop-off.



**60%**

of staff agreed that the Schubert Drive and Chestnut Avenue felt safer during pickup and drop-off.



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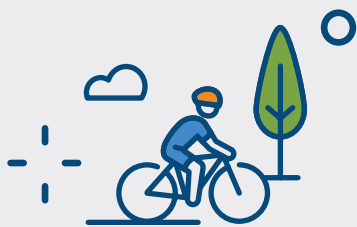


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**23%** increase in walking mode share **during** the pilot program

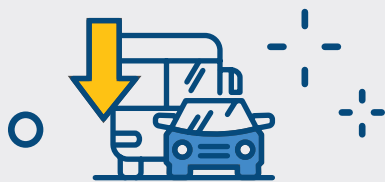
**13%** increase in walking mode share **after** the pilot program



**33%** increase in active mode share **during** the pilot program

**18%** increase in active mode share **after** the pilot program

**63%** of families tried walking, biking, or rolling for the first time



Reduction in adjacent road network traffic based on before and after traffic counts

The pilot program occurred at the same time as a major utility project on Fortune Drive. Despite the construction, traffic impacts around the closure area were minimal. Observations from City staff revealed that the closure did not meaningfully reduce performance of the Nelson Avenue and Oak Road signalized intersections with Fortune Drive. The results of this pilot program show that a carefully selected closure area can result in minimal traffic impacts while encouraging active transportation.



City of Kamloops



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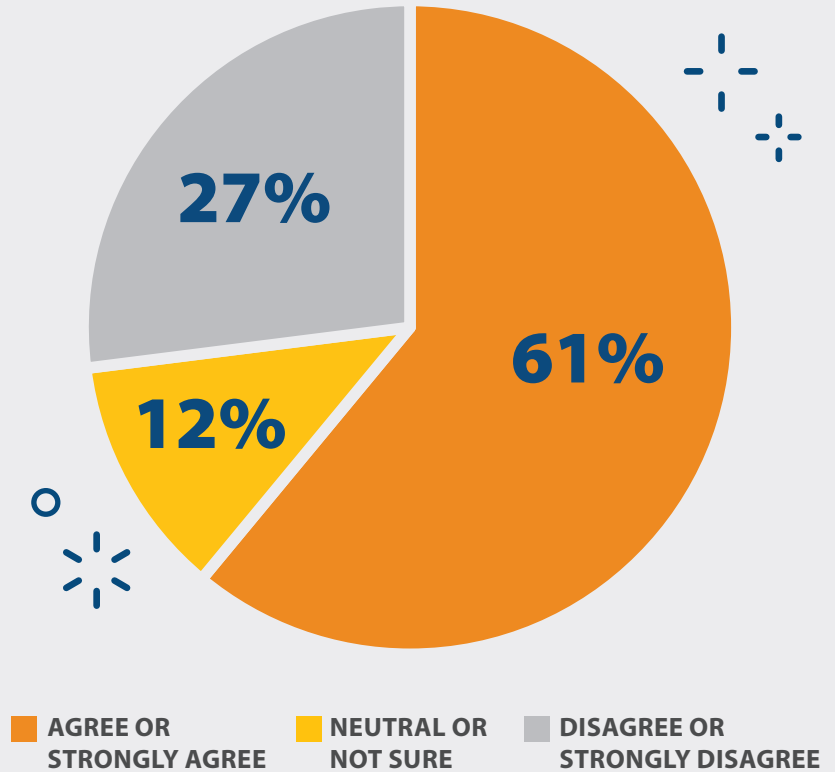
## Program Feedback

Of those surveyed, 61% of parents and 70% of staff said that they support continuing the Safer School Streets program at Arthur Hatton Elementary School in the future. Parent support for the program changed minimally after the program. Common themes in the qualitative feedback portions of the surveys included concerns about safety and drug use near the closure area, concerns about construction on Fortune Drive, and the importance of recreation in the street as part of the closure.

“I loved all the outdoor play that was happening before school started. Not only were students getting some different outdoor activity ideas, but they were also forming some new relationships”

~ Arthur Hatton Staff

## PARENT SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING THE SAFER SCHOOL STREETS PROGRAM



School District No. 73



# Lessons Learned for Future Safer School Streets Closures

In partnership with School District No. 73, the City of Kamloops is looking at how to expand or continue the Safer School Streets program. Based on the feedback received during the pilot program, the City of Kamloops and School District No. 73 recommend that the following lessons learned be implemented for any future Safer School Streets closures in Kamloops:

## Recreation activities and active transportation promotion are key to a successful program.

- Feedback about the games and activities on the street was overwhelmingly positive. It was especially well received with staff taking part in the games and activities. Feedback about the prizes and celebration of students using active transportation was also positive.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Future Safer School Streets closures should include recreational and promotional components to ensure a positive experience for the school community and enthusiastic support of the program. Staff support is necessary for it to be sustainable and positive.

## Align closure times with bell times, especially in the afternoon.

- Parent and resident feedback was much more positive and supportive when students were in/around the school. It was not necessary to continue with the road closure after school.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Future Safer School Streets closures should carefully consider the closure period and ensure that it aligns with when students will be in the vicinity of the school. To support manageable implementation, it is advisable to start with a morning road closure.

## Volunteer-run closures are required for sustainable program expansion.

- Although the service provided by the traffic control company was excellent, the cost and organizational logistics of contracting the company were too demanding for the pilot program to be scalable.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Future Safer School Streets closures should be administered by volunteers with traffic control person training. The City of Kamloops could assist in funding for training the volunteers or staff. School staff and administration are not to be the traffic controllers given the need for their involvement in student supervision. There is also a need to share with staff that extra supervision is necessary and requires a plan.

## A large closure area may not be necessary.

- The closure area for the pilot program was much larger than that of similar programs in other jurisdictions.
- Reducing the closure area would reduce the resources required to administer the closure while maintaining most of the benefits of a closure.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Future Safer School Streets closures may not need a large closure to be successful.

## Focus on the concerns of families regarding the area in and around Safer School Streets closures.

- Some parents expressed concerns about people without homes and/or undesirable behaviour near the closure area.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Future Safer School Streets closures should continue to pursue transportation safety and sustainability goals while ensuring the safety of students near the closure area.

## Minimize overlap between nearby construction projects and Safer School Streets closures.

- Feedback from parents, staff, and residents indicated that construction on Fortune Drive was a challenge when travelling to or from Arthur Hatton Elementary School.
- Nearby construction activity can increase the perception of community challenges.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Future Safer School Streets closures should be coordinated to avoid nearby construction projects when possible.

## Support from school community staff is critical for success.

- Arthur Hatton Elementary staff supported the Safer School Streets pilot program by participating in recreation activities, organizing and distributing prizes, planning assemblies and in-school promotion for the event, completing surveys, and planning for the street closure. Without this support, it would not have been possible to conduct or evaluate the pilot program.
  - **RECOMMENDATION:** Future Safer School Streets closures should be conducted at schools where the staff are supportive of the program. The recommendation from both the City and School District staff was to develop an information package to share with parents who can then take it to their school principal for consideration by the staff.
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