



Transportation Services

email | transportation@cbe.ab.ca

May 24, 2022

To Whom it My Concern.

I have had the pleasure of partnering with the City of Calgary's Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRS) team through the Safe Student Travel Advisory Group (SSTAG) since 2018. Since that time, we have reviewed traffic safety concerns at almost 80 schools, and ASRS has been an integral part of the reviews.

Additionally, ASRS also partners with specific schools, to coordinate engagement, education, encouragement, engineering improvements and enforcement. The schools that have been involved with ASRS are appreciative of the support that has been offered and are able to see meaningful and positive changes, including reduced demand on administration to address traffic safety concerns around the school. An expanded ASRS program could build on the success of the existing ASRS program by partnering with additional school communities.

Another benefit of working with ASRS is the encouragement of active travel. This empowers our students and families to change the way they travel to/from school to a more active option. Not only does active travel encourage a healthier habit, but it also reduces traffic congestion, and that reduction contributes to improved safety around schools.

I offer my support to the expansion of the ASRS program.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda Gibson".

Brenda Gibson
Manager, Transportation Services



May 26, 2022

Re: Prioritizing School Routes in the 5A Network - Expanded Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRS) Program, Letter of Support

To City of Calgary Council:

Ever Active Schools is pleased to offer support to the City of Calgary's Liveable Streets team in the development of an expanded Active and Safe Routes to School program.

Ever Active Schools is a registered national charity designed to create and support healthy school communities through a Comprehensive School Health approach, an approach that addresses health and education goals to improve the social outcomes of children and youth in Alberta. Through collaborative partnerships, projects-based work, knowledge exchange and competency-based learning opportunities, Ever Active Schools spearheads meaningful collaboration between the health, education, recreation and active living sectors.

Since October 2019, Ever Active Schools has worked collaboratively with the City of Calgary's Liveable Streets team, and multiple other stakeholders, to implement the ASRS program. In our work, we use the evidence-based School Travel Planning Approach and toolkit, which allow for the identification and improvement of conditions for active school travel. As we have one year to work with each project school and student leadership team, our work needs to remain local and focussed so many of these improvements border or occur on the school site. To date, project engineering successes have included upgraded crosswalks and improved signage, changes to student and bus loading zones, and improved bicycle/scooter/skateboard storage facilities. An expanded program that would incorporate Calgary's emerging 5A Network and improve school routes would benefit our school communities tremendously.

Through our Family Travel Surveys, we know that safety and convenience are two main determinants in travel mode selection for families. Building safer, connected, convenient active travel routes around project schools would make active transportation the safe, easy choice. It is not only families who would benefit, however. Teachers and students would also benefit as these routes would undoubtedly be used for walking field trips throughout the school year - an effective way for schools to meet daily physical activity requirements. Increased use of active transportation - for whatever journey - equates to improved health and learning outcomes for Calgary youth. Expanding the ASRS program is a step to establishing life-long healthy habits for so many.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracey Coutts", enclosed in a rectangular box.

Tracey Coutts
Health and Wellness Consultant
Ever Active Schools
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Supporting healthy school communities.

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June 14, 2022

201, 1225A Kensington Road
Calgary, Alberta
T2N 038

Dear Charlene Wilcock,

I am writing to express Sustainable Calgary's support for expanding the Active and Safe Routes to School Program.

For the past decade, our organization has worked at the intersection of health research, urban design and community engagement. We co-led the Active Neighbourhoods Canada program from 2013 to 2020, through which we collaborated with citizens and designers to conceptualize and implement walkable public spaces in 4+ neighbourhoods. We developed curriculum on healthy community design for public schools and post-secondary institutions; created resources and presentations to inform policy; and conducted and advised on original research. In 2021, we were funded by the federal government's Climate Awareness Fund to bring codesign to the classroom, piggy-backing on the work of Ever Active Schools, through a program called Stepping Towards a Greener Tomorrow (STGT). The object: design and prototype safe, active and inviting routes to school with schoolkids.

We know children in Canada are experiencing climate anxiety. We developed STGT in part so they could experience being part of the solution. We know from past work that kids can be empathetic and imaginative designers - less tied to assumptions and norms than adults. At a time when change is required, this is a strategic advantage. Our publication "Kids Reimagine School Streets", which councilors will receive shortly, summarizes work produced in this project: tactical urbanism proposals, Neighbourhood Active Travel Networks and longer-term street design concepts for three Calgary neighbourhoods - Connaught, Martindale and Meridian.

Over the course of our work with schoolkids, we have experienced additional demand for safe and active school travel infrastructure. Schools we are working with want to do more. Other schools want to get started: we have been contacted by four schools and five parents asking how they can advocate for better infrastructure at their schools – and involve their kids. We participated in an Active Travel round table with three school trustees and several parent councils all calling for physical changes to their school streets, including traffic calming and active travel infrastructure. Prior to this program, thousands of Calgarians we have worked with have called for safer streets; good active travel connections; more opportunities for play and socializing; better snow clearing of sidewalks and pathways; more seating and bathrooms; more trees and greenery; and accessible infrastructure.

The City of Calgary has declared a Climate Emergency, and our children need to be equipped with the tools to face the climate crisis – including infrastructure that supports them to develop low-carbon travel habits early in life. The co-benefits of supporting low-carbon travel are so numerous: healthier people, in

body and mind; higher sales at local shops; higher property values near walkable infrastructure; lower annual transportation costs; higher productivity – and so on.

Notable in our work with schoolchildren: they always identified streets with trees as feeling the safest and most inviting. This is something to keep in mind as we design travel routes for them. The benefits of trees are similarly numerous, including heat mitigation, pollution mitigation, flood mitigation, carbon sequestration, mental health and cognitive development benefits; studies now indicate they even improve our gut health.

We whole-heartedly support the expansion of the Active and Safe Routes to School program, and encourage councilors to vote to keep kids safe, healthy, and engaged in addressing the climate crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Celia Lee', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Celia Lee, B.Sc., M.E.Des.

Executive Director

Sustainable Calgary | celia@sustainablecalgary.org | 403.399.1707



Youth en Route

We champion active transportation to school and beyond

June 10, 2022

Dear Calgary City Councillors;

Youth en Route's work at Calgary high schools highlighted the gaps in the city's 5A network especially in the "donut" outside of the core but inside the city's newest communities. Most of our city was built between 20 and 60 years ago, when pathways and pedestrian connections weren't valued. We worked with Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart on her motion "Prioritizing School Routes in the 5A Network" to update this important infrastructure and provide youth with safe and direct routes to school.

We have surveyed over 2,000 Calgary high schools students. Currently, 43% of them arrive at school by car. At some schools, Lester Pearson High School for example (1,600 students) the statistic is 55%. Most Calgary high schools are in the "donut."

This is the low-hanging fruit for reducing GHG emissions from transportation. Students tell us they don't feel safe using active transportation because their routes are on busy roads with high speeds. Often, the walk/ride to a safe crossing location or MUP takes students FAR out of their way. Add in that Calgary Transit passes are prohibitively expensive for many families, and the fall back is driving.

Our programming follows the five Es of Ontario's Active Travel Tool Kit, which we have adapted for older students. Based on evidence, we know that students need encouragement and education to have confidence to walk or bike to school. When asked about their skills, 7% of students tell us they have NEVER been on a bike. Another 8% rate their experience as "a bit." We get schools bike fleets to use in PE or outdoor ed classes to build confidence.

Schools and students also need basic equipment, including secure storage facilities (three Calgary high schools have NO bike racks) — and yes bikes (Only 56% of students have bikes).

(Aside: Can we also talk about removing barriers like City Development Permits for adding school bike racks?)

The City's current Active and Safe Routes to School program saw funding for programs and data collection at 30 self-selected schools over three years. While the per-school funding of \$7,500 enables a ton of great work and data collection, Calgary has over 400 schools, and 10 schools per year is barely a dent. We also see benefits in working with larger schools; more students = more opportunity for change + bigger impacts. We are eager to support Active Transportation planners with data and student ideas.

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Youth en Route

We champion active transportation to school and beyond

Our hope is that schools are chosen for the program based on location and need (our model), rather than the availability of a school or parent champion.

Finally, data collection must be done year after year, at every school. Decision-makers should know how infrastructure changes – like new 5A routes – impact student travel choices.

We know that expanding ASRTS program will:

- Guide better data-driven decision-making as 5A network expansion is implemented.
- Drive community discussions about active transportation networks, greenspaces and community
- Build empathy with young drivers for vulnerable road users
- Empower a new generation to choose active modes of transportation

We've seen success with our programs – and know that with funding and support — Calgary schools can move from a culture of drop zones, traffic jams and pollution, to more students choosing sustainable, healthy ways to get to school.

Respectfully,

Laura Shutiak

Executive Director

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