

Transportation Response to
Regular Meeting of Council
2024 June 18

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
C2024-0532

Mobility Operations and Safety Improvements Near Schools

Question

School areas continue to be an area of concern for Calgarians. Ward offices, Mobility, Calgary Police Service (CPS) and school boards receive regular correspondence about safety concerns that are typically related to interactions between vehicles and pedestrians, and speeding. Improvements to the road environment such as signage, road markings, lighting, traffic control (crosswalks, pedestrian activated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), all way stop signs), and physical features like curb extensions are often requested by the public.

Could administration report back through a briefing note on:

1. The estimated total costs to improve all intersections adjacent to schools to the highest standards as laid out in City documentation
2. The safety performance around schools
3. The data around 311 requests for mobility improvements and/or monitoring near schools
4. Any other data or recommendations Administration has with respect to school area operations and safety

Safety Performance Around Schools

Police reported collisions within 30 metres of a school parcel were reviewed and summarized in the below table for each school type. The findings indicate that although elementary schools see the highest number of incidents, this category does include the largest number of schools. Elementary schools are seeing fewer collisions per school compared to higher grades. This may be related to a combination of factors such as often smaller school size and lower volume neighbourhood location, but also increased enforcement efforts and higher use of safety countermeasures. For example, 98% of “elementary” schools have 30 km/h playground zones, and 24% have temporary traffic calming curb treatments, the highest levels among all school type categories.

| School Type | Total Pedestrian/Cyclist Collisions (2016-2024) | Number of Schools | Pedestrian/Cyclist Involved Collisions per School (2016-2024) | Pedestrian/Cyclist Involved Collisions per Year |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------|---|---|
| Elementary | 270 | 221 | 1.2 | 0.1 |
| Elementary/Junior High | 171 | 115 | 1.5 | 0.2 |
| Elementary/Junior High/Senior High | 54 | 46 | 1.2 | 0.1 |
| Junior High | 62 | 18 | 3.4 | 0.4 |
| Junior High/Senior High | 13 | 13 | 1.0 | 0.1 |
| Senior High | 171 | 44 | 3.9 | 0.5 |

It should be noted that annualized average ped/cyclist collisions in Calgary total 597, 39 of which occur in playground zones.

Speed data is frequently used to evaluate specific locations and prioritize deployment of traffic safety programs. In addition, we are in the process of developing a high injury network map that considers injury risk to users based on speeds and road type. This information will be available by the end of 2024 and will serve as another data source in prioritization of our work plans.

School Related 311 Service Requests (SRs)

A search of our 311 Service Requests was undertaken to confirm the number of requests received annually. The search focused on keyword search of related SR types. As shown in the below table, 311 SRs have increased significantly in 2023 and are trending similarly in the current year. This is likely related to the changes with Corporate Realignment, such as reassignment of responsibility and rerouting of 311 SRs for traffic calming requests and other programs/initiatives.

| Year | Total - Safety & Education SRs | School Related SRs | Percent of Total |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 2021 | 297 | 59 | 20% |
| 2022 | 267 | 53 | 20% |
| 2023 | 758 | 143 | 19% |
| 2024 (Up to April) | 230 | 58 | 25% |

It should be noted that additional and duplicate requests are received by Calgary Police Service and school boards.

Parking Safety School Patrol Requests

Calgarians report parking infractions around schools by calling the Calgary Parking Contact Centre and are therefore not captured under 311 SR report above. As you can see in the table below, Calgary Parking received 31% less calls this year, indicating increased parking safety awareness and compliance around schools. We attribute this increased awareness to our pro-active communications. While we saw a significant reduction in school patrol requests by 31% YOY up to April, there was an even greater reduction in calls during the paid campaign period (60% YOY).

| School Year | School Patrol Requests |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 2022-2023 Total | 513 |
| 2022-2023 (Up to April) | 496 |
| 2023-2024 (Up to April) | 342 |
| Difference (Up to April) | -31% |

School Related Programs

A number of programs are available that are regularly deployed at schools to improve safety and engage, educate and encourage the public. These are outlined below.

- *Temporary and Permanent Traffic Calming.* Physical features such as curb extensions and median treatments have been shown to reduce speeds and improve safety. These features are being installed at schools with Safety Improvements funding.
- *In-Street Pedestrian Sign Initiative.* Following a successful pilot in 2020, a city-wide deployment of this successful low-cost countermeasure was initiated. It is expected to be completed for all schools with students in grades 6 and younger by mid-2024.
- *Active and Safe Routes to School Program.* In partnership with our facilitator, Ever Active Schools, this program engages with school children and staff to ensure the local roadway network is safe and supportive of active travel. The [Active and Safe Routes to School](#) program is initiated at 10 schools per year.
- *Safe Student Travel Advisory Group (SSTAG)* is a forum to discuss safety issues and potential improvements at schools. Members include school boards, Calgary Police Service, Mobility Safety team, Traffic Control and Parking, and others as appropriate.

- *Mobility Safety Education Tool Kit.* We developed a new educational resource for elementary-aged children and families, the Mobility Safety Education Tool Kit. The kit currently includes a new webpage, the *Calgary in Motion! Activity Book*, Conversation Guide and Crosswalk Safety Video. In 2024, we will work to further expand our programs through partnership with schools to target distribution of activity books to one grade level annually, expand “Staying Safe on City Streets” video series, translate resources into additional languages, and develop resources for older students (high schools).
- *Accessibility Improvements.* To improve accessibility for Calgarians, together with our partners we install missing sidewalks, wheelchair ramps, and remove maze gates and sidewalks across the city many of which include schools.
- *Community Speed Watch.* A popular [program](#) where CPS officers and Traffic Safety group staff join community volunteers at a location of concern. Volunteers can use the speed gun to measure speeds of oncoming vehicles and communicate a message to drivers using a paddle (‘Thank you’ or ‘Please Slow Down’).
- *SLOWs Speed Trailer Rotation Program.* We deploy [speed trailers](#) at locations where citizens have brought concerns about speeding. The rotation is done in two week increments between May and November, weather permitting. About 25% of deployments occur at school locations.
- *Calgary Parking Safety & Compliance School Patrol.* This program promotes, educates and enforces parking regulations around schools. Focused primarily on Elementary Schools, four officers are designated to go to all 150 schools throughout the school year during pick-up and drop-off to educate first and subsequently enforce safe parking practices. For the 2023-2024 school year, we amplified the School Patrol’s efforts through a public awareness campaign.

Conclusion

Addressing traffic safety issues at schools has been an ongoing effort for Administration in collaboration with our Safer Mobility partners. We implement safety strategies centred around physical changes to the roadway environment, public education campaigns, and engagement through Active and Safe Routes to School program, and regular presentations to students. We continue to expand our offerings and reach through the city-wide implementation of In-Street Pedestrian Signs at all schools with elementary grades, Student Video Contest, and accessibility improvements. We are working on a new strategy to address safety concerns at higher grade schools.

In the longer term, upgrades to all elementary school intersections should be considered through physical features like curb extensions, median treatments, or others as appropriate. This would impact 972 intersections and with the cost of \$50-100K per

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intersection the total need would be in the range of \$48-97M. For context in 2024-2025 work plan, 15-20 locations are planned for construction per year as part of the traffic safety program at a cost of \$1.5-2.0M per year.

Other treatments such as RRFBs and other crosswalk enhancements may be considered in addition to physical features, to further improve safety and pedestrian comfort. Raised crosswalks and intersections may be appropriate but would require a pilot/more detailed review to confirm benefits, impacts, and costs prior to larger scale implementation and the associated cost would be significantly more than the estimated cost for curb extensions shown.

Submitted by Doug Morgan, General Manager of Operational Services