

Traffic Management Review - BC Christian Academy & École Irvine Elementary School

RECOMMENDATION:

None.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL/COMMITTEE ACTION

None.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report summarizes traffic pattern concerns brought forward by members of the public related to the BC Christian Academy and École Irvine Elementary School, and advises Committee of work being completed in consultation with the school administrations to implement improvements to address these concerns. The report is also an opportunity to re-introduce the “safe routes to school” program and includes a sample two-page traffic management plan (prepared in conjunction with the schools) which will be developed and implemented for all elementary and middle schools in Port Coquitlam on a priority basis.

BACKGROUND

Over the years, various concerns have been raised regarding traffic safety in and around schools. In response, the City developed a Safe Routes to School program in 2009. The program was developed to assess the walking environment adjacent to elementary and middle schools across Port Coquitlam. A safe route is developed through collaboration with the school, collecting and analyzing location specific data, identifying site specific issues, implementing programs or corrective actions and long term monitoring. This was a co-operative effort between the City (Transportation, Bylaws & Community Policing), the school, RCMP, ICBC and the parents. The end result was that physical and attitudinal barriers to walking, cycling and other environmentally friendly modes of travel are addressed through actions undertaken by the stakeholders.

Over a period of 5 years (2009 to 2014), 16 of 19 schools participated in this program. Recognizing traffic patterns have likely changed over the past five years coupled with the intent to revise the Transportation Master Plan in 2020, staff intend on re-instating this program to refresh safe route to school materials across Port Coquitlam.

Again, issues in and around school zones have increased, most prominently at BC Christian Academy, and École Irvine Elementary School. While Irvine had previously participated in the safe route to school program, BC Christian Academy had not. Responding to these concerns, staff have reinstated the safe routes to school program for these two locations, and will be proceeding with a number of operational and informational changes noted in the report.

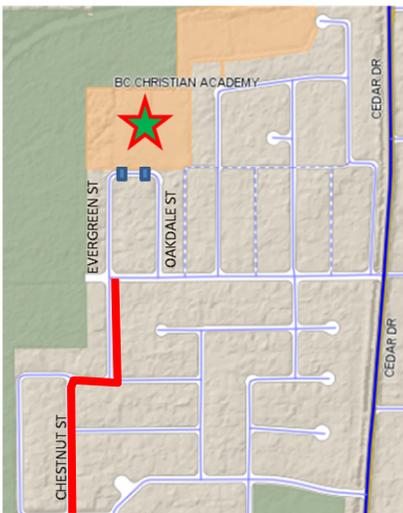
Traffic Management Review - BC Christian Academy & École Irvine Elementary School

DISCUSSION

BC Christian Academy

The BC Christian Academy is located at 1019 Fernwood Ave as shown in Figure 1. The school is situated in a residential neighbourhood and only accessible by local roads. The nearest collector road is Cedar Dr. approximately 400m to the east and the closest arterial road is Prairie Ave, approximately 1km to the South. Pedestrian access is provided by sidewalks on the east side of Oakdale St., and on the south side of Lincoln Ave. The School is currently contemplating reconstruction and have confirmed that pick-up/drop-off zones will be included onsite if/when redevelopment occurs.

Figure 1



Staff received a traffic calming application regarding cut-through traffic timed with school pick-up/drop off hours leading to increased volumes and speeds on Evergreen St. and Chestnut St. (identified in red on Figure 1). In addition, there is drop-off/pick-up congestion along the school frontage.

Staff reviewed this traffic calming request using the warrants established in the Traffic Calming Policy, and while the warrants were not met, staff understood the challenges the neighborhood were facing due to the operation of the school and set out to develop a “safe route to school”, which includes a traffic management plan, and roadway operational improvements in consultation with the school administration. The detailed analysis of the traffic calming request is included as Attachment 1.

Proposed Solution

Staff will be implementing the following measures to mitigate current traffic operation issues:

City of Port Coquitlam Implement Parking Restrictions on Fernwood Ave

Install “No Stopping Anytime – School Days - 8am to 5pm” on the south side of Fernwood Ave to improve traffic flow across the school frontage and eliminate children crossing this section between parked cars without a designated crosswalk. This restriction will be in effect during school days, eliminating 4 parking spots. The location of parking restrictions is highlighted on Figure 2 below:

Additional drop-off parking locations on Oakdale St. can be considered during school hours if needed.

Traffic Management Review - BC Christian Academy & École Irvine Elementary School

Figure 2



BC Christian Academy adopt a “Walk a Block” program

Parents who drive children to school should be encouraged to park their vehicles a block or two away, and finish on foot to the school grounds. This provides an opportunity for parents and children to exercise together, improve their knowledge of the local streets in the neighbourhood, and to discuss road safety, while alleviating the vehicle demand on Fernwood Dr. This will be included in the School Traffic Management Plan.

BC Christian Academy adopt a “Walking School Bus” program

The School should be encouraged to implement a “Walking School Bus” program, where children walk to school together under adult supervision. This can be combined with the Walk a Block program if the majority of the students come from outside of the local catchment and will be arriving by car. This will be included in the School Traffic Management Plan.

École Irvine Elementary School

École Irvine Elementary School is located at 3862 Wellington St. as shown in Figure 3. The school is situated in a residential neighbourhood and sited on a collector roadway. The nearest arterial roadway is Lincoln Ave, approximately 400m to the south. Pedestrian access is provided by sidewalks on Wellington St. and Renton Ave. There is also a footbridge connecting Renton Ave with Robin Pl. Robin Pl is a no-thru road without pedestrian infrastructure. The current school structure is slated for reconstruction in 2020. Student pick-up/drop-off zones will be provided on site.

Traffic Management Review - BC Christian Academy & École Irvine Elementary School

Figure 3



Staff received a concern from residents on Robin Pl. regarding the use of this local no-thru road for school pick-up and drop-off activities. Residents' concerns focused on congestion and speed (areas identified in red on the figure above). Staff have not received a traffic calming application for this location, however, proceeded with initial data collection as part of the school safety analysis.

Staff reviewed resident concerns using the warrants established in the Traffic Calming Policy, and while the warrants were not met, staff recognized an opportunity to improve the pick-up/drop-off operations of the School and set out to develop roadway operational improvements in consultation with the school administration. Staff anticipates these improvements will alleviate the impacts along Robin Pl. Additionally, staff intend to work with the

school to ensure there is an interim traffic management plan (during construction) and a corresponding plan in place for the grand opening. The detailed traffic calming analysis is included as Attachment 2.

Proposed Solution

Staff will be implementing temporary improvements on Renton Ave in order to facilitate pick-up/drop-off operations. In order to mitigate the safety concerns of pedestrians impeded by illegal stopped vehicles (the reason the parking was prohibited in the first place), the City will install temporary parking curbs (Figure 4) on the south side of Renton to prevent vehicle mount onto existing rollover curb. The curb will be placed horizontally near the gutter pan and will be spaced to maintain drainage.

Figure 4



Traffic Management Review - BC Christian Academy & École Irvine Elementary School

This operational solution has no long term impact and can easily be removed once the school is reconstructed. In order to facilitate a pick-up/drop-off zone on Renton Ave the no stopping zone must be relocated from the south side of the street to the north side of Renton Ave. This will impact the amount of available parking for residents along Renton Ave during school hours.

In regards to Robin Pl, no further improvements are recommended as the road is currently operating within its intended design criteria.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will implement the solutions identified and will coordinate this work with school administration and reinstate the Safe Route to school program. A product of the Safe Route to Schools program will include a simple two page Traffic Management Plan, which:

- identifies the specific traffic management concerns for the school
- instructs the parents of authorized pick-up/drop-off locations
- identifies the safe walking routes to schools
- promotes the walking school bus program and walk a block program
- reminds parents of pick-up/drop-off etiquette
- promotes pedestrian safety

A draft of this Traffic Management Plan is provided as Attachment 3.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

ATTACHMENTS

Att#1: BC Christian Academy - Traffic Management Analysis

Att#2: École Irvine Elementary School - Traffic Management Analysis

Att#3: Draft School Traffic Management Plan

Lead author(s): Erik Lam

Contributing author(s): Ross Maki, Melony Burton, Forrest Smith