

**REPORT TO TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2019**

SUBJECT **Active and Safe Routes to School Planning -- School Selection Criteria**

ISSUE

To approve the process by which schools will be selected to participate in the Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRS) Planning initiative.

BACKGROUND

From 2015-17, the Capital Regional District (CRD) delivered a region-wide ASRS pilot project to 20 schools. The program was funded by the CRD, partners and external grants. The 18-month program included data collection, planning, programming, and evaluation all with the aim to measure and increase the number of students who walk or bike to school.

The pilot project resulted in travel mode share shifts and received positive feedback from principals, municipal and school district staff, as well as students and their families. At a number of schools, infrastructure improvements were prioritized or installed. As well, the project obtained a province-wide award for excellence in planning practise.

Based on the success of the pilot project and in response to community requests, CRD staff proposed the creation of an ongoing active school travel planning initiative. With established partner relationships, credibility and efficiencies as a regional coordinating body, the CRD is in a strong position to deliver this program on an ongoing basis.

Late in 2018, the CRD Board gave preliminary approval for ASRS funding for up to five schools per year. Staff anticipate that interest in the comprehensive planning process will exceed the funding available, so there will be a need to prioritize school selection.

A method for prioritizing schools (proposed school selection criteria) has been developed for the Committee's consideration (Appendix A).

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1:

That the Transportation Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That staff be directed to use the school selection criteria contained in Appendix A as the basis for prioritizing schools to be funded by the CRD for Active and Safe Routes to School planning.

Alternative 2:

That the report be referred back to staff for more information based on Committee direction.

DISCUSSION

ASRS budget allocations allow for delivery of services to five schools per year. Services will include data collection, infrastructure and route mapping, planning and evaluation. The services will have the greatest impact in cases where the municipality/Ministry of Transportation commits to upgrade infrastructure if necessary, where internal school leadership is available to lead complementary programming, and where students live within walking and biking distance of the school.

School selection criteria

The proposed school selection criteria was developed based on:

- Lessons learned from the pilot project
 - Those factors most associated with travel mode shifts were incorporated as criteria
- Input from stakeholders, including principals, municipal and school district staff. Input was also obtained from CRD Committee members when the final ASRS report was presented to the Transportation Committee.

The intent of the selection criteria is to, in a transparent, objective and predictable manner, identify schools most likely to benefit from the planning process.

The school selection criteria considers:

- School grade composition;
- Extent of municipal/local government staff support;
- Extent of school administration and PAC support;
- Road safety concerns and documented incidents; and
- Student population living within walking/biking distance of the school.

See Appendix A for full details of the proposed selection criteria and rationale.

Regional Distribution:

Staff recommend that to the extent possible school districts be allocated a predetermined number of participating schools based roughly on the percentage of the regional population living within the boundaries of the school districts (see Appendix B):

- School District 61 (Greater Victoria) – three schools/year
- School District 63, 64 and 93 (Saanich, Gulf Islands, Francophone) – one school/year
- School District 62 (Sooke) – one school/year

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The Board has approved preliminary funding of \$50,000 annually for the ASRS initiative. This level of funding is consistent with that provided by other entities across Canada that fund active school travel planning.

There are no financial implications specifically attributable to the school selection criteria.

Implications for Participating Schools

Starting in 2019, schools will be able to express interest in the program through a short 'expression of interest' form that will be prepared by Regional and Strategic Planning. Principal support for participation will be required. To ensure continuity of support, it is important that the principal intends to stay at the school for the duration of the program.

The school selection criteria identifies interested schools that will get the most value out of the program.

Implications for non-Participating Schools

Schools that are not selected can be considered in future years. All schools in all municipalities and electoral areas (whether participating or not) will have access to "a la carte" active school travel offerings (data collection, programs and events, resources, reference website with tools, ideas and information sharing) from the CRD and partners.

Implications for Program Progress

There are a total of 120 public and private Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools within the capital region. Of these, 85 schools are elementary and middle schools with student populations of 100 students or more. Of those schools that are eligible for the program, 34 schools have completed the school travel planning process since 2015. With continued funding and municipal/school support, the CRD will be able to complete comprehensive planning for the remaining 51 schools over a 10 year period.

Municipal Implications

Municipalities who choose to participate in the program will be asked to commit to staff involvement in the program (up to five planning meetings over the length of the program) and consider funding or prioritizing street infrastructure surrounding the participating schools. The implementation of street improvements is essential to the success and credibility of the initiative.

Municipalities that do not directly participate in the initiative will benefit as travel mode shifts, safety improves and community congestion is reduced.

Partnership Implications

The success of this program is based on partnerships, including municipalities, police/RCMP, ICBC, Island Health and others. There are many players responsible for transportation, health and safety, and the environment. The resources and expertise of these partners will contribute to more and safer walking and cycling to school.

For electoral areas and municipalities with provincial highways, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is a key partner and staff will liaise with them as applicable.

Since CRD Regional and Strategic Planning does not have the mandate to provide transportation related *programming*, other entities will be asked to support that component. Partners will be invited to participate in the comprehensive planning process and to provide complementary program offerings.

CONCLUSION

The school selection criteria will, in a transparent, objective, predictable and efficient manner, identify schools most likely to benefit from the planning process.

RECOMMENDATION

That staff be directed to use the school selection criteria contained in Appendix A as the basis for prioritizing schools to be funded by the Capital Regional District for Active and Safe Routes to School planning.

Submitted by:	Kate Berniaz, MPA, Active Transportation Program Manager
Concurrence:	Signe Bagh, MCIP, RPP, Senior Manager, Regional & Strategic Planning
Concurrence:	Christine Culham, Acting General Manager Planning & Protective Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

KB/tt

Attachments: Appendix A: Proposed School Selection Criteria
Appendix B: Schools and Population Data