

Queensbury Safe and Active School Travel Program

Summary Report

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Contents

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 1. | Introduction..... | 3 |
| 2.0 | Safe Routes to School Plan for Queensbury Elementary..... | 3 |
| 2.1 | Existing Conditions at Queensbury Elementary..... | 4 |
| 2.1.1 | Population..... | 4 |
| 2.1.2 | Residential Location of Students..... | 4 |
| 2.1.3 | Modes of Travel..... | 5 |
| 2.1.4 | School Transportation Facilities and General Layout..... | 5 |
| 2.2 | Safety Concerns..... | 6 |
| 2.3 | Opportunities..... | 7 |
| 2.4 | Recommended Improvements..... | 7 |
| 3.0 | Education and Encouragement (TDM) Initiatives..... | 10 |
| 3.1 | Walking School Bus/Walking Wednesdays:..... | 11 |
| 3.2 | Walking School Bus Results..... | 12 |
| 3.3 | TravelSmart Leadership Initiative..... | 13 |
| 4.0 | Conclusion..... | 13 |
| | Appendix 1..... | 14 |
| | Appendix 2..... | 16 |
| | Week 1: February 12th- Theme: Heart Week-Jump/Walk for your Heart!..... | 16 |
| | Week 2: February 19th - Theme: GO CANADA!! (2014 Winter Olympics)..... | 17 |
| | Week 3: February 26th - Theme: Anti-Bullying..... | 19 |
| | Week 4: March 5th - Theme: Safety First!..... | 20 |
| | TravelSmart Leadership Performance..... | 22 |

1. Introduction

In 2013, the City of North Vancouver started the Safe and Active School Travel Program. The program addresses safety issues beyond the immediate school property and includes the development of Safe Routes to School plans and Education and Encouragement Programs and Initiatives. Behaviour changing initiatives are developed in cooperation with other partners such as the North Vancouver School District, TravelSmart, and the Heart & Stroke Foundation. The Safe and Active School Travel Program supports the City's Official Community Plan transportation, land use and environmental goals and objectives to:

- Encourage use of variety of transportation choices such as cycling, walking and transit;
- Provide effective and accessible transportation and mobility opportunities;
- Encourage the community to adapt to a sustainable lifestyle; and
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions via encouraging use of transportation alternatives.



The Safe and Active School Travel Program was piloted at Queensbury Elementary during the 2013/2014 school year. In fall of 2013 a working committee was formed to support development of this program, and included representatives from the City of North Vancouver TravelSmart, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Queensbury staff and Parent Advisory Committee. This report summarises the Queensbury School Program initiatives and results.

In addition to piloting the program in Queensbury Elementary in 2013, a survey for all schools in the North Vancouver School District was conducted in partnership with the School District and the District of North Vancouver. The purpose of the survey was to better understand issues specific to the areas surrounding each schools and to determine how students currently get to school. The survey results are posted on the City's web site (<http://www.cnv.org/SASTP>), and it will be used to prioritize implementation of the Safe and Active School Travel Program for City schools. It will also help identify current transportation issues and opportunities around each school, and barriers to active transportation.

2.0 Safe Routes to School Plan for Queensbury Elementary

The Safe Routes to School concept is a world-wide movement whose goal is to make it safer for children and their families to walk and bicycle to school on a daily basis. The benefits of students walking and cycling, as opposed to being driven to school, are numerous. Students are able to get more physical activity, thereby promoting a healthier lifestyle, and school traffic congestion is reduced. Lower automobile usage also reduces the emission of

greenhouse gases and other pollutants that are harmful to human health, and creates safer travel environments at schools and within the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The purpose of the City of North Vancouver's Safe Routes to School Program is to assess the current transportation operations and conditions at and around schools, and to identify potential improvements to make it safer for children getting to and from school by walking and cycling. As well, improvements that make it safer for children being dropped off by car are also recommended.

2.1 Existing Conditions at Queensbury Elementary

2.1.1 Population

Queensbury Elementary is a relatively small elementary school, located on East 20th Street, between Moody Avenue and Queensbury Avenue in the City of North Vancouver. The 2013/2014 student population is approximately 290, and there are 28 staff members. In addition, the Grand Boulevard Preschool is located on the school property.

2.1.2 Residential Location of Students

Figure 1, which was created by the School District, shows the approximate residential locations of the students who are attending Queensbury Elementary in the 2013/2014 school year and are within walking or cycling distance of the school. As illustrated, most of the students live to the west of the school, from East 14th Street to East 24th Street. Most students are also within walking distance to the school.

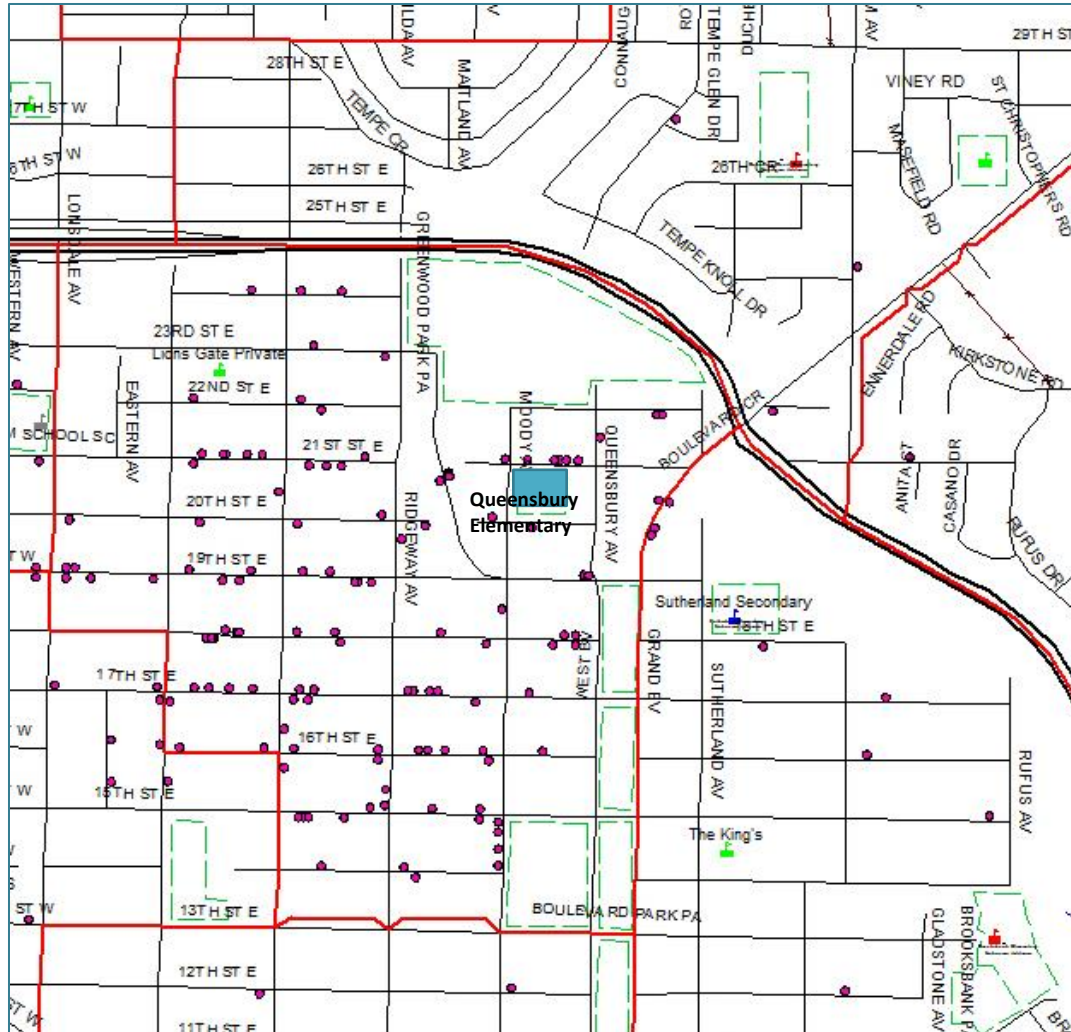


Figure 1: Map of Student Residential Locations within Walking and Cycling Distance

2.1.3 Modes of Travel

The most common mode of travel to and from school by Queensbury students is walking. According to the online survey conducted by the City of North Vancouver in December 2013, about 45% of student households travel to and from school exclusively by foot. About 25% of households exclusively drive to school. The remaining student households either walk or are driven to school, depending on the weather and other factors. Only a small proportion of students cycle or carpool to school. Public transit was not selected as a mode of travel by any of the respondents.

2.1.4 School Transportation Facilities and General Layout

Access Points: Apart from the school main entrance, which is located on the west side of the school, there are several other access points on the south, southwest, east, and north sides of the school. Paved foot paths are available on the west side, south side, and southwest corner of the school property. Students can also cross the

gravel field from the north and east sides of the school property. However, are there no formal footpaths leading to the school from these two sides. As a result, on rainy days, students accessing the school from these sides have to walk through muddy trails.

Drop-Off Area and Parking: The curb area directly in front of the school on Moody Avenue and E. 20th Street are designated as a general drop-off/pick-up only area. However, parents still often park within this zone as they are waiting for their children to get out of class or as they are escorting their children into the school. Parking is allowed north and east sides of the school along E. 21st Street and Queensbury. Parents also often park on the west side of Moody Avenue, in front of people's residences.

Pedestrian Facilities: There is a sidewalk along the east side of Moody Avenue, between 20th and 21st Streets, where the school is located, as well as on the north and south sides of 20th Street and east and west side of Moody Avenue between 19th and 20th Street. However, sidewalks are missing on 21st Street and on Queensbury Avenue. There is also a crosswalk on the south side of the Moody and 20th Street intersection. In addition, there is a four-way stop and marked crosswalks on all four sides of the intersection at Moody and 19th Street.

Bicycle Facilities: There is one small bike rack located on the north side of the school. However, the area is not covered, and may not be convenient for the majority of students, as they typically use the school main entrance. Nearby designated bike routes include Grand Boulevard, St. Andrew's, and E. 17th Street. However, St. Andrew's is the only bike route on a local road. E. 17th and Grand Boulevard are both collector roads, and therefore busier and less attractive for children and youth.

Transit Facilities: Grand Boulevard is a transit route, served by routes #228 and #255, whose peak period frequency is once every 15 minutes. E. 15th Street is also well served by bus routes #240 and #255. The peak period headway is 15 minutes or better for both bus routes. Despite these services, however, transit is rarely used by students.

Nearby Community Facilities: There are several parks and other recreational facilities located near Queensbury Elementary. These include: Greenwood Park, which is situated north of the school, and Loutet Park, which is situated east of the school. Sutherland Secondary is also located within walking distance of Queensbury Elementary. Nearby recreational centres include Harry Jerome Community Recreation Centre, which is at Lonsdale and 23rd Street, and Karen Magnusson Recreation Centre, which is north of Highway 1.

2.2 Safety Concerns

This section provides a summary of safety concerns that were raised by parents during a walkabout with City staff in December 2013 and in the follow-up online survey that was conducted by the City and sent out to parents of all the schools in the North Vancouver School District.

The main concerns in the immediate vicinity identified around the school area include the following:

- Motorists often do not stop at the four-way stop at Moody and E. 19th Street.
- There is no sidewalk on Queensbury Avenue, which is often used by students coming from the east.
- Parents are failing to obey the drop-off only policy on Moody and E. 20th Street. Many park and wait for their children after school or escort their children into the school in the morning.

- Some parents are also stopping in the travel lane on Moody and on E. 20th Street to drop off their children.
- Many parents make illegal U-turns on Moody Avenue or use the residential driveways to turn around.
- Some motorists speed along E. 21st Street, between Moody Avenue and Queensbury Avenue, as there is a downhill for eastbound traffic.
- There is a lack of street lighting on E. 20th Street, in front of the adjoining daycare.
- There is a need for a marked pedestrian crosswalk on the east side of Moody and E. 20th Street.
- Commuters are using Queensbury as a detour route to get onto Lynn Valley Road, and sometimes vehicle speeds are high.
- The lack of safe bicycle storage facilities deter parents from allowing their children to bike to school.

Traffic-related concerns for the neighbourhood in respect to nearby streets surrounding the school include the following safety concerns:

- The Lynn Valley Road and E. 21st Street intersection is dangerous for children to cross.
- The mid-block crossing on Grand Boulevard, just north of E. 19th Street, is difficult to see for motorists.
- There is a lack of street lighting along the trail parallel to and east of Grand Boulevard. This trail is well used by students coming from the west.
- There are vehicles speeding on E. 15th and E. 17th Streets, making the crossings at Moody Avenue unsafe at times.
- The lack of safe cycling routes and the topography of the area deter parents from allowing their children to bike to school.

2.3 Opportunities

As part of the school safety review, travel safety initiatives that are already underway have also been identified. One of these opportunities is the introduction of an adult crossing guard at the Moody Avenue and E. 19th Street intersection. The school has submitted a request to the City for a crossing guard at this intersection through the North Vancouver School District, and City staff have completed a technical assessment that indicates an adult crossing guard is warranted at this location. In 2014, Council has approved funding for a new Crossing Guard.

In addition, a Local Area Service (LAS)¹ initiative to install a sidewalk on Queensbury, between E. 19th and E. 20th Streets has been initiated. Installation is still pending successful completion of the LAS petition process.

2.4 Recommended Improvements

Based on the school's existing conditions and identified safety concerns and opportunities identified, a list of improvements were developed and included in Table 1. These recommended improvements, many of which will require further study to determine if they are warranted and feasible, take into account the suggestions that have

¹ A Local Area Service is a neighbourhood infrastructure improvement that is cost-shared between the property owners directly benefitting from the project and the City. For a Local Area Service project to proceed, at least 50% of the benefitting owners representing at least 50% of the aggregate assessed property value must support the project. The residents' total share of the costs is typically about 10% of the total project cost. A Local Area Service project can be initiated by the City or by residents.

been submitted by parents and school administration. They are prioritized as short-term improvements (Table 1) and medium and long-term improvements (Table 2), based on level of urgency and feasibility. They are also organized into the following five categories:

- **Engineering** – Operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.
- **Education** – Initiatives that teach children about the broad range of transportation choices, provide children with important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and increase driver awareness of safety issues around schools.
- **Encouragement** – Events and activities that promote walking and bicycling and generate enthusiasm for the program with students, parents, staff and surrounding community.
- **Enforcement** – Ensuring traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks and proper walking and bicycling behaviors) and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs and student safety patrols.
- **Evaluation** – Monitoring and documenting outcomes, attitudes and trends through the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).

Collectively, these are known as the “Five E’s”. To ensure a Safe Routes to School Plan is well-rounded, multi-faceted, and measurable, it is important that all five categories are included.

With respect to the recommended improvements that are the City’s responsibility, some have already been implemented such as a Crossing Guard, while other short-term improvements will be scheduled within the City’s annual work program. The medium and long-term improvements will be subject to Council approval of the funding for the Safe and Active School Travel Program through the City’s Project Plan.

■ Engineering
 ■ Education
 ■ Encouragement
 ■ Enforcement
 ■ Evaluation

Table 1: Short-Term Improvements for Queensbury Elementary

| Recommended Improvements | Responsibility | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|--------|-------|
| | City of North Vancouver | School District | School | Other |
| Install a crosswalk for east side of the Moody and 20 th intersection | ✓ | | | |
| Continue to work on the Local Area Service project to install a sidewalk on Queensbury, between E. 19 th and 20 th Streets | ✓ | | | |
| Install no U-Turn Signs on Moody Avenue | ✓ | | | |
| Investigate vehicle speeds and volumes on E. 21 st between Moody and Queensbury, and determine if speed humps might be warranted | ✓ | | | |
| Improve safety at Moody and 19 th for north/south movement through infrastructure improvements and/or the introduction of a crossing guard | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Issue notices to parents who are parking in the drop-off zone | | | ✓ | |
| Distribute the Safe Routes to School map shown in Figure 2 to parents. The map shows where traffic signals, other pedestrian crosswalks, and trails currently exist in the immediate school area and in the surrounding community. It also illustrates the best walking paths, the 5-minute and 10-minute radii, nearby amenities such as recreational centres, and a recommended Park and Walk location for families that have to drive | | | ✓ | |
| Encourage parents to park further away from the school – e.g. E. 19 th Street, between Moody and Queensbury | | | ✓ | |
| Continue rolling out the school Transportation Demand Management programs | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Look at the feasibility of enforcing the no parking policy on the east side of Queensbury, at E. 20 th Street | ✓ | | | |
| Evaluate impact of improvements by continuing to survey parents or students about their mode of travel | | | ✓ | |

Table 2: Medium and Long-Term Improvements for Queensbury Elementary

| Recommended Improvements | Responsibility | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|--------|-------|
| | City of North Vancouver | School District | School | Other |
| Provide street lighting on E. 20 th Street, in front of the Grand Boulevard Preschool | ✓ | | | |
| Provide street lighting on the north/south trail that runs parallel to Grand Boulevard | ✓ | | | |
| Provide a paved path from E. 21 st Street to the school building | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Provide a crossing on Grand Boulevard at E. 22 nd Street, west of the school property | ✓ | | | |
| Provide higher quality bicycle routes around the neighbourhood that are safe and attractive for children and family to use | ✓ | | | |
| Provide sheltered bike parking at the school | | ✓ | ✓ | |

3.0 Education and Encouragement (TDM) Initiatives

The Education and Encouragement (TDM) Initiatives occurred after the Safe Routes to School Plan was developed and assessed the transportation operations and conditions at and around school. Potential improvements were identified, including collaboration with the school, school district and partners to educate and encourage behavior change towards a safe and fun culture at Queensbury. The most important behavior changing initiatives identified include:

Education -Initiatives that teach children about the broad range of transportation choices, provide children with important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and increase driver awareness of safety issues around schools.

Encouragement – Events and activities that promote walking and bicycling and generate enthusiasm for the program with students, parents, staff and surrounding community.

Two initiatives were introduced at Queensbury School:

- Walking school bus/walking Wednesdays – The City started development of a Walking School Bus (WSB) program and a Walking Wednesday initiative with support from staff, teachers, staff and the PAC at Queensbury.
- TravelSmart Leadership Program – TravelSmart led a grade six class through their leadership program, which educates students about the impacts of transportation to health and wellbeing as well as the environment to inspire change.

3.1 Walking School Bus/Walking Wednesdays:

Starting in February 2014, each Wednesday for 4 weeks, the City and partners gathered on the school grounds to welcome students walking to school by creating excitement, themes and incentives for students and parents to participate.



In partnership with TravelSmart a walkability map for Queensbury was created and distributed to students (Figure 1). Additional partnerships and cooperation with Heart and Stroke Foundation, North Shore Safety Council, RCMP, The City's Fire Department and the PAC resulted in the following: tents were set-up and hot chocolate was provided on two of the mornings; there were jump ropes available for students; and Heart & Stroke activity sheets & stickers were handed out while staff talked to parents and students about the health benefits of walking to school. The City coordinated these events and provided stickers, sidewalk chalk, prizes and organized guest appearances from Mayor and Council, the Fire Department, RCMP and City

staff. Queensbury PAC and parents volunteered to walk with the groups and will continue this program throughout the coming school years, aiming to increase the WSB to 2-3 days per week and to encourage walking among parents.

Recent observations by City By-Law Officers and the RCMP have noted that this initiative has decreased congestion near the school drop off zones on Wednesdays. In addition to reducing pollutants from idling vehicles, students who have an increase of physical activity by 20-50 minutes a day, improve health and create invaluable street smarts at an early age.

Walk With Us!



Join our Walking School Bus Program every Wednesday starting February 12th
(Frequency will increase throughout the year)

PLEASE MEET AT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS AT 8:15AM OR WALK ON YOUR OWN!

Meeting Place #1: 14th/Moody Ave.

Meeting Place #2: 19th/St. Andrew's Ave.

Or suggest another meeting spot to a PAC member!

Bring a mug on Feb. 12th to enjoy some hot chocolate at school to warm up after your walk!

This is part of the Safe Route to School Program piloted by the City of North Vancouver, Travel Smart and Queensbury Elementary.

Walking to school is a first step in building healthy habits for life



Did you know...

Two out of three Canadian kids are not getting enough exercise (60 mins/day)

Kids who walk or bike to school develop more street smarts

90% of parents who walk to school with their kids find out the most about their child's life

Better brains!!

Active school travel before school can increase a child's ability to concentrate. These effects can last for about four hours.

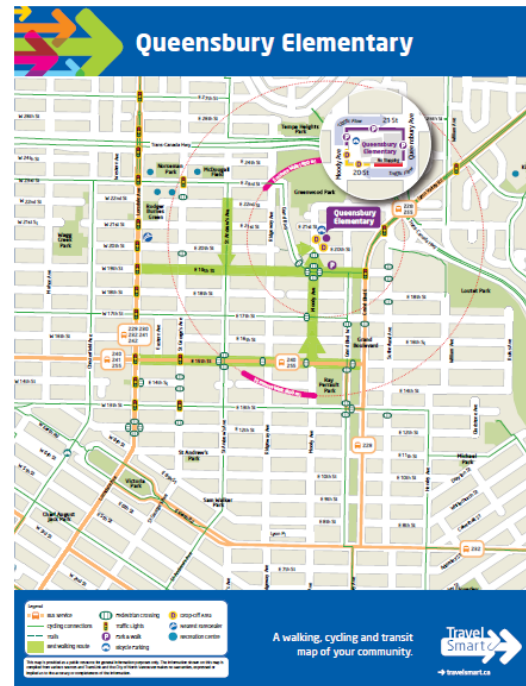


Figure 1: Queensbury WSB Hand Out/TravelSmart Map

3.2 Walking School Bus Results

The Walking School Bus (WSB) started on February 12th, 2014 which saw over 144 students (50% of total students) plus their parents walking to school. Two walking routes were introduced, the 1st route started at Moody and 14th and the 2nd route at 19th and St Andrew's Avenue.



Of the 144 students that walked over 46 reported that they walked that day although they usually drove. This resulted in 32% of new walkers, which continued throughout the year. Participation was the highest on the 3rd WSB day at 59% (170 students). Overall the Walking School Bus encouraged almost 50 more students out to walk who would have normally been dropped off by parents.

In May of 2014 the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) at Queensbury, sent home a survey to all parents in hopes of gaining feedback in order to gauge success in order to continue and improve the program's participation for future years. There were only 44 surveys returned due to the BC Teacher's strike which was happening during the time that the survey was being collected.



The survey found that 73% of families participated in the WSB where-as the remaining 23% who didn't participate stated the main reason for not taking part was because the children already walked to school and/or they lived too close to the school. Other reasons given were that children attend childcare or the route/times were too early or not in their immediate neighbourhood. More detailed results are included in Appendix 1

3.3 TravelSmart Leadership Initiative

The second initiative; TravelSmart's Leadership Program for Elementary Schools is a whole school sustainable and active transportation program which educates students about the impacts of transportation to our health and the environment and inspires behavior change. This program is sponsored by TransLink and the City of North Vancouver, and is fully funded so there is no cost to participating schools. A facilitator is provided to work with up to 30 student leaders for 6 one-hour workshops to develop student-led projects which are performed and displayed for the entire school via an assembly.

The performance from Heather Duncan's Grade 6 class was a great initiative which shared the importance of sustainable transportation in a funny and uplifting manner. This performance was shared with the entire school at an assembly, and was also brought to the City Hall to be shared with staff, residents and Council in the Council Chambers. The audience was extremely engaged and found the performance very informative. Students were commended for their courage to perform in front of the public as well as the depth in which they went to get their messaging across. A video recording of the show was captured and shared among partners. Photos of this initiative are included in Appendix 2.

4.0 Conclusion

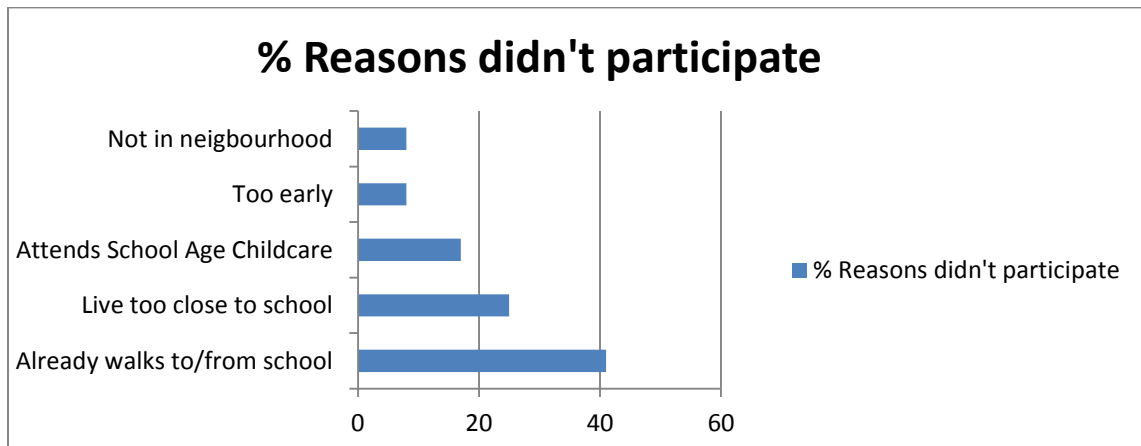
This program created a greater awareness in the school and community towards active and safe travelling to and from school. It increased mode share, and educated students and their parents on the health benefits of active transportation while also engaging the community. In January of 2015 two more elementary schools will be selected to receive this program. The City is pleased with the success of this pilot program and aims to continue the momentum through more City Schools with time. The experience, results and lessons learned will be taken into consideration for future SASTP programs.

Appendix 1

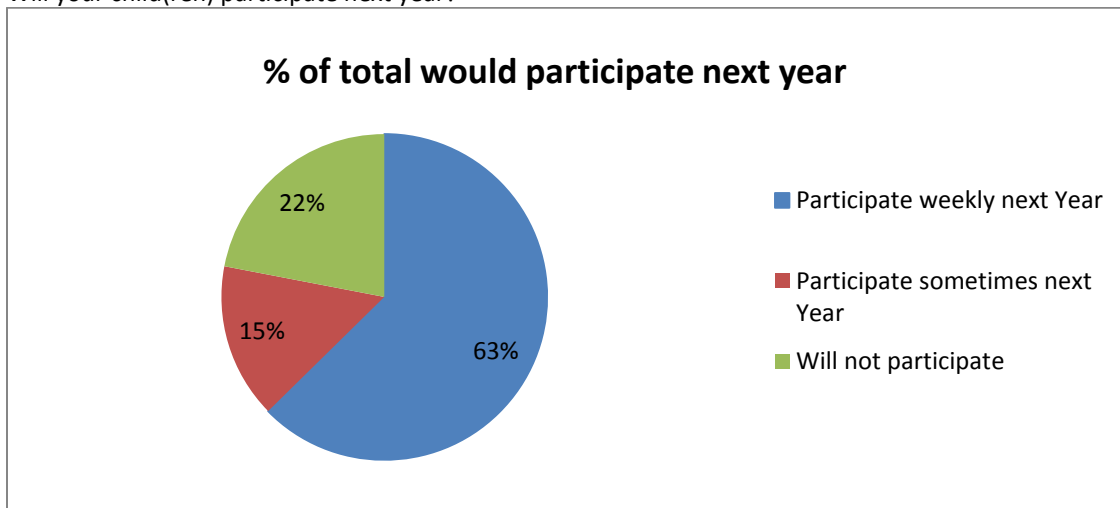
Survey Results from Parents

In May of 2014 the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) at Queensbury, sent home a survey to all parents in hopes of gaining feedback in order to gauge success in order to continue and improve the program's participation for future years. There were only 44 surveys returned due to the BC Teacher's strike which was happening during the time that the survey was being collected. Below is a summary of these findings.

1. Did your child(ren) participate in the walking school bus this past school year?
 - o **73% (32) families said YES**
 - o **27% (12) families said NO**
2. Reasons your children did not participate in the Walking School Bus Program:



3. Will your child(ren) participate next year?



4. What changes would you suggest to our walking school bus program:

| Suggestions for improvement: | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Area | Suggestion |
| Timing | Rainy days arrive too early at school |
| Timing | Different Times |
| Groups | Smaller groups |
| Groups | Walking home group |
| Schedule | More days |
| Schedule | Tuesday or a Thursday morning |
| Schedule | Increase frequency during good weather |
| Location | Another location on 17 th |
| Motivation | Kids come up with Themes |
| Motivation | Maybe a log book children could get stamped/gold star |

5. Additional Comments:

| Other Comments from Parents: | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | This was great. We looked forward to walking on Wednesdays. Thanks for running the program. We hope it continues for years to come. |
| 2 | It's a great idea . Perhaps we will join when my child is older (only in kindy this year) and better able to walk the distance in a timely fashion. |
| 3 | It's a great idea! But I always walk my child to and from school and enjoy the "together" time without participating in a group. |
| 4 | We would have used it but live too close to the school so our children already walk to and from school daily. |
| 5 | Have more "Stops" from point of origin to school. Ie. Our "Stop" is 18 th & Moody. |
| 6 | Great Idea. My son has really enjoyed the walking school bus and we hope it will continue. |
| 7 | Loved It!! Thank you. |
| 8 | An awesome way to help create a sense of community , show exercise can be fun and that our neighborhood is safe and cared for. |
| 9 | Great way to get kids to exercise and walk and less traffic! |
| 10 | I love the walking school bus idea! It forces my girls to walk a little faster too! |
| 11 | Awesome, my son said it was FUN and wants to do it again next year. Thanks for all your help making this such a success! |
| 12 | The walking school bus ensures we walk to school at least once a week, otherwise we take the lazy way and drive . Thanks Walking School Bus, Kathy & Christina! |

6. Would you like to volunteer:

YES!!

-19 Parents said they'd be interested in participating next year

Appendix 2

Photo Gallery-Walking School Bus

Week 1: February 12th- Theme: Heart Week-Jump/Walk for your Heart!





Week 2: February 19th - Theme: GO CANADA!! (2014 Winter Olympics)





Week 3: February 26th - Theme: Anti-Bullying





Week 4: March 5th - Theme: Safety First!







TravelSmart Leadership Performance

Heather Duncan's Grade 6 Class

*Raise your hands if
you like walking to
school!!*







City staff & families enjoying the lunchtime performance