

DATE OF MEETING OCTOBER 06, 2025

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SUBJECT ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with an update on Active School Travel initiatives and program development; and to request Council's endorsement to apply for a grant to assist in Active School Travel plan implementation.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Select Option 1 of Table 1 of the 2025-OCT-06 Staff report entitled "Active School Travel Program Implementation" for year 2026 of the 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan, contingent on a successful grant application; and,
2. Fund the projects as follows:
 - \$245,000 from the 2026 Pedestrian Unallocated budget
 - \$125,000 from the Active School Travel grant.

BACKGROUND

The term Active School Travel (AST) refers to students commuting to and from school using active modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, or rolling. AST supports all five goals of City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined, with particular alignment to A Connected Nanaimo and A Healthy Nanaimo.

The City of Nanaimo, in collaboration with Nanaimo-Ladysmith Public Schools, provides a range of supports to empower schools in promoting AST. These supports include resource sharing, identifying and facilitating school-specific opportunities, connecting schools to external initiatives, and most notably, delivering Nanaimo's AST Program.

This program produces tailored AST plans for participating schools, with the goal of increasing the number of students using active transportation while improving safety. Each plan outlines recommended actions across the "5 Es":

- Education
- Encouragement
- Engineering
- Enforcement
- Equity

This holistic framework is designed to boost AST uptake from multiple angles, ultimately fostering a school culture where AST Travel is embraced as a preferred and supported way to get to and from school.

More information on Nanaimo's approach to facilitating AST can be found here:
nanaimo.ca/goto/ast.

DISCUSSION

Recently Completed Plans

Nanaimo's most recently completed AST plans include:

- Uplands Park Elementary School (2023)
- Chase River Elementary School (2025)
- Cinnabar Valley Elementary School (2025)

School Selection Process

In recent years, demand for the AST program has grown significantly. To ensure a fair and transparent approach to managing this interest, City staff and School District staff have collaboratively drafted a school selection process, scheduled to launch later this fall.

As part of this process, schools interested in participating will be asked to submit an Expression of Interest outlining their specific needs, level of commitment to the program, and ongoing dedication to fostering a culture of AST.

Attachment A includes the draft materials related to the selection process.

Plan Implementation

AST Plan recommendations in the Education, Encouragement, and Enforcement categories are typically implemented more quickly than Engineering recommendations. A notable example is Uplands Park Elementary, which was selected in 2024 to participate in a Walking School Bus initiative funded by Green Communities Canada and delivered by the Society for Children and Youth of British Columbia.

Implementing recommendations within the Engineering category has proven more challenging due to the significant costs associated with infrastructure improvements and the current lack of dedicated funding.

While the City currently allocates \$30,000 annually for AST planning, there has not yet been a dedicated budget for implementation. As a result, any AST related infrastructure improvements have occurred opportunistically—typically in conjunction with other capital planning projects—rather than through a proactive, targeted approach. The 2026 – 2030 Draft Financial Plan includes a modest, dedicated annual budget to support ongoing AST implementation.

Safe and Active School Routes Funding Opportunity

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Green Municipal Fund is offering up to \$125,000 through its Safe and Active School Routes initiative, covering up to 50% of eligible costs for active transportation infrastructure near schools. This presents a timely opportunity to implement select Engineering actions from the recently completed AST plans for Chase River Elementary and Cinnabar Valley Elementary. To proceed with a grant application, the City would need to contribute at least 50% of total project costs.

Staff are recommending Option 1 in Table 1 below: that Council direct Staff to add the following projects to the 2026 of the 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan, contingent on a successful grant application, funded by \$245,000 from the 2026 Pedestrian Unallocated budget and \$125,000 from the Active School Travel grant to leverage this funding opportunity and support the following highest priority projects:

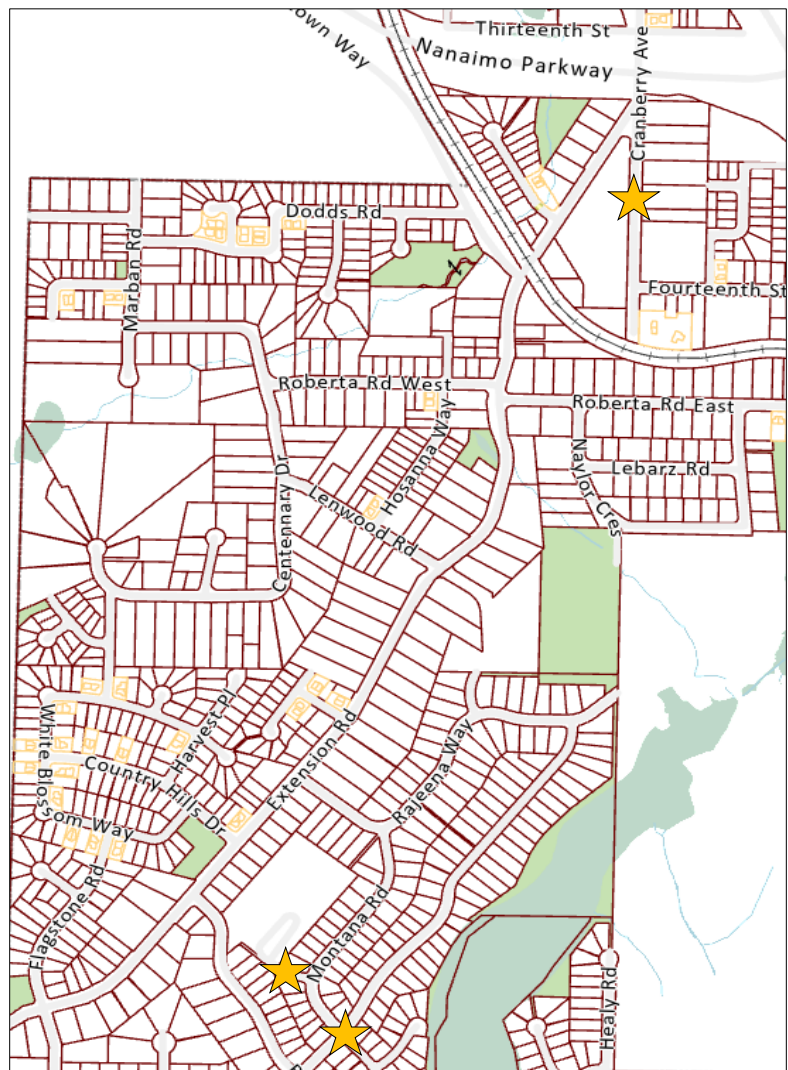
Chase River Elementary Active School Travel Plan

1. **Raised crosswalk on Cranberry Avenue**
Class D Cost Estimate: \$40,000

Cinnabar Valley Elementary Active School Travel Plan

2. **Intersection improvements at Ohio Way & Montana Road**
Class D Cost Estimate: \$80,000
3. **Intersection improvements at Montana Road, Ranchview Drive & Kentucky Place**
Class D Cost Estimate: \$250,000

See Attachment B for AST plan excerpts detailing these recommendations.



Potential combinations of funding to leverage the grant opportunity are shown below.

Table 1: Project and Funding Options

Option 1	Funding Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised crosswalk on Cranberry Avenue • Intersection improvements at Ohio Way and Montana Road • Intersection improvements at Montana Road, Ranchview Drive & Kentucky Place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$245,000 from the 2026 Pedestrian Unallocated budget • \$125,000 from the Active School Travel grant
Option 2	Funding Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised crosswalk on Cranberry Avenue • Intersection improvements at Ohio Way and Montana Road • Intersection improvements at Montana Road, Ranchview Drive & Kentucky Place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$125,000 from the Active School Travel grant • \$125,000 from the Community Works Fund • \$120,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund
Option 3	Funding Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised crosswalk on Cranberry Avenue • Intersection improvements at Ohio Way and Montana Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$60,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund • \$60,000 from the Active School Travel grant.

OPTIONS

1. That Council:

1. Select Option 1 of Table 1 of the October 6, 2025 report entitled “Active School Travel Program Implementation” for year 2026 of the 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan, contingent on a successful grant application; and,
2. Fund the projects as follows:
 - a. \$245,000 from the 2026 Pedestrian Unallocated budget
 - b. \$125,000 from the Active School Travel grant.

The advantages of this option:

- The City would be eligible for the full funding amount offered
- The City would be able to implement three high priority AST plan recommendations that are not currently budgeted for
- The intent of the Pedestrian Unallocated budget aligns with the recommended projects

The disadvantages of this option:

- Other high priority future pedestrian projects, including those discussed during the 2025 pedestrian unallocated report, would not progress as quickly.

The financial implications of this option:

- Funding availability in the Community Works Fund and Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund would remain the same, while the 2026 Pedestrian Unallocated budget would be reduced to \$55,000.
- The 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan would be amended to include the projects in 2026.

2. That Council:

1. Select Option 2 of Table 1 of the October 6, 2025 report entitled “Active School Travel Program Implementation” for year 2026 of the 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan, contingent on a successful grant application; and,
2. Fund the projects as follows:
 - a. \$125,000 from the Community Works Fund
 - b. \$120,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund
 - c. \$125,000 from the Active School Travel grant.

The advantages of this option:

- The City would be eligible for the full funding amount offered
- The City would be able to implement three high priority AST plan recommendations that are not currently budgeted for
- The 2026 Pedestrian Unallocated Budget would remain available for other priority projects across the City

The disadvantages of this option:

- Less money would be available in the Community Works Fund and Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund for other emerging needs.

The financial implications of this option:

- Funding availability in the Community Works Fund and Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund would decrease, while the 2026 Pedestrian Unallocated budget would remain at \$300,000.
- The 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan would be amended to include the projects in 2026.

3. That Council direct Staff to add option three as shown above to year 2026 of the 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan, contingent on a successful grant application (lesser investment).

The advantages of this option:

- The City would be able to implement two high priority AST plan recommendations that are not currently budgeted for
- Fewer funds would be required from Council’s unallocated budgets

The disadvantages of this option:

- The City would be unable to complete a high priority AST plan recommendation as quickly
- The City would miss the opportunity to utilize the full grant amount available

The financial implications of this option:

- Funding availability in the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund would decrease, while the 2026 Pedestrian Unallocated budget would remain at \$300,000.
- The 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan would be amended to include the projects in 2026.

4. That Council provide alternative direction to Staff. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo-Ladysmith Public schools' partner to offer an Active School Travel program which results in action plans aimed at getting more students walking, biking, and rolling to school safely.
- To manage interest in the program, a School Selection Process is under development and will be launching soon.
- The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is offering funding for infrastructure on school routes, and Staff recommend that Council allocate a total of \$245,000 towards AST plan recommendations in order to leverage the full funding offer.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Draft School Selection Process

ATTACHMENT B: Active School Travel Plan Excerpts

ATTACHMENT C: PowerPoint Presentation

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