

# School Streets Playbook

**A guidebook on how to run a  
successful school street pilot in  
Kingston.**



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## Introduction and Acknowledgements

The School Streets Playbook was made possible through the lessons of dedicated community volunteers, school principals, City staff, and school board staff. School streets in Kingston are endorsed by the School Pedestrian Safety Working Group and the School Transportation Safety Review Panel, each of which is comprised of representatives from school boards, the municipality, police, and public health. This includes the following organizations:

- Limestone District School Board
- Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board
- Kingston Police
- Tri-Board Student Transportation Services
- KFL&A Public Health

This playbook would also not have been possible without the work of the Kingston Coalition for Active Transportation (KCAT), which spearheaded Ontario's first two full-year school street implementations in Ontario.



This guideline was further supported through existing resources and learnings from cities across Canada, including the [Capital Regional District and City of Victoria](#), the [City of Vancouver](#), and the [City of Markham](#), as well as the [8 80cities School Streets Toolkit](#).

## Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to incorporate learnings from Ontario's first full-year school street implementations at Central Public School and Winston Churchill Public School and transform them into a practical guide for other school communities interested in piloting a school street.

## What is a School Street?

A school street is a car-free block beside a school that is open to walking, biking and rolling during peak drop-off and pick-up times, typically for 15 to 30 minutes. School streets encourage more families to walk or cycle to and from school by providing a safer space, free of vehicles.

## Why Implement a School Street?

Restricting vehicle traffic during peak times has a number of benefits, including:



**Promoting active and independent mobility:** Vehicle congestion in front of schools often leads to more families choosing to drive to school out of concern for safety. School streets give more autonomy to students to choose to walk or cycle to school.



**Removing congestion around schools and creating safer environments:** School streets can eliminate gridlock and poor driver behaviour that is often associated with the morning and afternoon rush, improving road safety for all users.



**Facilitating opportunities for community building:** School streets bring community members together to make streets safer and foster friendships through additional social space.



**Improving air quality:** School streets can effectively limit idling in front of schools.

In summary, school street implementations can help address a number of issues by limiting the vehicles on the street in front of schools and reallocating that space for families that are walking, cycling and rolling to school. It can help spark a conversation that ultimately creates a culture of more active travel to school, benefiting all.



## The School Street Playbook: A five-stage Process

This playbook is laid out in sections that correspond with five stages, spanning idea exploration to implementation. While school street pilots can come together quickly, it is important to start planning early. The process typically takes at least six months from ideation to launch.

The five steps laid out in this Playbook are as follows:



**Step 1 – Review Criteria:** Is a School Street right for you? Review the criteria for a successful school street.



**Step 2 – Engage and Plan:** Start to engage your school and the surrounding community. Generate buy-in!



**Step 3 – Approvals:** Prepare application submissions and plans to submit to your school board and municipality.



**Step 4 – Plan for Launch:** Recruit volunteers, gather materials, and prepare detailed communications ahead of launch.



**Step 5 – Launch:** It's go time! Make sure your pilot is sustainable beyond launch to keep the momentum going.

## Step 1: Criteria for a Successful School Street

School streets take careful planning and a reliable team of dedicated operations staff and/or volunteers to be successfully implemented over an extended period. They also require buy-in from the school community through detailed education and communications, including with parents, students, teachers, and principals, as well as support from the surrounding residential community. As school settings vary greatly across the city, school streets may not be appropriate in all contexts.

Here are some questions to ask at the outset of the process:

### Is the area walkable?

The ultimate goal of a school street is to encourage more walking and cycling to school, but it's important to ensure that it is a reasonable expectation for families attending the school. Review your school catchment area using an [eligibility tool](#) and estimate how many students may be within a 1.6 km walking distance of the school. If the majority of the catchment area is within walking distance, a school street may be a great fit for your school.

### Is there a problem you are trying to address?

While school streets can bring inherent benefits to a school community, it's important to understand what problems you're intending to address. Questions you may want to ask include:

- Is there significant vehicle congestion in front of the school during pick-up and drop-off periods?
- Are there safety concerns in front of the school related to motorist behaviour (i.e. U-turns, speeding, parking non-compliance, etc.)
- Is there undesirable motorist behaviour related to idling?

If the answer is 'yes' to the questions above, a school street could be an important tool to change this behaviour and reset expectations.

### Is the school on a local neighbourhood road?

It's important to consider that closing a road can create unintended consequences in other parts of the neighbourhood if the road is designed to be used as a city-wide connection, or where there is no alternative or redundancy to access a neighbourhood. This can result in short cutting using adjacent local neighbourhood roads that are not designed to accommodate the increased volume of vehicles.

As a starting point, you should avoid multi-lane roads, roads where the speed limit is above 40 km/h, and roads that are used by public transit (ex. [Kingston Transit](#)). The City



can provide more information about the classification and suitability of the school street you are proposing (see [Step 3: Applications and Approvals](#))

### **Are there alternative locations for vehicular pick-up and drop-off?**

While the intent is to shift travel behaviour towards walking and cycling, there is a reality that some families will continue to drive to school. You will need to consider where this pick-up and drop-off can continue to occur within a five-minute walk to the school and ensure it can remain in compliance with existing parking signage and use available sidewalks and crossings that form a connected path to the school. Having multiple alternative locations can effectively disperse this behaviour across the neighbourhood and builds in an element of walking to the school.

### **Are there others that may need to use the road during the school street?**

There are a variety of local uses for the road that you may need to consider, including:

- School bus access to and from the school
- Home businesses that may require regular curbside access
- Residents living within the school street closure area that require access to their driveway

While vehicles *can* be accommodated through the closed area, vehicle access should be kept to a minimum to protect the integrity of the school street. A school street is only a short duration during the day – regular users of the street often learn to accommodate the change by adjusting their patterns of use.



## Step 2: Engaging and Planning for a School Street

This section outlines the steps to build support, plan a school street implementation, and begin to build a team of volunteers.

### Pilot vs. Full-year implementation

First, you'll want to consider the scope of your implementation. Piloting a school street is a great way to start building support for the initiative. This could involve a one-week pilot, or a one-day-a-week pilot where walking to school is promoted on a particular day of the week (ex. "Walking Wednesdays"). Full-year, every-school-day implementations need to more strongly consider volunteer and staff recruitment and retention, long-term material storage, winter maintenance considerations, and impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood.

### Creating buy-in at the school and the community

School streets are not the responsibility of just one department, organization, or group of people. It takes full community buy-in to make school streets work. If you are interested in championing a school street, it's important to first approach the school principal and/or parent council to start the conversation. The principal and/or parent council can help navigate the feasibility of running a school street at the school, and will be instrumental in helping build support.

Examples of other stakeholders that could potentially be involved in making a school street a reality include:

- Community organizers
- Municipal staff
- Caregivers/Parents
- Elected representatives
- Community members
- School staff
- Students



### Engaging the surrounding neighbourhood

It's important to generate buy-in for the school street from neighbours – particularly those who may live within the closure area or require the use of the road to access their home. School streets are relatively brief in duration (15 to 30 minutes), but engaging neighbours early in the process and providing assurance that access will be provided on an as-needed basis (including for deliveries) will go a long way in setting a collaborative tone. Providing similar education on the benefits of the school street can also help surrounding neighbours better rationalize their support for the initiative and offset inconveniences that may be experienced. Focus on the positives such as creating a



safer space for vulnerable road users, less noise, and less pollution (i.e., tailpipe emissions). As a general rule of thumb, plan to share information with residents living within a two-block radius of the school street.

A common concern that arises stems from the fear that school streets will simply shift traffic congestion problems to nearby streets. While some families that drive to school will continue to do so and move to other areas to pick-up, drop-off, or park and walk to school, this is typically dispersed throughout the road network surrounding the school rather than simply shifting the congestion from one place to another.

### **School Street Expenses**

There are a number of expenses that should be considered and accounted for early in the process, including:

- Insurance (see below);
- Regulatory signage (i.e., legislated/required signage);
- Informational signage (i.e., signage with information about the school street);
- Barriers or other related traffic control materials;
- Storage of materials;
- Communications-related expenses (i.e., vehicle ‘passes’, print materials);
- Safety equipment, including whistles and reflective vests;
- Safety-related training costs (i.e., Traffic Control Person training);
- Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) checks;
- Material related to maintenance (i.e., snow shovels);
- Wages for staffing to support operational coordination/scheduling (if applicable)

### **Insurance requirements**

Typically, Public Liability Insurance of at least \$5,000,000 is required to cover all risks, with the municipality named as a party insured on the policy. Insurance is important to ensure that you are protected from claims made against you as a school street operator.

It is important to recognize that obtaining insurance can be a major barrier to operating a school street, as it can be costly and difficult to find providers that are willing to insure a ‘non-traditional’ road closure of this nature.

### **Volunteer recruitment and management**

School staff resourcing is limited and should not be relied upon to operate the school street – recruiting volunteers is therefore an essential aspect of running a successful program. The following are important considerations when building your volunteer base and an operational plan for a school street:

- **Define the volunteer role:** Clearly define the role of volunteers and what tasks they will be responsible for.
- **Identify target groups:** Reach out to social and professional groups that are likely to be interested in supporting the school street initiative, such as local community organizations and businesses.
- **Create a compelling pitch:** Develop a compelling pitch that highlights the benefits of volunteering for the school street program, such as making a positive impact on the community, gaining valuable experience, and building connections.
- **Utilize online tools:** Use online tools such as social media and volunteer management platforms to reach a wider audience and make it easier for people to sign up to volunteer.
- **Provide training and support:** Provide volunteers with the training and support they need to succeed in their role, including clear instructions, guidelines, and ongoing support.
- **Recognize and reward volunteers:** Show appreciation for volunteers by recognizing their efforts, providing incentives, and offering opportunities for professional development and growth.
- **Foster a sense of community:** Foster a sense of community among volunteers by organizing social events, encouraging communication, and promoting teamwork.

### **Where can you find volunteers for your school street Program?**

- **Utilize community networks:** Reach out to community networks such as local schools, community organizations, and businesses to find individuals who may be interested in volunteering for the school street program.
- **Utilize social media:** Utilize social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to reach a wider audience and promote the school street and the volunteer opportunities available.
- **Partner with local organizations:** Partner with local organizations that share similar goals and values, such as active transportation groups, environmental organizations, and health and wellness groups.
- **Contact local universities and colleges:** Contact local universities and colleges, such as Queen's University, to engage students and young professionals who may be interested in volunteering for the school street program.
- **Advertise through local media:** Advertise the volunteer opportunities for the school street program through local media outlets, such as newspapers, radio stations, and online media.

- **Attend community events:** Attend community events, such as fairs and festivals, to engage with potential volunteers and promote the school street initiative.
- **Reach out to local high schools:** High school students can use their volunteer hours with the school street toward their requirement to graduate. Student volunteers must be over 16 years of age.

See [Appendix B](#) for additional volunteer recruitment resources.

## School Street Roles

There are three main roles as part of a typical school street implementation. You can adapt these roles as you see fit. Each of the roles described below should have a “backup” prepared to fill in during short absences (illness, vacation, family emergency, etc.).

### Volunteer Coordinator

- Serves as the main contact for the entire operation;
- Liaison with parents, school principal, City staff, neighbours, etc.;
- Makes decisions related to cancellations due to dangerous weather (i.e., lightning storms, hail, high winds), or if there is a last-minute absence of volunteers;
- Acts as an emergency backup if a volunteer has to miss a shift on short notice (e.g., illness, family emergency, etc.);
- Recruits volunteers and handles all correspondence with them, other than the weekly schedules;
- Reimburses for CPIC checks and other miscellaneous expenses;
- Provides safety gear and training;
- Arranges access to additional training for volunteers if necessary.

### Volunteer Scheduler

- Prepares a weekly schedule and communicates this to the roster of volunteers;
- Maintains a roster of volunteers with details on availability. The roster includes “emergency backups” who live close by and can be “on call”;
- Ensures CPIC checks are received.

### General Volunteer

There are two types of general volunteers:

**Access Monitors** set up the barriers and signage for each shift. They stay at the access points to verify that anyone wanting to enter the closed street is authorized to do so. The Access Monitors move the barriers to allow authorized vehicles to enter the

closed street. They signal to the “Chaperone” that a vehicle is entering the closed street. They wait until the Chaperone arrives before handing off the vehicle for the chaperone to accompany.

**Chaperones** walk with each vehicle through the closure. They ensure the driver proceeds at no more than 5 km/h. They signal with a whistle if there are pedestrians in the roadway of the vehicle to ensure they clear the roadway until the vehicle has passed through the school street.

## Evaluation Plans

While robust evaluation is not a requirement for launching a school street, it can help build the case to keep it going. Setting a baseline can be as simple as conducting a survey prior to launch, which seeks to establish a baseline for how families are travelling to school, and how comfortable they feel doing so. It could also involve on-the-ground counts, including the number of vehicles picking up and dropping off students within the proposed school area, and observations of any concerning behaviour (such as speeding, parking non-compliance, or undesirable U-turns). In a similar way, conducting a follow-up survey or counts and observations in the surrounding community following the implementation of the school street can provide insight into how behaviour or perceptions may have changed. It can also be valuable in obtaining grants and generating buy-in longer term.

## Step 3: Applications and Approvals

### School Board Approval

It is a requirement for principals to communicate with their school supervisor and the manager of facility services at least 3 to 5 months before launch, depending on the time of year, if they are considering implementing a school street initiative. This communication is crucial because it allows the board to understand the needs and concerns of the school and to provide the necessary guidance. It is important to consider any capital work needed for the school street initiative, such as outdoor storage and following the proper internal process for facility improvements. Reaching out early will help in the planning process and help prevent unneeded issues.

### Municipal Approval

Preparing and submitting an application for City-review typically takes a minimum of eight weeks, including four weeks to prepare the application and four weeks of review time prior to the issuance of the temporary road closure permit, which is needed to operate a school street.



The following components should be prepared as part of a submission to the City:

- Completed Temporary Road Closure Application (contact [transportation@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:transportation@cityofkingston.ca) to get the latest version)
- Proposal outlining (at minimum):
  - Number of staff and/or volunteers that will be present during each school street closure and where they will be positioned
  - Vehicle access and chaperoning approaches
  - Inclement weather practices
  - Consultation conducted
  - School board approvals / letter(s) of support
  - Communications plan
- Traffic control plan in accordance with [Ontario Traffic Manual – Book 7](#) (see examples in [Appendix C](#))
  - Typically, materials that are required to close a road include:
    - A road closed sign (Rb-92)
    - Reflective barricades (i.e., TC-53 barricade)

As part of the City's review of the submitted application materials, the following are examples of what may be considered in the review process:

- Upcoming construction projects that may impact the closure area
- Impacts on the surrounding transportation network and/or unintended consequences for the surrounding neighbourhood
- Impacts on emergency services, waste collection, transit, and winter maintenance services

If approved, the City will issue a temporary road closure permit that outlines specific conditions that outline the rules and responsibilities that the school street operator is required to follow during the school street closure.

## Step 4: Plan for Launch

So you have the approval to launch a school street... now what? This section is dedicated to what you need to start planning before your first day.

### Communications ahead of the launch

#### School Community and Neighbourhoods

It is important to reconnect and communicate with the school community, surrounding neighbourhood and other relevant stakeholders ahead of the launch. By building a frequently asked questions document, many answers to potential questions can be consolidated and reused to help everyone get on the same page.

By using various communication tools, you can effectively communicate the launch of the school street program, build support for the program, and engage with the community. This will help ensure the success of the program and lay the foundation for future school street initiatives.

- **Newsletters:** Use newsletters to provide regular updates about the program and its progress to community members, stakeholders, and other interested parties.
- **Social media:** Utilize social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, to promote the program, share updates, and engage with the community.
- **Website:** Create a dedicated website for the program that provides information about the program, its objectives, and its progress.
- **Brochures and flyers:** Create brochures and flyers that provide information about the program and its benefits, and distribute them to schools, community centers, and other public spaces.
- **Community meetings:** Host community meetings, either in person or virtually, to introduce the program, provide information about the benefits, and answer questions from community members.
- **Media coverage:** Work with local media outlets to promote the program and its launch, including press releases, interviews, and articles.

**Appendix D and E include sample communication templates for inspiration in developing materials specific to your school street.**

### Training / Education

Traffic Control Person training can provide volunteers with training on how to safely perform duties and responsibilities in temporary traffic environments, such as school streets. The training is offered online by a number of providers in Ontario. Though the training is typically geared toward those working in the construction industry, it is helpful for volunteers to have to ensure they are trained in controlling access to the closed road and chaperoning vehicles at a walking pace.



## **Step 5: Launching and Operating a School Street**

### **Volunteer Scheduling**

Volunteer scheduling is important to think about ahead of time to ensure your school street runs smoothly. You can use a scheduling tool, or simply send out a call for availability across your volunteer roster for the weeks ahead. It's important when you're recruiting volunteers to ensure their availability lines up with your planned school street times.

Plan for last-minute cancellations; they happen more than you think! Have a volunteer or two on deck in case you need an additional person in a pinch.

### **Volunteer Retention**

Volunteering for a school street can be fun and engaging, but the rain, snow and ice can take their toll! Providing social opportunities or simply showing your appreciation can go a long way in building community and retaining volunteers for the long haul. Celebrate small wins and organize opportunities for school communities to show their appreciation.

### **Inclement Weather**

It's important to have an inclement weather plan to ensure families are aware of any changes to a scheduled school street closure with as much notice as possible. This may involve PA system announcements, or notifications sent through a school mobile app, email, or social media, and should be discussed with school administration prior to launching a school street.

### **Managing Access and Chaperoning vehicles**

Each access point (including school driveways) should be staffed with one to two persons that are tasked with the responsibility of chaperoning any vehicles entering or exiting the closed road at a walking pace and/or maintaining continued oversight of the access point. Access should always be provided to emergency vehicles, deliveries, and municipal or utility vehicles such as waste collection trucks.

Audible and visual cues may be used to warn pedestrians that a vehicle will be moving through the closed road space and that they must safely clear the road, such as whistles, verbal communication, and/or hand signals.

### **Monitoring safety issues**

Any compliance issues within the school street area, no matter how minor, should be documented in as much detail as possible. It may be appropriate to report concerns of unsafe motorist behaviour directly to police, such as through Kingston Police's [Traffic Complaint service](#).

## Neighbourhood Issues

Neighbourhood issues can arise, so it is important that you have the right processes in place to intake, review, and respond to concerns arising from the surrounding community. Having a dedicated email account set up that is regularly monitored can go a long way. It is also a good idea to keep school administration and the City in the loop as issues are received and responded to, ensuring everyone is on the same page.

## Active Travel Encouragement

One of the primary goals of school streets is to encourage more active travel to school. Pairing a school street with other educational and encouragement opportunities (i.e., cycling education or active school travel ‘competitions’) can help families feel even more confident to try walking or cycling to school and help build momentum towards a more active school community.

## Road Closure Equipment and Storage

Barriers and signage should be sturdy, wind resistant, and able to withstand the elements (snow, rain, and temperature fluctuations). At the same time, materials need to be transportable. Fold-up metal stands and roll-up banners work well to fulfill the ROAD CLOSED (Rb-92) signage requirements. Plastic reflective barriers (TC-53) work well to physically close the road and ensure they are moveable as needed.



## Peer-to-peer Support

No need to reinvent the wheel. Talk with your school board or the City to find out about other school communities that are planning and/or have implemented school streets in other locations. Sharing resources and lessons learned across each can go a long way in furthering your common goals.

## Conclusion

School streets can transform the school travel experience for families and encourage more active trips. They can improve road safety and introduce health benefits for everyone.

We hope this guide serves as a source of inspiration to consider starting a school street of your own!

## Appendix A – Examples of School Streets in Kingston

### Winston Churchill Public School

Kingston Coalition for Active Transportation (KCAT) ran a school street at Winston Churchill Public School on MacDonnell Street from Earl Street to Hill Street for the entirety of the 2021-2022 and the 2022-2023 school year (as of May 2023). The school street operated each school day for the duration of the school year, making it one of the first full-year pilots in Canada. The School Street ran every school day for 25 minutes in the morning (8:40 - 9:05 am) and 25 minutes in the afternoon (3:20 - 3:45 pm). The school street has received strong support from the school community and has been recognized for prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists along the frontage of the school.



The pilot operated by KCAT demonstrated the viability of school streets in Kingston and provided a structure of operating parameters and conditions that could be used in assessing future program locations.

### Central Public School

Through the guidance of KCAT, the Central Public School Advisory Council (parent council) has operated a school street on Sydenham Street from Colborne Street to Ordnance Street for the entirety of the 2022-2023 school year (as of May 2023). The

school street operated each school day for the duration of the school year, making it the second full-year implementation in Kingston, and more broadly in Ontario. The School Street ran every school day for 25 minutes in the morning (8:40 - 9:05 am) and 25 minutes in the afternoon (3:20 - 3:45 pm).



## Appendix B – Kingston Volunteer Recruitment Resources

### Queen's University & St. Lawrence College for Volunteer Recruitment

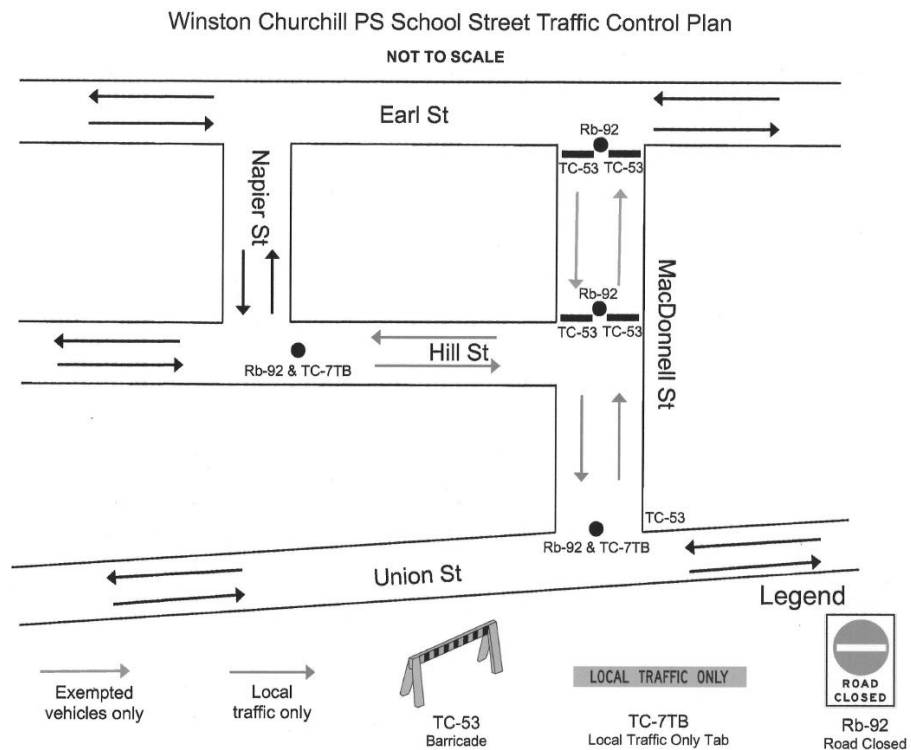
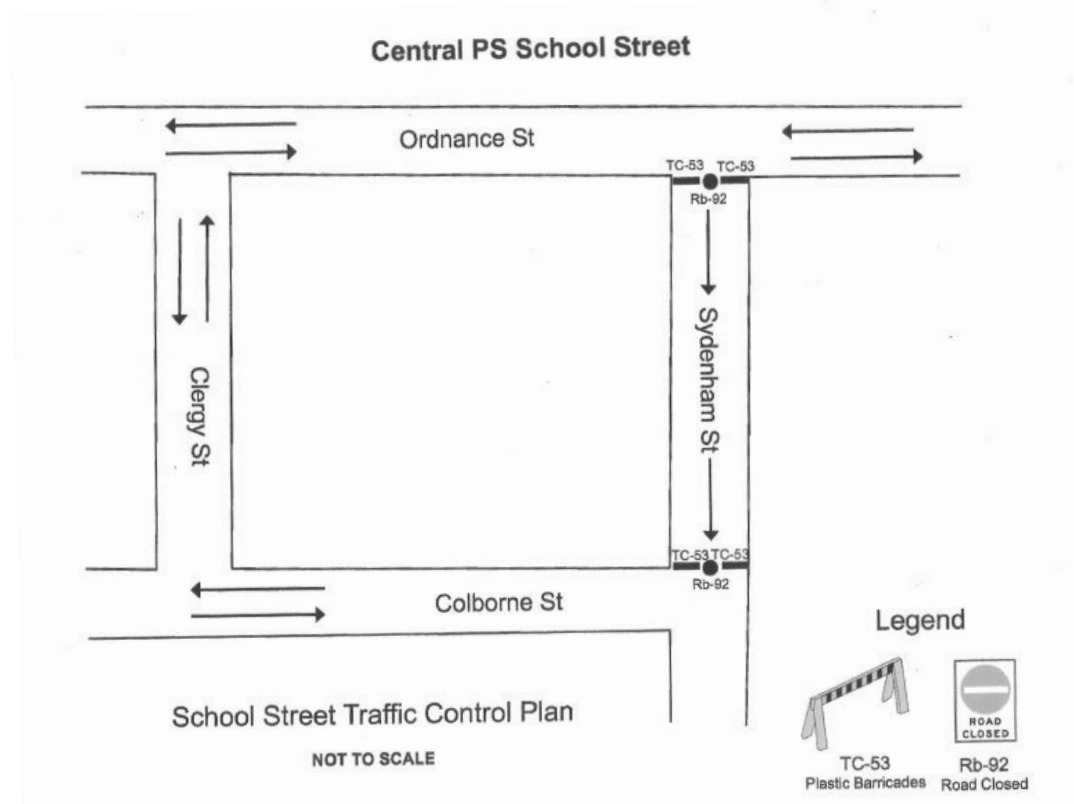
- Student organizations: Student organizations, such as environmental groups, active transportation groups, and health and wellness groups, may be interested in volunteering for the school street program.
- Service organizations: Service organizations, such as volunteer clubs and community service groups, may be interested in supporting the school street program and contributing to the local community.
- Student clubs: Student clubs, such as biking clubs and walking clubs, may be interested in volunteering for the school street program and promoting active transportation. You can find a list of clubs on the Alma Mater Society website - [Club Directory - Alma Mater Society - Queen's University Student Government \(myams.org\)](http://myams.org)
- Academic departments: Academic departments such as the Department of Geography and Planning may have students and faculty who are interested in volunteering for the school street program.
- Student governments: Student governments, such as the Alma Mater Society, the Graduate Student Society, or the St. Lawrence College Student Association may be interested in supporting the school street program and engaging with the local community.
- Queen's University has a variety of departments and programs that you can contact to volunteer to support school streets. You can find [a list of departments and programs](#) on the Queen's University website.

### Service Organizations and other Potential Partners/Opportunities

- [United Way Kingston Frontenac Lennox & Addington](#)
- [Awesome Kingston](#)
- [Rotary Club of Kingston](#)
- [Rotary Cataraqui-Kingston](#)
- [Kingston Waterfront Rotary Club](#)
- [KFL&A Public Health](#)



## Appendix C – Sample Traffic Control Plans





## Appendix D – Sample Communications

### Letter to Residents – Sample Communication

Dear resident,

We are writing this letter to remind you of the upcoming School Street initiative for Central Public School. We have secured approval from both Central Public School and the City of Kingston to run the initiative and therefore, will be launching the School Street September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The following informational letter will provide more details on this initiative and will review how this closure may impact you.

The boundaries for the School Street zone will be the intersections of Sydenham and Ordnance and Sydenham and Colborne. A detailed image of the closure zone can be seen on the following page. The closure times will be from **8:40-9:10am for the morning and 3:20-3:50pm for the afternoon**. As a resident living within the School Street zone, you will be permitted to enter/exit the street as needed; however, you must drive at walking speed (10 km/h or less) and wait for a volunteer to chaperone your vehicle through the space when the School Street is operating. We have attached rear-view mirror tags for your vehicle(s) so that our volunteers can easily recognize you as an exempt vehicle and allow you entry into the School Street efficiently. If you require additional mirror tags, please reach out to us at [\[insert email\]](#).

Delivery vehicles, service providers (e.g., cleaners), and clients will also be permitted to enter the space, though we ask for cooperation from residents to adjust schedules with visitors and service providers, if feasible, to minimize the traffic that will need to enter the zone during the 30-minute closure intervals. Waste, snow removal, and emergency vehicles will have full access to the street as needed.

As a reminder to the community, this initiative is being coordinated and operated by Kingston Coalition for Active Transportation (KCAT) with support from the City of Kingston and the Limestone District School Board. School Street Stewards are members of the community donating their free time to help support this initiative and have all been trained by KCAT. There are a number of ways to get involved in this initiative including volunteering as a street steward and participating in the research study. Our team is still looking for more volunteers to support the initiative for the 2022-2023 school year. Volunteer commitment can be as minimal as one shift (30 minutes) per week or greater, depending on your interests and availability. For more information please visit our website at [\[insert website\]](#) or contact us at [\[insert email\]](#).

Sincerely,  
School Street Team

## Frequently Asked Questions – Sample Communication

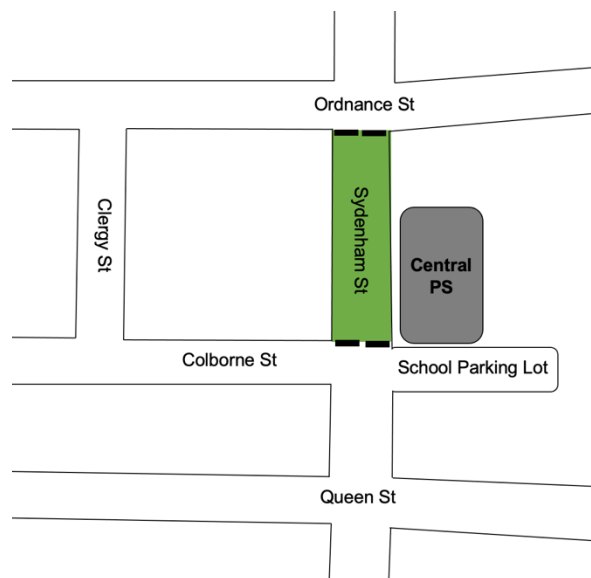
### Why School Streets?

School Streets are gaining popularity around the world in response to two common trends: declining levels of independent mobility and active transportation engagement among elementary school aged children; and unsafe conditions around school sites due to high vehicular traffic volumes, flow, and idling. By closing streets adjacent to schools to through traffic, School Streets offer a multitude of benefits for students, parents, teachers, and local residents. Specifically, School Streets:

- Provide a safer and calmer experience for children to come and go from school every day, thus reducing risk of injury, stress, and anxiety among students;
- Foster opportunities for children to develop skills in independent mobility and active transportation;
- Promote health and readiness to learn, by creating the conditions for children to engage in physical activity as part of their journey to/from school;
- Promotes social cohesion among students and among parents, by creating space for children and parents to informally interact outside the school;
- Improve air quality and reduce noise pollution by eliminating traffic congestion around the school.

### How do School Streets lead to increased active transportation to school?

While safe active transportation routes are also needed in our communities, School Streets guarantee that some active transportation happens for at least part of the journey to school. This is critical to building children's capacity for independent mobility, and eventually, for their engagement in active transportation for longer distances, and ultimately for the entire journey to school. School Streets also provide a calmer, quieter, and cleaner zone for children to arrive and depart from school, which may help parents feel more comfortable allowing their children to use AT to get to school.



### Where and when would the street be closed?

The boundaries for the School Street will be at the intersection of Sydenham and Ordinance and Sydenham and Colborne. The closure area is marked by the green area in the image on the right. The closure periods will be every school day 8:40-9:10am and 3:20-3:50pm.

### **Is this initiative just punishing parents who drive their children to school?**

This initiative is not intended to be punitive; the goal is to create safer conditions for all students attending Central PS when they arrive and leave the school property every day, by not allowing through-traffic along Sydenham Street. Vehicle congestion, blind spots, excessive speed, unsafe turns, and failure to yield all pose serious risks to the hundreds of children and adults who come and go from school every day. We estimate that this initiative may add 2-5 minutes to the morning routine for families who typically drive and drop their child off immediately adjacent to the school's entrance.

We understand that change is hard, but we see this as a relatively minor change in the daily routine for some families, with big potential rewards for children and parents alike. Beyond the benefits described above, research has also shown that parents who park two or three blocks away from the school have reduced stress by virtue of not having to navigate congested traffic around the school site.

### **Does this not simply push congestion onto other streets?**

Yes and no. For those parents who continue to drive their children to school, the implementation team will encourage them to park 2-3 blocks away on neighbouring street. It is expected that the redirected traffic will be much more dispersed compared to how it currently clusters around the Central PS entrance on Sydenham. Of course, the goal over time is for students to shift to an active mode of travel to and from school for their entire journey, so the hope is that the overall number of vehicles making the journey to school will decrease over the course of the intervention period. Whether this actually happens is all part of the evaluation component of the initiative, and we are committed to monitoring traffic patterns and making adjustments to the initiative as needed. Additionally, studies evaluating School Streets in other contexts have given us confidence that displayed traffic congestion will likely not be a major concern, as they have found that traffic on surrounding streets to the School Street did **not** see a significant increase in traffic volumes.

### **How will this initiative impact children's understanding of road safety?**

We feel confident that this type of initiative will not have a negative impact on children's understanding of road safety, but we can understand why parents may be concerned that this will be confusing for children. A study from the University of Bristol, indicates that children as young as 6 are able to recognize the difference between when a street is closed to traffic and when there is normal vehicular traffic. They found that children can clearly describe the visual and audial cues that signal the road is open to cars and not safe for play or walking in the street. They also found that these types of initiatives do not impair children's knowledge of road safety and parents were still teaching their children about road safety. Finally, the team plans to use this initiative to encourage more conversations and education on road safety.

**Will I be able to access my home during School Street hours?**

When the School Street is in operation, residents living directly on the School Street will still be able to come and go from their homes as they please. Volunteers at the barriers by the entrance to Sydenham will allow authorized vehicles (e.g., residents of the street, waste removal trucks, delivery vehicles, trades people, service providers, etc.), to enter but we ask that all motorists drive at a walking pace once they have entered the School Street zone.

**Will deliveries still be able to access the homes on the School Street?**

Deliveries and visitors will be permitted to enter the street during School Street hours. To attempt to limit traffic during School Street times, we will be informing local delivery companies of the hours of operation in hopes that they can schedule deliveries to avoid entering the zone.

**Would this initiative run in the winter? What about snow clearing and waste removal?**

The School Street that ran at Winston Churchill PS in Kingston in the previous school year operated throughout the winter and we are confident that we will be able to do the same at Central. The School Street provided extra space for walking on winter days when sidewalks were narrow from the snow, offering benefits on winter days. Additionally, we feel it is important that we promote active transportation year-round. The implementation team will coordinate with the City's Public Works department to ensure these schedules do not conflict with the School Street closure times. On inclement weather days (i.e., early dismissal), the School Street will not run, and parents will be permitted to park on Sydenham to pick up their child from the school.

## Appendix E – Additional Resources

### School Streets Toolkit – 8 80 Cities

The School Streets Toolkit has a wealth of information and templates from school street implementations across Canada, including the following:

- A sample letter to the school community
- Community engagement resources
- FAQs & Explainers
- A sample letter to residents
- A sample media release
- Sample informational signage from various cities
- Volunteer recruitment fliers
- Volunteer information checklists
- Launch day schedules
- Measuring success
- Engagement opportunities
- Implementation checklists

### School Streets Guidebook – 8 80 Cities

The School Streets Guidebook was developed in 2019 and was intended to serve as a resource for community members and school officials to launch a school street pilot.

### School Streets Program Report – City of Vancouver

The City of Vancouver released a program report in August of 2022 that summarized the results and learnings from five participating schools that participated during the 2021 to 2022 school year. Key findings compiled from the five schools included the following:

- 31% of families reported walking more
- 25% of families reported biking more
- 80% of families reported wanting to walk, bike or roll to school more often because of the school streets that were implemented
- 96% of families of students felt safer on the school street compared to the road being open to vehicles
- 90% of school staff felt that the school street had a positive effect on student well-being

### Markham School Streets Program Final Report

This report summarizes the findings from the City of Markham's school street implementations and offers key learnings from their implementation.