SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

Randerson Ridge Elementary



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www.sd68.bc.ca/studentsparents/getting-to-school



www.hastebc.org

Summary

The purpose of this School Travel Plan is to provide a summary of the 18-month School Travel Planning process at Randerson Ridge Elementary (hereinafter: Randerson). The School Travel Plan is a living document belonging to the school that should be revisited regularly in order to update the status of the School Travel Action Plan and to incorporate future evaluation findings. The School Travel Plan identifies and prioritizes engineering, encouragement, and enforcement actions aimed at creating a safer and more comfortable environment for students and their families to walk, bike, and roll to school.

This document consists of information compiled since the School Travel Planning process began at Randerson in the winter of 2018.

Background

In 2014, the City of Nanaimo completed its Transportation Master Plan, which included a need to identify and promote Active and Safe Routes to School as part of a refreshed approach toward neighbourhood transportation to reduce the negative impacts of vehicle traffic while encouraging walking and cycling; enhancing their liveability and sustainability.

Over the next few years, City staff worked with the Nanaimo Ladysmith School District and various stakeholders to determine the best approach to achieve the City of Nanaimo's goals. In December 2017, the City Nanaimo put out a call for proposals for consulting services to develop safe and active transportation plans in 4 of its schools. HASTe (the Hub for Active School Travel) was chosen to implement the School Travel Planning process as the foundation of the City of Nanaimo's Safe Routes to School project.

School Travel Planning

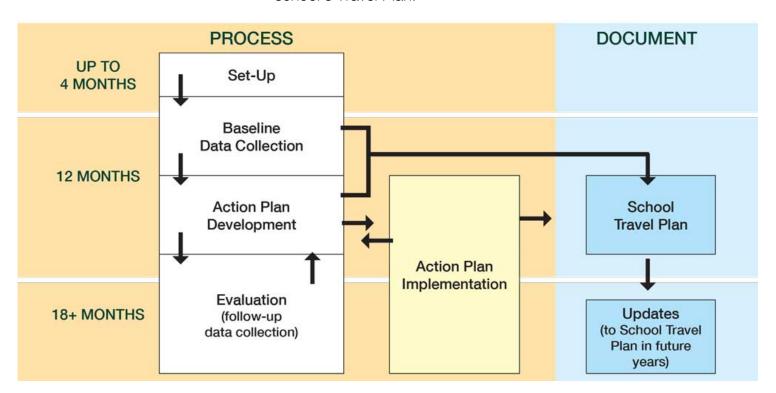
School Travel Planning (hereinafter: STP) is a community-based planning process that has been used with success to date in communities across Canada to increase the number of families choosing active transportation modes to get to and from school. STP uses a collaborative approach, working to involve all relevant stakeholders and enable communities to tackle the root causes of their schools' transportation challenges.

Key benefits of STP are:

- Improved physical and mental health
- Improved traffic safety
- Reduction in pollution
- Improved air quality

STP involves a network of representatives of key school-transportation stakeholder groups who make up a Steering Committee and inform and support the STP process. Organizations and individuals that contributed to the STP process at Randerson included administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students from the school as well as staff from the City of Nanaimo, the Nanaimo Ladysmith School District, RCMP, ICBC, and other community partners.

At individual schools, the STP process is led by an STP Facilitator, who convenes a School Committee, comprised of staff, parents, and administration, to outline specific active school travel barriers and solutions, developing the foundation and specifics for each school's Travel Plan.



The School Travel Planning Process

School

Randerson Ridge Elementary School (hereinafter: Randerson) is a community elementary school located 6021 Nelson Rd. in North Nanaimo, a residential neighbourhood in the northern end of the City of Nanaimo.

339 students were enrolled at Randerson during the 2017/18 school year. This number is expected to increase to 377 in the 2018/19 school year when the school is set to receive 38 additional students who formerly attended nearby Rutherford elementary. These students live in the northern end of the expanded catchment area, within 1.5km of the school.

Randerson opened in 1995. The school's website notes that Randerson staff encourage "each child to grow academically, physically and socially to the best of his/her ability."

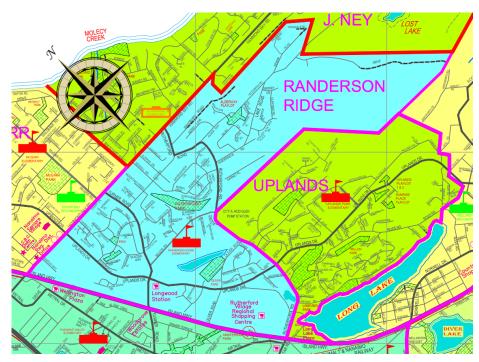
Randerson's Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is a small but dedicated group of parents who meet regularly at the school on the 1st Monday of each month.

Catchment

Randerson's catchment area is primarily residential, with a band of commercial zoning and activity along its western edge and near the intersection of Nelson Rd. and Rutherford Rd. Housing type is mostly single-family detached homes; however, there are a number of semi-detached houses, condominiums, and townhouses in the area as well.

There are several green spaces in the Randerson catchment area, including Rutherford Park to the north; Linley Valley Drive Park to the east; and the Oliver Woods Park, which houses the Oliver Park Community Centre, south of the school.

As its full name would suggest, Randerson is located on a ridge: specifically, the western end of Hidden Ridge. South of the school, the terrain slopes steeply downwards; the intersection of Butcher Rd. and Carrington Rd., about 500m away, is about 80 meters lower in elevation.



Randerson Elementary catchment map

Transportation

There are a number of major roads in and around the Randerson catchment area. Hammond Bay Rd., an arterial/major collector road, serves as its northern boundary, while the Island Hwy. runs along its western edge. Within the catchment, Uplands Dr., an arterial road, runs north-south to the west of the school; Turner Rd., a minor collector road, runs north-south to the west of the school; Linley Valley Dr., a short section of arterial road, runs eastwest and connects Turner Rd., Uplands Dr., and the Island Hwy.; and Rutherford Rd., an arterial/major collector road, runs north-south, bisecting the catchment.

Two of Nanaimo's few roundabouts are located in the Randerson catchment area: one at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Linley Valley Dr.; and the other, recently installed as of the writing of this plan, at the intersection of Nelson Rd. and Rutherford Rd.

There are two transit routes through the Randerson catchment area, along Turner Rd. and Uplands Dr. There are also transit routes on the Island Highway and along Hammond Bay Rd.

Many of the parks near Randerson feature pedestrian walking trails and multi-use paths. There are sidewalks on at least one side of all major and most local roads, and shared paths near the two roundabouts in the catchment area. On-road cycling lanes were recently added to two of the major roads in the catchment, Turner Rd. and Rutherford Rd.

Randerson has a Walk Score of 40/100, suggesting that its neighbourhood is largely car-dependent; Walk Score is a measure of neighbourhood walking accessibility, and is often an indicator of community health and well-being (www.walkscore.com).

Methodology and Results

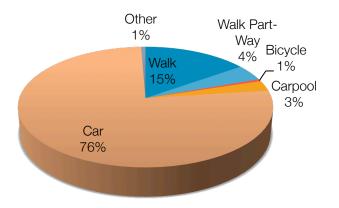
Baseline school travel data was collected through a variety of methods, including student hands-up surveys, family take-home surveys, a walkabout of the surrounding neighbourhood, and meetings with the school community.

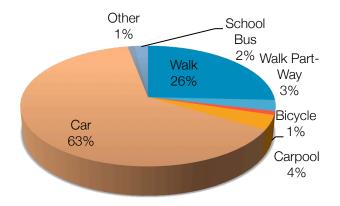
Baseline hands-up surveys and family take-home surveys were completed in February 2018.

The neighbourhood walkabout at Randerson took place on March 12th, 2018. The walkabout was attended by administrators, parents, and members of the municipal Steering Committee. Participants observed the school's travel patterns and toured the area to investigate and examine concerns. The walkabouts informed the Travel Challenges section of this report, the Best Routes to School map (Appendix B), and the School Travel Action Plan (Appendix A).

Hands-Up Baseline Data

15 divisions from grades K-7 participated in hands-up surveys at Randerson. Teachers asked students to raise their hands when identifying their method of travel to and from school, and recorded responses daily over the course of one week. Results from this survey are presented below.





Travel Mode RO School

Travel Mode FROM School

According to baseline hands-up survey results, the majority of students at Randerson are driven to (79%) and from (67%) school, either as a single family (76%/63%) or part of a carpool (3%/4%). A small but significant proportion of students walk to (15%) and from (25%) school, while a few walk part-way (4%/3%), ride their bicycles (1%), or travel by other means (1%). Additionally, a few students reported taking the bus from school (2%), though none reported taking the bus to school.

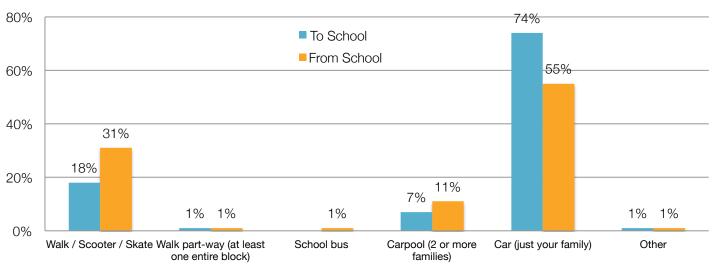
A copy of the baseline hands-up survey is attached to this document as Appendix C.

Family Survey Baseline Data

Family take-home surveys were sent home with each student Randerson. Families were asked to complete the survey and return it to the school within one week. Families were asked about their child(ren)'s travel choices to and from school, factors that influenced transportation decisions, and local transportation concerns. A copy of the baseline family take-home survey is attached to this document as Appendix D.

122 families representing 182 children completed the survey at Randerson, a return rate of 54%. The findings from this survey are presented below.

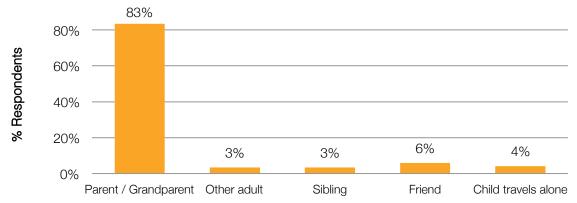
How does your child(ren) usually get to and from school?



Mode share splits from the baseline family take-home survey show more walking and less driving to school, and less walking and more driving from school, than were recorded by the baseline hands-up survey.

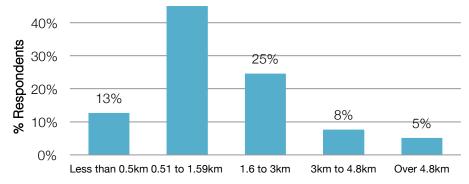
It is not unusual to see walking rates increase and driving rates decrease in the afternoon compared to the morning. However, the walking rate at Randerson almost doubles (72% higher), while the driving rate is 26% lower. These shifts suggest that many of the driving trips to school at Randerson may be elective, and could be shifted to active and sustainable modes under current circumstances.

▼ Who usually accompanies your child on the way to school?



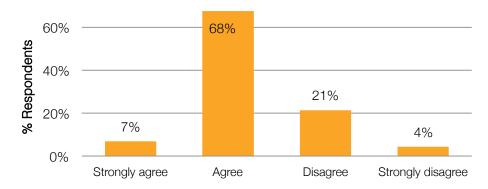
The majority of children at Randerson are accompanied by an adult (87%) on their trip to school, either a parent or grandparent (83%) or someone else (3%). A few students travel to school with their siblings (3%), with a friend (6%), or by themselves (4%).

How far away from school do you live?



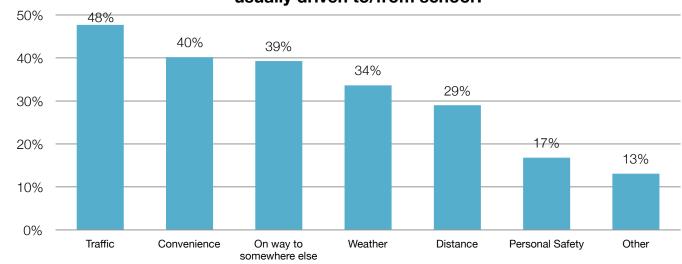
The majority of students at Randerson (63%) live within 1.6km of the school, generally considered a walkable distance for elementary aged children. A quarter of students live between 1.6km and 3km of the school (25%), while 8% live between 3km and 4.8km of the school, and 5% live more than 4.8km from the school, beyond the walking limit set out by the Nanaimo Ladysmith School District.

Our neighbourhood is safe for children to walk to school



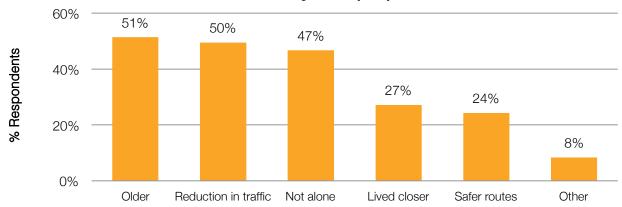
Three-quarters of parents at Randerson either agree (68%) or strongly agree (7%) that their neighbourhood is safe for children to walk to school, while a quarter either disagree (21%) or strongly disagree (4%) with that statement.

What are the main reasons your child(ren) is/are usually driven to/from school?



When asked why they drove their children to school, parents at Randerson were more likely to choose "traffic" (48%) than any other available option. "Convenience" (40%) and being "on the way to somewhere else" (39%) were also popular choices.

▼ I would allow my child(ren) to walk to school if...

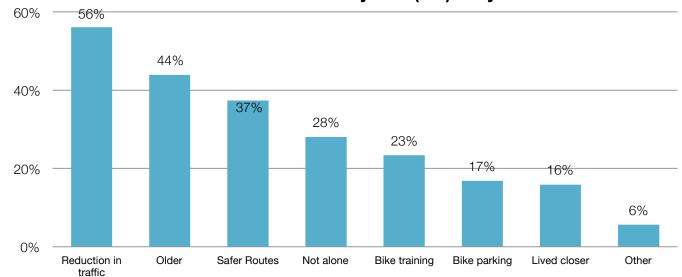


When asked under what conditions they would consider allowing their child(ren) to walk to school, parents were more likely to indicate "if they were older" (51%), "if there were a reduction in traffic" (50%), and "if they were not alone (47%) than other available options.

Data collected through the baseline survey indicates that older students at Randerson do indeed walk to school more often than their younger peers: only 4% of students aged 4-6 years walk to school, while 14% of students aged 7-9 years and 34% of students aged 9-11 years do so. The topography of the catchment area may have some bearing on the correlations between age and walking rates; in meetings at the school, several parents expressed concerns about their young children's abilities to manage the steep hills and grades in the catchment area on walking routes to school.



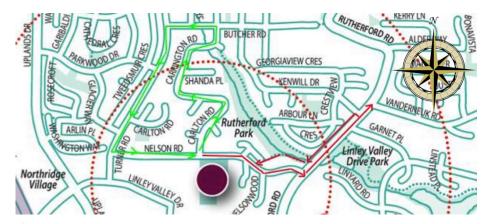
▼ I would allow my child(ren) to cycle to school if...



When asked under what conditions they would consider allowing their child(ren) to cycle to school, parents were more likely to indicate "if there were a reduction in traffic" (56%), "if they were older" (44%), and "if there were safer routes" (37%) than other available options.

Transportation Walkabout

A walkabout was held at Randerson on Monday, March 12th at 1pm. Parents came together with members of the School Travel Planning steering committee to review areas of concern and start developing solutions to overcome them.



The Randerson walkabout route

Walkabout participants met in front of the school to introduce themselves and review the routes they would walk. During the walkabout, participants:

- Observed vehicle and pedestrian activity on school grounds, in the drop-off loop, and in the school zone.
- Observed pedestrian crossing facilities at the intersection of Nelson Rd. and Turner Rd.
- Observed the roundabout at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Linley Valley Dr.
- Discussed the school community's desire for walking routes and pedestrian connections to school that were not on main roads.
- Observed the crosswalk at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Glacier Wy.
- Observed pedestrian conditions on Carlton Rd.
- Observed the new roundabout and construction at the intersection of Nelson Rd. and Rutherford Rd.



Walkabout participants observe transportation activity in the school zone at Randerson

School travel challenges are the barriers to active travel faced by students, families, and staff at Randerson. These challenges were identified through the take-home surveys where parents identified on a map the areas of their highest concern, and through conversations with the school administrators and other members of the school community.

This section, along with Randerson's School Travel Action Plan (Appendix A), identifies some of the challenges and presents solutions, drawn from the school community and best practices in the field of ASRTS, to overcome the barriers to active travel at Randerson.

Topography

As its name implies, Randerson Ridge Elementary is situated on an elevated ridge that runs south of Hammond Bay Rd. The difference in elevation between Hammond Bay Rd., which serves as the northern border of the school's catchment area, and the school site is approximately 80 meters, while the distance between the two is approximately 700 meters.



Topographic map of the area around Randerson. Online source: enca.topographic-map.com



Looking south down Turner Rd. towards the coast

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Through the family take-home survey and in conversations, several Randerson parents noted that the topography of the school's catchment area presents a barrier to active trips to school: the hill makes walking and cycling a strenuous activity; steep grades create safety, speeding and visibility concerns; and curving roads mean that trips often take longer than the distance between two points would suggest.



Looking south across the crosswalk at the intersection of Nelson Rd. and Turner Rd.

2.

Pedestrian crossing safety at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Nelson Rd.

Randerson is situated on the south side of Nelson Rd., a two-lane road that runs between Turner Rd., a minor collector road, to the west, and Rutherford Rd., a major collector road, to the east. Between the school and Turner Rd. there is a sidewalk on only the north side of Nelson Rd. To access this sidewalk, pedestrians approaching Randerson from the southwest must cross Nelson Rd. at its intersection with Turner Rd.

Through the family take-home survey, parents at Randerson expressed concern for the safety of students crossing north-south at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Nelson Rd. There are crosswalk lines painted on the roadway, letdowns on both curbs, and a stop sign controls motor vehicles travelling west on Nelson. However, curb returns on both the north and south sides of the intersection are wide, which increases pedestrian crossing time and distances, reduces both sightlines and visibility, and allows drivers to maintain speed while turning.



Looking south through the intersection of Nelson Rd. and Turner Rd.

Parents also raised concerns about the safety of students crossing east-west at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Nelson Rd. Though east-west crossings are not proscribed, Turner Rd. is wide through its intersection with Nelson Rd. and there are no traffic controls or crosswalks to facilitate pedestrian crossings.

Recent nearby infrastructure upgrades should eliminate the need or desire to cross east-west at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Nelson Rd. To the north, pedestrian-activated flashing beacons were recently added to the east-west crosswalk at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Glacier Wy. To the south, the recently completed roundabout at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Linley Valley Dr. features setback crosswalks and pedestrian islands.

Pedestrian safety at roundabouts

Randerson is situated close to two of the City of Nanaimo's roundabouts. One is located at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Linley Valley Dr., west of the school. The other is located at the intersection of Rutherford Rd. and Nelson Rd., east of the school.

Through the family take-home survey and in conversations and meetings at the school, no issue or feature in the catchment area generated more safety concerns than the nearby roundabouts. In particular, parents expressed doubts both that Nanaimo drivers know how to navigate roundabouts properly, and that it is safe for pedestrians to cross the road at a roundabout.



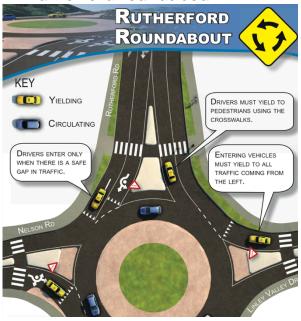
▲ Pedestrian island divide vehicle traffic lanes at the Rutherford roundabout.

The roundabouts constructed near Randerson adhere to best practices with respect to road and pedestrian safety. Crosswalks are set back from the roundabouts and feature pedestrian islands. The City of Nanaimo created an instructional video to help motorists learn how to safely navigate roundabouts: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeWLITsBCm0

Moving forward, the City has committed to monitoring conditions at new the roundabout at the



- Roundabout at the intersection of Rutherford Rd. and Nelson Rd.
- Excerpt from the City of Nanaimo's User Guide for the Rutherford roundabout



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intersection of Rutherford Rd. and Nelson Rd. and making adjustments or additions as appropriate.



The crosswalk east of the exit from Randerson's drop-off loop

4.

Pedestrian crossings in the school zone

There are two north-south crosswalks in Randerson's school zone: one located at the intersection of Nelson Rd. and Carlton Rd, west of the school; and one located just east of the exit to the school's two-lane drop-off loop. Both crosswalks are signed, marked with zebra stripes, and feature curb extensions. The curb extensions improve the visibility and sightlines of pedestrians waiting to cross and reduce the distance and time they must spend in the roadway.



The crosswalk at the intersection of Nelson Rd. and Carlotn Rd.

During the walkabout, participants noted that drivers in the school zone frequently failed to yield to pedestrians crossing Nelson Rd. Participants speculated that motor vehicle congestion; driver impatience and inattention; and curbside parking and drop-off near the crosswalks, which reduce the visibility of pedestrians and impede the sightlines of drivers, all contribute to this behaviour.

Absence of pedestrian infrastructure on Carrington Rd. / Carlton Rd.

Carlton Rd. is the closest north-south street to the school, and is the most direct walking route between the Butcher Rd. neighbourhood and the school. However, through the family take-home survey, parents expressed a number of concerns about the safety of pedestrians using this route.

Carlton Rd. is a two-lane residential road that runs north-south between Nelson Rd. to the south and (as Carrington Rd.) Butcher Rd. to the north. The road curves several times along its length and has a few sections that are steeply graded. Carrington Rd. features sidewalks only on its northernmost, and flattest, section near Butcher Rd. Most of Carrington Rd. and all of Carlton Rd. are comprised of two narrow vehicle lanes and bordered by soft shoulders, drainage ditches, lawns or hedges.

Through the family take-home survey, parents noted the combination of narrow roadway, no sidewalks or consistent shoulder, steep grades, high vehicle speeds, and poor sightlines makes Carrington Rd. / Carlton Rd. an unsafe walking route.

City staff noted that Carlton Rd. has been reviewed several times in recent years, but topography and current conditions do not lend themselves to any practical solutions that would address parent concerns. A trail through Rutherford Park bypasses some areas of concern on Carrington Rd. but still requires students to use Carlton Rd. when walking to and from the school.



Walkabout participants on Carlton Rd.

 The trail through Rutherford Park deposits students onto Carlton Rd.





The Oliver Woods Community Centre is less than 500m away from Randerson. Image Credit: Google Maps

Lack of pedestrian connections between the Oliver Woods neighbourhood and the school

Oliver Woods is the southern-most residential neighbourhood in the Randerson Ridge catchment area. Though the neighbourhood is only 500m away from the school, current routes require families to travel twice that distance or more, on routes that include busy arterial roads, to get to and from Randerson.

At the north end of the Oliver Woods neighbourhood is Oliver Woods park, which features a number of walking trails. Unfortunately, the topography and terrain between the park and the school make establishing an all-weather connection between the two via a pedestrian trail a difficult proposition.

The recently completed Linley Valley Dr. and upgrades to the pedestrian and cycling facilities on Rutherford Rd. have both improved active travel route options between the Oliver Woods neighbourhood and the school. However, both routes are indirect and much longer than the actual distance between the two. And, through the family take-home survey, parents noted a number of safety concerns on both routes, including pedestrian safety at the roundabouts; lack of physical separation on the bike lanes; vehicle speeds on Rutherford Rd.; and the lack of separation between the sidewalk and the roadway on Rutherford Rd.

Lack of pedestrian connections between Bradbury Rd. and the school

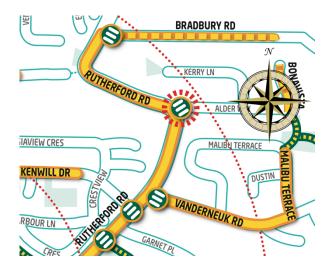
In the summer of 2018, a portion of the Rutherford elementary catchment area was added to the northern end of the Randerson catchment. For many of the families who live in this area, there are currently no attractive walking routes to and from school.



▲ Looking west towards the crosswalk across Alder Wy. at its intersection with Rutherford Rd.

Through the family take-home survey, parents raised concerns about Rutherford Rd. These concerns included the high speeds of vehicles travelling along it, the lack of east-west crossing facilities between Hammond Bay Rd. to the north and Kenwill Dr. to the south, and long crossing distances and poor sightlines at intersections with feeder roads, including Alder Way.

The City of Nanaimo recently invested in a number of upgrades to pedestrian facilities on the section of Rutherford Rd. near Linley Valley Drive Park that have made it more attractive to pedestrians. These include pedestrian-activated beacons at the east-west crosswalk at the intersection of Rutherford Rd. and Kenwill Dr., bike lanes and multi-use paths, and an



Excerpt from Randerson's Best Route to School map showing the walking route from Bradbury Rd. along Rutherford Rd. enhanced mid-block crosswalk at the Linley Valley Drive Park trailhead.



New midblock crosswalk across Rutherford Rd. at the Linley Valley Drive Park trailhead.



▲ Pedestrian crossing beacon at the crosswalk across Rutherford Rd. at Kenwill Dr.

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As of the writing of this plan, city staff were working on a trail network east of Bradbury Rd., and improving current trail connections from Bradbury Rd., both of which will provide improved off-street walking and cycling routes through this area.



▲ The east end of Bradbury Rd.

Over the course of the STP process at Randerson, a number of interventions were undertaken to address barriers to active school travel and encourage walking and cycling trips to school. Education and Engagement interventions inform members of the school community about active transportation; Encouragement interventions encourage students and families to travel actively; Enforcement interventions compel awareness of and compliance with traffic laws and bylaws; and Engineering interventions are physical changes that make walking and cycling safer, more comfortable and more convenient.

Interventions undertaken during the STP process at Randerson are detailed in the section below. Interventions identified that have yet to be undertaken can be found in Randerson's School Travel Action Plan (Appendix A).

Education and Engagement

Drive to Five Plus

Drive to Five Plus is a program that encourages parents to drop their children off at designated locations that are a 5-15 minute safe and comfortable walking distance from school. Parents can either park and walk with their kids or drop them off and let them walk alone.



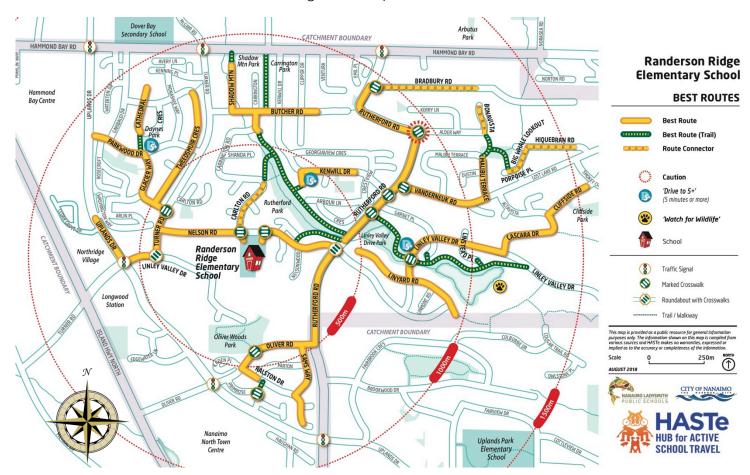
The City of Nanaimo installed permanent signs to identify Drive to Five Plus locations around schools

In the spring of 2018, Drive to Five Plus signs were installed in 3 locations in the Randerson catchment area. The locations were

selected for their proximity to the school, the access they provide to popular walking routes, and the availability of parking.

Best Route to School Maps

A Best Routes to School Map (Appendix B) was developed for Randerson based on information from the family take-home surveys, the walkabout, and consultation with the school community as well as other stakeholders. The map shows the best existing walking and cycling routes to school through the Randerson catchment and should be updated as infrastructure changes and improves.



▲ Best Route to School Map for Randerson

Engineering

The Rutherford Roundabout

In the spring of 2018, the City of Nanaimo completed construction on a multi-lane roundabout at the intersection of Nelson Rd. and Rutherford Rd. The roundabout adheres to best practices with respect to road and pedestrian safety. Crosswalks are set back from the roundabout and feature pedestrian islands.



▲ A walkabout participant observes the final stages of construction on the Rutherford Roundabout.

Moving forward, the City has committed to monitoring conditions at new the roundabout at the intersection of Rutherford Rd. and Nelson Rd. and making adjustments or additions as appropriate.

Enhanced Crosswalk at the Intersection of Turner Rd. and Glacier Wy.

During the summer of 2018, the City of Nanaimo added pedestrian activated flashing beacons to the east-west crosswalk at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Glacier Wy. The crossing beacons will increase the visibility of the crosswalk to drivers on Turner Rd. and should increase compliance by drivers, and improve the comfort and safety of pedestrians, at the crosswalk.



Pedestrian crossing beacons at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Glacier Wy.



▲ Pedestrian crossing beacons at the intersection of Turner Rd. and Glacier Wy.

Ongoing Efforts and Evaluation

The formal STP process ends with the completion of the School Travel Plan – but implementation is just getting started. It is important that stakeholders continue to implement and update the School Travel Action Plan. Parent volunteers, students, teachers, and Principals can lead implementation at the school level.

Recently, the City of Nanaimo has made a number of active transportation infrastructure improvements in the Randerson catchment area. Many of these improvements are captured in the 2006 Safer School Travel Program Status Update, included as Appendix F to this document. Moving forward, the City should continue to analyse, prioritize, and make improvements around the school; monitor progress; and engage directly with the school community when possible. The School Travel Plan should be considered when developing other community plans or projects that may have an impact on school travel.

Follow-up school travel data will be collected in the winter of 2019. Results and findings will be discussed with the steering committee, and the School Travel Plan will be updated with the results and any other changes. Families will be notified of the results via the school's newsletter.

School Travel Planning Members

The STP process at Randerson involved members of the School Travel Planning school committee and the Municipal Steering committee. Key members of each committee are listed below.

School Committee

Principal: Darren Brick

PAC Chair: Tracey Dent

Parent: Tanya Evans

Municipal Steering Committee

City of Nanaimo Manager of Transportation: Jamie Rose

City of Nanaimo Transportation Engineer: Annalisa Fipke

City of Nanaimo Open Space Planner: Kristy Macdonald

SD68 Director of Facilities: Pete Sabo

SD68 Capital Projects Coordinator: Chris Baker

SD68 Executive Director of Communications: Dale Burgos

RCMP School Liaison Officer: Misty Dmytar

RCMP School Liaison Officer: Terry Crawford

BC Transit / RDN Superintendent of Transit Planning: Erica

Beauchamp

ICBC Road Safety Coordinator: Caroline Robinson

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Update