

# **REPORT**

## ***Engineering Services***

**To:** Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council  
**Date:** May 26, 2025

**From:** Lisa Leblanc  
Director of Engineering Services  
**File:** 05.1035.10  
(Doc#2673762v2)

**Item #:** 2025-146

**Subject: Response to Council Motion: School Zone Time Limits**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

*THAT the school zone enforcement hours for New Westminster schools be aligned with Burnaby's schedule, operating between 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM on school days, as outlined in the report titled "Response to Council Motion: School Zone Time Limits" dated May 26, 2025.*

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### **PURPOSE**

To report back to Council on the time limits for 30-km/h school zone speed limits in New Westminister.

### **SUMMARY**

This report responds to Council's request for a review of school zone time limits in New Westminister and explores potential adjustments to improve road safety. A comparative analysis of policies from neighbouring municipalities highlights different approaches to school zone enforcement hours and speed limits. Based on this assessment and because New Westminister's longest boundary is shared with the City of Burnaby, it is recommended that New Westminister align with Burnaby's approach by extending school zone enforcement hours to 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM on school days. This adjustment is intended to enhance pedestrian safety, reduce traffic-related injuries, and promote sustainable transportation choices.

## **BACKGROUND**

On February 27, 2023, Council adopted the following motion:

*“BE IT RESOLVED that Council direct staff to bring a report back to Council for approval on how to extend the speed zone enforcement hours including a discussion on:*

- *The length of the extension i.e. 24 hours, or 7am – 10pm;*
- *Potential impacts to:*
  - *Neighbourhoods;*
  - *Transit;*
  - *Enforcement;*
  - *Traffic Management;*
  - *Any budget Implications; and,*
  - *Other concerns arising.”*

School zone speed limits are a critical component of urban traffic safety, aiming to protect children and pedestrians by reducing vehicle speed limits near schools when children are expected to be present. In British Columbia, provincial regulations mandate a speed limit of 30 km/h in school zones from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on school days, unless otherwise specified by local governments. (Time limits shorter than those specified in regulation are not permitted.) Several municipalities have extended these hours in an effort to enhance safety and driver awareness, particularly during before- and after-school programs.

New Westminster has historically followed the provincial regulation but has heard increasing concerns from parents, school officials, and community members regarding traffic safety in school zones, particularly during early morning and evening activities. Given these concerns, the City has conducted a review of existing regulations and potential improvements based on successful policies implemented in neighbouring municipalities.

## **DISCUSSION**

Several municipalities in British Columbia have implemented extended school zone speed limits to enhance student safety:

- **Burnaby:** As of March 2021, school zone speed limits (30 km/h) are enforced from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM on school days, extending beyond standard hours to account for extracurricular activities.
- **Township of Langley:** In July 2022, the Township extended 30-km/h school zone speed limits to 24 hours per day on school days for roads already designated as school zones, ensuring consistency, and particularly in areas with traffic calming measures.
- **Vancouver:** School zone speed limits (30 km/h) apply at all times (24/7) on local streets adjacent to schools in the City of Vancouver. A 2023 pilot program reduced

speed limits near select schools, lowering arterial roads to 40 km/h and collector streets to 30 km/h from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on school days (from 50 km/h at all times).

- **Surrey:** School zone speed limits are currently 30 km/h from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, but discussions are ongoing about extending enforcement to 24 hours per day.
- **Coquitlam:** The City follows the provincial regulation of 30 km/h from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on school days, unless otherwise posted.

City staff initiated some discussion at the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee on this topic to assess regional interest in a more coordinated regional approach. However, it was determined that interest is low, which is reflected in the varied approaches noted above.

The varying approaches provide insight into potential options for adjusting school zone speed limits in New Westminster. Given New Westminster's proximity to Burnaby, its long shared boundary, and the general similarities in traffic conditions, staff are recommending that the City align its school zone time limits with Burnaby's enforcement hours of 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM on school days. Staff at the City of Burnaby have indicated general satisfaction with the revised hours and are not currently planning any change to their school zone time limits.

This change is expected to have little impact on neighbourhoods, transit, and traffic management. Traffic enforcement of school zones is at the discretion of the New Westminster Police and is typically balanced with other enforcement needs across the city.

## **NEXT STEPS**

With Council's approval, Engineering staff will coordinate with Public Works staff to print and install decals that reflect the adjusted time limits for all existing school zone signage in the city. Staff will also advise New Westminster Police of the adjusted time limits.

Staff will continue to monitor the impact of this change on pedestrian safety and traffic patterns through data collection and community feedback.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Extending school zone hours to 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM will contribute to enhanced student safety and support active transportation to and from schools. A longer enforcement period better protects students attending before- and after-school activities and playing in schoolyards, encourages walking and cycling to school, and helps reduce noise and emissions near schools. These changes promote healthier lifestyles, cleaner air, and safer streets-aligning with the City's sustainability and road safety goals.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The total estimated cost for this update is approximately \$9,000, which includes both the printing of decals for existing signs and labour for installation.

The cost will be covered through the existing School Area Improvement budget in the approved 2025 – 2029 Capital Plan.

**INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

Staff from Public Works have been engaged to provide the total estimated cost for the signage update. This report has also been shared Finance, who provided comments that have been incorporated.

**OPTIONS**

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. THAT the school zone enforcement hours for New Westminster schools be aligned with Burnaby's schedule, operating between 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM on school days, as outlined in the report titled "Response to Council Motion: School Zone Time Limits" dated May 26, 2025.
2. THAT Council provide staff with alternate direction.

Staff recommend Option #1.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this report and practices from neighbouring municipalities, it is recommended that New Westminster extend school zone enforcement hours to 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM, aligning with the City of Burnaby's policy. This adjustment is intended to improve pedestrian safety, encourage active transportation, and contribute to overall traffic calming in school zones. The financial impact of implementation is limited and can be accommodated within the existing budget. By making this change, the City will contribute to enhanced road safety and support a more sustainable urban environment.

**APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:  
Stacy Lee, Transportation Engineer

This report was reviewed by:  
Mike Anderson, Manager, Transportation

This report was approved by:

Lisa Leblanc, Director, Engineering Services & Deputy CAO

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer