

north shore news

LETTER: School route 'danger zones' exist

North Shore News

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Dear Editor:

This is an open letter to the District of North Vancouver mayor and council.

One year ago, a delegation of families — supported by the North Shore Safety Council and the North Shore Division of Family Practice — presented to mayor and council about the need for improvements to the routes children take to school.

A growing number of parents, community leaders and health professionals are recognizing the importance of active transportation, such as walking and biking, on children's health. Daily physical activity can help alleviate stress and anxiety. Many North Shore parents have noticed that when their children walk to school, they remain calm and focused throughout the day.

When children walk for all trips of less than one kilometre, they take an average of 2,238 extra steps per day. This equals approximately 20 minutes of walking: a substantial contribution to the minimum of 60 minutes of daily physical activity kids need to maintain good health.

Since the delegation to council, DNV staff have already implemented several of the parents' recommendations. We thank the DNV for listening and starting to take action. We applaud the district's will to build safer, more active and healthier communities, and we invite the school board, the police and residents of all ages to help us make it happen.

There are still many "danger zones" in school neighbourhoods, and an ultimate need to increase the municipal budget for safe and active routes to school.

Please, continue to grow your investment in active transportation.

Continue to implement the DNV Transportation Plan, which aims to "create plentiful options for walking, cycling, taking transit and safe driving," and which lists "safer routes for children" as a priority. Let us know how we can help.

Erin MacNair and Martyn Schmoll, Safe Route Advocates

Dr. Amy Weber and Dr. Dean Brown, North Shore division of Family Practice

Dr. Mark Lysyshyn, Vancouver Coastal Health

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