

Edgemont parents want 4-way stops to stay

Temporary traffic controls eyed as water main work wraps up

Matthew Gilmour / North Shore News

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Edgemont area kids cross Edgemont Boulevard at Sunset Boulevard. Parents are lobbying the District of North Vancouver to leave temporary four-way stop signs in place after the Capilano water main project is complete. photo Cindy Goodman, North Shore News

A group of parents are asking the District of North Vancouver to step in and prevent changes to the traffic controls at a number of busy intersections in the Edgemont Village area, in the name of child safety.

On Friday (Aug. 26), Metro Vancouver published a notice informing residents that in the coming days, they would begin the process of removing temporary stop signs, put in place to relieve traffic congestion during the construction of the Capilano water main project. As construction wraps up, Metro Vancouver is obligated to return the traffic network to the way they found it. This means stop signs will be removed from intersections along Edgemont Boulevard and where Montroyal Boulevard meets Capilano Road.

This is not sitting well with some local parents, who would like to see these temporary changes made permanent. For Rhonda Roe, a resident of Bluebonnet Road, the thought of her 11-year-old son attempting to cross Edgemont at Sunset Boulevard was enough to hold back on allowing him to walk to school by himself.

"Traffic could build up some pretty nice speed along there," said Roe, who is also the co-chair of the Cleveland elementary parent advisory committee. "The kids had to stand at that pedestrian crosswalk and make the decision for themselves about when they were going to head out into the road."

Children are simply too young to be able to properly gauge the speed of the cars coming down that stretch of road, Roe said.

Eye contact is no longer possible with the now allowed tinted front windshield. - cik

"We teach our children to make eye contact with the driver before crossing the street," she said. "That's just not something that they had the opportunity to do before the four-way stop was put into place."

Roe has been going door-to-door in an effort to drum up support from members of her community and says that

overall the reaction she has been getting has been positive. She also has the support of the principal of Cleveland elementary, Bill Reid, who plans to write a formal letter to the district, encouraging them to leave the four-way stop in place.

"We want to do everything we can to limit the potential for harm to any of our students," said Reid in a written statement to the North Shore News. He explained that before the four-way stop was introduced, cars would back up all the way up Sunset. "This caused safety concerns for students walking home, crossing Sunset amidst gridlocked traffic, and also (many) crossing Edgemont, without signage to stop the traffic," he continued.

So far, the district appears to be listening.

Staff have agreed that four of the intersections that were altered during the project warrant a safety evaluation before traffic controls are loosened.

"The prudent thing to do would be to leave those (temporary controls) in place until the work is fully completed," said Gavin Joyce, manager of engineering, parks and facilities for the district. "Once traffic patterns are fully back to normal, we can do a full investigation of those sites."

That investigation, which is scheduled to begin Sept. 14, will be done in concert with the community monitoring advisory committee, and will be broader than a simple inquiry into whether the temporary measures should be made permanent. According to Joyce, it will consider all possible options including everything from pedestrian and cyclist safety, to sight lines and vehicle queuing.

In the meantime, the district seems to have Metro Vancouver on board with their plan. According to Joyce, at the district's request, Metro has agreed to leave traffic controls the way they are for now.