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**To:** Public Works and Transportation Committee      **Date:** January 4, 2002  
**From:** Gordon Chan, P. Eng.  
Director, Transportation      **File:** 6450-09  
**Re:** Traffic Safety Awareness Week – March 4-8, 2002

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**Staff Recommendation**

1. That Council support the 2002 Traffic Safety Awareness Week (March 4-8, 2002) activities initiated by the Richmond District Parents Association, sponsored by ICBC, the Autoplan Broker RoadSense Team and the Richmond School Board with the participation of the *Way to Go!* School Program, and endorse staff involvement as part of the City's on-going traffic safety education strategy.
2. That Council officially proclaim March 4-8, 2002 as "Traffic Safety Awareness Week."

Gordon Chan, P. Eng.  
Director, Transportation

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CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER

## Staff Report

### Origin

Since 1996, the Richmond District Parents Association (RDPA), with the involvement of the City, has held an annual campaign to promote traffic safety for students and parents and to encourage the use of alternative travel methods to and from school. This year's event, which again involves all Richmond schools, is sponsored by ICBC Loss Prevention, the Autoplan Broker RoadSense Team and the Richmond School Board and also has the participation of the City, the Richmond *Way to Go!* School Program and Better Environmentally Sound Transportation's *Off Ramp* Program. Each year, Council has endorsed the campaign and last year officially proclaimed the week as "Traffic Safety Awareness Week." This report provides highlights of the campaign's events in 2001 and describes the planned activities for 2002.

### Analysis

#### 1. Purpose of the Event

Over the past several years, the annual number of reported traffic collisions in Richmond has decreased by over one-third. The collective efforts of the City (traffic education and engineering initiatives), ICBC (Road Safety Improvement and Autoplan Broker RoadSense programs), the RCMP (Speed Watch and corridor enforcement programs), and other community traffic safety initiatives, such as Traffic Safety Awareness Week, have been key factors in achieving this substantial reduction in traffic incidents.

Traffic Safety Awareness Week has contributed greatly to the resulting enhanced level of traffic safety within the community, particularly around school zones. The annual event is a key component of the City's traffic safety education strategy that seeks to address traffic safety at the source by changing driver behaviour and encouraging alternative modes of transportation.

Traffic Safety Awareness Week is a proactive campaign aimed at educating the public on traffic safety, particularly at and in the vicinity of school sites, and promoting alternative transportation modes for travelling to and from school. The primary purposes of this event are to:

- educate students about traffic safety at an early age;
- raise the awareness of traffic safety among elementary and secondary school students;
- educate all drivers, including parents who drive their children to and from school, of the importance of respecting school zone traffic regulations, such as no stopping areas and the reduced speed limit of 30 km/hr; and
- encourage the use of alternative travel methods (walking, public transit and cycling) for the trip between home and school.

#### 2. Past Year Campaign Activities

A number of special events were organized at Richmond schools during last year's Traffic Safety Awareness Week, held March 5-9, 2001. Highlights of the campaign are described below.

School Activities

- Distribution of Traffic Safety Awareness Week resource kits (sponsored by ICBC Loss Prevention and the Autoplan Broker RoadSense Team) to all elementary and secondary schools.
- Elementary school packages included posters on traffic safety themes, yellow RoadSense Team tape that was tied along walking routes to schools, traffic safety pamphlets and brochures, and classroom exercises that promoted safe pedestrian practices. Classes that completed the exercises were eligible for prizes.
- Secondary school packages focussed on cycling as an alternative transportation mode and included City of Richmond cycling network maps and bicycle safety brochures.

Way to Go! Program

- Decoration of telephone poles and sign posts in the vicinity of schools with yellow RoadSense Team tape and yellow balloons to serve as visual reminders and warnings to drivers of the presence of pedestrians and schoolchildren.
- Kick-off day at Tait Elementary School to celebrate the first anniversary of its *Way to Go!* Program at the school, which featured the ICBC Road Safety mascot and the participation of an Autoplan Broker RoadSense Team Community Partner representative from the BC Lions football team, who walked with the schoolchildren to school.
- Participation of 16 elementary schools in the inter-school "Walking Yellow Wednesday" challenge to achieve the highest student participation rate. All participating schools received a *Way to Go!* Certificate of Achievement and Tait Elementary School, the winner at 99 percent, was awarded a trophy of a gilded shoe that was donated by former Mayor Greg Halsey-Brandt.

Enforcement and Education

- Increased RCMP presence along corridors in the vicinity of schools and increased RCMP and City Bylaw enforcement of school zone traffic regulations.
- Participation of local Speed Watch groups who monitored and displayed traffic speeds in the vicinity of schools.

Publicity and Participation

- Separate press releases by the RDPA and ICBC to advertise and raise awareness of the event.
- Television and newspaper coverage of the kick-off day at Tait Elementary School.
- Official proclamation by the City of March 5 – 9, 2001 as "Traffic Safety Awareness Week."
- Participation of Mayor Halsey-Brandt, Councillor Greenhill, RDPA representatives, and City staff in "Walking Yellow Wednesday" at Tait Elementary School.
- Photograph and autograph sessions with the Autoplan Broker RoadSense Team Community Partner representative from the BC Lions football team.

**3. Planned Activities for 2002 Campaign**

The goal of the RDPA during Traffic Safety Awareness Week is to raise awareness of traffic issues among both drivers and students and create safer traffic environments at schools. The theme of this year's campaign is "Keep Our Future Safe" and features the following events.

### School Zone Signage

- Distribution of bright yellow plastic lawn signs (sponsored by ICBC Loss Prevention and the Autoplan Broker RoadSense Team) to elementary schools participating in the “Keep Our Future Safe” campaign. The signs will have messages of “Please Slow Down School Zone,” “30 km/h Monday – Friday 8 am – 5 pm” and “School Zone Begins/Ends.”
- Parent volunteers will place the signs along the roadway within the school zone area around the school. Instructions will be provided on the correct placement of the signs (e.g., do not block sidewalks or walkways, ensure that driveway or intersection vision is not obstructed).
- Prior permission will be obtained for any signs to be placed outside of school property on private property or City property. It is anticipated that the signs will be displayed starting at the end of February and remain in place through the end of Traffic Safety Awareness Week. Thereafter, signs will be displayed on a rotating basis throughout the remainder of the school year.

### School Activities

- Distribution of Traffic Safety Awareness Week resource and information kits to all elementary and secondary schools.
- Elementary school packages will include yellow survey tape to be tied along walking routes to schools, traffic safety pamphlets and brochures, and suggested classroom exercises that promote safe pedestrian practices that can be implemented by individual schools.
- Secondary school packages will include information on *Off Ramp*, a vehicle trip-reduction program that seeks to reduce the number of motor vehicle trips to and from secondary schools. This program is an initiative of Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST) and involves training and supporting student leaders with resources and materials to encourage their classmates to use an alternative transportation mode to and from school.

### Way to Go! Program

- Encouragement of schools to participate in the *Way to Go!* Program, which is aimed at reducing the number of vehicle trips to and from school, by organizing a “Walking Yellow Wednesday” on March 6, 2002.
- Kick-off day at McKinney Elementary School that will feature the RCMP Safety mascot and the possible participation of a player from the Vancouver Ravens lacrosse team or the Vancouver Giants hockey team.
- Inter-school challenge to achieve the highest student participation rate on “Walking Yellow Wednesday.” All participating schools will receive a *Way to Go!* Certificate of Achievement and the winner will be awarded the Golden Shoe trophy.

### Enforcement and Education

- Increased presence and enforcement of traffic regulations by RCMP and City Bylaw in school zones and along corridors in the vicinity of schools.
- Monitoring and display of traffic speeds in school zones by local Speed Watch groups.

### Publicity and Participation

- Separate press releases by the RDPA and ICBC to advertise and raise awareness of the event. ICBC’s Marketing and Communications Department will endeavour to ensure television and radio coverage of the kick-off day at McKinney Elementary School.

- Official proclamation by City of March 4-8, 2002 as "Traffic Safety Awareness Week" (subject to Mayor's approval).
- Invitations to Mayor and Councillors to participate in "Walking Yellow Wednesday."
- Possible photograph and autograph sessions with a player(s) from the Vancouver Ravens lacrosse team or the Vancouver Giants hockey team.

### **Financial Impact**

Staff provide organizers of the annual Traffic Safety Awareness Week with time, resources and technical support as part of the City's on-going traffic safety education initiatives. The activities have no direct financial impact on the City.

### **Conclusion**

Traffic safety education is a cornerstone of the City's strategy to enhance traffic safety around schools. The 2002 Traffic Safety Awareness Week campaign (March 4-8, 2002) is a proactive program intended to educate elementary and secondary school students on traffic safety, emphasize the importance of parents and other motorists observing traffic regulations particularly at and around school sites, and encourage alternative travel modes to and from school. Staff therefore request that Council endorse the campaign and officially proclaim March 4-8, 2002 as "Traffic Safety Awareness Week."



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