Re-Envisioning School Streets for Pandemic Recovery

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Rachel Buck  Transport for London
Ashley Rhead  Seattle Department of Transportation
Lauren Hassel  Arlington County (VA) Public Schools
Housekeeping

- Submit your questions
- Webinar archive: www.pedbikeinfo.org/webinars
- Live transcript: https://link.ai.media/session?plink=HSRC
- Certificates and professional development hours
- Follow-up email later today
- Review previous episodes and sign up for upcoming sessions
Today’s Panel

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Transport for London

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Seattle Department of Transportation

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Arlington County (VA) Public Schools
Re-envisioning School Streets as Part of Pandemic Recovery
May 25, 2021

Image courtesy of Kent School District

Image courtesy of Seattle DOT
TUESDAY 25TH MAY

Delivering School Streets in London

Rachel Buck, Principal City Planner, Transport for London
Streetspace for London was the emergency response to the Coronavirus pandemic

• Objectives:
  • Provide space for social distancing
  • Encourage active journeys
  • Prevent a car based recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

• Pre pandemic almost 40% of journeys in London were made using public transport
Streetspace for London transformed London’s streets by delivering:

- Temporary cycle lanes and wider footways
- Additional space for people walking and cycling in town centres and at transport hubs
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and School Streets
London’s streets changed at an unprecedented rate

• By January 2021 TfL and the London Boroughs delivered:
  • 86km of 24/7 bus lanes
  • 89km of new cycle routes
  • 22,500sqm of footway reallocated to pedestrians
  • 2,250 traffic signal timing changes to give priority to pedestrians
  • 109 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
  • 322 School Streets schemes (13 subsequently withdrawn)
29th January 2020: First Coronavirus case in UK

March 2020: 82 School Streets in London

May 2020: School Streets guidance published

July 2020: All school year groups return

April 2021: 24 School Street funded under Active Travel Fund

23rd March 2020: UK goes into full lockdown

April 2020: Streetspace funding announced for School Streets

June 2020: Schools reopen for some year groups

July 2020: 405 School Street schemes funded in 25 boroughs

December 2020: 322 School Streets delivered across London

EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS
Traffic-free School Streets in operation or planned: July 2020 and October 2020, by London borough

Proportion of all borough schools with a traffic-free School Streets scheme operating, or planned, on the street/s outside the school in % for each borough and London average, comparing July 2020 and October 2020 Scorecard data.
School Street objectives:
- Space for Social Distancing
- Encourage active journeys
- Reduce car trips
- Improve air quality

- Rapid delivery is possible
- Relatively inexpensive
- Good community support
  - 60% of Londoners agree with the creation of School Streets (only 12% disagree)
What is a School Street?

- Timed access restrictions to motorised vehicles at drop off and pick up.
- 45mins-2hrs at either end of the school day
- Only pedestrians and cyclists can enter the School Street zone, plus exempted vehicles
- The road closure is enforced using either a physical barrier, cameras or street design clearly showing that the street is not open to motorised vehicles
- Each scheme reflects the needs of the school and local community
- Some School Streets are full road closures
Is my school suitable for a School Street?

Is the school on a main road? Is the school on a main road? Is the school on a main road?
- Yes
- No

Does the main access meet constant essential traffic? eg. hospital, industrial estate, waste depot?
- Yes
- No

May be feasible using camera-operated bus gates
Eg. London Fields Primary, Hackney

May be feasible if combined with area-wide measures
Eg. Holy Trinity Primary, Camden

Number of bus routes?
- 1 or 2
- Zero

Are there easy alternative local routes?
- Yes
- No

Likely to be feasible.
Go for it!

Possible.
Inspiring climate action

Mums for Lungs

EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS
"Thank you so much for sorting the traffic measures - what a difference to the start of the day - it was amazing!!!" Headteacher, Ivybridge Primary
Ivybridge Primary School

Timed closure

- Hours of operation:
  - 8:15-9:15 and 2:45-3:45
- The School Street is enforced using mobile cameras
- Residents, teachers and blue badge holders are exempt
Ivybridge Primary, London Borough of Hounslow

Challenges

• Time for people to get used to the closure

• Mobile camera enforcement

• Small school, larger busier schools would have priority for cameras

• However, the temporary scheme has been positively received

Ivybridge Primary School

Tackling congestion at the school gates and improving the environment for walking and cycling to school.

From Monday 7 September 2020, a section of Summerwood Rd (the cul-de-sac leading to the school) will become a pedestrian & cycle only zone.

Operating Monday - Friday during term time: 8:15 - 9:15am and 2:45 - 3:45pm

Find out more and register for an exemption: hounslow.gov.uk/schoolstreets

How does this work?

- A section of Summerwood Road, Isleworth (as marked below) will be a pedestrian and cycle only zone from 8:15 – 9:15am and 2:45 – 3:45pm on school days.

- Access is permitted for local residents and school staff subject to vehicle registration.

- Vehicles driven by parents/guardians will not be permitted to enter the zone during the timed closure.

- Unauthorised vehicles entering the zone will be issued a penalty charge notice.

- Blue badge holders can apply for an exemption.

- The School Street is enforced by camera.
Walnut Tree Walk Primary, London Borough of Lambeth
Walnut Tree Walk Primary, London Borough of Lambeth

- School has two entrances
- Two roads are closed
- Feedback is that the scheme is successful in preventing vehicles accessing the street despite no camera enforcement
- Some complaints are displaced parking
How are School Streets enforced?

Enforcement of School Street can be undertaken in a number of ways:

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)

Volunteers and moveable barriers or gates

Physical bollards

Full road closure

Which vehicles are able to access the street?

Example A:
• Residents living inside the zone
• Blue badge holders
• Special educations needs transport

Example B:
• Example A exemptions – plus:
  • Taxis and private hire vehicles
  • Delivery vehicles
Lessons learned

• Volunteer fatigue

• Strong support and commitment from the school is required

• Temporary measures can help trial more permanent arrangements

• School engagement with Travel Planning is an advantage (also useful to for access to travel data)

• Parents and residents should be fully engaged and consulted prior to implementation

• It is important to have clear and visible signage and advanced warning at the approach as well as entrance of the School Street Zone
School Streets Evaluation

Parent carer survey:
• 36 schools (50/50 School Streets vs control)
• Online survey
  – Good level of support for School Streets.
  – Impact of School Streets on travel behaviour is difficult to disentangle from the impact of Covid-19.
  – Parents at School Street schools claim to benefit from greater safety and ease of active travel

Resident interviews:
• 12 interviews
  – Local residents tended to have limited awareness of their local School Street or the scheme
  – Mixed views on whether the School Street was a good idea and depended on how much individuals benefitted and/or were inconvenienced.
Q: Are you using more or less of the following modes of transport as a result of the School Street and COVID-19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Covid-19</th>
<th>School Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>+27%</td>
<td>+27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle</td>
<td>+5%</td>
<td>+6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoot</td>
<td>+2%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park and stride</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td>-14%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transport</td>
<td>-15%</td>
<td>-26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: Based on your recent experience, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**Attitudes towards school area**

- Net Agree
  - Top 2 agree minus bottom 2 disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned about danger from traffic on this street</td>
<td>+29%</td>
<td>-21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This street is safe and easy to walk/scoot on</td>
<td>+25%</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a fair balance between the needs of the school community</td>
<td>+23%</td>
<td>-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and people passing through the area</td>
<td>+20%</td>
<td>-42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is safe and easy to cross this road on foot</td>
<td>+6%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This street is safe and easy to cycle on</td>
<td>+6%</td>
<td>-33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the air quality on this street</td>
<td>+6%</td>
<td>-33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Air quality study:**

- 30 air quality sensors installed at 18 schools
- Sensors recorded Nitrogen Dioxide levels
- 23% reduction in Nitrogen Dioxide on the School Streets
Next steps for School Streets in London
Contact

Rachel Buck, Principal
City Planner

rachelbuck@tfl.gov.uk
Seattle School Streets Program
Our vision, mission, and core values

**Vision:** Seattle is a thriving equitable community powered by dependable transportation

**Mission:** to deliver a transportation system that provides safe and affordable access to places and opportunities

Committed to 6 core values:
- **Equity**
- **Safety**
- **Mobility**
- **Sustainability**
- Livability
- **Excellence**
Presentation overview

• Background
• School Streets
  • What are they
  • Who is allowed
  • Where are they
  • Process
• Future
Background

- Schools re-opened in person during the Covid-19 pandemic with
  - Short notice
  - Two daily start and end times
  - No general education bus service
- What is SDOT doing to support families going back to school?
- Started Stay Healthy Streets program in 2020
- Existing permit for a fee allows timed street closures next to schools
School Streets

• What are they?
  • Close 1-2 blocks adjacent to school
  • Open up to families walking and biking
  • Opt-in only
  • 24/7
School Streets

• School Streets help to:
  • Provide social distancing space
  • Reduce traffic congestion
  • Organize drop-off/pick-up activity
  • Improve air quality
  • Improve safety
  • Encourage walking and biking
School Streets

• Who is allowed?
  • Local access for residents, deliveries, waste pickup, emergency vehicles
  • District provided transportation (school bus, ZUM, taxi, etc.) or students with mobility needs in family vehicle

• Who is NOT allowed?
  • Through traffic
  • Parents

seattle.gov/schoolstreets

LOCAL ACCESS ONLY FOR:

• Residential access
• District provided transportation/ADA
• Local deliveries
• Non-motorized

Go Slow and Share the Road
School Streets – Where are they?

• Non-arterial streets
• No public bus route
• No new dead-ends
• Currently at 8 public schools (out of approx. 100)
School Streets - Process

• Fill out form on website or contact me
  • All principals and PTAs were notified through District
• Transportation Operations Division
  • Reviews the request on a Sharepoint spreadsheet
  • Approves or sets up meeting to discuss
  • Provides TCP
• Third party (National Barricade) sets up barricades
• Notification: We provide flyers to school and mail postcard to neighbors
• Process can take as little as 1 day
School Streets

• “Street Closed” sign (NOT “Local Access”) removes street priority from vehicles – it’s now okay to walk in the street

• On a request basis only – strong nexus with a need at the school increases parent buy-in and improves neighbor support
  • We do not enforce School Streets

• School identifies the street to close based on their needs and traffic circulation

• SDOT manages the street closure and takes the liability, not schools. For that reason, they are in place 24/7 until end of school year.
  • Schools do not touch the barricades, but notify us of any issues.
School Streets – Future

• Results
  • Do School Streets result in mode shift? Improved feelings of safety?

• Program operation
  • Equity: Should SDOT manage the barricades or provide free permit for schools? Or both?
Questions?

Ashley.Rhead@seattle.gov | (206) 379-4342
www.seattle.gov/schoolstreets
www.seattle.gov/transportation
Arlington Public Schools
Safe Routes to School

Re-envisioning School Streets as Part of Pandemic Recovery

UNC Highway Safety Research Center/May 25, 2021
Context

Arlington Public Schools

By the numbers:

@27,000 students

• 150 nations/114 languages
• 29.1% free/reduced lunch
• All modes and means
• 41 schools and programs
  • 23 elementary schools
  • 6 middle schools (6-8)
  • 1 secondary program (6-12)
  • 11 high schools and programs (9-12)

+ Department of Multimodal Transportation Planning – 2017-present
+ Virginia Dept of Transportation/Safe Routes to School Grant – 2013-present
Components
Return to School Planning

Timing – Planning for 20-21 started Spring ‘20 / APS reopened March ‘21
Team – APS Depts, County Staff, Police, Community Partners,
Families,
Students,
Volunteers
+ DMV/Va/US Support

+ Workgroups/Meetings
2-3x/week March 2020-March 2021!
Considerations

Return to School Planning

• School Bus Transportation
  • Challenges / Mitigations

• Walk & Bike Access
  • Expanded Walk Zones / Resources

• Park & Walk
  • Remote Locations / MOT

• Evaluation
  • Crossings / Interventions

• Engineering
  • Infrastructure / Non-infrastructure

• Engagement / Encouragement
  • Activities, Tactics + Outreach

• Equity
Continuity/Co-Benefits

Return to School

Behavior Change
• Opportunity
• Flexibility
• Community

Sustainability
• Expanded Walk Zones
• Park & Walk / Remote Drop-off
• Walking School Buses/ Bike Trains
• Necessity = new innovations yet to come….?
Continuity/Lessons Learned

Return to School Planning

Trust but Verify

- Peers
- Partners
- New Variables
- Wild Cards

ABC’s

= Always Be Communicating
- APS/Internal and External
- County/Police/Partners
- Traditional + Social Media
- Word of Mouth / N’hoods
Continuity/Changes

Return to School Planning

APS
Redefined Priorities
• New Possibilities

SRTS
Redefined Role
• Engineering
• Engagement
• Equity
• Funding

= AGILITY
Contact Info

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Traffic Garden Installation / October 31, 2020
Discussion

⇒ Send us your questions

⇒ Follow up with us:
  ⇒ Nancy Pullen-Seufert  Pullen@hsrc.unc.edu
  ⇒ Rachel Buck  RachelBuck@tfl.gov.uk
  ⇒ Ashley Rhead  Ashley.Rhead@seattle.gov
  ⇒ Lauren Hassel  lauren.hassel@apsva.us
  ⇒ General Inquiries  pbic@pedbikeinfo.org

⇒ Archive at  www.pedbikeinfo.org/webinars