



Questions and Answers – Traffic Flow Around Gros Morne Academy and Parsons Lane

Question: What is the new traffic flow plan?

Answer: In an effort to improve safety around Gros Morne Academy and Parsons Lane, the Town of Rocky Harbour is requesting that drivers follow the identified route for school drop off and pick up: drivers should approach Gros Morne Academy via Kin Place/Shears Village and exit onto Main Street. (Fig. 1)



Figure 1 – Map of Pond Road, Kin Place, Parsons Lane and Main Street North. Red arrows identify the traffic flow and direction that drivers should follow for school drop off and pick up.

Question: How was the decision made?

Answer: Discussions and consultations regarding safety around Parsons Lane and Gros Morne Academy have been ongoing for several months between the Town, residents, Gros Morne Academy's School Council and Administration, and the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD). The Town has factored in all information and suggestions, and has deemed that the proposed traffic flow from Pond Rd/Kin Place to Main Street is the best option at this time.



Question: Why are there vehicular traffic issues now, when there are fewer students than years ago?

Answer: Several factors may have caused increased traffic in the area. They include changes in bussing eligibility, differences in family requirements and after school childcare, and the sense that walking or cycling in the area is not safe.

In terms of bussing eligibility, NLESD policy states that students must live at least 1.6 km from school to qualify for bussing. All other students are required to arrive and depart by other means. It is worth noting though, that courtesy seats sometimes open up on the bus for those who do not live far enough away, and the Town encourages parents and guardians to avail of those seats to maximize the number of students who take the bus. More students taking the bus instead of being driven to school means less traffic congestion. The Town of Rocky Harbour encourages bus use or non-motorized transport to and from school whenever possible.

Question: Why isn't Gros Morne Academy's bus lane involved in the traffic flow plan?

Answer: The bus lane is surrounded by outdoor learning and active space for students, and there are plans to further develop the area with gardens, etc., which will benefit students and the community. Parents and guardians who pick children up at school can attest that students and teachers/staff are often in that area, particularly around dismissal time.

The bus road is closed to regular traffic between 8am and 4pm, and despite this, some drivers insist on using it during school hours, which has resulted in numerous close calls. When no vehicles are present, this area is a safe outdoor learning space for students, and routing traffic through it would be a major hazard.

Even if the bus lane were used by drivers for morning drop off, it would still require implementation of a one-way traffic flow toward Main Street on Parsons Lane due to the dangerous corner at the end of the parking lot; and routing traffic through the bus lane at dismissal would be exceptionally dangerous given the presence of students in the area in the afternoon.

Since the bus lane cannot be used for pick up, the Town has deemed it more consistent and less confusing to establish one traffic flow plan that applies to both drop off and pick up.



Question: Are there exceptions to this suggested traffic flow plan?

Answer: The only exception will be the school bus, which won't be able to follow the traffic flow plan. It will follow its current route around the school premises and exit via the bus lane. The school bus can't travel from Parsons Lane to Main Street because as long as Parsons Lane is not a mandatory 1-way, the bus may meet oncoming vehicles on Parsons Lane and there is not enough space for it to pass by another vehicle.

Question: Are there other changes?

Answer: Through consultation and discussions, the Town received many constructive suggestions to improve safety in the area. Here are some outcomes:

- At a June meeting with Gros Morne Academy Administration and representatives from NLESD, the Town requested that staff parking be moved to the side of the building to relieve congestion and open up more space in front of the school for drop off and pick up
- At the same meeting, the Town also requested changes to the school's snow clearing/removal, as tall snow banks have reduced lines of sight in the past, compounding the dangers of the area
- The Town will install multiple speed bumps and additional signage (including radar signs) around the traffic flow route
- The Town will make changes and improvements to its snow clearing in the area
- The Town will work with the local RCMP detachment to request extra patrols along the traffic flow route

Question: Is this the final decision on traffic flow in the area?

Answer: The Town is always eager to improve and make the best decisions for the community. It will be constantly monitoring and assessing the situation. If drivers don't adhere to the proposed traffic flow and/or the safety situation doesn't improve dramatically, other actions will be taken. Safety is of utmost priority.

The Town of Rocky Harbour would like to thank everyone who provided feedback. As always, if you have comments or suggestions, please contact any member of council or the Town Office.