



**The purpose of the Plan for Safe and Secure School Routes is to create a safe, secure traffic environment in the vicinity of schools and to reduce the number of car journeys to and from school. The plan also aims to create a systematic approach to the work with school routes and the travel habits of children in the City of Stockholm.**

The plan should be useful and facilitate dialogue within and between responsible administrations in the early planning phases and during rebuilding. It should also act as a practical support in discussions and decisions related to the location, design and traffic environment of schools, as well as children's travel to and from school.

The City of Stockholm is actively committed to improving the areas around schools and influencing the travel choices that children make in order to ensure that their school journeys are safe and secure. The children themselves have been involved in this work and their views have been taken into account when locations are analysed and improvements are planned.

Planning the city based on the needs of children benefits all road users and increases the participation of children in the life of the city.



Part of the Urban Mobility Strategy

# Plan for Safe and Secure School Routes



# “ A city that benefits children is a city that benefits everyone”

**Tomorrow's society will depend on our children as well as their opportunities to explore independently and understand the world around them.**

It is essential to a child's development that their curiosity should be encouraged to flourish, but not at the risk of their safety or by limiting their freedom of movement. A child's ability to move freely in the world around them impacts greatly on their health and welfare, both now and in the future.

The number of children walking and cycling to school has declined in recent decades as more and more parents drive their children to school and to leisure activities, but the traffic environments near schools have not been designed to cope with large numbers of motor vehicles. This has led to unsafe and disorganised traffic situations near several of the city's schools. The increase in car journeys to and from school has resulted in children that are less physically active, an increase in health issues and a rise in transport-related emissions. Car journeys to and from school also deprive children of the joy of exploring the world around them and creating their own space in that world.

The City of Stockholm is actively committed to improving the areas around schools and influencing the travel choices that children make in order to ensure that school journeys are safe and secure. The children themselves have been involved in this work and their views have been taken into account when locations are analysed and improvements are planned. Building a city in which young people can participate increases our understanding of city life from a child's perspective.

The purpose of the Plan for Safe and Secure School Routes is to create a safe and secure traffic environment in the vicinity of schools and to reduce the number of car journeys to and from school. The plan also aims to create a systematic approach to the work with routes to and from school and with the travel habits of children in the City of Stockholm.

The plan is an element of the implementation of the Urban Mobility Strategy and the further development of the Traffic Safety

Programme. In order to fulfil the Urban Mobility Strategy, it is essential to influence the attitudes and travel habits of the next generation at a young age. Creating favourable conditions for non-car travel to and from school helps children develop behaviours and attitudes to transport modes in which walking and cycling play an important role. In turn, this creates the prerequisites for a more sustainable transport network and a living city. Planning a city based on the needs of children helps ensure that the public spaces and traffic areas that make up the city are more accessible to everyone. A city that benefits children is a city that benefits everyone.

The Plan for Safe and Secure School Routes should be useful and facilitate dialogue within and between responsible administrations in the early planning phases and during rebuilding. The plan should also act as a practical support in discussions and decisions related to the location, design and traffic environment around schools, as well as children's travel to and from school.

The scope of the plan encompasses the City of Stockholm's primary and secondary schools where children are expected to make their own way to and from school. The plan, which is targeted at pedestrians and cyclists, focuses on schools in close proximity to major city streets, and the work with road safety prioritises a radius of about 300 metres around each school. The plan contains three overall goals that will create safe, secure school routes, an action plan for the years 2015-2020, as well as guidelines for the design of the physical environment around schools.



“  
I like to scooter while  
my parents cycle.”  
Malek, 8



“  
My way to school  
should be straight  
and not as bendy.”  
Morvarid, 9

## Stockholm school routes today

The City of Stockholm currently provides a wide range of choices and some of these affect school travel for children. How children get to school is an active choice. The choice of school and school routes is influenced by other factors than distance.

Since the freedom to choose schools was introduced in 1992, the pupils and parents themselves have been able to choose which school a pupil attends. This has meant that children do not necessarily attend the school closest to their home. However, most children in the City of Stockholm attend a school close to home, although the average distance travelled to school increases as students become older. 90% of Grade 0-3 pupils live within 2 km of school, 80% of Grade 4-6 pupils live within 2 km of school, while only 65% of Grade 7 pupils and older live within 2 km of school.

In 2012, roughly one in four children travelled to and from school in a car and this percentage

has increased. On the other hand, the traffic environment near schools is not generally designed to allow children to be dropped off and collected in private cars. This has resulted in serious congestion, especially in the mornings as most parents drop their children off at the same time.

There can be any number of reasons why parents drive their children to school despite the short distance and a high level of road safety. Different families have different lives and different habits; hence they have different reasons for driving their children to school. Some explanations are related to general changes in society and others to perceptions of parenting and car use. Many parents drive their children to and from school because they feel that the environment around the school is unsafe and that there is too much traffic. However, more often than not, it is the act of driving children to school that creates the problem in the first place.



If children cycle or walk to school, they learn to move about in traffic safely and independently. They become accustomed to traffic, which makes it safer and easier to choose walking and cycling as independent road users.”



I'd like to go to school through a portal. A portal is when you go through a wall of water and come out through another one.”

Ali, 11



The Plan for Safe and Secure School Routes contains three goals that guide the direction of the City of Stockholm’s work with children’s travel to and from school.

## Goal 1

### To create safe and secure school routes

If school routes are safe and secure, it increases the likelihood that more children will walk or cycle to school instead of travelling by car. By taking action to reduce the proportion of car journeys, the City of Stockholm will work systematically to improve the most important school routes, develop clear guidelines, and implement physical measures to ensure that school routes become safer and more secure. The City will prioritise improvements to important thoroughfares and school access routes within an approximate 300-metre radius of the school.

## Goal 2

### To create opportunities for new travel habits and increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists

In order to create opportunities for new travel habits, collaboration is required within the City of Stockholm, and between the City and the schools, that aims to bring about a change in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. The goal will be to ensure that the proportion of non-car journeys to and from school increases. This will lead to enhanced security, road safety and public health, as well as good conditions for improved pupil performance in school.

## Goal 3

### To create a city-wide approach to the work that affects school routes

Collaboration between responsible municipal administrations and schools is an essential success factor if the goal of safe, secure school routes is to be achieved. Collaboration will ensure that the actions taken to influence travel choices are more comprehensive.



I'd just like paths and pavements, no cars.”  
Simon, 10



“

I think walking buses are a good idea. It's fun walking with friends.”

Mia, 9

### The most frequent requests from pupils and parents to achieve safer school routes are:

- more and wider walkways and pavements
- more lighting in dark places, especially in tunnels and woods
- more green spaces, activities and meeting places for a more vibrant environment
- to tidy up the city's environments and prune shrubbery
- better maintenance, cleaning and snow removal on school routes
- less car traffic, more car-free zones and pedestrian streets
- separate walkways and cycle paths
- more pedestrian crossings – safe and well-indicated

## From words to action

In order to facilitate the transition from words to actions, the plan includes a number of actions that describe methods and tools to determine which schools should be prioritised, identify problems and evaluate which actions will be most beneficial.

### Actions Goal 1

- 1A** develop a process for prioritising schools
- 1B** conduct travel and travel mode analysis
- 1C** identify physical measures for enhanced road safety and security
- 1D** limit car traffic in the vicinity of schools
- 1E** stagger class start times
- 1F** conduct trials of various actions
- 1G** inspect operations and maintenance

### Actions Goal 2

- 2A** introduce walking buses and bike buses at schools
- 2B** arrange awareness-raising and inspiring activities
- 2C** increase learn-to-ride sessions for children
- 2D** integrate road safety into the curriculum
- 2E** develop school journey plans
- 2F** use the skills and ideas of young people actively and constructively

### Actions Goal 3

- 3A** increase collaboration with responsible administrations
- 3B** establish dialogue between responsible administrations
- 3C** distribute guidelines for actions and designs near the city's schools

The plan also includes guidelines for appropriate actions and design principles near the city's schools. The guidelines have been developed jointly by the responsible administrations. They should serve as a basis for future planning and rebuilding of the traffic environments around schools.

