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# ***Rocky Mountain Boulevard West Pedestrian Safety Proposal***

Prepared for: Lethbridge City Council

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March 2019

# SUMMARY

## Objective

- To enhance pedestrian safety along Rocky Mountain Blvd West for the students of Dr. Gerald B. Probe Elementary and Senator Joyce Fairbairn Middle School. The local pedestrian safety infrastructure requires improvement to reflect the increased population in the area. It is appropriate to update the pedestrian safety infrastructure similar to Lethbridge's newest elementary school; Coalbanks, Lethbridge's oldest elementary school; Galbraith, Probe's sister school; Mike Mountain Horse, as well as the other 3 westside elementary schools; Nicholas Sheran, St. Pat's and St. Martha's.
- It is noted in the Lethbridge School District No. 51 2018/19 to 2020/21 Capital Plan that, based on anticipated population growth, a new 600 student elementary school is recommended for the West Lethbridge South Zone. Lethbridge School District No. 51 has recognized that all 4 west side elementary schools have very high core utilization ranging from 163% to 187%.
- Planning is almost complete and construction is anticipated to begin within the 2019 calendar year to twin University Drive from the University Stadium to Sunridge. This construction is sure to shift traffic patterns for residents of Mountain Heights, RiverStone, Sunridge and Paradise Canyon who would regularly travel South on University. Many residents will likely chose to turn South off of Whoop-up onto McMaster and eventually end up at the corner of Rocky Mountain Blvd and Mt. Burke Blvd.
- If The City of Lethbridge had chosen to complete the Metis Trail Southern extension prior to twinning University Drive, the anticipated impact would likely not be so great for this area. The City of Lethbridge will not have the Metis Trail Southern extension complete for at least 5 years. Once it is complete, it will provide relief for the increased traffic flow to the neighbourhoods surrounding Probe and SJF.
- For the reasons provided, I propose that The City of Lethbridge act in a pro-active manner in upgrading the current pedestrian safety infrastructure along Rocky Mountain Blvd before a child is seriously injured or killed.

New School Construction								
Year	Priority	Community/School	City Sector	Site Readiness	Type	Grade	Capacity	2017 Cost (\$)
2018-2019	1	South Lethbridge Elementary School (South Lethbridge - East)	South	Site Ready	New Construction - Requesting approval to proceed to Construction	K-5	600	\$17.1 million
	2	Gary Station Elementary School (West Lethbridge - North)	West	Site Available	New Construction	K-5	600	\$17.1 million
2019-2020	3	West Lethbridge Elementary School (West Lethbridge - South)	West	Site Not Yet Determined	New Construction	K-5	600	\$17.1 million

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## Issues

1. Pedestrian safety along Rocky Mountain Blvd. has been poor for years. These concerns had been addressed with The City of Lethbridge by former Probe Principal(2001-2010) and current SJF Principal, Bill Bartlett. Mr Bartlett expressed his concerns during his time at Probe and repeated them during the planning of SJF. The City has taken NO ACTION since his concerns were raised.
2. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic along Rocky Mountain Blvd has increased significantly since SJF opened. The student population of Probe is currently 617 students and the student population of SJF is currently 483 students, which totals 1100 students. Probe and SJF's bell times are staggered by 25 minutes as Probe's day begins at 8:20am and SJF starts at 8:45am. As such, quite a few SJF students walk their younger siblings to Probe and continue on to SJF.
3. Probe does not have a drive-through pick-up and drop-off lane or a parent parking lot as all of the other west side schools do have either one or the other or both of these features. Probe is in the unfortunate circumstance of having residential drive-ways directly across the street from the main door and a church parking lot that is clearly marked PRIVATE PROPERTY - UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLES WILL BE TOWED AWAY AT OWNER'S EXPENSE. Probe's Leadership Team occasionally sends out reminders to parents to be mindful of their parking near local residents' driveways as well as the Immanuel Lutheran Church parking lot. Yet, everyday Probe parents park inappropriately in these areas.
4. Because there is no left turn arrow going North at the intersection of Rocky Mountain Blvd and University Drive, it often takes multiple rotations of the traffic lights to successfully turn left onto University Drive when traffic volume is high. There is frequently a backlog of traffic attempting to turn left onto University Drive as multiple vehicles from RiverStone travel across University Drive towards Probe. This causes frustration and poor left turns resulting in accidents and "close-calls".
5. Increased parking/traffic frustration for parents has resulted in unsafe driving practices which puts children in harms way regularly. Bus parking used to be West of Probe but has been moved in front of the school which decreased parent parking. As well, 15 minute designated parking being "camped-out" in regularly before and after 8:00am.
6. Families have chosen to enrol their children in the before and after school program BLAST as well as to move to neighbourhoods located within busing zones partially due to these concerns.
7. Parents are encouraged to address their concerns to The City of Lethbridge or Lethbridge Police Service.

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## Goals

1. A solar-powered pedestrian-activated flashing crosswalk light should be installed across the western-most crosswalk at the T-Intersection of Rocky Mountain Blvd and Mt. Burke Blvd. A curb extension called a “bulb-out curb” should also be installed at all 3 crossing points of this intersection. This would increase what is currently a NO PARKING zone of one car length(15metres) to at least two car lengths. If a car is parked properly in this current location it is virtually impossible to see a pedestrian waiting to cross the street. A bulb-out curb would also extend the sidewalk into the road to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and allow better sight lines for both pedestrians and approaching vehicles.
2. A bulb-out curb should also be installed at all 4 corners of the Intersection of Rocky Mountain Blvd & Mt. Rundle Blvd. Parents regularly park in these crosswalks and it's a challenge for children to cross safely here as well. An adult crossing guard would also greatly assist as there are often “close calls” of vehicles vs children.
- Flashing Crosswalk Lights and Bulb-out Curbs have recently been installed at the following locations in Lethbridge based on a significant need for increased pedestrian safety:
  - Galbraith Elementary School(both)
  - Coalbanks Elementary School(both)
  - 3rd Avenue & 12 'B' Street South (both)
  - Mike Mountain Horse Elementary School(NO bulb-out curb, but there is at least 2 car lengths of NO PARKING signage before and after the Flashing Crosswalk)
  - A Bulb Out Curb was installed at the intersection Red Crow & Jerry Potts Blvd after public consultation.
3. A Green Left Turn Arrow should be installed at the intersection of Rocky Mountain Blvd and University Drive.
4. *Pick-up and drop off with driver remaining in vehicle* parking ONLY signage should be installed in front of Probe. There should no longer be a 15 minute parking zone.
5. Move the bus parking back to where it was, West of Mt. Burke Blvd. With the installation of a Flashing Crosswalk Light and Bulb-out curbs, visibility for pedestrians intending on crossing the street near the buses will be greatly improved.
6. Alternatively, leave bus parking in front of Probe but install a pick-up & drop-off lane West of Mt. Burke Blvd.

## SCHOOL PARKING DIAGRAMS & LOCATION PHOTOS

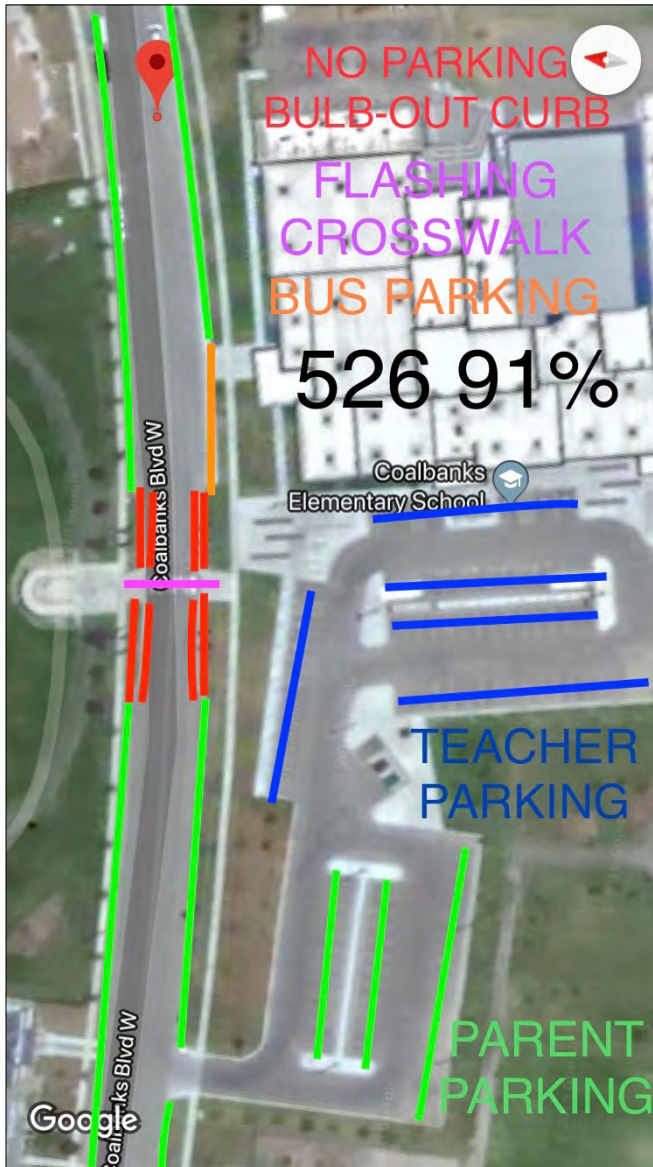
### DR. GERALD B. PROBE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



A properly parked vehicle before the crosswalk at Mt. Burke Blvd does not allow proper visibility for pedestrians.

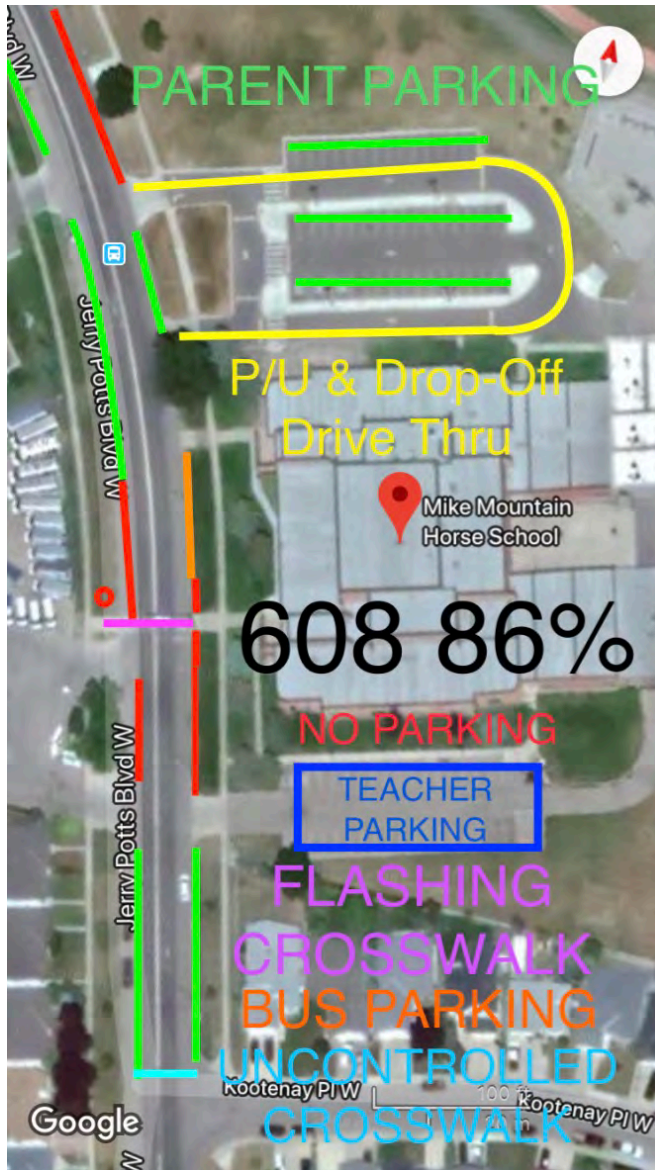
A NO PARKING sign had been placed in an obvious NO PARKING zone at Mt. Rundle Blvd.

## COALBANKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Coalbanks Elementary School is the newest school in Lethbridge with the most up-to-date pedestrian safety infrastructure.

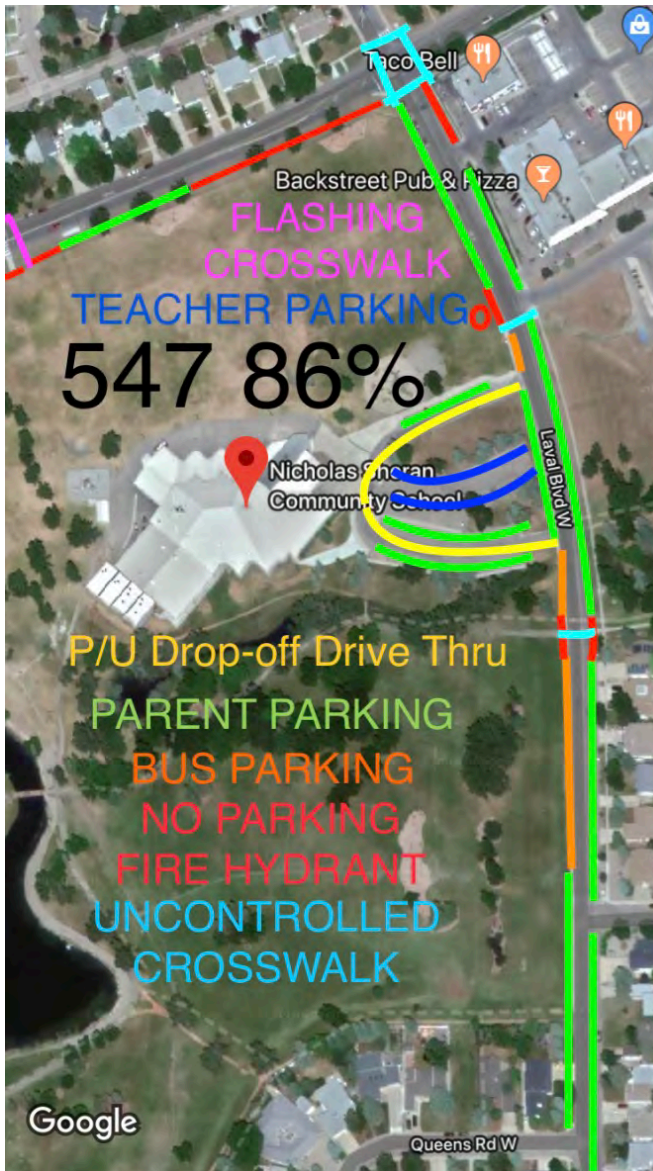
## MIKE MOUNTAIN HORSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Mike Mountain Horse recently had valuable pedestrian safety upgrades installed.



## NICHOLAS SHERAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Nicholas Sheran is a good model of pedestrian safety balanced with parking for all users.



## ST. MARTHA'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Despite St. Martha's having a much lower student population, they have struggled with extremely limited parking. Their solution was installing a Pick-up & Drop-Off Drive Thru with signage stating **SHORT TERM PARKING ONLY**.

## ST. PAT'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



The City of Lethbridge parking lot across Grand River Blvd has no signage stating that it cannot be used by parents, therefore it is used as overflow parking.

## COMPARABLE PROJECTS WITHIN LETHBRIDGE

### GALBRAITH ELEMENTARY CROSSWALK

lethbridge.ca

Published June 29, 2018

Work to enhance pedestrian safety at 9 Avenue N and 18 Street N - in front of the Galbraith Elementary School - is scheduled to begin July 3 and the new solution is also good for the environment.

The planned construction will include the installation of the City's first solar powered flashing pedestrian lights as well as an extension of the curb called a bulb-out. A bulb-out extends the sidewalk to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and allows better sight lines for both pedestrians and approaching vehicles.



CONSTRUCTION AREA  
DETOUR ROUTE  
LOCAL TRAFFIC ONLY

### 3RD AVE & 12 "B" STREET SOUTH

lethbridge.ca

## News Centre

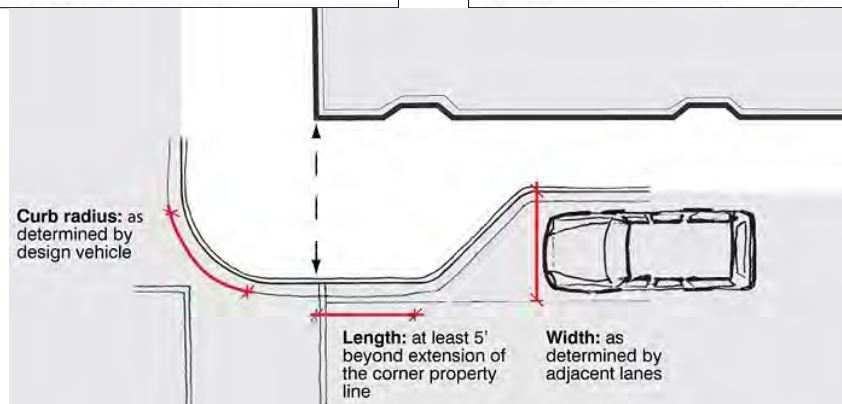
### Work begins Sept 10 to improve pedestrian safety on 3rd Ave S

Published September 07, 2018


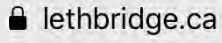

Construction work to enhance pedestrian safety on 3 Avenue South and 12 'B' Street South will start September 10. Motorists should be aware that traffic is being reduced to one lane in each direction. The work is expected to finish with all lanes re-opened by Friday, September 21, weather permitting.

The enhancements being made include the installation of pedestrian activated flashing lights as well as an inward extension of the curb called a bulb-out. A bulb-out extends the sidewalk into the road to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and allows better sight lines for both pedestrians and approaching vehicles.

Due to the volume of traffic in this area, the lane closure will stretch over two blocks to accommodate merging vehicles. For safety, the speed limit will also be reduced to 30 km/h when workers are present.



## SQUAMISH BLVD / RED CROW BLVD PEDESTRIAN SAFETY UPGRADES



### Background

The 2012 Squamish Boulevard West Traffic Concerns study involved a public consultation process that resulted in recommendations to construct Jerry Potts Boulevard from Red Crow Boulevard to Métis Trail, construct Métis Trail from Garry Drive to Jerry Potts Boulevard and consider traffic calming measures on Red Crow Boulevard. The recommendation was presented and approved by Council on January 24th, 2013.

[Click here to view information on the Squamish Blvd Traffic Concerns Process.](#)

### Project Updates



**October 8, 2015** - Concrete bump outs are being constructed on Red Crow Blvd West between both entrances to Squamish Court West. Red Crow Blvd West will be closed in this area from October 13 - 15 to facilitate construction. Traffic will be detoured onto Squamish Court West during this time.

**October 2, 2015** - Garry Drive West will reopen today at 4 p.m. with the completion of roundabout construction at the Squamish Boulevard West/Highlands Boulevard West intersection.

### Squamish Blvd. W / Red Crow Blvd. Traffic Concerns

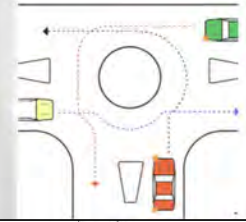
These are neighbourhood concerns:

- The roadway is busy and driveway access is difficult
- Traffic congestion at the intersections of Squamish Blvd./Garry Drive and Squamish Blvd./Red Crow Blvd.
- Speed of traffic on Red Crow Blvd.
- Pedestrian and traffic safety

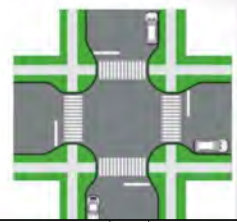


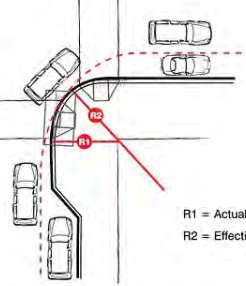
### Possible Traffic Calming Solutions on Red Crow Blvd.

**Mini Roundabout**  
- speed reduction



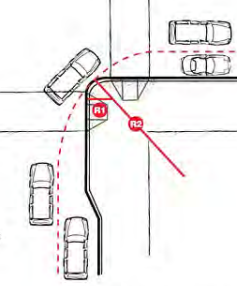
**Bulb outs**  
- speed reduction  
- improved pedestrian safety





R1 = Actual curb radius  
R2 = Effective turn radius

**Option 1: A shorter crossing and larger overall bulb-out**



**Option 2: Greater directionality and sharper curb radius**

# DISTRICT NO. 51 WESTSIDE BOUNDARY REVIEW INFO

## WESTSIDE BOUNDARY REVIEW

Currently, all elementary schools on the westside are near capacity. In particular, Dr. Probe Elementary School is at 99 per cent capacity, and Coalbanks Elementary School is at 91 per cent capacity. Chinook High School, École Nicholas Sheran and Mike Mountain Horse Elementary School are also near capacity.

According to estimates, the westside of Lethbridge could gain anywhere from 800-1,000 students over the next 10 years.

As a result, it is necessary for Lethbridge School District No. 51 to review school boundaries on that side of the city for our elementary schools and our westside high school.

Lethbridge School District No. 51 has stressed the need for a new elementary school in west Lethbridge, and has met with the Government of Alberta to present a case for the construction of a new school.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

- Why is a new elementary school being built on the southside of Lethbridge, when the westside is the fastest-growing part of the city?
- How can Lethbridge residents help the District's efforts in advocating for the need for a new westside elementary school?
- Can we add more modular classrooms to the other westside elementary schools to increase the capacities of those schools?

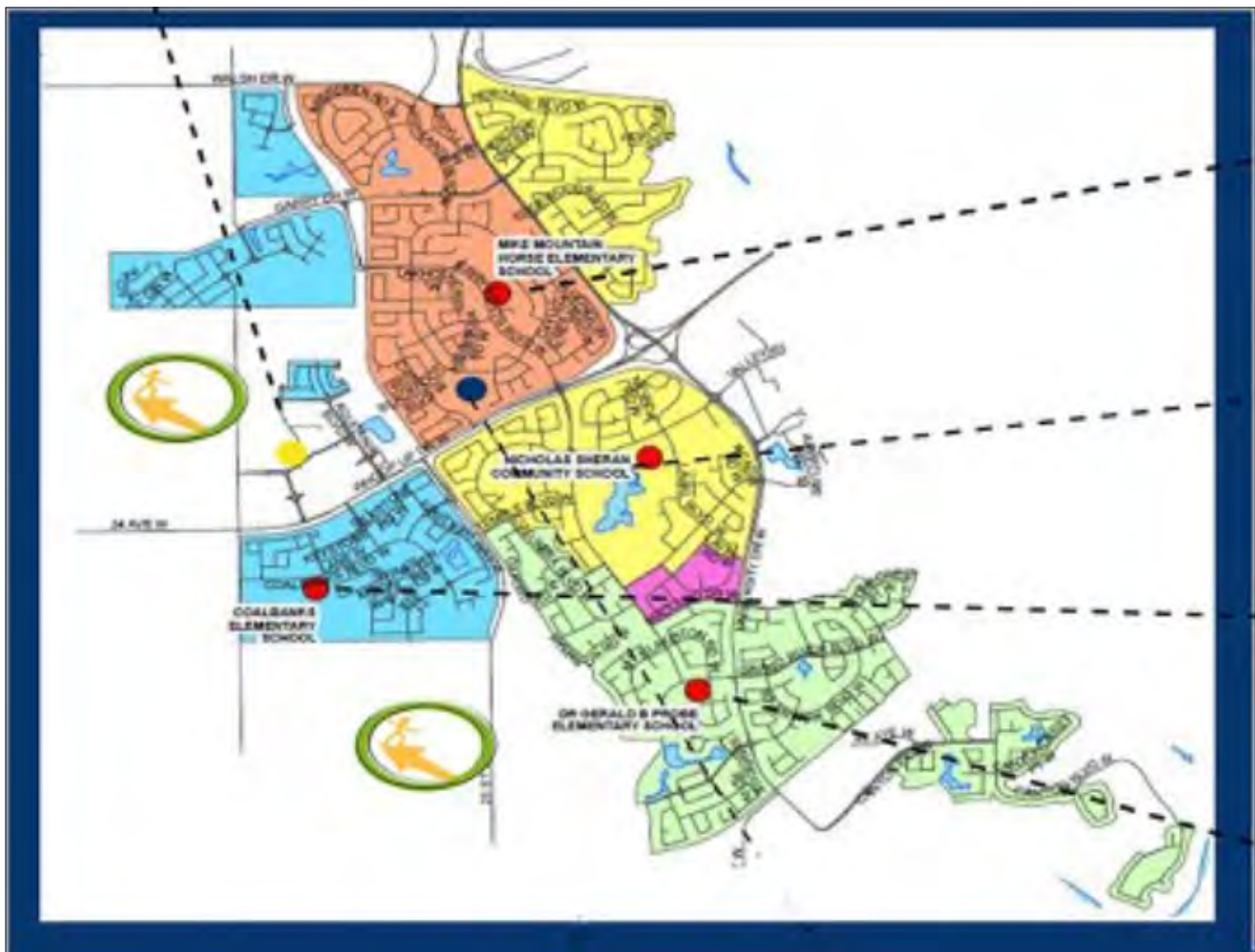
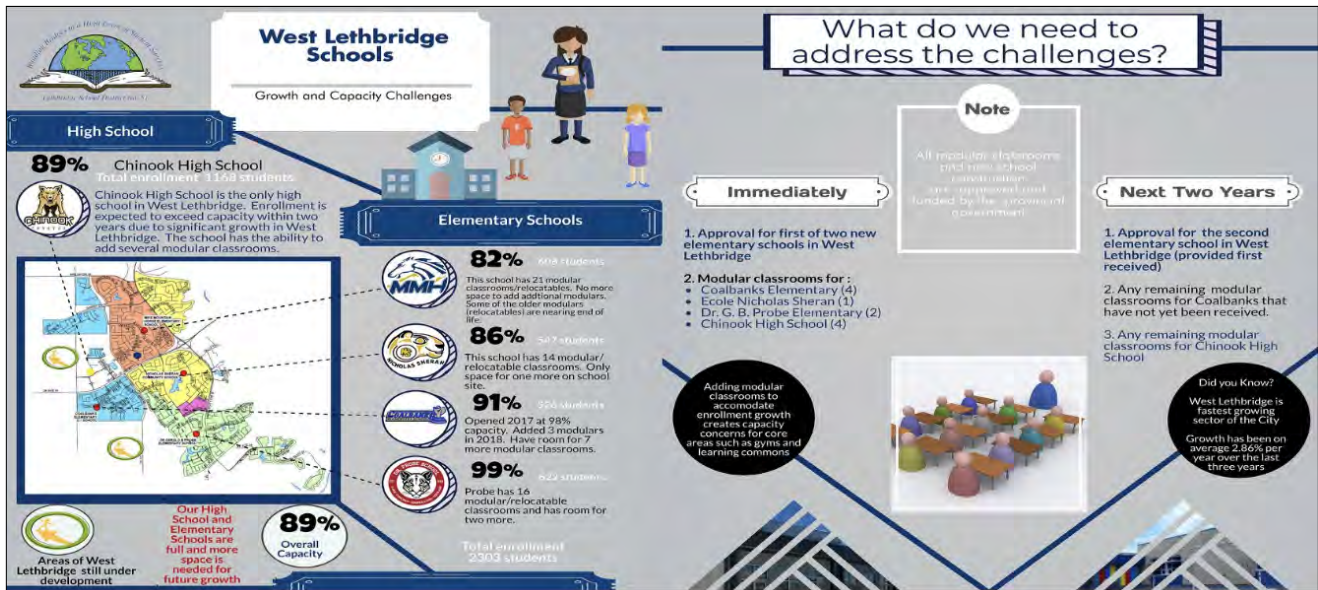
South Lethbridge has been experiencing growth and schools in south Lethbridge were also experiencing capacity pressures. With new development in Fairmont, Sixmile Coulee and now Southbrook, a new school in south Lethbridge is very much required.

Contact your elected provincial representative, Lethbridge-West MLA Shannon Phillips, at [lethbridge.west@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:lethbridge.west@assembly.ab.ca) or 403-329-4644.

**Facility Utilization**  
The school district begins to get concerned over space utilization when the utilization rate is over 85%. When looking at utilization the District considers not only base utilization but also core utilization. Core utilization takes into account the facility core learning spaces and does not include modular classroom facilities. Modular Classrooms may have been added to address immediate enrolment pressures, however through the facilitation of added enrolment may have exceeded rated core capacity.

This chart illustrates that both the South and West Sectors will have utilization rates over 85%. Due to significant growth in the next three years, in West Lethbridge, utilization rates are over 100%.

City Sector	Full Area		Projected Growth in 3 year period	Core Area Only	
	2017-2018 Actual	2020-2021 Projected		2017-2018 Actual	2020-2021
North	71%	78%	9.73%	77%	84%
South	81%	86%	5.81%	100%	106%
West	91%	103%	11.28%	158%	176%
<b>Total District</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>9.12%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>103%</b>



## MEMO FROM PROBE PRINCIPAL - HEATHER HADFORD

### Probe Bulletin Week #22: February 11, 2018

Oki and good morning, Probe families!

#### Parking Concerns

We know that the limited parking in front of the school is frustrating and can be even more frustrating at certain times of day. The neighborhood grew up around the school and the City did not foresee a day when we would have 620 children coming and going each day. For instance, BLAST parents typically drop off between 7:00 AM and 8:00 AM, which is well before supervision begins or when the busses arrive (both at 8:10 AM). There should be plenty of parking available for them prior to the second round of drop offs between 8:10 AM and 8:22 AM when the bell goes. BLAST parents can't drop off outside and drive away, because they need to sign their children in with the BLAST staff. Please keep these things in mind as you are managing your morning routine. Dropping off efficiently and safely is key to reducing everyone's frustration. Comments and suggestions regarding bus parking, traffic/street signs, traffic lights, controlled intersections, etc can be directed to the City of Lethbridge. We continue to share our own concerns as a school and as a school district.



#### Traffic Safety

The number of calls and visits we are getting from upset parents and grandparents regarding driver safety around the school has increased dramatically since Christmas. In the last couple of weeks, Lethbridge Police Service have issued tickets or warnings to drivers in front of our school for u-turns, running the intersections, excessive speed, parking in the bus loading zones, and obscured vehicle windows. The Lethbridge Police Service encourages parents to take down licence plate numbers and report unsafe activity to them immediately rather than to the school.



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## In Closing

I have been a nearly daily visitor to Probe since September 2012. My daughter attended Probe from Kindergarten through Grade 5 and she currently attends SJF in Grade 6 and my son began attending Probe in September of 2018 in Grade 1. I have noticed significant negative changes in pedestrian safety, parking and traffic flow over the past 6+ years. My frustration with these issues increased in the Fall of 2018 to a level that I could no longer ignore.

I was taught that if you have a complaint, you should offer a solution along with that complaint. So, I decided to visit all of the westside elementary schools to see what their pedestrian safety and parking infrastructure looked like. I did some online research and I spoke with current and former Probe Teachers and Principals. I spoke with friends who had children in Probe when it opened in 1992 as well as friends who currently walk their children to and from Probe each day. I have also spoken with Probe's School Resource Officer from The Lethbridge Police Service as well as the Director of Facilities from the Planning & Development Department of Lethbridge School District 51. Finally, I spoke with the respective Parent Councils for Probe and SJF along with the Lethbridge School District No. 51 Associate Superintendant Business Affairs. I have received overwhelming support to go ahead with my proposal as upgrades to the pedestrian safety infrastructure along Rocky Mountain Blvd is long overdue.

Thank you for your time and consideration with the hope that improvements can be made.