

The Street Reclaiming Project

- ▶ A committee of Neighbourhood Traffic Group members has been working with Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (B.E.S.T.)ⁱ to develop this pilot project.
- ▶ We have designed small, informal meetings (coffee clatches) to be held in people's livingrooms throughout the neighbourhood in March, April, and May to gather ideas that will form the basis for a Street Reclaiming Action Plan.
- ▶ On June 8th, B.E.S.T. will host a neighbourhood Visioning Workshop & Pot Luck to pull all these ideas together and create a map of all the street reclaiming activities we can do.
- ▶ B.E.S.T. will then use this map to write a Street Reclaiming Action Plan, help analyse the feasibility of the ideas, and help the NTG to coordinate these activities. Then the NTG and neighbourhood residents will put our plans into action throughout the summer and beyond!

What is Street Reclaiming?

Street Reclaimingⁱⁱ is a creative, community-building approach to addressing neighbourhood traffic problems such as volume, speed, noise, pollution, loss of safety, social isolation, and deterioration of community. *It is a way to reclaim your street as a place for play, social activity, and community-building.*

Through neighbourhood organising, celebration, art, community-designed streetscapes, direct action strategies, and reducing our own car use, we can become active participants in finding solutions that will help us rediscover streets as places to connect with neighbours and build a healthy community.

Street Reclaiming is different from traffic calming. Implemented by the City, traffic calming aims to be a disincentive to car-drivers speeding & using certain streets or parts of streets. Street Reclaiming, on the other hand, is done by the community, and aims to reclaim the street as a space for play, social activity, and community-building.

Some Street Reclaiming Ideas

These are some of the ideas that were brainstormed by residents at Coffee Clatches held throughout the neighbourhood in March, April, and May.

Note: These ideas have not been edited for feasibility – while we can't do all ideas that have been brainstormed, this is a starting point for selecting and prioritising activities that we can do.

Themes or other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constantly changing features, always interesting • get children involved in making banners & other art projects • Include activities that will include the “quieter” less engaged neighbours
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with other streets throughout the year to see how they're doing with their street reclaiming ideas • Get lots of people to help – talk to people – have fun! • Attract media – get free exposure (traffic dropped a little after media exposure during past hockey games) • Random acts – like the bird houses in the trees on Napier
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block parties - party, party, party! • Parades, stilt walkers, juggling, invite Public Dreams! • neighbourhood sidewalk sale, garbage pickup day or block clean up day • porch theatre - different scenes on different porches! • plant swaps - save \$ on gardening, match novice gardeners up with experienced gardeners • outdoor potluck - show & celebrate different ethnic backgrounds (with flags, food, etc)... welcome the passersby for such events • theatre or opera or movies in the park (on Victoria) • slide shows or travel presentations (take turns doing slide shows for neighbours) • musical performances or jam sessions, talent show or standup comedy shows! • Big carnival – Rio de Jenerio on Napier St. – take the block party to a whole new level! • Movie Night - project a movie onto a house • Large neighbourhood picnic - lots of food! • Block parties to close street - or not necessary to block traffic, just to attract attention • Tour of different houses, gardens, renovations, etc. ☺ • Art shows in front yards
Features & Beautification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plant more flowers outside fences, make gardens more interesting; "extend my home" • archways at street entrances • banners hung across the street; make it out of material that can be easily pulled down, or doesn't matter if it gets taken down by City • flags or banners on both sides on street posts - could use banners as fundraiser (auction off copies) • if don't own a car, use the parking spot for something else - Parked car

	<p>planted with plants!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skateboard ramps on street • Paint the street – at Nanaimo, write s l o w on the pavement in bright yellow paint • hanging banners to enclose the street -hang laundry across the street! - create movement with art. • Cut-out flowers in front yards & trees again (re-do the same action as last year, and get more out this year!) • Make more body cut-outs of children playing • Furniture & tables on grass boulevards • R.I.P. crosses with signs indicating what we lose because of car traffic (clean air, health, safe neighbourhood, peace & quiet, etc.) • Create a patio on the sidewalk or boulevard or car parking space
Ongoing or Random Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • randomly place 2 buckets along side of street (like for saving parking stall) • regular street closures once a week? less frequently (organise an event) • weekly BBQ or block dinner on the roadside • everyone park the maximum distance from the curb • form a Blockwatch Neighbours' Network • get people walking across the street more • sing or practice music on the deck • front yard parties (rent a hot tub, kiddie swimming pool, tikki lanterns...) • network neighbourhood cat/dog sitters, dog walkers • Pylon spaces on wide corner – create a lounge area marked by pylons

ⁱ B.E.S.T. is a non-profit organisation that strives to make urban communities healthier places to live by promoting sustainable transportation and land-use planning, and pedestrian, cycling, and transit-oriented neighbourhoods. B.E.S.T.'s Street Reclaiming project aims to assist neighbourhood groups in their efforts to address local traffic concerns such as volume, speed, safety, and loss of community through "Street Reclaiming" activities. For more information about B.E.S.T. see www.best.bc.ca or phone 604-669-2860.

ⁱⁱ For more information about street reclaiming see www.lesstraffic.com or contact B.E.S.T. for further resources (incl. a book & video available for loan).