GUIDE TO SAFER STREETS NEAR SCHOOLS

Understanding Your Policy Options in the City of Toronto

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Working Together
Driving Kids to Unhealthy Habits

• 58% of Canadian parents walked to school but only 28% of their children do today (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2014)

• In Toronto, trips to school by walking or biking have also declined from:
  • 68% in 1986 to 48% in 2011 for students aged 11-13
  • 38% in 1986 to 33% in 2011 for students aged 14-17

• Meanwhile, trips to school by automobile have increased from:
  • 10% to 25% for students 11-13
  • 11% to 20% for students 14-17 (Smart Commute, 2015)
Wide Ranging Benefits
  • E.g. physical and mental health, safety in numbers, improved school performance

Also Big Challenges
  • Distance, weather, convenience, traffic danger
A key reason why fewer kids are walking and biking to school is because parents are afraid of traffic danger

(Macdonald, 2012; Pucher & Buehler 2008)

As a parent, I would love to see my kids walk and bike to school, yet the imminent danger of speeding cars and other safety concerns (no bike lanes, lack of signals or crosswalks) makes me hesitate. In fact, many parents in our community would like to help make our neighbourhood safer, but it’s often not clear what steps can be taken.

(Parent, Toronto, Ontario, Canada)
What did we do about it?

- Studied the literature on traffic calming and speed limits
- Undertook a review of all relevant city and provincial policies
- Completed interviews with city staff, councillors, and community members
- Developed a guide explaining the process as we understood it
- Pilot tested guide with (3) school councils and received additional feedback from Transportation Services
By working closely with your neighbours, school community, Ward Councillor, City staff and other passionate individuals, you can help build a better city.

**VOCABULARY**
Green boxes provide definitions of key vocabulary that you will need.

**TIP**
Yellow boxes highlight helpful tips that can assist you.

**POLICY**
Blue boxes have key policies that you can refer to for more information.
Step 1: Connect with Your School Council
Step 2: Write Your Vision

• What does a ‘safe neighbourhood’ mean to you?
• What do the streets look like?
• Who is using them and when?
• Which ideas do you all agree on?
Step 3: Define the Problem

• In your school neighbourhood, which streets, street segments, or intersections do not look or feel like the streets in your vision?

• List the ones you are most concerned about here, and what the main issues are on those streets.
Step 4: Know Your Road Classification
Step 5: Learn about the Paths

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road Class</th>
<th>Road Classification Type</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Road or Collector Road</td>
<td>Arterial Roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major Arterial</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interventions</th>
<th>The Path</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed Limit</td>
<td>Path 1 (30km/hr Policy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Calming</td>
<td>Path 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersections, Crossings, Sidewalk</td>
<td>Path 3a or b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed Limit</td>
<td>Path 1 (40km/hr Policy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersections and Crossings</td>
<td>Path 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Calming</td>
<td>Path 2 generally Traffic Calming not eligible but &quot;Other Safety Measures&quot; are possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed Limit</td>
<td>Path 1b 50km/h often lowest speed but exceptions are possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Step 6: Connect with Your Councillor
CHAPTER 2: THE PATHS

PATH 1: Speed Limit Measures

Lowering vehicle speeds are one of various tools to improve road safety. Higher speeds increase the severity of crashes since drivers have less time to react\(^6\). In particular, pedestrian and cyclist fatalities increase as vehicle speed goes up\(^7\) (Figure 2).

Research studies have found that higher speed leads to more collisions involving children, who are injured more often in pedestrian and cycling injuries and casualties\(^8\). Children are usually injured mid-block, often on residential streets, and in front of their home or a park\(^9\).

Lower speed limits are more effective when combined with enforcement and education. A comprehensive

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Figure 2: Vehicle Impact Speed vs. Probability of Fatality

Probability of fatal injury for a pedestrian colliding with a vehicle.
Source: Global Road Safety Partnership, 2008.
Traditional Traffic Calming Treatments

Traffic calming can take a variety of forms. The most common type in Toronto are speed humps.

However, there are many other types of traffic calming that may be appropriate for your street. These include traffic circles, curb extensions, or other measures.

We recommend keeping an open mind. Councillors and City staff will have experience with a number of traffic calming solutions and can advise what will work best on certain streets. Examples of specific traffic calming treatments are included below\textsuperscript{12}:

\begin{figure}
  \centering
  \includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{speed_hump.png}
  \hfill
  \includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{curb_extension.png}
  \caption{Speed hump and Curb extension examples.}
\end{figure}
APPENDIX A

Worksheet: Writing a Vision, Defining the Problems, Considering Options

Vision: What does a ‘safe neighbourhood’ mean to you? What do the streets look like? Who is using them and when? Talk about your ideas as a group, and take notes on a scrap piece of paper. Which ideas do you all agree on? Put them together and write your vision below. For some vision ideas and language, check out activeneighbourhoods.tcat.ca or Chapter 1 of Toronto’s Official Plan.

Problems and Options: In your school neighbourhood, which streets, street segments, or intersections do not look or feel like the streets in your vision? List the ones you are most concerned about here, and what the main issues are on those streets. Find out what road class each street is (Local, Collector, Minor Arterial, Major Arterial). Compare the issues and road classes to the paths in Figure 1 in the Guide and the measures in Chapter 2 to see your options moving forward. We also recommend taking pictures of the issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street (Name, number range, intersection)</th>
<th>Issues (Be specific, list all)</th>
<th>Road class (Local, collector, etc.)</th>
<th>Options (Traffic calming, speed limit, crosswalk, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Current State of the Project

Launched in September 2016 at saferstreetsnearschools.ca
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