

# GUIDE TO SAFER STREETS NEAR SCHOOLS



Understanding Your Policy Options  
in the City of Toronto

September  
2016



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Partial support was provided by a seed grant from the Healthier Cities and Communities Hub Seed Grant initiative, a consortium of three Funding Partners: Toronto Public Health, The Wellesley Institute and the Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

This work was also supported by Mitacs through the Mitacs-Accelerate Program.

## Authors

Kevin Chan, *University of Toronto*

Brandon Quigley, *York University*

Katie Wittmann, *Green Communities Canada*

## Editors & Advisors

Sherry Biscope, *Toronto Public Health*

Monica Campbell, *Toronto Public Health & Dalla Lana School of Public Health*

Kristen Evers, *Toronto District School Board*

Jacky Kennedy, *Green Communities Canada*

Carol Mee, *Toronto Public Health*

Beth Savan, *University of Toronto*

Kristin Schwartz, *CultureLink Settlement Services*

Nancy Smith Lea, *Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT)*

We would like to thank all of our interview participants who shared their knowledge on various Toronto policies and processes, as well as the City of Toronto staff, Kids at Play team, school council members, and other community members who provided valuable insight and feedback on drafts of this guide.

To download the editable toolkit of templates, literature review and policy scan document, and browse the web version of the guide (which is compatible with Google Translate), please visit [saferstreetsnearschools.ca](https://saferstreetsnearschools.ca)



# SUMMARY

Do you want to work with your community to create safer streets in your neighbourhood?

*A Guide to Safer Streets Near Schools* will help you learn how. This guide brings together a number of policies from the City of Toronto that residents can use to request street improvements. It explains the policies step-by-step, and shares advice about which ones may be most relevant to you.

After reading this guide, you will be better informed about the importance of **active transportation** and how you, as a resident, can contribute to neighbourhood changes that slow the **speed of vehicles** and make it safer for people to **cross the street**.

**Chapter 1** introduces you to the guide and takes you through the steps of who to contact, defining the problem, and understanding the possible paths forward.

**Chapter 2** goes into detail about the three potential paths that you may want to follow depending on your particular problems, goals, and the road class(es) you are trying to change. These paths include (1) **Speed Limit Measures**, (2) **Traffic Calming Measures**, and (3) **Intersection and Major Road Crossing Measures**.

**Chapter 3** gives you research and other resources from around the world to help you make strong arguments for the changes that you want to see.

Changing the way your streets look and function is only one piece of the puzzle. This guide focuses on City of Toronto policies, but we share a number of valuable resources in *Appendices G & H* that will help you connect with other organizations and teach about road safety. For a variety of other educational and promotional tools that you can use no matter where you live, we encourage you to visit [saferoutestoschool.ca](http://saferoutestoschool.ca).

## VOCABULARY

### Active Transportation

Active Transportation means getting around using your own energy, such as walking, cycling, or using a scooter, wheelchair, roller-blades – anything that gets your body moving! Using active transportation to get to and from school is fun, fast, affordable, and great for student and environmental health.

**More people using active transportation makes the roads safer for everyone.**



# CHAPTER 1: GETTING STARTED

## Introduction to the Guide

Walking and biking are great for children's health, are a fun way to get from place to place<sup>1</sup>, and can even help students do better in school<sup>2</sup>. Unfortunately, while most parents walked to school when they were kids, not as many families are walking to school today<sup>3</sup>.

One of the reasons fewer kids are walking or biking is because families are worried about traffic danger<sup>4</sup>. As communities, we can work with our Ward Councillors and City staff to make our neighbourhoods safer and help kids get the many health and social benefits of travelling actively to school<sup>5</sup>.

Many cities around the world and here in Canada have been lowering speed limits, installing traffic calming, and improving intersections. These cities, including Toronto, are gaining the benefits of better health and safety, a cleaner environment, and a stronger local economy.

*A Guide to Safer Streets Near Schools* explains key steps that you, as a resident, can take to be better informed about traffic safety and how you can request street improvements in your neighbourhood.

If you live outside of Toronto, many of our suggestions and approaches will still be useful, but your municipality will have its own specific policies and practices around road safety.

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.



## Using the Guide

### STEP CONNECT WITH YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL

1

Get in touch with your School Council Chair and Principal. Talk to them about the *Guide to Safer Streets Near Schools*, and ask if it can be a topic at an upcoming meeting. Suggest creating a subcommittee that can focus on street safety, and plan a first meeting.

### STEP WRITE YOUR VISION

2

At your first meeting, talk about your vision for the neighbourhood. Use our worksheet in *Appendix A*. It asks you to think about what a safe neighbourhood means to you, and the key pieces that create it.

### STEP DEFINE THE PROBLEM

3

What are the traffic problems that are in the way of your vision? Our worksheet asks you to think about the specific streets that have issues, and what those issues are. Is there no safe place to cross the street? Are cars travelling way too fast?

### STEP KNOW YOUR ROAD CLASSIFICATION

4

Find the classification of the streets you wish to improve. Streets in Toronto are classified as one of either local roadway, collector roadway, minor arterial roadway, or major arterial roadway. On the [City of Toronto's website](#), you can search for streets by name, map, or by ward.

### STEP LEARN ABOUT THE PATHS AND INTERVENTIONS

5

Compare the streets you identified on the worksheet to the options in *Figure 1*. This will help give you an idea about which path(s) can address your traffic problems. Read Chapter Two to learn about the steps of each path. You can choose a general path and start to think about which options may work well in your neighbourhood, but we recommend that you not focus too narrowly on any one idea if there are several options that can help achieve the same goal.

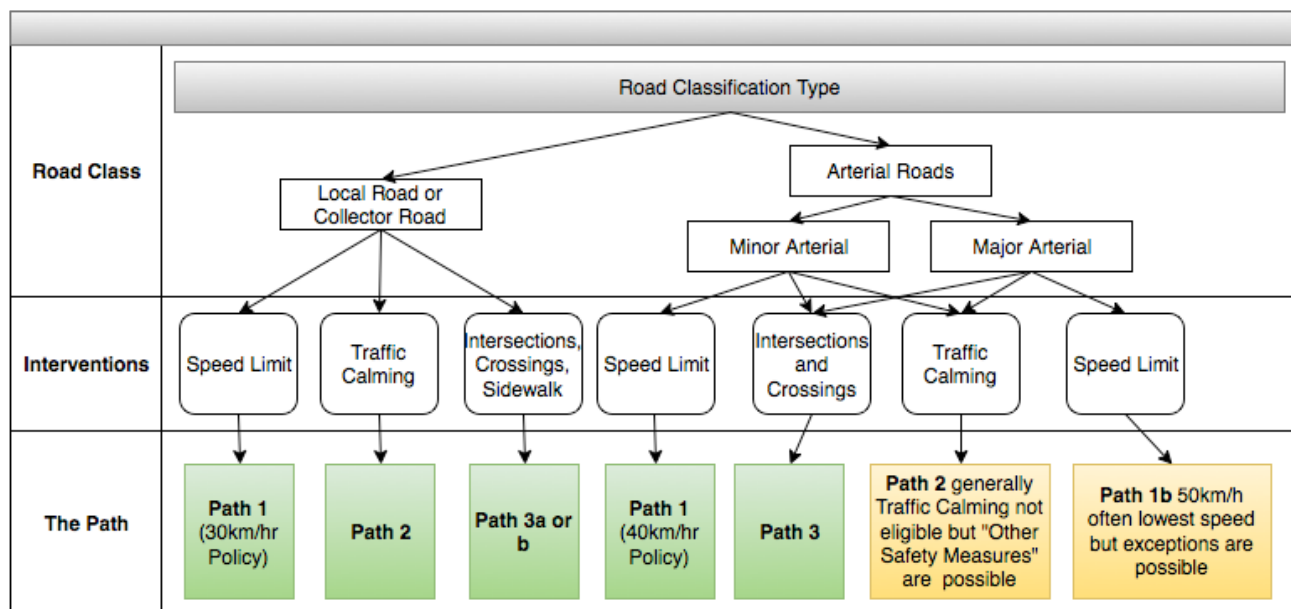
### STEP CONNECT WITH YOUR WARD COUNCILLOR

6

If you don't already know who your Ward Councillor is, use the City of Toronto's ["Find your Councillor" website](#). Type in your address to find your ward name and number, along with the name of your Ward Councillor. It will take you to their profile and give you their phone number and email.

Invite your Councillor to your next subcommittee or School Council meeting, and share with them the results of the worksheet you completed. *Appendix B* includes a sample template for reaching out to your Councillor. With their help, decide which of the interventions are possible and best suited to your neighbourhood. Find out if others have contacted them with similar concerns. Then you can begin to follow the specific steps for the path(s) and intervention(s) you have chosen. If you want to recruit more parents to help you move forward, you can fill in the sample outreach letter in *Appendix C* and share it with your school community.

**Figure 1: Choosing your Path**



## VOCABULARY

The City of Toronto's Road Classification System designates streets based on the service provided. Classification considers motor vehicle traffic volumes, the amount of public transit, and the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

**Arterial:** Arterial roadways are urban streets that move large amounts of traffic and public transit. Speeds and volumes are higher on these roads and specialized infrastructure such as bicycle lanes and sidewalks are necessary. Minor arterials have over 8000 vehicles per day. Major arterials have over 20,000 vehicles per day.

**Collector:** Collectors are medium sized streets that connect arterial and local roads. They may have signalized intersections. Some collector roads have public transit. Collector roads have 2,500 to 8,000 vehicles per day.

**Local:** Local roads provide access to neighbourhoods and carry a smaller amount of traffic. Traffic is usually low and there usually is no public transit. They are sometimes called residential or neighbourhood streets. Local roads have fewer than 2,500 vehicles per day.

## TIP

### Visiting Your Councillor

We recommend having a vision, defining the problems, and thinking about possible interventions, but keeping an open mind about which ones may work best. Councillors will consult with Transportation Services, who review traffic safety concerns raised by residents, and provide technical recommendations with possible options. Working together with your Councillor and Transportation Services will allow you to direct your efforts towards the interventions that will help you reach your vision and also have the greatest chance of success.



# CHAPTER 2: THE PATHS

## PATH 1: Speed Limit Measures

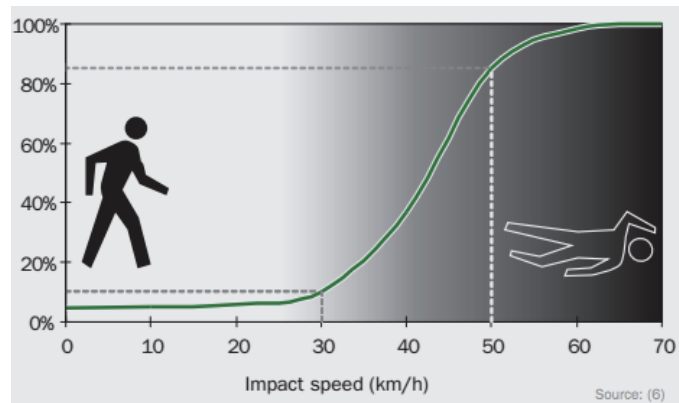
Lowering vehicle speeds are one of various tools to improve road safety. Higher speeds increase the severity of crashes since drivers have less time to react<sup>6</sup>. In particular, pedestrian and cyclist fatalities increase as vehicle speed goes up<sup>7</sup> (*Figure 2*).

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<sup>8</sup>. Children are usually injured mid-block, often on residential streets, and in front of their home or a park<sup>9</sup>.

Lower speed limits are more effective when combined with enforcement and education. A comprehensive approach that includes local Police Services and other community groups is a good idea when making speed limit changes. Also, keep in mind that lowering speed limits is only one of the tools available – depending on your street's design, traffic calming interventions (Path 2) may be more appropriate and effective.

Check out our enforcement tip on page 10, and some education ideas in *Appendix G*.

**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.



## Path 1A: 30km/h Speed Limit Policy

You can apply for a 30 km/h Speed Limit on a single street or for several streets around your school.

To have lower speed limits implemented, a number of requirements or 'warrants' will need to be met (*Figure 3 outlines Toronto's Speed Limit Warrants*).

After speaking with your Councillor you will be asked to complete a petition as required by Warrant "A." After the petition is complete, Transportation Services will undertake a study to determine if the street meets the other requirements. The street must either meet warrants B and C or B and D.

### POLICY

The **30 km/h Speed Limit Policy** applies to local and collector roads.

### VOCABULARY

#### Warrant

Many city policies must pass a number of criteria to be recommended for approval. These criteria are known as warrants. Warrants can include technical criteria such as block length, speed of traffic, or the proximity to a school or park. Warrants can also be measures of neighbourhood support such as a community petition, a poll, or a public meeting. Warrants are assessed by City staff who will prepare a report for the appropriate Community Council if the warrants are met.

**Figure 3: 30 km/h Speed Limit Policy Warrants**

Warrant A - Petition (mandatory - responsibility of residents)			
You must provide a petition to your Councillor signed by at least 25% of the affected households (or 10% in the case of multiple family dwellings like apartment buildings)			
Warrant B - Road Environment (ALL criteria must be met)			
1. Must be a local or collector road	2. Width of road must be 8.5 metres or less	3. 85% of vehicles must be travelling at or below 50km/h	4. Vehicle volume must be less than 8000 vehicles per day
Warrant C - School and Cycling Environment (ONE criteria must be met)			
1. An elementary or junior high school is beside the road	2. Road is beside parkland that has access to a school or park	3. There are bike lanes, sharrows, or signed bike routes	
Warrant D - Pedestrian and Traffic Environment (At least THREE criteria must be met)			
1. No sidewalk on either side of road or a major part of the road	2. Frequent parking throughout the day with a pavement width less than 6.5m	3. Two or more curves in short distance from each other	4. Not enough distance for stopping

\*The proposal must also not have significant impacts on transit service.

Source: Adapted from City of Toronto (2015). Appendix A. Proposed 30km/h Speed Limit Policy.

## Path 1B: 40km/h Speed Limit Policy

The 30 km/hr Speed Limit Policy only applies to local and collector roads. Lowering the speed limit on arterial roads or other roads with current posted speed limits of 50km/h or more will involve using the [40km/hr Maximum Speed Limits Policy](#).

### POLICY

The **40 km/h Speed Limit Policy** applies to local, collector, and minor arterial roadways.

There is no community petition required for this policy, but there are other warrants that must be met (shown in the chart below). Transportation Services will do the studies to evaluate warrant criteria. If you complete the visioning process and meet with your Councillor and Transportation Services, they can advise whether or not a 40km/h speed limit is an appropriate solution for your street.

- While 40 km/h speed limits apply primarily to minor arterial roads, exceptions have been made for major arterial roads that have schools (where the limit drops during school hours)
- This policy may also be relevant for some local and collector roads

Figure 4 provides a simplified version of the 40 km/h Speed Limit Warrants. To view the details and original language that will be used by the City refer to the full [policy](#).

Warrant A, B, or C must be met.

**Figure 4: 40 km/h Speed Limit Policy Warrants**

Warrant A - Wide Roads			
Pavement width cannot be more than 10.5 metres			
Warrant B - Pedestrian Environment <i>(ONE criteria must be met)</i>			
1. An elementary or junior high school is beside the road	2. Road is beside parkland that has access to a school or park	3. No sidewalk (on either side or a major portion of the road)	4. The sidewalk is not separated from motor vehicle traffic by street parking or bike lanes AND the roadway width is 5.7 metres (if a two-way street) or 4.0 metres (if a one-way street)
Warrant C - Road and Traffic Environment <i>(ONE criteria must be met)</i>			
1. Two or more locations of concern with steep hills and/or curves, with a safe speed of less than 50 km/h	2. Not enough distance to stop safely at two or more locations when travelling at 50km/h	3. Pattern of collisions affected by vehicle speed: Local Roads – 3+ over 3 years Other Roads – 5+ over 3 years	4. Where long term parking is permitted on one or both sides, AND the roadway width is 5.7 metres (if two-way street) or 4.0 metres (if a one-way street)

Source: Adapted from City of Toronto (2002). Warrants for All-Way 'Stop' Sign Control and 40 km/h Maximum Speed Limits.

## Path 1C: District-wide Speed Limit Reduction

Lowering the posted speed limit over a large area can be more effective than a limit on a single street<sup>10</sup>.

In May of 2015, the Toronto and East York Community Council voted to lower the default speed limit from 40km/hr to 30km/hr on all local roads and some collector roads. This was done in response to demands for safer streets from local communities.

A similar reduction in your Community Council area could have a major impact on a large part of the city. Such an initiative would need significant community support including from other school and community groups from each of the wards in your district, as well as studies by City staff.

### **POLICY**

**Toronto and East York Community Council Decision on District Wide Speed Limits.**

### **VOCABULARY**

#### **Community Council**

A Community Council is made up of the Ward Councillors from wards within defined boundaries. Many decisions about local and collector roads are made by Community Council.

Toronto is split into four Community Council districts based on geography. Each district also has its own branch of Transportation Services. The four councils are:

- “Etobicoke-York,”
- “Scarborough,”
- “North York,” and
- “Toronto and East York.”





### **TIP**

#### **Starting your Petition**

A good petition needs to be reasonable, relevant and clear. It should be laid out in a way that the residents who are signing can easily understand what you are saying. You can use and/or modify the petition template in *Appendix D*.

Include the name of the street in question, and make sure that those signing the petition reside on that street. Include your vision for the street and the measures you are considering.

When residents sign the petition they should include their name, address, signature, and date. Include the contact information of the person carrying out the petition.

In addition to the mandated petition required for the 30 km/h Speed Limit Policy and the Traffic Calming Policy, collecting signatures and letters of support from parents, nearby residents, and the school principal can make your case stronger. *Appendix E* includes a sample letter of support.

### **TIP**

#### **Enforcement**

In some cases you may want to ask for enforcement. If this is something you would like to pursue, contact information is provided below:

- Parking Enforcement Officers respond to immediate parking complaints. For a short term response, call the Toronto Police Service at (416) 808-2222.
- Parking Enforcement Area Supervisors work with community members to explore, evaluate, and problem-solve parking related issues affecting the community. To explore long-term solutions, call your Area Supervisor at (416) 808-6600.
- For other enforcement related concerns, school administrators can contact your school's Community School Liaison Officer (a Police Constable with Toronto Police Service).

### **TIP**

#### **Call 311**

In addition to speaking with your Councillor it may be appropriate to call 311.

- 311 provides a 24/7 direct connection to non-emergency City services and information
- Outside City limits you can call 416-392-CITY (2489), within the city dial 311
- You will receive a reference number to track the status of your service request
- You can call 311 to report worn out infrastructure for repair, or to request new infrastructure (such as a pedestrian crossing)

## PATH 2: Traffic Calming Measures

Traffic calming is the deliberate slowing of traffic in residential areas. Engineering changes to roadways such as adding speed humps, roundabouts, or narrowing lanes have been proven to slow traffic and reduce collisions<sup>11</sup>. These improvements can be even more effective at improving road safety when combined with lower speed limits.

Traffic calming can take place on a single street, or across a larger neighbourhood. Begin by consulting with your Ward Councillor, who can help you with the early stages of this process, and whose support will be important to the success of any local traffic calming initiative.

The [City of Toronto Traffic Calming Policy](#) has a number of requirements that must be met. These include:

- Community consultation requirements through a community petition or a public meeting (hosted by your Councillor).
- Safety requirements such as the presence of sidewalks and impact on emergency vehicles.
- Technical requirements such as speed and volume of traffic, minimum block length, and impact on transit.

Safety and technical analysis are undertaken by City staff. Proposals that meet all the criteria are subject to polling conducted by the City Clerk's Office. The poll must have over 50% of affected households respond and at least 60% of households should be in favour.

The City of Toronto has recently produced the [Traffic Calming Guide For Toronto](#) to provide an overview of different traffic calming measures, their impacts, and processes to have them installed.

### POLICY

#### City of Toronto Traffic Calming Policy

- Traffic calming can only be implemented on local and collector roads
- Other forms of road narrowing, such as bike lanes, can be added to arterial roads

### VOCABULARY

#### Traffic Calming

Traffic calming involves changing the physical design of a street to slow traffic. Often, road design has a great effect on a driver's speed. Traffic calming measures include, but are not limited to, narrowing roads or installing speed humps with the purpose of slowing down or reducing the amount of vehicle traffic to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

### TIP

#### Getting a Sidewalk

Some streets near schools may not have sidewalks. You can request a new sidewalk in a school zone by emailing [newsidewalks@toronto.ca](mailto:newsidewalks@toronto.ca). Staff will evaluate the request for a sidewalk by considering safety issues, traffic volume, proximity to schools, and connectivity. They will also consider landscaping, drainage, and utilities to determine whether a new sidewalk will be built.

## 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<sup>12</sup>:



### Speed hump

Speed humps are used to slow cars to a speed of about 30km/h in locations where they are used.



### Curb extension

Curb extensions make it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross the street by shortening the distance from curb to curb.



### Chicane

Chicanes are a series of alternating mid-block curb extensions that create extra turns along a road to slow traffic.



### Raised pedestrian crossing or intersection

Raising a section of the roadway to the height of the sidewalk slows vehicles and makes it easier for pedestrians to cross the street.



### **Traffic circle**

Traffic circles limit a driver's speed when passing through an intersection, and ensure safer turns.



### **Traffic diversion**

A traffic diversion lowers the volume of cars by restricting motor vehicle access while allowing pedestrians and cyclists to travel through.



### **Median island**

Median islands separate opposing directions of traffic, and can slow traffic by briefly narrowing the roadway.



## Other Safety Measures

Other solutions that narrow the width of the road may also act to slow traffic. Some, such as bike lanes, can be placed on arterial roadways. Potential interventions include:



### Bike lane

A designated space on the road for use by people on bicycles. It can be separated from motor vehicle traffic with paint, posts, or other materials.



### Sidewalk

A sidewalk provides dedicated space for pedestrians to separate them from motor vehicle traffic. Many local streets in Toronto do not have sidewalks.



### Contra-flow bike lane

A bike lane added to a one-way street to allow cyclists to travel in the opposite direction to motor-vehicle traffic, creating a two-way route for cyclists.



### Parklet

Parking or travel lanes can be turned into miniature parks using planters, street furniture, or other materials.

## PATH 3: Improving Intersections and Major Crossings

The majority of collisions between motor vehicles and pedestrians or cyclists occur on high speed arterial streets and at intersections<sup>13</sup>. Improving the safety of pedestrian crossings can help to reduce vehicle speeds, separate pedestrians and vehicles, and increase pedestrian visibility<sup>14</sup>. On wider roads with heavier traffic flows or on streets where low speed limits are not feasible, the focus should be on designing safe crossings<sup>15</sup>.

Intersections with high traffic volumes or poor design can overstimulate drivers and make it difficult to notice pedestrians<sup>16</sup>. A recent analysis of crash data in Toronto found that the majority of pedestrian collisions occurred at intersections, and usually the pedestrian had the right-of-way<sup>17</sup>.

If the street you've identified for safety improvements is an arterial road, these are the types of solutions you likely will want to focus on.





## Path 3A: Requesting a Crossing

Requests for crossings can be made through your Councillor or by calling 311. Infrastructure such as pedestrian crossovers, traffic signals, and stop signs are known as “traffic control devices.” Traffic control devices have engineering requirements that City staff will follow. Data that will likely be considered when a new crossing or traffic control is requested include traffic and pedestrian volumes, pedestrian delay, and collisions.

Call 311 or speak with your Councillor to have them request that Transportation Services conduct a “Pedestrian Crossing Protection Study.” If the study is positive, it will be reported to Community Council. If the study is negative, council does not receive a report unless the Councillor requests one.

Several pedestrian crossing and traffic control device solutions exist. Some examples include:



### School crossing

Marked by a double crosswalk line. Requires a student patroller or adult crossing guard.

See *Appendix F* for details about crossing guards and student patrollers.

## POLICY

### The Ontario Traffic Manual Book 12 and Book 15.

City staff will use the criteria outlined in the Ontario Traffic Manual when considering requests for new traffic signals or pedestrian crossing facilities.



### Signalized intersection

Signals indicate when vehicles must stop or proceed, and when pedestrians should cross the street. Countdown timers and different signal phases can help improve safety at signalized intersections.



### Pedestrian crossover

A designated area where pedestrians can cross the street, often marked by flashing overhead lights.

## Path 3B: All-Way Stop Signs

An all-way stop uses stop signs in all directions to control traffic.

Often, a school crossing, pedestrian crossover, or traffic control signal can be used instead of stop signs. However, installing stop signs has been shown to improve safety in some instances<sup>18</sup>.

Introducing an all-way stop is subject to a number of [warrants](#) including:

- Collisions: average number of collisions per year
- Volumes: number of pedestrian and vehicles using the intersection in each direction
- A number of other warrants that City staff will consider.

View the [policy](#) for a complete list.

### POLICY

#### All-Way 'Stop' Sign Control

All-way stop sign controls are not meant to be used to control speed, but are a form of intersection control.





## Path 3C: Improving an Existing Pedestrian Crossing

There may be an existing intersection or pedestrian crossing that your community has safety concerns about. Rather than installing a new crossing or traffic control device, existing crosswalks or intersections can be improved.

### At intersections and crossings:

- Pavement markings such as advanced stop lines, or new signage or lighting can improve safety in an inexpensive way
- Visibility can be improved by removing vegetation or street parking

If existing infrastructure is wearing out, such as faded pavement markings or broken light fixtures, a simple call to 311 or to your Ward Councillor should resolve the problem.

### At pedestrian crossing locations:

- Raised pedestrian crossings and curb extensions can provide safety benefits but are often only possible on local or collector roadways
- Raised medians or pedestrian refuge islands may be possible on arterial roads
- A roundabout can reconfigure an existing intersection for improved safety

### At existing signalized intersections:

- The phasing of the signals can be changed to give pedestrians an advanced start to cross the street
- Signals can also allow for separate phases for pedestrian crossings and vehicle left turns
- Turn restrictions for vehicles can also help improve pedestrian safety at these locations

The process is different depending on how you want to improve an existing pedestrian crossing. Contacting your Ward Councillor will be important to successfully implement these kinds of changes, many of which require a study by Transportation Services.



# CHAPTER 3: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## Research and Data to Support You

### Why lower speeds

- Encouraging walking and biking for transportation is one important way to address the low levels of physical activity among Canada's youth. There is a strong association between active travel to school and levels of physical activity<sup>19</sup>.
- Improving conditions for walking and biking can have a positive impact on local economies and equity<sup>20</sup>.
- Traffic calming and reduced traffic speed can attract customers and new businesses to an area. These improvements to the pedestrian environment result in better retail sales and make neighbourhoods more desirable places to live<sup>21</sup>.

### Effectiveness of 30km/h speed limits

Studies from around the world have taken a closer look at the effectiveness of lower speed limits in residential areas and found them to be effective at lowering speeds and improving safety.

- In Switzerland there was a decrease in overall accidents (15%) and accident severity (27%) in 30km/h zones<sup>22</sup>.
- In London (UK) a reduction of road casualties by 41.9% (48.5% among those 15 and younger) was reported for 20mph (32km/h) traffic speed zones compared to adjacent areas without lowered speed limits<sup>23</sup>.
- Lancashire County (UK) implemented a blanket 30 km/h speed limit in all residential areas and near all schools, and early indications are that deaths and injuries have been reduced<sup>24</sup>.

### Compliance with lower speed limits

One concern about lowering speed limits is that they may frustrate drivers and create a false sense of security. However, lower speed limits have proven to be particularly effective on local roads.

- Studies that have found that reducing a speed limit fails to reduce actual travel speed have mostly been limited to high-volume high-speed roads. Studies done in residential areas, however, have found statistically significant speed reductions were achieved when posted speed limits were reduced<sup>25</sup>.
- Calgary found an average speed of 32 km/h in 30 km/h school zones, and an 85th percentile speed of 38.8 km/h. While 54% of vehicles drove at speeds higher than 30 km/h, only 10% drove at speeds more than 10 km/h over the speed limit<sup>26</sup>.

## Traffic calming

- An analysis reviewing 33 previous studies found that area-wide traffic calming reduced the number of injury accidents by 15%. Residential areas saw an average reduction in the number of injuries by about 25%<sup>27</sup>.

## Effectiveness of pedestrian crossings

- Marked pedestrian crossings should be combined with other safety measures, such as signage, signals, raised medians, narrowed roadways, or other features<sup>28</sup>. Without these other measures, studies have found no significant difference in safety between unmarked and marked crossing sites<sup>29</sup>.
- Pedestrian controlled flashing or solid lights that signal drivers to stop have been shown to reduce crashes involving pedestrians by 69%<sup>30</sup>.

## Other intersection and crossing treatments

- Raised medians have been found to reduce crashes involving pedestrians by 69%. Even at non-signalized intersections, a raised median with a marked crosswalk can reduce collisions between vehicles and pedestrians by 46-56%.<sup>31</sup>
- Installing roundabouts in place of conventional intersections, including both traffic lights and stop signs, is a very effective speed control measure, and can reduce collisions with pedestrians by 75%.<sup>32</sup>



## For More Information

### City of Toronto Policies and Documents

**City of Toronto. (2002).** [Warrants for All-Way “Stop” Sign Control and 40km/h Maximum Speed Limits, \(1\), 1–27.](#)

This policy outlines the warrants for All-Way Stops and the 40km/h Maximum Speed Limits. It is most relevant if you are following Path 1C or 3B.

**City of Toronto Transportation Services. (2010).** [Summary of Traffic Calming Policy 2010.](#)

This document provides a summary of the Traffic Calming Policy. The various components of the policy are otherwise contained in various Council reports and documents. This is most relevant if you are pursuing Path 2. It includes the full Traffic Calming warrant requirements and a number of other related policies.

**City of Toronto Transportation Services. (2013).** [City of Toronto Road Classification System: Summary Document.](#)

The Road Classification System provides a consistent framework for transportation and planning staff, Community Councils, the public, and other stakeholders. All roads in the City of Toronto are classified in this document.

**City of Toronto Transportation Services. (2015).** [Proposed 30 km/h Speed Limit Policy, 1–10.](#)

The 30km/h Speed Limit policy is outlined in this document. Appendix A includes all warrants related to this policy.

**City of Toronto Transportation Services. (2016).** [Traffic Calming Guide for Toronto.](#)

This guide was created as part of the Road Safety Plan for Toronto, and provides an overview of traffic calming, including when and where it can best be used, and what the impacts of applying traffic calming measures can be. It includes a description of different measures, their estimated cost, and details the process to request traffic calming measures in the City of Toronto.

### Toronto Public Health Reports

**Toronto Public Health. (2012).** [Road to Health: Improving Walking and Cycling in Toronto.](#)

This report focuses on how active transportation can be used to improve the health and quality of life in Toronto. It is a good source of information about walking and cycling mode shares (the percentage of trips taken by a certain form of transport) in the Toronto context. It is one of a series of reports on building healthy communities through design.

**Toronto Public Health. (2015).** [Pedestrian and Cycling Safety in Toronto.](#)

This report provides useful statistics about the health impacts of collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists in Toronto. It discusses which groups are particularly vulnerable. Information is provided about the role that speed and road class play in collisions. This document provides important background information that can be used as part of your proposal.



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# TOOLKIT

We have included a number of supplementary tools that you may find useful. You are encouraged to modify the templates to meet your needs, which are available as Word Documents for download from our website: [www.saferstreetsnearschools.ca](http://www.saferstreetsnearschools.ca)

The toolkit includes the following appendices:

- **Appendix A: Worksheet: Writing a Vision, Defining the Problems, Considering Options**
- **Appendix B: Sample Email Template for Inviting Councillor to Meet**
- **Appendix C: “A Plan for Safer Streets Near Our School” Outreach Letter**
- **Appendix D: Traffic Calming Petition**
- **Appendix E: Sample Support Letter from School Administration and Council**
- **Appendix F: Crossing Guards and Student Safety Patrollers**
- **Appendix G: Bringing Transportation Safety into the Classroom**
- **Appendix H: List of Organizations Working for Safer Streets**

## 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](http://activeneighbourhoods.tcat.ca) or [Chapter 1 of Toronto's Official Plan](#).

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**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.

Street (Name, number range, intersection)	Issues (Be specific, list all)	Road class (Local, collector, etc.)	Options (Traffic calming, speed limit, crosswalk, etc.)

We suggest keeping your options open at this stage by listing several potential measures (e.g. speed humps or chicanes) or a general path (e.g. traffic calming)

*Sample issues:* vehicles travel too quickly (speeding, or posted speed limit too high); vehicles use street as a short cut; no place to cross the street; existing crossing does not feel safe; no sidewalks; no room for people on bikes; not enough light on the street or at the intersection; collisions/conflicts between vehicles and other road users (along street or at intersection); concerns about parking.

## APPENDIX B

### Sample Email Template for Inviting Councillor to Meet

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**To:** [Councillor's email]

**CC:** [School Council Chair] ; [Principal and/or Vice-Principal] ; [School Trustee]

**Subject:** [School Name] Safer Streets Project

*Attach completed Worksheet on Vision, Problems, Options*

Dear Councillor [last name],

I am a parent at [School name] [and member of the School Council – *if applies*]. I am leading the Safer Streets project at our school, a new project we have recently started .... *[give a little context – how did this project get started at your school? Did it stem from a particular incident, connection to School Travel Planning project, Eco Club, etc?]*

We have compiled our traffic safety concerns and ideas for solutions in a one page worksheet that I've attached here. I would like to meet with you to go through this worksheet and discuss what options are feasible in the near future. We understand that some of the changes we are interested in require a petition or public meeting. We are ready to do the work to show you that residents in our neighbourhood support these changes. Before we put in the time for a petition or work with you to host a public meeting, we want to get your feedback and the expertise of Transportation Services to know which options have the potential to be implemented – which ones you think will have the greatest success and can be our starting point.

We would like to meet with you at [School name] so we can also invite the School Council Chair, school administration, and School Trustee [name]. Please propose a few dates/times that work for you. *[You can note some general times that are best for you – e.g. mornings, afternoons, over lunch, etc].*

Sincerely,

*[Add your name and contact information]*



## APPENDIX C

### A Plan for Safer Streets Near Our School - Outreach Letter

Dear Parents,

Many of us walked to school when we were kids, but not as many families are walking to school today<sup>1</sup>.

Walking and biking have been shown to be great for children's health and can even help them do better in school<sup>2</sup>. One reason fewer kids are walking and biking to school is because families are worried about traffic danger.

We are a group of parents at your school who are working together to make our neighbourhood streets safer for all road users, especially our children.

*A Guide to Safer Streets Near Schools* explains how City of Toronto policies can be used to make streets safer by:

- slowing the **speed of vehicles**, and
- making it safer for kids to **cross the street**

We have created a vision for safer streets that we want to share with you. Next, we will be using the guide to try to make our vision a reality.

Do you want to help create safer streets around our school? **We could use your help.**



1 ParticipAction. (2015) The 2015 ParticipACTION report card on physical activity for children and youth. Retrieved from: <http://www.participation.com>

2 Martinez-Gomez, D., Ruiz, J. R., Gomez-Martinez, S., Chillón, P., Rey-López, J. P., Díaz, L. E., ... & Marcos, A. (2011). Active commuting to school and cognitive performance in adolescents: the AVENA study. Archives of pediatrics & adolescent medicine, 165(4), 300-305.

## Our Plan for Safer Streets

Our vision:

Solutions we're considering:

Who's already involved:

How you can help:

## Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX D

## Traffic Calming Petition

We, the undersigned residents of \_\_\_\_\_ in the City of Toronto, present this petition to formally request the installation of appropriate traffic calming procedures on our street, as traffic calming will improve the quality of life for residents of the street by forcing slower speeds for motor vehicles and increasing the safety of all road users, especially children, seniors, and those walking or cycling.

Name	Street # / Address	Signature	Date

(Use additional pages if necessary)

To be completed by resident responsible for petition:

Name:

Signature:



## APPENDIX E

### Sample Support Letter from School Administration/Council

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[Date]

Dear Councillor [name]\_\_\_\_\_and Transportation Services,

At [school name]\_\_\_\_\_, we are very concerned about the safety of our students travelling along [street name]\_\_\_\_\_. The speed and volume of vehicles create an unsafe environment in our school neighbourhood and deter many families from walking or wheeling to school. We want to promote active and sustainable transportation among our school community, but we need to make the streets safer before we can confidently do so.

We are writing to you today to demonstrate our support for traffic calming on [street name]\_\_\_\_\_. We believe slowing the speed of vehicles with physical measures is necessary for the safety of our students, and we ask that appropriate traffic calming procedures be considered as soon as possible.

*[If you have any examples/descriptions of collisions or specific problems you can add a few sentences here].*

We are working with those who live on [street name]\_\_\_\_\_to demonstrate residents' support. We share a common vision for a safer neighbourhood, and ask that the City of Toronto act quickly to help our vision become a reality.

Sincerely,

*[add signatures and titles]*

[School Principal]

[Vice Principal]

[School Council Chair]

## APPENDIX F

### Crossing Guards and Student Safety Patrollers

Crossing guards are hired by the Toronto Police Service. The Toronto Police have a Traffic Survey Team that responds to requests for crossing guards. They survey the intersection in question and may make the following recommendations:

- Placement of an adult crossing guard
- Implementation of the School Safety Patrol Program
- Modifications to the traffic control at the crossing location
- Increased traffic enforcement to help control traffic violations
- No change to the existing traffic control already in place

Requests made to the Traffic Survey Team may come from members of the public, Ward Councillors, public officials, school administrative staff and also members of the Toronto Police Service.

To make a request, email a letter to [officeofthechief@torontopolice.on.ca](mailto:officeofthechief@torontopolice.on.ca) with 'Crossing Guard Request' in the subject line.

In the letter, describe the specific location you wish to be considered for a crossing guard and a brief explanation of why you believe one is needed. Have your letter jointly signed by your School Principal, School Council Chair, and, if possible, sent and/or signed by your Ward Councillor.

For more information visit [www.torontopolice.on.ca/traffic/scg.php](http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/traffic/scg.php)



Many schools in Toronto have the Safety Patrol Program, which is a peer based program that trains students 11 years old and up to monitor school crossings. The Safety Patrollers make sure students cross the street safely and responsibly and that the road is clear of dangers before they step out.

Schools interested in starting the Safety Patrol Program can email [schoolsafetypatrol@caasco.ca](mailto:schoolsafetypatrol@caasco.ca).

Additional information can be found at [www.caaschoolsafetypatrol.com](http://www.caaschoolsafetypatrol.com) and [www.torontoschoolbus.org/walk/safety-patrol-program](http://www.torontoschoolbus.org/walk/safety-patrol-program)

## APPENDIX G

### Bringing Transportation Safety into the Classroom

#### Ideas and Resources for Teachers

- **Bike Safe/Walk Smart DVDs** - Go to [saferoutestoschool.ca/info-teachers](http://saferoutestoschool.ca/info-teachers). Here you will find a list of ideas for teachers, including a link to request a DVD and two documents with follow up key messages, talking points, and activities. The DVD clips feature elementary and middle school aged students sharing the information, and on each DVD there are versions for Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grades 4 to 7.
- **iSchool Travel Calculator** - Go to [ischooltravel.org](http://ischooltravel.org). Here you will find an online tool about active transportation that teachers can use in class. It measures distances travelled to and from school by walking, biking, bus and private vehicle, as well as the amount of calories burned walking and biking (expressed in pizza slices!), the cost of fuel for private auto use, and greenhouse gas emissions (shown with balloons!). On the website you will also see a tab called 'Ideas for Use' where lessons plans are posted.
- **Leadership Projects** - Following the example of a group of Grade 6 students at a Toronto school (Google "Gr 6 girls push for crosswalk" to find Toronto Star article), students can be encouraged to think about the design of their streets and what would make them safer. They can use the Traffic Count and Observation Tool below to collect data and present the information along with some potential solutions to the Ward Councillor.
- **Letter Writing** - Students can share their views, stories, and ideas in letters to their Ward Councillor, Toronto Police Service, and/or Transportation Services. They can draw pictures of their own vision for the neighbourhood, or take pictures of their existing neighbourhood and identify the positive and negative features.
- **Toronto Police Service Safety Presentations** - Your School Community Liaison Offer can be invited by your school's administration to give classroom or assembly presentations about walking and cycling safety. Confirm the dates of their presentations early—they book up quickly!
- **Toronto Public Health Curriculum** - Toronto Public Health supports schools that are actively engaged in issues pertaining to active and sustainable school travel. TPH provides curricular supports for students in grades 3 to 6, focusing on wheel safety and rules of the road. TPH also works in partnership with the school community to look at the built environment and to explore opportunities for active transportation.
- **Traffic Count and Observation** - Go to [saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit](http://saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit). Here you will find a template with instructions for doing traffic counts and observing the driving/walking/cycling behaviour of people around your school. A class or student club could do this first thing in the morning at a particular intersection to help make the case for traffic calming or other changes you're working towards.



## APPENDIX H

### List of Organizations Working for Safer Streets

These organizations may be helpful partners, allies, or sources of information as you work to make change in your neighbourhood.

#### **8 80 Cities**

[880cities.org](http://880cities.org)

8 80 Cities works to build cities that prioritize people's well-being, and create great public spaces for everyone from 8 to 80 years-old.

#### **Canadian Automobile Association (CAA)**

[www.caasco.com](http://www.caasco.com)

The CAA is a not-for-profit automobile association that provides a variety of products and services for drivers, as well as campaigns on issues related to traffic safety, mobility, and infrastructure (such as the Student Safety Patrol program).

#### **Community Bicycle Network**

[www.communitybicyclenetwork.org](http://www.communitybicyclenetwork.org)

The Community Bicycle Network organizes cycling events, rides, and affordable bicycle rentals to break down economic and accessibility barriers while reducing smog and congestion.

#### **CultureLink Settlement and Community Services**

[www.culturelink.ca](http://www.culturelink.ca)

CultureLink is a settlement and community development organization providing services and innovative programming within schools, libraries and community centres. CultureLink's cycling programs engage thousands of students and newcomer adults annually with cycling education and promotion campaigns.

#### **Cycle Toronto**

[www.cycleto.ca](http://www.cycleto.ca)

Cycle Toronto is a diverse member-supported organization that advocates for a healthy, safe, cycling-friendly city for all. Many wards across the city have their own Cycle Toronto Ward Advocacy group.

#### **Evergreen**

[www.evergreen.ca](http://www.evergreen.ca)

Evergreen is a Canadian charity whose mission is inspiring action to flourishing cities. Their work includes designing school grounds, building community programs, partnering on a variety of environmental issues such as transportation, housing, and water, as well as creating and growing the Evergreen Brick Works social enterprise.

#### **Green Communities Canada**

[www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca)

Green Communities Canada is a national association of community organizations that works together to help Canadians improve the health of our communities, conserve resources, and reduce pollution. One of its divisions, Canada Walks, oversees the Active & Safe Routes to School initiative.

**Jane's Walk**

[janeswalk.org](http://janeswalk.org)

Jane's Walk encourages citizen-led walking tours that develop urban literacy and a community-based approach to city building.

**Kids at Play**

[www.facebook.com/leasidekidsatplay/](http://www.facebook.com/leasidekidsatplay/)

Kids at Play is a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the safety of community streets. Their current campaign "SLOW DOWN" features prominent lawn signs and school flags with their powerful message illustrated on the silhouette of a child.

**Parachute Canada**

[www.parachutecanada.org](http://www.parachutecanada.org)

Parachute Canada is a national, charitable organization dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives.

**Park People**

[parkpeople.ca](http://parkpeople.ca)

Park People is an independent charity that builds stronger communities by animating and improving parks, and placing them at the heart of life in the city.

**Share the Road**

[www.sharetheroad.ca](http://www.sharetheroad.ca)

The Share the Road Cycling Coalition is a provincial cycling advocacy organization working to build a bicycle-friendly Ontario.

**Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA)**

[www.toronto-bia.com](http://www.toronto-bia.com)

TABIA is a non-profit umbrella organization working with the over 81 Business Improvement Areas within the City of Toronto, who in turn represent more than 40, 000 business and property owners.

**Toronto Atmospheric Fund**

[taf.ca](http://taf.ca)

The Toronto Atmospheric Fund invests in urban solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

**Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT)**

[www.tcat.ca](http://www.tcat.ca)

TCAT is a project of the [Clean Air Partnership](#), and works to advance knowledge and evidence to build support for safe and inclusive streets for walking and cycling.

**Toronto Cycling Think & Do Tank**

[www.torontocycling.org](http://www.torontocycling.org)

The Cycling Think & Do Tank is a team of expert practitioners and academics who research behavioural change and active transportation, and collaborate on projects to put their studies into practice.

**Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA)**

[www.torontoenvironment.org](http://www.torontoenvironment.org)

The Toronto Environmental Alliance advocates on behalf of all Torontonians for a green, healthy, and equitable city.

**Toronto Public Health**

[www.toronto.ca/health](http://www.toronto.ca/health)

Toronto Public Health's team of health professionals work to service school communities to create Healthy Schools.

**Walk Toronto**

[www.walktoronto.ca](http://www.walktoronto.ca)

Walk Toronto is a grassroots pedestrian advocacy group that works to improve walking conditions and safety in Toronto.

## PHOTO CREDITS

**All photos by Katie Wittmann, except:**

- Page 12 - Photo of chicanes: [www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org) / Dan Burden;  
Photo of curb extension and raised pedestrian crossing/intersection:  
Brandon Quigley
- Page 13 - Photo of traffic circle: Brandon Quigley
- Page 14 - Photo of bike lanes and contra-flow bike lanes: Brandon Quigley
- Page 15 - Photo of intersection: Brandon Quigley
- Page 16 - Photo of signalized intersection: Brandon Quigley;  
Photo of school crossing: Ontario Ministry of Transportation, [www.mto.gov.on.ca](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca);





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