

# GUIDE TO SAFER STREETS NEAR SCHOOLS

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Understanding Your Policy Options  
in the City of Toronto

# Working Together



School of the Environment  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



# 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)



**PLEASE  
SLOW DOWN**



**PLEASE  
SLOW DOWN**



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# Parking Ticket Lookup

Check the status of your City of Toronto parking tickets online. Accurate. From conception to on-site review.

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# #10 TALENT TALK

Find all jobs at Toronto and many more jobs in 10 in a row on our City of Toronto and Talent network.

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# Toronto Road Restrictions

Keeping traffic moving is an important priority. The City has checked a number of programs and initiatives aimed at helping you get around Toronto's busiest streets and highways.

102 | 113 | 70

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# Emergency and Lane Block Business Closures

When a major emergency occurs, it's important to have a plan in place to ensure that the City's services are not disrupted.

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# LOOK FOR CARS WHEN CROSSING

## Road Safety

Stay Alert/Stay Safe

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# Traffic Signals

Traffic control systems are electronic devices that are designed to manage the flow of traffic at an intersection.

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# Management

Our City's Traffic Management System is a major challenge. We are working to keep traffic moving and to maintain our roads and transportation infrastructure.

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# Traffic Calming

Keeping city streets safe for everyone is an important responsibility for the City's Transportation Services staff.

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# The City's System of Traffic Calming Policy (TCP) is now available

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# 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.

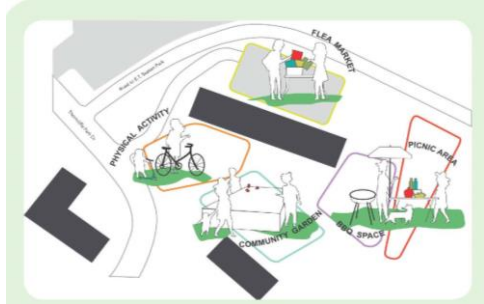


# Step 1: Connect with Your School Council



## 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?

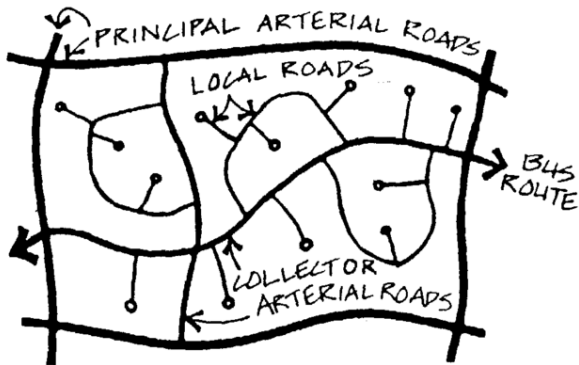


## Step 3: Define the Problem

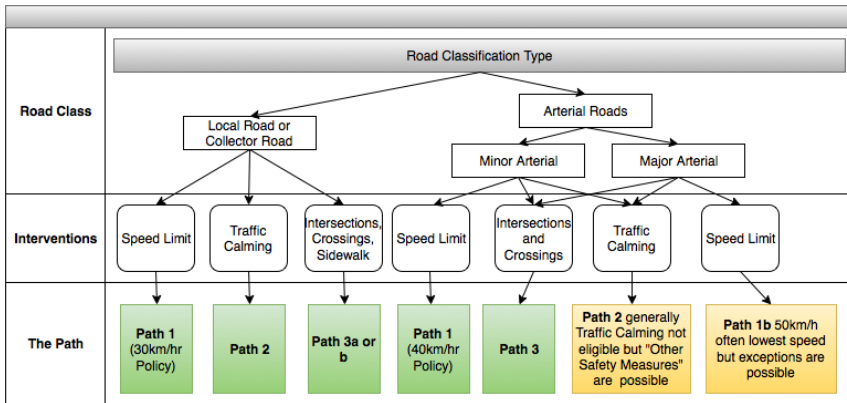
- In your school neighbourhood, which streets, street segments, or intersections do not look or feel like the streets in your vision?
- List the ones you are most concerned about here, and what the main issues are on those streets.



## Step 4: Know Your Road Classification



# Step 5: Learn about the Paths



## Step 6: Connect with Your Councillor



# CHAPTER 2: THE PATHS

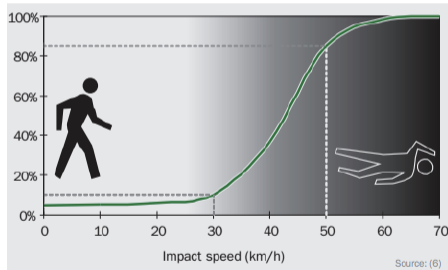
## PATH 1: Speed Limit Measures

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<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

**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<sup>12</sup>:



**Speed hump**



**Curb extension**

## 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](#).

**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.

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

# Current State of the Project

Launched in September 2016 at [saferstreetsnearschools.ca](http://saferstreetsnearschools.ca)



## 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 traveling 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

Blue boxes highlight helpful tips that can assist you.

#### POLICY

Blue boxes have key policies that you can refer to for more information.



#### Path 1A:

#### 30km/h Speed Limit Policy

You can apply for a 30km/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 may 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.

#### 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: 30km/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. 80% of vehicles must be traveling 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

<sup>1</sup>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





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