

HANDBOOK

A Toolkit for Local Electeds Climate Action

Safe Streets

A part of the [Transportation Equity Handbook Section](#)



Stay tuned for the up-to-date version of this resource!

This document is undergoing fact checks and updates... you will be able to access the new version in September 2025.

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Introduction

Streets that prioritize walking and biking and allow for fewer and slower cars are climate-friendly streets ([Curbed 2020](#)). The transportation sector, particularly passenger transportation such as passenger cars, light trucks, buses, rail, and motorcycles, is Canada's second-leading greenhouse gas emitter ([Canada Energy](#)

[Regular, 2016](#)). Streets designed for high-speed movement make getting around by bike, foot, and public transportation, dangerous and unpleasant ([Transportation for America, 2019](#)).

The Equity Issues:

- Women's safety is often overlooked in public transportation policies, particularly in regard to night-time transportation.
- Low-income communities often lack safe sidewalks and biking infrastructure.
- Indigenous peoples, lower income households, older adults, linguistic minorities are more exposed to failures in transportation systems that result in serious injury and fatal crashes ([City of Edmonton, 2021](#)).

Possible Initiatives

****Climate Caucus has ranked the following initiatives from beginner to expert, based on Complexity to implement, Staff time & expertise and Political capital. Please note, these rankings are our own best judgements.*

*Resource expertise level:



Green = beginner



Blue = intermediate



Black = advanced



Double black = expert

 **Encourage physical protection for people walking and biking**, such as bike lanes protected with planters, bollards and curbs.

 **Reduce vehicle speeds on routes** intended for people walking and biking, so that people of all ages and abilities feel safe.

 **Engagement with marginalized populations on how to enhance safety** and how to create more inclusive public spaces. Respond proactively to the needs of the community. Re-designing streets without substantive and meaningful engagement with marginalized populations could adversely affect the communities that the streets may claim to serve. Learn more [here](#) (start pg. 19) and [here](#).

 **Make safety a priority** in the city's Strategic Plan and service delivery.

■ **Promote public safety, comfort and accessibility** by enhancing/adding sidewalk presence, pedestrian-level street lighting, public seating, tree plantings, cycling paths, textured right-of-ways and guiding pathways.

◆ **Address gaps in the pedestrian network.**

◆ **Make streets and public spaces weather-friendly** (ex., sidewalk trees to cool during the warm season and shelters to keep dry during rainy seasons)

■ **Apply an equity lens to vehicle crash analysis.** An equity analysis helps to understand how different populations may experience transportation safety differently. (See [City of Edmonton's Safe Mobility Strategy](#) as an example)

■ **Launch a parklet program** to foster the conversion of on-street parking spaces into low-cost public spaces

◆ **Widen sidewalks and enhancing crosswalks** for pedestrians, including seniors and the mobility-challenged

■ **Implement design interventions in neighbourhoods to calm traffic.** Examples include speed bumps, raised crosswalks, parklets, and neighbourhood traffic circles.

Examples:

Case Study - City of North Vancouver, British Columbia: "Safe Mobility Strategy"

The [Strategy](#) examines the key factors contributing to safety issues and explores proven practices and actions that help to improve safety. The City will use the Strategy to help guide priorities, design safe streets and intersections, deliver community education and programs, and undertake enforcement.

Case Study - City of Edmonton, Alberta: "Safe Mobility Strategy 2021-2025"

The [Safe Mobility Strategy](#) is a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) pilot project that seeks to achieve Vision Zero through safe and livable streets in Edmonton. GBA+ helps the City address inequality, reduce discrimination, and ensure equality of outcomes for all communities.

Case Study - City of Brampton, Ontario: Main Street North Redevelopment

The regeneration of [Main Street North](#) retrofitted the street for pedestrians and public transit. The provision of public transit and proximity to residents and employment opportunities close to transit stations and mobility hubs will contribute to reducing GHG emissions. Low-impact development elements were implemented (trees, permeable surfaces, bioswales, green roofs) which supported limited municipal infrastructure capacity, reduced heat island effect, improved air quality and reduced stormwater storage. The public realm improvements created conditions for better physical and mental health for people of all incomes, ages, and capabilities.

Case Study - City of Montreal, Quebec: Pedestrian and Shared Streets Program

Montreal implemented the Pedestrian and Shared Streets Program to create shared public spaces that encourage walking, cycling and active transportation and reflect the distinct character of the surrounding neighbourhood. Montreal now has approximately 50 streets with reduced or prohibited vehicles. Learn more [here](#) and [here](#).

Pushbacks & Responses

Read [EFCL's "Neighbourhood Street Safety Handbook"](#) for potential push backs and how to respond (start pg. 23).

Additional Resources & Supplementary Reading

- [Sabat Ismail's "Incomplete streets, incomplete imaginations: Safe streets for whom?"](#)
- [Institute for the Prevention of Crime's Making Cities Safer: Action Briefs for Municipal Stakeholders](#)
- [Racial Equity Tools' Community Planning: Land and Transportation](#)
- [Transport Canada's Improving Travel Options in Small & Rural Communities](#)
- [Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues' "Neighbourhood Street Safety Handbook"](#)
- [Safer for All: Report and Recommendations of the Community Safety and Well-Being Task Force](#)
- [Clean Air Partnership's "Backgrounder: Rural Complete Streets"](#)

Did you know Climate Caucus offers an "Ask Us Anything" service for elected officials in the network?

You could ask questions like "can you help me find this resource?" "Do you know of funding for X?" "Do you have examples of X policy language?" or "can you connect me with an expert in X?"

[Send us your questions here!](#)

Climate Caucus Resources:

[Climate Caucus Municipal Grants List](#) - detailed list of relevant municipal grants
[Policies and Resources Library](#) - list of motions, bylaws, council reports and briefing notes