

More roads that [purport to “ease congestion”](#) actually [induce demand for more car use](#), because people are able to travel further and easier by car and can live in locations that are more distant from the urban core, causing [expensive “urban sprawl”](#).

The IMP provides for a considerable number of actions relating to safe streets and active transport, including a complete-street policy and a much needed review of HRM’s street-design guidelines, referred to as the “Red Book”.

Quarterly progress reports relating to the IMP can be viewed [here](#).

The IMP contains the level of long and short term detailed action points, planning and multiple agency collaboration that advocates have stated our commitment to Vision Zero also requires, but currently lacks.

One well-known active transport aspect of the IMP is the development of an “all ages and abilities” bike lane network, which thanks to funding commitments from the federal and provincial government may be completed within the next few years.

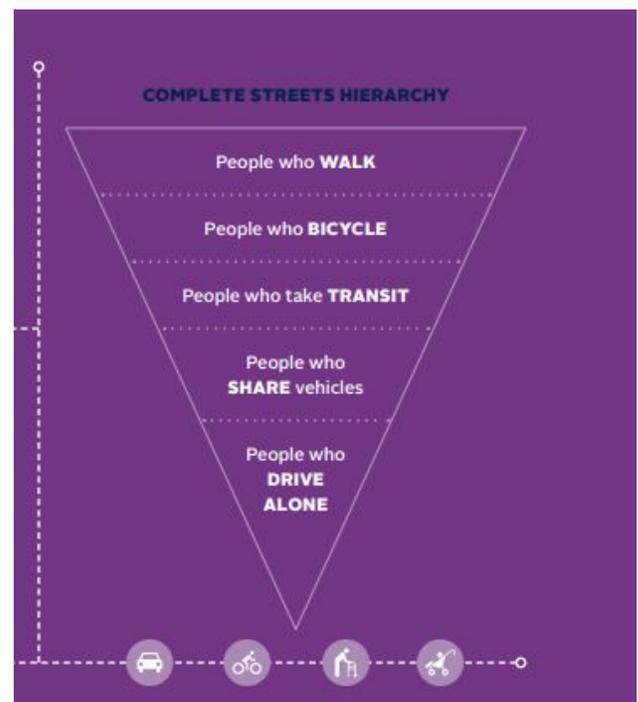
The IMP alone could easily take up the whole Survival Guide, so for the sake of brevity for busy people, this installment of the Guide will shine a spotlight on **Complete Streets**.

Halifax made a very welcome higher-level policy commitment to not just improve facilities, but actually place vulnerable road users at the top of the Complete Street design hierarchy - see image from page 60 of the IMP.

Wheelchair and mobility-scooter users should also be placed at the very top of this hierarchy.

This approach follows successful design strategies implemented outside of North America for centuries.

It has proven results; transforming streets into successful and busy residential and commercial hubs. The approach usually involves reducing or eliminating space for through traffic and parking.



The comprehensive benefits for all are set out in this detailed report [by Transport for London](#).

Placing vulnerable road users at the very top of design priorities means Halifax’s Complete Streets should ensure vulnerable road users are in a dominant position and are in control,

reversing what we are used to now - an environment where drivers have the majority of space and so dictate street conditions.

For vulnerable road users, this hierarchical approach would require traffic to be slowed **by design** to a [safer speed of 30kph](#) in conjunction with safe crosswalks and bike lanes, also potentially reducing traffic to one-way only. Safety at all intersections is particularly vital.

Halifax's Complete Street efforts so far have not met this policy promise.

Consider this example below in a recent [overview from Halifax staff](#) of “complete street” transformations.

Do you think this adequately accommodates the needs of all vulnerable road users, including children, seniors and disabled pedestrians?

What issues might they still encounter when crossing this intersection, or cycling past it? Will the paint adequately protect them from fast moving vehicular traffic? How much does this design rely on road user behaviour to ensure people are safe?

FOLLOW THE PAVERS



2017



2018

The recent [Gottingen “Complete Street”](#) project did not [reduce the speed of traffic on Gottingen Street](#) itself, nor introduce frequent safe-by-design crossing points. Focus of analysis and reporting since has been on vehicular [traffic related issues](#) - speed of buses, removing cars from bus lanes, traffic flow, etc.

Gottingen is a busy residential and pedestrian commercial shopping street. If the Complete Street project had met the design hierarchical requirements in the IMP, residents and businesses would have benefited greatly. And if the intersections along Gottingen had been retrofitted with [raised crosswalks](#), Willard Corneau may not have lost his life on [14 December 2018](#).

Likewise, the recently approved [Spring Garden Road “Complete Street” redesign plans](#) did not include bike lanes, continuous sidewalks or raised crosswalks as was suggested could happen from an [earlier 2009 conceptual design plan](#), shown below.



The description of the complete street criteria for the Spring Garden Road project refers to [improving vulnerable road user mobility](#). This is different to the Complete Street Hierarchy set out in the IMP, which requires vulnerable road users to be **prioritized** over the design needs of vehicular traffic.

Neither did the [approved plans for the Cogswell District](#) include frequent safe by design pedestrian crossing points, or proven physical design measures that [slow traffic to safe speeds](#). This is unusual for a modern commercial and residential street redevelopment in the urban core.

Gehl advised that Cogswell’s prospect as a residential and commercial hub could be improved greatly by reversing the priority shown in the plans of vehicular traffic over people, creating what they referred to as a [“human scale”](#) district.



Prioritising vulnerable road users in street design plans requires key measures or adaptations that ensure they are safe for all ages and abilities to use, such as;

- [raised crosswalks](#), particularly at intersections.
- continuous sidewalks - see photo.
- regular crossing points with [pedestrian refuge islands](#) suitable for people of all ages and abilities - NACTO suggest crosswalks should be [spaced approximately every 120 to 200 feet](#).
- Include bike lanes and safe intersections by design for cyclists.
- A street which is [adapted or designed to effect slower, safe speeds of 30kph](#) without the need for constant police enforcement.
- Safe [protected crossing phases at signalized intersections](#) for cyclists and pedestrians



Although these are all increasingly staple design features in many cities and towns worldwide, they are not common or unknown in Halifax.

The development of a **complete street tool-kit**, mentioned in the IMP, should set out the design measures required to genuinely consider vulnerable road user needs first, placing them in a less subordinate and vulnerable position.

A tool-kit could also set out a means to ensure Complete Streets are a process of collaboration and assessment with the community, such as this fabulous "[Friendly Streets Toolkit](#)" from Hamilton, Ontario.



Consider the benefits of Complete Street re-designs that do meet the design hierarchy set out in the IMP, such as [this transformation shown](#) in a suburb of Sydney, Australia.

What benefits could result from streets that place people at the top of the design priorities?

Could they result in more diversity? More seniors, people with disabilities, people of colour and children who feel confident to use our streets?

More people [shopping, hanging-out and enjoying urban space](#) which supports local residents and business?

Would more people be encouraged to leave their car at home if streets are genuinely safe and enjoyable to use on foot, by bicycle or by wheelchair/mobility scooter?

How much is greatly increasing the [commercial viability](#) and residential appeal of a street worth to the community? Are the rewards worth sacrificing the usual priorities and focus given to through traffic and parking?

Could commercial delivery and parking requirements still be met but perhaps differently to how they are now, as shown in this [recent Complete Street remake in Auckland, NZ](#)?



If vulnerable road user requirements are not evidently prioritized in proposed plans, you have the option to refer to the **vital and binding policy objectives set out in the IMP and Vision Zero**, and propose amendments before they are finally approved.

With your help, Halifax could achieve healthier, more efficient and busier streets that are also a delight for all to use.

Safe Streets cannot be achieved with Complete Street re-designs alone. Many roads will not be eligible for “Complete Street” remakes and re-designs are often long term and expensive projects.

For wider reaching reform, the development of a genuine **Vision Zero action plan** is critical, also **traffic calming policy reform** - see previous installments of the Safe Street Survival Guide. Tactical urbanism is another policy tool for inexpensive street reform that will be covered in the next Survival Guide installment.

Further Reading.

[Gehl's report on Cogswell](#) is essential reading. It provides much bonus material on how to develop unique people-focused streets which reflect, support and engage with the established local indigenous, black and immigrant culture and community.