

Dear 2020 Election Candidates,

I hope you are enjoying your campaign and the experience of meeting so many residents. There is so much energy, knowledge and commitment from candidates!

This is a final email to you on safe streets. Why all the information? Because this is a complex area, but well suited to those who have the appetite to tackle a long-term issue where great impact can be achieved with the right policies and funding. You are also invited to respond with your own opinions relating to the issues raised in this series, which will be published in the NS Advocate next week.

Underpinning all required action are the [proven and specific principles of Vision Zero](#). Edmonton have [reduced fatalities by 50% and serious injuries by 30%](#) with this methodology. Their second [phase of planning and action](#) promises to ensure [community collaboration](#) and [equity](#) are key components and the driving force behind change.



This is what Halifax also requires - recognition that for our most vulnerable road users, journeys remain extremely treacherous. The unique safety requirements of senior, disabled and child vulnerable road users must be heard, documented and prioritized with effective countermeasures in the most dangerous locations, previously deemed "untouchable" due to the priority afforded to vehicular traffic flow and movement.

Recent reported examples are [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) in relation to disabled vulnerable road users, and [here](#) in relation to ongoing and frequent pedestrian incidents at unsafe signalized intersections, which account for around [40% of pedestrian incidents in HRM](#).

What follows is brief overview information on **sidewalks, provincial roads, enforcement and lower speed limits**.

Sidewalks

Many roads in HRM have no sidewalks. Walking with vehicles on wide roads is extremely dangerous and prevents active mobility for those who need it the most.

Roads without sidewalks require pedestrians to move around parked vehicles into the path of traffic, seen here.



They're often very icy on the periphery for weeks on end, resulting in injury, or requiring pedestrians to walk in the centre of roads.

A sidewalk is a basic and essential mobility requirement that enables people to move outside of their home and make local journeys on foot to services, to socialise, for exercise, or to take the bus.

Streets which lack sidewalks include those with [affordable high density apartments](#), where the majority of residents may not use a car regularly.

Using an equitable approach to safe mobility and access these streets should be prioritized for sidewalks, [even if they are inexpensive options](#). This requires specific policy.

Provincial Roads

The journey towards safe infrastructure for children, the elderly and anyone else who wants to enjoy their own community without getting into a car has been a frustrating one for those who live on provincial roads.

Years of raising issues with MLA's, confusion and getting nowhere is a common story throughout HRM and Nova Scotia. Provincial roads in communities endanger children walking to school, and leave everyone without the means to step outside and enjoy where they live.

Basic infrastructure that slows traffic passing through communities and ensures walking, wheeling and cycling isn't a dangerous stunt is a [human right](#), and should be treated as such by all.

Failing to provide safe mobility for all in communities leads to isolation, health problems and in worst case scenarios (too frequently in Nova Scotia) the death of our most vulnerable road users, [usually seniors](#), as happened [last week](#).

Basic active mobility and safety should not require a [major campaign by the community](#), however that is certainly what it does require at this time.

All levels of government must acknowledge this is an urgent issue, work together on joint strategy and solutions, and ascertain what funding is required to address what is certainly a mobility crisis, especially for seniors.

Simple inexpensive solutions are available and can be [implemented with policy and political will](#).



Elected representatives are encouraged to meet with MLA's and staff and feedback the outcome with residents, even if policy commitments are not forthcoming.

Enforcement

It is clear that Halifax's limited in number traffic enforcement team are overwhelmed with persistent issues relating to speeding, distracted and impaired driving. A recent campaign lasting several weeks on Highway 111 continued to yield [numerous charges of stunting and speeding](#) despite the many fines being well publicized.

Vision Zero recognises that police enforcement alone can't make streets safe if the fundamental road conditions support dangerous driving and speeding. Speeding issues are dealt with more

effectively through action such as road diets and reallocating road space for use by [sustainable and efficient transport](#).

Possibilities are endless, especially if Park and Ride is extended and connected with bus lanes, and has Provincial support.

Legalizing speed cameras is due with the [Traffic Safety Act](#). European drivers will be familiar with the sudden braking that occurs in front of speed cameras, however recently the wider use of [average speed cameras on longer stretches of road](#) has helped provide consistent safe speeds where they are most needed.

Lower Speed Limits

A common myth is that the Province prevents or does not approve of speed limit reductions below 50km/h. Not true.



Lockeport have successfully obtained a reduced speed limit on [all their roads \(not just residential\) to 30km/h](#) - shown in photo. This has been achieved without any special adaptations to roads; many have just simple painted sidewalks. Consequently, it enjoys a unique dynamic for Nova Scotia - elderly residents are seen out walking and enjoying their community. It has a different feel entirely to many other vehicular-prioritized Nova Scotian communities.

It is not ideal that the Province must approve speed limit reduction requests for neighbourhoods by the Municipality, but the procedure can and should be utilized urgently by municipal staff and leadership, especially in relation to all downtown (not just residential) Dartmouth and Halifax streets where most vulnerable road user incidents occur.

Cities increasingly enforce [30km/h limits on all streets](#), not just residential roads, in an effort to ensure they support improved safety for vulnerable users, and to embrace a much needed change in transportation culture.

Legal speed limit reductions does not by itself result in safe streets - many drivers will continue to exceed the legal speed limit, and even [30 km/h is not a safe speed for vulnerable road users](#). Therefore lower legal speed limits should be combined with road-class appropriate countermeasures to slow and stop traffic at crosswalks, prevent conflict between vehicles and vulnerable road users at intersections, and separate micro-mobility users and cyclists from vehicular traffic on urban roads. Solutions suggested by groups including the Crosswalk Safety Society of Nova Scotia, are [rumble strips at high speed intersections, implemented in Ghana](#), and protected phases at signalized intersections (no conflicting vehicular movements) for pedestrians, at all intersections in [some European countries](#).

What next?

This concludes the information on safe streets issues. If you have not done so already, please respond to the questions sent by the Crosswalk Safety Society of Nova Scotia.

If you would welcome the opportunity to provide some general comments and opinions relating to the issues discussed in this Safe Streets series, please respond to this email, indicating if you would **not** like these comments to be published in the NS Advocate and elsewhere. Your answers provided to the Crosswalk Safety Society may also be included.

If you find yourself elected, please review this Guide again which you will also [find in one location on NS Advocate](#). The issues raised in it will not sort themselves out: New thinking, collaboration and policy is required. The good news is: So many of you have the right knowledge, commitment and passion to make progress on this vital issue for the future of Halifax residents' good health, safety and their improved transport choices.

Thank you very much for following this series, and please do get in touch if you have any queries.

Best of luck with election week!