



Building Healthy Communities

Road Safety

Where you live affects your health. The way our communities are designed can influence our lives in many ways, from the quality of the air we breathe to how physically active we are.

How you live affects the environment. The choices you make every day can have an impact on the environment in a positive or negative way. We share our surroundings with each other and must work together to make changes for the better. Municipalities, health units and others are working to create healthier communities by planning for trails and sidewalks, parks and public spaces, safe roads, reductions in personal vehicle use, access to healthy local food, energy conservation and many other health supporting features. You can help too! Good health starts with each person, but it takes a community to support it.

Safe Roads
=A Healthier Community
=A Healthier You

The way our roads are designed affects how we get around in our communities. It influences if and when people cycle, walk or drive and how safe they are when they take part in these activities. The layout and width of streets, the presence of sidewalks and cycling lanes and the inclusion of safety features such as four-way stops, speed bumps and traffic lights make a big difference in how drivers drive and how safely people move along or across our roads. Safer streets mean children can walk or cycle to school with less risk of injury. Cyclists can safely travel to go about their daily business. And drivers can make their way at reasonable speeds, reducing risk to others.

Think about the decisions your municipality makes and the actions you take that affect road safety in your community.

Did you know?

- ✚ Crosswalks and traffic lights make it safer for people, especially children and older adults, to get across wide roads.
- ✚ Compact, dense communities result in fewer vehicles on the road, which means that streets are safer to walk and cycle and public transportation works more efficiently.
- ✚ Trails, sidewalks and cycling lanes provide a safer way to get to work, school or shopping.
- ✚ People drive more safely when there are more people walking or cycling in our communities which results in fewer collisions and injuries.
- ✚ For every 100 Simcoe Muskoka residents headed for work, 92 will drive, six will walk or cycle and two will use public transit.



You can make a difference when you...

- Use trails, cycling lanes and sidewalks to get to work, school and recreational facilities.
- Take a walk around your neighbourhood and assess how safe and walkable it is. Identify areas that need improvement and let your municipality know.
- Speak with your neighbours about the issues affecting road safety in your community and discuss ways to address them.
- Learn more about your municipality's official plan and how it affects road safety.
 - The official plan guides how land should be used in your community, such as where housing, industry, shops, parks and schools will be located, what services are needed and how road and transportation systems are designed.
 - Official plans are updated at least every five years. A copy of the plan is made available to the public and your local council must ensure a public meeting is held about the plan.
- Contact your municipality at any time to discuss opportunities for input into your community's official plan. Any person can provide written comments and/or speak at the public meeting about the proposed plan.

Municipalities show leadership when they...

- Build roads that provide sidewalks and cycling lanes to accommodate the safe passage of cyclists and pedestrians.
- Ensure walking and cycling routes and public spaces are well placed, well linked and well lit.
- Make intersections where many pedestrians cross a priority for maintenance and safety upgrades.
- Build and develop compact and complete communities.
- Develop policies and bylaws that address road safety issues on an ongoing basis.

For more information:

Refer to other fact sheets in this series: Air Quality, Active Transportation, Food Access and Healthy Communities.