

2018 Municipal Election priorities to make Toronto's streets safe for everyone

The 2018 municipal election presents a critical opportunity for our leaders to commit to putting the safety of our loved ones first. We encourage voters to ask your candidates: Will they work to reduce traffic speeds and red-light-running, and properly fund the Vision Zero road safety plan so we can redesign our streets for safety?

When it comes to safety, our streets are failing. Toronto's streets are "in crisis," a description used by our Mayor and many other civic leaders. In July 2016, Toronto City Council approved the [Vision Zero Road Safety Plan](#), a five-year plan to reduce to **zero** the number of traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries on Toronto's streets. While a laudable goal, Vision Zero is nowhere close to being achieved.

In 2017, the first year of implementation of the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, [47 vulnerable road users \(people walking and cycling\) died on our streets](#) (Toronto Star). In addition, there were 1,958 pedestrian collisions and 1,070 cyclist collisions reported to police in 2016. This year (2018) Toronto has seen a surge in deaths of vulnerable road users. The City is on pace to have one of its deadliest years ever. Each and every one of these deaths was preventable. We know the proven solutions now. We know how to build streets that are safe and accessible - streets that can save lives. Additional investments were made by Council in 2018 but we still have a long way to go.

We need the next term of Council to step up and take immediate action. In the context of the 2018 election, and in conjunction with our [#BuildTheVisionTO coalition](#), Friends and Families for Safe Streets (FFSS) is encouraging voters to ask candidates for office how they intend to make real progress in reducing the number of fatal and life-altering collisions in Toronto. We have three concrete proposals:

#1: IMPLEMENT A CITY-WIDE DEFAULT SPEED LIMIT OF 30 KM/H ON ALL RESIDENTIAL STREETS AND 40 KM/H ON ALL ARTERIAL AND COLLECTOR ROADS

Speed kills. A pedestrian struck by a vehicle travelling 50 km/h is [five times more likely to die](#) than if they are hit at 30 km/h. Bill 65, the [Safer School Zones Act](#), passed in 2017, enables municipalities to create Community Safety Zones with blanket default speeds lower than the current default of 50 km/h. Implementing lower city-wide default speed limits is a critical component in preventing traffic fatalities. In June 2018, City Council approved a [staff report](#) to designate all elementary schools as Community Safety Zones. While an important first step, every Torontonian is at risk on streets across the city where excessive motor vehicle speed is permitted. We need to move Toronto closer to a city-wide speed limit of 30 km/h on all streets other than expressways.

#2: SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE THE USE OF AUTOMATED SAFETY CAMERAS FOR SPEEDING AND RED-LIGHT RUNNING

Red-light cameras save lives but they are few and far between. Red-light cameras, first introduced in Toronto in 2000, have been reported by the City of Toronto to [reduce instances of crashes and injury by up to 60 percent](#) in the intersections where they've been implemented. Toronto's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan will increase the number of safety cameras at red lights from [77](#) to 154 [in 2019](#) but there are [over 2,300 signalized intersections](#) in Toronto. We need the City to expand our red-light camera program significantly.

Speed cameras save lives but are not yet legal in Ontario. [Speed cameras resulted in a 60 percent drop in speeding](#) after one year when New York City installed them in 2014. Speed cameras require the Province to pass a regulation under the *Safer School Zones Act, 2017*, before they can be used in Toronto. Candidates for municipal office should be vocal in pressing the Province to enable speeding cameras in Ontario

Accelerating the implementation of automated safety cameras - both for speeding and red-light running - would save lives.

#3: MATCH NEW YORK CITY'S PER-CAPITA FUNDING TO ACHIEVE VISION ZERO IN TORONTO THROUGH STREET REDESIGN

An ambitious goal needs an ambitious plan. The City of Toronto has now committed [\\$43.3 million for 2018 and a total of \\$109 million over five years](#), or \$8 per capita per year, to its Vision Zero Road Safety Plan (2016-2021). New York City has committed [\\$1.3 billion over four years](#) (2017-2021) to its Vision Zero capital budget, or \$38 per capita per year. Vision Zero starts with the redesign of streets and intersections and automated enforcement so that human error does not result in death or serious injury. The City of Toronto has given itself modest goals in its Vision Zero plan in terms of the number of streets and intersections to be redesigned, the number of traffic cameras it plans to install relative to the total number of intersections (over 2300), and the pace of installation of protected bike lanes (a completed network by 2026).

By contrast, New York City has undertaken bold measures like the [transformation](#) of Queens Boulevard - previously known as the "Boulevard of Death"; protected bike lanes on [numerous bridges and streets, including Fifth Avenue](#); and the [pedestrian plaza program](#). New York City's automated speed enforcement program and reduced speed limits are equally ambitious (if not as expensive) although their safety cameras are under threat from a state regulation that may expire. In 2017, New York experienced its [fourth consecutive year of declining traffic fatalities](#) (the fewest number of lives lost since 1910) while Toronto's number of deaths is on the rise. Toronto needs to move more quickly and adopt a true Vision Zero plan that focuses on re-designing streets to reduce motor vehicle speeds, ensuring that inevitable human errors do not lead to death or serious injury.



A Friends and Families for Safe Streets vigil. Photo credit: Jun Nogami

Background on Friends and Families for Safe Streets:

Friends and Families for Safe Streets (FFSS) was founded in 2016 as a volunteer-led initiative to end traffic violence in Toronto by changing laws, enforcement, street design, public attitudes and traffic culture. We advocate to make Toronto's streets safer and more equitable for all road users, while supporting those who are survivors. Members include survivors of traffic collisions as well as friends and families whose loved ones have been killed or severely injured by careless drivers and dangerous conditions on Toronto's streets.

During the 2018 municipal election period, FFSS is also working in partnership with an active transportation coalition (led by the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation) to promote [#BuildTheVisionTO: Safe and Active Streets for All](#).



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