



Oct. 25, 2021

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee
Re: IE25.20, Scarborough Cycling Report

Dear committee members,

Walk Toronto is a grassroots pedestrian advocacy group that works with various levels of government, community groups, and citizens to improve walking conditions and safety.

Walk Toronto strongly supports the motion to “develop a long-term plan for a comprehensive pedestrian and cycling network plan for Scarborough.”

Scarborough greatly needs a comprehensive pedestrian plan. As the report “The Scarborough Opportunity” demonstrates, Scarborough currently has the worst rate of pedestrian fatalities among Toronto’s four districts. This situation is a result of a road network that was built to give motor vehicles priority. Scarborough has the widest and fastest arterial roads, on average, in the city, and has the longest average distance between safe crossing points. Many sidewalks on arterial roads are too narrow and are poorly maintained, discouraging their use and hampering accessibility. The recent death of a high school student struck by a driver at Birchmount Road and Danforth Avenue is a reminder of these problems.

Despite this dangerous infrastructure, many people already walk in Scarborough, to get to services, to access transit, and for exercise and pleasure. There is also a significant potential to encourage more walking, which would help to reach the city’s goal of having 75% of short trips in Toronto made by walking or cycling.

The good news is, Scarborough also provides opportunities for a much safer and more attractive pedestrian realm. The wide rights-of-way along many arterial roads give room for wider sidewalks, trees, street furniture, and bike lanes that will provide a buffer from fast-moving traffic and keep cyclists off the sidewalk. Intersections can be redesigned for safety, and more safe crossing points implemented at locations where people want to cross. “The Scarborough Opportunity” report provides many ideas for improvements.

However, no change will be possible without a conscious and determined strategy to transform Scarborough into a community where walking is safe, convenient, accessible, and appealing. That is why this motion is so important.

Thank you,

Dylan Reid
On behalf of Walk Toronto