



April 7, 2015

To: Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
Re: PW3.3: Proposed 30 km/h Speed Limit Policy

Walk Toronto is pleased with any move to make it easier to reduce speeds on Toronto's roads. It is now well-established that lower speeds significantly reduce the chances of pedestrians being seriously injured or killed by vehicles.

However, the current proposal, which would address only a small number of individual streets, is very modest. Many cities in Europe and North America are moving towards large-scale reductions of speed limits to 30 km/hr for local roads in entire neighbourhoods or entire cities. The Montreal borough of Outremont, for example, [now has 30 km/hr speed limits](#) on all local streets. A [recent study](#) by University of Missouri researchers in the town of Columbia, Missouri, showed that simply posting a lower speed limit city-wide does, in fact, reduce speeds.

It is not clear why this agenda item is not being coordinated with the [Toronto and East York CC motion TE34.196](#) (August 12, 2014), which seeks a 30 km/hr speed limit on all local streets in the district. Walk Toronto is concerned that the current policy could interfere with that motion. Therefore, our first recommendation is:

- **That PWIC specify that nothing in this policy will preclude broader neighbourhood, district, or city-wide speed limit reductions to 30 km/hr on local roads.**

Within the present policy proposal, we note that the conditions in Warrant B already, in themselves, go a long way towards encouraging slower speeds. In fact, we suggest that meeting the conditions of Warrant B might, in itself, be sufficient for reducing a street's speed limit.

If Warrant C remains a requirement, we wonder why seniors facilities are not also a sufficient condition to reduce speeds. Years of collision statistics in Toronto show clearly that seniors are at greater risk of death or serious injury from motor vehicles than the rest of the population. Walk Toronto therefore recommends:

- **That Warrant C include an additional criteria for the presence of a seniors' residence on the street, as a sufficient condition for a reduction in the speed limit**

When it comes to Warrant D, it is hard to imagine that very many streets in Toronto meet its very restrictive conditions, requiring 3 out of 4 dangerous safety situations to be present.

Any single one of the elements in warrants D would, in itself, be a strong reason to reduce the speed limit to 30 km/hr, if Warrant B conditions are already met.

For example, a street with two consecutive curves that are unsafe at speeds over 30 km/hr, and already satisfies the restrictions in Warrant B, should not require other conditions in order to be set at a 30 km/hr speed limit. Likewise, an 8.5 metre street with parking on both sides only allows 4.5 metres of space for driving in two directions, in which case any speed over 30 km/hr would already be dangerous.



As well, there may be other conditions on a street that are not easily captured in a warrant but that already restrict natural driving speed to a low speed.

Walk Toronto therefore recommends:

- **An additional criteria be added to Warrant D: where Operating Speed 85th Percentile is already no greater than 40 km/hr.**
- **That only ONE of the criteria in Warrant D need to be met to enable a 30 km/hr speed limit.**

Making these changes would bring the policy in line with the desire of council, which was to make it possible for a wider number of streets with safety concerns to reduce their local speed limit both in regulation and in practice.

Walk Toronto supports the proposal to enable the General Manager, Transportation Services to begin a study of the proposal by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation regarding the reduction of default speed limits to 40 km/hr. Such a reduction would greatly improve the safety of both pedestrians and drivers across the city.

In terms of such general speed limit reductions, Walk Toronto also strongly supports the Toronto and East York CC motion TE34.196 (August 12, 2014), which proposes a blanket 30 km/hr speed limit across the entire district. PWIC could also consider applying it to local streets in all parts of the city. We feel a large-scale change by neighbourhood, district or across the city could be more efficient than the street-by-street approach proposed here, and, if accompanied by public education and enforcement, could be more effective at reducing local speeds.

We hope that the Road Safety Plan recently proposed by PWIC and adopted by council will include the kind of large-scale speed reductions that have been key parts of "Vision Zero" plans in other North American cities.

Walk Toronto is a grassroots walking advocacy group dedicated to making Toronto a better city for walking.

Thank you,

Dylan Reid and Michael Black
On behalf of Walk Toronto