

**From:** [Wittmann, Katie](#)  
**To:** [Public Works and Infrastructure Committee](#)  
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**Subject:** My comments for 2015.PW9.16 on November 12, 2015 Public Works and Infrastructure Committee  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 11, 2015 1:39:06 PM

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To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the November 12, 2015 Public Works and Infrastructure Committee meeting on item 2015.PW9.16, Traffic Calming Options Manual

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

We are the lead researchers working on a project to help improve the safety of streets near schools. Our project team includes academics and professionals from various organizations, including Green Communities Canada, Toronto Centre for Active Transportation, CultureLink Settlement Services, York University, and the University of Toronto. We are also getting input on our project from Toronto District School Board and City of Toronto staff members, and we are working closely with the international award-winning non-profit organization Kids at Play which has the mandate to improve the safety of community streets across Canada.

We strongly support Councillor Robinson's request for Transportation Services to include an easy-to-use traffic calming manual as part of the upcoming Toronto Road Safety Plan. We hope that by sharing our experiences and findings, our work can complement the new manual and help inform staff as they begin this process.

Our project, a *Guide to Safer Streets near Schools*, aims to improve the health of communities by facilitating safer neighbourhoods for children and youth to walk, cycle, and roll to school. The goal is to enhance neighbourhood safety by creating an easy-to-follow guide to the City's warrant system for reducing speed limits and implementing safe intersection protocols. The guide will be supplemented with research on similar processes in other jurisdictions, supported by research into City of Toronto's collision data and best practices for crossings, input from groups who have experience with the traffic calming warrant system, and piloted by at least one school before wider dissemination. Parents at participating schools will be invited to share feedback on the draft guide and their pilot experience, and City staff and Councillors will be consulted throughout the process to ensure accuracy, value, and usability.

We began our project in June 2015 with funding from the Healthier Cities and Communities Hub Seed Grant. We also have Mitacs funding for our student researcher, and we will have a revised guide ready for spring 2016.

From our preliminary interviews with City staff and community members it has become clear that the City's processes for traffic calming, speed reduction, and other neighbourhood changes feel like a "black box", as one key informant suggested. Residents seeking positive neighbourhood change are often at a loss for the steps they can take, or what kind of options they have. People may know the general problem (e.g. speeding cars), but they are typically unaware of the possible solutions or the relevant policies. The City's website is difficult to navigate if you do not know specific terms to search, and should be made more accessible to the public. An easy-to-use manual for traffic calming is one step the City can take to help bridge the gap between community initiatives and City policies.

We also urge the City to consider the usability of their website and how they will facilitate access to the traffic calming manual and other helpful documents for residents. Through dedicated research we have come across a wealth of information developed by the City, but the process for retrieving the information is not intuitive nor centrally located.

Lastly, we invite staff to contact our group to learn more about the research we have done to date and to provide feedback on our draft guide.

Thank you,

Katie Wittmann, Green Communities Canada ([Katie.wittmann@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:Katie.wittmann@tdsb.on.ca))

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Brandon Quigley, York University ([brandonq@yorku.ca](mailto:brandonq@yorku.ca))

The rest of our project team supports this deputation: Beth Savan (University of Toronto), Nancy Smith Lea (TCAT), Kristin Schwartz (CultureLink), Kristen Evers (TDSB), as well as Meghan Sherwin (Kids at Play).