



## Key Messages

### Our future roads: Safety is not a fairy tale

Once upon a time, the idea of truly safe roads might have seemed like a fairy tale. We wish we could walk or bike more, we wish we had more options than driving, we wish we could feel safer. But here's the good news: we don't need magic to make safe roads a reality. Proven strategies exist that can dramatically reduce injuries and deaths, creating roads where everyone can travel safely, and youth have a vital role in bringing this change to life.

Road crashes are the third-leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 24 in Canada, making youth some of the most vulnerable on our roads. But as young people inherit the transportation systems being built today, they also have the power to reshape them. Their voices, ideas and actions are essential to making our streets safer.

During Canadian Youth Road Safety Week (#CYRSW2024) from Oct. 20 to 26, 2024, we'll dive into factors that make roads safer and some proven measures that can protect young people.

Through our key activity, **Snap for Change**, Parachute invites youth across Canada to share their voices and advocate for road safety measures in their communities. Together, we can make safe, sustainable and inclusive roads a reality.

Is there an area in your neighbourhood where the road could use a safety boost? Maybe it's a damaged sidewalk, or a busy intersection where there isn't enough



light, or an area where the speed limit is higher than 30 km/h. Maybe you would love to bike to the grocery store or to see your friends, but there aren't enough bike lanes on your route.

Share your voice with us by joining the Snap for Change Initiative! Take a picture of the problem area, tell us what you think would make this area safer, and receive a \$100 gift card for your submission. Safe roads are not a fairy tale – your voice matters and together we can make our future roads safe for all.

[Read more about Snap For Change.](#)

## Safe speeds: No need for fairy dust

Speed plays a role in nearly a quarter of fatal crashes on our roads. In busy urban areas where people walk, cycle, skate and play, having lowered speed limits is especially critical. Studies show that a pedestrian struck by a car traveling at 50 km/h is almost six times more likely to be killed than one hit at 30 km/h.

But as much as we wish posting lower speed limits would solve the problem, it isn't always enough. No magical spells are required here, just smart solutions such as traffic calming – speed bumps, roundabouts and road narrowing. These measures not only reduce speeds but also reliably reduce pedestrian injuries.

Lower speeds don't just save lives – they also reduce carbon emissions and create streets where walking and cycling feel more like part of everyday life than something out of a storybook. When more people are out walking, drivers also tend to be more cautious. Youth, as changemakers, can champion safer speeds in their neighbourhoods to help create roads where everyone can feel safe.

## Active transport: Not a quest but a choice

Choosing to walk, cycle, or scoot shouldn't feel like a heroic quest. Active transportation, such as walking and cycling, is a powerful way to cut down carbon emissions and improve our overall health. But to make active transportation safe and appealing, we need more than a wish. We need safer road designs. For example, separated bike lanes can reduce the risk of injury and death by up to 90 per cent, making cycling as safe as it is enjoyable.

Youth play a key role in this story as they often decide how they'll get around based on the design of their surroundings. If roads are built with safe active

transport options like bike lanes and pedestrian pathways, more young people are likely to choose walking or cycling, especially since not all youth drive or have access to cars.

## **Public transit access: Magic wands not required**

Public transit access can seem like a magical solution to many problems – cutting emissions, improving access, and reducing collisions – but no wands are necessary to make it happen. In Canada, 53 per cent of transport emissions come from cars and light trucks. Expanding public transit can help reduce these emissions while also lowering the risk of collisions.

But the story doesn't end with safety, it's also about access. In Canada's largest cities, 40 per cent of low-income residents don't have reliable access to essential services like jobs or healthcare, and in many rural and northern areas, the challenge is even greater. For youth, this lack of access creates physical, economic and social barriers.

Accessible public transit will provide youth with real, tangible choice and opportunities. Youth can drive the demand for this and advocate for expanded public transit systems. It's not about magic, it's about creating a world where sustainability, equity and safety are the happily-ever-after we work toward together.

## **Impaired driving: No potions, just prevention**

There's no magic potion that can undo the damage caused by impaired driving. It remains one of the leading causes of preventable road crashes, endangering the lives of many Canadians. Harm reduction strategies can work like a shield, protecting people from making dangerous choices.

Encouraging designated drivers, increasing access to rideshare options and public transit can help create supportive environments and provide safe alternatives. Youth can be leaders in supporting this and encouraging safe choices among their peers. With the right support, we can ensure that people don't need a fairy godmother to protect them at the end of the ball – they will have the resources they need to do it themselves.

## It's all connected: A fairy tale ending within reach

Active transport, lower speeds, public transit access and safe infrastructure all work together to improve the health and safety of our communities:

- Lower speeds reduce emissions and increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Accessible public transit encourages more people to choose sustainable travel options, while giving lower-income populations greater access to essential services and encourage people to opt for the bus when impaired.
- Separated bike lanes protect cyclists, making active travel a safer and more appealing choice.

Youth are at the heart of making this change happen. By advocating for safer speeds, smarter infrastructure, and better transit, they can play a key role in shaping the future of road safety in Canada. Practical and achievable solutions exist, and we don't need magic wands to make these wishes come true.

**To find out more, visit**

**[parachute.ca/ourfutureroads](https://parachute.ca/ourfutureroads)**