

Speed Limits and Road Safety: Examples of Questions to Ask to Ensure the Safety of Pedestrians

by

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**Presentation materials for the
Community Summit
*Speed Limits and Road Safety***

organized by
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1. BACKGROUND

In brief, I accepted the invitation to make a five-minute presentation and serve on a panel discussing the 2015 Community Summit theme, *Speed Limits and Road Safety*.

I believe I can be most helpful by recalling some of the evidence and lessons learned from the Walking Security Index (WSI) project, with its emphasis on serving and promoting the safety, comfort, and convenience of pedestrians while they are using city streets, and, in particular, intersections.

The Walking Security Index report and the companion Walking Security Index Pilot Study report can be viewed at <http://wellar.ca/wellarconsulting/home.html>.

My approach for this assignment is to provide a selection of questions regarding the summit theme, “Speed Limits and Road Safety” rather than attempting to be prescriptive.

In my experience the questions are pertinent to situations across Ottawa and in a number of other municipalities as well.

Further, it is my expectation that they will serve the very productive purpose of leading to more questions about how to ensure that decisions involving speed limits, road safety, and the relationship between speed limits and road safety, have due regard for the safety of pedestrians, and especially the safety of more vulnerable road users including children, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

2. EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF PEDESTRIANS WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE ABOUT SPEED LIMITS

Whatever speed limits are specified for city roads, the Province of Ontario, the City of Ottawa, and all other municipalities are obliged to ensure that an appropriate standard of care is provided for all road users, including pedestrians -- with particular regard for children, seniors, and disabled persons.

Speed limit and road safety questions pertinent to establishing whether an appropriate standard of care is provided to all pedestrians using roads in a municipality include those which address the following issues, concerns, problems, objectives, etc.

1. Is the distance between stop bars and crosswalks appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
2. Is the width of crosswalks appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
3. Is signage alerting drivers to pedestrians appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?

2. EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF PEDESTRIANS WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE ABOUT SPEED LIMITS

4. Are winter road maintenance standards involving plow and salt/sand/grit operations appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
5. Are winter road maintenance operations involving plow and salt/sand/grit operations appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
6. Are winter sidewalk maintenance standards involving plow and salt/sand/grit operations appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
7. Are winter sidewalk maintenance operations involving plow and salt/sand/grit operations appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
8. Are traffic signal lights and other controls appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
9. Are gaps between the red signal for vehicles and the walk signal for pedestrians appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?

2. EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF PEDESTRIANS WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE ABOUT SPEED LIMITS

- 10.** Are traffic surveillance standards for police, radar, and cameras at road intersections used by pedestrians appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
- 11.** Are traffic surveillance operations by police, radar, and cameras at road intersections used by pedestrians appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
- 12.** Are traffic enforcement standards for police, radar, and cameras at road intersections used by pedestrians appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
- 13.** Are traffic enforcement operations by police, radar, and cameras at road intersections used by pedestrians appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
- 14.** Are traffic surveillance standards for police, radar, and cameras on roads proximal to schools, playgrounds, parks, seniors' residences, community centres, arenas, outdoor rinks, ball diamonds, soccer fields, etc. appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?

2. EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF PEDESTRIANS WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE ABOUT SPEED LIMITS

- 15.** Are traffic surveillance operations by police, radar, and cameras on roads proximal to schools, playgrounds, parks, seniors' residences, community centres, arenas, outdoor rinks, ball diamonds, soccer fields, etc. appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
- 16.** Are traffic enforcement standards for police, radar, and cameras on roads proximal to schools, playgrounds, parks, seniors' residences, community centres, arenas, outdoor rinks, ball diamonds, soccer fields, etc. appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
- 17.** Are traffic enforcement operations by police, radar, and cameras on roads proximal to schools, playgrounds, parks, seniors' residences, community centres, arenas, outdoor rinks, ball diamonds, soccer fields, etc. appropriate to ensure pedestrians' safety?
- 18.** Are procedures employed by Police Services to document safety-related incidents involving pedestrians sufficient to support remedial measures as needed to ensure pedestrians' safety?

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- 19.** Are procedures employed by Police Services to analyse safety incident data involving pedestrians sufficient to support remedial measures as needed to ensure pedestrians' safety?
- 20.** Does the Ontario Highway Traffic Act ensure that all statements involving speed limits, road safety, and the relationship between speed limits and road safety have full and due regard for the safety of pedestrians?

3. ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS

Additional questions and concerns with regard to pedestrians' safety are discussed in a number of my reports, papers, etc., many of which can be viewed at:

<http://wellar.ca/wellarconsulting/home.html>

<http://www.transport-action.ca/en/>

<http://www.slideshare.net/wellarb>

<https://urbanneighbourhoods.wordpress.com/research/>

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