



## University Students' Council Standing Policy on Pedestrian Safety

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<b>Original Author(s)</b>	<b>Author(s) of Renewed Paper</b>
Mauricio Diaz Associate, Vice-President University Students' Council  <i>with files from</i> Jamie Cleary Vice-President University Students' Council	N/A

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## Introduction and Overview

Pedestrian safety on Western's campus is a topic of great importance for Western students as London residents. In 2015, the death of a student initiated a conversation on our campus surrounding pedestrian safety. In 2016, Ontario saw 30 pedestrian deaths, the highest pedestrian death toll since 2007.<sup>1</sup> This paper addresses the need for Western and the City of London to concurrently address road safety in a manner that considers the identification of high-risk roads through data collection and association metrics such as traffic flows and road-related incidents. Furthermore, road safety is a multi-sectoral issue that requires multiple departments and stakeholders to be engaged throughout the process. Although both Western and the City of London have recently begun to collaborate between various stakeholders upcoming project, it is important that there is continuity in these actions as this will decrease redundancies and improve assessment capabilities.<sup>2</sup>

Road Safety is a public health issue – both the prevention of incidents and the encouraging healthier more sedentary behaviours such as walking and biking are important as the safety of our students is paramount in ensuring a positive experience here at Western. Furthermore, pedestrian and road safety measures extend to more than just solutions about the road users themselves -- the road design and layout influence the way road users navigate spaces.

Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-29 years old as declared by the World Health Organization.<sup>3</sup> The USC believes that more action needs to be taken by Western and the City of London to identify areas of high-risk and proactively implement measures to decrease the risk of road accidents. Despite effort being taken, the focus should be pedestrian centric and creating a holistic community for Western and the City of London respectively, whereby the vulnerability of the human body should be a primary design parameter for road design and speed management.

For the purposes of this paper we will define a pedestrian to be:

- A person who is not in or upon a vehicle, motorized or otherwise propelled;
- A person in a non-motorized wheelchair;
- A person in a motorized wheelchair that cannot travel at over 10 kilometres per hour; or
- A person pushing a bicycle, motorized or non-motorized wheelchair<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> "Ontario pedestrian deaths reach 8-year peak," *London Free Press* (November 18, 2016), <http://www.lfpress.com/2016/11/18/pedestrian-deaths-reach-eight-year-peak-in-ontario-provincial-police>

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, *Pedestrian Death Review*, (Toronto: Ontario, 2010), 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> "Road traffic injuries," *World Health Organization* (November 2016), <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs3>

## Recommendations

The University Students' Council proposes the following recommendations in an effort to improve pedestrian safety both at Western and in the City of London

1. Western should assess the amount of pedestrian and road traffic incidents every 4 years in order to make calculated decisions for high-risk areas on campus.
2. Western will collect data on the effectiveness of pedestrian safety measures through services, engineering, and education.
3. Western should survey students about their perceived safety on campus and couple it with an assessment of the 'Safe Campus services' survey specifically related to the utilization and satisfaction.
4. Western should publish the data they find pertaining to pedestrian safety to the Western Safe Campus website.
5. With the data collected, Western should implement infrastructure to at-risk areas on campus specifically, but not limited to, the University Dr. & Perth Rd. intersection.
6. Western should implement more lighting fixtures in areas of low-light.
7. Western should support, through funding, the continual safety of students on campus by painting the Emergency Phone poles a visible colour.
8. Western will support pedestrian safety efforts, through procedure changes, by ensuring that services such as foot patrol and campus police are focused on reducing pedestrian related incidents.
9. Western should ensure that facilities management deferred maintenance does not affect pedestrian flows on campus.
10. Recommendation: The City of London should support pedestrian safety by collecting data that considers students in the overarching issues that affect the London community.
11. Recommendation: The data collected by the City of London should be published to
12. Recommendation: The City should collect data on the number of incidents that occur from right-on-red turns.
13. The City of London should support student pedestrian safety on Western Road, through funding, to develop pedestrian islands along the road.
14. The City of London should implement a cross walk at the intersection of Brescia Ln. and Sarnia Road.

15. The City of London should consider lowering the speed limit of Sarnia Rd.
16. The City of London should, through capital investment, ensure engineering changes are made to Western and Sarnia Rd in the form of an underground tunnel.
17. Western should commit to the implementation of a Leading Pedestrian Interval at the Western and Sarnia Road intersection.

## Data Collection at Western University

Principle: Data records on road related incidents are needed in order to make informed decisions for campus road traffic and student safety.

Concern: This data is not available in a manner that is centralized and publicly available.

Concern: There is no data available pertaining to the effectiveness of the 'Safe Campus' services offered.

Recommendation: Western should assess the amount of pedestrian and road traffic incidents every 4 years in order to make calculated decisions for high-risk areas on campus.

Recommendation: Western will collect data on the effectiveness of pedestrian safety measures through services, engineering, and education.

Recommendation: Western should survey students about their perceived safety on campus and couple it with an assessment of the 'Safe Campus services' survey specifically related to the utilization and satisfaction.

Recommendation: Western should publish the data they find pertaining to pedestrian safety to the Western Safe Campus website.

Students have become growingly concerned with the safety of pedestrians on Western's campus. Last year, the death of a student on our campus prompted students to advocate, research, and spread awareness about pedestrian-related incidents. However, in order to assess the areas on campus that put pedestrians at-risk the data collected should be centralized and publicly available. As the university plans for growth they should continue the efforts of the *Open Space and Landscape Plan* to assess the impact of new engineering and infrastructure on the safety of pedestrians over a continuous 4-year period. This will ensure that the university is committed to student safety being at the forefront of the infrastructure design. To ensure that the data is centralized and publicly available to students, Western should publicize the data metrics on the Safe Campus website under the Physical Safety component to ensure that current and prospective students have access to this information.

## Infrastructure & Services at Western

Principle: The safety of our students around campus should be a primary influence for continual improvement of infrastructure and 'Safe Campus' services.

Concern: Western's facilities operations can impede pedestrian traffic flows through deferred maintenance in the winter.

Concern: Lack of lighting near roads or on-campus leaves the opportunity for a multitude of pedestrian safety related issues to occur.

Concern: 'Safe Campus' services should aid in facilitating a pedestrian centric campus.

Recommendation: With the data collected, Western should implement infrastructure to at-risk areas on campus specifically, but not limited to, the University Dr. & Perth Rd. intersection.

Recommendation: Western should implement more lighting fixtures in areas of low-light.

Recommendation: Western should support, through funding, the continual safety of students on campus by painting the Emergency Phone poles a visible colour.

Recommendation: Western will support pedestrian safety efforts, through procedure changes, by ensuring that 'Safe Campus' services such as foot patrol and campus police are focused on reducing pedestrian related incidents.

Recommendation: Western should ensure that facilities management deferred maintenance does not affect pedestrian flows on campus.

Pedestrian safety is a multifaceted issue – there are many reasons that can cause an individual to perceive danger on campus. Western is well aware of this risk and has therefore created services to address this issue on campus, Foot patrol is an example of such a service. However, it's important that these services are continually evaluated and improved while not becoming dependent on these services as a sole solution to the issue of safety on this campus.

In order to guarantee that the university is utilizing the data, action in the form of infrastructure implementation, should be taken within two years of having an identified at-risk area. The Perth Dr. and University Dr. intersection has been identified as an area with a high volume crosswalk and a maximum of 11800 vehicles flowing from the east corridor, University Dr; it is important that the University take action or communicate a plan of action for area such as these.

Support for pedestrian safety should extend beyond roads and to pedestrian-only paths – a problem however seems to be the navigation of the campus at night, more specifically addressing the lighting and access to emergency resources. According to the Pedestrian Death Review, 60% of pedestrians were killed at night or in dim light conditions<sup>5</sup>. The University should commit to implementing more lighting fixtures in dark areas and on road with heavy car and/or pedestrian traffic flow.

In combination with effective lighting across campus would be increasing the visibility According to Western the purpose of the 22 Emergency Phone poles is to provide pedestrians direct two-way communication with the Police Communications Operators<sup>6</sup>. The poles are painted black attached is a light. However, since the poles are predominantly used at night they blend. At McMaster, the phone poles are attached with an overhanging streetlight and are painted red to maximize the visibility at night<sup>7</sup>. The emergency phone poles should be tested weekly to certify appropriate operation.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> *Campus Community Police Service* "Emergency Phones," *Western University*.  
[http://www.uwo.ca/police/campus\\_safety/emergency\\_phones.html](http://www.uwo.ca/police/campus_safety/emergency_phones.html)

<sup>7</sup> Security Services "Assistance Phones," *McMaster University*. [http://security.mcmaster.ca/crime\\_prevention\\_ephone.html](http://security.mcmaster.ca/crime_prevention_ephone.html)

# Pedestrian Safety Strategy & Charter

Principle: The City of London should establish a value-system to coordinate pedestrian safety efforts.

Principle: The City of London should be a community whereby there are zero fatalities are at cause of road-related incidents.

Concern: The City of London's pedestrian safety documents should set principles to allow all stakeholders to operate congruently.

Concern: Documents by the City of London lack engineering measures that focus on the vulnerability of the human body as being a primary design parameter.

Recommendation: City of London should create a Pedestrian Safety Charter.

Recommendation: The City of London should commit, through the Pedestrian Safety Charter, to reducing the amount of deaths and serious injuries caused by road traffic to zero.

Recommendation: The City of London should amend the existing Road Safety Strategy to include amendments surrounding engineering for pedestrian.

In order to ensure that all departments and relevant stakeholders of the City of London operate under a centralized system with shared values and philosophies around pedestrian safety, the City should create a charter that stipulates as such similar to the City of Toronto's Pedestrian Charter<sup>8</sup>. This will allow the City of London to identify pillars for departments to make harmonized decisions from. One of the core values of the charter would be to reduce the amount of deaths caused by street related incidents to zero. Currently the city of London's Road Safety Strategy aims to reduce the death rate by 10%<sup>9</sup>. Ultimately, the Vision Zero plan should aim to better coordinate efforts and resources among stakeholders across the City of London.

Furthermore, the current Road Safety Strategy identifies young drivers as a core target population<sup>10</sup>. It's also interesting to note that Western, a key stakeholder, is not included in the working group discussions and therefore, very difficult to ensure that the student voice is considered. The strategy goes on to define the age range of young drivers to be 16 – 25 years old, which classifies the predominant populous of students. However, all of the proposed recommendations for this section pertain to education and enforcement as solutions. Although education is important and young drivers are undergoing a learning process, the failure to explore engineering measures through road design and layout could perpetuate the notion that the young driver is to be held accountable.

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<sup>8</sup> "Toronto Pedestrian Charter," *City of Toronto*. [https://www1.toronto.ca/city\\_of\\_toronto/transportation\\_services/walking/files/pdf/charter.pdf](https://www1.toronto.ca/city_of_toronto/transportation_services/walking/files/pdf/charter.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> "City of London Road Safety Strategy 2014-2019," *City of London*. <https://www.london.ca/residents/Roads-Transportation/Road-Safety/Documents/city-of-london-road-safety-web.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## City of London Data Collection

Principle: The collection of data is necessary to identify the roads and areas in the City of London that are at-risk to road traffic incidents.

Concern: The City of London road incident data should be location specific and distributed in a manner that is centralized and publicly available and conducted to take proactive measures.

Recommendation: The City of London should support pedestrian safety by collecting data that considers students in the overarching issues that affect the London community.

Recommendation: The data collected by the City of London should be sent to and be published by the Community Safety & Crime Prevention advisory committee.

Recommendation: The City should collect data on the number of incidents that occur from right-on-red turns.

In order to accompany the pedestrian charter, stakeholders should be able to access road usage and incident data that is location specific. This will allow for a coordinated approach in pedestrian safety related initiatives and allow for location specific improvement. The Collision Data Improvement program – Pedestrians should extend to the design and layout of the road and its impact on the behavioural impact it may have on road users. Ultimately, the inclusion of students could lead to more efficient and effective outcomes.

## London Infrastructure

Principle: Upon identification of at-risk areas infrastructure measures, be it short-term or long-term action should be taken to ensure pedestrian safety.

Concern: At-risk areas are often not identified until a road-traffic incident occurs

Recommendation: The City of London should support student pedestrian safety on Western Road, through funding, to develop pedestrian islands along the road.

Recommendation: The City of London should implement a cross was at the intersection of Brescia Ln. and Sarnia Road.

Recommendation: The City of London should consider lowering the speed limit of Sarnia Rd.

Recommendation: The City of London should, through capital investment, ensure engineering changes are made to Western and Sarnia Rd in the form of an underground tunnel.

Recommendation: Western should commit to the implementation of a Leading Pedestrian Interval at the Western and Sarnia Road intersection.

The City of London is a key partner in creating a holistic community for students. As London shifts to encourage healthier behaviours for residents such as walking or biking, the need for effective road engineering for the London, and near-campus neighbourhoods.

The Western and Sarnia Road intersection has become a priority for the USC in terms of risk for pedestrian-vehicle related incidents -- the area has 9000 pedestrian crossings during the 9-hour peak period, and 7615 car crossings over a period of 24 hours<sup>11</sup>. With 3 first-year residences located near the Western & Sarnia intersection, there are 1953 students that are acclimating to the on-campus road traffic environment.<sup>12</sup> This has been identified as a risk because every year students matriculate into residence, and as highlighted in the London Road Safety Plan educating pedestrians is a key component in decreasing the occurrence of incidents. However, in this instance it is more feasible to implement infrastructure that can guide road users, be it drivers or pedestrians, to navigate the road safely because of the quick-turnaround for first year students in residence. The USC believes that education and engineering at Western and Sarnia should be synergistic. Furthermore, to decrease the stress caused by driver and pedestrian traffic flow, it is proposed that the City of London build an underground tunnel to diffuse the flow of pedestrian traffic at the Western and Sarnia Rd. intersection as a long-term solution. In the short-term, the City should implement a Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) that displays the walk sign turned on, at minimum, 3-5 seconds before the green light allows the vehicle intending to turn right or left to have improved visibility and time to yield for pedestrians crossing.<sup>13</sup> LPI's are known to reduce pedestrian-vehicle collisions as much as 60%, have a low implementation cost and are most effective in areas where there is an increased chance for potential collisions between vehicles and pedestrians<sup>14</sup>.

Continuing off of Sarnia Rd. is Brescia Lane, and currently there is a bus stop located adjacent to the the Brescia Lane connection. However, there is no immediate crosswalk and students have learned to traverse the street without using the crosswalk. The City of London should implement a crosswalk near Brescia Lane to make the bus stop more accessible to students. Furthermore, the City of London should aim to decrease the speed limit of Sarnia Road as roads over 50 km/hour exponentially increase the probability of death occurring from a road related incident. The combination of jaywalking behaviours and high vehicular speed limits is an incident that is preventable, and action should be taken.

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<sup>11</sup> "Traffic Study 2015/ 2016," Western University. [http://www.uwo.ca/ipb/publicaccountability/documents/WesternUTrafficStudy2015\\_16.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/ipb/publicaccountability/documents/WesternUTrafficStudy2015_16.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> "Residence at Western," *Western University*. <http://www.residenceatwestern.ca>

<sup>13</sup> <http://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/intersection-design-elements/traffic-signals/leading-pedestrian-interval/>

<sup>14</sup> "Urban Street Design Guide," *National Association of City Transportation Officials*. <http://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/intersection-design-elements/traffic-signals/leading-pedestrian-interval/>