

Designing Safer More Engaging Streets: Putting People First



Vision: To make streets safer, more engaging and inclusive for pedestrians, cyclists, transit services & vehicles.

Times have changed. People's needs have changed. We need safer streets now.

The Problem:

For decades, the design of streets has primarily focused on accommodating vehicles and infrastructure, while pedestrians and cyclists were given limited consideration.

Streets are much more than corridors for transportation and infrastructure. They are great public spaces that link our communities.

Transportation road design traditionally started at the centre line of the road and moved outwards to the periphery property lines focused on ensuring adequate space for vehicular traffic.

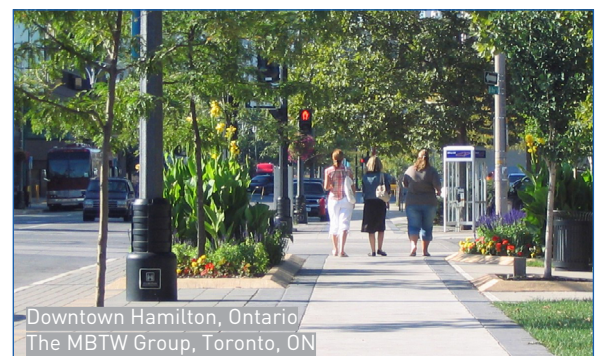
Pedestrian and cycling needs were accommodated where possible, at the edges of streets by applying uniform sidewalk, cycling and crosswalk standards to the remaining left-over space, after vehicular requirements were satisfied. Conventional wisdom suggested vehicular lane widths were absolute and whatever width remained may accommodate pedestrians and/or cyclists.

The COVID-19 pandemic work from home requirements have increased the desire for access to quality public spaces, demanding more inclusive solutions.

With a world more conscious of climate change and the impacts of fossil fuel vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists are returning to the streets in greater numbers demanding safer, more engaging urban environments where pedestrians' and cyclists' needs are considered first in street design.

What can politicians do to help?

1. Support policy, planning, design and street operations for safer streets through legislation.
2. Choose where to spend funds that support safer streets.



Solutions:

<p>Designing safer streets requires a paradigm shift in thinking from traditional street design. We must now start with the requirements for pedestrians and cyclists placed on par with those of vehicles.</p>	<p>Focus on rebalancing pedestrian and cycling needs together with vehicular needs placing a greater emphasis on safety within the overall streetscape network.</p>	<p>Safer streets meet Provincial legislation and municipal policies for healthy, sustainable and complete communities where people choose to walk and cycle.</p>
<p>Use an evidence-based approach to create safe and engaging streets by applying public health science and transportation research to the built environment.</p>	<p>Safer context sensitive street environments generate greater pedestrian and cycling trips for shopping, work, play and civic life, while also reducing greenhouse gases.</p>	<p>Landscape Architects are skilled at designing and rebalancing competing and complex requirements to create safer streets that create great public spaces.</p>

Safer Street outcomes:

<p>Creates a culture of walking that improves personal well-being.</p>	<p>Achieves universal accessibility and mobility with safer clear travel zones.</p>	<p>Reduces attacks from vehicles on enhanced sidewalk zones.</p>
<p>Creates a local context sensitive design balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles with a sense of place, pride and ownership.</p>	<p>Reduces crime or the fear of crime through the provision of well lit, energy efficient pedestrian and street lighting.</p>	<p>Creates an attractive more comfortable walking environment that increases pedestrian activity and personal safety.</p>
<p>Creates effective alternative transportation modes providing amenities within the right of way for public transit, pedestrian and cycling movement.</p>	<p>Supports new development with improved environments for people.</p>	<p>Inclusive to all economic categories encouraging active living through walking and cycling as modes of transportation.</p>

What can Landscape Architects do to help?

1. Provide comprehensive planning and design skills to address the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.
2. Utilize public consultation skills to engage local citizens and propose community appropriate solutions that create safer streets.
3. Design streets that are safer and assist with the mitigation of weather-related impacts. Provide shade trees where appropriate and innovative stormwater management solutions.

