

Everything roads
since 1894.

2024 Advocacy Day

Good Roads

Good Roads

Who We Are

Good Roads is a municipal association concerned with the quality and design of roads in Ontario. We have been devoted to the cause of better roads since 1894. Originally known as the Ontario Good Roads Association (and still using that name corporately), our members include most of Ontario's municipalities and a growing number of First Nations as well as dozens of affiliated corporate members in the transportation and infrastructure sectors.

We are the connective tissue.

Our purpose, in part, is to connect our members to each other, to other levels of government, and to relevant companies in the private sector. We see issues through a municipal wide-angle lens, capturing both staff and elected official perspectives. We attempt to unify those interests. Our members look to us for training, knowledge, political advocacy, and answers to their most pressing problems. In doing all this, we serve the public good by helping improve infrastructure, which improves the economic prosperity, quality of life and functionality of communities.

We stand for trusted independence.

Good Roads is resolutely independent. We generate all our revenue without government funding. That enables us to remain non-partisan, working only in the interests of our members, as we have for 128 years. Our members count on our advocacy with the province and on the impartiality of any advice we give, including recommendations for products and services.

We improve the return our members earn on their roads investment.

Every government wants their roads to pay an ROI — in dollars, in connectivity, and in performance. Good Roads contributes by:

- Helping save billions in taxpayer dollars through better maintenance, methods, and materials.
- Helping save lives through better road policy.
- Helping municipalities effectively manage risk.
- Bringing consistency to Ontario roads via unified member training, standards, and qualifications.
- Mitigating the environmental impacts of roads.

Our Brand Promise

A brand promise is like a compass. It helps you stay aligned. This is ours:

To help our members build better communities.

We do it by providing:

- Skills development to improve the workforce.
- Knowledge to inform decisions.
- Networking to share knowledge and solve problems.
- Analysis to clarify emerging policy.
- Data and research to support initiatives.
- Tools to better manage assets and budgets.
- Political advocacy to further the goals of communities.
- Insights to help anticipate the future.

When our members succeed, everybody wins.

When our shared infrastructure is excellent, everybody wins.

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A Plan to Build Safer Rural Roads and Address Municipal Liability

Ontario's rural roads are disproportionately dangerous and a source of significant liability for rural municipalities. They do not need to be this way. There are cost-effective, cutting-edge roadway safety tools that can prevent injuries and save lives. With funding from the provincial government, municipalities across rural and Northern Ontario can make their roads safer, improve risk management, and enhance community connectivity and economic development.



¹ Ontario Road Safety Annual Report 2021. Ministry of Transportation. Pages 47-61.

² Socioeconomic facts and data about rural Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/socioeconomic-facts-and-data-about-rural-ontario>

³ America's Rural Roads: Beautiful and Deadly: <https://www.ghsa.org/resources/GHSA/Rural-Road-Safety22>

Background

Simply put, rural roads are more dangerous than other roads. In 2021, there were 426 traffic fatalities on municipal roads, with 259 of these occurring in rural municipalities.¹ The unfortunate reality is that with only 17% of the provincial population², rural Ontario accounted for 61% of traffic fatalities on municipal roads.

Many rural, remote, and northern municipalities are responsible for maintaining extensive road networks on a smaller population/tax base. As a result, these roads tend to be older, in poorer condition, and incorporate only basic road safety infrastructure.³

With provincial partnership, problematic sections of Ontario's rural, northern, and remote roads can be made safer. Interventions could include replacing legacy assets (e.g., wooden posts with guardrails), installing necessary road fixtures (e.g., guardrails, signs, lighting, road paint), or upgrading to modern assets with innovative safety functions (e.g., crash cushions). In other jurisdictions, governments are implementing similar measures.

A Plan to Build Safer Rural Roads and Address Municipal Liability

The Good Roads Proposal

Good Roads proposes to partner with the Government of Ontario by investing \$183 million over a five-year term. Good Roads will administer the program and collaborate with the Ministry of Transportation, municipal and First Nations partners, researchers, and the private sector to design and implement a program aimed at reducing fatalities and injuries on rural, northern, and remote roads.

Benefits

Investing in a rural road safety initiative offers numerous benefits, with a primary focus on harm reduction for Ontarians, improved risk management for local road authorities, and public financial protection. This program will lower Ontario road fatality rates and save both municipalities and the healthcare system money.

The World Bank estimates that each \$1 spent on an RSA yields a return of \$36.⁴ Furthermore, the benefit of preventing even a single casualty far outweighs the cost of an RSA. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that each traffic fatality incurs a lifetime economic cost of \$1.6 million⁵, while each critically injured survivor costs an average of \$979,000.

Good Roads believes it is fiscally responsible to invest in interventions that reduce the likelihood of crashes resulting in fatalities or serious injuries.

Key Components

Road Safety Audit Grants

The proposed program emphasizes the use of road safety audits (RSAs), a formal, systematic process for assessing the safety of a road or traffic project. RSAs identify potential safety issues and suggest improvements to reduce crash risks and severity.

Good Roads' plan would provide up to \$50,000 per municipality or First Nation to perform RSAs in known problem areas.

Infrastructure Grants

Each RSA will include a list of recommendations for improving the safety of problem stretches of road, most of which involve alterations to the built environment. Good Roads' initiative utilizes key partnerships for cost-effective, cutting-edge interventions.

The plan allocates grants of up to \$315,000 per municipality or First Nation to support the implementation of recommended road safety infrastructure.

Analysis Grants

After implementation, it is best practice to monitor the site to assess whether the changes effectively enhance safety. This involves using crash data, feedback from road users, and regular inspections to evaluate each recommendation's impact.

Good Roads' plan provides grants of up to \$30,000 for analyzing interventions in these problem areas.

⁴ Deng, F, Jordan P & Goode M 2012, Reducing traffic accidents in China: strengthening the use of road safety audits, World Bank, Washington, USA.

⁵ The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>

A Plan to Build Safer Rural Roads and Address Municipal Liability

Current Status

Good Roads has already begun building road safety audit capacity in Ontario. To date, four courses have trained over 70 students in this practice, with plans to expand and enhance the training further.

This initiative has garnered widespread support across the sector. The Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA), the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), and both the Western and Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucuses (WOWC & EOWC) have all voiced support for this initiative.

Ontario's municipalities are also rallying in support. To date, over 70 municipalities have passed resolutions urging the province to collaborate with Good Roads to deliver this program.

Recommendation

Good Roads recommends that the province commit to exploring the feasibility of this initiative in the 2025 Ontario Budget.

Request

Please write to the Minister of Transportation in support of Good Roads' Plan to Build Safer Rural Roads and Address Municipal Liability.

A Plan to Get Serious About Road Safety

Road safety in Ontario has reached an inflection point. The number of fatalities is up nearly 20% in the last ten years.¹ In that time, the number of deaths connected to speeding is up 54%. On-the-ground enforcement alone is not preventing the strain our hospitals are experiencing due to traffic-related injuries. Concrete action must be taken to effectively lower the fatalities and serious injuries on Ontario roads and empower municipalities to deter the bad actors behind the wheel across the province.



¹ Ontario Road Safety Annual Report 2013. Ministry of Transportation. Page 22.

² Preliminary 2023 Ontario road safety annual report selected statistics. Ministry of Transportation. Page 1.

³ Ontario Road Safety Annual Report 2018. Ministry of Transportation. Page 14.

Background

After making huge strides in road safety in the 1990s and early 2000s, improvements in the province have stagnated. In fact, the past ten years have seen an erasure of 20 years of progress as the number of fatalities has risen nearly 20%. In 2023, there were 616 people killed and 36,090 people injured on Ontario's roads.² This is completely unacceptable.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Transportation tabled Bill 197, the Safer Roads and Communities Act, which targeted impaired and stunt driving. While the changes made in this legislation are welcome, it appears the ministry's efforts are not aligned with the most pressing road safety issues.

Over the last five years, drunk driving deaths have decreased by 65% while distracted driving deaths are down 25%.³ Conversely, there has been a 25% increase in speed related deaths over the past five years. While Good Roads welcomes the changes in Bill 197, a broader road safety package is required to target the more urgent road safety issues. Ontarians are driving faster and more recklessly as there are no serious deterrents for their actions. This is leading to more carnage on our roads and more life-altering injuries bogging down our health care system. Something needs to change.

A Plan to Get Serious About Road Safety

The Good Roads Proposal

Good Roads is proposing the government put together a sequel to Bill 197 – an omnibus bill with a suite of changes that will have a real impact, while allowing municipalities to use the available tools that are proven to be effective. We strongly recommend a package that maximizes and enhances existing schemes, takes advantage of new technologies, frees up police resources on the ground, stiffens penalties for offenders, and does more to keep dangerous drivers off the road:

Slash Red Tape Around Automated Speed Enforcement Deployment

Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) works – it is known to be effective at slowing vehicles down to the posted limits. Currently, municipalities are restricted to installing ASE on roads that are less than 80 km/h and must be in declared Community Safety Zones. This prevents them from being deployed where the most egregious speeders are offending. This is especially true in rural areas, where the most dangerous roads have speed limits of 80 km/h. Municipalities know best where speed-related fatalities are occurring, but red tape prevents them from deploying ASE in the most important locations.

Increase ASE Processing Capacity

Smaller municipalities are very keen to use ASE, but lack the administrative capacity to process the tickets that they generate. Larger municipalities have opened up their own processing centres at great cost and occasionally have capacity to contract their services to other municipalities. Mid-sized governments may pool their resources to open similar centres, but smaller municipalities are hard-pressed to enter into similar partnerships. ASE is an excellent tool for municipalities to deploy, but is simply out of the budgetary scope of smaller municipalities. They require assistance for the capacity to utilize them.

Enhance School Bus Arm Camera Deployment

The average number of drivers who pass stopped school buses (with lights flashing, stop sign extended, children present) is 30,000 per day – that is equivalent to two drivers per bus per day. School bus cameras are a vital tool for municipalities of all sizes to use to protect the most vulnerable road users there are: our children. Deployment of these cameras are actually an administrative resource issue for more than just the smallest municipalities, since tickets for these cameras cannot be processed in the aforementioned processing centres. These centres can handle red light and speed cameras, but not school bus cameras. In order for municipalities make use of these effective tools, capacity needs to be increased, and the obvious first step is for processing centres to accept images from these cameras.

Double Speed Fines

Ontario has among the lowest fines for speeding infractions in Canada, with basic fine amounts not increasing in 30 years – inflation alone nullifies the deterrent value of these fines. Speed fines should at least be doubled from their current values to have an impact. Increasing these fines will send a strong message to the public that speeding is unacceptable, and a strong message needs to be made.

A Plan to Get Serious About Road Safety

The Good Roads Proposal (Continued)

Escalating Sanctions for Repeat Offenders

In 2022, 39% of speeding convictions were for repeat offences within the previous five years. People with multiple speeding offences are at a higher risk of being in a serious collision, and yet there is nothing in the books that will effectively deter them. With speed fines low, a large number of speeders pay the fine and simply continue to speed. For some, no speed fine is going to stop them. Stronger tactics need to be used for people who refuse to stop speeding no matter how much they are fined. Escalated sanctions and escalating license suspensions must be deployed to stop these drivers. These are exactly the drivers that will kill people on the road next year and the next year, and more must be done to either slow them down or keep them off the road entirely.

Increase Penalties for Drivers That Kill Vulnerable Road Users

Currently, there are very little ramifications for reckless drivers who cause a fatality on Ontario's roads. There are cases where vulnerable road users are killed and the driver responsible is only charged with an improper turn and a fine of \$500 (compare that with the max \$425 fine for fare evasion on the TTC). Good Roads proposes adding a section to the Highway Traffic Act adding penalties to all driving offences that result in the death or serious injury of a vulnerable road user. Penalties could include much stiffer fines, licence suspension, mandatory probation, driver re-education, and potentially jail time. Drivers should not be able to kill a pedestrian and then find themselves back behind the wheel in no time, none the worse for wear. Penalties should reflect the gravity of the outcome and should serve to deter this driver and others who drive recklessly.

Recommendation

Good Roads recommends that the Ministry of Transportation put together a road safety bill including any or all of these elements to effectively prevent more carnage on our roads.

Request

That you write to the Minister of Transportation urging him to make road safety a priority in Ontario and table this bill.