

Rural Road Safety

Sunday, January 18 | 1:00 – 2:15

Dominion Ballroom North



Good Roads

Safer Roads, Stronger Communities

A Rural Road Safety Program for Ontario

\$207.38 Million Investment • 2026–2030 • 523 Communities

Executive Summary

\$207.38M

Investment Over 5 Years

150 Lives Saved

Fatalities prevented

523

Rural Municipalities and First Nations

400 Serious Injuries

Avoided through safety improvements

\$3.14

Return for Every Dollar Invested

Safe System Approach

Safe Speeds, Roads, Users, Vehicles

The Rural Road Challenge

Most rural infrastructure built 1950-1980 is now past design life

Higher Speeds

80+ km/h with narrow lanes

Longer Response

EMS 2-3x slower than urban

Natural Hazards

Wildlife, flooding, limited lighting

Road Geometry

Old design standards

AVERAGE COLLISION COST

\$2.02M

Per fatality

RURAL SHARE OF FATALITIES

60%

With only 15% of traffic

INFRASTRUCTURE GAP

\$3.6B

Estimated deficit

Municipal Capacity Crisis

390 of 444 Ontario municipalities qualify for OCIF small/rural stream

Systemic Constraints

- 1** Part-time councils with limited time for complex decisions
- 2** Often 1-2 FTEs managing all roads
- 3** Insufficient tax base for major safety investments
- 4** Cannot access road safety engineering specialists

AVERAGE ROAD SPENDING

Under \$500K/year

Municipalities under 5,000 pop.

ENGINEERING ACCESS

Ad-Hoc Only

No systematic assessment

GRANT APPLICATIONS

50+ Pages

Required for major programs

First Nations: Compounded Challenges

133 First Nations communities face unique infrastructure barriers

Jurisdictional Gaps

Federal-provincial funding boundaries create gaps

Remote Access

Many only accessible by seasonal roads

Climate Vulnerability

Shorter ice road seasons

Underinvestment

Decades of infrastructure deficit

Indigenous Partnership Stream

Dedicated funding with culturally appropriate engagement and community-led prioritization

ENHANCED FUNDING

+50%

Above standard rates

Principles: Nation-to-Nation engagement, community-led selection, local capacity building

Why Traditional Approaches Fail



Expertise Gap

\$35-75K

Per safety audit

Small municipalities cannot afford specialized road safety consultants



Funding Maze

50+ Pages

Typical application

Multiple programs with different criteria and reporting requirements



Scale Mismatch

Too Small

For competitive pricing

Individual projects too small to attract qualified contractors

Result: Rural communities left behind while urban areas benefit

Good Roads

Solution: Collaborative Contracting

	Traditional	Collaborative
Project Scope	Individual projects	Bundled regional packages
Selection	Lowest bid wins	Best-value qualification
Risk	Owner bears all risk	Shared risk and reward
Changes	Costly change orders	Built-in flexibility
	6-10% Better costs	12% Faster delivery
	Higher Quality satisfaction	Fewer Disputes

Evidence-Based Solutions

Guardrails

80%

Fatal run-off-road reduction

Rumble Strips

44-64%

Lane departure reduction

Enhanced Signage

39%

Curve crash reduction

Left-Turn Lanes

28-48%

Intersection crash reduction

Road Lighting

43%

Nighttime crash reduction

High-Friction Surface

75%

Wet-weather reduction

Safe System Approach: Combining proven treatments tailored to each community's highest-risk locations

Economic Impact: \$3.14 Return per Dollar

TOTAL INVESTMENT

\$207.38M

Over 5 years (2026-2030)

TOTAL ECONOMIC RETURN

\$651.2 Million

Net benefit: \$443.8M over program period

Investment Breakdown

Infrastructure	\$124.4M (60%)
Technical Support	\$41.5M (20%)
Administration	\$31.1M (15%)
Research	\$10.4M (5%)

Return Sources

Collision Cost Avoidance	\$390M
150 lives, 400 injuries prevented	
Healthcare Savings	\$156M
Emergency, hospital, rehabilitation	
Productivity	\$105M
1,200+ jobs, local economic activity	

Sources: Transport Canada collision costs (2023); Ontario Health Analytics

Implementation: Ready to Launch 2026

2026

Foundation

Consortium formed,
100 audits, quick wins

\$28.5M

2027

Scale-Up

Full ops, 200+ projects,
Indigenous stream

\$45.2M

2028

Full Operations

Peak construction, 350+
communities

\$52.8M

2029

Optimization

Measurement,
refinement, 450+

\$48.1M

2030

Completion

All 523 communities,
full evaluation

\$32.8M

Key Success Metrics

523

Communities

1,500

Safety projects

150

Lives saved

1,200

Jobs created

Governance: Tri-partite Provincial-Municipal-Indigenous oversight board

Accountability: Annual public reports tied to Vision Zero Ontario targets

THE REQUEST

\$207.38 Million to Save 150 Lives

\$3.14

Return per dollar

523

Communities

133

Indigenous
communities

1,200+

Jobs created

Evidence-based. Collaborative. Equitable.

Requested Action

Approve \$207.38M in the 2026 Ontario Budget

Good Roads



ROMA 2026

Rural Road Safety



Rural Road Safety

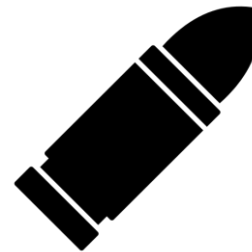
Introduction



Claims & Litigation



Silver Bullet



Road Safety



Rural Road Safety

Introduction

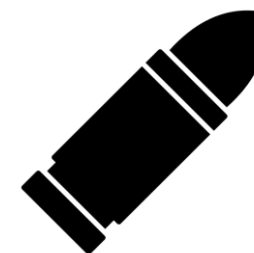


- Vice President, Risk Management Services, Intact Public Entities
- Jessica.Jaremchuk@intactpublicentities.ca

Claims & Litigation



Silver Bullet



Rural Road Safety

roduction

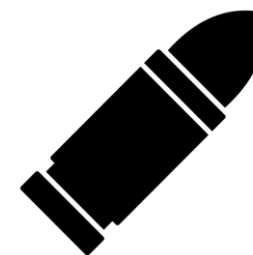


Claims & Litigation



- Frequency vs. severity
- High judgment and settlement costs
- Insurance and legal outcomes as downstream consequences

Silver Bullet



Road Safety



Rural Road Safety

Claims & Litigation



Silver Bullet



- Joint & Several Liability
- Apportionment of liability and lack of contributory negligence
- There is no silver bullet

Road Safety



Rural Road Safety

Claims & Litigation



Silver Bullet



Road Safety



- Root cause analysis
- Regulations and accepted best practices
- High-impact, low-cost solutions



What do you think would be a more acceptable number?

TAC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2tOye9DKdQ>

Rural Road Safety

Mike Pearsall, P.Eng., CVS-Life, FEC
January 18, 2026



What does Rural Road Safety mean to me?

Reduced Collisions

Reduced Severity

Improved Mobility



Context

- Rural Roads often serve competing interests
 - Residential
 - Retail
 - Local
 - Farm
 - Through
- Limited \$\$



Typical Rural Road Hazards

Sharp Curves

Deep Ditches / Slopes

Trees

Utilities

Other Vehicles / Users



Dealing with Hazards

Remove

Reduce

Shield

Delineate

Keep Current

- Standards Evolve over time – for a reason
- Would this serve its intended purpose?
- How far out of date is it?



What are you driving?

Something like this?



Or more like this?



Don't Modify Approved Devices

- Aesthetically Nice $\neq$ Safe
- Tested devices reduce liability
- Try to only use as-tested
- Heights and connections are sensitive



2017/10/3

Creativity is not your friend...

- What would happen when impacted?
- Was this crash tested?



How do things relate?

- Drive and Observe
- Roadsides are dynamic



Is the solution worse?

- Which hazard is more severe?



Look for the obvious

- Where is the driver looking?
- Where are errant vehicles likely to go?
- “Moths and porch-lights”



■

If it looks like a ramp – It will be one...

Remember evolution...



Safety is Relative

- Safety is not absolute
- Fix the “low-hanging fruit”
- Consider all users



Safety is not always intuitive

- Seek out new products and treatments



Keep your perspective

- Barriers and delineators are a hazard
- You can't eliminate all hazards
- You can reduce severity
- Think – Observe - Act



Some things are beyond our control...

- You can't fix stupid
- Politicians can change any law EXCEPT the laws of physics
- Public may still have a bad day, however without you, it could have been worse...





Thank You! –
Questions?
