# Executive summary

Road safety is a critical issue in Winnipeg and beyond. Motor vehicle collisions are a leading cause of death and disability worldwide. These collisions lead to significant economic costs, as well as physical and emotional suffering for those involved. In Winnipeg, deaths from motor vehicle collisions have decreased, but serious injuries are still a big problem.

From 2015 to 2022:

- 106 people died in traffic collisions
- 1253 were seriously injured in traffic collisions
- Vulnerable groups like pedestrians and cyclists made up more than 40 percent of the fatalities and more then 10 percent of the serious injuries

In 2023, Council approved the Road Safety Strategic Action Plan to help curb these numbers. The plan highlights speed as a major factor that affects road safety. We subsequently decided to study the effect that lower speed limits could have on road safety.

This study lowered speed limits in four residential neighborhoods: two to 40 km/h and two to 30 km/h. The goal was to see how lowering speed limits would impact driving behavior, safety and quality of life.

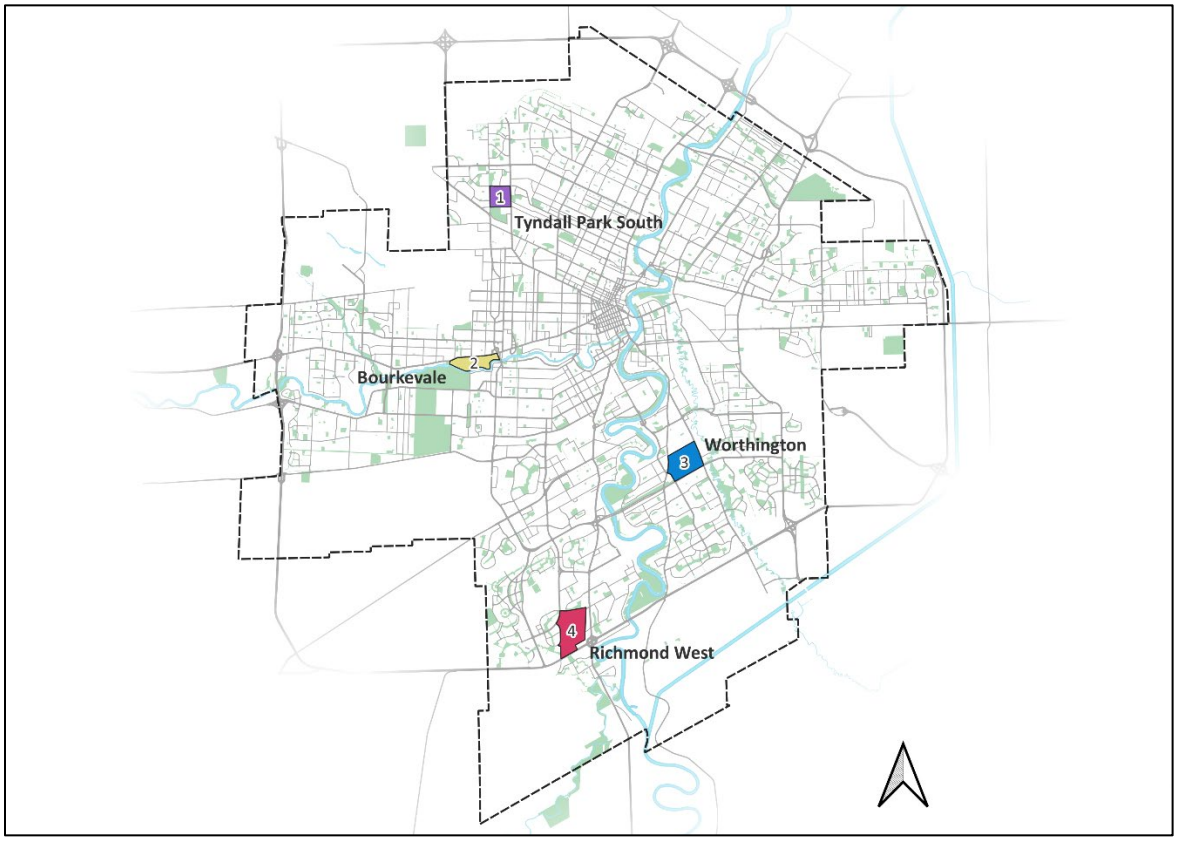



*Figure 1: Location of Pilot Neighbourhoods*

Winnipeg

# City of Winnipeg Reduced Speed Neighbourhood Pilot

## Study details

The study took place between 2022 and 2024. We used a number of different methods to determine the effects of lower speed limits:

- Reviewing studies from other places about speed limits and safety
- Talking to other cities in Canada that tried similar projects
- Looking at speed data collected from 2020 to 2022
- Talking to different organizations and the public to obtain feedback throughout the duration of the project
- Collecting new data on how fast people were driving and what they thought about safety in their neighborhoods
- Checking the thoughts and feelings of people who lived in the study neighbourhoods, both before and after we reduced the speed limit
- Surveying Winnipeg residents

## What the study found

Before the speed limits were changed, most streets in the study neighbourhoods had a speed limit of 50 km/h. Here is what the data showed before the change:

- People drive faster on collector roads than on smaller, local streets
- Many drivers travel above the speed limit, especially in school zones, where more than half the cars go faster than the 30 km/h limit
- Many people walk every day or a few times a week in all neighborhoods, but this isn't the case for cycling or wheeling
    - People have similar reasons for not walking in their neighbourhoods:
        - Snow and ice make it hard in winter
        - Cars drive too fast
        - Destinations are too far away
    - For cycling and wheeling, fast cars and snow were also problems, but the third most common reason was the lack of bike lanes and paths.
    - Most people said they wouldn't walk, bike, or wheel more even if speed limits were lower. This was especially true for cycling and wheeling compared to walking
- When asked if they would accept longer travel times due to the speed limit changes, most people were unwilling to deal with even a 60-second increase in travel time
- Many people in each neighborhood said they don't think lowering speed limits will reduce the number of collisions and injuries:
    - This belief was strongest in Tyndall Park and weakest in Bourkevale
    - Most people still believe speeding makes collisions more likely
- Most people in the survey said Winnipeg should keep the speed limit for residential streets at 50 km/h
    - If the speed limit were to be lowered, people preferred 40 km/h over 30 km/h

After the speed limits were lowered this is what the data showed:

- Speeds dropped significantly in most areas, especially in neighborhoods with a 30 km/h limit
    - Richmond West did not see much change, even after the speed limit was reduced to 40 km/h
- People's concerns about speeding seemed to go down after the project began
    - People still worried about traffic delays and travel times
- In surveys, many still preferred the old 50 km/h limit, but others were more open to 40 km/h than 30 km/h
- The amount of walking and cycling reported was like what was reported before the pilot started
    - After the speed limits were changed in the different neighbourhoods, only walking increased, and cycling stayed the same
- Vehicle speed was not mentioned as one of the biggest reasons people gave for not walking and cycling after the start of the pilot
    - This is something that had been mentioned before the pilot
- Most people in the neighborhoods where speed limits were lowered said they were less supportive or not supportive of the change after experiencing it
    - Another survey found that four of 10 people think Winnipeg should keep the speed limit at 50 km/h, another four of 10 prefer 40 km/h, and two of 10 prefer 30 km/h
    - Many people felt that if speed limits are lowered, it should be done everywhere, not just on some streets or in some neighborhoods
- A survey by Probe Research found that many people believe lowering the speed limit to 30 km/h would improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists and reduce the severity of collisions but would make commute times longer
- More than one-half of Winnipeggers support lowering speed limits as a general idea, mainly because of the positive effect on fewer injuries and fatalities from road collisions
    - People who do not think speed limit reduction is a good idea say residential speeding is not really a problem that needs fixing
- Winnipeggers are more willing to accept a reduction to 40 km/h instead of 30 km/h
    - Generally, residents do not see much difference between these two speeds regarding improvements to road safety, but they feel a that a reduction to 30 km/h will have negative effects on traffic jams and travel times

## Recommendation

We studied different options for speed limit reductions based on we heard from the public, studies from other places, results from speed data analysis, cost to make changes, and other factors.

Our results suggest Winnipeg should changed the default speed limit and lower speed limits to 40 km/h on local streets and minor collector roads across the city. We need public education campaigns to help people understand why the changes are important for safety.

The idea is that lowering speed limits could improve safety for everyone, especially pedestrians and cyclists, while also making neighborhoods feel calmer and quieter.