



# 2016-2017

# **THUNDER BAY**

# **POLICE SERVICE**

Traffic Management Plan

Your Police Service





# Traffic Enforcement & SAFETY PLAN



The Traffic Enforcement and Safety Plan of the Thunder Bay Police Service addresses traffic management, traffic law enforcement and road safety within the jurisdiction of the Thunder Bay Police Service. As outlined in our current Business Plan for 2015-2017, the Service must address road safety. This also goes hand in hand with the requirements of the Police Services Act, O.Reg. 3/99 s. 8, which stipulates that “every Chief of Police shall establish procedures on traffic management, traffic law enforcement and road safety”. This plan aims at addressing the quality of mobility and safety for all road users in our jurisdiction.

Traffic is a part of everyone’s daily life. It includes our movements from one place to another, and logistics – the transportation of the goods and services that we consume. It is the lifeblood of our commerce and productivity, and the conduit of our prosperity as a society. For that reason, all users of our network of roadways and highways have a vested interest in traffic safety and traffic efficiency.

In order to speak about traffic and traffic related issues, one must first ensure that the vocabulary is defined and well understood by all readers. “Traffic”, by definition, is the movement of people and goods, on and through a publicly supported infrastructure of roadways. “Roadways” and “highways” are the fence line to fence line engineered structures that include roads, sidewalks, trails, bridges and boulevards. These structures are publicly funded through taxes and represent a major investment by all levels of government.

“Accidents” have traditionally been thought to be synonymous with traffic, an inseparable cost associated to the use of the highway infrastructure by the spectrum of users. The commonly held definition is that an accident is often an undesirable or unfortunate happening. Accidents by common perception happen unintentionally and certainly without malice but usually result in harm, injury, damage, loss or casualty.

In policing, that concept is set aside through root cause analysis. More accurately it is viewed as an incidental and unplanned event that could have been prevented, had circumstances leading up to the ‘accident’ been recognized, and acted upon prior to its occurrence. Every traffic ‘accident’ is in fact not an accident at all, but more precisely a collision that would not happen without cause. This paradigm shift of reference is a critical step in changing public awareness and perception, and is being

strongly promoted as a priority by the Traffic subcommittee of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP). All Police Services in the province are removing the term “accident” in reference to traffic related matters, and are replacing the term with “collisions”. A philosophy of acceptance of the ‘inevitable and unfortunate’ is being replaced by an attitude of challenge to change what is really very predictable and avoidable. Drivers who are allowed to drive aggressively, while distracted, while impaired by alcohol or drugs, or when just unskilled or unaware, will surely crash and cause injuries and death as a result. The Thunder Bay Police Service has developed a philosophy of change through positive steps of education, intelligent infrastructure design and the enforcement of appropriate laws to encourage compliance and discourage bad driving habits.

The ease of mobility that our society enjoys is not without real and considerable risks. According to Public Health Agency of Canada’s Injury in Review -2012 Edition, “Motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of injury related death among Canadians 1-24 years of age combined, and the leading cause of death overall for persons 15-24.” The 2012 Ontario Road Safety Annual Report states that on average, one person is killed on Ontario roads every 15 hours. These frightening numbers have inspired Police Services in Ontario to act aggressively through intelligence based strategies to make prevention a high priority. On a positive note, there has been considerable success in recent years, and the latest data available through Transport Canada’s Canadian Motor Vehicle Collisions Statistics 2013 report shows that Ontario has the safest roads in North America. The Thunder Bay Police Service is committed to striving to be a continuing participant in that level of success, and our 2014 year end collision statistics confirm that we continue to perform better than similarly sized comparators within the province.



## TRAFFIC

The movement of people and goods, on and through a publicly supported infrastructure of roadways.



## ROADWAYS

The fence line to fence line engineered structures that include roads, sidewalks, trails, bridges and boulevards.



## ACCIDENTS

Unintentional and certainly without malice but usually result in harm, injury, damage, loss or casualty.



## COLLISIONS

Our challenge to change what is really very predictable and avoidable.



## Past WHERE WE'VE BEEN

**Our roads are becoming increasingly crowded and are being used by more diverse types of vehicles.**

For the past century, we have become very reliant on the use of automobiles. Vehicles with either gasoline or diesel internal combustion engines do the heavy work for the transportation of goods, and to provide us collectively with a cheap and affordable means of personal transportation. Between 1993 and 2012, the number of drivers has increased provincially by 39%. Heavy trucks have increasingly become the preferred mode for transporting goods. However, with these trucks come real hazards when in situations of road conflict with personal vehicles and pedestrians.

Public transportation in this region of the province has never been deemed to be a viable or effective means of daily commuting for most, except perhaps for the needs of our children on school buses. We are a city that relies heavily upon personal motor vehicles, primarily because of our low urban population density and a very large geographic footprint.

In many parts of our city, the use of alternate forms of transportation is not only discouraging and challenging, it is outright dangerous. Alternate forms of transportation such as cycling and walking are extremely difficult because of environmental factors and decades of poor infrastructure choices and designs. Cyclists have long complained that they are aggressively threatened by motorists, and that there have not been connected dedicated routes for them to use safely and efficiently.

Persons with handicaps or mobility challenges have had a world of disconnected sidewalks or in many cases, no sidewalks at all. This has forced them to venture out into roadways and thereby become unwilling law breakers. These road users are always the most vulnerable participants in collision situations.

Canadian roads have traditionally been designed for motor vehicles, with little concern for the needs of other users. It seems that this in turn has developed a culture of entitlement for motorists, and a culture of resentment by all the other user groups. Our community is presently very polarized regarding road usage. Strong sentiments have arisen on both sides as changes in infrastructure such as bicycle lanes and traffic calming structures are introduced to address the disparities. Thunder Bay is not unique in this scenario of change, and every urban center across Canada is struggling greatly to address these needs. Police are often caught in the middle of these conflicting emotions, and are needed to fulfill a role of both education and enforcement to encourage compliance with new laws. The Thunder Bay Police Service commits to a lead role in assisting all road users as they relearn the rules of the road and develop a greater attitude of sharing.

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**39%**







## Present WHERE WE ARE NOW

**Police in Canada have consistently used a model of road safety that has been built upon three pillars (and a continuum) of education, engineering and enforcement.**

This widely accepted and favoured model has now had a fourth pillar – empathy – added, primarily to give additional meaning in the educational and enforcement aspects of use. At the very centre of this model is crime/collision prevention, one of the most central of the core duties of policing.

The Thunder Bay Police Service works very closely with City Engineering at many levels. Police sit jointly on many committees for planning, design and use of our roads. Police are an integrated part of any road closure decision, over-dimension vehicle use, and by-law changes. Bicycle lane design and introduction have been the full responsibility of Engineering, but police have been consulted at all steps along the way. The educational phase has commenced, and police are now relied upon for timely communications and informational media interaction. Efforts are being made to speak publicly on these changes and to champion the transition process. Information and support of existing laws will naturally be followed by a phase of enforcement.

There have been a number of significant changes in law introduced in 2015 as a result of Bill 31. These new laws focus on the need for sharing of road resources and focus on protective measures for the most vulnerable of road users.

Police are now tasked with educating the public about the law changes and more importantly, the enforcement of these laws.

We recognize that traffic enforcement should be community driven and relevant, and linked clearly to our two way communications process. In other words, the focus and location of our enforcement initiatives should be identified primarily by listening to the concerns of our primary stakeholders – the citizens who use our roadways.

These concerns are expressed in many ways: through the formal and informal complaints about speeding and other traffic violations, feedback obtained at ward meetings and other public forums, through information passed on by Councillors, letters to the editors of our local newspapers, and on line forums. Also factored in are the skillful analyses of calls for service regarding motor vehicle collisions and other traffic hazards or incidents that are deemed to be legitimate concerns.

Communication through the news media to address safety concerns has always been a key part of the education process, but the educational component of our traffic management strategy will no longer be limited to news media releases alone. Communication itself is evolving, dramatically changing our lives and the way that we conduct our business. Social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are becoming very significant platforms to deliver messages and interact with the public. Public disaffection and complaints about police not being interactive are greatly addressed through this new approach. Information is provided in a very timely and well informed professional fashion, issues are raised and discussed and all questions are answered by a police officer specialist.

The fast pace of technological change is presenting training and adequacy challenges never before seen. We are ensuring that our officers have remained at the leading edge and are receiving all required training to remain current.

Long established enforcement techniques have been greatly challenged by technology. An example that is easily illustrated is that of the R.I.D.E. (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) impaired driving interdiction programs that have become a standard since 1985. In the 3 decades since, cell/smart phone technology has totally changed the impaired motorist's ability to foil this enforcement technique. Communication systems that are mobile, almost universally available and instantaneous allow for police locations to be known and avoided. Police now need to develop techniques that still stay within existing case law that will allow them to appear relevant, and be effective.

Traffic policing has traditionally focused on the areas of aggressive driving, impaired driving, and occupant restraint to ensure that injury and death are prevented. In vehicle technology use has increased exponentially and at an alarming rate during the past decade, causing many drivers to become distracted from the task of driving and thereby endangering themselves and other drivers and road users. Distracted driving has risen to the point that it is now generally held to be 'the new impaired driving' in terms of overall risk to traffic and public safety.

Reporting processes to the Provincial Registrar of Motor Vehicles and the Ministry of Transportation have changed and are now fully electronic and computer based. We anticipate that this system will soon be fully integrated into the systems that investigators use to measure and record crash scenes.

We are now also reviewing a long culture and a business model regarding the quasi-public transportation field of taxis and limousines. A highly regulated and monitored business sector, it has traditionally been the responsibility of the Police Services Board to oversee the permit process and operations. This process is now in transition, with a transfer of this responsibility going from Police to the City By-law Enforcement office. This transfer will bring greater cost efficiencies for all, and will put this business sector under an administration model similar to all other businesses in this City.





## Future WHERE WE ARE GOING

**Ontario has become the first province to allow the use of a fully autonomous (self-driving) vehicle, and it is hoped that eventually this technological approach may reduce the dangers of in-car distractions.**

Canadians are becoming a nation of seniors. The ‘baby boomers’ have become a significant demographic cohort in our driving public. Issues such as dementia and motor skill diminishment are clearly challenges for these driving seniors. Medications that are intended to keep them well will put them into unintended positions of impairment if driving is attempted when using these medications or in combination with even small amounts of alcohol. As was stated previously, public transportation is not a viable option in this region, so mobility and independence become compromised for senior drivers. Analysis of the fatal collision data from the past decade causes us to predict at least one senior will be involved in a fatal collision every year due to medical issues.

‘Millennials’ are also a significant cohort that are native to the new digital world and are very comfortable with technological change. They are a generation that relies upon technology to make life easier and more enjoyable. At the same time, they are so tied to their electronic devices that distraction while driving is a significant issue. They are a generation that is willing to reinvent the entire world of transportation, including the vehicles that are quickly becoming computers on wheels. We are told that they do not like to drive as much as the generations before them, and will be quick to seize upon all the advantages that self-driving vehicles bring.

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## The focus of our Traffic SAFETY PLAN:

- 1 We will work closely with City Engineers as they plan and implement infrastructure changes to our roads to accommodate greater safety for alternate forms of transportation. Efforts towards greater walkability need to be supported and championed by police in the educational process and enforcement of the laws.
- 2 Seniors will need a greater level of attention to address their education and other needs. Specific programs to address these needs will be a priority, as will enforcement of suspensions and other violations that are indicative of diminished skills.
- 3 We will work toward the increased use of technology for investigation and enforcement. Three dimensional (3D) scanning is a technology that is being rapidly developed and is gaining wide acceptance as prices fall and become affordable. If this technology does become accessible to the Thunder Bay Police Service traffic investigators, it will totally revolutionize their ability to collect evidence, analyze, and present cases in court. Vehicles are becoming increasingly computerized and thus are filled with more digital files. Understanding this technology will require advanced training.

Computers and computer software programs are currently being obtained toward this goal.

The reporting and ticketing processes will become e-based and will be fully integrated into our records management system. Productivity improvements and efficiencies are expected.

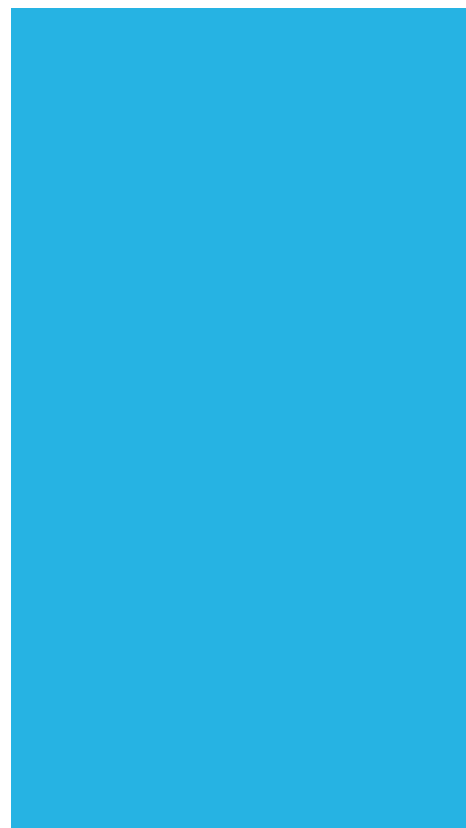
- 4 High priority will be given to media, both news and social platforms, to expand the educational component of our road safety model.





**A Safe Community**  
THROUGH PROACTIVE POLICING





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[thunderbaypolice.ca](http://thunderbaypolice.ca)

