



What would it take to have a safe highway 6?

**Report back to the community on from 2
community meetings:**

October 25th – South Bruce Peninsula

November 8th – Northern Bruce Peninsula

January 2018



We dedicate this report and all actions that arise from it, to the memories of:

**Traves Atchison
Jana Watson
Chad Honneyman**

and all souls lost prior

*Goodbye may seem forever.
Farewell is like the end.
But in my heart's a memory.
And there you'll always be*

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Safe Communities



Background

The Bruce Peninsula Safe Communities Committee received its accreditation from Parachute Canada in May of 2017.

The committee had been meeting for almost 2 years and had run numerous local initiatives that focused on reducing injuries and creating a safer community over all.

The committee meets the first Thursday of each month and welcomes community partners to join.

From Parachute Canada

Sixty-eight communities in Canada have been designated as Safe Communities, with more communities seeking this designation every year. Canadian Safe Communities believe that a safe life is a basic right.

The official designation of a municipality as a Safe Community indicates a publicly articulated commitment to work towards a safer locality for all. It is the beginning of a concerted effort to make injury prevention and safety promotion a top community priority with tangible results, ultimately creating safer places where citizens can live, work and play.



Communities bring together local officials from their municipalities at a leadership table, including representatives from local government, public health, police, fire and emergency services, educational institutions, local business, and health and safety organizations. Designated Safe Communities have completed a formal Priority Setting Exercise and community scan, to inform their programming decisions, and they have a proven plan for sustainability.

Already the following actions have been taken:

- Grey Bruce Crown Attorney will NOT plead down stunt driving charges for charges laid on highway 6 in the Bruce Peninsula catchment area
- Social media is sharing the message eg. [Lets Fix Hwy 6 Facebook page](#)
- OPP and the OSTC (ferry) are meeting to review suggestions and messages for the passengers

Public Meetings

As a result of concerns regarding the number of speeding and other traffic tickets, along with 4 fatalities the Bruce Peninsula Safe Communities Committee (BPSCC) embarked on hosting 2 community meetings. One in South Bruce Peninsula and one in Northern Bruce Peninsula. During the planning there was a 5th fatality, adding urgency and concern to the entire community.

The format and agenda were kept simple to focus on creating a community dialogue at both meetings.

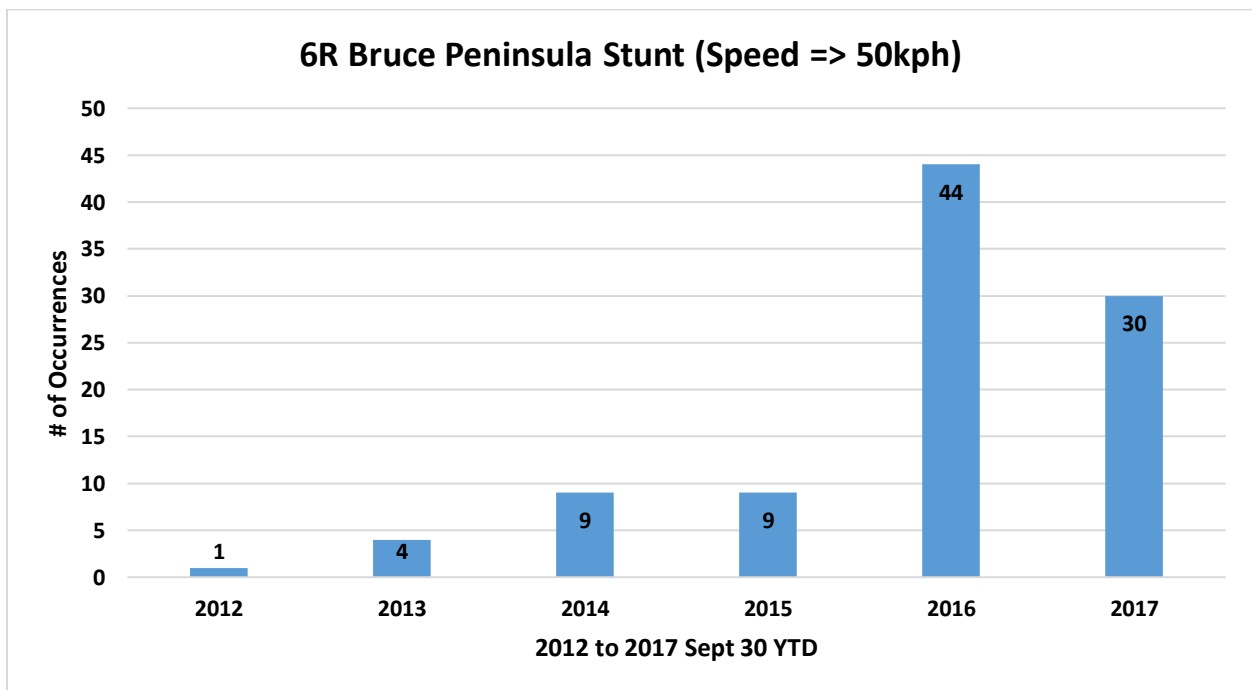
Francesca Dobbyn, Executive Director of the United Way of Bruce Grey, who serves as the Secretary Treasure for the group facilitated both meeting. The meetings were opened by Terry Bell, chair of the committee.

Atchison family had requested a moment to speak, to highlight the need for change and their heartbroken desire to be a part of the conversation and offer their thoughts on what could be done to create a safer highway 6.

Community Safety Officer Provincial Constable Adam Belanger reviewed statistics on charges laid by OPP officers within the Bruce Peninsula detachment catchment area (therefore not all on highway 6).

Constable Belanger's data demonstrated that most collisions occurred during peak day time hours, and that stunt driving charges had a correlation to tourism traffic and generalized 'summer' weather patterns.

There has also been a significant increase in the number of charges laid in the past 5 years.



Constable Belanger answered many clarifying questions in regard to the data presented.

Constable Belanger also encouraged everyone and anyone who sees someone driving unsafe to call 911 and report what they are seeing.

As the meeting progressed questions were asked and we have grouped most of the unanswered ones here:

Enforcement

What are the conviction rates for these stunt drivers? How does it work with rental cars?
How would we increase the consequences of stunt driving? Is 7 days of impoundment and suspension long enough?
Would it be possible to confiscate cell phones from distracted drivers for a period of time?
What happens if people report convoys?

Governments

How much clout does the community have with Queen's Park? Can Bill Walker, MPP advocate for increased Northern Bruce Peninsula OPP presence?
How are other national parks dealing with the traffic? Could the federal government flow us some funds to help us?

Data

Can the accidents be identified by geographic region?
How is the information fed up through to the MTO?
Are the speeders or those who cause the fatal accidents more commonly found going north or south? Is there a trend?

Who?

Where are the stunt drivers from? Are any of these people local?
What is it that causes the accidents, is it the stunt drivers or something else?
How do we reach the people who do not speak English?
Is the problem indeed mostly the result of day trippers who are speeding? Or is it something else?
What can we do to change behaviour?

Built Environment

Is the answer more signage?
How can we help people to obey the signs and the passing lines on the road?
Can we learn something from the communities along Hwy. 10 i.e. Mississauga – Brampton – North?
What about Hwy. 11?
What about passing lanes with signage that they are coming?
Are there some real highway issues to consider? – Lines on highway, blind spots, curves, hidden entrances, difficulties getting off of the highway
How will this process of community consultation work? What happens to all of this information gathered tonight?
How can we get some quick wins? What can be done before next summer?

As the meeting shifted to a solutions based conversation, the attendees were encouraged to answer this question:

What would it take to make highway 6 a safe, functioning highway that locals and visitors can use without fear?

Identified Main Themes

MTO/Government

- Research the value of passing lanes at strategic locations along HWY 6 (Include signage of location and length of lanes)
- “No Passing” zones – with highly visible colour on the road.
- Photo Radar
- Better Signage / Digital Signs -- Many suggestions around this.
- Signage – Fatalities (can be updated annually)
- Create turning lanes with better signage
- Better / clearer sign for Cyprus Lake, including a night light
- Advocate for driver training to be included in the schools so that everyone receives it.
- Advocate for increased funding to address the infrastructure pressures in the summer months
- Allow the OSTC to bring RVs and large house trailers destined for the ferry, onto the parking lot after the 8 PM departure leaves to allow for overnight “dry” camping (No campfires). These vehicles can then be put on the 7 AM ferry and will not be on the highway in the middle of the day. (Requires change in Municipal by-law.)

ENFORCEMENT

- Bolster OPP staff during summer months
- More highway presence / enforcement, especially on the weekends

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Provide road safety information, including “how to pass safely”
- Use Google Maps, Yelp, Trip Advisor, Facebook and Instagram to get message out – This is a great place, great business etc., but lots of enforcement on the roads, stick to the speed limits, etc.
- Promote other attractions than the Grotto
- Engage GTA bloggers in our concerns

TOURISM

- Encourage bus tours to decrease the number of vehicles – include information about the peninsula – flowers, topography, National Park, shipwrecks etc. Make it exciting; a part of the trip.
- Coordinate / communicate. Do not make changes to your business plan in isolation. There may be unintended consequences.
- Promote the area as an eco-tourism destination. Encourage cycling, hiking, artists, low-impact activities
- Include road safety education on the southbound ferry. (PSAs developed with OPP?)
- Include road safety information in materials sent to customers (e.g. bottom of invoice / confirmation of booking) and / or in place of business. Consistent messaging. Work together.
- Slow pace of cars coming off of the ferry to avoid convoys.
- Post message on tourist sites that the road is a two-lane highway, that is heavily patrolled and enforced for speeding and dangerous driving
- Use Chambers of Commerce as driving forces of a coordinated strategy to increase safety and get the message out.

More broad notes and gathered thoughts

Answers were captured by committee members and attendees were encouraged to write their thoughts on post-it notes and place them on themed flip-chart paper.

What follows is a summary and condensing of those thoughts. **Bold ideas** are simple and quick wins!

SIGNAGE:

- Multi-language signage
- Safety billboards
- Vivid signage
- Stark, dramatic signage
- Graphic signs to scare people
- More signage “OPP patrolled”
- Better way-finding signage
- **Erratic Drivers: Call *OPP or Crime Stoppers**
- Digital signs – change speed according to traffic and conditions

- Sense of URGENCY to ACT NOW. – Photo radar, traffic lights, increased signage of accident “visuals”
- Special designation on HWY 6 – community safety zone – higher fines in the zone.
- No passing zones with highly visible colour in the location. (Used in Maine and New Hampshire in unsafe passing zones)
- Notices at the information centres and in the village explaining the ferry times
- Have the electronic speed signs that have the red and blue police lights that go off when the driver is breaking the speed. They are very effective.
- Put a warning sign near fatal crash sites. “Two young people lost their lives here”
- Statistical signs on the highway to illustrate the fatalities.
- Use the old Tobermory sign. Put it on wheels and use to show the fatalities.
- Better, clearer signage for Cyprus Lake and Info center. Also for Ferndale Tourist Info Center. All three of these signs are unclear.
- Zero Tolerance signs posted on HWY 6 up the peninsula.
 - Zero Tolerance on HWY 6 from Warton to Tobermory for speeding
 - Zero Tolerance. If you get a ticket, you are part of the problem. Accept the ticket. Slow down and be a part of the solution.

Signage slogan suggestions

Is 3 minutes’ worth your life?

We have families too. Please slow down.

Driving is a privilege, not a right

This is not the 401.

We are peaceful. Enjoy the scenery.

Better late than never

Slow down. Arrive Alive.

ENFORCEMENT:

- Heavy O. P. P. presence to put the hammer down
- Need to bolster the O. P. P. Officers at the Warton detachment during the summer months.
- Saturation of enforcement at the north and south ends of the Peninsula.
- Satellite OPP station in Tobermory, summer police station
- Saturdays and Sundays – Increase police presence during these periods that are high
- One significant emergency can put us into crisis. PROBLEM: We are all staffed for winter
- Ghost police cars
- Strict enforcement. Zero tolerance
- No U-turns on HWY 6. Too dangerous.
- Bring back photo radar for problem areas such as Bruce Peninsula
- Increased penalties for impaired driving
- Longer suspension for stunt driving
- Ticket everything over 80 KMs.
- Before the return of a vehicle and license, the driver MUST take and pass a safe driving course
- Stunt driving the same charge as impaired driving
- Change Highway Traffic Act to make the lines on the road enforceable and not just a guide
- **Cadet/information on the ferry explaining concerns, two-lane highways etc.**
- Ban passing on the HWY
- Make problem areas into community safety zones.
- Airplane patrols

TECHNOLOGY:

- **Use social media for messages**
- **Use social media to spread information re: How to pass safely**
- **Any social media needs to be attached to the tourism sites so that they see these issues when they are exploring coming to the Bruce.**

SCHOOLS / EDUCATION:

- Driving is a privilege, not a right
- Driver's education for everyone.
- Education of kids about safe driving
- Long term education beginning in elementary school – similar to seat belt campaigns.
- Wrecked cars on the side of the road

- Education for driving on two lane highways verses multiple lanes.

GOVERNMENT:

- Legalize photo radar
- Passing lanes
- Stiffer penalties
- Start with deterrents for stunt drivers
- Lobby for a parking lot to be built as a rest stop on HWY 6 in Tobermory and in between.
- Rental Cars – legislation around stunt driving and renting performance rentals
- We need more money from the Provincial and Federal governments for policing, fire departments, first responders etc.
- Postal code specific licensing for drivers
- “Rumble” strips installed in areas with a lower speed limit e.g. Ferndale
- Increase driver check stops
- Share the road is great, but most of HWY 6 does not have a safe shoulder for bikes – especially with on-coming traffic is passing.
- Passing lanes!!!
- No passing allowed at all from Wiarton to Tobermory
- Permit overnight *camping/parking* at ferry dock for RVs

TOURISM:

- **Write reviews on TripAdvisor, Yelp pages for local attractions “warning” people about strong police presence. It is a good way to deter visitors from dangerous driving AND they feel like they’re getting a good tip!**
- Need a night light at the Cyprus Lake entrance
- Increase and encourage bus tours to decrease number of cars
- More public education about the area
- Have the cars come off of the ferry at a slower pace to help stagger the convoys coming down HWY 6.
- **Have educational material and maybe an OPP presence on the ferry. Talk to people about highway safety and traffic statistics.**
- Tour operators in Tobermory advertise in big cities everywhere. They bring thousands of tourist here. They need to step up and address the problems of too many people speeding into our community. We need limits on the number of tourists heading up HWY 6.

NEED MORE INFORMATION:

- Conviction Data
- What have other communities done?
- HWY 26 – it is better since change
- Compare HWY 6 south of O/S to north of O/S
- Seek lessons learned from HWY 6 between Guelph and Hamilton. They have made many changes to try to improve that stretch of road, some without any success (such as passing lanes). Use their experience to inform / best apply our limited resources.
- Local statistics vs. Out of Towners (who is being ticketed)
- What is the nature of the accidents?
- Stats on Bikes – Bike lanes. (MTO has stats)
- Track the number of near-misses where people are forced off of the HWY, tail-gating etc.

COMMUNITY:

- Provide local transit for more people who live here.
- **Have Safe Communities Committee include churches and religious groups.**
- Drive safely materials for all merchants

HUMAN BEINGS:

- Stop making cars that go that fast
- Re-testing for driving every 5 years

MEDIA:

- **Facebook to put message out**
- **Google – Use reviews to say that enforcement is tough**
- Google ads: enforcement, tourist spots, alternative attractions
- Post about OPP presence on the Bruce Peninsula tourist web sites.
- **Saturate social media that HWY 6 is a speed trap or with positive reinforcement**
- **Use social media, and especially Instagram to share information and OPP statistics and highway safety**

- Coordinate /Cooperate with Toronto bloggers to add educational information and highway safety in the web site.
- For social media – consider non-english speakers / readers
- GTA – Consider non-english speaking individuals and come north – how do you communicate the safety info.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Increase speed limit to 90 KPM
- Promote area as eco-tourism. Encourage cycling, hiking, artists, low-impact activities
- Look at busses and trolleys going north between Warton and Tobermory. Make it part of the adventure. Have someone talk about the flowers, topography, National Park, shipwrecks etc.

KEY PLAYERS / STAKEHOLDERS

- Remind locals and municipality worker to follow the laws.
- Citizen watch groups to contact OPP.
- Role for insurance companies?
- Link the Safe Communities committee to the Sustainable Tourism committee and consultants

Final thoughts

If you have an idea, a thought, a suggestion, an offer, a donation (there is no funding) please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Everyone is welcome to help us, help our community. Designative representatives from your committees and organizations are welcome to join the Safe Communities Committee.

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