



ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL: HALIFAX CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH AND FEEDER SCHOOLS



Presentation to the HRM Transportation
Standing Committee, Jan 26, 2023

Prepared and presented by:
A group of concerned parents of students required to actively travel to
Halifax Central Junior High Public School and its feeder Schools

Purpose of the presentation

Inform the Standing Committee of Immediate Dangers Faced by HCJH and feeder schools daily

Students attending Halifax Central Junior High (HCJH) and feeder elementary schools are at serious risk of pedestrian/vehicle collision in crossing the street on route to their public schools

Request for Urgent Audit and Actions

1. Immediate Assessment and Audit of the active school transportation for Halifax Central Junior High (HCJH) and feeder elementary school students
2. Take immediate action to make HCJH catchment area safer for students actively travelling to their public school





Students attending HCJH and feeder elementary schools are at serious risk of pedestrian/vehicle collision in crossing the street on route to their public schools

- HCJH and feeder schools are “active transport schools”; students are expected to walk, bike, scooter, etc. to school
- Students must cross busy streets - drivers rushing to/from downtown businesses, hospitals, universities, etc.
- Lack of “School Zone” or student image yellow signs along major roads to remind drivers to slow to 30km/hr when children present
- HCJH no longer has access to crossing guards for safety (provided only for elementary schools);
- The pedestrian-controlled amber flashing light crosswalks DO NOT require traffic to stop⁽¹⁾
- There are no safe official bike routes for students to commute to public schools
- Active transit for HCJH students has and will continue to worsen as Halifax population continues to boom⁽²⁾
 - In two years, HRM grew by 20,000 new residents
 - In April 2022, the population of HRM was over 460,000 was expected to jump to 525,000 in five years and up to 650,000 in fifteen years

Source: (1) According to NS "Rules of the Road", amber flashing light "has the same meaning as a warning sign: slow down and proceed with caution"

(2) [Halifax population could hit 650,000 in 15 years | CTV News](#), April 11, 2022

Halifax is not safe for pedestrians, whether adults, crossing guards, or our children

Halifax ranks at bottom in safe driving study

[Susan Bradley](#) · CBC News · Posted: Nov 22, 2017

Injured on the job, this Halifax crossing guard knows the dangers faced by pedestrians

CBC News · Posted: Dec 15, 2021 6:00 AM AST | Last Updated: December 15, 2021

11 pedestrians struck in 11 days in Halifax

SaltWire Network | Posted: Dec. 20, 2022, 6:28 p.m.

'Slow down': Family speaks out after girl on scooter hit in Bedford crosswalk



By [Amber Fryday](#) · Global News

Posted June 2, 2022 3:48 pm · Updated June 2, 2022 5:35 pm

ATLANTIC | News

Pedestrian seriously injured after being struck in Halifax; section of Robie Street reopens

Updated Jan. 18, 2023 1:14 p.m. AST

Published Jan. 18, 2023 8:40 a.m. AST

Pedestrian in hospital with life-threatening injuries after being hit by vehicle

CBC News · Posted: Nov 18, 2022 11:34 AM AST | Last Updated: November 18, 2022

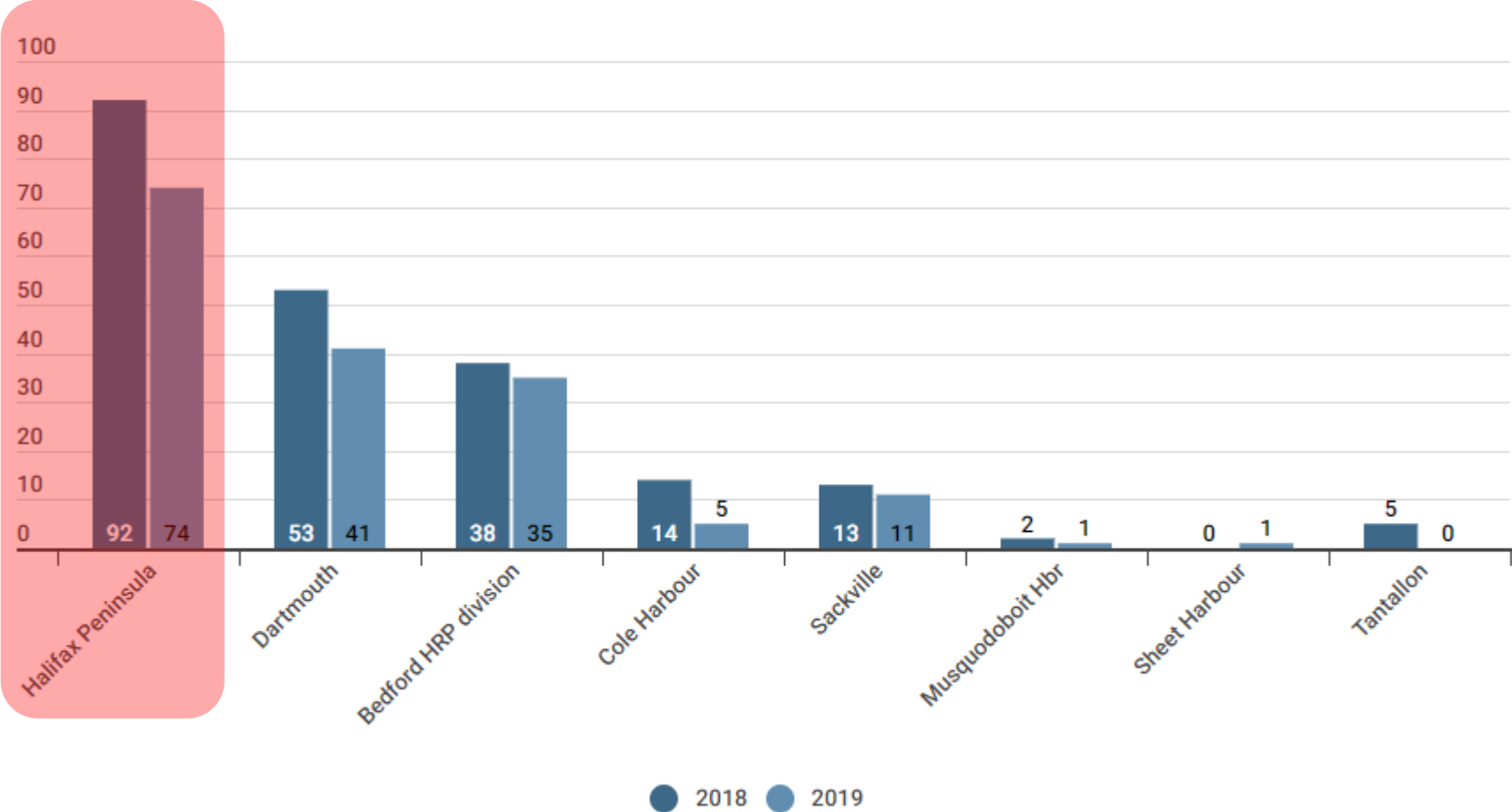
COMMENTARY: How many more people have to be injured or killed on Halifax streets?

Posted: July 19, 2022, 1:23 p.m. | Updated: July 19, 2022, 3:50 p.m.



Halifax peninsula experiences significantly more vehicle/pedestrian collisions than other HRM districts

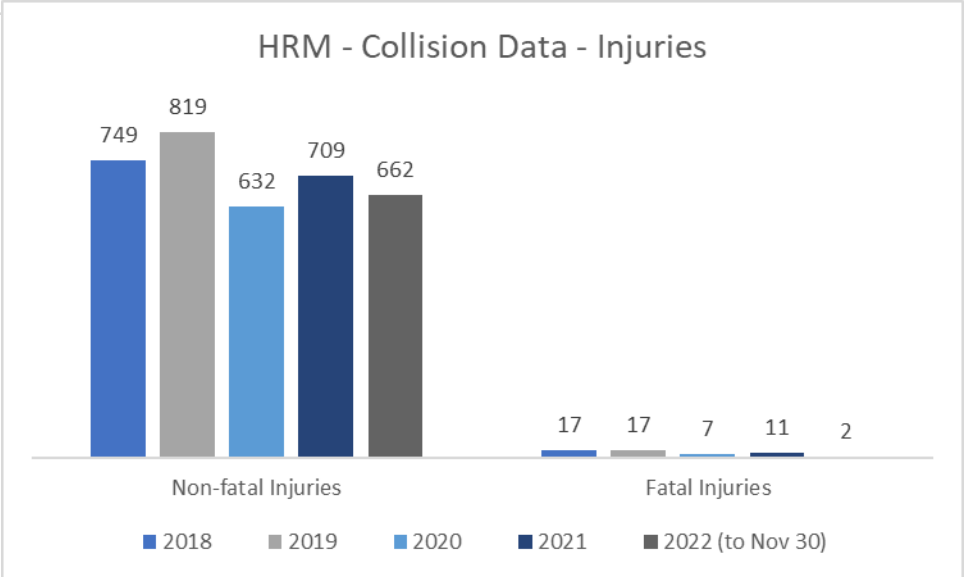
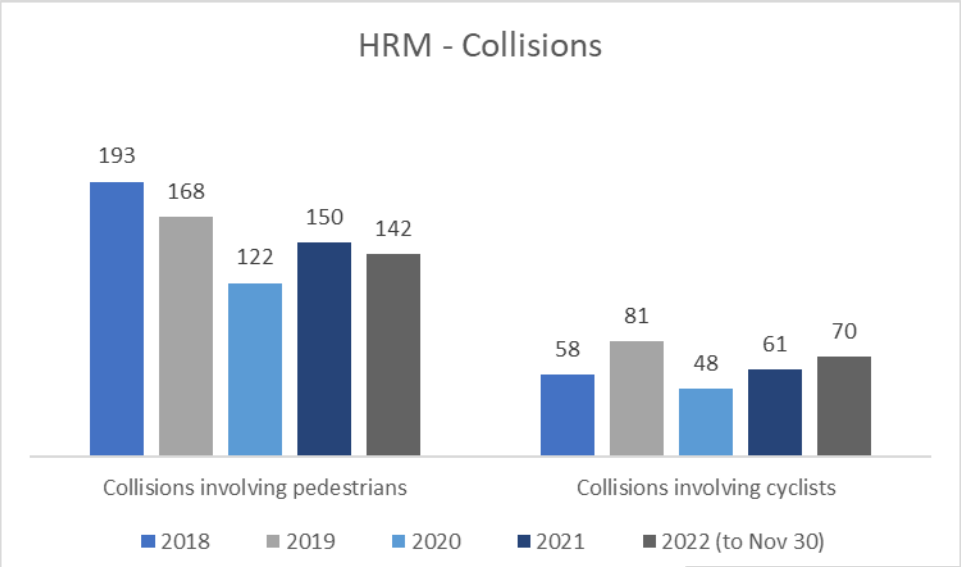
Vehicle/pedestrian collisions in Halifax by policing division/district



Source: [A day in the life of a crossing guard; 'It's a precarious profession', Saltwire, Feb 7, 2020](#) (highlighting added for emphasis)

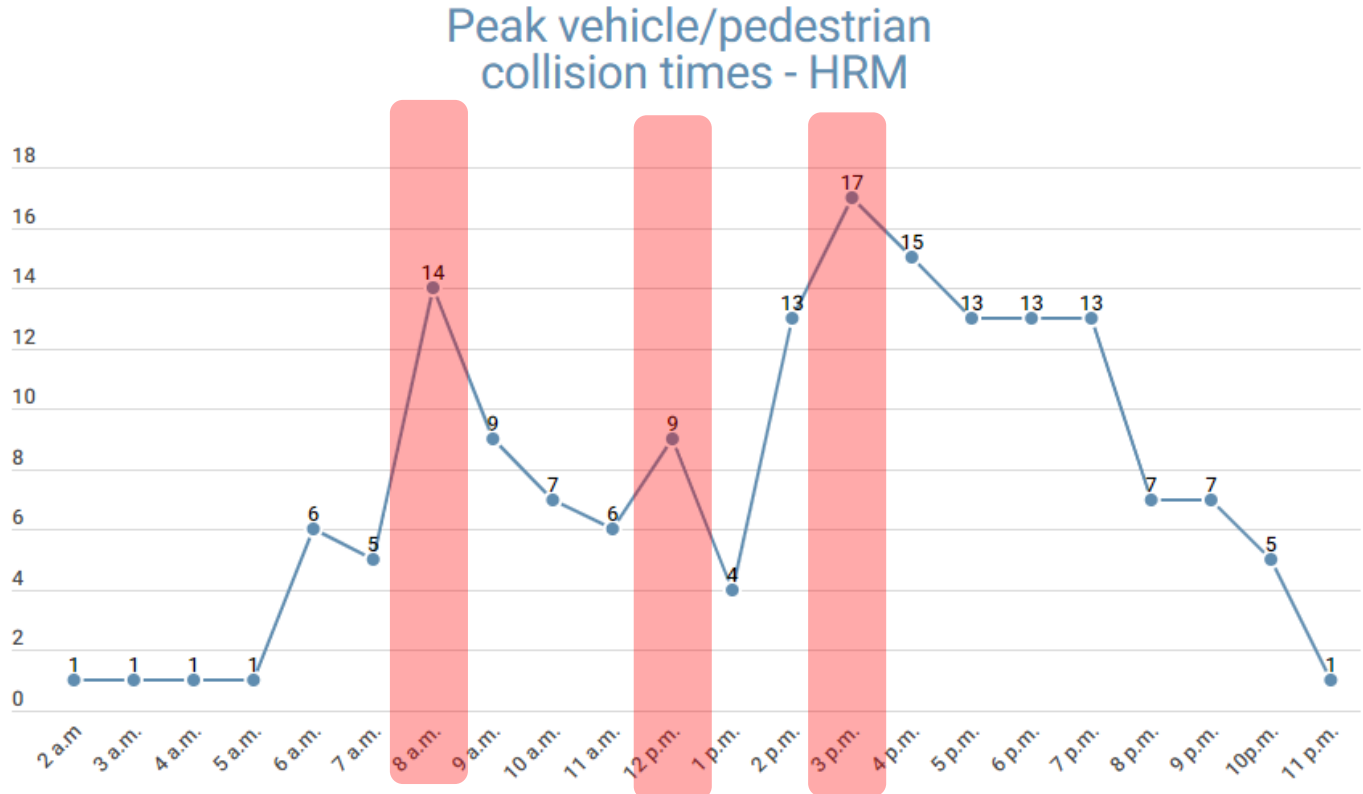


HRM reported 140+ pedestrian/vehicle collisions and +70 cyclist/vehicle collisions last year (note excludes Dec data)



Source: Halifax Road Safety Dashboard, Jan 24, 2023

HCJH bell times coincide with peak HRM vehicle/pedestrian collisions



Source: [A day in the life of a crossing guard; 'It's a precarious profession', Saltwire, Feb 7, 2020](#) (highlighting added for emphasis)



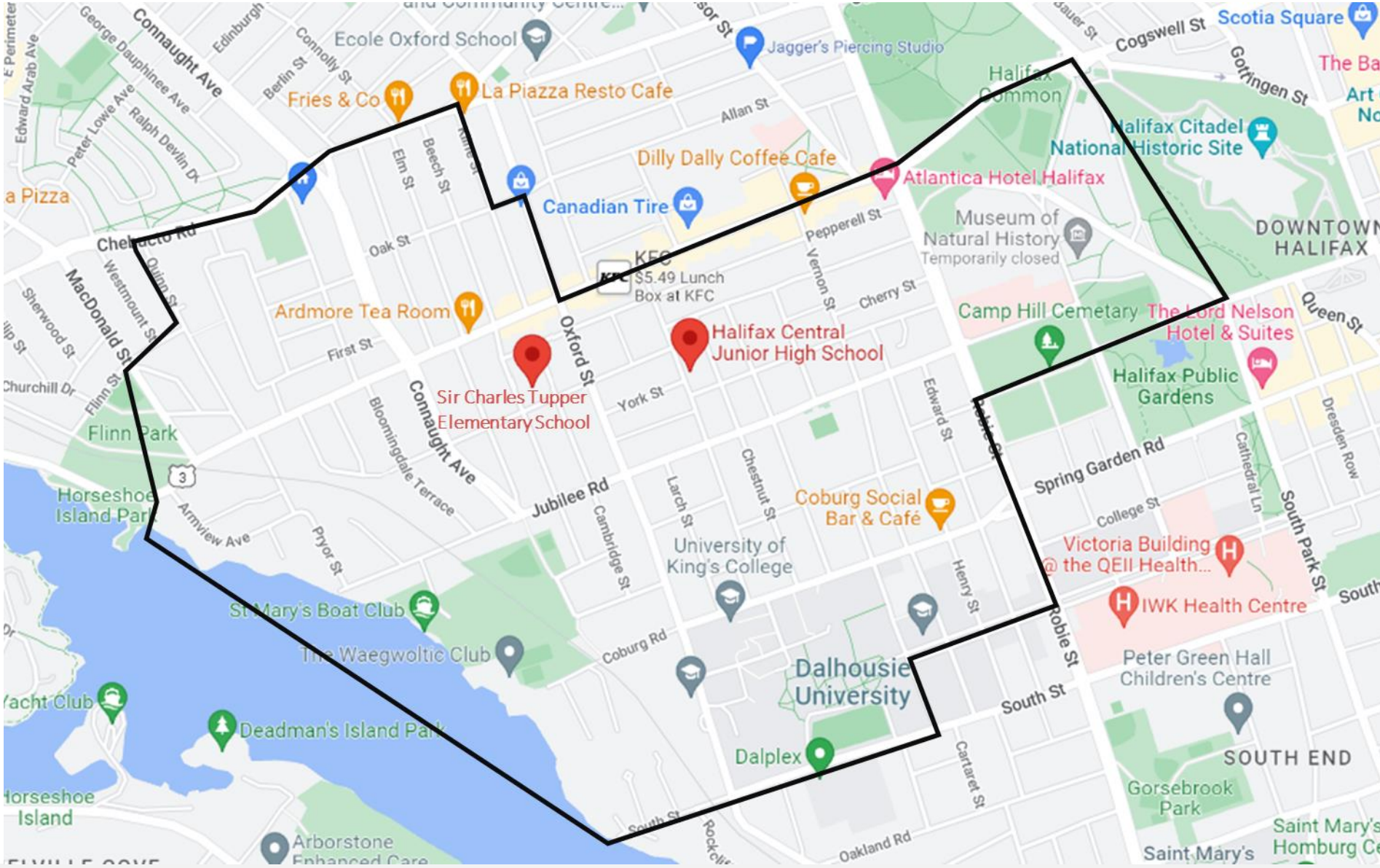


“Most child pedestrian injuries and deaths occur in urban areas.

....

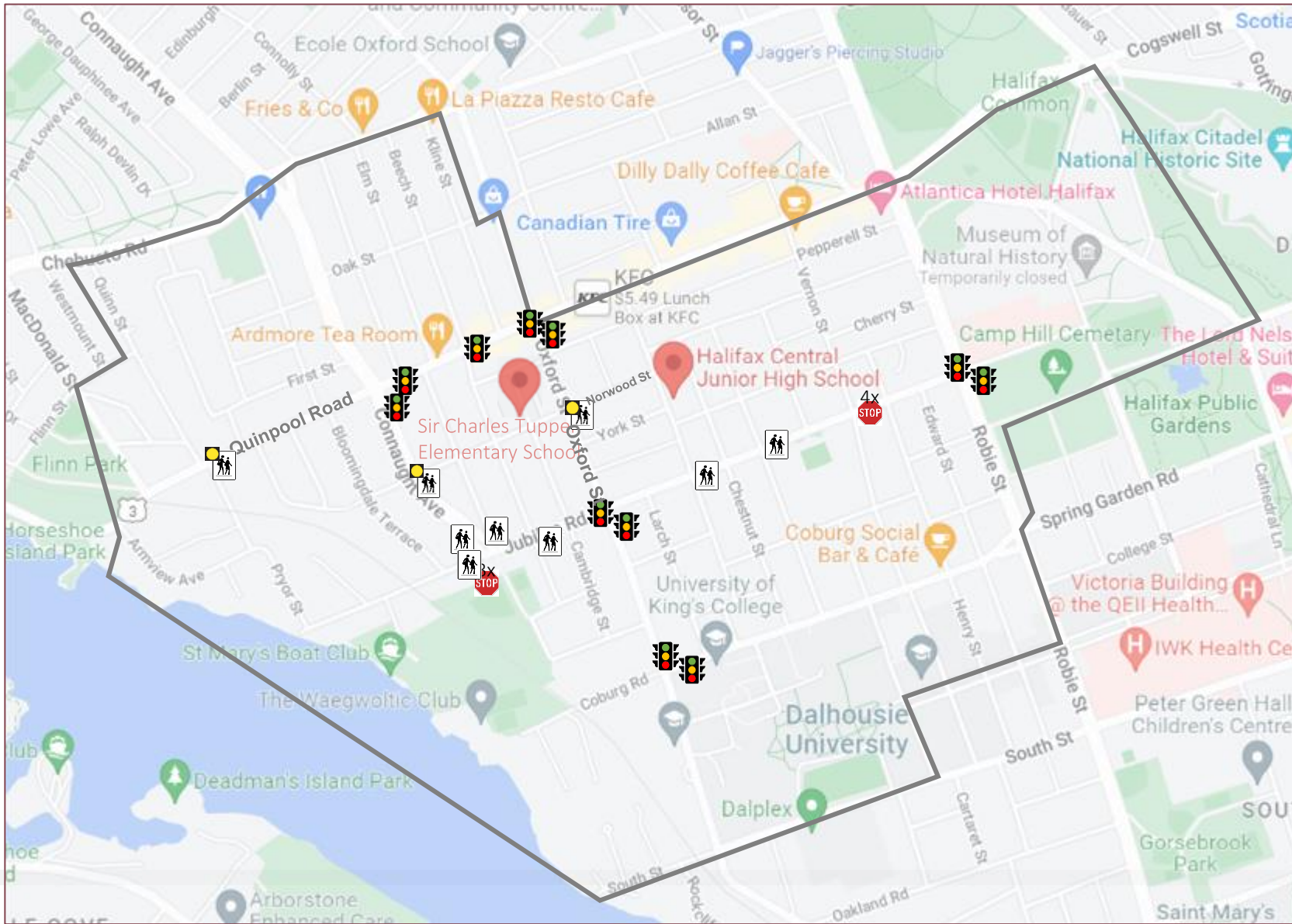
“Injuries to child pedestrians are often severe. They may be left with long-term disabilities, emotional strain and financial burdens that can last a lifetime.”

HCJH Catchment Area is in and along the route to and from the peninsula core

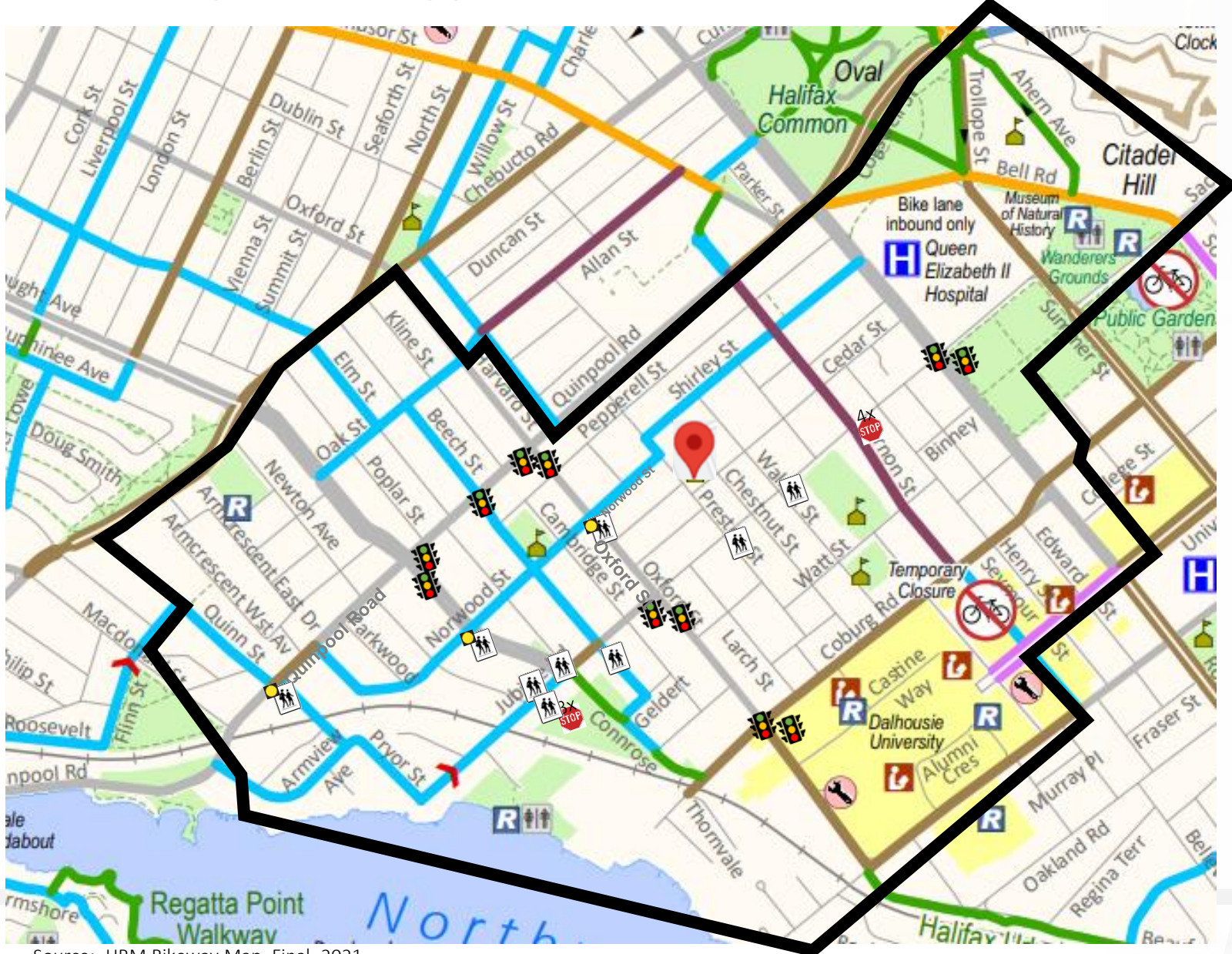


Source: Catchment area estimated

HCJH is an “active transportation” school (i.e. no bus), with students required to walk, bike, etc. to and from school daily, up to 2.4 km each way



In the HCJH catchment area, there exist no official bikeways or bike routes, only dangerous “suggested routes on Main Roads and Local Roads

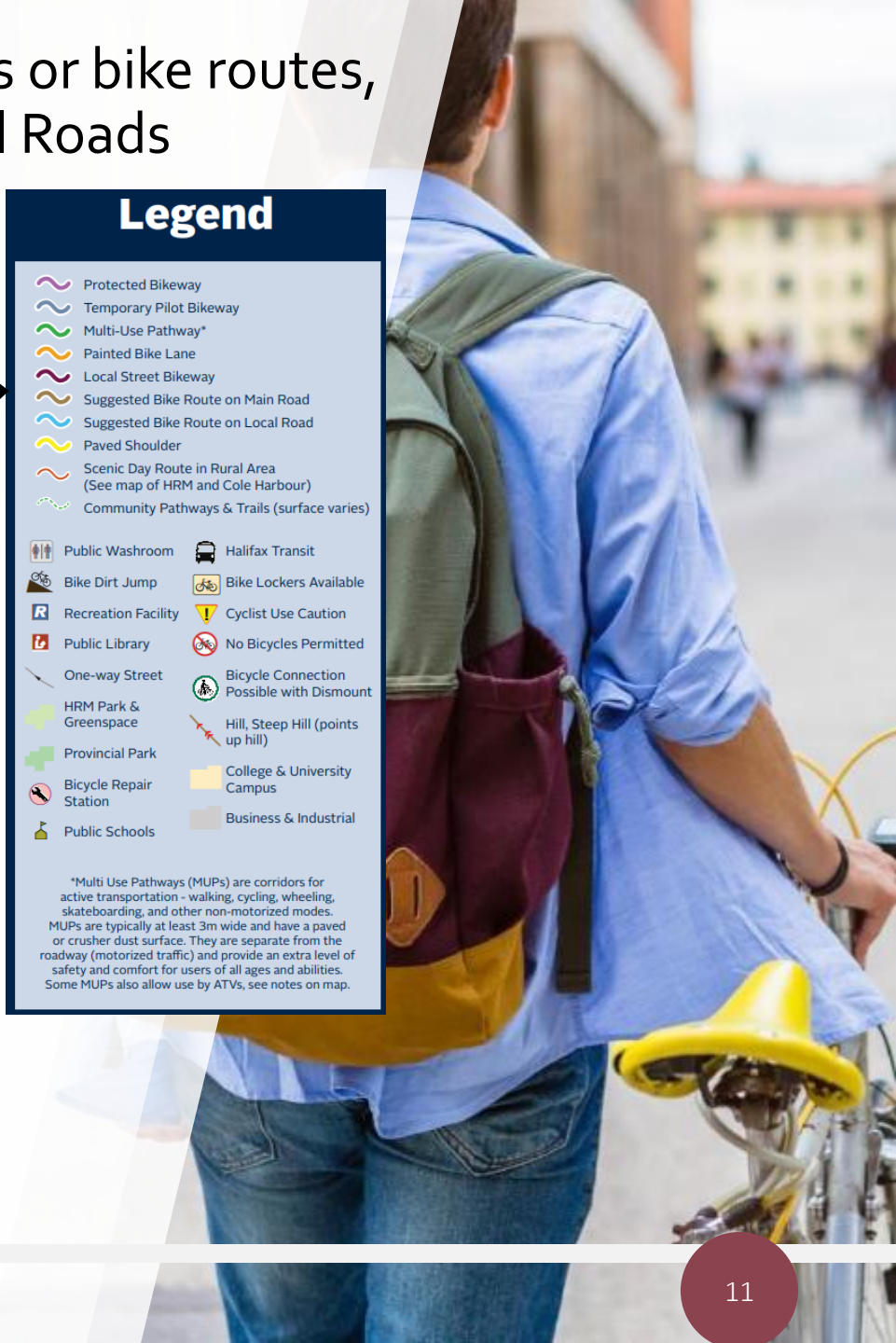


Legend

- Protected Bikeway
- Temporary Pilot Bikeway
- Multi-Use Pathway*
- Painted Bike Lane
- Local Street Bikeway
- Suggested Bike Route on Main Road
- Suggested Bike Route on Local Road
- Paved Shoulder
- Scenic Day Route in Rural Area (See map of HRM and Cole Harbour)
- Community Pathways & Trails (surface varies)

- Public Washroom
- Halifax Transit
- Bike Dirt Jump
- Bike Lockers Available
- Recreation Facility
- Cyclist Use Caution
- Public Library
- No Bicycles Permitted
- One-way Street
- Bicycle Connection Possible with Dismount
- HRM Park & Greenspace
- Hill, Steep Hill (points up hill)
- Provincial Park
- College & University Campus
- Bicycle Repair Station
- Business & Industrial
- Public Schools

*Multi Use Pathways (MUPs) are corridors for active transportation - walking, cycling, wheeling, skateboarding, and other non-motorized modes. MUPs are typically at least 3m wide and have a paved or crusher dust surface. They are separate from the roadway (motorized traffic) and provide an extra level of safety and comfort for users of all ages and abilities. Some MUPs also allow use by ATVs, see notes on map.



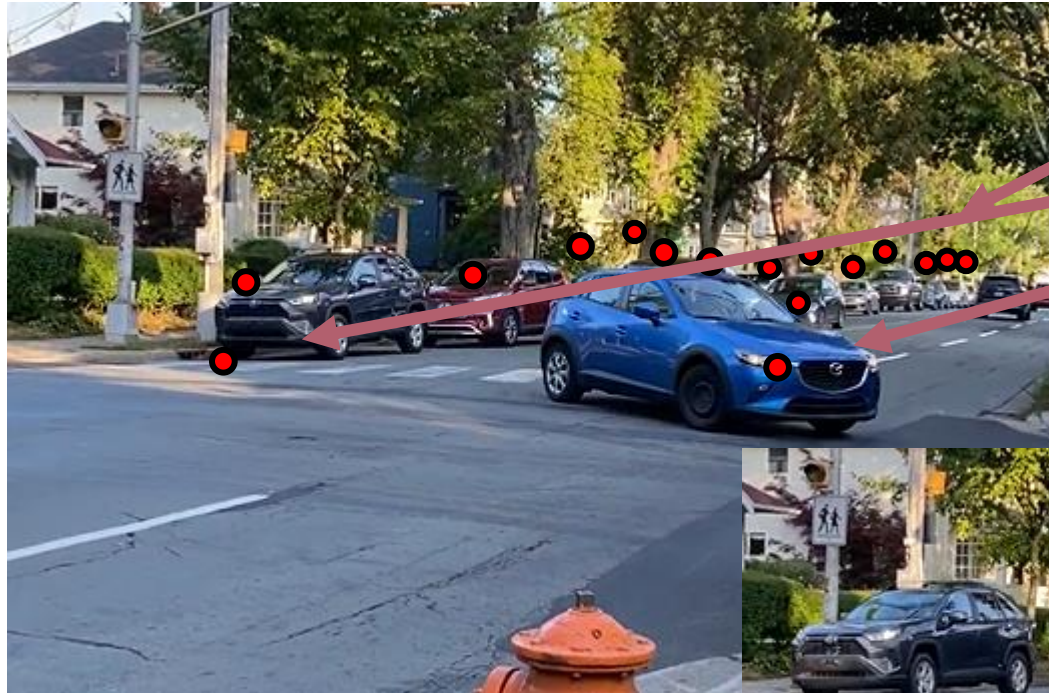
Source: HRM Bikeway Map, Final, 2021

The Crosswalk on Oxford at Norwood is used by HCJH and its feeder schools to attend school

- HCJH and SCT feeder school boundary straddle Oxford at Norwood crosswalk
- Elementary students cross the Crosswalk heading southwest
- Junior high students cross the Crosswalk heading northeast
- Crossing guard available for elementary students only, aligning with elementary bell times



Typical experience of HCJH student crossing at Oxford and Norwood (Sep 7, 2022 ~8am (no crossing guard))



These drivers were **stopped** in traffic

- Line of cars hugging curb to **allow for illegal "double lane"**
- Driver in black car (first pic, on right) is **on sidewalk** while waiting for traffic to move
- Blue car driver (first pic, on left) **illegally speeds** south on Oxford, **past cars hugging curb**, **"creating" two lanes** waits for a bit, then turns left onto Norwood
 - There are two drivers behind this blue car - also **illegally speed down Oxford**
 - One driver also turns left onto Norwood

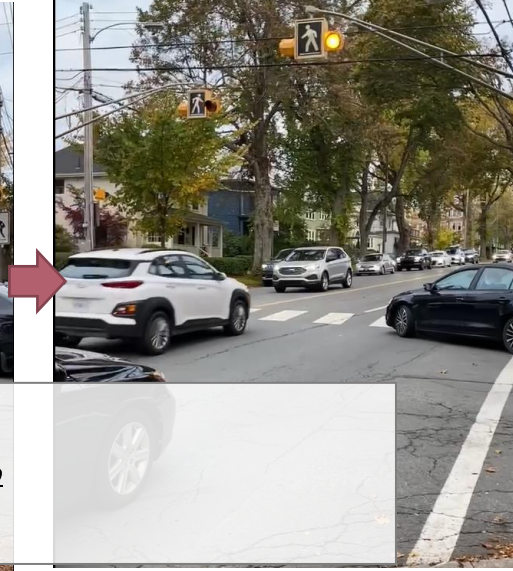
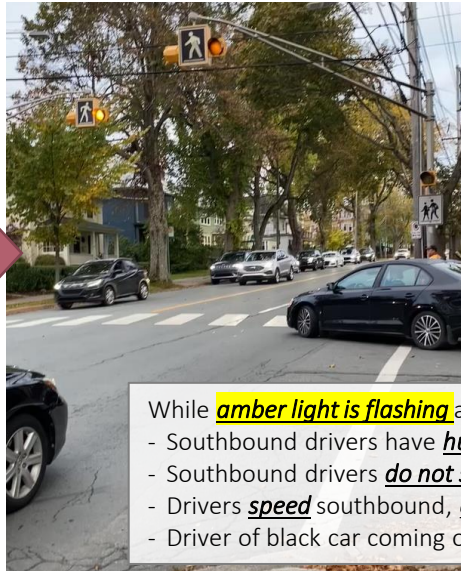


Typical experience of HCJH student crossing at Oxford and Norwood – video stills

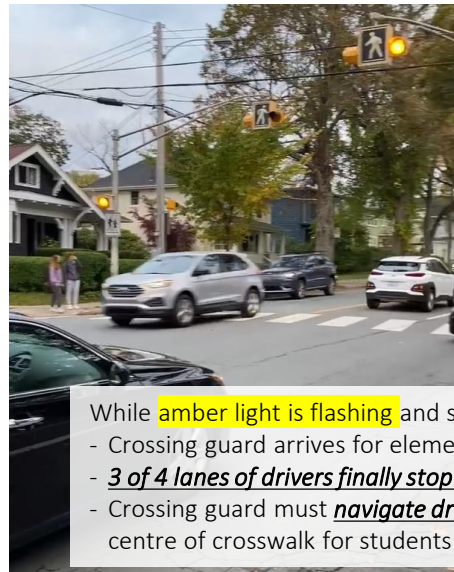


Students hit push button for **amber light** at ~8:10am

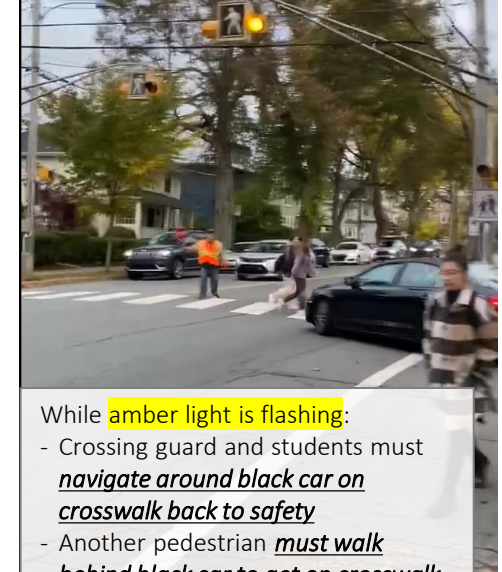
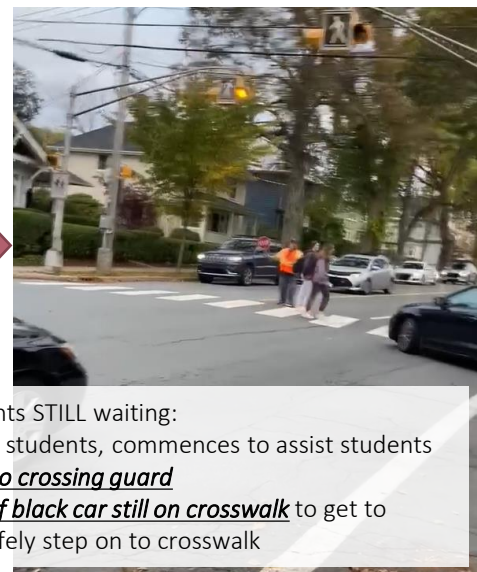
- Northbound driver in black car stops for their crossing before Norwood entry



- While **amber light is flashing** and students waiting:
- Southbound drivers have **hugged curb** to allow for illegal double lane
 - Southbound drivers **do not stop**; Northbound driver in white car **does not stop**
 - Drivers **speed** southbound, **creating illegal "double lane"** in a single lane street
 - Driver of black car coming on to Oxford **stopped on two sidewalks**



- While **amber light is flashing** and students STILL waiting:
- Crossing guard arrives for elementary students, commences to assist students
 - **3 of 4 lanes of drivers finally stop due to crossing guard**
 - Crossing guard must **navigate driver of black car still on crosswalk** to get to centre of crosswalk for students to safely step on to crosswalk



- While **amber light is flashing**:
- Crossing guard and students must **navigate around black car on crosswalk back to safety**
 - Another pedestrian **must walk behind black car to get on crosswalk**

Typical experience of HCJH student crossing at Oxford and Norwood After 8:15am (when crossing guard arrives; students late for first bell)



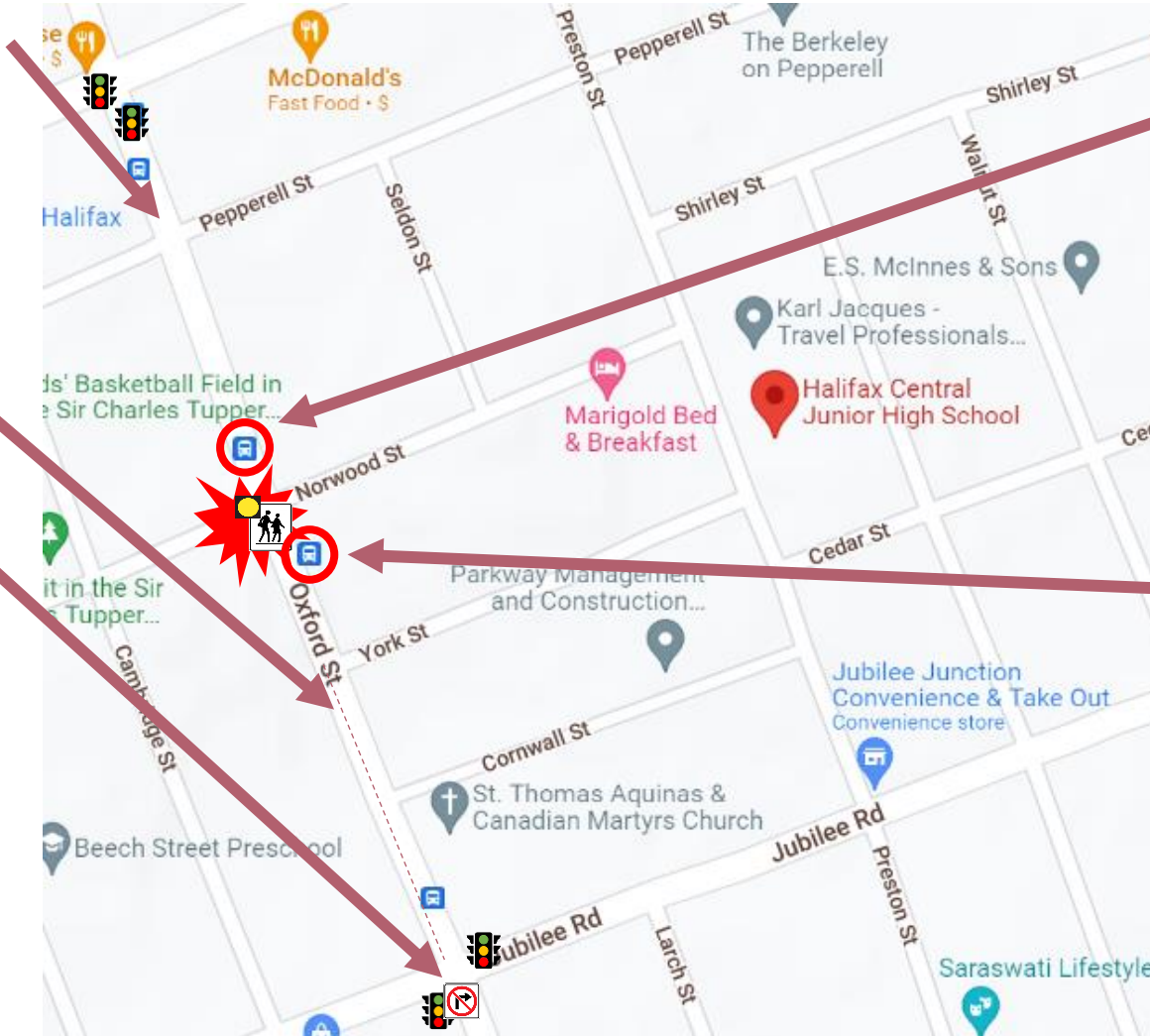
Key issues at crosswalk on Oxford at Norwood

1. Southbound Oxford street is extra-wide, encouraging speeding and drivers creating double-lane on single-lane street

- Only becomes double lane after York Street

2. Jubilee/Oxford "no-right-on-red"

- Resulting in increased vehicle traffic on Quinpool Road and Oxford Street all times of day, but particularly during morning rush hour



3. Southbound near-side bus stop (Oxford and Norwood) hinders sightlines

- For pedestrians cannot see southbound traffic when attempting to cross
- For drivers from seeing pedestrians when passing around bus AND/OR when illegally creating double lane
- #1 (runs every 10-15 min)

4. Northbound nearside bus stop (Oxford and Norwood) at intersection hinders sightlines, similarly, however northbound is double-lane

5. Buses run frequently, e.g. #1 (runs every 10-15 min)



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Urgent Call to "Action"

- 1) An *Active Transportation Review/Audit* of Halifax Central Junior High School (including Related Feeder Schools), and
- 2) Immediate action the audit regarding the most dangerous active transportation situations, including Oxford at Norwood crosswalk



“Every student
deserves to travel
to school in a safe
manner”



Source: NS School Transportation Policy

Appendix

Since September 2021, HCJH bell times ceased to coincide with Elementary school crossing guard hours

	Halifax Central Bell Times	Sir Charles Tupper Bell Times	Crossing Guard Hours
Entrance Bell	8:15		n/a
		8:50	8:15 – 8:50
Lunch Begins	11:25		n/a
		12:00	12:00 – 12:20
Lunch Ends	12:40		n/a
		1:10	12:55 – 1:10
School Ends	2:45		n/a
		3:15	3:15 – 3:45

