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Durham Region welcomes students back to school; reminds drivers to slow down in school zones

Whitby, Ontario – As Durham Region students gear up to go back to school next week, the Region of Durham is reminding road users to keep safety top of mind in school zones.

“Road safety is a two-way street: drivers need to slow down, stay focussed, and watch for cyclists and pedestrians; and pedestrians must ensure they always cross the road at a designated crossing or signalized intersection,” says Ramesh Jagannathan, Director of Transportation and Field Services for the Region of Durham. “With more people on the roads, please give yourself extra time to get to your destination and drive with care to protect the safety of our children.”

Through the Durham Vision Zero strategic road safety action plan, Durham Region is taking steps to reduce the number of fatal and serious-injury-causing collisions on our roads. The Traffic Engineering and Operations Division is studying the use of automated speed enforcement in school zones, and ensuring road design and safety features—such as signage, speed limits and crosswalk locations—support the safety of all road users. Durham Region also recently launched a speed radar feedback sign program to improve driver awareness of speed limits and reduce aggressive driving in school zones and Community Safety Zones.

Every September, the Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) conducts a back-to-school safety initiative called In the Zone. It focuses on roadway safety near school zones. During last year’s campaign, the DRPS wrote 1,029 tickets for various driving offences, including 640 tickets for speeding, 105 for stop sign/red light violations, 38 for careless driving, 19 for seatbelt infractions and 31 for distracted driving.

“We also want to remind drivers of Durham Region’s newest Community Safety Zone, which is on Simcoe Street around the Conlin Road intersection—the location of the Durham College and Ontario Tech University campus,” says Steven Kemp, Manger of Traffic Engineering and Operations for Durham Region. “With the new school year comes an increase in pedestrians in this area, and we want to make sure everyone gets to school and back home again safely.”

In Community Safety Zones, fines for traffic offences—such as speeding or traffic signal infractions—are doubled. The Simcoe Street Community Safety Zone stretches from Niagara Lane/Selleck Drive to the Campus Ice Centre (just north of Conlin Road).

Durham Vision Zero is a long-term plan to ensure a safe transportation system that sees no lives lost or serious injuries on Durham’s roadways. Learn more at durham.ca/VisionZero.

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### Collision Between DRT Bus and Tow Truck

Five people were transported to Lakeridge Health - Oshawa with injuries following a collision between a tow truck and a Durham Region Transit bus in Oshawa on Tuesday afternoon.

On Tuesday, August 27, 2019, at approximately 4:07 p.m., officers from East Division were called to Bloor Street East and Armada Court in Oshawa regarding a two-vehicle collision.

A 2010 flatbed tow truck being operated by a 42-year-old Whitby male was traveling westbound on Bloor Street East when it collided with an eastbound Durham Region Transit bus being operated by a 56-year-old Clarington female. At the time of the collision, the bus had several occupants, three of whom were transported to Lakeridge Health - Oshawa with minor injuries.

Both drivers were transported to Lakeridge Health - Oshawa. The driver of the transit bus suffered minor injuries and the driver of the tow truck suffered serious but non-life threatening injuries.

Members of the DRPS Collision Investigation Unit attended the scene to conduct an investigation. The roads in the area were closed for several hours while evidence was collected and the scene cleaned up.