



YOUR VOICE MATTERS

You Don't Have to Be an Expert to Advocate for a
Safer Street

You know your community.

You know the intersection you avoid.

You know where cars rarely yield.

You know where your child cannot safely cross.

You know where the sidewalk disappears.

You know the route that feels unsafe on a bicycle.

That experience matters.

You can help bring attention to transportation problems—and
you can ask your government to address them.

1 WRITE

One of the simplest ways to advocate is to write to your elected officials or transportation agency. You don't need to be a policy expert. A short, specific message about your experience is powerful.

Tips for writing:

- Be specific: name the street, intersection, or route.
- Be personal: describe what you've seen or experienced.
- Be direct: state what you want changed.
- Be brief: a few sentences can be enough.

SAMPLE EMAIL

Dear [Council Member / Agency Staff / Representative /Senator],

I'm writing about [street/intersection]. I [walk/bike/drive] here regularly and have experienced [specific safety concern]. I'm asking that [specific request: crosswalk, signal, traffic calming, decrease in speed limit, etc.] be considered.

Thank you for your time.

[Your name, neighborhood]

2 SPEAK

Public comment periods let you speak directly to decision-makers. Most meetings allow 2–3 minutes for each speaker. You can read from notes. You can bring a photo. You can simply tell your story.

PUBLIC COMMENT PROMPTS

- “I live near [location] and I've seen [problem].”
- “I'm asking for [specific improvement].” OR “I'm in support of [ordinance/statute].”
- “This matters to me because [personal reason].”
- “I want my community to be safe for [people: children, seniors, people with disabilities, myself].”

3 SHOW UP

Attending a public meeting—even without speaking—sends a message. Your presence shows decision-makers that people care. And when you do speak, it carries weight.

Types of meetings where your voice matters:

- City council meetings
- Transportation or planning commission hearings
- Community input sessions or open houses
- School board meetings (for Safe Routes to School)
- Neighborhood association meetings

What to bring:

- A photo of the problem area
 - A written statement (even a few sentences)
 - A neighbor or friend for support
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4 FOLLOW UP

Advocacy doesn't end after one email or one meeting. Following up shows you're paying attention—and that the issue won't go away.

Follow-up steps:

- Send a thank-you email after a meeting.
- Reference what was discussed or promised.
- Ask for a timeline or next steps.
- Share updates with your neighbors.
- Return to the next meeting to check on progress.

5 BRING OTHER VOICES WITH YOU

The more voices, the harder to ignore. You don't have to organize alone—just invite one person. Share what you've learned. Forward an email. Walk to a meeting together.

Ways to bring others in:

- Share this handout with a neighbor.
- Post about a meeting on social media.
- Offer to help someone write their first email.
- Attend a meeting with a friend.
- Translate information for non-English speakers in your community.

Your lived experience is evidence.

You don't need a degree in urban planning. You don't need to know the "right" words. You don't need permission to ask for a safer street.

You belong in the room where these decisions are made.

Start where you are. Use what you know. Speak up for the streets you walk every day.

— The Kayla Project
<https://thekaylaproject.org>

