

# Apps for Justice Challenge: Warm up scenario

## Student Handout

### Scenario 1

### Hitting the brakes on bike accidents

To avoid transit delay and multiple transfers, Tal takes their bike to work at SmartRx, the big drugstore they've been working at for a few months now. This route to work takes them along a busy main thoroughfare which, thankfully, has a dedicated bike lane for most of the trip. However, they do have to cross a few congested intersections which are sometimes scary as they're not particularly bike or pedestrian-friendly (e.g. taxis and food delivery cars often park in the bike lane for 5–10 minutes, forcing cyclists to enter the car lane).

This past summer, there was a big construction project that disrupted traffic on this main road. The construction zone eliminated the only bike path, so Tal had to ride along the busy road, squished between cars and the edge of the construction zone.

The marked construction zone changed from day to day, which meant that the traffic was often rerouted, and signals for crossing were not always clearly marked. One day, Tal got into a collision with a car. The driver of the car started to turn right but couldn't see the cyclists crossing the street behind a construction site partition wall, and by the time Tal became visible to the driver, it was too late. The car turned into the intersection causing the front tire of the bike to crash into the car and sent Tal flying over the hood of the car. The driver of the car didn't stop and drove away before Tal could take notice of any identifying information such as the car's license plate. Tal ended up at the hospital with a broken wrist.

A few days after the collision, Tal posted about the experience on social media. They got a ton of comments about similar situations happening to people near the same intersection. Tal did some research and found out that last year there were 10 bike accidents in this neighborhood caused by cars or unsafe road conditions. Some of the people injured were compensated by private insurance claims, others received settlements from a government fund known as the [Ontario Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Fund](#), and some got nothing because their injuries were deemed not bad enough to be eligible for any compensation.

Tal claimed compensation from the government fund because they had to miss three weeks of work following the accident and had to replace their laptop, which was damaged beyond repair in the accident. The claim didn't cover the damage to the bike though, nor the fact that Tal still has limited mobility in their wrist, limited function of their hand, has to do ongoing physiotherapy, and had to take fewer shifts at work for several months while they fully recuperated.

Even with compensation, peoples' injuries typically continue to cause pain and suffering and interfere with their lives and the lives of their loved ones. Data from the last couple of years show that cycling and pedestrian related injuries and deaths have increased. For example, according to the [Ontario Provincial Police](#), cycling related fatalities per year in Ontario in 2022 increased by 300% compared to 2021. ([WHO](#))([Social inequalities in Road accidents](#))

There are laws such as the [Highway Traffic Act](#) and municipal rules to govern cyclists and motor vehicles and to prevent accidents on the road. So why are so many cyclists still being injured? What can be done to get more bike-friendly routes, so cyclists have multiple options and don't have to rely on a single bike path? What can be done to make drivers more accountable to others on the road, and ensure a safer commute for cyclists and pedestrians? Being compensated for a crash is the least that can be done, but it's after the fact, and it would be better if accidents could be prevented from happening in the first place.

### **Questions to think about and discuss:**

1. What areas of law, legal issues are engaged by Tal's situation?
2. What are the A2J barriers present in this situation?
3. What is the negative impact on Tal and their network?
4. What are some app ideas that could help Tal and others like them?