



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Roumen Kotev, Supervisor of Transportation

DATE: October 11, 2024

REPORT NO.: TPW-2024-008

SUBJECT: 30 km/h Speed Limit Feasibility Review

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. TPW-2024-008, dated October 11, 2024, regarding the 30 km/h Speed Limits Feasibility Review, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT future 30 km/h speed limits are implemented on Local and Collector classification roadways within School Zones;

AND FURTHER THAT 30 km/h speed limits in School Zones on Local and Collector roads be implemented following the completion of current multi-year projects as part of a future budget consideration and workplan.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- In 2017 the Province of Ontario passed Bill-65, the Safer School Zone Act.
- As part of the 2024 Traffic Engineering Workplan staff included the feasibility review of 30 km/h speed limits based on practices adopted by other municipalities in Ontario.
- The research indicated that considerable traffic calming measures are required to achieve driver compliance, which often included Automated Speed Enforcement.
- Town staff has been actively addressing road safety through several multi-year programs.
- Staff recommends that 30 km/h speed limits in School Zones on Local and Collector roads be implemented upon completion and full evaluation of the current multi-year programs.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

On May 30, 2017, the Province of Ontario passed Bill 65, the Safer School Zone Act which permits municipalities to enact speed limit reductions on a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood basis. The legislation amended the Ontario Highway Traffic Act (HTA), and municipalities are permitted to reduce speed limits, below 50 km/h, through municipal by-law by designating neighbourhoods for reduced speed limits.

As part of the 2024 Traffic Engineering Workplan staff included the research and feasibility of 30 km/h speed limits based on practices adopted by other municipalities.

The review consisted of researching the experience of other municipalities that have begun programs to reduce speed limits to 30 km/h and report back on the effects of these programs in terms of reduced operating speeds. The researched municipalities include the City of Burlington, City of Mississauga, City of Hamilton, City of Guelph, City of Kitchener, City of Waterloo, City of Cambridge, and Town of Georgina.

Review of other Municipalities

Within Halton Region, the City of Burlington is the only municipality that has reviewed and approved the 30 km/h speed limits in School Zones through a report to Council in November of 2021. The implementation of the program has not begun; as city staff recognizes the challenge of achieving driver compliance without supplementary traffic calming measures which primarily include Automated Speed Enforcement.

The cities of Mississauga, Hamilton, Kitchener, Cambridge and Guelph have conducted extensive research and have approved the implementation of 40 km/h on Local and Collector classification roads while reducing School Zone speed limits to 30 km/h.

The City of Waterloo's Council directed staff to lower speed limits from 50 km/h to 30 km/h on all Local and Collector classification roads. Afterwards, Council reversed their decision and directed staff to convert Local and Collector classification roads to 40 km/h while implementing 30 km/h within School Zones.

The Town of Georgina retained a consultant to carry out a Functional Assessment Review to improve safety for their popular corridors which provide access to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians for both commuting and leisure purposes. As part of the review, the consultant indicated that the existing speed limit of 40 km/h was appropriate and responded well to drivers' expectations. Although, the final recommendation was that 30 km/h speed limits are theoretically safer and were implemented within selected areas that serve seasonal traffic. It should be noted that a detailed analysis of 30 km/h speed limits was not conducted as part of that study. Community Safety Zones along with intrusive traffic calming measures were implemented even though significant operational concerns were not expected as speeds in these areas were already low.

In summary, most of the researched municipalities adopted 40 km/h on Local and Collector type roadways while reducing school zones on the same type of roadways to 30 km/h due to the presence of vulnerable road users. It was also concluded that

achieving lower operating speeds requires traffic calming measures and Automated Speed Enforcement.

Town Practices

Road safety is a key priority and since 2019, staff increased their efforts to address road safety through the Neighbourhood Traffic Calming (NTC), School Zone Traffic Calming (SCZTC) and the 40 km/h Speed Limit Area Implementation, multi-year programs.

In 2019, Report No. TPW-2019-0004 identified an update to the Traffic Calming Implementation Protocol that was approved by Council. An overall neighbourhood traffic calming approach was considered to ensure that all roads within the area are reviewed and evaluated to determine the appropriate traffic calming measure. Each year staff reviews at least one neighbourhood and prepares an extensive plan that includes data collection and analysis, public consultation, capital budget, a final recommendation report subject to Council approval, and post-implementation review.

In 2021, staff recognized the need to increase safety for vulnerable road users within school zones. This resulted in the implementation of the School Zone Traffic Calming Program which considered both intrusive and non-intrusive traffic calming measures which included the review of the Council approved Traffic Calming Implementation Protocol. Each year staff reviews a minimum of two elementary schools and prepares an implementation plan.

In 2022, staff completed a pilot project that assessed the feasibility of 40 km/h speed limits on Local and Collector classification roads. The 40 km/h speed limit pilot confirmed that reducing the posted speed limit with signs alone is not effective in reducing operating speeds on all roadways. A change to incorporate 40 km/h posted speed limits on all Collector and Local classification roads with cut-through will not reduce the overall operating speeds in the community. In addition, such a change requires increased consideration for traffic calming measures in conjunction with Halton Regional Police Service presence to manage speed enforcement. Through the analysis it was determined that implementation of 40 km/h area speed limits for Local and Collector classified roads will follow the screening process identified in the Council approved Policy. Since the commencement of the 40 km/h Speed Limit Area Program staff have been actively reviewing and implementing up to ten (10) areas each year.

Following the implementation of each traffic calming project, staff conduct a thorough post-implementation review to determine whether the desired results are achieved or if further measures are warranted. To date, the extensive work undertaken throughout the Town has yielded positive results through the reduction of operating speeds.

Community Safety Zones and Automated Speed Enforcement

Community Safety Zones are designated areas that aim to protect vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, through measures like reduced speed limits and enhanced signage. In 2023, staff implemented 22 Community Safety Zones, increasing the total number in Town to 24, with the majority fronting school zones.

In 2025, staff will begin the Automated Speed Enforcement program with one mobile camera that will be utilized within the established Community Safety Zones.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research outlined that the primary reason for the adoption of 30 km/h speed limits is to further enhance safety for vulnerable road users within School Zones located on Local and Collector type roads.

The 40 km/h Speed Limit Pilot Project undertaken by the Town indicated that changing the signs alone would not have a significant impact on operating speeds. Municipalities who have adopted 30 km/h speed limits confirmed these findings and have implemented a multitude of safety and traffic calming measures in efforts to reduce operating speeds.

Multi-year programs, such as the School Zone Traffic Calming program have shown effectiveness through post-implementation data results which indicate increased safety through lower operating speeds.

Given all the findings summarized in this report, staff recommends that the implementation of 30 km/h speed limits be considered within School Zones on Local and Collector type roads following the further advancement and evaluation of current multi-year programs. The implementation will be included as part of future budget considerations and workplan.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report identifies a safe and welcoming community as well as infrastructure and asset management as two of the Town's Strategic priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement was not needed as this report is administrative in nature.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

This report was discussed internally within the Transportation and Public Works department.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report has the potential to require funding in a future budget year and therefore needs to be referred to budget committee for tracking purposes.

Reviewed and approved by,

Maureen Van Ravens, Director of Transportation

Bill Andrews, Commissioner of Transportation & Public Works

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer