

Staff Report

Report To: Operations Committee
Report From: Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works and Engineering
Meeting Date: March 16, 2023
Report Code: OP-23-013
Subject: Traffic Bylaw Amendment

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report OP-23-013 respecting an amendment to the Traffic By-law, the Operations Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to bring forward a by-law to amend Traffic By-law No. 2009-075 to amend Schedule 8 and add section 3.9.3.1 as outlined in the report.

Highlights:

Two (2) amendments are proposed to the Traffic By-law:

- Add 3rd Street West, west of 2nd Avenue East, to the “No Parking Anytime” Schedule 8
- A clause granting the Director or designate the discretion to alter the half-load period (seasonal load restrictions) depending on that year’s weather conditions. This provides more flexibility to adapt to variable climatic conditions year-to-year.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by strengthening the resiliency of City infrastructure or services.

Previous Report/Authority:

The proposed amendments are Staff-initiated. Therefore, there are no previous reports relating to this topic.

[By-law No. 2009-075](#)

Background:

Acknowledging that the Operations Committee is awaiting a report about the implementation of reduced speed limits in school zones as well as a commentary on the implications and opportunities relating to photo enforcement (photo radar), as that analysis is more involved and requires additional preparation time, Staff are proposing two minor amendments on the Traffic By-law immediately, to close some identified gaps and improve administration and enforcement of the by-law. A subsequent report on speeding shall be presented to Committee later.

The existing Traffic By-law dates to 2009. Since that time, it has undergone multiple amendments. In the future, it should be contemplated to rewrite the by-law afresh.

Analysis:

The following three amendments are proposed for the Traffic By-law.

1. No Parking addition

Amend Schedule 8 to include the following:

No parking anytime on 3rd Street West from 2nd Avenue East to the west end

Comments - This is required as it was brought to the City's attention that on-street parking was creating an unsafe condition due to impeding traffic and emergency access westward on the road, especially when roadside snow storage is present.

Staff assessed the width available on the travelled portion of the road, about the minimum width required for emergency and service vehicles (6 metres of clear width). The Highway Traffic Act (HTA) also prohibits parking within a minimum clearance of 9 metres from any intersection. The Traffic By-law also already prohibits parking across driveways or in a way that prevents the removal of another vehicle. As such, on this road segment, there is nowhere that meets all the above tests to allow safe on-street parking, a situation that worsens in the winter with the requirement for the accommodation of snow storage.

2. Load Restriction

Clause 3.9.3 currently states:

“Where an Authorized Sign has been installed and is on display, no Person shall operate a Commercial Vehicle or Trailer on any Highway or parts of Highways over allowable loading as defined by the Highway Traffic Act during a reduced load period designated as the months of March and April except the Highways or part of Highways as set out in Column 1 and between the limits set out in Column 2 of Schedule 11C to this By-law.”

Add Clause 3.9.3.1 stating the following:

“If deemed necessary by the Director of Public Works and Engineering or approved designate, the period of load restrictions may be extended to include the months of February and May due to the risk of damage to the roadway.”

Comments - Shifting the timeline of roadway load restrictions based on actual weather conditions allows the Department to ensure better protection of the road structure from heavy loads during the spring thaw. The melting of ice lenses within the road structure renders the roadway vulnerable to damage due to voids in the structural base, i.e., rutting, deformation, and pothole formation. The voids, in turn, damage the surface waterproofing layer, setting off a vicious cycle of damage due to water penetration, freezing, expansion, and contraction.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial impacts directly arising from this By-law amendment, as the effects are administrative only.

Communication Strategy:

Clear signage is required in all cases where a change in public behaviour is desired. This applies to both parking prohibitions and load restrictions. Moreover, the City publishes a news release when the load restriction period is enacted or removed. Coordination with upper-tier and partner municipalities is undertaken to limit driver confusion across geographic boundaries.

Consultation:

The proposed amendments have been developed based on the City Clerk, Bylaw Enforcement staff, and Public Works and Engineering Staff feedback.

Attachments:

None.

Recommended by:

Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works and Engineering

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works and Engineering, at lwiddifield@owensound.ca.