

Staff Report

Report To: Operations Committee
Report From: Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works and Engineering
Meeting Date: July 20, 2023
Report Code: OP-23-034
Subject: Neighbourhood Traffic Calming, School Zones and Radar Photo Enforcement

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report OP-23-034 respecting Neighbourhood Traffic Calming, School Zones and Radar Photo Enforcement, the Operations Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Direct staff to bring forward a by-law to approve Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Policy No. PRT001;
2. Receive the information on Radar Photo Enforcement; and
3. Direct staff to bring forward a by-law to amend Traffic By-law No. 2009-075 as outlined in the report:
 - a. Add Section 3.14.3;
 - b. Amend Schedules 2B, 8, and 9J; and
 - c. Add Schedule 13B.

Highlights:

- Staff propose that the Traffic By-law be amended to add:
 - No parking anytime on the north side of 3rd Street West, west of 2nd Avenue East;
 - No parking within the period of December 1 through March 31 on the south side of 3rd Street West, west of 2nd Avenue East;

- No Stopping 8:00 am – 5:00 pm on School Days, and add the north side of 25th Street East, from 9th Avenue East to the west end; and
- School Zones with a posted speed limit of 30 km/h.
- The draft Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Policy provides a transparent and uniform process for receiving, evaluating, and administering requests for traffic calming measures in a residential area.
- Automated speed enforcement can effectively reduce speeding in School and Community Safety Zones; however, such a program may have operational expenses that could exceed the ticket revenue resulting from the program.

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 creating conditions to minimize health and safety risks.

Previous Report/Authority:

[Operations Committee Report OP-21-019 dated April 13, 2021](#)

OP-210413-006

Moved by Member Robertson

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report OP-21-19 respecting Speed Limits on Residential Roads, the Operations Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Approve staff conducting a pilot test of traffic calming devices on 6th Avenue West;
2. Direct staff to work with Owen Sound Police Services to find ways to help address and deter speeding along problematic roadways within Owen Sound; and
3. Direct staff to bring forward a by-law to amend the Traffic By-law to lower speed limits in School Zones throughout Owen Sound to 30 km/hr with implementation starting in 2022, to allow time for staff to work on signage design options for the school zones and prepare the

required budgets for the changes to school zones at the locations presented in the report."

[Operations Committee direction dated January 26, 2023](#)

OC-230126-006

Moved by Member King

"THAT in consideration of the Additional Business of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Trade Show Municipal Warning and Enforcement Cameras, the Operations Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to investigate using photo radar within the Streets of the City of Owen Sound and bring back to Operations Committee these findings to be included in the Traffic Calming Report".

[Operations Committee Report OP-23-013 dated March 16, 2023](#)

OC-230316-006

Moved by Councillor Hamley

"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."

Background:

Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Policy

The 2010 Owen Sound Transportation Master Plan called for the establishment of a Traffic Calming Policy to "reduce high traffic speeds and decrease through traffic on local roads to acceptable levels to maintain the liveability of residential neighbourhoods, maintain access and mobility of all users of the road allowance, and improve safety for pedestrians and motorists."

A notable portion of Staff's time, both in Public Works and Engineering and at the Police Services, is spent addressing residents' concerns relating to speeding and safety in neighbourhoods. The attached proposed policy has been drafted to establish a reproducible and transparent process for requesting, monitoring and implementing traffic calming measures.

Automated Speed Enforcement (Radar Photo Enforcement)

Staff were asked to provide commentary on the viability of implementing an Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) program in the City.

A brief timeline on ASE in Ontario:

- Bill 65, the "Safer Schools Act," was tabled in May 2017 and received Royal Assent.
- A month later, the Ontario Traffic Council established an ASE Steering Committee and 25 municipalities to establish common operating principles for ASE in Ontario.
- In April 2019, Ontario municipalities issued a cooperative request for proposals for a service provider.
- That October, Redflex, the chosen vendor and the City of Toronto set up the Joint Processing Centre that processes all ASE violation files for the member municipalities.
- In November 2019, Ontario Regulation 389/19 was filed, prescribing the requirements for ASE.
- The City of Toronto's ASE program began in February 2020 with the distribution of warning letters
- In July 2020, Toronto began issuing tickets for ASE violations

The following Ontario municipalities have implemented ASE since the program launched in 2020:

- Ajax
- Brampton
- Durham Region
- Hamilton
- London
- Mississauga
- Oakville
- Ottawa
- Peel Region
- Pickering
- Toronto
- Waterloo
- York Region

It should be noted that these are all significantly sized municipalities.

According to its website, Toronto now has 75 speed enforcement locations and 280 red light cameras. However, others have comparatively few. For example, York Region has only three (3) cameras rotating through nine prioritized locations, including 17 school areas from January through September 2023. This is noteworthy as the Region of York is home to 1,173,334 people, approximately 58 times the size of Owen Sound.

It should also be noted that, at this time, ASE can only be implemented in School Zones and Community Safety Zones. Several municipalities have sent letters to the Province requesting the program be expanded; however, the municipalities sending these demands are not necessarily municipalities that are listed as participants in the ASE program.

Traffic By-law Amendments - Parking

For several months, Staff have been working on a solution to alleviate an issue relating to on-street parking impeding emergency access on **3rd Street West**, west of 2nd Avenue East. This issue was first brought to the City's attention that on-street parking was creating an unsafe condition due to blocking traffic and emergency access westward on the road, especially when roadside snow storage is present.

The Operations Committee previously endorsed a future amendment to the Traffic By-law to prohibit parking on 3rd Street entirely; however, other adjacent residents voiced concerns over the blanket prohibition. By working with the residents, a new solution is proposed that balances the freedom to park while preserving emergency access.

The compromise involves the implementation of a year-round parking prohibition on the north side of 3rd St West and a winter (December 1 – March 31) parking prohibition on the south side. As such, parking will only be allowed on the south side from April 1 to November 30 annually.

A second, similar on-street parking issue was raised to staff concerning parking during school pick-up and drop-off times on **25th Street East** adjacent to Notre Dame School. To preserve access and egress from driveways and for emergency services within this road segment, Staff propose that stopping be prohibited on the north side of 25th St East between 9th Ave East and the west end of 25th St East between 8 am-6 pm on school days. Parking and stopping on the south side of 25th Street East would continue unrestricted.

Traffic By-law Amendment - School Zones and Areas

In 2021, Staff were directed to implement School Zones adjacent to the following schools:

- Timothy Christian School (1735 4th Ave W)
- Alexandra Community School (1556 8th Ave E)
- Hillcrest Elementary School (501 8th St W)
- St. Basil Catholic Elementary School (925 9th Ave W)
- Owen Sound District School (750 9th St W)
- St. Mary's High School (555 15th St E)
- Ecole Catholique Saint-Dominique-Savio (800 23rd St E)
- Keppel-Sarawak Elementary School (937 24th St W)
- Notre Dame Catholic School (885 25th St E)

Some schools have 40 km/h speed limits in the surrounding area, but this has yet to be implemented consistently. Further, there are no designated School Zones or School Areas in the Traffic By-law. School Zones are reduced-speed areas designated to increase safety adjacent to schools, whereas School Areas include warning signage but maintain the ambient speed limit. While the 2021 resolution based the direction primarily on political reasons, both designations can be founded on established criteria calculated following guidance manuals such as the Transportation Association of Canada's "*School and Playground Areas and Zones: Guidelines for Application and Implementation.*" It is this approach that Staff have taken this time.

Analysis:

Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Policy

The proposed policy focuses on identifying operational issues within existing residential areas. It does not apply to arterial, Grey County or Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) roadways or future concerns. Similar problems may exist on higher-traffic volume roadways, but as the primary function of higher-class roads is to move traffic efficiently, they are typically equipped with a separate pedestrian corridor to limit pedestrian-vehicular conflict to designated, typically controlled, crossing points.

The policy outlines the process for the application and review of traffic calming requests. A summarized procedure is as follows:

Initiation of the Request – must be submitted in writing, outlining the scope, nature and location of the concern. The applicant must represent the majority opinion of the affected group.

Determination of the Subject Area – Staff will review and determine the area influenced by the concern, such as local and feeder roads.

Traffic Calming Warrant Analysis – If a potential issue exists, traffic monitoring will be undertaken when resources allow to provide empirical data upon which decisions can be based.

Local Improvement Process – If the traffic data does not corroborate the traffic concern, residents can petition the City to implement the traffic calming measures under the Local Improvement provisions of the Municipal Act (where costs for the improvement would be assessed directly to each property on a pro-rata basis).

Identification & Evaluation of Alternatives – If the traffic data supports the volume or speed-related concern, Staff will identify a list of potential measures.

Stakeholder Engagement – The affected stakeholders will be engaged to ensure their support for implementing calming measures and to gain input on the preferred alternatives. The majority of stakeholders must support the approach for the application to proceed to Council for budget approval.

Approval by Council - The preferred solution will be presented to the Operations Committee to recommend to Council for final approval. Temporary measures may be recommended for significant/complex solutions to ensure that the measures are effective and well-tolerated prior to construction with permanent materials. Projects may be temporarily deferred pending budget availability.

Ongoing monitoring – Shall be undertaken for a minimum of two (2) years.

Removal of Traffic Calming Measures – This can only occur after the two-year monitoring period and must be directed by Council or a petition process with a minimum of 60% in favour of removal. If removed, the area residents cannot request a traffic calming study for at least three (3) years.

Automated Speed Enforcement

According to information available at the time of writing this report, Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) is a tool proven to enforce speed

limits, increase driver awareness and decrease pedestrian injury and death. The current iteration of ASE arose from the "Safer Schools Act," which added the use of ASE in Ontario's school and community safety zones.

Although many municipalities have excessive speed issues in school and community safety zones, others may not. Often, these issues are perceived rather than real.

Before deciding to take the plunge with ASE, Redflex, a service provider working with Ontario municipalities on the ASE program, recommends that first, data be gathered to determine where ASE implementation is viable. ASE is one of many tools, along with engineering activities, education initiatives and police enforcement, to help reduce speed in areas with vulnerable populations, such as school and community safety zones.

The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario Guidance Document Suggests:

- Choosing sites with a documented history of crashes, serious injuries, or fatalities
- Sites where speed limits are posted and visible
- Not locating ASE in speed transition zones or typical 'speed traps.'

The Ontario Traffic Council Site Selection Guidelines:

- Consideration should be given to traffic volumes, travel speeds, length of zone, school population and after-hours use
- Pedestrian collision history
- Feasibility and effectiveness of traditional enforcement

Camera System Requirements:

- Straight, flat section of road
- Minimum 1.5m offset from the edge of 1st enforced lane
- 1m square clearance to place housing
- Min. 30m of space free of parked cars and other obstructions
- Min. 40m back from intersection/stop sign/speed bumps
- Consideration for ease of maintenance and potential for vandalism
- Awareness of driveways and side streets within the zone

Political Consideration: Will the deployments be moved around equally or based on data?

How does it work?

Images are only captured by the ASE system when a vehicle is detected travelling above the posted speed limit. The image is stored and sent to the Joint Processing Centre in Toronto, where all ASE infractions in Ontario are processed. (An Agreement is required with the Joint Processing Centre; an Agreement is also required with the MTO to access vehicle ownership information).

A Provincial Offences Officer reviews the image and lays a charge when the photo proves that the vehicle was speeding and the vehicle owner is identified. The ticket includes a digitized copy of the image and an enlargement of the plate portion and is mailed to the registered vehicle plate holder. Upon conviction, the only penalty is a fine; no demerit points are applied as the vehicle owner is charged regardless of who the driver was.

The tickets indicate the set fine, which is determined by the Chief Judge of the Ontario Court of Justice and is specific to the rate of speed over the speed limit that the vehicle was travelling at the time the image was taken. The total fee indicated on the ticket includes the set fine, court costs and the victim's fine surcharge.

Fine revenue, minus the above remittances to the province, would be retained by the City. If there is a surplus revenue, those funds are often reinvested into the program or other safety initiatives. However, it is important to note that most municipalities operate the ASE program at a loss.

How much would it cost?

The information available did not indicate a typical service fee, but all literature suggests that the system tends to be revenue negative.

Program Costs

- Joint Processing Centre setup costs
- Cost of processing (postage, MTO ownership lookup)
- Existing and Potential Provincial Offences Court caseloads
- Initial Camera installation
- Monthly service provider costs
- Rotation Fee
- Civil Works (i.e. concrete pads for Semi-Fixed installs)
- Warning Letters (if sent)

- Signage (required 90 days before the ASE is activated in a particular location)
- Staff Resource Allocation
- Communications Plan

Based on the early stage of implementation of Owen Sound's designated School Zones, Staff advise that venturing into ASE may be premature at this time. It will also result in upfront investment and monthly service fees, which may exceed the revenue generated by fines.

Staff suggest that the City's funds would be better spent on traffic counting equipment capable of counting, measuring speed and determining vehicle class demographics, which can be deployed and managed by Staff; such equipment could be used both for traffic concerns and to ensure that the City is meeting its Minimum Maintenance Standards obligations.

Traffic By-law Amendment - Parking

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

- Amend **Schedule 2B** – No Stopping 8:00 am – 5:00 pm on School Days, and list the North side of 25th Street East, from 9th Avenue East to the west end.
- Amend **Schedule 8** - No Parking Anytime, to add the North Side of 3rd Street West, from 2nd Avenue East to the west end.
- Amend **Schedule 9J** - No Parking between December 1 through March 31, to add the South Side of 3rd Street West, from 2nd Avenue East to the west end.

Traffic By-law Amendment – School Zones and Areas

Staff followed the warrants analysis in the Transportation Association of Canada's "*School and Playground Areas and Zones: Guidelines for Application and Implementation.*" This analysis considers the school type (i.e. age group attending), road classification (i.e. local/collector/arterial), the nature of any fencing between the road and the schoolyard, if any, the distance the school is set back from the abutting roads, the type of entrance, and the presence of sidewalks in calculating a score that is then cross-referenced with a table that determines if the configuration warrants a school zone, a school area (warning signs only) or no controls.

Of the list provided in the direction from the Operations Committee requesting 30 km/h school zones, one did not warrant any controls (Owen

Sound District School), and St. Mary’s requires only a School Area designation. Notre Dame needs a Zone at the main entrance and an Area on the other frontage. The limits of the designated areas were selected to be as logical as possible in linking with nearby pedestrian crossings or intersections, making compliance clearer for motorists and to keep the descriptions simple for the By-law.

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

- Add Section 3.14.3 to read as follows:
 “Where Authorized Signs have been installed and are on display and are marked in compliance with the regulations under the Highway Traffic Act, as amended from time to time, no Person shall operate a Motor Vehicle between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on School Days upon any Highway set out in Column 2, between the distances set up in Column 3, at a rate of speed in excess of 30 km/hour.”
- Add Schedule 13B – School Zones as shown below. Please note that some of the road segments extend into Georgian Bluffs. City Staff have been corresponding with Georgian Bluffs management staff, who have indicated support of the School Zone in principle and that it will be presented to their Committee of the Whole meeting on July 19th.

Schedule 13B – School Zones

Overrides ambient speed limit with 30 km/h limit from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm on School Days.

School Name	Road	From	To
Timothy Christian School	4th Ave W	19th St W	16th St W
	17th St W	4th Ave W	3rd Ave W
	3rd Ave W	17th St W	100m north of 17th St W
Alexandra Community School	8th Ave E	15th St E	16th St E
	15th St A E	8th Ave E	9th Ave E
Hillcrest Elementary School	8th St W	6th Ave W	4th Ave W
	6th Ave W	7th St W	8th St W
	4th Ave W	7th St W	8th St W

St. Basil Catholic Elementary School	9th Ave W	10th St W	South end
Ecole Catholique Saint-Dominique-Savio	23rd St E	8th Ave E	9th Ave E
	8th Ave E	23rd St E	100m south of 23rd St E
Keppel-Sarawak Elementary School	24th St W	120m east of 8th Ave W	Town Limit
	8th Ave W	24th St W	26th St W
(Georgian Bluffs)	24th St W	Town Limit	Carney St
(Georgian Bluffs)	Finden St	24th St W	Unopened Road Allowance of 26th St W
Notre Dame Catholic School	25th St E	9th Ave E	West end

School Areas

A change to the Traffic By-law is not required at this time. Signage will be put in place to denote limits, but no additional speed limit reduction will be applied at this time.

School Name	Road	From	To
Alexandra Community School	15th St E	7th Ave E	70m south of 7th Ave E
	7th Ave E	15th St E	150m north of 15th St E
St. Mary's High School	15th St E	7th Ave E	4th Ave E
Notre Dame Catholic School	9th Ave E	25th St E	170m south of 25th St E

Financial Implications:

At this time, there are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report; costs associated with the implementation of the School Zones and Areas are estimated to be less than \$5,000 for signage and post installation, which can be accommodated in the Operating Budget.

Costs Associated with the Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Policy are minimal; the impact would be primarily for staff time to analyze complaints as they are submitted. Further action to install traffic calming measures would be subject to Committee and Council approval, including budgetary allocations.

If Committee and Council support the initiative, a future budget request will include traffic monitoring equipment to enable Staff to undertake speed and traffic count surveys independent of the Police Services. This would have a future capital budgetary implication of approximately \$30,000 but would facilitate more frequent traffic surveys for maintenance and traffic engineering purposes and would be a better use of resources, allowing the police to focus on more important/urgent matters.

There is no budgetary impact arising from Automated Speed Enforcement as this report was requested for information only.

Future direction on Capital expenditures, such as for traffic monitoring equipment or initiating Automated Speed Enforcement, would be subject to further direction and budget approval by Council.

Communication Strategy:

Extensive communication will be required if the City implements Automated Speed Enforcement. By law, notification must be initiated 90 days before the system is activated in a particular area. Other forms of notification could include the locations on the City's website and direct mail/tax insert notices. While some residents may applaud the initiative, OSPS cautions that automated enforcement tends to be unpopular with residents, and the camera housings are subject to vandalism as they are left unattended.

Changes to the school zones and parking prohibitions will require some public outreach/press release(s), and "New" sign halos will be considered and installed where appropriate to draw attention to the new conditions.

Consultation:

Owen Sound Police Services has been consulted in the generation of this report.

Staff have liaised with representatives ranging from Principals, Parent Council members and students from several schools, such as Notre Dame,

Keppel-Sarawak, and Timothy Christian, in determining appropriate solutions and problem areas for the proposed School Zones.

One of the School Zones, Keppel-Sarawak, lies along the City's jurisdictional boundary, requiring consultation with Georgian Bluffs. City Staff have been corresponding with Georgian Bluffs management staff, who have indicated support of the School Zone in principle and that it will be presented to their Committee of the Whole meeting on July 19th, with a subsequent presentation to their Council on August 16th. They would be responsible for the costs of signage within their jurisdiction.

Lastly, affected residents have been extensively consulted prior to this round of changes to the Traffic by-law on-street parking schedules to ensure that the solution is mutually acceptable.

Attachments:

1. Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Policy
2. School Zone and Area Maps

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.