

# Residential Speed Limit Review – Background Information and Feedback Summary

## ISSUE

Building on the revising speed limits on residential streets project roadmap that was provided in March of 2021, this report provides information collected from technical collision analysis, literature review, jurisdictional scan and surveys of the public.

## BACKGROUND

Since 2013, the Administration has been working closely with local residents, community associations, and area Councillors to complete 75 Neighbourhood Traffic Reviews (NTRs), with another 10 currently underway. The most common concern raised by residents is vehicles speeding on neighbourhood streets.

At its Regular Business Meeting held on October 22, 2018, City Council considered the Posted Speed Limit Review report, and resolved:

1. That the Administration develop a detailed framework for revising posted speed limits on neighbourhood streets;
2. That the Administration develop a detailed framework for revising posted speed limits in school and playground zones; and
3. That the Administration report on options for addressing speeding and safety in areas of high concentration of seniors.”

At its meeting held on March 1, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation received an information report for the Residential Speed Limit Review – Project Roadmap.

## CURRENT STATUS

Posted speed limits are governed by Bylaw No. 7200, The Traffic Bylaw, which states that the posted speed limit is 50 km/h, with exceptions being specifically listed within Schedule 4. The speed limit is 50 km/h for most residential areas. The Montgomery Place neighbourhood posted speed limit is 40 km/h since there are no curbs or sidewalks.

Council Policy C07-015, Reduced Speed Zones for Schools guides the City’s current practice for the creation of school zones. Highlights of the policy include:

- A posted speed limit of 30 km/h is installed at all elementary and high schools,
- In effect from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday from September 1 to June 30, and
- End of school zone is marked with a sign indicating maximum speed.

Saskatoon has not established reduced speed limits for playgrounds, areas with a high concentration of seniors, or streets designated as neighbourhood bikeways.

Approximately 650 speed studies or assessments have occurred in direct response to resident concerns with vehicle speeds on residential streets in neighbourhoods since 2013.

The Administration uses the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile vehicle operating speed to validate whether a speeding issue exists. If the speed at which 85% of drivers are operating is greater than the posted speed limit plus 10% (i.e. 55 km/h on a residential street), then the street is eligible for traffic calming. In approximately half of the studies undertaken, the street was not eligible for traffic calming measures.

This could indicate that residents are concerned with drivers travelling at excessive speeds, and additionally there may be a perception of speeding because the vehicle operating speeds 'feel' too fast for residents.

In 2019, the Saskatoon Police Service Traffic Unit issued over 12,870 speeding tickets.

Between 2015 and 2019, there were a total of 38,049 motor vehicle collisions on city streets, including 27 fatalities and 217 people severely injured with a summary as follows:

- The average number of fatalities on city streets is 5.4 per year, with the highest year being 2017, with 10 fatalities.
- The average number of people severely injured on city streets is 43.4 per year, with the highest years being in 2015 and 2016, each with 50 people severely injured.
- On average, there are 20.8 collisions per day in Saskatoon; the highest collision days are dominated by property damage only type collisions.

A background information report including the collision history details is provided in Appendix 1.

### DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The background information report in Appendix 1 also includes a literature and best practices review, and a jurisdictional scan. Key findings include:

- **Establishing Speed Limits:** There is a holistic approach being used by some municipalities to establish posted speed limits. The Safe Systems approach is proactive and aims to minimize severe consequences of motor vehicle collisions so that road users involved in a collision do not suffer a severe injury or fatality as a result. The City of Saskatoon follows the traditional approach to setting speed limits which relies on the roadway geometric design standards, roadway classification, and adjacent land use to determine the appropriate speed limit.
- **School and Playground Areas and Zones:** Saskatoon's current approach to install school zones at all elementary and high schools and no playground zones differs from the national guidelines established by the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) in the [School and Playground Areas and Zones: Guidelines for Application and Implementation \(Guidelines\)](#). The Guidelines were published

after the City implemented school zones and offer guidance on the type of area or zone for a school or playground site dependent on the risk factors involved for that site.

- **Areas with a High Concentration of Seniors:** There is no national guide on implementing reduced speed areas or zones for streets with a higher concentration of seniors.
- **Neighbourhood Bikeways:** According to TAC's Geometric Design Guide for Canadian Roads, unseparated bikeways provide suitable conditions for bicyclists where motor vehicle speeds are 30 km/h or less and where motor vehicle volumes are less than 2,500 vehicles per day.
- **Jurisdictional Scan:** Specifics according to a review of 16 Canadian municipalities include:
  - Speed limit reductions for residential areas:
    - Six have recently approved a speed limit reduction (either 40 km/h or 30 km/h)
    - Four have a posted speed limit of 40 km/h
    - Three are considering a speed limit reduction (one 30 km/h, one 40 km/h, one both)
    - Three have posted speed limit of 50 km/h and are not considering a speed limit reduction
  - School zones:
    - Eleven have a speed limit of 30 km/h
    - Two use either 30 km/h or 40 km/h speed limits (dependent on speed limit for regular hours)
    - Two use playground zones of 30 km/h for their schools
    - One has a speed limit of 40 km/h
  - Playground zones:
    - Ten have a speed limit of 30 km/h
    - Four do not use
    - Two use either 30 km/h or 40 km/h speed limits for (dependent on speed limit for regular hours)
  - There was a wide range of effective hours used for school and playground zones.
  - One municipality has established reduced speed limits for areas with a high concentration with seniors. The speed limit is reduced by 20 km/h for the street through the section of street with a high concentration of seniors.
  - Four municipalities have established reduced speed limits of 30 km/h for designated bikeways or are undertaking a pilot project for these types of facilities.

### Engagement Summary

Two surveys were completed to obtain opinions on revising speed limits in residential areas of Saskatoon: 1) a representative survey was completed; and 2) an open public survey was available online. Key findings of the surveys were:

- Open public survey respondents are less in favour of speed limit reductions compared to statistically relevant survey respondents (34% for public survey and 52% for representative survey).
- Majority of representative survey respondents (60%) and about a third of open public survey respondents (31%) are concerned about the speed of the vehicles in their neighbourhoods.
- Respondents of both surveys prefer 30 km/h or 40 km/h speed limits more for local streets (52% for public survey and 34% for representative survey) compared to collector streets (15% for public survey and 36% for representative survey) or arterial streets (5% for public survey and 25% for representative survey), though no change in speed limits on any streets is the most preferred.
- Majority in both groups agree on the removal of the speed limits next to high schools (77% for public survey and 53% for representative survey) and adding speed limits next to playgrounds (57% for public survey and 78% for representative survey).
- Respondents of both surveys prefer to keep the times and days that school and playground zones are in effect (80% for public survey and 68% for representative survey).

The Speed Limit Review Survey 2021 including details on the purpose, methodology, interpreting the report, and detailed findings is found in Appendix 2.

A report providing additional information on the public engagement conducted for the Residential Speed Limit Review is included in Appendix 3.

Several stakeholder meetings have occurred to date:

1. Internal on January 19, 2021 – representatives from Saskatoon Transit, Sustainability, Water and Waste Operations, Planning and Development, Community Standards, Saskatoon Fire Department, Parks, and Transportation.
2. Internal on January 19, 2021 – representatives from Solicitor's Office, Saskatoon Police Service, and Transportation.
3. External on March 25, 2021 – representatives from Medavie Health Services West, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Saskatoon Council on Aging, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, and Saskatoon Public Schools. Regrets received from Saskatoon Safety Council Representative, and Saskatchewan Government Insurance.

The Saskatoon Council on Aging submitted a letter in April, included as Appendix 4.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial implications of the implementation of any speed limit revisions from this review will be identified and presented as part of future reports and incorporated into Transportation's capital budget submission for consideration within the 2022-2023 multi-year business plan and budget deliberations.

## **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no privacy, legal, social, or environmental implications identified with this report; however, the remaining reporting and possible implementation steps will have implications that will be identified within future reports.

## **NEXT STEPS**

1. Prepare a decision report to be presented at the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation meeting on August 9, 2021, summarizing the various options and their implications for speed limits for residential streets and whether street eligibility will be based on road classification or street function.
2. Prepare approval (or decision) reports, if and as required, to address speed limits for schools, playgrounds, areas with a high concentration of seniors, and streets designated as neighbourhood bikeways.
3. Develop an implementation strategy.

The planned project schedule is included as Appendix 5.

## **APPENDICES**

1. Background Information
2. Speed Limit Review Survey 2021
3. Speed Limit Review – Engagement Supplemental Information
4. Saskatoon Council on Aging Letter
5. Anticipated Residential Speed Limit Review Project Schedule

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