

# Residential Speed Limit Review – Speed Limit and Eligible Streets – Follow Up: Speed Watch Program

## ISSUE

The Administration was directed to investigate the costs, grant options, and feasibility of a Speed Watch program, with a plan to adopt such a program or carry out a limited pilot project to help assess its worth. In addition to a jurisdictional scan, the Administration has assessed its own programs to address speeding concerns.

## BACKGROUND

City Council, at its Regular Business Meeting held on September 27, 2021, considered the Residential Speed Limit Review – Speed Limit and Eligible Streets report, and resolved, in part:

- “1. That the Administration report back on the costs, grant options, and feasibility of a Speed Watch program, with a plan to adopt such a program or carry out a limited pilot project to help assess its worth;”

## CURRENT STATUS

Speed issues are addressed through engineering, education, and enforcement. A summary is provided in Appendix 1.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Speed Watch programs are one of the enforcement tools outlined in the Canadian Guide to Traffic Calming (Guide). Speed Watch is where volunteers from the community use radar equipment to monitor traffic and identify speeding vehicles and report them to the local police service. Letters may be sent to registered owners of speeding vehicles alerting them of their excessive speeding.

A jurisdictional scan was completed for various jurisdictions across Canada and the United Kingdom (UK). Eleven jurisdictions with a Speed Watch program were reviewed, six in Canada, and five in the UK. Although the Edmonton Speed Watch program was included in the review, it is no longer in operation.

### Program Administration

Based on the jurisdictions reviewed, the Speed Watch programs were typically administered by local policing agencies (eight out of 11). The City Administration was responsible for administering the Speed Watch program in two jurisdictions (Calgary, AB, and Sudbury, ON). A non-profit group administered the Speed Watch program with the support of the local policing agency in Surrey, BC. The Guide describes the Speed Watch program as being “run by the local police agency”.

In the UK, while many Speed Watch programs were administered by local policing agencies, three of the five jurisdictions required local council and/or community support for each speed watch location.

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In British Columbia, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) is a major partner of the Speed Watch program. ICBC helps coordinate the training for volunteers with the local policing agency, supplies equipment, determines location of speed watch sites, and collects data from volunteers.

### **Program Needs**

The Speed Watch programs reviewed identified several required elements to ensure success, including policing agency involvement, volunteers, equipment, and a defined process for selecting eligible locations.

Police Services: Based on the jurisdictional scan, the local policing agency involvement varied significantly with some police agencies not being involved while others were providing program administration. The various tasks of police responsibility include:

- Respond if there is a problem (i.e., call 911);
- Complete a risk assessment of the speed watch sites;
- Conduct enforcement downstream of speed watch sites;
- Provide on-site presence to ensure safety and no confrontational interactions;
- Train volunteers;
- Provide equipment;
- Send letters to speeding drivers; or
- Administer the program.

Volunteers: All Speed Watch programs are delivered by volunteers. Based on the programs reviewed, volunteers cannot be alone for any speed watch, and are either to be in groups of two-to-six or have police presence on site.

Volunteer responsibilities generally included the following tasks: set up and removal of a speed watch site, data collection, and driver feedback with a paddleboard or speed display board.

Training was provided by most of the jurisdictions reviewed (nine out of 11). Training ranged from simple training on how to use the equipment to multi-day training that included first aid training, bike training and collision response training.

Equipment: Standard equipment for Speed Watch programs include:

- Hand-held radar or speed display board;
- Personal protective equipment (safety vest);
- Recording equipment (app, paper forms, etc.);
- Signs and cones (as needed); and
- Paddle board for feedback (optional).

Location Selection: Determining a location for eligible speed watch sites was largely based on resident requests. Some of the elements that jurisdictions considered for acceptance of a resident's request for a speed watch site were:

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- Resident making request must complete speed watch themselves,
- Sites require council support,
- Sites require community support,
- Completion of a risk assessment of site by local policing agencies.

In British Columbia, the ICBC determines the locations of speed watch sites in collaboration with the local policing agency using ICBC crash maps, resident and community feedback, and police and municipal requests.

### **Program Outputs**

Many of the Speed Watch programs included collecting data or providing driver feedback as part of the program.

Data Collection: Nine of the jurisdictions reviewed collected data, which was provided to the city administration, local policing agencies, additional funding partners or made available to the public. The type of data collected included total number of vehicles, number of vehicles speeding, number of distracted drivers, and/or licence plate numbers for speeding vehicles.

The Guide recommends the speeds of passing vehicles be stored and analyzed so that municipalities can create a plan for additional speed limit enforcement or traffic calming measures based on the results. All five jurisdictions in the UK and two out of six jurisdictions in Canada collected licence plate information.

Driver Feedback: Providing drivers with feedback is a main component of most of the Speed Watch programs reviewed. The type of feedback provided to drivers can include speed display boards, paddle boards with messages, or letters from police informing the drivers of the consequences of speeding.

Seven of the jurisdictions reviewed provided speeders with letters from local policing agencies. Two of the jurisdictions provided drivers with instant feedback in the form of a “Slow Please/Thank you” paddle or a speed display board. Two jurisdictions did not provide drivers with any form of driver feedback.

Jurisdictions within British Columbia and Calgary did not provide speeders with letters from the local policing agency.

### **Program Funding**

Funding was based on the extent of the program and varied greatly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Generally, a Speed Watch program was considered low cost; with policing availability being a common limiting factor.

The ICBC is responsible for funding the Speed Watch program within the province of British Columbia. While only three jurisdictions were reviewed within the province of British Columbia, it is understood there are several jurisdictions in British Columbia that

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operate a Speed Watch program with the assistance of the ICBC. Some jurisdictions in British Columbia also receive funding from their city and sponsorship funding.

Additional details on the jurisdictional scan can be found in Appendix 2.

### **Pros and Cons**

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduction in speed commonly 1 to 3 km/h, some up to 8 km/h.</li><li>• Peer education of motoring public personalizes the speeding issue.</li><li>• Community engagement is a different way of changing driver behavior.</li><li>• Opportunity for citizens to calibrate their perception of speed.</li><li>• Data collected could be shared with community.</li><li>• Engages the community through the volunteers.</li><li>• High visibility of Speed Watch program may be enough for motorists to slow down.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drivers cannot be fined.</li><li>• Drivers may continue exceeding the speed limit.</li><li>• Requires community volunteers and commitment.</li><li>• Requires accurate notation of vehicle licence number.</li><li>• Not considered a long-term solution.</li><li>• Registered vehicle owners who receive letters may not be the high-speed driver.</li><li>• Program requires monitoring by staff to avoid potential abuse or harassment.</li><li>• More policing support is required for training and operation of the program.</li><li>• Local policing agencies are very busy, low availability.</li><li>• Volunteers may not understand intent of program, which is to slow drivers, not “catch speeders”.</li><li>• No objective way to assess success of program.</li><li>• Program has limited utility as it duplicates existing speed management programs.</li></ul>

While a pilot program may be technically feasible with adequate funding, the Administration suggests that it may have minimal benefit, considering the existing programs already in place to address speeding concerns. Additionally, the jurisdictional scan did not identify any metric for measuring the success of the program, so evaluating a pilot project would be difficult or very subjective. Finally, the hiring of temporary professional staff in the administration or police service to complete pilot projects can be difficult.

### **Preliminary Program Components and Feasibility Assessment**

The following outlines the necessary program components. Several would require further consideration to confirm their scope.

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Program Component		Considerations	Feasibility Assessment
Administration		<p>Eight of 11 jurisdictions administered by local policing agencies.</p> <p>In BC, the ICBC is major partner of the Speed Watch program.</p>	<p>The Saskatoon Police Service has indicated that they are unable to administer a Speed Watch program.</p> <p>SGI does not administer Speed Watch programs.</p> <p>The Administration would have to provide complete administration of the program; however, the Administration is unable to issue letters to vehicle owners.</p> <p>Potentially feasible, pending funding and resources.</p>
Needs	Police Services	<p>Local policing agency involvement varied significantly, with most jurisdictions having police involvement.</p> <p>There are numerous tasks a policing agency could provide.</p>	<p>The Administration suggests Saskatoon Police Service support would be required to help deliver a successful program; additional funding and perhaps staffing resources would be required to provide their services.</p> <p>Potentially feasible, pending funding and resources.</p>
	Volunteers	All Speed Watch programs are delivered by volunteers.	Feasibility is uncertain, the program would need to start and a call for volunteers sent out.
	Equipment	Standard equipment is required.	Feasible pending funding to perform this service.
	Location Selection	Determining location was largely based on resident requests.	
Outputs	Data Collection	Nine jurisdictions reviewed collected data.	Feasible pending funding to perform this service.
	Driver Feedback	<p>Providing feedback to drivers is a priority for Speed Watch programs.</p> <p>In seven jurisdictions reviewed, letters were provided by the local police agency. Calgary and BC jurisdictions do not.</p>	
Funding		<p>The costs consist of police services, equipment, data collection, providing driver feedback, and administration. No funding is currently available.</p> <p>A one-time grant of approximately \$25,000 may be available from SGI's Traffic Safety Fund Grant. This is uncertain; an application is required.</p> <p>The anticipated required annual funding is \$100,000 (\$20,000 in equipment and \$80,000 for an FTE) plus the cost of police services if they are able to provide support.</p>	<p>Transportation staff are committed to prior assigned work until the end of 2023. Two options are 1) report back with a list of initiatives that can be delayed until the next multi-year budget, to free up staff time to complete the development and delivery of the program, or 2) place this project on the Prioritized Transportation project list to be presented to City Council for their consideration in the next multi-year budget process.</p>

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

All funding costs are provided in the previous table above.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There is a safety risk to the volunteers. Volunteers positioned within the right-of-way are in a high-risk situation during the installation, removal, and duration of the Speed Watch program.

There is potential for actual or perceived intrusion of individual privacy with the Speed Watch program. The recording, accuracy, and retention of any private information (photos that could show faces of individuals) by volunteers would need to be addressed prior to the implementation of a Speed Watch program.

**NEXT STEPS**

The Administration will continue the existing engineering, education, and enforcement programs to address resident concerns with speeding.

No additional steps are planned by the Administration as direction from City Council is required.

**APPENDICES**

1. Current Status
2. Jurisdictional Scan

**Report Approval**

Written by: Katie Sapiuha, Transportation Engineer  
Nathalie Baudais, Senior Transportation Engineer

Reviewed by: David LeBoutillier, Engineering Manager, Transportation  
Jay Magus, Director of Transportation

Approved by: Angela Gardiner, General Manager, Utilities and Environment  
(for Terry Schmidt, General Manager, Transportation and Construction)