

Gateway Speed Limits in Residential Areas

Presented To:	Operations Committee
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Recommended by:	General Manager of Growth and Infrastructure

Report Summary

This report provides a recommendation regarding estimated costs and scope of a pilot project to implement gateway speed limits within each ward.

Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury directs staff to prepare a business case for consideration during the 2023 Budget process to fund the Gateway Speed Limit pilot project, as outlined in the report entitled “Gateway Speed Limits in Residential Areas”, from the General Manager of Growth and Infrastructure, as presented at the Operations Committee meeting on May 16, 2022.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report refers to the Create a Healthier Community strategic initiatives as identified in the Strategic Plan and Goal 8: Achieve 35% active mobility transportation mode share by 2050 in the Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

If approved, the Gateway Speed Limit pilot project would require \$72,000 of funding for the installation of the signs associated with the pilot project. Staff will submit a business case as part of the 2023 Budget to seek funding for this pilot project.

Background

At the September 2019 Operations Committee meeting, Transportation and Innovation Support staff brought a report which outlined a change in the Highway Traffic Act (HTA) to allow municipalities to post a lower speed limit for large sections of the municipality through the use of Gateway Speed Limit signs. Prior to this amendment, a municipality which wanted to post a speed limit other than 50 km/h for an area was required to

install speed limit signs on all roads within the area. With the amendment to the HTA, a municipality is now only required to post a new type of speed limit sign (Figure 1 below) at all the entrance/exit points to the area they have designated and the speed limit would apply to all roadways within the area. This change greatly reduce the number of required signs and associated costs to reduce the speed limit in a large area. For example, as noted in the 2019 report, staff had estimated to reduce the speed limit on all residential roads would require approximately 9,600 signs and approximately \$2.5 million (2014 estimate). With the amendment to the HTA, only 850 signs would be required at an estimated cost of \$320,000 (2019 estimate).



Figure 1 – Gateway Speed Limit Signs

At the September 2019 Operations Committee meeting, resolution OP2019-18 was passed. This resolution stated:

That the City of Greater Sudbury directs staff to prepare a report identifying the estimated cost and scope of a pilot study for the implementation of gateway speed limits in isolated areas within each ward and report back to committee in Q1 of 2020.

As noted in previous studies completed by staff, only changing the speed limit sign has limited impact on operating speeds. Staff have found that additional measures are required to have a lasting impact on operating speeds. These measures could include the Automated Speed Enforcement program, traffic calming or an expanded flexible bollard traffic calming program.

Analysis

While the change to the HTA may be applied to any type of road in the City, staff recommend Gateway Speed Limits only be considered on local and collector residential roads. In addition, in the event a school zone speed limit of 40 km/h falls within one of these designated areas, it is recommended that the school zone speed limit be reduced to 30 km/h. Further reducing school zone speed limits will reinforce to motorists that they are entering a school zone and extra caution is needed as they are more likely to encounter young children within the road. School zone speed limits of 30 km/h are being utilized by Ontario municipalities such as the City of Guelph, City of Hamilton, City of Mississauga and the City of Ottawa. As previously noted, staff anticipate that additional engineering and enforcement measures will be required to impact the operating speeds of vehicles.

In order to estimate the cost and scope of a pilot project for the implementation of Gateway Speed Limits, staff identified residential areas within each ward which have a history of resident speeding concerns or traffic calming requests. These areas were then reviewed for their suitability for Gateway Speed Limit signs.

Attachment 1 includes maps outlining the areas within each Ward which have been selected to estimate the cost and scope for the pilot project. These areas have been selected by staff based on the analysis described above.

In order to determine the effectiveness of Gateway Speed Limits, staff will complete pre and post implementation speed studies in each of the areas identified. The areas identified include school zones, permanent traffic calming measures and roads that will have the temporary flexible traffic calming bollards installed on a seasonal basis. Speed studies would be conducted in all of these areas to help understand how effective the Gateway Speed Limit signs are on their own and with the support of traffic calming measures.

Estimated Cost of Pilot Project

If approved, the pilot project can be implemented by utilizing existing City staff. In total, there are 174 sign locations and 14 school zones identified in Attachment 1. The implementation costs to install the signs required for the pilot project are estimated at \$72,000.

If the program were made permanent, the locations identified in Attachment 1 would require an increase to the annual sign maintenance budget of \$7,200.

Should the pilot project not be successful and the Gateway Speed Limit program not be adopted, the estimated total cost for the removal of the signs is \$26,500.

Next Steps

At the direction of City Council, staff will submit a business case to fund the pilot project as part of the 2023 Budget process.

The evaluation of the pilot project will require a significant number of speed studies to be completed across the community. While staff are working through a back log of traffic studies from the past two years, if funding is approved, it is anticipated that the pilot project studies can be completed during the 2023 and 2024 traffic count seasons. A report on the effectiveness of the pilot project with a recommendation on whether to continue the program would be provided to the Operations Committee in the third quarter of 2024.

In addition, if the pilot project and funding are approved, staff will work with the Ward Councilors to finalize the location of the Gateway Speed Limits signs within their respective wards.

Resources Cited

City of Greater Sudbury, Gateway Speed Limits in Residential Areas 2019,
Accessed online: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=2245>