



Town of Newmarket
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Speed Limit Policy Review – 30 km/h Limit Lorne Avenue Pilot Project Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2022-37

Department(s): Engineering Services

Author(s): M. Kryzanowski, Manager Transportation Services

Meeting Date: May 30, 2022

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Speed Limit Policy Review -30 km/h Limit – Lorne Avenue Pilot Project, dated May 30, 2022 be received; and,
2. That the speed limit on Lorne Avenue, between Eagle Street and Davis Drive, be reduced to 30 km/h as noted in Appendix A, and that Schedule VII (Speed Limits) of the Town's Traffic By-law 2011-24, as amended, be further amended to reflect this change; and,
3. That a Town-wide public input campaign be undertaken regarding the lowering of speed limits to 30 km/h on certain Town roads; and,
4. That Staff forward a report to Council once the Lorne Avenue pilot has been evaluated and the public input campaign is completed; and,
5. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend a speed limit change for Lorne Avenue between Davis Drive and Eagle Street, as part of the Traffic Calming Demonstration Project for the street. The report also outlines next steps into creating a speed limit policy for reducing the speed limit to 30 km/h on other streets throughout the Town.

Background

Lorne Avenue is a north-south residential minor collector road which intersects Davis Drive to the north and merges into Cane Parkway to the south. Through a multi-year construction plan, Lorne Avenue is being fully reconstructed from Davis Drive to Eagle Street. At the onset of the design process, it was determined that Lorne Avenue would be an excellent road where multiple traffic calming strategies could be included as a pilot “Traffic Calming Demonstration Project”. As such, a speed limit reduction to 30 km/h for the street was considered an essential part of the overall traffic calming pilot project.

Discussion

Until recently, the Highway Traffic Act only allowed 30 km/h speed limits to be implemented on streets that traversed parks, cemeteries or fairgrounds. In Newmarket, Bayview Parkway, from Heman Drive to Leslie Valley Drive and through George Richardson Park is the only street posted at 30 km/h, because it met the criterion of crossing through a park. The lowest speed limit for all remaining streets in Newmarket is 40 km/h, except for a few Town roads, mostly in industrial areas, that have a speed limit of 50 km/h.

The Highway Traffic Act was recently changed to allow municipalities to implement speed limits lower than 40 km/h on all municipal streets. Many municipalities, as part of their traffic calming mitigation measures and based on Vision Zero concepts, have utilized the lower speed limits on certain types of streets in particularly sensitive areas.

The key component in reducing a posted speed limit to 30 km/h is the nature and design of the street. Most Town residential roads have been designed to accommodate speeds of 50 or 60 km/h, which is a typical standard that has been used throughout Ontario. As a result, since the 1960’s, the Town has posted all residential streets at a maximum speed of 40 km/h, even though 50 km/h was the standard at the time (and still remains the current standard).

The lowering of speed limits helps somewhat in overall speed reduction. But without other traffic calming measures that include police speed enforcement, and because municipal streets were designed to accommodate higher speeds, many drivers will continue to drive at a speed that is comfortable to them instead of abiding by the posted speed limit.

A blanket speed limit reduction to 30 km/h for ALL Town roads is not considered to be a practical solution to speeding matters. A more effective strategy would be to use a 30 km/h speed limit on streets that meet specific criteria. For example, streets with enhanced conditions for speed reduction, such as a narrower paved surface, or bike lanes or other traffic calming measures on them, or those that are located in school zones, would make ideal candidates for speed limit reductions.

Lorne Avenue is being reconstructed with several traffic calming measures that include bike lanes, textured intersections, signage, and other features. The new bike lanes in particular, will physically reduce the width of vehicle travel lanes, thereby making it an ideal candidate to reduce the speed limit to 30 km/h (between Eagle Street and Davis Drive). As it will be closely monitored for the effects of the speed reduction, Lorne Avenue will become the test case to help staff develop and propose to Council a policy that will determine the future use of the 30 km/h speed limit zones within the Town.

As with any transportation policy, public consultation is an important component to help craft a Newmarket-specific policy. Therefore, a Town-wide public consultation, in addition to the monitoring activities of the pilot on Lorne Avenue, would be warranted. It should be noted that these activities could also lead to a review of the Town's current traffic calming policies, which may need to be updated.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the speed limit on Lorne Avenue, between Davis Drive and Eagle Street, be reduced to 30 km/h, and that Town staff develop a 30 km/h Speed Limit Policy by reviewing the results of the Lorne Avenue pilot project and through public consultation that would be done Town wide.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Speed Limit reduction (traffic calming) addresses the Council Strategic Pillar entitled "Safe Transportation (Streets)". More specifically, the project addresses the following priorities under the "Safe Transportation (Streets)" Strategic Pillar:

- ii) Continue to implement the traffic mitigation strategy and Active Transportation Plan and explore/advance an off-road Mulock multi-use path;
- v) Develop a 'complete street' design and construction/reconstruction methodology to support ongoing safe street initiatives and continue to explore design options related to speed reduction, where appropriate.

Consultation

Consultation for the specific speed limit reduction was undertaken as part of the Lorne Avenue public consultation process.

The 30 km/h Speed Limit Policy will have a separate public consultation that will be Town-wide.

Human Resource Considerations

None.

Budget Impact

The cost of additional signage has been factored into the capital cost of the Lorne Avenue reconstruction project.

The future report to Council on the 30 km/h Speed Limit Policy will outline additional costs and funding sources.

Attachments

Appendix A – Lorne Avenue 30km/h speed limit zone

Approval

Rachel Prudhomme, Director, Engineering Services

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services

Contact

For more information or questions regarding this report, please contact Mark Kryzanowski, Manager, Transportation Services, at 905-895-5193 extension 2508 or mkryzanowski@newmarket.ca