



Region of Waterloo

# Community Safety Zones

Transportation Services Department

August 13, 2024

# Background

From the February 7, 2023 Planning & Works Committee meeting:

Council directed staff to “*investigate the expansion of the Automated Speed Enforcement Program to include community safety zones, including to the entire Region.*”

# Community Safety Zones

From the Highway Traffic Act (HTA): *“214.1 (1) The council of a municipality may by by-law designate a part of a highway under its jurisdiction as a community safety zone if, in the council’s opinion, public safety is of special concern on that part of the highway. 1998, c. 6, s. 1.”*



# Region-Wide Community Safety Zone?

Staff advise against designating the entire Region as a Community Safety Zone for the following reasons:

1. Does not comply with the HTA definition
2. Diminishes a public safety tool by losing its intended effect
3. Ineffective without supplementary measures (such as physical roadway changes or Automated Speed Enforcement).
  - Can result in additional resource pressure on Waterloo Region Police Services

Staff advise that [the Region should designate Community Safety Zones only in priority locations around the Region.](#)

# Priority Locations for Community Safety Zones

Staff engaged a transportation consulting engineering firm to help us develop a warrant for identifying the appropriate locations for Community Safety Zones.

The process involved the following steps:

1. Review best practices and strategies adopted for Community Safety Zones by other Ontario municipalities;
2. Develop a warrant suitable for Region of Waterloo roadways; and
3. Test the practicality of the warrant versus a handful of prospective locations around the Region.

# Warrant for Community Safety Zones

From this collaborative work, staff recommend the adoption of a two-step Region of Waterloo Community Safety Zone warrant.



**Step 1: Eligibility Assessment**



**Step 2: Points-Based Risk Factor Assessment**

# Step 1: Eligibility Assessment

## A location would be deemed eligible if:

- ✓ Adjacent land use that is pedestrian-focused (elementary and high schools, parks, playgrounds, community centres, hospitals, daycare centres, senior centres, and senior residences);
- ✓ Speed limit is 60 km/h or less and there is poor speed compliance;
- ✓ Appropriate speed limit with no other traffic calming measures present or planned; and
- ✓ Physically allows for a Municipal Speed Camera.

# Step 2: Points-Based Risk Factor Assessment

**A points-based assessment that quantifies the risks associated with:**

- Average daily traffic volumes (more traffic = higher risk);
- Pedestrian volumes (more pedestrian volumes = higher risk);
- Presence of pedestrian-generating facilities, such as schools, community centres, parks or hospitals (more community facilities = higher risk);
- Presence of heavy trucks along the roadway (higher truck percentage = higher risk);
- Observed traffic speed (higher speeds = higher risk);
- Collision history (higher history of collisions = higher risk);
- Frequency of intersections & accesses (more intersections = higher risk); and
- Presence of sidewalks (no sidewalks = higher risk).



# Community Safety Zones & Municipal Speed Cameras

To ensure that each Community Safety Zone designation is effective at achieving the associated road safety goals, **staff recommends that new Community Safety Zone designations are only implemented in parallel with (and at the same time as) the activation of Municipal Speed Cameras.**



# New Program Name

Moving forward, the Region has adopted the **Municipal Speed Camera** name to replace "Automated Speed Enforcement".

- Clear and plain language
- Communicates purpose and focus on intended outcome (i.e. reducing speed, safer municipalities)
- Increases familiarity/recognition for road users by using the same wording as what is used on provincially mandated road signage for school zones and community safety zones



# Community Safety Zones & School Zones

Staff recommends adding a Community Safety Zone designation at any School Zone along a Regional roadway where a Municipal Speed Camera is in use. The new Community Safety Zone warrant will also help identify which Regional School Zones should be eligible for a Municipal Speed Camera.



# Why layer Community Safety Zones onto School Zones?

1. Safer roads near all schools (even when certain roadways do not meet the Highway Traffic Act definition for a School Zone)
2. Ensuring a consistent, best practice approach aligned with other Ontario Municipalities
3. With the new Administrative Penalties program (in accordance with the Highway Traffic Act), speeding fines from Municipal Speed Cameras would be doubled regardless of where the infraction occurs – prioritizing safer roads for everyone.
  - The Community Safety Zone signage (with the "Fines Increased" notice) would provide clear communication to the public around the expectations for traffic infractions; and
4. If the Municipal Speed Camera program expands beyond school areas in the future, it's important to ensure all sites look the same for the program to operate effectively.

# Summary of Recommendations

From this work, staff have identified 4 recommendations for Regional Council

1. Adopt the Two-Step Region of Waterloo Community Safety Zone Warrant, as outlined in Report TSD-TRP-24-0XX;
2. Direct staff to identify which Regional School Zones should have a Community Safety Zone designation added in parallel with the Municipal Speed Camera changes planned for late 2024;
3. Adopt the strategy of utilizing a Community Safety Zone designation at all School Zones along regional roadways that are to be equipped with a Municipal Speed Camera in the future; and
4. Direct staff to use the newly adopted Community Safety Zone warrant to identify a comprehensive list of prospective Community Safety Zones along regional roads (including those not centred around a School Zone) and report back to Council with options for implementing those Community Safety Zones, including associated impacts to the staffing and resources for the Region's Municipal Speed Camera program

**Staff anticipate that it will take 6-9 months to identify a comprehensive list of possible Community Safety Zones around the Region.**

# Implications for Area Municipalities

- The warrant and subsequent recommendations developed for this report are **applicable for regional roadways only**.
- It is staff's opinion that consistency across all roadways in the Region (regardless of jurisdiction) would be best for the integrity of the Region's Municipal Speed Camera program.
- Following direction from Council, regional staff will work with staff from the Area Municipalities to develop a plan for the potential use of Community Safety Zones on City and Township roads.

# Questions?

For follow-up, please reach out to:

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