



The Corporation of the District of Saanich | Mayor's Office

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October 2, 2020

Dear Regional Mayors,

Since my last letter of March 11, 2020, significant progress has been made on developing the parameters for the pilot project that would set the default speed limit to 40 km/h on streets without a continuous yellow center line.

Broad stakeholder engagement began in September to raise awareness and engage local and regional stakeholders in dialogue to inform the pilot application. I am pleased to have Saanich leading this, in collaboration with participating municipalities, on behalf of the region.

Over 60 diverse stakeholders with interests in transportation, road safety, community well-being, and accessibility are being engaged across the region. These include the CRD Traffic Safety Commission, police agencies and emergency services, school districts and parent advisory councils, active transportation groups, road safety partners, ICBC, and other government agencies, such as BC Transit and the Capital Regional District. The District of Saanich is leading engagement with regional stakeholders and each respective participating municipality is undertaking engagement at a local level within their municipality. Communications materials have been provided to our other municipal partners to support consistent and coordinated communications and engagement efforts across the Region.

It is too early to report on the full results of engagement, but conversations to date have been generally positive with many stakeholders such as the CRD Traffic Safety Commission, Walk on Victoria, Greater Victoria Transit Alliance, ICBC and BC Transit indicating interest and support for the pilot project. Other stakeholders have indicated support for the project but have provided feedback wishing to see a more aggressive approach to set the default speed limit on roads without a continuous yellow centre line to 30 km/h instead of the proposed 40 km/h. A meeting with local Police Chiefs garnered some excellent questions about what data exists to support the current direction of the Pilot Project and I am pleased to share some of the data below. All of the input received will help us shape an application and implementation plan that is informed by our community.

Research shows that vehicle speeds are the fundamental factor in crash severity, with the risk of death and injury increasing as travel speeds increase. A pedestrian hit at 30 km/h has a 90% chance of surviving, while at 50 km/h or greater, they have only a 20% chance of surviving. Evidence also shows that small reductions in speeds can result in significant safety gains. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) [Highway Safety](#)

[Manual](#) states that a 1.6 km/h reduction in operating speeds can result in a 17% decrease in fatal collisions.

There is evidence for the effectiveness of reducing speed limits. NACTO's recent document [City Limits – Setting Safe Speed Limits on Urban Streets](#) provides evidence that speed limit reductions alone (even in the absence of complementary engineering interventions) can reduce speeds and crashes, stating: "A growing body of research shows that speed limit changes alone can lead to measurable declines in speeds and crashes, even absent enforcement or engineering changes."

Speed limit reductions are relatively new to Canada although many cities across Canada have reduced posted speed limits on local and/or residential roads (e.g. Ottawa, Montreal, [Mississauga](#), and [Hamilton](#)) and many others are actively pursuing these initiatives (such as [Vancouver](#), [Edmonton](#), [Toronto](#), and [Calgary](#)).

Data on Canadian outcomes is limited. However, international results demonstrate that reducing residential area speed limits is an important tool in an overall program to enhance road safety. Some examples of speed limit reductions and their effectiveness, are included in the City of Calgary's [Report to the City's Standing Policy on Transportation and Transit](#), and are summarized below. This report also includes additional scientific literature on this topic that may be of interest.

- **The Netherlands:** 75% of residential streets have speed limits of 30 km/h or less, and this has resulted in an average decrease in injuries of 25%.
- **London, England:** More than 400 'Neighbourhood Slow Zones' where the posted speed is 30 km/h have been implemented since 2001. Since that time, serious traffic injuries and fatalities have fallen by 46% within the zones and deaths and serious injuries sustained by children have decreased 50%.
- **Boston:** The City lowered the default speed limit on all streets to 30 km/h and found that the likelihood of a vehicle exceeding 50 km/h fell by 29.3%. Studies on injuries and fatalities have not yet been conducted, though fatalities appear to have dropped by half.
- **New York City:** The City has developed a community-based slow zone program to 40 km/h, along with traffic calming investments and increased enforcement, which has resulted in a 10-15% decrease in speeds, and a 44% reduction in collisions resulting in serious injuries and fatalities. In areas where safety infrastructure investments were made, fatalities have fallen by 34%.
- **Seattle:** All local neighbourhood streets were lowered to 30 km/h, and collector streets were lowered to 40 km/h in 2016. A spot improvement traffic calming budget accompanied the rollout. Speed limits were lowered from 50 km/h to 40 km/h without extensive traffic calming. For the speed limit reductions on collector roadways, collisions were reduced by 22%, injuries by 18%, and high-end speeders by 52%.
- **Toronto:** Researchers at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children found measurable safety gains after Toronto lowered speed limits from 40 km/h to 30 km/h on a number of local streets, including a 28% decrease in the number of collisions between pedestrians and motor vehicles and a 67% decline in the number of fatal and serious injuries on streets with speed limit reductions.

Based on the experience of other communities, the evidence suggests these programs are effective in reducing speeds along with reductions in collisions and injuries. It is recognized that most collisions resulting in fatalities and serious injuries occur on major roadways, particularly at intersections. Reducing the speed limit on residential roads is not intended to take the focus away from safety improvements and enforcement at these high collision locations.

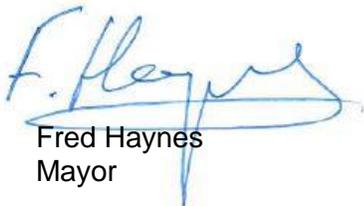
The pilot program is a complementary initiative that can be implemented at relatively low cost and would apply to the majority of roadways throughout participating municipalities in the Capital Region. For context, from 2015 – 2019 in the District of Saanich alone there were on average 254 reported collisions per year on local roads (approximately 11.5% of all reported collisions). Of these collisions occurring on local roads, approximately 28% (or 70 collisions) resulted in injury or fatality. Based on the [average cost per collision information published by MOTI](#), collisions on local roads in Saanich represents a total societal cost of approximately \$24 million per year.

In addition to a reduction in these societal costs, reduced speeds on local roads can also bring a number of broader benefits in terms of overall community benefits and changes in driver behaviour by raising the importance and awareness of reducing speeds.

In October or November staff from each of our municipalities will be bringing forward a Council update which will ask your Councils for a motion to participate in a joint application. Unfortunately, the unexpected Provincial Election has impacted the project schedule and we will not see the application period for these Pilot Projects open in late October as initially anticipated. It will take some time for the new government to form and set their priorities before potentially opening the application period, so for now we should expect a 3-6 month delay in the potential implementation as a result of the election.

I look forward to your continued support of this project

Sincerely,



Fred Haynes
Mayor