



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

770 Vernon Avenue Victoria BC V8X 2W7 | T 250-475-5510 | F 250-475-5440 | www.saanich.ca

October 30, 2020

Dear Mayor,

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on Saanich Councils' recent consideration of an update report on the proposed speed limit reduction pilot program. I understand that your Council may also be considering a similar report in the near future.

We are very pleased to share that on October 19th, Saanich Council voted unanimously to support the recommendation to proceed with the speed limit reduction pilot application. Council was very pleased with the level of technical and planning analysis that has occurred to date, as well as the healthy dialogue that has been generated by the ongoing stakeholder engagement. We continue to believe that the pilot will improve community livability and safety, and support the most vulnerable road users, those who walk, bike and use mobility aids, while also providing the opportunity for additional monitoring, stakeholder engagement, and data collection. Should you have any questions about our recent Council discussion, I welcome you to review our [recent webcast](#).

The coordinated stakeholder engagement that is underway across the Region has generated tremendous input thus far. I believe it has already strengthened our implementation planning and will inform our application to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

At the **municipal level** there is a strong recognition that the pilot program presents us with an excellent learning opportunity that will inform future decision-making around permanent changes to reduced speed limits. Questions have been raised about impacts on congestion and commute times, existing roads with lower speed limits, and costs. Below I've summarized some information around each topic as I believe they are pertinent questions for everyone.

Congestion and Commute Times

The majority of residential roads (local roads without a continuous yellow centreline) experience less than 2000 vehicles per day with an average of 300-500 vehicles per day. These are considered low volume roads with little to no congestion. A change in the traffic speed is not expected to increase congestion for these roads. Generally congestion is governed by intersection capacity and not vehicle speed.

In terms of commute times, the majority of the commuting public travel on collectors, majors, and highways when traveling to their destination. Residential roads represent a small fraction of a commuting trip. Even though a lower speed limit is being suggested for residential roads, our data shows many drivers already drive at 40kmh or less for these roads. As such, a lower speed limit for residential roads is not expected to change the commuting times.

Existing Roads with Lower Speed Limits

Roads that have been previously signed with lower speed limits including school zones and playground zones would maintain their regulatory speeds. The Speed Reduction Pilot would only lower speeds for existing residential roads that operate at the default municipal 50km/h speed limit.

Costs

The implementation and monitoring costs for the pilot program are not known at this time but they are expected to be relatively low compared with societal benefits the pilot offers. This initiative is the least expensive way to increase livability of our streets compared with infrastructure costs to build more pedestrian and cycling infrastructure or conventional speed reduction that requires signage for every block. A relatively minor investment in this pilot will create cost saving opportunities such as reduced societal costs resulting from collisions, reduced health care costs due to improved social and physical well-being of our residents, and reduced climate change costs as a result of increased modes of active transportation.

From our **police agencies** we've heard they are concerned with enforceability, signage, data collection, and effectiveness of lowered speed limits. The District of Saanich Police Board shared these concerns but were also confident in our ability to address them and has since shown strong policy direction and support for the speed reduction pilot. In order to support you in your respective discussions, I have briefly addressed these concerns below but would be happy to provide more detailed information upon request.

Enforceability: As this is a pilot project that will be conducted in partnership with the Provincial Government and should the pilot be approved, appropriate changes to the Motor Vehicle Act will be in place to ensure that the regulatory change is enforceable. We are confident the Province will undertake its due diligence with a legal opinion to ensure that the pilot projects are enforceable and that the MVA is worded accordingly. At the same time, should the pilot be approved, we continue to look to our Police agencies to prioritize and tailor their police response to the needs of the community as they always have.

Signage: The technical working group and planning consultants continue to confirm the signage and resource requirements to support the pilot, however at a minimum, we understand 'gateway' signage will be required at all entry and exit points to participating municipalities to inform motorists of the change in default speed limit. As such, whenever a motorist enters a jurisdiction that has a different default speed limit, signage will ensure motorists are aware of this speed limit. This signage will be reinforced with changes to the BC MVA regulations to provide the legal framework to ensure the enforceability of the reduced speed limits in participating municipalities. Consistency throughout the region would be beneficial.

Data collection: As part of the project application, a comprehensive data collection and evaluation framework has also been developed. This data collection and evaluation framework is critical as part of the BC MVA pilot project, since pilot projects are intended to research, test, and evaluate new regulatory approaches to matters not currently set out in the MVA framework.

The evaluation framework includes a before-and-after research study design and includes a number of primary and secondary indicators. The primary indicator focuses on traffic speeds, with the evaluation framework focused on assessing the change in operating speeds before, during, and upon completion of the pilot project. This includes collecting baseline data before pilot project implementation, collecting ongoing data during the three-year pilot project on an annual basis, and collecting post-pilot project data. For each period, this will include a rigorous data collection process involving collecting speed data at approximately 70 locations across the region, in addition to control sites. Count locations will be selected to ensure a range of different contexts are considered in the research design based on land use, road network, and demographic characteristics. This data will allow for statistical analyses to result in a statistically significant

comparison of before-and-after operating speeds at each location, a review of the effectiveness of the speed limit reduction in different contexts, and a comparison between sites that have had a reduced speed limit and other control sites that have not had a change in speed limits.

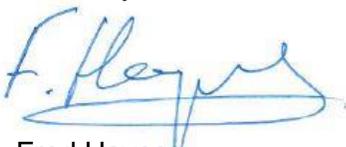
Collision data is a secondary indicator for this study, as the time period for the pilot project will not provide sufficient data to obtain an adequate sample size of collision data. Typically, at least 5 years of collision data would be required. Instead, traffic speed data will be used a surrogate measure for safety in the short-term in the 3-year pilot project. For collision data we've spoken with ICBC about obtaining their collision data and engaging in a partnership to study and review the data.

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

- **Seattle:** All residential 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 residential 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.

In closing, together, we are collectively advancing a necessary dialogue within our community, amongst our key partners and stakeholders, and between our respective municipalities. Saanich Council and the Police Board are extremely pleased to see the on-going collaboration across our municipal borders and is pleased to continue to lead this initiative and application. We are hopeful your Council will consider this pilot with the same enthusiasm and interest in improving our road safety for all users. A coordinated and sustained partnership across our municipalities will lend even greater ability for us to collectively improve road safety and community well-being, across the Capital Region.

Sincerely,



Fred Haynes
Chair, Saanich Police Board
Mayor, District of Saanich

c. Saanich Police Board
Saanich Council
Paul Thorkelsson, CAO
Harley Machielse, Director of Engineering