



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

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Sent via email: [Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca)

March 4, 2021

The Honourable Rob Fleming, M.L.A.  
Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure  
PO Box 9055 Prov Stn Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Fleming:

**Re: Modernizing the Motor Vehicle Act**

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I write to you today to ask for your leadership in advancing Motor Vehicle Act pilot projects for road safety improvements across the Province of British Columbia. In late 2019 I wrote to Premier Horgan to ask for action to update and modernize the BC Motor Vehicle Act. This ask was multi-faceted, but had a specific focus on lowering the default speed limit on residential roads. Reducing speed limits has many benefits, including reducing vehicle operating speeds, improving road safety, and improving neighbourhood livability. It can have significant safety benefits in terms of fewer collisions as well as less severe collisions when they do occur. Speeding is a significant contributing factor to collisions and traffic-related injuries and fatalities. In British Columbia, speeding has been a contributing factor in nearly 30% of traffic-related fatalities over the past 10 years.

Minister Trevena responded at that time with the excellent suggestion that Saanich pursue a pilot project for speed limit reductions under the Motor Vehicle Act pilot project program. As a result, the District of Saanich is leading the development of a regional application for reducing the speed limits on roads without a continuous yellow centerline to 40km/h. Recognizing the regional importance of the issue and to maintain consistency across the region, Saanich has requested partnership from all other municipalities throughout the Capital Region to have them join this proposal and pilot project. To date Saanich, Central Saanich, North Saanich, Sidney, Oak Bay, and Esquimalt have elected to participate in the regional pilot. The District of Saanich undertook stakeholder consultation with over 30 regional stakeholders such as BC Transit, ICBC, regional police, and school districts. Many of which indicated support for the pilot. In addition, the CRD's Traffic Safety Commission recently expressed its support for the 40km/h default speed pilot project. It's evident there is significant interest in the region to apply for a speed limit reduction pilot.

We came to understand after conversations with Ministry staff that the appropriate avenue for speed limit reductions under the Motor Vehicle Act pilot project program, would be as part of the Phase 2 intake which was expected in the fall of 2020 prior to the Provincial Election.

Understandably the election has caused some delay in launching the Phase 2 pilot project, but we hope with your leadership it can be prioritized within your Ministry to allow these important projects to proceed.

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. As an example in Seattle, speed limits were lowered to 40 km/h in 2016 without extensive traffic calming measures. As a result collisions were reduced by 22%, injuries by 18%, and high-end speeders by 52%.

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 your Ministry, collisions on local roads in Saanich alone represents a total societal cost of approximately \$24 million per year.

The regional interest in collaborating on a speed limit reduction pilot program and the potential for these types of projects being acceptable applications to the Motor Vehicle Act pilot project program provides a unique opportunity for local governments in the Capital Region to reduce speed limits through a consistent, coordinated, and consultative approach.

Saanich Council and our staff are ready to proceed with this work and I would be grateful if you could ensure that the Phase 2 Motor Vehicle Act pilot project program advances this spring and that Ministry staff reach out to our staff here at Saanich to connect on the appropriate next steps.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With hope,



Fred Haynes  
Mayor  
Enclosures

cc: Saanich Council  
Paul Thorkelsson, CAO, District of Saanich  
Harley Machielse, Director of Engineering, District of Saanich