

Subject: Community Safety Zones

Staff Report No. EPW-016-24

**Department/
Commission:** Engineering and Public Works Commission

Date: September 25, 2024

Recommendation:

- 1) That Council direct staff to proceed with the amendments to the Community Safety Zones on Town roads adjacent to all existing schools and select parks in Stouffville; and
- 2) That Council direct staff to amend Traffic By-law 2008-147-TR; and
- 3) That Council delegate authority to the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works to submit by-laws to amend Traffic By-law 2008-147-TR in accordance with the Community Safety Zone criteria; and
- 4) That Council direct staff to request that York Regional Police maintain a sustained enforcement program for all existing and new Community Safety Zones in Stouffville.

Report Highlights:

Community Safety Zones are sections of roadways where public safety is of special concern and traffic offences are subject to double the fines. The Highway Traffic Act permits municipalities to establish Community Safety Zones on public roads under their jurisdiction. The intent of these zones is to modify driver behaviour and increase safety for all road users, particularly vulnerable road users like children.

Staff are recommending Schedule XVIII (Community Safety Zones) be amended to include additional Community Safety Zones and expand the scope of the existing zones on major Town roads adjacent to existing schools and select parks. This includes sections of Main Street, Millard Street, Hoover Park Drive, Reeves Way Boulevard, Glad Park Avenue, Sunset Boulevard, Greenwood Road and Forsythe Farm Drive which have been determined to be areas of speeding.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the proposed implementation of additional Community Safety Zones for roads adjacent to all existing schools and select parks in Stouffville and the amendment of By-Law 2008-147-TR (Community Safety Zones).

2. Background:

Community Safety Zone legislation was introduced by the Province of Ontario in 1998. In May 2012, York Regional Council approved a policy to designate Community Safety Zones in all school areas on the Regional road network. There are currently five Community Safety Zones located on Regional roads in Stouffville.

Regional Community Safety Zone Locations in Stouffville	
School	Regional Road Frontage
Whitchurch Highlands Public School	Bloomington Road
Ballantrae Public School	Aurora Road
Glad Park Public School	Ninth Line
St. Brendan Catholic School	Ninth Line
Blessed Chiara Badano Catholic School and St. Katherine Drexel Catholic School	Ninth Line

The Town introduced Community Safety Zones in 2019. Staff recommends amending the Community Safety Zones to broaden the scope of the zones. There are eleven (11) primary and secondary public schools that Community Safety Zones are currently applied to, which are summarized as follows:

Community Safety Zone Locations	
School	Road Frontage
Summitview Public School	Main Street & Stouffer Street
Wendat Public School	Reeves Way Blvd.
Glad Park Public School	Glad Park Ave. & Ninth Line
St. Mark Catholic School	Glad Park Ave.
St Brendan Catholic School	Hoover Park Drive
Harry Bowes Public School	Greenwood Road
Oscar Peterson Public School	Hoover Park Drive
St Bridgid Catholic School	Millard Street

Barbara Reid Public School	Hoover Park Drive & Yakefarm Boulevard
Ecole Catholique Pape-Francois	Sunset Blvd.
Stouffville District Secondary School	Hoover Park Drive

The York Catholic District School Board opened Blessed Chiara Badano Catholic School and St. Katherin Drexel Catholic High School earlier this year. Staff have reviewed creating a Community Safety Zone on Meridian Drive as part of this review.

3. Analysis:

Community Safety Zones are road segments where safety is of special concern, and the fines for most moving violations have been doubled. These moving violations include speeding, stop sign and traffic signal compliance, careless driving, failing to yield, etc. The goal of a Community Safety Zone is to improve road safety on a roadway by modifying driver behaviour and encouraging compliance with traffic By-laws.

In a Community Safety Zone, traffic laws remain the same, but fines for offences within the Highway Traffic Act may be doubled at the discretion of the police officer. Parking fines and demerit points can not be increased within a Community Safety Zone.

3.1 Jurisdiction

On September 1, 1998, the Highway Traffic Act was amended to permit municipalities to establish Community Safety Zones on public roads under their jurisdiction. Section 214.1 (1) of The Highway Traffic Act states:

“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.”

For the Community Safety Zones to be enforceable, signs denoting the zones must be erected in accordance with appropriate regulations.

3.2 Application

The Provincial guidelines specifically mention, but do not require or limit the application of Community Safety Zones to roads contiguous to schools, retirement facilities and community centres.

School children are generally viewed as representing the youngest and most vulnerable road user group. In keeping with Council’s resolution and considering that overuse of the Community Safety Zones designation could become counter-productive to the goal of increased traffic and pedestrian safety, staff recommend limiting application to existing schools and select parks at this time. Only existing community parks and neighborhood

parks will be reviewed. The criteria may be expanded, in the future, to include other public facilities (such as new schools, retirement facilities and community centres).

In many cases these schools and parks are flanked by more than one road. The 'Main Frontages' identified above are typically roads that are of a sufficient length and geometry that enable speeding.

Secondary flanking roads often have speeds that are inherently lower due to the geometry of the road (i.e., not straight) or short segment length. These roads are not conducive to successful Community Safety Zones. The benefit of Community Safety Zones is maximized by limiting their quantity and ensuring their placement in areas of most significant concern.

If Council supports the amendments outlined in this report, staff will prepare an amendment to By-law 2019-009-TR that specifies all roads that are deemed appropriate for Community Safety Zone implementation.

3.3 Signage and By-law Requirements

In accordance with Sections 214.1 (4) and (5) of the Highway Traffic Act, Community Safety Zone designations do not take effect and are not enforceable until a municipal By-law is in place and the required signs are posted.

The By-law is required to specify the spatial limits of each Community Safety Zone, as well as the hours, days and months when the designation is in effect. Unlike School Zones, there is no measurement limitation on the area that can be defined if Council's opinion is that public safety is of special concern on that part of the roadway.

The road user is made aware of the existence of a Community Safety Zone through regulatory signs posted at a minimum at the start and end of the zone. The standard signs appear as follows:



Implementing a Community Safety Zone requires no physical modifications to the roadway. They are therefore considered an enforcement and education tool rather than an engineering tool.

3.4 Effectiveness

Enforcement

As with other roadway regulations, the effectiveness of Community Safety Zone designations on driver behaviour and traffic safety is to a large extent a function of the level of enforcement provided. The ability of York Regional Police to effectively enforce moving offences should be taken into consideration to make a Community Safety Zone a successful traffic safety tool. Enforcement plays an important role in road safety for two reasons. First, the response to an improper behaviour is immediate correction; second, the response is specifically directed to the road user responsible for the unsafe behaviour (as opposed to road design or education which are broad-based in their targets).

Education

To derive the greatest potential benefit from Community Safety Zones, it is important to advise residents of the purpose and implications of these zones within the Town. If the amendments to the Community Safety Zone program are implemented, Engineering and Public Works will work with Corporate Communications to formulate a communication plan that will coordinate with York Regional Police and include use of the Town's website, social media, 'burst' signage, and other communications tools as appropriate.

Statistical Data

A 2014 York Region Council report summarizes the findings of a review completed by the Region to determine the effectiveness of Community Safety Zones in York Region. Nine evaluation sites were selected from geographically diverse locations within the Region, including one site in Stouffville on Ninth Line at St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School.

At each of the nine evaluation sites, monthly speed studies were conducted within and adjacent to the Community Safety Zone for a period of one year to analyze the impact on average operating speed. In addition, the data collected within the Community Safety Zones was compared with studies conducted prior to their implementation.

The results of the speed study analysis indicate that there is an overall average reduction in driving speeds of approximately 3 km/h within Community Safety Zones.

Other studies have been inconclusive or shown no benefits, however the prevalence of Community Safety Zones is increasing, and studies are generally considered to be in their infancy.

3.5 Stakeholder Consultation

York Regional Police (YRP) support Community Safety Zones and find them to be a useful tool for encouraging motorists to drive safely. YRP strives to provide consistent enforcement levels, and in co-operation with Regional staff, continue to raise awareness and provide education of Community Safety Zones through various outreach programs and campaigns.

York Region District School Board and York Catholic District School Board are also supportive of Community Safety Zones as a measure to help keep school neighbourhoods safe for students.

3.6 Main Street Focus Area

Based on resident concerns that were raised, from Park Drive to Tenth Line, staff placed radar speed signs to determine the prevalence of speeding in this area, and to determine any options for improvements if deemed necessary.

The speed limit on this segment of Main Street is 40 kilometers per hour. Radar speed sign implementation was undertaken with equipment that captured westbound vehicular speed data at Main Street and Spring Street. Eastbound radar speed signs captured eastbound vehicular speed data at Main Street and Pine Street.

The data indicates that speeding was common on this segment of Main Street during the study period. Maximum daily speeds occasionally exceeded 70 km/hr. Weekly average westbound speeds ranged from 40 to 50 km/hr. Weekly average eastbound speeds ranged from 40 to 50 km/hr.

3.7 Options for Implementing the amended Community Safety Zones at all Schools

This option would implement Community Safety Zones along Town roads adjacent to all existing schools as well as all existing community and neighborhood parks. This option represents a rational implementation plan that would be consistent and predictable for motorists and enforceable by York Regional Police.

This option also includes the implementation of Community Safety Zones for future schools, parks and other public facilities as they become operational and would allow for implementation on roads that indicate significant speeding. The delegated authority being sought for the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works will allow for an efficient implementation of future Community Safety Zone locations. The table below summarizes the proposed locations:

Community Safety Zone Locations	
Location	Road Frontage
Barbara Reid Public School	Hoover Park Drive & Yakefarm Boulevard
Blessed Chiara Badano Catholic School	Meridian Drive
Byer's Pond Park	Hoover Park Drive
Ecole Catholique Pape-Francois	Sunset Blvd.
Felcher Park	Felcher Blvd
Gar Lehman Park	Gar Lehman Avenue
Glad Park Public School	Glad Park Ave. & Ninth Line
Greenwood Park	Greenwood Road
Harry Bowes Public School	Greenwood Road
Madori Park	Millard Street
Memorial Park	Park Drive
Oscar Peterson Public School	Hoover Park Drive
Royal Cachet Montessori School	Mostar Street
Rupert Park	Rupert Avenue
St Brendan Catholic School	Hoover Park Drive
St Bridgid Catholic School	Millard Street
St. Mark Catholic School	Glad Park Ave.
Stouffville District Secondary School	Hoover Park Drive
Summitview Public School	Main Street & Stouffer Street
Wendat Public School	Reeves Way Blvd.
Wheeler's Mill Park	Mostar Street

4. Financial Implications:

Each Community Safety Zone will require new signage at the beginning and end of the zone as per the Highway Traffic Act. Given the requirements, each school/park location would require a minimum of 6 signs (i.e. 3 per direction) and additional signs mid-block depending on the length of the defined segment. In summary, each CSZ location will require approximately 16 signs and pavement markings to advise motorists. The cost of the material needed for each CSZ location is approximately \$3,500 which would be funded from an Engineering and Public Works operating account.

5. Alignment with Strategic Plan:

1. A Town that Grows
A Town that grows in support of complete communities
2. A Town that Moves
Improve the condition and efficiency of the local road network while addressing connectivity and advancing active transportation facilities
3. A Safe Town
Make our community safer

6. Attachments:

Attachment No. 1 - Existing Community Safety Zones
Attachment No. 2 - Proposed Amended Community Safety Zones
Attachment No. 3 - Community Safety Zone Criteria

7. Related Reports:

January 22, 2019 – PW-001-19 Traffic By-law Amendments for Implementation of Community Safety Zones in Various School Zones and Stop Signs at the Intersection of Burkholder Street and Franklin Street (T08)

<https://whitchurch.civicweb.net/FileStorage/C91F5ACE5D7740AD85FC6CB955823D4E-PW-001-19%20-%20Traffic%20By-law%20Amendments.pdf>

August 28, 2018 – PW-028-18 Community Safety Zones and Main Street Traffic Study

<https://whitchurch.civicweb.net/FileStorage/7143F9F3EE3748D392EA881346D7BD97-PW-028-18%20-%20Community%20Safety%20Zones.pdf>

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