

# DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

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**Title:** Traffic Calming Policy - Update on Review

**Date Prepared:** March 16, 2021

**Report To:** Committee of the Whole

**Councillor and Role:** Councillor Ian Froude, Transportation and Regulatory Services & Sustainability

**Ward:** N/A

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## **Decision/Direction Required:**

A review of the City's Traffic Calming Policy is underway. Prior to preparing a public engagement strategy staff have developed a set of changes recommended for consideration. Staff are seeking approval from Council for the planned areas of policy change prior to public engagement.

## **Discussion – Background and Current Status:**

The [Traffic Calming Policy](#) and the associated [Traffic Calming Warrant](#) was developed by a consultant for the City and was completed in 2011. They were designed to manage the requests to slow vehicle traffic, reduce non-local traffic, and/or correct or improve perceived safety concerns in the street network.

It is important to note that projects which fall under the Traffic Calming Policy are fundamentally neighbourhood driven projects. Council has chosen to spend discretionary funds to try and address concerns raised by residents. The policy creates a framework to prioritize these projects and select appropriate interventions, but the demand for these projects originates with local residents.

Council considered a [Traffic Calming Policy Overview](#) in summer of 2020. Following this Council requested that the policy be reviewed to address points of common difficulty and improve the policy overall. Transportation Engineering and the Office of the City Clerk have since initiated a full policy review.

On December 9, 2020 Council considered a [discussion on the policy review](#). The goal of this discussion was to gather feedback from Council on how the policy could be updated to better reflect current priorities. This feedback has been considered by staff and the resulting recommended policy changes are discussed below. Changes are divided into two major categories: substantive updates and housekeeping items.

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# ST. JOHN'S

## 1. Substantive Updates

The changes recommended in this section will have direct implications on the following outcomes. These outcomes are ultimately what express the values of Council and residents:

- What kind of street is prioritized – streets that are ‘too wide’? historic streets that are carrying ‘too much’ vehicle traffic? streets with ‘sensitive uses’?
  - What is the balance between technical criteria (such as speed and volume) vs contextual information (such as current street design and land use)?
  - What is the balance between streets serving the motoring public, streets serving active modes, and the experience of an adjacent resident?
- a. New development – it is recommended to include in the revised policy provisions for the application of traffic calming tools to projects completed in new development or road rehabilitation/reconstruction. This aligns with the recommendations of the recently presented St. John’s Collision Report (2012 - 2019).
  - b. Interrelated factors – it is recommended that a system is developed to score factors that are related to each other such as high speed and sensitive uses scoring higher than either would independently. This recommendation, however, requires significant effort to test and validate the system developed and would likely require an external consultant to assist.
  - c. Target speeds – it is recommended that a system is developed to score City streets based on a target speed. This recommendation, however, requires significant effort to evaluate streets then determine an appropriate target speed and would likely require an external consultant to assist.
  - d. Volume thresholds – it is recommended to increase volume thresholds somewhat and/or modified given that the existing thresholds are very low and therefore the scoring on this metric has limited differentiating power.
  - e. Street context – it is recommended to increase the weight of street context criteria relative to technical criteria. For example, presence of sensitive uses or vulnerable users.
  - f. Non-local traffic – it is recommended to eliminate this criterion in favour of an improved system for volume and speed which are the underlying factors commonly referenced when concerns about non-local traffic are raised.

## 2. Housekeeping Items

The changes recommended in this section have less impact on the outcomes of the traffic calming policy and more of an impact on the process itself and how resident expectations are managed through the process.

- a. Current practice – it is recommended to formally update several practices have been revised in minor ways since the creation of the original traffic calming policy
- b. Priority list length – it is recommended that the priority list be trimmed to a maximum of 10 projects at any one time. Projects would be removed from the list when they are completed or when higher ranking streets are identified.
- c. Response rate – it is recommended to formalize the current practice of using a 60% of responses threshold, further that staff investigate methods to better ensure notices are received/recognized (currently notices are individually delivered to each neighbouring property)
- d. Screen out cul-de-sacs and crescents – it is recommended that these streets, which have historically never met the volume or speed thresholds be screened out in advance to prevent waste of resources.
- e. Re-evaluation timeframe – it is recommended to extend the re-evaluation timeframe to 5 years to prevent waste of resources, a provision should also be made to allow staff to re-evaluate on a shorter timeline if there are changes to the neighbourhood that have affected conditions
- f. Public vote – it is recommended that the process of the public votes be reviewed during public consultation. Specifically the need for the second vote to confirm a project that has been temporarily implemented and resulted in good technical outcomes.

### **Key Considerations/Implications:**

1. Budget/Financial Implications:

Two of the recommendations above (1b and 1c) require significant effort to implement. In order to complete these either the existing traffic calming budget or a new allocation would need to be identified to hire an external consultant.

The current traffic calming budget has approximately \$110,000 available. About \$60,000 of this is being held for ongoing projects. \$50,000 is available for new projects this year.

2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: n/a

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: n/a

4. Legal or Policy Implications:

This note is part of a policy review that currently underway with the Office of the City Clerk.

5. Privacy Implications: n/a

6. Engagement and Communications Considerations:

An engagement strategy will be developed in order to take the next steps on the policy review. This engagement would focus on the policy outcomes desired by the public and getting feedback on the areas noted above. New areas identified during consultation would also be considered prior to final recommendations being made to Council.

The City will work to educate residents about the policy review and promote opportunities for engagement via Public Service Announcements, information on the City's website and social media platforms.

7. Human Resource Implications: n/a

8. Procurement Implications:

As discussed above, two of the recommended changes could require outside assistance. If external assistance is pursued, it could facilitate the process to include the public consultation work and policy writing as part of the consultant workload. This would be informed by staff capacity and budget available at the time an RFP is issued.

9. Information Technology Implications: n/a

10. Other Implications: n/a

If the available Traffic Calming budget is used to complete a portion of this work as described above then the capacity of the Traffic Calming Program to undertake new projects in 2021 will be reduced. Depending on the scope of work considered for external award the \$50,000 available may not be sufficient to initiate any new projects this year. With the policy under review and a reranking of projects a likely outcome it may be acceptable to defer new project undertakings until this process is complete.

**Recommendation:**

That Council:

- a) approve the 12 policy update areas noted above to proceed to public engagement prior to staff making final policy update recommendations,
- b) use funds available in the current Traffic Calming budget to hire an engineering consultant to complete the work required for items 1b and 1c.

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**Approved by:** Scott Winsor, Director of Engineering

**Report Approval Details**

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Attachments:	
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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Scott Winsor - Mar 12, 2021 - 3:48 PM**

**Jason Sinyard - Mar 18, 2021 - 12:25 PM**