

# DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

**Title:** Traffic Calming Policy Update (February 6, 2023)

**Date Prepared:** January 31, 2023

**Report To:** Regular Meeting of Council

**Councillor and Role:** Councillor Maggie Burton, Transportation & Regulatory Services

**Ward:** N/A

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## Decision/Direction Required:

This Decision Note (DN) presents a summary of proposed changes to the City's current Traffic Calming Policy. The proposed changes are based on previous traffic calming policy review and council recommendations, feedback from public engagement including stakeholder consultation, review of traffic calming policies from municipalities across Canada and recent follow-up discussion with the Council.

## Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The current Traffic Calming Policy and the associated Traffic Calming Warrant were developed in 2011. They were designed to manage the requests to slow traffic speed, discourage non-local traffic, and/or correct or improve perceived safety concerns in the street network.

[In June 2020](#), Staff prepared an overview of the City's Traffic Calming Policy and presented to the Council initiating the policy update process. Following this, in [December 2020](#), Staff prepared a review of the policy and identified key areas for updating the policy.

[In March 2021](#), following the policy review, 12 policy update areas were identified and categorized into two groups. The first category, as listed below, was mostly related to improving project selection and scoring criteria, whereas the second was more related to enhancing traffic calming process.

### ***Project Selection and Scoring Criteria***

- Traffic Volume Threshold
- Non-Local Traffic Volume
- Interrelated Factors
- Target Speed
- Street Context
- New Development/Rehab Work

### ***Traffic Calming Process***

- Annual Priority List
- Formalize Temporary Implementations
- Public Survey Distribution
- Public Response Rate
- Re-evaluation Timeline
- Cul-de-sacs and Crescents/P-loops



In [August 2022](#), Staff presented a list of proposed updates for the policy. In September 2022, a follow-up discussion with the Council was carried out for their input on the policy updates presented in [August 2022 Decision Note](#). Council's feedback and comments were incorporated into a [November 2022 Decision Note](#) that was brought to Council but was referred back to staff and Committee of the Whole after issues regarding the proposed survey process and response rate were raised. Staff brought more information and a revised [January 2023 Decision Note](#) to Committee of the Whole where Council approved the proposed approach.

The following decision note presents a summary of the finalized Traffic Calming Policy updates that reflects all of the feedback and comments raised to date.

### Key Policy Updates

The following are the list of proposed updates to City's 2011 Traffic Calming Policy.

**Collision History:** According to the current Traffic Calming Policy 2011 (also referred to as the 2011 Policy), points are given to historical collisions that are only related to vulnerable road users. The revised scoring scheme considers additional collisions such as property damage only (PDO) and fatal/injury collisions as well as collisions related to vulnerable road users. The weight allocated is 1 point for each PDO collision and 2 points for each fatal/injury collision. The point for vulnerable road users related collisions will remain same.

***Proposed Change:*** Consider PDO and fatal/injury collisions in the revised scoring.

**Traffic Volume Threshold:** The maximum score allocated to traffic volume for both Local and Collector roads is 25 points. Based on 2011 Policy, local roads get points from 900 vehicle per day (vpd) and reach maximum value at 2150 vpd. Similarly, collector roads get points from 3000 vpd and reach maximum value at 5,500 vpd. While previous review recommended revising this upper volume threshold to make the scoring more sensitive to higher traffic volumes, a review of traffic volume data of the City's local and collector streets indicated that the upper volume thresholds of 2150 vpd and 5500 vpd, respectively, are reasonable.

***Proposed Change:*** No proposed change to the upper volume thresholds for Local and Collector.

**Non-local Traffic Volume:** Non-local traffic volume is difficult and expensive to measure accurately. Also, this factor is closely related to the total traffic volume, which is already part of the scoring system. By including a non-local traffic volume factor, a busy street can score points for the same matter twice. Therefore, previous review (DN March 2021 and IN Dec

2020) recommended removing this from scoring scheme. Jurisdiction scan also shows that this factor is rarely used in scoring by other municipalities.

***Proposed Change:*** Remove non-local traffic volume in the revised screening and scoring scheme.

**Street Context:** Previous review (DN March 2021 and IN Dec 2020) recommended adding more weight to street context, which is addressed by the following changes in the revised scoring scheme:

- Points for sidewalk is increased by 5 points for Local Road. With this, the maximum point a street (Local or Collector) can get for sidewalk is 10. Score will be allocated based on the proportion of sidewalk for the given street as follows: If a street has sidewalks on both sides of the street, it gets no point; for each 20% missing sidewalk, 2 points is given; street gets maximum 10 points when there is missing sidewalk on both sides.
- Some additional locations such as playgrounds, licensed childcare centers, library and retail stores are identified as pedestrian generators.
- Adjacent Land Use is added as a new factor to provide weights related to land use context. With this scoring, street in a residential area, irrespective of whether it be a Local or Collector, gets additional points based on the proportion of residential area fronting the street. A street gets 5 points if it is a fully residential area; 1 point is reduced for every 20% non-residential area, reaching 0 point when it is a fully non-residential area.

***Proposed Change:*** Above mentioned street context related components are added in revised scoring scheme.

**Traffic Speed:** It was recommended that the score be developed for target speed (DN March 2021). A jurisdictional scan indicated all other municipalities base scoring for speed on the posted speed limit. Therefore, the updated policy will maintain this approach. The maximum score for traffic speed is increased to 30 points; however, there will be no change in the scoring criteria, meaning a Local street gets 1 point for each 1 km/hr above posted speed and a Collector gets 1 point for each 1 km/hr above threshold (i.e., posted speed + 5 km/hr).

During the follow-up discussion with the Council, the possibility of speed limit reduction for slow neighborhood streets was emphasized. Reducing the speed limits throughout the city would require significant resources and a plan. This study is outside of the Traffic calming Policy update. Depending on the staff resources this traffic initiative can be explored in future.

**Proposed Changes:**

- *Scoring for traffic speed to be based on the posted speed limit.*
- *Increase maximum score for traffic speed to 30 points*
- *A separate program/plan to formulate in future to evaluate speed reduction as a traffic initiative. Progress on this plan will depend on staff resource.*

**Removed Factors:** Three factors, namely, transit route, EMS route and block length, are removed from the revised scoring scheme. This aligns with the practices across other Canadian municipalities.

**Proposed Change:** *Remove transit route, EMS route and block length from the revised scoring scheme to be aligned with other jurisdictions.*

**Interrelated factors:** It was recommended that a scoring system be developed for interrelated factors (DN March 2021). From Jurisdictional scan, no other municipalities use scoring criteria for interrelated factors.

**Proposed Change:** *it is recommended not to develop interrelated factors.*

**Request Initiation:** In the updated policy, a petition would be required to initiate the traffic calming process. The petition intends to minimize resources spent in evaluating streets which may not proceed due to insufficient resident support at the later stage of implementation. For the updated policy, it is proposed request initiator will obtain signatures from at least 25% of households on their street for the petition. Similar approaches have been practiced by other municipalities in Canada. A standard format for petition would be included in the updated policy and readily available to residents for use.

**Proposed Change:** *Petition required from 25% of households for the requested street.*

**Formalize Temporary Implementations:** Based on the current practice, City first installs temporary traffic calming measures prior to the permanent ones. This approach provides an opportunity to test and evaluate the impact for both residents/road users and the technical team and has proved to be an effective approach. It was recommended to formalize this practice (DN March 2021).

In the current practice, a public survey is conducted prior to implementation of the temporary measures. In the follow-up discussion with the Council held in September 2022, this initial survey was recommended to be removed from the traffic calming process.

**Proposed Change:**

- *Install temporary traffic calming measures for warranted locations.*

- *Remove public survey step prior to the implementation of temporary measures.*

**Public Survey:** Public participation is an important part of successfully implementing permanent traffic calming measures in neighborhoods. The final step in the proposed updated traffic calming process is to survey residents of the street and ask them to provide input on the temporary traffic calming measures that were installed as a trial on their street. It would be the only survey completed by the City during the process and would be distributed to all residents of the street giving everyone an opportunity to determine how the project proceeds. It would also be the only opportunity for a resident to express opposition to a project within the formal process. During public engagement on this policy update, 86% of survey participants were in favour of the City conducting and distributing this survey.

According to the 2011 Policy, 60% of the affected residents would need “yes” vote to move to permanent implementation. In practice, this requirement for the public survey was changed to “60% of those who responded to the survey”. This provision assigns a “neutral” opinion to residents that do not respond. Previous review recommended to formalize this current practice (DN March 2021).

Final survey response rates for recent traffic calming projects have been in the range of 15-35% of the total number of households surveyed. This low response rate creates a situation where a small number of respondents may be choosing whether or not traffic calming is permanently implemented on a street. If a street with 100 homes only has a response rate of 10 completed surveys (10%) with 6 households (60% of respondents) voting in favour this would trigger permanent installation even though only 6% of households voted in favour of it. To address this, other municipalities in Canada have adopted response rate thresholds in the range of 40-50% +1 household.

A goal of this policy is to make the traffic calming process more participatory. It is therefore proposed that the City work towards a minimum response rate of at least 40% of the surveyed households over the next three years (by 2026). During this time staff will work to improve the response rate on projects through communication and expanded survey participation options (including a possible online survey option and prepaid postage). The anticipated increase in survey participation for projects coming through the new petition process will also be assessed. Streets evaluated for traffic calming over the next three years will not require a minimum response rate but will still require 60% of responses received in support of the project to proceed with permanent traffic calming implementation. Assuming a general improvement in response rate is achieved Council will be updated and the target response rate threshold of 40% will be adopted in 2026.

***Proposed Change:*** Keep the final resident survey and set a target minimum response rate of 40% of households surveyed by 2026. Require the support of at least “60% of the responding households” to implement permanent traffic calming.

**Annual Priority List:** Current policy simply follows the ranking list when selecting the project for implementation. Whenever a new street is evaluated and is warranted for traffic calming, street ranking could change, thereby impacting the priority for the implementation. For the updated policy, it was recommended to prioritize top 10 streets for implementation of traffic calming in each fiscal year so that it will allow technical team to prepare a systematic plan for implementation for the given fiscal year (DN March 2021).

***Proposed Change:*** With the current staffing capacity staff can annually, prioritize a range of 5 to 10 streets/segments for implementation.

**Re-evaluation Timeline:** Based on 2011 Policy, if a street gets excluded from traffic calming for not meeting any of the traffic calming process criteria, it will have to wait at least 2 years to be reconsidered. It is recommended that re-evaluation timeline be changed from 2 years to 5 years to allow more time to focus on new requests and optimize staff resources (DN March 2021). If there is a major change in area traffic patterns, a street may be exempted from the evaluation timeframe.

***Proposed Change:*** Re-evaluation timeframe to be a 5-year period.

**Cul-de-sacs and Crescents/P-loops:** The current policy doesn't screen out cul-de-sacs, crescents, and P-loops. Due to the nature of these streets, they never scored high enough to be eligible for traffic calming in the past. Time and money for data collection and analysis is therefore wasted in assessing their eligibility. As such, the updated policy is streamlined by excluding these from consideration, thereby focusing on streets that are more likely to meet eligibility requirements. Some of these street types in the city are long; therefore, a limitation of 300 m is considered for their exclusion from traffic calming.

***Proposed Change:*** Screen out cul-de-sacs, P-loops, and crescents that are less than 300 meters.

**New Development/Rehab Work:** It was recommended to include provision for the application of traffic calming tools to projects identified under new developments and road rehabilitation (DN March 2021). This aligns with the [Envision St. John's Municipal Plan 2021](#) which states “Require new development to anticipate and implement traffic calming measures consistent with the principles and objectives of the City's Traffic Calming Policy, so that proactive measures can be applied before traffic problems arise.”

It is important that the traffic calming measures considered for these projects would not unduly affect service of emergency vehicles, transit buses and other vehicles. Some examples of traffic calming measures suitable for these types of projects are roundabouts, curb extensions and raised crosswalks. New development projects do not involve public consultation on the traffic calming features; however, Staff may consult stakeholders such as Emergency Services and Metrobus, where needed.

If a street is eligible for traffic calming (scores above 30) and is also being considered for City street rehabilitation, this streets will be given high priority for temporary installation. The traffic calming process followed for this kind of project will be the same as for all other streets.

***Proposed Change:***

- *Integrate traffic calming as part of new developments where appropriate.*
- *Streets qualified for traffic calming and considered for Rehab projects will be given high priority in the Traffic Calming process to be aligned with Rehab projects for implementation.*

**Speeding Issue in Arterial Roads:** In the follow-up discussion with Council (September 2022), speeding issues on arterial roads was discussed. This road category falls outside of the Traffic Calming Policy. The Traffic Calming policy applies to local and collector streets. An enforcement program with the RNC could be initiated to address speeding concerns along arterial street.

***Proposed Strategy:*** *It is recommended that an enforcement committee be formed with internal and external stakeholders. This committee could meet three times a year to discuss and implement an effective enforcement program.*

**Table 1** presents revised scoring scheme reflecting the proposed changes. The updated scoring scheme has a single table for Local and Collector roads. However, it is noted that the factors such as traffic volume and traffic speed are weighted differently for these two road categories as described. Also, some of the scoring factors that represent a common theme are regrouped under the same heading, which has resulted into a total of six different categories: collision history, traffic volume, traffic speed, pedestrian generators, active transportation facilities and adjacent land use. It is noted that the seasonal factor such as sidewalk snow clearing are not practical and cannot be added in the revised scoring scheme.

**Table 1:** Revised Scoring Scheme

Scoring Factor	Point Criteria	Max Score	Note
Collision History	<b>1 point for each Property Damage Only (PDO) collision in the past 3 years</b>  <b>2 points for each injury/fatal collisions</b> , or 2 points for each collision involving vulnerable road users in the past 3 years	10	Updated policy considers scores for PDO and injury/fatal collisions too; Max points for local and collector are same.
Traffic Volume	<b>Local road:</b> 1 point for every 50 vehicles above 900 vpd  <b>Collector road:</b> 1 point for every 100 vehicles above 3,000 vpd	25	
Traffic Speed	<b>Local road:</b> 1 point for each 1 km/h above posted speed  <b>Collector road:</b> 1 point for each 1 km/h above threshold (i.e., posted speed + 5 km/hr)	<b>30</b>	Maximum point increased: 10 points added to Local and 5 to Collector.
Pedestrian Generators	5 points for each high school, park, <b>playground, licensed childcare centre, library, residential retail store</b> , community centre or senior facility within study area, to max of 10  5 points if there is an elementary school or safe route to school within the study area, to max of 5	15	More facilities added in the pedestrian generator list.
Active Transportation Facilities	<b>For sidewalk:</b> 0 if sidewalk existed on both sides, 10 points if missing on both sides, Give 2 points for each 20% sidewalk missing. That means:  <b>0 - sidewalk exists on both sides</b> <b>2 pts - Approx 20% of sidewalk missing</b> <b>4 pts - Approx 40% of sidewalk missing</b> <b>6 pts - Approx 60% of sidewalk missing</b> <b>8 pts - Approx 80% of sidewalk missing</b> <b>10 pts - no sidewalks</b>  <b>For bike route:</b> 5 points if there is an existing bike route or is part of <b>Bike Master Plan full network</b>	<b>15</b>	Weight increased for vulnerable road users (DN March 2021)

Scoring Factor	Point Criteria	Max Score	Note
Adjacent Land Use	<p>5 points if fully residential area; reduce 1 point for every 20% non-residential area. That means:</p> <p>5 points - All residential area  4 points - Approx 80% residential area  3 points - Approx 60% residential area  2 points - Approx 40% residential area  1 point - Approx 20% residential area  0 point - non-residential area</p>	5	Adjacent Land Use factor added to incorporate residential neighbourhoods along Collector roads (DN March 2021)

Note: Blue text describes factors or criteria added to the revised scoring table

### Key Considerations/Implications:

#### 1. Budget/Financial Implications:

City has recently increased Traffic Calming Program budget for 2022 from \$50,000 to \$200,000.

#### 2. Partners or Other Stakeholders:

Emergency Medical Service (EMS) - Eastern Health, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) and Metrobus were consulted for their comments and feedback on City's Traffic Calming Policy and Program.

#### 3. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A City that Moves: Create a sustainable and accessible, low-carbon public transportation system.

A City that Moves: Improve safety for all users on a well-maintained street network.

#### 4. Alignment with Adopted Plans: N/A

#### 5. Accessibility and Inclusion: N/A

#### 6. Legal or Policy Implications:

This note is part of a policy review and update. After proposed changes in this Decision Note once finalized, the updated policy document will be prepared in cooperation with the Office of the City Clerk and other City departments

7. Privacy Implications: N/A

8. Engagement and Communications Considerations:

Public Engagement was undertaken by Transportation Engineering and Organizational Performance and Strategy teams in February 2022. Accordingly, "What We Heard" document was released in March 2022.

9. Human Resource Implications: N/A

10. Procurement Implications: N/A

11. Information Technology Implications: N/A

12. Other Implications: N/A

**Recommendation:**

That Council approve the proposed changes to the City's Traffic Calming Policy presented in this Decision Note.

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**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	Traffic Calming Policy Update (February 6, 2023).docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Feb 1, 2023

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

**Amer Afridi - Jan 31, 2023 - 1:35 PM**

**Scott Winsor - Jan 31, 2023 - 1:43 PM**

**Jason Sinyard - Feb 1, 2023 - 11:39 AM**