

INFORMATION NOTE

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| Title: | Traffic Calming Policy Overview |
| Date Prepared: | June 15, 2020 |
| Report To: | Committee of the Whole |
| Councillor and Role: | Councillor Sandy Hickman, Transportation & Regulatory Services |
| Ward: | N/A |

Issue: The City's Traffic Calming Policy (attached) was finalized in 2011. This overview brings Council up to date on the current status and application of the Policy.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

Goals of the Traffic Calming Policy

The Traffic Calming Policy was developed to provide a system with which to handle the numerous requests the City receives each year requesting action be taken to slow vehicle traffic, reduce non-local traffic, or correct/improve safety concerns in the street network.

The four most important goals of the policy are to:

- provide a standardized process to address concerns regarding speeding and safety;
- provide this process in a manner that is fair, reasonable, consistent and cost-effective;
- prevent installation of measures that need to be removed shortly after installation; and,
- ensure the most important concerns are addressed while funding is available (instead of expending the available budget on minor concerns).

Traffic calming is mostly focused on neighbourhood liveability. While improvements in safety can be a benefit of a successful traffic calming project, they are rarely the driving factor behind the City's current program. Deficiencies in, or improvements to, the street network may be addressed outside the traffic calming program under one of several programs the City operates:

- Annual accessible pedestrian signal program
- Annual sidewalk repair program
- Annual pedestrian crossing program
- Annual sidewalk infill program
- Road Safety Initiatives
- Capital Projects
- Road Rehab

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Basic traffic calming process

The process that a request for traffic calming follows is outlined in the Policy. Over the years some minor changes have occurred in this process to reflect the practicalities of and experience with these projects. The steps, and changes, are shown in the table below.

| Step | Policy | Current Practice |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Request – Request is received, typically from public or Councillor. | No change. |
| 2 | Screening – Data is collected on grade, speed and volume. This is evaluated with % non-local traffic to determine project eligibility. | No change but steps 2 and 3 are effectively a single process conducted by staff. |
| 3 | Scoring and Ranking – Additional factors are incorporated based on street context to develop a score. | |
| 4 | Toolbox – An initial staff review of possible measures is conducted at this point. | Typically restricted to top 10 projects at any given point. |
| 5 | Project Selection – Projects are selected and referred to capital budget for funding of a traffic calming study. | Council has allocated funding to an Annual Traffic Calming Program and top ranked projects are pursued without individual project approvals. |
| 6 | Design, Public Support, Final Council Approval, Implementation – This step covers a number of sub steps described below. | |

A breakdown of Step 6 in the process is provided here:

| Step | Policy | Current Practice |
|------|--|---|
| 6-A | Initial Public Support – the original requestor is to circulate a survey seeking support for project. Requires 60% support of affected residents to proceed. | Staff develop this survey, circulate it, and collect responses. The threshold of “60% of affected residents” was adjusted to “60% of survey responses” given the low response rate that is typical. |

| Step | Policy | Current Practice |
|------|--|--|
| 6-B | Draft Design – a public meeting is held to discuss project options | This meeting was held for projects conducted early in the lifetime of the Policy. Unfortunately, these meetings were not well attended and upon implementation found to be ineffective in identifying issues presented by the community affected. In substitute, the survey conducted in '6-A' includes the preliminary options that would have been discussed in this step. |
| 6-C | Draft Design – a draft design is developed by staff | No change. |
| 6-D | Draft Design – a public meeting is held to review | Rather than a public meeting we now implement a temporary project at this step. This method has been more effective at communicating the impacts of the project and gathering feedback from affected residents. Technical monitoring/evaluation also occurs here. |
| 6-E | Final Plan – a final traffic calming plan is developed | This plan now incorporates the direct feedback on the temporary implementation. |
| 6-F | Final Public Support – the original requestor is to circulate a survey seeking support for the final plan. | Staff develop this survey, circulate it, and collect responses. Same threshold as above applies before project proceeds. |
| 6-G | Identify Funding – forward funding request for the final plan to the capital budget process | These steps have been precluded by the establishment of the Annual Traffic Calming Program budget. |
| 6-H | Final Council Approval – council approves capital budget for project implementation | |
| 6-I | Permanent Implementation – The final plan is implemented | No change. |
| 6-J | Evaluation and Monitoring | This step now occurs during the temporary implementation in step '6-D'. |

Current traffic calming list

The table below lists the current list of streets eligible for traffic calming projects and the status of those considered to date.

| Rank | Location | Posted Speed | Score | Status |
|------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------|---|
| 1 | University Avenue | 30 | 69 | Overlaps with Road Safety Initiative area for crosswalk improvement. |
| 2 | Old Bay Bulls Road | 50 | 57 | Currently a detour route for capital works. Project deferred. |
| 3 | Ennis Avenue | 30 | 44 | Overlaps with Road Safety Initiative area for crosswalk improvement. See also Parsons. |
| 4 | Quidi Vidi Road Civic 66 | 50 | 44 | Feedback signs in place – project to be closed out |
| 5 | Exmouth Street | 50 | 44 | Underway as part of Larkhall neighbourhood work, turn restrictions to be posted soon following notice |
| 6 | Warford Road | 30 | 43 | Partial inclusion in Linegar capital works, further work required. |
| 7 | Gleneyre Street | 30 | 41 | Speed limit complication, see discussion |
| 8 | Southside Road (at viaduct) | 50 | 41 | Initial survey delivered June 2020 |
| 9 | Dunlea Street | 30 | 41 | Speed limit complication, see discussion |
| 10 | Linegar Aveune | 30 | 40 | Incorporated into capital works project |
| 11 | Craigmillar Avenue Civic 26 | 50 | 39 | |
| 12 | Rotary Drive Civic 20 | 50 | 39 | Previous temporary speed cushions used during wait for Team Gushue Highway. New ranking post opening. |
| 13 | Toronto Street | 50 | 38 | |
| 14 | Argyle Street | 50 | 38 | |
| 15 | Keith Drive | 50 | 37 | |

| Rank | Location | Posted Speed | Score | Status |
|------|--------------------------------|--------------|-------|--|
| 16 | Pearce Avenue | 50 | 37 | |
| 17 | Symonds Ave | 50 | 37 | |
| 18 | Middleton Street | 50 | 37 | |
| 19 | Pearl Town Road | 50 | 36 | |
| 20 | Parsons Road Civic 28 | 30 | 36 | Ennis Avenue area, incorporate. |
| 21 | Great Eastern Avenue | 50 | 36 | 2017 Pilot Project area. Technical success but no public support. |
| 22 | Ladysmith Drive Civic 34 | 50 | 36 | |
| 23 | Carpasian Road Civic 30 | 50 | 35 | |
| 24 | Canada Drive Civic 123 | 50 | 35 | On cycling route, to be addressed as part of upcoming road rehab |
| 25 | Jasper Street West of Cheshire | 50 | 35 | |
| 26 | Meadowbrook Drive | 50 | 35 | |
| 27 | Stavanger Drive | 50 | 35 | |
| 28 | Frecker Drive Civic 25 | 50 | 35 | Ranking dropped based on removal of cycling lanes |
| 29 | Walsh's Lane | 50 | 35 | |
| 30 | Back Line Civic 232 | 50 | 35 | |
| 31 | Bells Turn | 50 | 34 | |
| 32 | Empire Avenue Civic 438 | 50 | 34 | |
| 33 | Kerry Street | 30 | 33 | |
| 34 | Weymouth Street | 50 | 33 | Underway as part of Larkhall neighbourhood work, restrictions to be posted soon following notice |
| 35 | Petite Forte Drive Civic 14 | 50 | 33 | |
| 36 | Anspach Street Civic 334 | 50 | 33 | |
| 37 | Downing Street | 50 | 32 | |
| 38 | Gairlock Street | 50 | 31 | |
| 39 | Gloucester Street - Hunts Lane | 50 | 31 | |
| 40 | Smith Avenue Civic 58 | 50 | 31 | |
| 41 | East Meadows Avenue | 30 | 31 | |
| 42 | Fort Amherst | 30 | 30 | |

Commonly questioned areas within the existing Policy

The issues presented below have practical implications on which projects are eligible for traffic calming and how highly they rank in the list of eligible projects. There is no intention to say that the current system is incorrect, simply that a different system could express different values and lead to different projects being completed.

Volume thresholds

Points are awarded for vehicles above 3,000 per day on collector roads and above 900 per day on local roads. However, these roads are expected to carry between 1,000 and 12,000 vehicles per day for collectors and up to 3,000 per day for local streets. This leads to the situation where roads that are operating well within their technical expectation are scoring maximum points for volumes. For example, a collector street with 5,500 per day, or a local street with 2,250 vehicles per day.

This issue sets a low threshold beyond which the scoring system is no longer sensitive to vehicle volumes. For example, Ladysmith with over 11,000 vehicles per day is scored nearly the same as Carpasian with 5,350 per day.

Speed scoring

Speed scores are a significant proportion of the total a street might receive with up to 20 or 25 points for locals and collectors respectively. Speeds are only awarded points above the speed limit. As such, streets that are of concern to residents but operate just below 50km/hr are pushed further down the list.

Conversely, streets that have the limit set at 30km/hr for political or historic reasons and operate at the same speeds (just below 50km/hr) receive a high number of points and subsequently rank highly.

In other cases, such as school zones, where there is a technical justification for a 30km/hr speed limit the scoring based on posted speed works as intended and ranks these areas higher.

Context/Function mismatch

An issue that is often raised by concerned residents is that the function of their street (as a collector or arterial) does not match the context of the street. In these cases, such as Waterford Bridge Road, a street is not eligible for traffic calming because it is an important link in the City street network. In a Catch 22, traffic calming is requested for this street precisely because it is well used and that this level of use does not match the design of the street.

This occurs most often in older areas of the City where the streets were not necessarily “designed”. This can, however, also happen in newer areas of the City where the design of the street meets the needs of vehicle traffic but the land use surrounding it does not match that use. An example of this case is Great Eastern Avenue where the frontage of single family homes and on street parking conflicts with the collector role of the street.

Factor independence

In the current scoring system, each variable is scored independently. The scoring system for Local Roads is reproduced below for reference. As a result there is no correlation in the scoring for factors that may compound or negate each other. For example, higher speeds score the same whether they are near a school area or not. Concerns received, and real safety implications, are often due to combinations of factors that occur: a street lacks sidewalks and serves a community park where either situation in isolation may not be an issue.

| Factor | Criteria | Maximum Points |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Collision History | 2 points for each collision in the past three years involving vulnerable road users, to max of 10 | 10 |
| Traffic Volumes | 1 point for every 50 vehicles above 900, max 25 | 25 |
| Traffic Speeds | 1 point for each km/h above posted speed, max 20 | 20 |
| Non-Local Traffic | 3 points for each 10% of non-local above 30%, to a maximum of 15 (reached at 70% non-local traffic) | 15 |
| Pedestrian Generators | 5 points for each high school, park, community centre or senior facility within study area, to max of 10 | 10 |
| Pedestrian Facilities | 5 points if no sidewalk | 5 |
| Schools and Safe Routes to School | 5 points if there is an elementary school or Safe Route to School within the study area | 5 |
| Bicycle Concerns | 5 points if the road is an existing or planned cycle route | 5 |
| Transit Services and Routes | -2 points if existing or planned transit route | 0 |
| Block Length | 1 point for each 50m increment if greater than 100m, to max of 5 | 5 |
| | | 100 |

Overall factor weight

The current system scores traffic characteristics (collisions, speed, and volume) at a little over half of the total possible score. 55/100 for local streets and 60/100 for collector streets. Some feel that this does not put enough weight on street context such as the design (width, sidewalks) and context (residential, schools).

Local decision making

The last public stage in the process is a final survey on support for permanent installation. If this survey is returned with a negative result the project is concluded. This process is a strong step in favour of direct public decision making. However, this result is often unsatisfactory to those that were initially advocating for a project. This process also supersedes the technical evaluation: a project may achieve its goals of lower speeds and/or volumes but still be turned down by the affected residents.

Response rates and thresholds

The traffic calming process relies on hand delivered surveys to directly poll the affected residents on proposed changes. The original policy – “60% of affected residents” as the threshold – implicitly assigns a “no vote” to residents that don’t respond. The current practice – “60% of responses” as the threshold – assigns a “neutral” opinion to residents that don’t respond. Unfortunately, when a project area is small, or the response rate is low, the question may be decided by very few of those affected.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications:
In most years a contribution of \$50,000 is made to the Annual Traffic Calming Program. This program currently has \$69,600 available from previous allocations.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders:
n/a
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans:
n/a
4. Legal or Policy Implications:
This policy was developed in 2010 and finalized in 2011. If Council feels that changes are needed to better reflect the priorities of today a project to do so would need to be initiated.
5. Privacy Implications:
n/a

6. Engagement and Communications Considerations:
The process of engaging on traffic calming projects has changed since the initial recommendations of this policy.
7. Human Resource Implications:
n/a
8. Procurement Implications:
n/a
9. Information Technology Implications:
n/a
10. Other Implications:
n/a

Conclusion/Next Steps:

The discussion above is provided for information only.

Report Approval Details

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| Document Title: | Traffic Calming Policy Overview.docx |
| Attachments: | - TrafficCalmingPolicy.pdf - TrafficCalmingWarrant.pdf |
| Final Approval Date: | Jun 18, 2020 |

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

Scott Winsor - Jun 18, 2020 - 11:32 AM

Jason Sinyard - Jun 18, 2020 - 11:57 AM