

# **The Regional Municipality of York**

Committee of the Whole  
Transportation Services  
May 13, 2021

Report of the Acting Commissioner of Transportation Services

## **Reduced Speed Limits in School Zones**

### **1. Recommendations**

1. The Establishing Speed Limits on Regional Roads policy be updated to include the new school zone maximum speed sign introduced by the Province.
2. Existing speed limits on Regional roads in all school zones identified in Attachment 1 be reduced by 10 km/h.
3. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Clerks of local municipalities, public school boards and the Chief of York Regional Police.
4. The Regional Solicitor prepare the necessary bylaws.

### **2. Summary**

This report seeks Council approval to apply a consistent approach in school zones adjacent to Regional roads, through the reduction of speed limits by 10 km/h and use of a single new school zone maximum speed sign introduced by the Province.

Key Points:

- The Province has introduced a new school zone maximum speed sign with a reduced speed limit to allow the use of automated speed enforcement in school zones
- A 10 km/h reduced speed limit in school locations and use of the new school zone maximum speed sign will promote consistency, ease of enforcement and facilitate the use of automated speed enforcement
- School boards, York Regional Police and local municipal staff were consulted and are, in principle, supportive of a Region-wide harmonized approach in reducing speed limits in school zones
- The Region is prepared to manufacture and supply the new school zone maximum speeds signs at no cost to local municipalities at existing locations, to create a consistent application Region-wide

### 3. Background

#### **The Region's speed limit policy allows for reduced speed limits in school areas using school zone maximum speed when flashing signs**

In April 2011, Council approved the [Establishing Speed Limits on Regional Roads](#) policy (Policy), which is based on guidelines provided by the Transportation Association of Canada. The Policy allows for a reduced speed limit of up to 20 km/h lower using school zone maximum speed when flashing signs on an identified section of road.

#### **Several versions of signs are currently used in school zones connecting to Regional roads**

There are 64 elementary and secondary schools adjacent to Regional roads. Forty-two have school area signs (Figure 1), eight have school area with flashing beacons signs (Figure 2) and 14 have school zone maximum speed when flashing signs (Figure 3). School zone maximum speed when flashing signs include a reduced speed limit during school start, lunch hour and dismissal. Flashing signs operate at various times Region-wide without advertising the times, days and months to the motoring public, which precludes the use of automated speed enforcement.

**Figure 1**  
**School Area Sign**



**42 schools**

**Figure 2**  
**School Area with  
Flashing Beacons Sign**



**8 schools**

**Figure 3**  
**School Zone Maximum  
Speed When Flashing Sign**



**14 schools**

## **The Province has introduced a new school zone maximum speed sign with a reduced speed limit to allow the use of automated speed enforcement in school zones**

On August 28, 2020, the *Highway Traffic Act* amended Regulation 615 for a school zone maximum speed sign (Figure 4) to include the times, days and months to inform motorists when the reduced speed limit is in effect. Under Regulation 615, the use of flashing beacons with the new school zone maximum speed sign is not permitted. The new sign permits the use of automated speed enforcement and addresses evidentiary concerns by advertising the times, days and months when the lower rate is in effect.

**Figure 4**  
**New School Zone Maximum Speed Sign**



## **4. Analysis**

### **Reducing speed limits in school areas will help improve traveller safety and protect our most vulnerable road users**

School areas throughout the Region experience different modes of travel by students to get to and from school, including walking, cycling and rolling. As the Region continues to grow, pedestrian and cycling volumes are increasingly putting greater demand on motorist attention. Rates of injuries sustained by pedestrians and cyclists remain a concern. While 24% of vehicle-only collisions result in injuries or fatalities, almost all pedestrian (94%) and cycling (82%) collisions result in injury or death. Reduced speed limits throughout the Region's school zones help increase a motorist's ability to stop in time to avoid collisions, preventing serious injury or death to vulnerable road users. Reduced speed limits may also strengthen active school travel initiatives and promote safety of vulnerable road users in school zones throughout the Region.

## **A Region-wide 10 km/h speed limit reduction in school zones using the new sign promotes consistency, ease of enforcement and facilitates the use of automated speed enforcement**

There are more than 550 elementary and secondary schools adjacent to Regional or local municipal roads that would benefit from reducing speed limits by 10 km/h, using the new school zone maximum speed sign from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. This will help enhance safety, including when school is in session, the morning and evening commute periods when children are walking, cycling, being dropped off/picked up, and during after-school activities.

The new school zone maximum speed sign promotes a common understanding to motorists and York Regional Police when the lower rate of speed is in effect. The new sign also facilitates the use of automated speed enforcement through clear direction to motorists as to the day and time when reduced speed limits are in effect.

## **Stakeholders have indicated their support of reduced speed limits in all school zones Region-wide**

Staff consulted the school boards, York Regional Police and local municipal staff about a harmonized approach in reducing speed limits in school zones on Regional and local roads. York Regional Police are very supportive.

Local municipal staff agree in principle and will consider applying a consistent approach on local roads including the use of the new sign. Recognizing the Region-wide benefit, the Region is prepared to manufacture and supply new signs at existing locations at no cost to local municipalities.

## **Staff propose implementing new school zone maximum speed signs prior to September 2021**

Starting this spring, staff will install new school zone maximum speed signs at the 64 elementary and secondary schools on Regional roads listed Attachment 1. This includes upgrading school areas to include a new school zone maximum speed sign with a 10 km/h speed reduction and removing all existing flashing beacons. One school currently has a 20 km/h speed reduction when flashing, which will be maintained. The signs are proposed to be installed before September 2021, prior to the start of school.

## **5. Financial**

Costs to manufacture and install new school zone maximum speed signs at all elementary and secondary schools in Attachment 1 are approximately \$60,000. The cost to remove all flashing beacons from 22 existing locations as noted in Attachment 1 are approximately \$30,000. Funding for this initiative is included in the approved 2021 Transportation Services Operating budget.

Manufacturing costs for signs at all elementary and secondary schools on local municipal roads is approximately \$100,000 and is included in the approved 2021 Transportation Services Operating budget and 2022 outlook.

## 6. Local Impact

Staff will continue to work with school boards, local municipalities, York Regional Police and Public Health on active school travel initiatives. Our partners are supportive of reducing speed limits in school zones on Regional and local roads.

## 7. Conclusion

The Province has introduced a new school zone maximum speed sign with a reduced speed limit to allow the use of automated speed enforcement in school zones. A 10 km/h reduced speed limit in school locations and use of the new school zone maximum speed sign will promote consistency, ease of enforcement and permit the use of automated speed enforcement.

Staff recommend the Establishing Speed Limits on Regional Roads policy be updated to include the new school zone maximum speed sign introduced by the Province and that existing speed limits on Regional roads in school zones identified in this report be reduced using the new sign. Staff propose installing the new signs before September 2021.

---

For more information on this report, please contact Joseph Petrungaro, Director, Roads and Traffic Operations, at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75220. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

**Ann-Marie Carroll**

Acting Commissioner of Transportation Services



Approved for Submission:

**Bruce Macgregor**

Chief Administrative Officer

May 3, 2021  
Attachment (1)  
12414037