

City of Mississauga  
**Corporate Report**



Date: March 31, 2023

To: Chair and Members of General Committee

From: Geoff Wright, P.Eng, MBA, Commissioner of  
 Transportation and Works

Originator's files:  
 RT.10.ZVAR

Meeting date:  
 April 12, 2023

## Subject

### School Zone Speed Limits

## Recommendation

1. That the current speed limit designation of 30 km/h in school zones on local roadways be maintained as outlined in the report from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works, dated March 31, 2023 and entitled "School Zone Speed Limits".
2. That the current flashing 40 km/h time of day speed limits be removed and replaced with full time 40 km/h speed limits in school zones on major roadways as outlined in this report.
3. That the remaining school zones on major roadways currently not governed by flashing 40 km/h time of day speed limits be designated as full time 40 km/h speed limits.
4. That any required by-law amendments resulting from this report be enacted through the delegation of authority to the Commissioner of Transportation and Works.

## Executive Summary

- Staff were instructed by Council to report on the feasibility of implementing time of day speed limits in school zones on local roadways
- Speed limits in school zones on local roadways were recently reduced to 30 km/h at the direction of Council as part of the Neighbourhood Speed Limit Project completed in 2022
- Staff do not support a change to the current full time 30 km/h in school zones on local roadways given the City's commitment to Vision Zero, as lower operating speeds significantly reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities.
- Changing the 30 km/h speed limits to time of day speed limits would require dedicated resources in terms of staff and materials and poses a number of significant challenges.
- Speed limits in school zones on major roadways currently vary throughout the City, with

17 of the 29 areas being governed by flashing 40 km/h speed limits

- Flashing 40 km/h speed limits prevent the deployment of Automated Speed Enforcement cameras
- Revising the speed limits in school zones on major roadways to static 40 km/h school zones will allow for the deployment of Automated Speed Enforcement on major roadway school zones where speeds and impacts will be greater
- The existing flashers can be repurposed to reinforce the school zones on major roadways during school hours
- New flashers can be installed at the remaining 12 locations in order to have uniform school zones on major roadways City wide

## Background

### Local Roadway School Zone Speed Limits:

As part of the Neighbourhood Speed Limit Project initiated in 2019, which lowered all local speed limits to 40 km/h. Staff were further directed by Council to reduce the speed limits in all local school zones to 30 km/h. The project was completed in 2022. Speed limits were reduced on 3,280 roadways within 130 neighbourhoods. This included 199 local roadway school zones that were reduced to 30 km/h.

The school zones were further designated as Community Safety Zones and identified as potential Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) sites. Those locations that have been confirmed as having operating speeds in excess of the posted speed limit, are on a rotating schedule for deployment of ASE cameras currently consisting of 22 cameras (2 cameras per Ward).

At the December 2, 2022 meeting of Council, staff were instructed to review the feasibility of converting the 199 existing 30 km/h school zone speed limits on local roadways, to time of day speed limits (30 km/h 06:00-18:00 / 40 km/h 18:00—06:00).

### Major Roadway School Zone Speed Limits:

There are 29 identified school zones located on major collector, arterial roadways or scenic roadways. Of those, 17 are currently signed as 40 km/h when flashing. Meaning that the speed limit is 40 km/h only when the flashing lights are activated from September 1 to June 30, Monday to Friday, and 07:30 to 17:00. Outside of those times, the regulatory speed limit reverts to standard speed limit.

## Comments

### Local Roadway School Zone Speed Limits:

There are 199 school zones on local roadways. As part of the Neighbourhood Speed Limit Project, each of these school zones have been reduced to 30 km/h between 2020 and 2022. This required the installation of approximately 1,400 posts and signs to ensure each of the school zones were properly signed. As part of the speed limit reduction, a robust communications campaign was deployed across a variety of media to ensure residents and motorists were aware and familiar with the new speed limits.

The move to reduce speed limits full time in school zones to 30 km/h is consistent with the City's commitment to Vision Zero. Lower speed limits and lower operating speeds significantly reduces incidences of personal injury. While the majority of younger pedestrians and traffic occurs during the school day, most schools are adjacent to parks and playgrounds that are utilized by residents outside of school hours in the evening, on weekends and throughout the summer.

Additionally, a benchmarking review revealed that our reduction to full time 30 km/h school zones is consistent with the majority of neighbouring municipalities who have taken the same approach to local school zones. The City of Toronto is in the process of reducing the speed limit on all local residential roads to 30 km/h with all wards planned for completion by 2025.

Implementing variable time of day speed limits in local school zones poses a number of challenges:

1. The number of signs located within each of the 199 school zones will double to accommodate the time of day information resulting in approximately 1,400 additional signs and require the replacement of the existing 4x4 wooden posts.
2. The information that motorists must process when approaching the sign is significantly greater and more complex than the standard speed limit sign.
3. A communications campaign was undertaken to advise residents of the school zone speed limit reduction. Revised messaging would be required to readjust driver behaviour.
4. The costs associated with the above undertaking will require dedicated capital funds as staff are unable to accommodate this work as part of standard operations.

### Major Roadway School Zone Speed Limits:

Council has expressed a desire to expand the ASE program, specifically to enforce school zones located on major roadways. There are 17 school zones located on major roadways currently designated as 40 km/h when flashing. Given the reliance of the flashing lights in order for the speed limit to be in effect, ASE cameras are not permitted to enforce speed limits within

flashing 40 km/h zones due to the inability to confirm the working order of the lights at the time of the photo. This has limited the ASE program to local roadways, and prevented its deployment on the major roadway school zones.

The existing flashing 40 km/h zones are strictly limited to school zones, as defined in the Highway Traffic Act as 150 metres beyond the property of the school. The flashing lights are activated, and the 40 km/h speed limit is in effect, from September 1 to June 30, Monday to Friday, and 07:30 to 17:00. There is no consideration for holidays or other days when the school is closed as a result of PD Days or inclement weather.

Staff are proposing to convert these areas to full time 40 km/h zones, and removing the need for flashing lights in order for the speed limit to be in effect. Removing the 40 km/h when flashing requirement, will allow staff to deploy ASE in school zones located on major roadways where speeds and potential impacts are greater. The proposed revisions would further provide staff the flexibility of assigning a reduced 40 km/h speed limit to a stretch of roadway, without being constrained by the strict definition of the School Zone.

Understanding the value and effectiveness of the flashing lights as a means of driver awareness of the school zone, staff are also proposing that we retrofit the existing flashing lights, and utilize them as supplemental warning signs within the school zone. The lights would continue to operate during school hours, however they would only serve as a warning or reminder to motorists travelling in a school zone. The lights would have no regulatory impact on the speed limit.

In order to provide a uniform approach to major roadway school zones across the City, staff are further recommending that the remaining 12 school zones located on major roadways, that do not currently have a speed reduction or are not currently utilizing flashing 40 km/h, also be reduced to 40 km/h and equipped with supplemental warning flashers.

A typical drawing of the existing condition versus staff's proposal can be found in Appendix 1 – Typical Major Roadway School Zone Speed Limits. A list of impacted locations can be found in Appendix 2 – Major Roadway School Zones.

## **Financial Impact**

The estimated costs associated with the work to retrofit the existing 17 flashing school zones, and install 12 new flashing school zones on major roadways is \$550,000.

Of the total cost estimate of \$550,000, an existing PN #21197 - 40 km/h When Flashing Speed Zones, can accommodate \$400,000. The remaining \$150,000 will be requested through the mid-year 2023 Works in Progress (WIP) report or through the 2024 Budget Process.

## Conclusion

### Local Roadway School Zone Speed Limits:

Revising the speed limit in school zones on local roadways is not recommended given the City's commitment to Vision Zero as lower operating speeds significantly reduce incidences of personal injury. While the majority of younger pedestrians and traffic occurs during the school day, most schools are adjacent to parks and playgrounds that are utilized by all residents outside of school hours in the evening, on weekends and throughout the summer.

### Major Roadway School Zone Speed Limits:

Modifying the approach to speed limits in school zones on major roadways by eliminating flashing 40 km/h speed limits and assigning full time 40 km/h speed limits, will allow for the use of ASE at these locations. Further, it will provide staff with the flexibility to assign reduced speed limits outside of the existing school zone locations.

## Attachments

Appendix 1: Typical Major Roadway School Zone Speed Limits

Appendix 2: Major Roadway School Zones



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Geoff Wright, P.Eng, MBA, Commissioner of Transportation and Works

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