



REQUEST FOR DECISION

MEETING DATE: June 26, 2023

TITLE: Spruce Grove Roadway Speed Limit Reductions

DIVISION: Planning & Infrastructure

SUMMARY:

To present the findings from the Spruce Grove Roadway Speed Limit study started in 2022 by Morrison Hershfield. As well, provide how the City should proceed on implementing administrative recommendations.

PROPOSED MOTION:

THAT the City of Spruce Grove school and park zones be updated based on the report and road classification and be in effect for the commencement of the 2023/2024 school year.

THAT the speed limit for all City of Spruce Grove local roads be changed to 40km/hr and be in effect by August 31, 2024.

THAT further analysis be completed on the major collector and arterial roadways study recommendations and bring recommendations back to Council by June 30, 2024.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

During the March 10, 2021 Community Road Safety Advisory Committee (CRSAC) meeting, the Committee was provided with information on how speed limits are determined and approved in the City. At the July 14, 2021 CRSAC meeting, Administration provided the Committee with further information on speed limit reductions including the required considerations, and examples of other cities in Alberta that have recently reduced their residential speed limits.

The CRSAC recommended to City Council at the September 27, 2021 Council Meeting that a similar study be completed for the City of Spruce Grove and asked that it be included in the 2022 corporate planning process. At that time, Council directed Administration to proceed with a speed study on the speed limits within the City of Spruce Grove.

Morrison Hershfield Limited conducted the study throughout the latter half of 2022 and provided recommendations to the City in May 2023. This report has been attached for Council's information.

The study reviewed three components of the roadways system within the City:

- major collectors/arterials - high-capacity roadways where traffic movement is priority;
- local roadways - provide active and vehicle access to property and businesses; and
- school/playground areas - provide an environment for children and families.

Morrison Hershfield reviewed these and provided recommendations for the City to consider when applying their speed limits within the City.

School and Park Area Signage

Administration's first recommendation is addressing the signage for the school and park areas. The study shows that generally they are adequately signed, however it is noted that a few schools fall within the zone where they could be labelled as either a zone or area, and one playground that is currently not signed.

For the schools that fall within the warrant result of "School Area or School Zone" Administration further assessed what road type they are adjacent to, as well as the fencing around the area, as the final determining factors. If the road is a major collector or arterial road, the school will stay a school area. Any future concerns within these school areas will be addressed with fencing and other safety mechanisms. If the school is adjacent to a minor collector or local road, then the schools will be school zones and signage will be updated.

Given this analysis, Administration is recommending the following:

- Millgrove School remain a school area as it is fully fenced and on a collector road;
- Ecole Broxton Park and St. Joseph Catholic schools to be signed as school zones due to lack of fencing and being on local roads; and
- Harvest Ridge Park, currently not signed, to be signed as a park area.

These signage changes are to be completed in July and August to be in effect for the 2023/2024 school year. The cost of the additional signs will be absorbed in the current 2023 budget.

Local Roads Speed Limit

The second recommendation is to create a blanket speed limit of 40km/hr on the City of Spruce Grove local roads and to be in effect as of August 31, 2024. This time frame allows Administration to ensure adequate budget is secured for implementation in 2024, time to create an implementation plan with Public Works and Enforcement, and to conduct fulsome communication and education programs to ensure community awareness is prevalent. The Traffic Bylaw will also require an amendment prior to the implementation of the proposed new speed limit.

Major Collector/Arterial Road Speed Limit

The third recommendation is to take a closer look at the report's recommendations for the major collector/arterial road speed limit updates. Administration is recommending that Public Works and an external peer reviewer examine these recommendations in the attached report to ensure that they are feasible for City operations and ensure any other external factors are considered prior to bringing a final recommendation back to Council by June 30, 2024.

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:

That Council does not proceed with any speed limit changes at this time.

That Council proceeds with the blanket speed limit of 40km/hr on local roads only.

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:

The Community Road Safety Advisory Committee requested that this study be conducted, and Enforcement provided the history of incidents within the City of Spruce Grove. Records of concerns from residents within areas was also shared with Morrison Hershfield for consideration during their analysis.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:

Information and education public engagements are being planned before the implementation of the blanket local road speed limit change to 40km/hr.

IMPACTS:

Lowering the speed limit for the local roads to 40km/hr will increase the survival of vulnerable road users if they are struck by a vehicle. It also makes the streets calmer, quieter, and safer for people walking, biking, and otherwise enjoying their yards and neighbourhoods.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The implementation of the school and park speed changes will have minimal impact on the budget and can be absorbed in the current 2023 operating budget. For the change to the local roads to 40km/hr, there are strategies that can be implemented to keep costs to a minimum like jurisdictional entry signs that state "Speed Limit is 40km/hr unless otherwise posted". The costs are still being determined and will be included as a budget line item in the 2024 budget for Council approval if Council approves the proposed motion.