

Transportation Report to  
SPC on Transportation and Transit  
2019 October 23

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
TT2019-1300

## **Street Safety and Neighbourhood Speed Limits Update**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Traffic safety is a prominent concern of Calgarians, and one of the most common requests citizens have of The City. In 2018 Council directed Administration to prepare a speed limit reduction plan for neighbourhood streets. This would include a recommended speed for different street types, an implementation plan and complementary roadway design changes.

Three scenarios were developed to help guide a conversation on speed limit changes in Calgary's neighbourhoods. Each represents a possible approach to changing neighbourhood speeds and has a different expected result and outcome. An initial technical analysis will provide information on the credibility and feasibility of the scenarios. Engaging with Calgarians will provide information on citizen perceptions and expectations about safety and operations on their streets. Together, these components will inform an analysis of neighbourhood speed limit changes, ultimately resulting in a recommendation.

Administration recommends that engagement with citizens and businesses begin in 2019 and that the results be used along with data and research to complete an analysis and provide Council with a recommendation in early 2020.

#### **ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**

That the SPC on Transportation and Transit recommend that Council:

1. Direct Administration to engage with Calgarians and business stakeholders on the subject of reducing neighbourhood speed limits and report the findings and a recommendation to Council through the SPC on Transportation and Transit no later than March 2020.

### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY**

At the 2016 May 2 Meeting of Council, Council adopted the Step Forward pedestrian strategy (TT2016-0250). This directed Administration to "work with the Province to ensure that the City Charter Initiative includes a legal framework to allow a reduction in the unposted speed limit, should The City of Calgary choose to implement residential speed limits in the future, or to make bylaws to permit new pedestrian safety techniques or walkability initiatives, if required." The City Charter was enacted by the Province in 2018 and includes this ability.

At the 2018 September 24 Meeting of Council, Council approved the Notice of Motion on Street Safety and Neighbourhood Speed Limits (C2018-0960) directing Administration to "provide a recommendation on whether the reduced speed limit should be 30 km/h and/or 40 km/h, as well as to what extent collector classification streets should receive speed limits, as part of an interim report as well as an engagement plan through the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit no later than Q2 2019." This report was deferred to October 2019 (TT2019-0833).

Speed limit reform in neighbourhoods has been discussed by Council several times over the past 40 years. Attachment 1 details this history.

### **BACKGROUND**

Transportation safety is a primary goal of The Calgary Transportation Plan, and it underlies all transportation services provided by The City. In support of this goal, The Safer Mobility Plan

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builds on earlier work and reinforces the adoption of Vision Zero; a strategy to continually reduce serious injuries and fatalities on Calgary streets.

Traffic collisions can cause life-altering consequences for all parties involved. Each year an average of 35,000 collisions occur in Calgary, and 10,000 occur in residential neighbourhoods where there is a high proportion of people walking and a high presence of children. 40 per cent of pedestrian and bicyclist traffic collisions in residential neighbourhoods result in a fatality or injury. Collisions cost the Calgary economy an estimated \$1.19 billion in 2018. Lower vehicle operating speeds lead to fewer collisions and lower levels of injury and damage for collisions that do occur. Reducing speed limits, supported by changes to the design and operation of the transportation network will result in safer neighbourhood streets.

### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

To fully understand the range of considerations, effects and consequences of a speed limit change, Administration developed an array of different speed limit scenarios. There are many options of different speeds that could be applied to different streets and understanding the outcomes and challenges associated with each is essential to a successful implementation. Any speed limit change will need to be reinforced in many ways such as through media, school engagements, leveraging the safety values of Calgarians, making changes to the driving environment and through enforcement. Three core scenarios were developed to provide realistic options along with important context such as the expected reduction in operating speed, reduction in collisions and casualties, and relative cost to implement. These scenarios were chosen to best cover changes that have different benefits and outcomes but are credible and feasible to implement.

1. Unposted speed limit of 30 km/h on both residential and collector streets
  - Largest expected reduction in collisions, injuries and fatalities
  - Requires significant modification to the driving environment
  - Consistent speeds in neighbourhoods that align with international best practice
2. Unposted speed limit of 30 km/h on residential streets with collectors posted at 50 km/h
  - Smallest expected reduction in collisions, injuries and fatalities
  - Requires some traffic calming
  - Inconsistent speeds across residential neighbourhoods
3. Unposted speed limit of 40 km/h on both residential and collector streets
  - Moderate expected reduction in collisions, injuries and fatalities
  - Requires significant modification to the driving environment
  - Consistent speeds across residential neighbourhoods

Attachment 2 shows these scenarios in more detail. Each of these scenarios will have a different effect on communities and stakeholders, and before recommending any scenario to Council, Administration needs to better understand these effects and the perspectives of citizens. Collector streets serve many functions and need a thoughtful approach to get to the outcome of reducing speeds and reducing collisions, injuries and fatalities in Calgary.

As cities continue to evolve and change, how we travel will as well. Part of successfully implementing a speed limit change will be adapting road designs so that new communities are built with different speeds in mind. An additional consideration is making a recommendation

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which is a responsible and feasible step for today. This could include a speed limit change that is feasible for today, but a stepping stone to another change in the future.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

In researching this project, Administration examined other cities in Canada and internationally. Many cities are adopting speed limits of 30 km/h or 40 km/h for their neighbourhood streets. Different cities have taken different approaches to implementation, leading to different levels of success with the key determining factor being making changes to the driving environment such as traffic calming.

The combined information from public engagement, the Technical Advisory Committee, Calgary Police Service, the technical analysis of each scenario and the body of research on neighbourhood speed limits will allow Administration to finalize a recommended speed limit scenario in 2020.

### Public Engagement and Communications

In assessing the scenarios an important consideration in addition to technical analysis is the input of Calgarians. Speaking with citizens about their perceptions of traffic safety can help create a better understanding of the project's guiding principles. Success in achieving lower speeds on neighbourhood streets is routed in Calgarians' attitudes about street safety. Simply changing signs or enforcing more often will not drive fundamental behaviour change on the streets that Calgarians live on. Meeting with members of the business community is another important step. Businesses can help to uncover the trade-offs that accompany each scenario for their industry which is vital to building an effective implementation plan.

### Technical Advisory Committee

A Technical Advisory Committee of expert citizens was formed in early 2019 and has met three times. The committee is comprised of professionals and experts with diverse perspectives on neighbourhood speed limits. Among the fields represented are communities, policing, schools, health care, academia, transportation safety and community planning. The Committee has assisted the project team in reviewing draft scenarios and their work will continue as recommendations are refined.

### The City of Edmonton

The City of Edmonton is developing a plan to change the default speed limit on neighbourhood streets using the same enabling legislation through their City Charter. Given this strong contextual alignment, collaboration by sharing data, planning and analysis methods and other expertise will have benefits to both cities. Administration is working with colleagues in Edmonton to achieve efficiency and consistency where it is mutually beneficial.

### Calgary Police Service

Throughout this project Calgary Police Service has been a vital partner, actively participating on the project team, providing feedback on scenarios and analysis, as well as sitting on the Technical Advisory Committee. Collaboration towards the common goal of street safety is essential for both organizations, and this partnership will continue as a recommendation on neighbourhood speed limits is refined and implemented.

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### **Strategic Alignment**

Improving the safety of neighbourhood streets in Calgary directly supports the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP) and its associated policy (TP011). Goal #2 of the CTP is “promote safety for all transportation system users.” Additionally, Council Directive M1 from the One Calgary service plan and budget identifies safety as a primary priority for transportation.

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

**Social:** Reduced speed limits lead to fewer collisions, injuries and fatalities, contributing significant social benefit to the community. Additional social benefits include reduced traffic noise and greater safety and comfort for people walking in their neighbourhoods.

**Environmental:** Reduced speed limits are expected to have negligible environmental impact in terms of emissions and energy use. A reduction in noise pollution is expected.

**Economic:** A safe, effective transportation network drives economic value by allowing for reliable and efficient travel and goods movement throughout the city. Additionally, reducing collisions provides considerable economic benefit by minimizing the over \$1 billion annual cost to the local economy.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### ***Current and Future Operating Budget:***

There is no operating cost impact associated with developing a recommendation for Council. Engagement efforts are anticipated to cost \$200 thousand, to be accommodated within existing traffic safety and community mobility budgets.

A speed limit reduction may affect the operating budgets of some business units. A detailed listing of operating cost implications for a recommendation will accompany the implementation plan in 2020.

#### ***Current and Future Capital Budget:***

There is no capital cost associated with developing a recommendation for Council. The capital costs of a recommended speed limit change, including any additional requirements or funding gaps, will be outlined in the implementation plan report in 2020.

### **Risk Assessment**

The risk of pursuing the proposed engagement plan is that the decision to reduce harms associated with our transportation network will be politicized, which could affect the effectiveness of implementation. The risk of not engaging Calgarians is that they may not support Council’s final decision, making it more difficult to change the behaviours and attitudes around speed that are necessary to achieve the desired outcome.

#### **REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Public engagement will provide valuable input, which will better inform a final recommended plan for neighbourhood speed limits in Calgary when presented to Council in 2020.

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#### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Attachment 1 – Summary of Previous Council Direction
2. Attachment 2 – Summary of Scenarios for Engagement
3. Attachment 3 – Engagement Plan