

April 18, 2019

To: Members
Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

Re: Safety in School Zones – School Zone Safety Audit

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the following amendments to *The Regina Traffic Bylaw, 1997*, No. 9900 (the “*Traffic Bylaw*”) be approved and come into force on September 1, 2019:
 - a. reducing the speed to 30 kilometres per hour from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in school zones and playground zones to enhance pedestrian safety prohibiting U-turns in school zones
2. That the City Solicitor be instructed to prepare the necessary bylaw to authorize the respective *Traffic Bylaw* amendments.
3. That this report be forwarded to the April 29, 2019 meeting of City Council for approval.

CONCLUSION

Administration has completed a school zone safety audit which consisted of a review of existing school zones for size of zone, signage locations, parking and drop off locations, as well as overall safety. After the audit, proposed changes were reviewed by the Traffic Bylaw Working group to ensure they were acceptable. Administration is supportive of the School Zone Safety Committee’s proposed changes. In anticipation of potential changes to school zones for the 2019-2020 school year, Administration has also started pre-design work of all school zones.

The results of the audit are consistent with expected outcomes and Administration will continue to work with our community partners in implementing the proposed changes as time and budget permit

The following changes to school zones are proposed:

Amendments to the *Traffic Bylaw*:

- reducing the speed to 30 kilometres per hour from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in school zones and playground zones to enhance pedestrian safety
- prohibiting U-turns in school zones

Other Proposed Changes that Administration will undertake:

- pedestrian crosswalks in school zones to be constructed or upgraded to national standards, including ‘zebra crossings’ where appropriate

- education and collaboration with community partners to help ensure safety is addressed in a proactive manner, help ensure citizens understand the importance of complying with school zone regulations, and discouraging inappropriate driver behaviour
- signing of school zones and school areas to be consistent with national guidelines and best practices
- possible increase fine amount for stopping where prohibited in school zones. This change requires further investigation and will require a subsequent amendment to the *Traffic Bylaw*

BACKGROUND

In response to Council Motion *MNI6-4*, the School Zone Safety Committee consisting of subject matter experts, reviewed school zone safety issues and considered the following:

- school zone signage
- speeding
- pedestrian and vehicle movements
- parking concerns
- violations and fines
- educational opportunities
- school site layout concerns

This committee also considered the implementation, feasibility, costs, enforceability, expected compliance levels of safety improvement and impact on the community, including the road user in their proposed changes.

At the February 13, 2019 meeting of Executive Committee, report *EX18-16* was presented outlining the proposed changes for safety improvements in school zones. As noted in *EX18-16*, the committee was supportive of a multi-faceted approach to improving safety in school zones that used a balance of appropriate engineering controls, education, and enforcement. To support the implementation of proposed engineering controls, including changes to speed limits and school zone hours, an audit was first required to assess individual school zones to provide proper safety controls for their unique needs.

In response to *EX18-16*, the following motion was passed:

Administration to complete its audit of existing school zones and playground zones to review signage locations, parking and drop-off locations and overall safety consideration; and provide a report to Public Works & Infrastructure Committee by Q2 2019 outlining recommended changes to:

- *Speed zones*
- *U-turns*
- *Visibility and traffic calming initiatives*
- *Fines for speeding*
- *Other recommendations from the Traffic School Zone Safety Committee*

DISCUSSION

Following the work of the Traffic School Zone Safety Committee, Administration began work on the School Zone Safety Audits (audits) for 93 school zones across the city. A framework was developed to ensure consistent application, which also recognizes specific considerations at each location and is outlined below.

School Zone Safety Audit

A school zone safety audit was conducted for all school zones in the city. The evaluation methodology combined data collection and engineering analysis and research. Administration examined each school zone on a case-by-case basis, considering information gathered as noted above to produce individualized solutions. Administration engaged with representatives from each school to assess issues that are specific to their site.

Through the audit, a list of safety improvements for each school was developed. The short-term improvements can be done at the same time as a speed limit changeover and include school zone limits, intersection controls and sightlines near pedestrian crossings. The long-term items will be a part of future budget discussions and include installation of bus loading zones, curb extensions and pedestrian corridors.

Proposed Changes

Upon completion of the safety audit, recommendations from the previously presented report, *EX18-16* are valid and Administration recommends proceeding with the initial recommendations. Below is a brief summary of those recommendations:

School Zone Speed Limit

Administration recommends changing school zone speed limits from 40 kilometres per hour to 30 kilometres per hour.

While the current speed of 40 kilometres per hour is not inherently unsafe, the recommendation to reduce speed zones to 30 kilometres per hour was put forward as a method to improve the safety in existing school zones and decrease risk. The 30-kilometre recommendation is based on research that indicates there is a substantial increase to the survival rates for pedestrians struck at this lower speed compared with the current 40 kilometres per hour limit.

Further, school zones by their nature have a high concentration of vulnerable persons who are still developing impulse control and depth perception and are more likely to act contrary to instruction, misjudge the risk or assume a motorist sees them.

Finally, 30 kilometres per hour is consistent with the many other comparable Canadian municipalities and is also consistent with the City of Regina's (City) speed reductions in construction zones on 50 kilometre per hour roads.

Effective Hours and Days

Administration recommends changing the effective time for a school zone from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and maintaining the current 365 days per year operation of the school zones.

The 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. timeframe strikes a balance with lowering vehicle speeds during peak pedestrian times, including during, before and after school programming, while mitigating the impact on motorists in the zones that are largely inactive in the later evenings. Playground zones are also more likely to be used outside of school hours. A consistent approach for all zones encourages increased driver awareness which will have a distinct impact on safety.

Maintaining 365 days a year, operation of school zones is consistent with the current operation of the City's school zones. It also decreases the amount of awareness drivers must have with respect to the day of the week or time of year it is while passing through these zones. It also promotes consistency throughout the City with playground zones which are frequently used during summer months and weekends.

Consistent days and hours of operation across all zones means that some locations will have periods where the lower speed limit is in effect while the volume of pedestrian activity is low, however the trade-off is that there are zones during those times where the lower speeds will have a positive impact on safety.

Prohibition of U-Turns in School Zones

Administration recommends prohibiting U-turns in school zones.

Vehicle U-turns within school zone limits represent a substantial risk to children. They are contrary to pedestrian expectations and are particularly dangerous for children who find these movements challenging to predict. U-turns are currently prohibited at signalized intersections, including pedestrian half signals, at flashing pedestrian corridors when activated, and at intersections controlled by school safety patrols. The recommendation will extend the prohibition to all intersections within the school zone, as well as midblock locations in school zones via a bylaw amendment, as previously recommended.

Visibility of School Zones

Some speed violations in school zones are inadvertent as drivers fail to notice they entered a school zone. Increasing the visibility of school zones using alternative sign posts with reflective markings and zebra crossings are reasonably low-cost solutions, which will increase the awareness for drivers and help voluntary compliance rates. The zones will also be clearly established so drivers are more aware of where the zone begins and ends.

School Zone Fines

Changes to the fine amount for no stopping will be considered through the Traffic Bylaw Working Group and if necessary, amendments to the *Traffic Bylaw* will be forwarded to the Public Works & Infrastructure committee in the future for consideration.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The estimate to implement immediate changes to the school zones to go in effect September 1, 2019 is \$450,000. This will be funded from past fine revenue from the Automated Speed Enforcement Program (ASE) which the City has set aside for traffic safety initiatives. The ASE Program funding model has recently changed meaning the revenues will be lower in future budget years. Sufficient funds currently exist from ASE revenue to cover these expenses.

Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

The pursuit of an overall action plan for school zone safety supports the strategic priorities of the Official Community Plan (OCP), the Transportation Master Plan and the City's vision of promoting active transportation for residents to get to work and school.

Strategic priorities from the OCP that will be addressed through this work include:

- *Section C, Goal 4 - Ensure that new neighbourhoods and employment areas maximize infrastructure investments and quality of life through a compact and integrated built form.*
- *Section D1, Goal 2 - Support regional economic growth through an effective and efficient transportation system.*
- *Section D2, Goal 4 - Build a resilient city and minimize Regina's contributions to climate change.*
- *Section D3, Goal 1 - Offer a range of year-round sustainable transportation choices for all, including a complete streets framework.*
- *Section D3, Goal 3 - Integrate transportation and land-use planning in order to better facilitate walking, cycling, and transit trips.*
- *Section D3, Goal 4 - Optimize road network capacity.*
- *Section D3, Goal 5 - Promote active transportation for healthier communities.*
- *Section D4 Goal 1 - Meet regulatory requirements and industry best practices for design, construction and operation of infrastructure.*

This will contribute to achieving the City's outcomes for a connected, safe, and accessible community.

Other Implications

The Traffic Bylaw Working Group is a multidisciplinary group of the Administration with members in Traffic Engineering, Bylaw Enforcement, Legal, Bylaw Prosecutions, Parking Branch, Regina Police Service and Planning & Development. The Traffic Bylaw Working Group reviewed these proposed amendments and supports the recommendation contained in this report.

In order to fully implement the changes by the start of the school year (September 1, 2019), approval is required at the April 29, 2019 meeting of City Council, due to the staff work required to implement these changes due to the large number of schools.

Accessibility Implications

None with respect to this report.

COMMUNICATION

Education and communication will play an important role in the successful implementation of any changes to the *Traffic Bylaw* and school zones in our community. Administration will work with our partners to launch a targeted education and advertising campaign for the fall of 2019, should recommendations be adopted. Communications may include PSA's, social media and messaging from the school boards and schools

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The recommendations contained in this report require City Council approval.

Respectfully submitted,



Norman Kyle, Director
Roadways & Transportation

Respectfully submitted,



Kim Onrait, Executive Director
Citizen Services