

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: November 8, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Jim Gordon, P.Eng., Director, Engineering & Municipal Operations

SUBJECT: City Wide 30 Km/h Speed Limits

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the November 8, 2021 report from the Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations for consideration and support the city monitoring of Ministry of Transportation and Highway's approved blanket speed limit pilots and report back to Council prior to consideration of the implementation of city-wide 30 km/h speed limits.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 12, 2021, Council considered a motion endorsing 30 km/h speed limits on all streets in White Rock. Council directed that staff bring forward a corporate report with feedback from the White Rock RCMP.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) sets default speed limits of 50 km/h in municipalities and 80 km/h on highways outside of a municipality. The legislative authority for default speed limits is the *Motor Vehicle Act (MVA)*.

The Union of BC Municipalities requested in 2019 that municipal default speed limits be set at 30 km/h for local (no centre line) streets; however, the province, through MOTI, did not support this. MOTI noted that municipalities can set speed limits on individual streets by bylaw posting signage on each end of the street. This would amount to approximately \$125K in signage costs to implement for all White Rock local residential streets.

While lowering default speed limits throughout White Rock is possible, it would be prudent to consider potential adverse consequences and unintended outcomes. Considerations include motorist acceptance or increased agitation, reduced driver attention span, increase in driver distraction, disruption to free flow of traffic, and enforcement challenges. Consequently, it is recommended that staff monitor ongoing pilot projects in other cities such as Saanich and report back to Council.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Motion # & Meeting Date	Motion Details
2021-290 July 12, 2021	THAT Council: 1. Defer consideration of the following Motion: THAT Council endorses the speed limited on all streets in White Rock be lowered to 30 km/hr; and 2. Direct staff bring forward a corporate report, with feedback from the White Rock RCMP. Motion CARRIED (7 to 0)

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

On July 12, 2021, Council considered a motion endorsing 30 km/h speed limits on all streets in White Rock. Council directed that staff bring back a corporate report with feedback from the White Rock RCMP.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) sets default speed limits of 50 km/h in municipalities and 80 km/h on highways outside of a municipality as per Part 3 section 146, clause 1 of the *BC Motor Vehicle Act (MVA)* shown below:

146 (1) Subject to this section, a person must not drive or operate a motor vehicle on a highway in a municipality, treaty lands or a Nisga'a village at a greater rate of speed than 50 km/h, and a person must not drive or operate a motor vehicle on a highway outside a municipality or in Nisga'a Lands outside a Nisga'a village at a greater rate of speed than 80 km/h.

MOTI or municipalities can then set lower or higher speeds on individual roadways as per the subclauses in Part 3, section 146 of the *MVA*. These adjustments are usually based upon many factors including road geometry, traffic volumes, access/egress, modal split, road classification, driver comfort and enforcement considerations. Signage must be in place in each direction for speed limits adjusted from the default limits.

The Union of BC Municipalities requested in 2019 (Appendix A) that municipal default speed limits be set at 30 km/h for local (no centre line) streets; however, the Province, through MOTI, did not support this. MOTI noted that municipalities can set speed limits on individual streets by bylaw with signage posted on each end of the street. As noted, this option would amount to more than \$125K in signage costs for all White Rock residential streets.

Studies show that lower motor vehicle speeds result in less accidents and less injuries. Some Canadian cities are experimenting with pilot projects with lower default speed limits to determine compliance, verify crash and injury data, and also to identify unintended consequences. It is not always the case that lower speed limits result in lower speeds, traffic calming measures specific to each street may be more effective. Saanich is about to embark on a MOTI approved three year pilot default speed limit project with a default, city wide speed limit of 30 km/h for all residential streets.

Lower default speed limits do not consider all factors, but may still be viable when set at low levels such as 30 km/h. However, more study should be carried out on potential adverse consequences and unintended outcomes in reducing speed limits on all streets in White Rock. Consequently, it is recommended that staff monitor the ongoing pilot projects, particularly the Saanich three year pilot and report back to Council.

RCMP COMMENTS

A change in speed limits, particularly the lowering of a speed limit, inevitably leads to anticipated increase in complaints to the police for a resolution when motorists are exceeding the 30km limit. The primary method available to police for changing driver behaviour is enforcement, which can have marginal effectiveness and present unachievable demands on police resources when robust engineering solutions are not present. Although the implementation of 30 km/h speed limits on ‘local streets’ is welcomed by the White Rock RCMP for the expressed safety reasons, strong consideration to engineering solutions (such as strategically placed speed humps, LED warning signs, etc.) are recommended if Council supports this city-wide change.

Speed Enforcement Challenges

Since June 2020 the White Rock RCMP has placed increased speed enforcement in many areas of the city, including in three specific 30km/h zones (East Marine Drive, West Marine Drive, and Johnston Road). It was observed that there is a divide between speeders that are aware they are in a 30km/h zone and chose to exceed the limit, and those that are not attentive to the speed signs and intuitively drive around 50km/h. Despite increased enforcement, there continues to be driver’s exceeding the speed limit on a regular basis. In our opinion, the 30km/h signs are generally well placed in the three areas noted, which suggests that additional engineering solutions are required. Of note, the areas with the most speeding complaints are not classified as local streets and are roads with a center line.

Enforcement Considerations

The White Rock RCMP does not have a dedicated traffic enforcement position. There will likely be an increased expectation from the community for enforcement that the current police resources will not be able to effectively address. Moreover, the primary use of a police officer based enforcement solution in some 30km/h zones that previously functioned safely as a 50km/h zone can negatively affect police-community relations, especially on streets that were not previously identified as a concern as a 50km/h zone. An ethical-enforcement conflict can arise when residents request enforcement in these areas, however enforcement does not serve a legitimate safety reason and is perceived as a ‘tax grab’ opposed to the actual purpose of a violation ticket – specific and general deterrence to promote road safety.

In summary, the expansion of 30km/h zones in White Rock has conditional support from the White Rock RCMP when done in conjunction with robust engineering measures to avoid the reliance on police enforcement for compliance.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If the city waits until the Saanich pilot program is completed and/if MOTI approves 30 km/h default speed limits on local streets, the financial implications for signage at city boundaries would be minimal.

If Council wishes to proceed with 30 km/h signage on local streets now, each street will require signs be installed at each end and all the streets would need to be listed in the Street Traffic Bylaw through an update of the bylaw. The estimated costs to install these signs in \$125K.

Speed limit signs are often ignored by motorists which could result in increased requests for enforcement that will potentially result in increased funding requests for policing.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There is the potential for more speeding tickets to be issued in new 30 km/h zones and this could result in legal challenges to the tickets.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

If new 30 km/h speed limits are set, extensive communication would be needed with residents in addition to newly installed signage as it is evident that not all motorists closely monitor speed limit signage.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS

Police and Engineering would need to work together on coordinating signage implementation and enforcement.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

It could possibly be argued that lower speeds may result in less braking and some climate change benefit.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Not applicable.

OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES

The following alternate options are available for Council's consideration:

1. If Council wishes to proceed with 30 km/h signage on all local streets now, each street will need signage installed at each end of the street and the names of each street listed in a Street and Traffic Bylaw update. The estimated costs to install these signs is \$125K.
2. Council could select certain streets for bylaw 30 km/h speed limit approval and signage.

CONCLUSION

Unless the provincially regulated *MVA* is changed, cities cannot set blanket city-wide speed limits. Speed limits can only be changed from the default 50 km/h speed limit by bylaw and street by street signage. Signage for White Rock residential streets is estimated to cost \$125K. It is recommended that the city monitor MOTI approved blanket speed limit pilots and carefully consider a city-wide 30 km/h speed limit only if MOTI provides a mechanism for implementation on a City wide basis without the need for street by street signage.

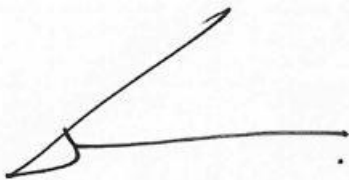
Respectfully submitted,

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Jim Gordon, P.Eng.,
Director of Engineering & Municipal Operations

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

I concur with the recommendation of this corporate report.

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Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer