



CORPORATE REPORT
The Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach
Meeting Date: 8/22/2024

DATE: 7/17/2024

SUBJECT: Safe Routes to School for Children

CONTACT: Mike Pincivero, Manager of Engineering Services
Mark Taylor, Project Coordinator

REPORT NUMBER: 2024/08/22-05

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the report titled: Safe Routes to School for Children, to the Council meeting of August 22, 2024, be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- This report is in response and further to the Deputation from Ms. Diaz, Public Health Nurse and subsequent Motion provided by Councillor Timms regarding safe routes to schools for children.

BACKGROUND:

On September 6th, 2023, a deputation was submitted by Sherry Diaz, Public Health Nurse, from the Community and Family Health Department. The deputation was in regards to active school travel at Worsley Elementary School and the Simcoe Muskoka 'On the Move' initiative. The deputation further requested that Council support requests to promote students walking and wheeling, improve roadway safety, as per the Term of Council Priorities. The request included a presentation to Council at the September 14th Council meeting.

At its meeting on September 14th, 2023, Ms. Diaz presented to Council, on behalf of the Worsley Elementary School 'On the Move' Committee, the Simcoe Muskoka 'On the Move' Initiative. This initiative began locally in 2019 after a successful funding application to the Ontario Active School Travel Fund from the Ministry of Education. The goal was to support Active School Transportation (AST) for children to be more physically active in their daily routine by walking or wheeling (e.g., cycling, skateboarding, rollerblading and scootering) to and from school.

As noted in the presentation, there is concern that children are not getting enough daily physical activity to be healthy. The 'On the Move' initiative is intended to promote children to use active modes of travel to school and help achieve children's daily physical activity goals. Further, using

the School Travel Planning method was recommended to determine best practice including many different factors like education, engineering, and enforcement.

The Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium Policy identifies the elementary student walk zone distance to be 1.6 km from school property to the students residing property. However, it was determined through a family school survey in 2020 that, while close to 30% of the students live within the school walk zone, only about 10% are actually walking to school. Additionally, the survey revealed almost 30% of students usually get to school by car. Through the same survey, respondents noted that there were concerns with traffic speed, the need for more sidewalks, crosswalks, and better snow removal.

With the Term of Council Priorities relating to schools, listed below, and the 'On the Move' initiative Ms. Diaz noted that it is an important step/component for all to help achieve the goals for the community.

- #14 Undertake neighbourhood walking audits
- #15 Explore traffic calming in vulnerable locations (schools)
- #16 Implement Safe Routes to School
- #17 Identify & construct additional priority sidewalks

Council requested a staff report be brought back regarding safe routes to school for children with consideration for traffic flows, crosswalks, traffic calming and a potential crossing guard program. Further, an information report be brought back for sidewalk options, outlining the difference in cost of various sidewalk options including hot mix asphalt, concrete and permeable pavers. (Please note that a staff report went to Council regarding sidewalks on August 8, 2023.)

At its meeting on November 16th, 2023, Councillor Timms also passed a motion for Public Works Engineering Services to prepare a report for safe routes to school for children with consideration for traffic flows, crosswalks, traffic calming and a potential crossing guard program.

DISCUSSION:

Worsley 'On the Move' Committee

To help coordinate efforts between the Town and Worsley 'On the Move' Committee, Town staff and Council representatives were included in committee meeting discussions. This helped to provide further clarity with regards to existing Town policies and standards relating to traffic calming, regulatory sign installations, pavement painting, and other roadway infrastructure.

At the Worsley Meeting in January 2024, the priorities of the committee were noted as follows:

1. Implement traffic calming in school zones.
2. Explore the merits of the Town's investment in automated speed enforcement (ASE) to support traffic calming in school zones.
3. Increased by-law and police enforcement, at the start and end of the school day, especially on 39th & 40th Street South.
4. Confirm whether children are permitted to cycle on sidewalks within the Town of Wasaga Beach.

5. Identify which municipal advisory committee has a mandate related to active transportation/active school travel as a potential support/resource to the Worsley 'On the Move' Committee, now that the Healthy Community Network is dissolved.
6. Determine if the west end of the RecPlex parking lot can be utilized as a "Park and Walk a Block" option for families to walk to school, during the start and end of the school day.
7. Expand the limits of the existing Community Safety Zone (CSZ) along Knox Road West, in proximity to Red Oak Park.
8. Review limits of existing CSZ, for all elementary schools, from the 150 metres distance to at least 250 metres. Additionally, reducing the speed limit in all elementary school CSZ, from 40km/h to 30km/h.
9. Invest in and implement a school crossing guard program for the Town.
10. Collaborate with the Worsley 'On the Move' Committee to develop an Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) routes map, which would encourage students to walk and cycle to and from school. It was noted that a map was created for the 'On the Move' initiative with Clearview Meadows School, in partnership with Clearview Township.

Traffic Studies

In order to address a number of the items identified in the Motion, Engineering staff compiled recent traffic studies / data collected in the areas of schools. It was noted however that although past studies were completed on Ramblewood Drive, that roadway was recently reconstructed and with the new residential development constructed between 45th Street and 58th Street, it was anticipated that traffic volumes and statistics may have changed for the area of St. Noel Chabanel. With this in mind, a new traffic count and study was conducted for that area.

When Public Works / Engineering staff receive complaints about speeding and/or requests for traffic calming measures from the public, staff rely on the Traffic Calming Policy (found on the Town's website including a Request Form in Appendix A, and the Assessment of Traffic Calming Need is in Appendix B). Please see both of these Appendices at the end of this report.

After collecting traffic data, the assessment for potential need of traffic calming is based on:

Traffic Data

1. Speed (largely the 85th percentile speed, described further below).
2. Volume (higher traffic volumes increase risk and therefore, more points allotted to higher volumes).
3. Short-cutting traffic (if / as applicable).
4. Collisions.

Road Characteristics

1. Sidewalks (more points assigned if no sidewalk is present).
2. Pedestrian Generators (more points assigned for each type of pedestrian draw in the area).
3. Sight Lines (poor sight visibility causes greater concern and therefore is assigned more points in the analysis).
4. Road Allowance / Paved Width (narrower roads are assigned more points).

It should be noted that in terms of speed, the 85th percentile is the speed at which 85% of all motorists are travelling at or below. This represents the majority average speed. The 85th percentile is the standard used for setting or adjusting posted speed limits by the MTO and the

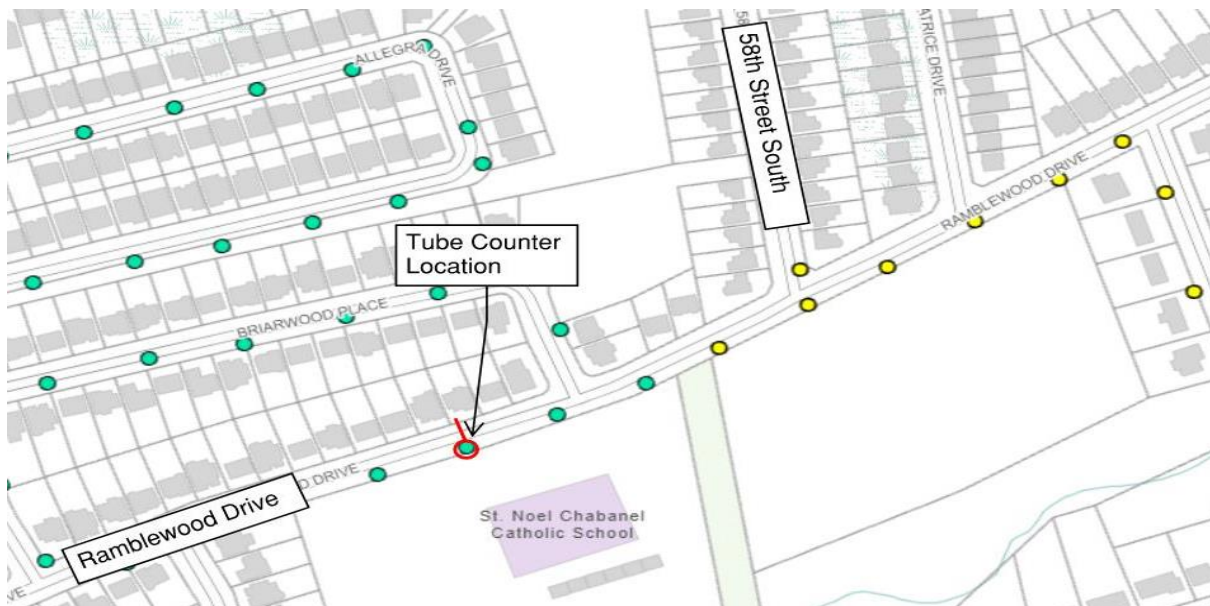
County of Simcoe, and analysis of traffic calming within roadways by the Town. Further, it is used to calculate travel times for urban streets and signal timing plans. This is standard industry practice. In order to calculate the 85th percentile speed, traffic data equipment is installed on the roadways to count the speed of all traffic. The total number of vehicles are represented as 100% and the speeds are broken into groups, such as the 15th percentile and 85th percentile. Generally, motorists traveling in the 15th percentile or below are driving unreasonably slowly and travelers observed in the top 15th percentile, (i.e. greater than 85%), are driving in excess of the majority average speeds, which can represent some infrequent, unsafe driving. When there is a small percentage of vehicles speeding (i.e. those travelling over the 85th percentile speed), implementing traffic calming could unfairly impact the driving behavior of those who would otherwise be driving at a safe and reasonable speed.

There is a separate evaluation matrix relied on for local and collector roads, where more points are required in the evaluation of a collector road than on a local road. This is another standard industry practice, recognizing that collector roads have much higher total traffic volume, and many of the above noted categories are expected with collector roads (e.g. higher overall speed and volume, pedestrian generators, etc.).

The following is a list of the traffic study reports that have been completed in the areas of elementary schools in Wasaga Beach:

Traffic & Pedestrian Study Report - St. Noel Catholic School - Ramblewood Drive (May 3rd to May 22nd, 2024)

A study was completed in response to a traffic calming request received by Public Works, and based on the request from Council for this summary report. A vehicular traffic study was undertaken on Ramblewood Drive in front of St. Noel Catholic Chabanel Elementary School. Additionally, a pedestrian and cyclist count was conducted at 58th Street South & Ramblewood Drive intersection.



The following is a summary of the findings of this study:

A traffic data collection device (ATR – automatic tube reader) was installed on Ramblewood Drive, in front of St. Noel Catholic Elementary School. Traffic speeds and volumes were recorded continually (24 hours per day) from May 3rd, 2024 – May 22nd, 2024. The data concluded that the 85% Speed (majority of motorists) were traveling at 60.66 km/h. Further, that the Median speed was 52.02 km/h, the Mean speed was 50.9 km/h, and the Mean Exceeding the speed limit was 57.72 km/h.

It is noted that reduced speed school zone flashers are present in front of St. Noel Chabanel as well as in all school zones in the Town of Wasaga Beach. These school zone flashers are based on a timed circuit / software for the flashers to run at the appropriate times of day when each school would have the most pedestrian activity (i.e. before the morning school bell, at lunch hours, and at the end of the school day). The traffic data / statistics observed in front of St. Noel Chabanel during the time periods when the flashers were going were drawn from the software for review.

The 85th percentile observed during the flashers running was 56.12km/h. This compared with the total 85th percentile speed of 60.66 km/h shows a reduction of 4.54km/h on the 85th percentile speed. Similarly, the average / mean speed was observed to be 45.2km/h, which is a reduction of 5.7km/h compared with the average speed of 50.9km/h throughout the entire day. This reduction of average speeds between 4.54km/h to 5.7km/h for the average speeds demonstrates that the school zone flashers do provide some benefit to slow traffic at the peak times without having to reduce the posted speed limit all of the time. However, it is suggested that once the Town has implemented an automated speed enforcement (ASE – see more details in report below) program, the radars could be erected at each of the schools to encourage further reductions and issue tickets to those that are speeding.

Based on the data received, and in accordance with the Town's Traffic Calming Policy, it was deemed that traffic calming is not warranted for further consideration. The scoring in the evaluation did not meet the criteria as per the Policy's Appendix B assessment scoring criteria. Collector roads require a minimum score of 52 points or higher for traffic calming to be further considered, but the analysis only yielded 30 points for this area. (It is noted that this was based on the full time 85th percentile speed, and with assigning the maximum points for collisions, as collision data was not readily available and Engineering staff applied the maximum points to "err on the side of caution" in the analysis.) Notwithstanding, the findings were shared with the OPP for consideration of enhanced enforcement.

The pedestrian count was conducted by Engineering staff from 8:15am to 4:15pm on Wednesday, May 15, 2024. The weather during this period was between 13 to 15 degrees Celsius, with no rain. The volume and direction of pedestrians and cyclists were recorded at the crosswalk located at the intersection of 58th Street South & Ramblewood Drive. The study count recorded a total of 97 pedestrians and 35 cyclists over this 8 hour period.

It was noted that some motorists were observed making "incomplete stops", where motorists slowed but did not come to a complete stop. However, there were no observations of motorists passing straight through the intersection without slowing. Vehicles always did come to complete stops while pedestrians were crossing.

Traffic Study Report for Knox Road West at #105 and #177 Knox Road West (May 15th to May 29th, 2023)

A study was completed in response to a traffic calming request received by Public Works.



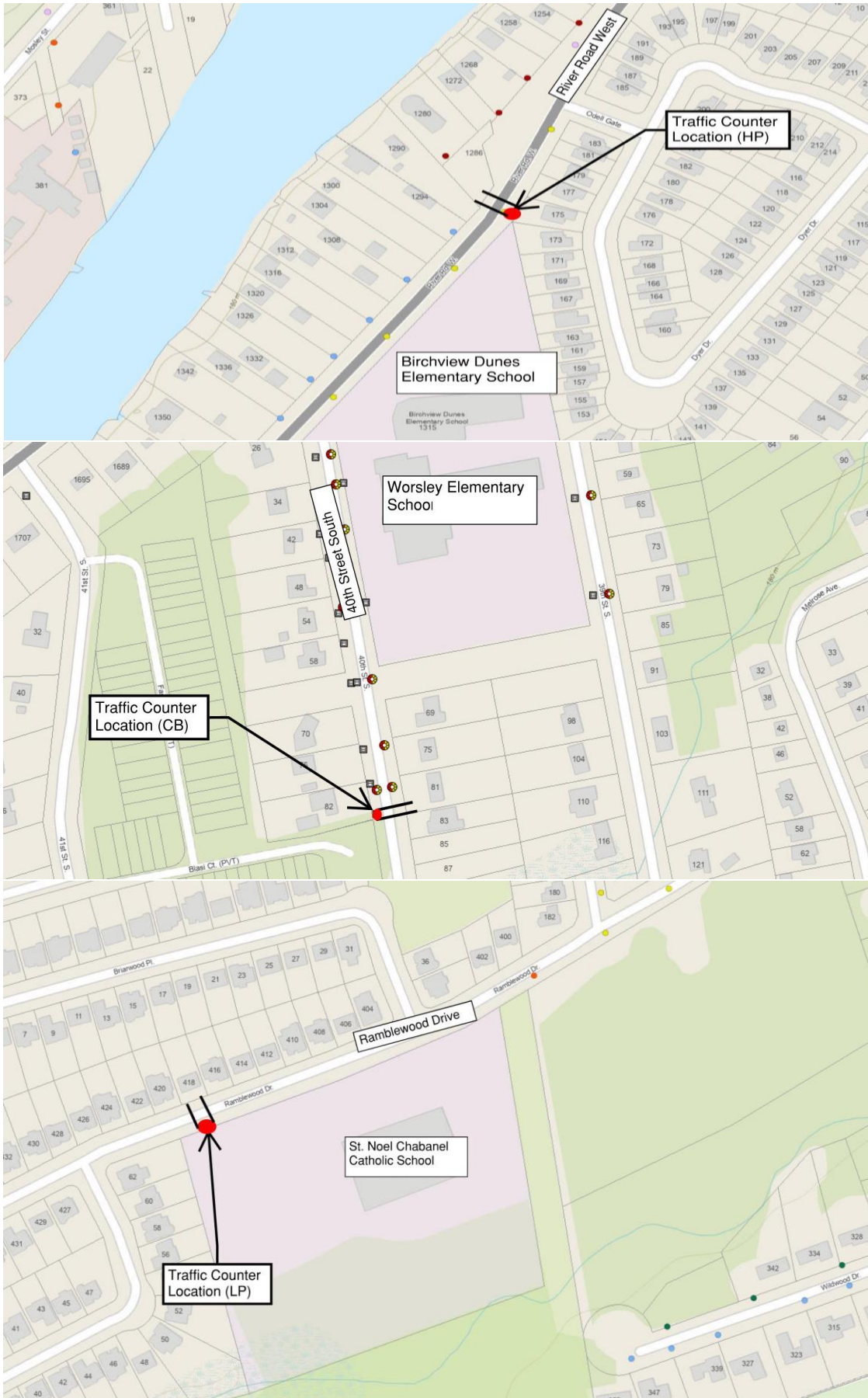
The following is a summary of the findings of this study:

Two (2) traffic data collection devices (ATR – automatic tube reader) were installed outside of #105 & #177 Knox Road West, between Sunnidale Road and 41st Street South. Traffic speed and volumes were recorded continually (24 hours per day) from May 15th to May 29th, 2023. The data concluded that the 85% Speed (majority of motorists) were traveling at 58.7 km/h. Further, that the Median speed was 52.02 km/h, the Mean speed was 51.5 km/h, and the Mean Exceeding the speed limit was 56.22 km/h.

Based on the data received, and in accordance with the Town's Traffic Calming Policy, it was deemed that traffic calming is not warranted for further consideration. The 85th percentile was determined to be 58.0 km/h at #177 Knox Road W and the mean (average) speed was 42.3 km/h. Further, per the Town's Traffic Calming Policy, the need to implement traffic calming measures is based (in part) on the average speed being greater than 10km/h above the posted speed. Therefore, further analysis for traffic calming is not warranted for this area. Notwithstanding, the data was shared with the OPP for consideration of enhanced enforcement.

Traffic Study Report – School Zones (September 1st to September 23rd, 2022)

A study was completed in response to a traffic calming requests received by Public Works for River Road West, 40th Street South and Ramblewood Drive (i.e. in the locations of travel to the three elementary schools). Traffic data was collected within the school zones of the roadways, for 50km/h speeds and when the speed was reduced to 40km/h, as per the “by-law to regulate the speed of traffic in school zones”.



The following is a summary of the findings of this study:

Three (3) traffic data collection devices (ATR – automatic tube reader) were installed at the three streets noted above in the vicinity of the schools. Traffic speed and volumes were recorded continually (24 hours per day) from September 1st to September 23rd. The main purpose of the study was to review the speed of vehicles travelling during the times that the “School Zone Warning” lights are flashing and speed is to be reduced to 40km/h, summarized as follows:

The 85th percentile was 61.2 km/h on River Road West at Birchview Dunes Elementary School and the mean (average) speed was 54.5 km/h.

The 85th percentile was 47.5 km/h on 40th Street South at Worsley Elementary School and the mean (average) speed was 35.3 km/h.

The 85th percentile was 55.8 km/h on Ramblewood Drive at St. Noel Chabanel Elementary School and the mean (average) speed was 47.4 km/h

Based on the data received, and in accordance with the Town’s Traffic Calming Policy, it was deemed that traffic calming was not warranted based on the evaluation and warrant criteria for further consideration. Notwithstanding, the data was shared with the OPP for consideration of enhanced and targeted enforcement.

The following headings are related to the topics itemized above by the Worsley ‘On the Move’ Committee:

1. Traffic Calming

Council adopted the Traffic Calming Policy in November 2017, to provide staff with a guideline and procedure for the initiation, investigation and implementation of traffic calming measures for roadways within the Town. Further, the policy ensured that there would be a formal process defined by which all sites/traffic calming requests can be evaluated using consistent screening and criteria.

Within the Policy, different types of traffic calming measures are discussed and how they are implemented, as well as where they can be installed. For example, speed control measures are intended to reduce vehicle travel speeds and may include speed bumps / humps (rounded, raised areas placed across the roadway). Further, non-physical traffic calming measures would include law enforcement, signing and pavement markings. Both types of traffic calming measures can be considered within school zones, if warranted.

To ensure a consistent evaluation of data and infrastructure, the Assessment of Traffic Calming Need matrix is relied upon and is located in Appendix B of the Policy. Many different factors are considered to assess the area as a whole. Vehicle speed, volume, movement, and collision data are collected for analyses of the traffic data portion. Additionally, the existing roadway characteristics are reviewed for pedestrian routes, points of interest, sight lines / geometry and road widths.

For the evaluation, each item in the matrix is given a scoring value, with a maximum that can be applied. The scores are totaled and depending on the classification of roadway, it is determined if further investigation for traffic calming is warranted.

The Traffic Calming Policy was adopted in 2017, and is slated for review by engineering staff before year-end 2024.

2. Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE)

Since the passing of Bill 65 – Safer Schools Act, the placement of Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) devices were now permitted in School Zones and Community Safety Zones (CSZ) where the speed limit is less than 80km/hour. Ontario Regulation 389/19 was subsequently filed, prescribing the requirements for ASE.

ASE uses radar technology to detect and record images and data which are used to issue tickets to the owner of the offending vehicle.

ASE has been considered by staff since 2020, including presentation and report to Council in November 2020. At that time, there were only a select few (larger) municipalities leveraging this technology, including but not limited to: Toronto, Durham, York, Ottawa, Hamilton, Brampton, Peel, Waterloo, Ajax, Mississauga, London, Pickering, and Oakville.

Similarly, ASE programs in Ontario - at that time - were limited to a collaborative partnership between a participating municipality, their Provincial Offences Act (POA) Court, the Joint Processing Centre with the City of Toronto, the Ministry of Transportation, and Redflex Traffic Systems.

Since then, alternative ASE options are available to municipalities. More recently, the Director of Public Works and Manager of Engineering Services met with a representative of Global Traffic Group (GTG) on November 28, 2023 to review their “turn key” offer for ASE. Based on that meeting, GTG pays for the radar equipment, installation, operation and maintenance of the equipment. The only payment made to GTG is through a percentage of the revenues gained from the speeding tickets issued.

Mobile ASE equipment is temporarily setup in designated Community Safety Zones. As tickets are issued, and speeds are subsequently reduced, the radar equipment can be setup in a new location. Prior to the radar being installed, prescribed (90 day) signage advising motorists that ASE radars are forthcoming is required. Examples of such signage is below.



ASE radars can only be installed in Community Safety Zones (CSZs). Public Works would advise GTG where to install the radars. However, in order to establish the most suitable locations to install

the radars, speed data can be reviewed by GTG by way of traffic data being utilized to create speed “heat zone” maps. The traffic data can either be collected by the Town or by GTG if requested. Engineering staff have already provided GTG with traffic data collected in existing CSZs.

GTG offered that they could provide a pilot project for Wasaga Beach for 12 months to see how the system works before finalizing a decision. Following the 12 month pilot, the Town may retain GTG or go to a Request for Proposals to select a similar service from another organization. GTG have already partnered with Essa Township with success as well as recently with Bradford West Gwillimbury, and is currently reviewing implementation in two other Simcoe County municipalities.

In order to best manage the tickets and related processing, the Town could leverage the recently implemented Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMP) system, which was approved at Council in June 2024. Further discussion internally is required in this regard to confirm staffing implications, including how best to manage. With the Town having its own automated system, no money goes to the external courts. Hearings can be held on-line to contest tickets, etc. It is further understood there might be an opportunity to partner with neighbouring municipalities to handle any “conflict of interest” cases.

ASE technology is strongly supported by staff. More details regarding ASE options will be provided to Council in a future report; however, it is anticipated that a pilot project could easily be initiated once AMP system integration is further understood.

3. Increased By-law and Police Enforcement

It was noted that there are a number of parents that are not comfortable letting their children travel to and from school alone. The vehicle congestion that occurs during the pick-up and drop-off times along 39th and 40th Street South are parents and guardians transporting students. Providing an alternative that parents are comfortable with could reduce the need of increased By-law enforcement patrolling the area.

In recent years, the Town has erected ‘No Stopping’ signage in the vicinity of Worsley Elementary school, and installed bike lanes along Ramblewood Drive in the area of St. Noel Chabanel. Both of these items reduce congestion of parked vehicles for more visibility and safety in the area. They also provide By-law staff with more enforcement powers, as motorists should not be stopping or parking in these areas. It is also noted that school zone flashers have been installed at all sites. Having flashers at each school provides OPP with added powers for speeding enforcement.

A number of traffic studies have also been conducted by Town staff within school zones over the years. The traffic study reports are shared with the OPP for their review and consideration to increase patrol / enforcement. The traffic reports’ data help the OPP to identify blocks of time to monitor, to ensure the most efficient use of staff and resources.

4. Children permitted to cycle on sidewalks

Under Ontario's Highway Traffic Act (HTA), a bicycle is considered a vehicle, just like a car or truck.

The HTA does define bicycles as a vehicle, and recognizing that vehicles are not permitted to travel along sidewalks, it is implied that bicyclists are to use the road rather than sidewalks.

The Government of Ontario website - "Driving and Roads" includes a section regarding Bicycle safety. Within this section, it provides information on where you can ride, and it states that "children under 10 can ride on the sidewalk until they develop the skills to ride on the road with traffic." It is understood that a Bicycle By-law is currently under review with the By-Law Department and will follow under separate report.

5. Municipal Advisory Committee

As confirmed with the Clerk's office, there is currently no delegated Advisory Committee with a mandate related to active transportation etc. to aide the Worsley 'On the Move' Committee. Should Council choose to start such a Committee, one would have to be established.

In absence of a specific committee, appropriate staff from respective Departments can continue to be contacted directly for specific questions relating to their Division / expertise. Unfortunately, resources are limited to commit a designated staff / resource to such a committee.

6. Rec Plex Parking for a "Park and Walk a Block"

Through Worsley 'On The Move' Committee meeting discussions, the idea was put forward to consider a "walking school bus", which is a group of students traveling to and from school with one or more adults to help guide them. The group would meet at a designated area and time, traveling a predetermined route, with the possibility of picking up or dropping off more children during travel. A school survey would need to be conducted, to determine family interest, and how the program would be structured.

It was put forth by the Worsley 'On the Move' Committee that the RecPlex could be a convenient location where parents can drop off and pick up their children at a walking distance from Worsley school. Children would then travel in a supervised group to and from school, which would encourage active transportation. Additionally, this program would help reduce the congestion that occurs during drop off and pick up times, along 39th and 40th Street South. It was proposed that the front parking lot of the RecPlex would be an ideal location, as there is ample parking, a signalized intersection for pedestrian crossing, sidewalks along the whole route, and a distance of about 500m to the school.

In order to determine if the program is viable, it is understood that a school survey would need to be conducted by the school. This would determine if there is interest. This would help determine how many adults are required, in order to have a safe ratio of children to adults in each group.

It is noted in the "Starting a Walking School Bus: The Basics" guide put out by the National Center for Safe Routes to School that such programs require coordination, volunteers and potential attention to other issues such as safety training and liability. The school principal and administration, law enforcement and other community leaders will likely be involved. Further, that changing behaviors of children and parents require creative solutions that are safe and fun.

Surveys have been conducted at Worsley Elementary School, from which parents have provided comments on how their children get to school and their concerns. Parents are not confident that

their children will be safe traveling the route they will need to take to school and traveling on their own. Having an adult supervised group that travels together could help reduce these concerns for families who live within walking and bicycling distance to school. Additionally, there is another program called the “Bicycle School Bus”, which has a similar structure to the walking bus but all the students ride their bikes. Staff would be receptive to such a program if implemented by the school.

7. & 8. Extend Community Safety Zones

Worsley ‘On The Move’ Committee requested to extend the community safety zones around all elementary schools from the current 150 metres to at least 250 metres. They further requested to reduce speed limits in Community Safety Zones for elementary schools from 40km/h to 30km/h, as is being considered by the Town of Collingwood.

It is noted that the Highway Traffic Act (HTA) and Ontario Traffic Manuals (OTM) do not specify the distances to extend beyond parks etc. for community safety zone limits. However, the HTA does indicate that Council of a municipality may pass a by law to: “designate a portion of a highway under its jurisdiction that adjoins the entrance to or exit from a school and that is within 150 metres along the highway in either direction beyond the limits of the land used for the purposes of the school”. With this in mind, current signage is of sufficient distance.

However, staff would not be opposed to extending those limits to as far as 250 metres, if deemed appropriate by Council. Estimated cost to relocate would involve Public Works labour and could take upwards of 2 – 3 weeks, subject to resources. Additionally, please see notes below under “Other” for Ramblewood Drive.

As for the request of further reducing the posted speed within community safety zones from 40km/h to 30km/h, Public Works is not currently considering this as necessary. It should be noted that once the ASE program is implemented, Public Works can have the radar equipment installed within school zones and in any community safety zone to further encourage speed reduction and issue fines to those not complying with the posted speed.

9. School Crossing Guard Program

Section 176 of the Highway Traffic Act (HTA) sets out specific legislation for the operation of school crossing guards (SCG), including penalty fines for drivers who fail to stop for a crossing guard.

One of the most comprehensive guidelines for crossing guards has been created by the Ontario Traffic Council (OTC), who prepared the School Crossing Guard Guide (SCGG) for use by municipalities across the province. The OTC has ensured that the SCGG is easy to understand, justified in its guidance, and straightforward to implement.

Studies have indicated that one of the reasons that children don’t walk to school is their parents’ concerns about traffic safety. The presence of a SCG helps address those concerns and give parents the confidence to let their child walk to and from school. However, a school crossing guard should not be considered the only or first tool to improve the safety of students as they cross roadways to and from school. It is further noted that considering the cost and administrative efforts to implement and run a crossing guard program, once it is introduced, it would be very difficult for

a municipality to remove the program if it were found to be unmanageable or not economically feasible.

School Crossing Guard Program implementation is a very complex process that involves determining an exposure index, investigating the number of conflicts, analysis of traffic data, and additional assessments. It should also be noted that crossing guards only help students to cross the road, they do not actually direct traffic.

Some of the criteria considered in crossing guard warrant analysis includes vehicular speed and volume, number of lanes, sight line distances (for pedestrians and drivers), proximity to the school, collision history, motorist behaviour, as well as pedestrian volumes and presence of pedestrian facilities.

It should be noted that OTM Book 15 Section 4.2 – Hierarchy of Controlled Pedestrian Crossings Treatment Systems lists in order the hierarchy of types of crossings, from least controlled to most controlled, as follows:

- a. Supervised School Crossing (i.e. crossing guard)
- b. Stop Controlled or Yield Controlled Intersections
- c. Pedestrian Crossovers (PXO)
- d. Traffic Signals

As such, a supervised school crossing is actually deemed to not be as adequate as a stop controlled intersection. It is noted that at all major crossing locations in Wasaga Beach, the crossings are at minimum stop controlled, if not traffic signals.

As a final thought on this subject, it is noted that on March 26, 2024 the Tecumseh Town Council meeting adopted a number of new traffic calming policies. Through these new policies, Council received a report regarding the current School Crossing Guard Program relative to new pedestrian crossover and traffic control measures. These new policies were to provide broader coverage, to utilizing pedestrian crossovers treatments with higher control levels, at current crossing guard locations. During May's Tecumseh Town Council meeting, it was decided to phase out the school crossing guard program, to be replaced by pedestrian crossovers and other traffic control measures. The Town has seven crossing guards, at five schools and it was noted that the cost of running the crossing guard program is \$110,000 per year.

Should a crossing guard program be considered, it will need to be determined which Department would oversee such a program and what staffing resources would be required to manage same.

Regardless of the aforementioned, it is recommended that, following the "walk audit" proposed by the 'On the Move' Committee, when primary crossing locations are confirmed, further review and discussion should be held to determine the best form of crossing identification at those locations, whether they are converted to PXOs or other means to make the crossing locations more prominent, including line painting.

It is recommended that, should Council wish to pursue the option of a Town wide crossing guard program warrant analysis, then the review and recommendations should be provided by one of the Town's transportation engineering consultants. The cost to undertake such an analysis is

estimated to be approximately \$15,000 and could be included in the 2025 budget for further review and consideration.

10. School Routes Map

Town Engineering staff will collaborate with the 'On the Move' Committee and the Town's GIS Coordinator to prepare a route map through the summer of 2024.

Creating a school routes map(s) can be helpful to families for planning the journey to/from school. The map would show walking routes, with points of interest and key features within the area. The maps would help guide students to crosswalks, routes with bike lanes and sidewalks, signalized intersections, and school crossing guard locations (if applicable). Further, the map can identify designated drop off and pick up areas to help promote active transportation to school, which can reduce vehicle congestion around schools.

Other

Other considerations may be taken for added safety on walk routes to school. For example, major crossings for access to schools could be re-painted or enhanced between the standard white line crosswalk painting for more prominent crossing locations, such as on Ramblewood Drive at Denis Drive and at 58th Street South. The Mosley Street crossing for Worsley at 39th Street South is already prominent with the pride / inclusivity colours painted for the crossing, together with the push button signals for crossing.

"Zebra stripes" are also already used for the River Road West crossing for Birchview Dunes. It is noted that zebra stripes are typically to be used with a combination of other intersections controls such as pedestrian crossovers, assisted crossings, signals, etc.; however, these stripes are becoming more widely considered/accepted as an enhanced stand-alone solution locally, as well.

It is also recommended that to provide for safer crossing of Ramblewood Drive at 58th Street, the existing school zone and community safety zone (CSZ) limits are currently located to the west of 58th Street South. It is recommended that the school zone and CSZ be relocated to the east of 58th Street South, which would put the 58th Street crossing within the reduced speed limit zone when the lights are flashing for safer crossing. This can be achieved by installing an additional school zone sign on the north side of Ramblewood Drive, mid-block between 58th Street South and Beatrice Drive for the westbound traffic, as well as relocate the existing CSZ on the south side of the road to the same location. This would lengthen the CSZ limits by approximately 90m and would be generally consistent with the 'On the Move' Committee request to extend CSZ limits from 150m to 250m.

Further to above, for the eastbound approach, the CSZ already starts just east of Sugar Maple Lane and therefore, the Denis Drive crossing is already in the CSZ and does not require any further adjustments.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

Should additional signage be required for any of the proposed improvements, traffic sign installation can range in cost, depending if it is a warning or regulatory sign, how it is mounted, size, scope of labour, etc. It is estimated that a sign install would typically cost between \$300 and \$400 each, plus the labour for installation by Public Works staff.

The cost to place a new school zone sign on Ramblewood Drive, east of 58th Street is as per above, and the cost to relocate the existing CSZ sign would be covered by Public Works labour.

The estimated cost to paint zebra striping within the applicable crosswalks can range between \$1,200 to \$2,500 depending on the width of intersection.

As departmental oversight is uncertain, it is anticipated that staffing resources would be limited to implement and administer a school crossing guard program. If a warrant analysis is to be considered for every school location, this would require staff to engage the services from one of our transportation consultants. The study is estimated to cost \$15,000 and would be dependent on the number of school locations, data that needs to be collected, and other factors such as population size of the walkable catchment area, geometry, analysis of warrant of potential traffic signals to facilitate the crosswalk area, etc. Further, through the warrant analysis, it is unknown how many school crossing guard locations would be justified for each school.

As indicated above, if the analysis warrants crossing guards, departmental oversight will need to be confirmed, as well as staffing resources needed to implement, recruit, train and manage such a program.

Term of Council Priorities:

#14 Undertake neighbourhood walking audits

Through discussions at the Worsley 'On the Move' Committee meetings, it was agreed upon that completing an audit during the 2023/2024 school year would not be conclusive to implementing future goals/priorities. This was based on the premise that with the new elementary school opening in September (in Sunnidale Trails) and the proposed catchment zone, the number of students and the way they travel would be greatly altered. Therefore, it was decided to wait until early fall 2024 to undertake a neighbourhood walking audit.

#15 Explore traffic calming in vulnerable locations (schools)

Traffic studies have been completed at each of the school locations, and based on the data received (see summary above), traffic calming measures were not warranted in accordance with Traffic Calming Policy.

The Traffic Calming Policy is up for review later in 2024; however, it is recommended that the ASE program be advanced, now that the Town has established an AMP system. A follow up report and recommendation will follow and/or such costs (if any) will be included in the 2025 budget for Council consideration.

#16 Implement Safe Routes to School

A 'Routes to School' map is an effective tool to help families plan their active and safe routes to/from school.

To encourage active transportation, the Worsley 'On the Move' Committee requested signs to be installed displaying the "On the move" logo. Public Works staff installed signs within a 10 minute walk zone along 39th Street South and 40th Street South. Further, signs were also installed east and west of the school along Mosley Street.

Worsley 'On the Move' Committee members and residents also completed sidewalk stencil painting on 39th & 40th Street South.

Public Works also extended a new paved shoulder along the west side of 39th Street from the existing sidewalk to Knox Road West and improved line painting along Sunnisdale Road South in the vicinity of Mosely Street.

#17 Identify & construct additional priority sidewalks

As part of the capital works project for Ramblewood Drive Reconstruction, installation of sidewalks and dedicated bike lanes were completed in July 2023. Sidewalks were installed on the north side of the roadway from the Medical Centre at 45th Street South to 58th Street South. 58th Street intersection has an all-way stop control to help facilitate pedestrians crossing the road to the south side.

Additionally, bike lanes were also implemented on both sides along this area of roadway. This improves the safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and especially children traveling to and from St. Noel Chabanel Catholic Elementary School. Similarly, the recent Trillium Creek Berm construction accommodated a new trail extension to St. Noel Chabanel School.

In 2023, Public Works staff completed a new paved shoulder along the west side of 39th Street South, from the end of the existing sidewalk near the school to Knox Road West. Further, pavement line painting was applied, specifically a white solid edge line, to help keep vehicle traffic in their lane.

Urbanization of River Road West from Veterans Way to Blueberry Trail (which is currently ongoing construction) will have sidewalk installed on both sides of the roadway for a total distance of 2.5km. There will also be new traffic signals installed at the easterly intersection of Silver Birch Avenue and River Road West. This will greatly help with pedestrian access to and from Birchview Dunes Elementary School.

CONCLUSIONS:

A number of measures have been implemented recently including introduction of sidewalk and bike lanes on Ramblewood Drive to help with access to St. Noel Chabanel, and introduction of sidewalks and bike lanes on River Road West (currently ongoing) will help with access to Birchview Dunes. Sidewalk was installed along 39th Street South for access to Worsley in 2016, with extension of a paved shoulder from the sidewalk southerly to Knox Road West in 2023.

Additionally, the introduction of a new elementary school in Sunnidale Trails will have sidewalk access throughout the development.

The idea of a “Walk Bus” has been suggested for Worsley Elementary, which requires more feedback from the parents and organization for adults to lead this potential “Walk Bus”; however, staff have no concerns in this regard.

An Active and Safe Routes to School map will be worked on through the summer of 2024 through collaboration with Engineering and GIS staff together with the Worsley ‘On the Move’ Committee.

The 2017 Traffic Calming Policy will be reviewed by Public Works Engineering staff in the winter of 2024/2025.

Further studies are required to determine other measures that may be considered as outlined in the report above, including a “walk audit” by the Worsley ‘On the Move’ Committee when schools re-open in September 2024.

Since the recent passing of the Automated Monetary Penalty System (AMPS), staff can now leverage such system to advance the implementation of Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) technology. A separate report will follow; however, ASE is recommended by staff.

Additionally, should a Crossing Guard Warrant Analysis be considered, budget for same will be considered as part of the 2025 budget for Council consideration.

Authored by,

Mark Taylor, C.E.T.
Project Coordinator

Mike Pincivero, P.Eng.
Manager of Engineering

Appendices:

Appendix A: Traffic Calming Request Form

Appendix B: Assessment of Traffic Calming Need