

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Public Works

Speed Management and Road Safety Reviews – Princeton, Plattsville, Woodstock and Zorra

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That County Council endorse the implementation of speed management and road safety measures in Princeton (Oxford Road 2, Oxford Road 3), Plattsville (Oxford Road 8), Woodstock (Oxford Road 59) and Zorra (Oxford Road 7) as described in Report No. PW 2022-26;
2. And further, that a by-law be presented to County Council at the July 13, 2022 Council meeting to amend By-law No. 5725-2015 to designate and modify speed zone limits as outlined in Report No. PW 2022-26.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The purpose of this report is to seek County Council endorsement to implement recommended speed management, traffic management and road safety measures on certain County roads in Princeton, Plattsville, Woodstock and Zorra.
- Adjustments to speed zone limits and posted speeds in the subject areas are recommended to align with village limits and/or the limits of built up areas in accordance with Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) guideline criteria to promote uniform traffic flow and reduce the risk of collisions.
- Implementation measures include, but are not limited to, the installation of electronic speed feedback signs (Oxford Road 2 and Oxford Road 3 – Princeton, Oxford Road 8 – Plattsville, Oxford Road 59 – Woodstock), realignment of community gateway signage and installation of additional street lights (Oxford Road 2 and Oxford Road 3 – Princeton, Oxford Road 8 – Plattsville) and construction of dedicated left turn lane facilities (Oxford Road 59 – Woodstock).

Implementation Points

Road safety measures identified for immediate implementation will proceed following Council authorization and enactment of by-law amendments.

Approval from Brant County Council will be required for proposed speed zone adjustments on Oxford Road 2 in Princeton since it is a boundary road jointly owned by both Oxford and Brant Counties. Brant County staff will seek approval from Brant County Council and enactment of a matching by-law subject to the adoption of the recommendations contained in this report by Oxford County Council.

A number of additional measures will be considered for future implementation pending the findings of ongoing monitoring and overall effectiveness of the immediate measures.

Financial Impact

Traffic calming and road safety measures recommended for immediate implementation will be funded from the 2022 Business Plan and Budget.

Communications

Staff liaised with respective Area Municipality staff representatives, Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Woodstock Police Services (WPS), residents and Brant County staff throughout the establishment of work plans and the outcomes (findings and recommendations) of the speed management and road safety reviews noted above. Staff presented the review findings and recommendations to the respective Area Municipality Councils on the following dates:

- Oxford Road 2 and Oxford Road 3 – Princeton and Oxford Road 8 – Plattsville were presented to Township of Blandford-Blenheim Council on Wednesday, March 16, 2022;
- Oxford Road 59 – Woodstock was presented to the City of Woodstock Council on Thursday, March 17, 2022; and
- Oxford Road 7 – Township of Zorra was presented to the Township of Zorra Council on Wednesday, April 6, 2022.







Community consultation and engagement efforts for the proposed speed management and road safety implementation measures in the subject areas included information posted on [Speak up, Oxford \(SUO\)](#), social media and direct mailouts (Attachment 1) to residents in the vicinity of the proposed changes.

Information was posted on SUO on March 14, 2022 and the link was shared with Township of Blandford-Blenheim, Township of Zorra, and City of Woodstock staff for posting on their respective websites. Notices were mailed on April 11, 2022 which advised residents of proposed road safety measures in the subject areas and information on how they could request a delegation and/or submit written comments to be received by County Council at the May 25, 2022 Council meeting. Social media posts were issued the week of May 2, 2022 advising residents of the speed management and road safety reviews and upcoming County Council meeting on May 25, 2022.

Following County Council's adoption of By-law No. 5725-2015 amendments on July 13, 2022, Public Works will work with the communications team to develop proactive communications that clarify these speed management and road safety measures. This may include social media, direct mailing, advertising and/or other approaches.

Report No. PW 2022-26, along with any potential amendments, will be circulated to the Township of Zorra, City of Woodstock, Township of Blandford-Blenheim, Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and Woodstock Police Services (WPS) for information.

Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

					
WORKS WELL TOGETHER	WELL CONNECTED	SHAPES THE FUTURE	INFORMS & ENGAGES	PERFORMS & DELIVERS	POSITIVE IMPACT
1.ii.	2.i.		4.ii.	5.ii.	

DISCUSSION

Background

Speed management and road safety reviews were recently completed at a number of locations throughout the County in response to requests from Area Municipality representatives and residents. Oxford County Council also received a petition representing 100 plus residents and correspondence from the City of Woodstock at the March 10, 2021 County Council meeting to reduce the speed limit on Oxford Road 59/Vansittart Avenue, and directed Public Works staff to prepare a report regarding the matter. The locations are as follows:

- Oxford Road 2 and Oxford Road 3 (Princeton – Township of Blandford-Blenheim);
- Oxford Road 7 (north of Ingersoll – Township of Zorra);
- Oxford Road 8 (Douro St, Plattsville – Township of Blandford-Blenheim); and
- Oxford Road 59 (Vansittart Ave, from Oxford Road 17 to CP Railway - City of Woodstock).

Staff retained a third party Consultant (Dillon Consulting) to undertake the speed management and road safety reviews in Plattsville, Princeton, Woodstock and Oxford Road 7 using traffic speed, volume, vehicle class and collision data provided by the County.

A third party consultant (Pyramid Traffic Inc.) was utilized to collect 7 day, 24 hour traffic data including speed, volume and vehicle class information in the subject areas.

Additional speed data was collected on Oxford Rd 2 from February 16 – 28, 2022 by Brant County staff and provided to Oxford County to further inform the speed and road safety review undertaken in Princeton.

County-wide Approach to Speed Management and Traffic Calming

The 2022 speed and road safety reviews undertaken in Plattsville, Princeton, Woodstock and Oxford Road 7 were completed in accordance with the County-wide approach that was adopted by County Council through Report No. PW 2019-14. This approach identifies the following key principles that can be applied consistently across the County-wide road network for the development of recommended speed management and traffic calming implementation measures.

- Adoption of posted speeds and speed zone limits which are consistent with the driving environment in accordance with *Canadian Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits – Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) - 2009*;
- Regular/ongoing speed monitoring in communities and settlement areas;
- Information sharing/collaboration with Police, municipal partners and community members;
- Identifying and prioritizing implementation of traffic calming measures;
- Consideration of speed management, traffic calming and road safety measures as part of road design/geometry for planned future road rehabilitation/land development; and
- Ongoing monitoring to evaluate effectiveness of speed reduction, traffic calming and road safety measures following implementation.

Vehicle Operating Speeds, Posted Speeds and Speed Zone Limits

Within the study areas, vehicle operating speeds (85th percentile) exceeded posted speeds in varying degrees ranging from not excessive to very excessive and in some instances reduced speed zone limits extended beyond the limits of built up areas.

Current posted speeds in Princeton (Oxford Rd 2 and Oxford Rd 3), Plattsville (Oxford Rd 8), Woodstock (Oxford Rd 59) and Township of Zorra (Oxford Rd 7) were found to be below recommended posted speeds in accordance with TAC guideline criteria. Further, limits of speed zones did not substantively align with the limits of built up areas/urban road cross section and TAC guideline criteria in many cases.

With respect to posted speed limits, there is a general belief that increasing the posted speed to better align with the driving environment and promote a more consistent flow of traffic will result in traffic speed increases. This is evident when reviewing the community feedback received from residents in Princeton and Plattsville areas, where staff are recommending adjustments to posted speed limits.

However, contrary evidence exists where the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) recently conducted a study where traffic speeds were increased to 110 km/h on several 400 series highways across the province. Throughout the study, the MTO monitored all raised speed limit sections for safety/operations and concluded that the operating speeds and collision trends within these sections remained comparable to other similar highway sections where speed limits remain unchanged at 100 km/h. On March 29, 2022, the province issued a news release titled "[Ontario Raising Highway Speed Limits](#)" which provided further details on the study, findings and implementation measures.

Although it may be perceived that the MTO study and findings are only applicable to 400 series highways, the evidence based engineering principles adopted and utilized for setting posted speeds (TAC Guidelines) are the same whether they're used for assessing a highway or the County's arterial roads. Staff interpret that the MTO findings and recommendations support traffic engineering science that the driving environment influences driver behaviour when selecting a safe operating speed (as opposed to the posted speed limit).

Driver's choice of speed is significantly influenced by the driving environment and road design and most drivers travel at a speed they consider to be safe regardless of posted speed limits. Simply imposing lower posted speed limits is ineffective in reducing operating speeds unless the posted speed and/or reduced speed zone limits align with changes in the driving environment, matching driver expectations based on their surroundings and visual cues.

Posted speed limits set substantively lower than the operating/design speeds reduces enforcement effectiveness and can result in:

- Tailgating
- Impatient Drivers
- Increased passing
- Greater collision risk

Comments

The work plan, findings and proposed recommendations for safety reviews completed in Princeton and Plattsville (Township of Blandford-Blenheim), City of Woodstock and Oxford Road 7 (Township of Zorra) are detailed in Attachments 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively. Area Municipality Councils each passed respective resolutions (Attachment 6, 7 and 8) indicating general support for the proposed immediate and future speed management and traffic calming recommendations with some exceptions noted below.

Princeton (Oxford Road 2 and Oxford Road 3), Plattsville (Oxford Road 8)

Blandford-Blenheim Township Council was generally in support of the proposed speed management and traffic calming measures recommended for Oxford Road 3 in Princeton and Oxford Road 8 in Plattsville as detailed in Attachment 2 and 3 respectively. However, Blandford-Blenheim Township Council did not support the traffic calming measures recommended for Oxford Road 2 with the exception of the installation of electronic speed feedback signs (Attachment 6).

Recommendations for Immediate Implementation

The main speed management and traffic calming recommendations for immediate near term implementation in 2022 are as follows:

Princeton (Oxford Road 2):

- Adjust limit of the 80 km/h speed zone at the west village approach to align with the visual change in the driving environment;
- Relocate gateway signage to the west village limit and the built up area at the east end of the village;
- Extend street lights to the west village limit and the built up area at the east end of the village;
- Adjust 60 km/h posted speed at west approach to 70 km/h from the proposed limit of the 80 km/h speed zone (Horner Creek) to the west village limit; and
- Adjust 50 km/h posted speed zone to 60 km/h from west village limit to the built up area at the east end of the village and install associated electronic speed feedback signs for westbound and eastbound vehicles where the proposed 60 km/h speed zone begins.

Princeton (Oxford Road 3):

- Eliminate 60 km/h posted speed transition zone north of Township Road 2/Roper Street (becomes 80 km/h) and install electronic speed feedback sign for incoming traffic from north approach where 50 km/h zone begins;
- Relocate gateway signage to align with the village limits at the north approach; and
- Install temporary electronic speed feedback sign within village limits for outgoing traffic north of Cowan Street West until such time that road reconstruction/urbanization is completed (scheduled for 2025).

Plattsville (Oxford Road 8):

- Extend 50 km/h zone south to align with the limits of the urban road cross section;
- Adjust 60 km/h posted speed zone to 70 km/h and extend further south to align with the village limits and install electronic speed feedback sign for northbound traffic at the southern limit of the proposed 70 km/h speed zone;
- Installation of electronic speed feedback sign for southbound traffic between the Nith River bridge and Seaton Street;
- Relocate gateway signage closer to village limits; and
- Extend street lighting to Elizabeth Street.

Woodstock (Oxford Road 59):

- Installation of electronic speed feedback signs for southbound traffic north of Ridgewood Avenue, and for northbound traffic between Fairway Road/Frederick Street and Pittock Park Road; and
- Intersection improvements that include dedicated left turn lanes at Fairway Road/Frederick Street, Pittock Park Road and Ridgewood Avenue.

Zorra (Oxford Road 7):

- Reduce 80 km/h posted speed zone to 70 km/h through rural settlement cluster; and
- Elimination of existing 60 km/h posted speed transition zone north of Newton Street (becomes 70 km/h).

Recommendations for Future Consideration

Recommendations for future consideration include the following:

- Extension of urban road cross section (Princeton and Woodstock);
- Reduction of road width (Oxford Road 3, Princeton);
- Pedestrian warrant study (Oxford Road 3, Princeton);
- Built features at Community limits - gateways, entrance signage, landscaping, pavement markings and flexible delineators (Plattsville, Princeton);
- Consideration of Community Safety Zones/Automated Speed Enforcement;
- Ongoing post monitoring and data sharing with Police; and
- Townships to consider development of Local Community Watch programs.

Ongoing post monitoring will be undertaken after implementation of proposed immediate traffic calming measures to determine the effectiveness in reducing traffic operating speed and consideration of further measures as necessary.

Police (OPP, WPS) have been fully engaged in collaborative discussions with County and Area Municipality representatives throughout the various safety reviews and agree to support recommended speed management implementation measures through initial and ongoing enforcement and speed data analysis.

Public Consultation

During the public consultation campaign, two residents in Princeton and one resident in Plattsville were concerned with proposed adjustments of posted speeds on Oxford Road 2 in Princeton and Oxford Road 8/Douro Street in Plattsville, respectively. Residents felt that increasing the posted speed would only result in higher traffic speeds. One resident in Woodstock indicated they did not believe that intersection improvements (addition of left turn lanes) on Oxford Road 59/Vansittart Avenue would reduce traffic speeds.

Two residents have also submitted delegation requests to the County Clerk for the May 25, 2022 County Council meeting.

Conclusions

Speeding concerns identified by Area Municipality representatives and community members in the subject areas have been validated by traffic speed, volume, vehicle class and collision data. Staff utilized traffic management principles and engineering best practice methodologies to develop evidence based recommendations intended to improve safety from its current state at these locations.

The recommendations are believed to appropriately balance traffic engineering science with local community perceptions of safety within the respective County Road networks which pass through these communities and are generally supported by Area Municipality staff and Councils (with the exception of speed zone adjustments on Oxford Road 2 in Princeton).

Staff will continue to collaborate with Area Municipalities, stakeholder agencies, Police and community members to monitor vehicle operating speeds and evaluate the effectiveness of traffic calming measures and make further incremental changes as necessary.

SIGNATURES

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Original signed by:

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Original signed by:

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Approved for submission:

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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Speed Management and Road Safety Community Update
- Attachment 2: Workplan, Findings and Recommendations for Princeton – Oxford Road 2 and Oxford Road 3
- Attachment 3: Workplan, Findings and Recommendations for Plattsville – Oxford Road 8
- Attachment 4: Workplan, Findings and Recommendations for Woodstock – Oxford Road 59 (Vansittart Avenue)
- Attachment 5: Workplan, Findings and Recommendations for Oxford Road 7, north of Ingersoll
- Attachment 6: Township of Blandford-Blenheim Council Resolution
- Attachment 7: City of Woodstock Council Resolution
- Attachment 8: Township of Zorra Council Resolution