

30 km/h Speed Limit Policy

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Category: Traffic Services Service Area Policy

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Policy Statement

This policy defines the criteria that must be met in order to establish a 30 km/h posted speed limit on an existing roadway within the city of Ottawa.

Purpose

The purpose of the Policy is to establish a set of criteria, based on roadway and road user considerations, which will allow staff to determine existing locations where the posting of a 30 km/h speed limit is most appropriate. The 30 km/h Speed Limit Policy helps to promote a consistent application by the City and supports greater motorist compliance with the posted speed limit.

Application

This Policy will be used by the Transportation Services Department's Traffic Services Service Area (Traffic Services) staff to determine whether a roadway is eligible to be posted at 30 km/h when requested to do so by residents, Councillors and other internal partners.

Policy Requirements

When a request is received by Traffic Services staff to post a lower speed limit on a roadway, staff will conduct a site investigation and collect the necessary data to review the roadway to assess its eligibility for a 30 km/hr posted speed limit.

There are two scenarios, where streets may be eligible for a posted speed limit conversion to 30 km/h. These are:

Scenario 1: The operational speed of the existing roadway is equal to or less than 35 km/h. In this case, a posted speed limit of 30 km/h will be implemented.

Scenario 2: The existing roadway, which has an operating speed greater than 35 km/h, meets the Roadway and Traffic Environment criteria, the Active Transportation Environment criteria and the petition process requirements where applicable.

Roadway and Traffic Environment (all five conditions must be met)

1. Roadway Classification and/or Strong Pedestrian presence:

- a. As defined in the City of Ottawa [Transportation Master Plan 2013](#), local roads “provide direct access to adjacent lands” and “serve neighbourhood travel to and from collector or arterial roads. The primary function of a local roadway, from a transportation perspective, is to provide access to the abutting land use”; mobility is only a secondary consideration.
 - b. A strong pedestrian presence is defined as a count of greater than 20 pedestrians per peak hour, or 60 pedestrians per 4 hours, or 15 elderly/children crossing the roadway during peak hour per block.
- 2. Transit Operations:** For roads with transit service, a 30 km/h speed limit will only be considered if the service is infrequent (3 trips per hour per direction or fewer) or if the road already operates at 30 km/h or more slowly during daytime hours (generally 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday). A 30 km/h speed limit will not be considered on roadways that have a high frequency bus route. Only those roadways with volumes of no more than 3 buses per hour per direction will be considered, or where it can be demonstrated that prevailing traffic conditions result in vehicles operating at an actual speed of less than 30 km/h.”

3. Travel Lane Width:

- a. Two-way roadways with no more than 1 lane in each direction, with a width of 7 meters or less for both lanes combined (not including parking)
- b. One-way roadways with no more than 2 lanes in one direction, with a width of 7 meters or less for both lanes combined (not including parking)

Note: On all roadways with a pavement width greater than 7 m, parking must be permitted on at least parts of one side of the roadway, ideally enclosed by a physical element at the beginning and the end of the parking lane or parking bay.

4. **Speed Limit:** The current speed limit is no higher than 50 km/h.
5. **Daily Traffic Volume:** Maximum of 2,500 vehicles per day

Active Transportation Environment (at least one of seven conditions must be met)

- Elementary or junior high school abutting the roadway
- Improved parkland (i.e. not vacant or undeveloped parcel) abutting the roadway
- Significant pedestrian generator (i.e. older adult residences) abutting the roadway
- No dedicated cycling facility
- No sidewalks along the roadway
- Existing physical traffic calming measures that were installed to address a speeding issue (ex. speed humps, curb extensions, etc.)
- Lack of safe stopping sight distance

In addition to meeting the Roadway and Traffic Environment criteria and the Active Transportation Environment criteria as listed above, the entrance to the 30 km/h zone must be no more than 7 meters wide for local residential roadways. For those local residential roadways with a width greater than 7 meters, temporary traffic calming measures to reduce the entrance throat of the roadway to the recommended 7 m width must be available to pursue a 30 km/h posted speed limit. Temporary traffic calming measures include, but are not limited to flex stakes, temporary curbing or pavement markings.

Where the roadway has an operating speed greater than 35 km/h and does not meet the necessary criteria as listed above, staff will offer the requestor a petition to change the speed limit to 40 km/h, as per the existing Speed Zoning Policy.

Where the operating speed of the roadway is less than or equal to 35 km/h a petition will not be required and a 30 km/h speed limit will be established.

In instances where the roadway's operating speed is greater than 35 km/h, the roadway meets all of the necessary criteria and the roadway entrance width can be narrowed via temporary traffic calming measures, the following will apply based on the roadway type:

- **Local Residential Roadway:** Staff will offer to provide the requestor with a petition for a change to a 30 km/h speed limit in accordance with the 30 km/h Speed Limit Policy.
- **Traditional Main Streets with a Strong Pedestrian Presence:** A petition will not be offered by staff to the requestor as it is not required. In order to implement a 30 km/h speed limit on such roadways meeting the criteria, concurrence must be provided to Traffic Services staff by the respective Business Improvement Area (BIA). In the absence of an established BIA, Ward Councillor concurrence is required.

Where a petition is required to reduce the speed limit, Traffic Services staff will prepare the petition form in which all affected households will be identified. Staff will also provide wording on the petition as to what residents may expect in terms of signage changes within the right-of-way. It is the responsibility of the resident to petition every address listed on the petition form provided by the City. The rate of support required in support of the speed limit change is set at 66% of all addresses listed to be consistent with the 40 km/h speed limit change process as identified in the City's Speed Zoning Policy.

The petition not only serves to inform City staff of the proportion of residents who support the change in speed limit, but it also provides notice to the residents along the affected street that a change may occur and that there may be some signage installed within the City right-of-way adjacent to their property.

Petition from Affected Residents (when applicable)

- Requires support of 66% of affected households
- For multi-family dwelling units (ex. apartment buildings), only one signature is required from the property manager.

Responsibilities

Traffic Services staff will be responsible for collecting and evaluating the data to determine if the roadway meets the criteria to establish a 30 km/h speed limit. Traffic Services staff will also be responsible for confirming the availability of temporary measures to reduce local residential roadway widths where applicable, issuing the work orders and installing the signage required to establish the speed limit within the right-of-way, once criteria are met.

References

[City of Ottawa Speed Zoning Policy](#), 2009 (ACS2009-COS-PWS-0021)

Enquiries

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