

**5. Reduction of Speed Limit on Main Street to 40 km/h**

**Réduction de la limite de vitesse sur la rue Main à 40 km/h**

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council approve that the speed limit on Main Street from McIlraith Bridge to Colonel By Drive, be reduced to 40 km/h in both directions.**

**RECOMMANDATION DU COMITÉ**

**Que le Conseil approuve la réduction de la limite de vitesse sur la rue Main, du pont McIlraith à la promenade du Colonel-By, à 40 km/h dans les deux directions.**

**DOCUMENTATION**

Councillor's report, dated August 23, 2021 (ACS2021-OCC-TRC-0022 ).

Rapport du Conseiller, daté le 23 août 2021 (ACS2021-OCC-TRC-0022 ).

**Subject: Reduction of Speed Limit on Main Street to 40 km/h**

**File Number ACS2021-OCC-TRC-0022**

**Report to Transportation Committee on 1 September 2021**

**and Council 8 September 2021**

**Submitted on August 23, 2021 by Councillor S. Menard**

**Contact Person: Councillor S. Menard**

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**Ward: Capital (17)**

**Objet : Réduction de la limite de vitesse sur la rue Main à 40 km/h**

**Dossier : ACS2021-OCC-TRC-0022**

**Rapport au Comité des transports le 1er septembre 2021**

**et au Conseil le 8 septembre 2021**

**Soumis le 23 août 2021 Conseiller S. Menard**

**Personne ressource : Conseiller S. Menard**

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**Quartier : Capitale (17)**

#### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**That the Transportation Committee recommend Council approve that the speed limit on Main Street from McIlraith Bridge to Colonel By Drive, be reduced to 40 km/h in both directions.**

#### **RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Comité des transports recommande au Conseil d'approuver la réduction de la limite de vitesse sur la rue Main, du pont McIlraith à la promenade du Colonel-By, à 40 km/h dans les deux directions.**

## BACKGROUND

Main Street is a traditional main street located in Old Ottawa East. It is a mix-use street, with commercial, residential and institutional development. The speed limit is currently 50 km/h.

In 2017, Main Street—from McIlraith Bridge to Hawthorne Avenue—was re-constructed as a *Complete Street*. The roadway was narrowed, raised cycle tracks implemented and improved pedestrian facilities constructed. Planning is currently underway to complete work on Main Street to convert the entire length of the street—from the bridge to Colonel By Drive—into a Complete Street.

A 30 km/h residential area speed zone was implemented for the western half of Old Ottawa East in 2020. The recent Greystone development in Old Ottawa East is also a 30 km/h speed zone, and a 30 km/h speed zone for the remainder of Old Ottawa East is planned for 2021.

Main Street is home to many local businesses, single-detached homes, multi-home buildings, Immaculata High School and sports field, St. Paul's University, the Old Town Hall Community Centre, a daycare and two churches. Lady Evelyn Alternative School and St. Nicholas Adult High School are each situated less than a block from Main Street.

The conversion of Main Street to a Complete Street has facilitated a transformation of Main Street, attracting more residences and businesses, leading to a more active street life, increased pedestrian activity and increased bicycling.

## DISCUSSION

Street safety is a significant concern for the residents of Old Ottawa East and Capital Ward. Both traffic speed and speed limits have an impact on the safety of all road users.

In the last five years, the profile of Main Street has changed. The Complete Street conversion and many developments have led to increased pedestrian and bicycling activity, as well as the opening of new businesses, and the associated increase in shopping and economic activity.

Main Street is truly living up to its name. It is a vibrant, urban street that emphasizes the life of the street rather than primarily serving arterial transportation. Residents have

noted that having the community's main street remain a 50 km/h zone does not align with the new reality of Main Street.

Main Street is not a streetscape designed for such high speeds. With the proliferation of homes, businesses, schools and public amenities along Main Street or within blocks of it, a reduction in the speed limit to 40 km/h would better reflect the life and usage of Main Street within the community, while still balancing the needs to motorists passing through the neighbourhood.

This reduction would also bring more consistency and predictability to the area—key safety characteristics when designing our streets. By the end of 2021, it is expected the entirety of Old Ottawa East will have an area speed limit of 30 km/h, as will the adjoining neighbourhood of Old Ottawa South. While 30 km/h would not be considered appropriate for Main Street, the reduction to 40 km/h will bring it closer to the speed limit profile of the rest of the neighbourhood.

Additionally, Bank Street—another traditional main street in Capital Ward—is already 40 km/h, for the very same reasons supporting the reduction on Main Street: it provides better safety and comfort for all road users, and it better supports the commercial, residential and community amenities along the street.

Main Street, in fact, is better suited for 40 km/h than Bank Street, as Bank Street is not a Complete Street, and it has narrow sidewalks, four lanes of motor vehicle traffic and a distinct lack of bicycling infrastructure.

There is ample evidence that lowering speed limits and traffic speeds has a positive correlation with overall street safety, as well as lower fatality rates. Specifically, lowering speeds from 50 km/h to 40 km/h has the potential to significantly reduce severe injuries and to save lives.

The Curtin-Monash Accident Research Centre found risk of pedestrian death reduced exponentially as collision speeds dropped, estimating that 26% of pedestrians would die when struck by a vehicle travelling at 40 km/h as opposed to over 80% when a vehicle is travelling 50 km/h. (Curtin-Monash Accident Research Centre, [Improving Pedestrian Safety](#) and [The Impact of Lowered Speed Limits in Urban/Metropolitan Areas](#).)

The implementation of a 40 km/h speed limit would increase the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists—including those stopping to visit local businesses or

community amenities. It is a move that is supported by the latest studies of traffic studies, as well as the desires of the community.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation of this report. The cost would be funded from within the existing Traffic Services' Operating Budget.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impediments to approving the recommendation as outlined in this report.

### **COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)**

Any comments made by the Councillors whose wards are affected by this report should be included in this section. Report writers should work with their Department's Report Coordinators to obtain Councillor comment. This section does not apply to City-wide items.

### **CONSULTATION**

#### **Transportation Services Comment:**

Engineering best practices support that it is important to maintain consistent, uniform speed limits on any roadway to provide all users including pedestrians, cyclists, adjacent residents and motorists with a correct representation of the actual speed of traffic on that roadway. The provision of speed limits considers the roadway function and its design. Implementing a speed limit that does not align with these considerations may result in enforcement difficulties and increases in traffic hazard. Lowering the speed limits on City streets without consideration of the physical configuration of the road will have minimal impact on driver behaviour. In such cases where a posted speed limit is below operating speeds, most motorists will continue to drive at speeds they feel are reasonable and prudent unless continual police enforcement is present. The visual and physical cues a driver uses to determine the appropriate travel speed should be consistent with the posted speed limit. Furthermore, the Council-approved City of Ottawa Speed Zoning Policy states that the speed limits should be based on the actual 85th percentile speed (i.e. the speed at or below which 85% of all the vehicles travel) of the free-flowing traffic on the street.

Multiple speed surveys conducted along Main Street between McIlraith Bridge and Colonel By Drive *Hawthorne and Riverdale* in April 2021 showed that operating speeds (the 85th percentile speeds) are in the order of 50 to 52 km/h. This represents a substantial reduction in operating speed compared to the mid 60's km/h range speeds recorded before Main Street was reconstructed in 2017.

Posting a 40 km/h speed limit on a roadway where the operating speed is significantly higher may increase the collision risk. Some drivers will choose to comply with the 40 km/h speed limit while others will continue to drive the higher speed at which they feel comfortable travelling. The varying difference in operating speeds between individual vehicles may increase the risk of collision as the potential for interactions or conflicts between vehicles is greater. Main Street is classified as an arterial roadway and a truck route connecting the Central area to communities to the south and east. The Transportation Services Department does not expect the existing operating speeds of Main Street to be significantly reduced because of the implementation of 40 km/h speed limit signs unless considerable police enforcement occurs on an ongoing basis. This creates significant financial strain on police resources. Upon Council approval of the report recommendation, the Transportation Services Department will initiate the necessary work to implement a 40 km/h Speed Limit along the length of Main Street. The cost of the signage installation is to be funded by Traffic Services general maintenance budget. The estimated cost to establish this 40km/h zone is approximately \$5,100.00, plus HST.

### **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

There are no specific accessibility impacts identified associated with this report or its recommendations.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated to this report.

### **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no rural implications associated with this report or its recommendations.

### **TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

The implementation of a 40 km/h speed limit on Main Street aligns with the following three Term of Council Priorities:

### **Integrated Transportation**

The lowered speed limit will help enable effective mobility through a sustainable, accessible and connected city transportation system; it will provide residents with easy access to their preferred transport choice; and it will enhance the safety of vulnerable road-users.

### **Thriving Communities**

The 40 km/h speed limit will enhance safety and livability of our streets by slowing vehicles and making the streets more welcome for all road-users.

### **Environmental Stewardship**

The 40 km/h speed limit will provide safer streets, allowing more residents to switch to active transportation.

### **DISPOSITION**

The Transportation Services Department will take appropriate action based on the recommendations made by the Committee and Council and will endeavour to install the signs as soon as practicable.