

Community Traffic Management Process

Possible Changes to the Project Initiation Requirements

Recommendation:

That Transportation Committee recommend to City Council:

That the March 23, 2016, City Operations report CR_1790, be received for information.

Clerk Note: Once Council has received the above report for information, funds held pursuant to the amendment (OP54) passed at the November 27, 2015, City Council Budget meeting may be released.

Report Summary

This report provides an outline of current practices for the initiation of Community Traffic Management initiatives as well as alternatives that will be considered in the development of a City Policy for Community Traffic Management. Release of the funds held as noted in the motion outlined in the previous Council/Committee Action is subject to Committee receiving this report for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the November 27, 2015, City Council Budget meeting, the following motion was passed:

That the Transportation Services, Transportation Planning Branch Operating Budget be increased by \$829,000 in 2016, \$17,000 in 2017 and \$20,000 in 2018 to fund the Community Traffic Management service package on an ongoing basis with funding from the Traffic Safety and Automated Enforcement Reserve, and that the release of funds be subject to Transportation Services report CR_1790 report to Transportation Committee in the first quarter of 2016.

Report

As the City of Edmonton continues to grow, additional demands are placed on the existing transportation network. To avoid increased traffic congestion, some motorists are finding their way through communities along interior neighbourhood streets. As a result, many residents are concerned for the safety of residents, children, pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. In order to support livable and healthy communities, intrusion of non-local traffic through neighbourhoods must be properly managed.

Background

The City's "Public Participation Guidelines For The Community Traffic Management Process" were approved by City Council in 2003. These Guidelines established selection criteria to be used as a means of prioritizing communities for traffic

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management initiatives, and facilitating a planned rather than a reactive approach by identifying those communities most in need. Communities are evaluated based on both their commitment to the process as well as evidence of excessive traffic volumes, speeds, and the presence of shortcutting traffic.

The following thresholds were established during the development of the 2003 Guidelines to ensure that perceived problems are indeed significant issues that should be addressed through the community traffic management plan, and that community awareness and support for the process extends throughout the neighbourhood.

- Traffic Volume: Daily and/or Peak Hour traffic volumes above the expected traffic volume based on adjacent land uses.
- Traffic Speed: Average traffic speeds above the posted speed limit, with 85th percentile speeds at least 7 km/h over the posted speed limit.
- Shortcutting*: Greater than 40 percent shortcutting traffic on the most significant shortcutting route during the highest volume Peak Hour.
- Community Support: An “Expression of Interest” signed by a minimum 25 percent of household units in the immediate vicinity of the area of concern as well as a letter of support from the relevant Community League(s) or other community association.

*Shortcutting is defined as traffic with neither an origin nor destination in a community.

Current Status

The request to address neighbourhood traffic concerns is often initiated by a single resident or a small group of residents. Requiring a community “Expression of Interest” prior to embarking on the process of developing a traffic management plan ensures that resources are focused on those communities that have demonstrated a level of agreement that concerns are wider community interest. The collection of signatures on an “Expression of Interest” also serves to raise awareness of the transportation-related issues in the community and facilitates broader engagement within the community in the process to develop a traffic management plan.

Since adoption of the 2003 Guidelines, only two neighbourhoods have met the requirement to demonstrate community support through an “Expression of Interest” - Pleasantview and Prince Charles. These two communities subsequently began working with Administration through the Community Traffic Management planning process. Insights from those involved in these two traffic management initiatives indicate that the “Expression of Interest” requirement was difficult to meet. In Prince Charles, Administration felt that the collection of signatures in support of the “Expression of Interest” did contribute to awareness about the project, however, in Pleasantview, this same level of awareness was not achieved.

Recently, at Council's direction, Administration undertook a pilot project to assess the effectiveness of an expedited process to address more localized traffic shortcutting

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issues in four communities. This expedited process did not include an evaluation of whether or not these four communities met the selection criteria established by the 2003 Guidelines with respect to traffic volumes, speeding, or shortcutting, nor was an “Expression of Interest” required prior to initiation of the process. Based on information gathered to evaluate the pilot project, residents of the four communities expressed opinions that the traffic issues being addressed were not of widespread concern in the community. Further, the residents indicated that community input supported by data collection would have allowed for the issues to be evaluated prior to the installation of traffic management measures. Seeking greater community input at the outset of the process would have allowed for greater discussion of community-wide traffic issues rather than the more localized approach that was taken in the expedited process.

Options

In response to the Community Shortcutting Audit, which was conducted in 2015 by the City Auditor, Administration is developing a City Policy governing Community Traffic Management. The development of this Policy will consider the initiation requirements for communities requesting traffic management plans.

Options for the initiation requirements may range from:

- No set criteria (neither evidence of traffic issues through data collection nor widespread community support).
- Specific criteria for one or all of traffic volumes, speeds, and shortcutting, as verified through data collection.
- Specific criteria for community support, as verified by an “Expression of Interest”, community survey, or other means.
- Requirement that criteria for both community support and evidence-based issue verification be met.

Example - City of Calgary Traffic Calming Policy - “Screening Process”

- Resident(s) document traffic concerns through submission of a standardized form; endorsement of the community association, ward alderman, and police endorsement is also required.
- City Administration reviews the submission to determine if a traffic calming solution may be appropriate.
- Concerned resident(s) document support through signatures on an expression of interest.
- While there is no specific threshold for the number of households signing the expression of interest, greater priority is given to communities with the highest percentage of households signing the expression of interest.
- Data is collected to validate and quantify the traffic issues and a point system is used to establish placement in the priority listing.

Example - City of St. Albert Traffic Calming Policy (Draft) - “Neighbourhood Priority”

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- Resident(s) initiate the process through a request for neighbourhood traffic calming.
- Preliminary engagement is undertaken to identify perceived traffic issues in the community and to ensure that the community understands the issues, their role in solving the problems, and the trade-offs that may be required to implement a solution.
- Data is collected to validate and quantify the traffic issues and a point system is used to determine whether the community is eligible for traffic calming and to establish priorities.
- Administration undertakes a community support survey of affected households with a minimum of 60 percent support required before the project moves further.
- Levels of support above 60 percent are assigned points which are also used to establish placement in the priority listing.

Next Steps

Administration has compiled a listing of over 30 neighbourhoods where citizens have requested the initiation of a community traffic management plan. Establishing criteria for community support and thresholds for traffic volumes, speeds, and shortcutting in an evidence-based approach, provides a means of addressing the growing city-wide demand for community traffic management initiatives in a more planned, efficient, consistent, and equitable manner.

Options for initiating the Community Traffic Management Process will be evaluated and recommended to Council as part of the Community Traffic Management Policy.

It should be noted that the 2003 Guidelines were updated to include the condition that priority should be given to those communities that are scheduled for future roadway renewal, recognizing that the implementation of traffic management measures in conjunction with rehabilitation projects ensures that construction is undertaken in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. This approach would be embedded in the Community Traffic Management Policy that is under development.

Policy

The Way We Move, Edmonton's Transportation Master Plan:

- Strategic Objective 7.6: The City will appropriately mitigate the impacts of the transportation network on existing and future residential communities.
- Strategic Action 7.6.a.: Undertake Community Traffic Management Plans to address community speeding and shortcutting traffic issues.
- Strategic Action 7.6.b.: Address isolated incidents of speeding and shortcutting traffic within communities through education, enforcement and engineering.

The Way We Grow, Edmonton's Municipal Development Plan:

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- Strategic Objective 5.7.1: Ensure that streets, sidewalks and boulevards are designed to perform their diverse roles and to enable safe access for all users.

The Way We Live, Edmonton's People Plan:

- Strategic Objective 1.1: The City of Edmonton provides opportunities in neighbourhood, community and public spaces to connect people and build vibrant communities.
- Strategic Objective 4.1: Edmontonians enjoy safety and security of person, place and community.

Complete Streets Policy C573A:

- Community Traffic Management / Shortcutting Reduction Initiatives will conform to the principles of the City's Complete Streets Policy and Guidelines.

Vision Zero:

- Community Traffic Management / Shortcutting Reduction Initiatives are also included as "Engineering" interventions in Edmonton's recently approved Road Safety Strategy.

Public Consultation

Public feedback from the ongoing Prince Charles and Pleasantview Community Traffic Management plans, as well as the four communities involved in the expedited shortcutting reduction pilots, will provide input.

Budget/Financial Implications

On November 27, 2015, City Council approved the Service Package OP54:

That Administration provide a report on possible changes to the project initiation requirements under the Community Traffic Management Process, to ensure that the initiation requirements do not unreasonably impede commencement of community traffic management plans.

Funding will be released once Council has received this report for information.

Others Reviewing this Report

- R. G. Klassen, General Manager, Sustainable Development
- T. Burge, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer and General Manager, Financial & Corporate Services