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**Subject:** Community Safety Zones

**Report to:** Public Works Committee

**Report date:** Tuesday, July 9, 2019

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## Recommendations

1. That the designation of Community Safety Zones (CSZs) **BE APPROVED** for:
  - a. Regional Road 81 (York Road) from Queenston Road to Concession 3 Road in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, length of 1.10 km; and
  - b. Regional Road 24 (Victoria Avenue) from Frederick Avenue to Regional Road 81 (King Street) in the Town of Lincoln, length of 1.20 km
2. That the necessary By-law **BE PREPARED** and **PRESENTED** to Regional Council for consideration; and
3. That Regional Staff **REPORT BACK** with potential future CSZ locations by the end of 2019.

## Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to implement Community Safety Zones (CSZs) at the locations listed above.
- CSZs are sections of roadways where public safety is of a special concern and traffic offences are subject to double the fines.
- The goal of the CSZ programme is to modify driver behaviour and improve safety on certain sections of road, particularly vulnerable road users like children and seniors.
- Among the last five years from 2013 - 2017, 2016 was the highest in the number of pedestrian and cyclist fatalities and injuries on Niagara Regional roads.
- The maximum collision frequency in 2017 was during peak hours, in the weekdays of schools months.
- Recent traffic studies in the proposed school zones show the following percentage of vehicular traffic that exceeds the posted speed limit:

- Regional Road 81, York Road: 56% and 35% during the weekdays, and 74% and 57% during the school hours for east and westbound traffic respectively, and;
- Regional Road 24, Victoria Avenue: 73% and 76% during the weekdays, and 88% and 73% during the school hours for north and southbound traffic respectively.

## **Financial Considerations**

The cost to establish a Community Safety Zone is minimal in terms of signage installation within the limits of each zone. The costs are covered under the approved 2019 Transportation Services Operating budget.

The community education programs and police enforcement resources have already been discussed with the Niagara Regional Police, Strategic Communications and Public Affairs, Legal & Court Services and Public Health Staff.

## **Analysis**

### **Background**

In June 1998, the Province of Ontario passed Bill 26 - to promote public safety through the creation of community safety zones (CSZs). This Bill, and its regulatory changes, are targeted at improving road safety in Ontario. The proposed amendments to the Highway Traffic Act (RSA 1990) allow Municipal Councils to designate CSZs by Municipal by-law along sections of roadway where public safety is of special concern (i.e., around schools, retirement facilities, parks, etc.). Within CSZs, traffic fines will be increased for violations committed at the CSZs (i.e. speeding).

With the passing of Bill 26, Niagara Regional Council has the authority, under section 214.1 of the Highway Traffic Act, to pass by-laws where deemed necessary to ensure the safety of Niagara residents. In establishing CSZs, this will aid in safe communities.

### **Objective**

The objectives of the CSZs are:

- Traffic safety measures to reduce the number or severity of collisions and/or speeding within designated CSZs;
- A traffic management tool to reduce the rate of Highway Traffic Act (HTA) offences committed within CSZs; and,
- To maintain an enforcement program that is achievable within the current financial and human resources available to Niagara Regional Police.

### **Enforcement**

Niagara Regional Police enforcement and their partnership are required for CSZs to be successful. Regional Staff are working with Niagara Regional Police on enforcing the CSZs in the two locations outlined in the report. Niagara Regional Police resourcing will have to be taken into account as the program grows.

Public will be made aware that a traffic violation occurring within a designated CSZ will have consequences. The intent is to ensure that a CSZ is not just another signed regulation that is sporadically enforced. Therefore, Regional Staff will continue to work with Niagara Regional Police on this safety initiative with enforcement strategies throughout Niagara region.

### **Criteria**

No Provincially recommended technical criteria for the establishment of CSZs currently exists, other than locations where public safety is of special concern, such as in the vicinity of schools, day care centres, retirement homes or areas with high collision rates.

Regional Staff continue to review and evaluate strategically potential high priority locations of CSZs with coordination of enforcement with Niagara Regional Police.

Education and enforcement are key factors in the success of this initiative. Therefore, Transportation Services Staff recommended two (2) locations of CSZs to gain first-hand experience, and then based on that experience, future recommendations for additional CSZs will be formulated and brought back to Committee for further consideration.

### **Site Selection**

Site selection includes locations that have safety concerns or complaints near sensitive areas such as schools, retirement homes and daycares.

Staff considered as part of the site selection the following to prioritize locations:

- Number of safety and speeding complaints at location.
- Percentage of students/families walking to/from school.
- Speeding study results and number of violations.

Area Municipalities share Staff's concern about public safety and also wish to implement CSZs on their roads. The Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake requested Niagara Region to implement a Community Safety Plan in St. Davids, specifically the intersection of Four Mile Creek Road and York Road, to address traffic and pedestrian safety issues around St. Davids Public School. Similarly, concerns have been raised over the last few years for the speeding in the neighbourhood of 20 Valley

School, from Niagara Student Transportation Services, residents and Niagara Region Public Health Staff. This area is also a preferred truck route in the Town of Lincoln.

Staff are targeting that the two (2) CSZs, outlined in Table 1, commence Monday, September 16, 2019, (after school returns) to ensure the required communication material and education programs are in place during the first week of the school term.

Staff will conduct studies to evaluate CSZs to determine their effectiveness through data collection. Data collection studies consist of “before” and “after” speed and general regulation compliance surveys.

Table 1  
 Community Safety Zone locations on Regional Roads

Road	Section	Municipality	School
RR 81 (York Rd)	Queenston Rd to Concession 3 Rd	Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake	St. Davids Public School
RR 24 (Victoria Ave)	Frederick Ave to RR 81 (King St)	Town of Lincoln	Twenty Valley Public School

All Community Safety Zone designations are in effect 24 hours a day, seven (7) days per week. Location plans showing each location are attached to this report (See Appendices 1 and 2).

**Education**

To maximize the effectiveness of CSZs, being an unfamiliar new traffic safety management tool in Niagara region, it will be necessary to educate the public on their meaning, what it means to contravene a traffic regulation within such a zone, and how to identify a zone. Research has demonstrated that changes in traffic control and regulations require an extensive public education campaign in order to be effective.

Part of the overall review process, Regional Staff will coordinate with the District School Board of Niagara through Niagara Student Transportation Services and Public Health. Staff to identify potential routes to school and opportunities for safety improvements in an effort to encourage active and safe route to school.

The recommendations gathered from the ongoing public consultations will be taken into consideration as part of the overall school zone safety review process. Each time a CSZ is approved, Niagara Region will undertake the following education efforts:

- Have CSZ information brochures distributed, at least two weeks in advance of implementation, to places of public gathering within the newly designated CSZ.

- Prepare a media release explaining the size and location of the CSZ, the consequences associated with committing a violation in the CSZ, and the Niagara Regional Police's commitment to providing strict enforcement in these areas.
- The Community Relations Branch of the Niagara Regional Police will include CSZs in their presentations and appearances at local functions and assemblies.
- The Strategic Communications and Public Affairs Branch of the Niagara Region will ensure all communications and awareness programs are in place with the residents, and local Councillors to provide appropriate notice in advance of implementation.

### **Stakeholders Engagement**

To establish a consistent uniform, set of designation criteria and a co-ordinated approach to the design and implementation of CSZs within Niagara Region, Staff in Transportation Services will establish a Cross-Niagara CSZ Working Group (CNCSZWG). Invitations will include all the local area Municipalities, Niagara Regional Police, Legal and Court Services, Public Health and District School Board of Niagara.

### **Relevant Consultation**

This report has been written in consultation with Regional Staff from Legal and Court Services, Niagara Regional Police, Strategic Communications and Public Affairs, Public Health and the members of the Niagara Student Transportation Services.

### **Alternatives Reviewed**

The Region has implemented various measures to address safety concerns within school zones, including the use of flashing lights, decreasing speed limits during school hours, monitoring, education and awareness.

### **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

#### **Alignment to Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan**

Niagara Region is undergoing significant change and by 2041 will have grown and evolved on economic, demographic, social and technological fronts. This recommendation will support growth and enhance Niagara globally by promoting an integrated network of roads and highways for the safe movement of people and goods.

Also, this is a step forward to adopting a Vision Zero Road Safety Plan in Niagara Region; helping to reduce aggressive driving and speeding in areas within Niagara Region that have higher concentrations of school children and families.

## Other Pertinent Reports

None.

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