

Corporate Policy and Procedure



Policy	Community Safety Zone Policy – Policy XX
Category	Departmental
Authority	Transportation Engineering
Related Policies	N/A
Approved By	City Council
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Policy Statement

The City of Guelph will designate part of its roadways to be Community Safety Zones for roadways that meet its Community Safety Zone (CSZ) criteria and follow an implementation process led by City staff.

Purpose

This policy document outlines the criteria for CSZ consideration and the implementation process for CSZ designation.

Goal

Reduce the number of serious injuries and fatalities that occur due to collisions with vehicles on Guelph’s roadways.

Objectives

- Reduce vehicle speeds in Guelph
- Enhance driver compliance to the Highway Traffic Act

Definitions

Community facility: Buildings or locations typically known to have higher concentration of vulnerable road users.

Community Safety Zone: Part of a roadway designated by council and through the Traffic By-Law where public safety is of special concern.

Educational institutions: Post-secondary education centres with an enrollment of more than 250 students.

High-Risk Network: A dataset of risk scores based on a road segment’s risk of collisions causing serious injuries and fatalities.

High-Risk Road: A road segment with a higher-than-average risk score according to the latest High-Risk Network.

School Zone: Part of road that fronts the entrance of a school and that is within 150 metres in either direction.

Vision Zero: A road safety strategy to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads to zero.

Vulnerable road users: People who are walking, cycling, or riding a motorcycle. Its definition may also include people who use mobility aids, ride skateboards, or people who spend most of their time outside on roadways such as construction workers. Based on their increased risk of injuries, older and younger adults are also considered vulnerable road users.

Overview

The City of Guelph has the jurisdictional authority from the Province of Ontario to designate any part of its roadways as a CSZ as a way of prioritizing areas where public safety is of special concern. Only within a CSZ are fines associated with the Highway Traffic Act doubled and Automatic Speed Enforcement (*ASE*) cameras permitted. Where public safety is of special concern to residents, and to therefore apply the CSZ designation, a CSZ criteria and implementation process has been established and defined in this document.

Background

In 1998, Bill 26 Highway Traffic Act Amendment was passed by the Ontario Legislature to promote public safety through the creation of CSZs. The amendment describes that the council of a municipality may, by By-law, designate a part of a highway under its jurisdiction as a CSZ if, in the Council's opinion, public safety is of special concern. The Amendment also states that in any highway designated as a CSZ, fines associated with Highway Traffic Act violations are doubled.

The Highway Traffic Act describes requirements for the CSZ designation. A by-law or regulation designating a CSZ shall specify the hours, days, and months when the designation is in effect. The municipality shall also ensure that signs denoting a CSZ are erected in accordance with the regulations.

In 2017, the province introduced Bill 65 Safer School Zones Act that permitted municipalities to implement Automatic Speed Enforcement (*ASE*), programs in CSZs where the speed limit is less than 80 km/h. In 2022, in preparation for future ASE programs, Guelph City Council revised the Traffic By-law to include 57 CSZ designations that encompasses every elementary school zone: 46 are with School Zones of 30km/h; and 11 are School Zones with a flashing signage of 40km/h.

Prioritizing public safety

Public safety is of special concern on roadways where there is a history of collisions causing serious injuries or fatalities, or on roadways with a higher risk of severe collisions.

Following the City of Guelph's endorsement of Vision Zero, City staff created a High-Risk Network to guide road safety and transportation related decision making. Guelph's High-Risk Network is a dataset of risk scores based on a road segments risk of collisions causing serious injuries and fatalities according to the following proven risk factors: historical collision data, average daily vehicle volume, average vehicle speed, average daily pedestrian volume, average daily cyclist volume, percentage of population over the age of 65, and percentage of low-income population.

Public safety is also of special concern on roadways which typically have a high concentration of vulnerable road users due to their increased risk of serious injury and fatality in a collision. These roadways are understood to be near to all primary and secondary schools, all major educational institutions, all major health centres or hospitals, and community facilities that include all community centres, libraries, senior centres, retirement homes, and shelters.

Community Safety Zone Criteria

A roadway will be reviewed for CSZ designation if it meets one of the following criteria.

- 300 metres from the front entrance to a primary school or secondary school
- 300 metres from the front entrance of a major health centre or hospital
- Within a major educational institution or 300 metres from its boundary
- Is identified as a High-Risk Road according to the High-Risk Network and is also within 300 metres from a community facility.

Implementation

A CSZ designation will be recommended to Council through the following implementation process:

1. A list of potential CSZ roadways that meet the established CSZ Criteria will be established.
2. City staff will review the list of potential CSZ roadways to recommend specific roadways and road lengths for CSZ designation. The review will seek to integrate existing CSZ designations and consider known mobility concerns and travel patterns of vulnerable road users.
3. A list of CSZ road designations to be added or altered will be recommended to Council to approve within the Traffic By-law specifying the hours, days and months when the designation is in effect.
4. Once a new CSZ designation is approved within the Traffic By-law, City staff will ensure that signs denoting a CSZ are erected in accordance with the regulations provided by the Highway Traffic Act.
5. An ASE camera may be installed in a CSZ following that appropriate CSZ signage has been in place in the designated area for a minimum of 12 months.

Funding

Funding comes from the TF0037 Road Safety Initiatives capital account.

Costs

Costs for the implementation process are minimal and include the installation and maintenance of new CSZ road signs.

Community Safety Zone Sources

One noteworthy source was the Community Safety Zones Warrant report created by True North Safety Group for the Region of Waterloo in 2024 which provided a jurisdictional review of 11 Ontario municipal CSZ policies and a warrant criteria recommendation.

Guelph's CSZ Policy mirrors most closely the CSZ warrant criteria proposed by the City of Toronto and the Region of Waterloo. The City of Toronto CSZ warrant criteria, with its focus on identifying higher volume roads near community facilities, was seen as the most appropriate criteria to match given the City of Guelph's goal of prioritizing and addressing roads with highest risk.