

FROM: Brian Lima, Director of Engineering Services

DATE: May 7, 2019

SUBJECT: Springwater Road – Community Safety Zone and Speed Limit Assessment

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the report titled, “Springwater Road – Community Safety Zone and Speed Limit Assessment” from the Director of Engineering Services, dated May 7, 2019 be received and filed.

INTRODUCTION:

At its meeting on April 9, 2019, Council directed staff to complete an engineering study on Springwater Road at the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (hereinafter referred to as CCCA) to determine if this section of road qualifies to be established as a Community Safety Zone with a reduced speed limit, and report back. The following report details the findings based on completion of the assessment.

DISCUSSION:

The County received correspondence from the General Manager of the CCCA requesting a speed limit reduction to 60km/h or lower to allow visitors to cross Springwater Road. It was acknowledged that a pedestrian tunnel exists to accommodate a safe and protected crossing of the road, however, it was stated that patrons take the most direct route to cross the road and that the pedestrian tunnel was “unsafe” during the winter. As a result, County Council directed staff to study the area and report with its findings.

TRAFFIC DATA

Staff has obtained recent updated traffic data in this vicinity and have found that the 85th percentile speed of vehicles to be 95 km/h within the existing 80 km/h posted speed zone. This figure is within the upper range of what is expected on this type of County road, being a rural collector with an average volume of approximately 2,500 vehicles per day.

COLLISION DATA

A search of Elgin Ontario Provincial Police collision records available through the Ministry of Transportation’s Authorized Requestor Information Services portal found that no collisions had been reported along the frontage of the subject properties for the past 5 years.

BUILT UP AREA

Reduced speed zones on Elgin County's roads are established when they meet the Highway Traffic Act's definition of a "built up area". Essentially, for an area to be classified as "built up", at least 50% of the abutting frontage must be occupied by dwellings, businesses, schools or churches. This criteria is not met on this section of road, therefore the default 80 km/h speed limit automatically applies.

COMMUNITY SAFETY ZONE

The Community Safety Zone was introduced in 1999 as a part of the provincial government's road safety strategy to address aggressive driving. An intersection or portion of a road is designated a community safety zone. These zones are used in locations where public safety "is of special concern" such as intersections experiencing a high frequency of collision, roadways near schools, day care centres, playgrounds, parks, hospitals and senior residences. It is not intended that an entire municipality be designated as a Community Safety Zone.

Fines for traffic violations are increased considerably within a Community Safety Zone. This increased fine structure may provide sufficient deterrent to discourage aggressive driving.

Currently 13 Community Safety Zones within school areas have been designated by County Council.

At its meeting on June 24, 2003, then County Council by resolution had established warrant criteria for Community Safety Zones as follows:

THAT all future requests for Community Safety Zones use the following policy to determine if the zone is warranted:

In order for the establishment of a Community Safety Zone the area must comply with 3 out of 4 of the following criteria:

- *Minimum traffic volume of 2,500 vehicles per day.*
- *High truck traffic (>5%).*
- *High volume of children/seniors crossing the road or walking on the shoulder of the road where sidewalks are not present (school or home for the aged near or within area).*
- *Poor sight distance for the posted speed limit; and further,*

THAT regardless of this policy, Council may elect to grant requests received by local municipal councils at any time so long as all costs are borne by the requesting municipality.

Staff has reviewed this area with respect to the warrant criteria and has determined that the area does not automatically qualify to be established as a Community Safety Zone.

PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS

In 1972, the County of Elgin designed and constructed a pedestrian underpass tunnel across Springwater Road connecting the CCCA's Springwater Conservation Area with its administration building. This is the only such protected pedestrian crossing facility on a county road and was presumably constructed to provide pedestrians with a separated and protected means to connect both CCCA properties on both sides of Springwater Road. The original construction plan is attached in Appendix A for Council's information.

The Township of Malahide has been contacted to ensure the drainage facilities on either end of this tunnel are maintained in order to eliminate any flooding that may occur that would deter safe use of the tunnel.

PREVIOUS REQUEST

A similar request for a reduced speed limit within the same general location was received from the Municipality of Central Elgin by resolution on March 10th, 2009. Then County Council passed the following resolution on April 28th, 2009:

"THAT the Municipality of Central Elgin be informed that the requested section of Springwater Road does not warrant a reduced speed zone as defined under the Highway Traffic Act; and,

THAT the users of the Springwater Conservation Area are encouraged to use the existing pedestrian underpass to cross Springwater Road."

CONCLUSION:

Staff has completed an assessment to determine if this section of Springwater Road qualifies as a Community Safety Zone with a reduced speed limit. The results of this review, utilizing established warrant criteria has found that no action is required. This conclusion is consistent with Council's resolution responding to a similar request in 2009.

However, as always available to County Council, the decision whether or not to implement reduced speed zones or establish Community Safety Zones remains with Council. Particularly, this authority is reinforced by Council's policy with respect to Community Safety Zones, whereas the policy states, *"THAT regardless of this policy, Council may elect to grant requests received by local municipal councils at any time so long as all costs are borne by the requesting municipality."*

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

Brian Lima
Director of Engineering Services

Julie Gonyou
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A – Existing Springwater Road Pedestrian Underpass

