



The RMOW has been working for some time to manage vehicle travel speeds in the community, to reduce speeds and risks of conflict between vehicle and non-vehicle users by using other means of traffic calming such as:

- Enhancing pedestrian crossing areas at intersections and at midblock locations with streetlights and flashing pedestrian lights, to improve pedestrian visibility to drivers.
- Installing speed reader boards to display real time travel speeds back to drivers as they pass by. Studies have shown that people stop paying attention to these signs over time, the speed reader boards are periodically moved to new locations.
- Installing speed bumps and speed cushions on roadways to physically slow vehicles down.
- Enhancing roadway paint markings to ensure drivers stay within their travel lanes and clear of pedestrian areas (this is more effective during the summer when there is no snow on the ground).
- Narrowing of roadways to encourage slower vehicle speeds.
- Constructing grade separated valley trails – to provide a physical separation between vehicles and the multi-use valley trail system to limit the risk of conflict.
- Improving roadway lighting to help make pedestrians more visible at night.
- Forwarding bad driving behavior reports from community members to the RCMP with a request to provide enforcement at those reported locations.

Regardless of these step taken to protect vulnerable users, if a pedestrian or cyclist comes into conflict with a vehicle the mortality rate for crashes at 50 km/h is approximately 80 per cent (see Figure 1). This is according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and there are a number of studies with varied results, but this is the most consistent. Because of this, the WHO supports a 30 km/h default speed limit for roads as does Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) through their Vision Zero initiative. The primary goal of speed reduction is to reduce the risk of death (where physical separation is not feasible) on a roadway shared by motor vehicles and the more vulnerable active road users (pedestrians and cyclists). It has been found that the mortality rate for active road users in conflict with vehicles at 30 km/h is only 10 per cent and the majority (75 per cent) of injuries at this speed are classified as ‘slight’.

For this reason a speed reduction to 30 km/h on Whistler’s municipal roads is a significant addition to our traffic calming efforts, will improve safety for all road users, and protect the active road users.

**Death and injury risk percentages**



Figure 1: Death and Injury risk percentages (WHO)

This change also plays a part in encouraging a more active lifestyle in Whistler. The real and perceived risk of excessive roadway speeds can limit physical activity and quality of life for residents that want to reduce their reliance on their motor vehicles. Residents and visitors may choose to get into their car even to travel short distances instead of walking or biking because of a fear of fast moving vehicles along the road they must travel. Some community members must walk, bike or use other modes of active transportation to travel along local roads that have a 50 km/h speed limit to access the valley trail system, increasing their risk of injury from an inattentive driver travelling at the allowed speed limit along the roadway.

Driving at slower speeds results in less fuel being burned to get where we need to go, and providing safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists will promote less vehicle use and reduce green house gas emissions.

### **Function Junction Pilot Project**

A speed reduction pilot projected was tested in the Function Junction neighbourhood in 2019 and 2021 that included additional road lines, some physical barriers, flashing crosswalk indicators, and a posted 40 km/h speed limit. Vehicle monitoring both before and after the implementation of these measures clearly showed a reduction in the average vehicle speeds after the implementation of the pilot project, giving staff confidence that posting of a reduced speed limit will result in lower average speeds (and associated safety benefits). To maintain consistency with the broader speed reduction program being proposed, and to reduce confusion, staff are recommending that the speed limit in Function Junction also be reduced to 30 km/h at this time.

### **Introduction of a Speed Reduction Program**

Municipal staff will continue to use existing traffic calming tools to manage local road traffic speeds. To provide additional support to the traffic calming program and to move towards ensuring no deaths or serious injuries occur on municipal roadways, the Infrastructure Services department is proposing to institute a default speed limit of 30 km/h on all municipal roads with direct property access. Changes to speed limits would not occur on Highway 99 as this is a provincial highway and outside of municipal jurisdiction.

### **Program Phasing**

Upon Council adoption of reduced local road speed limits, signs will be posted at each subdivision entrance to advise vehicle drivers that the speed limit in that neighbourhood is 30 km/h and not the default speed limit of 50 km/h. These signs are known as “gateway” signs and will be an opportunity for drivers to observe the speed change as they exit the highway. Beyond the gateway signs, additional speed limit signs will be posted along network roads that connect subdivisions or along roads that have had a history of complaints related to vehicle travel speeds within the neighbourhood. This will be Phase 1 of the program and will require the installation of approximately 41 speed signs. Municipal staff will install Phase 1 signs within a few weeks if this bylaw amendment is approved by Council.

Phase 2 of the program will be to place signs at most major intersections within the neighbourhoods and this will require approximately an additional 82 new signs to be installed. Staff will monitor the

effectiveness of the speed reduction program and if the results are not as good as expected, additional signs may be required.

## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Official Community Plan**

#### **Community Vision**

Chapter 11 Transportation – Our Shared Future includes the statement “*Whistler’s transportation system is integral to the livability and success of Whistler as a resort community. ...Whistler residents and visitors walk, cycle and use public transit, supported by excellent transportation infrastructure orientated to these methods of travel. Whistler also keeps current with transportation-related technology innovations. As a result, residents and visitors of all ages and abilities increasingly choose preferred modes of transportation over single occupancy vehicle trips.*” The recommendation in this report directly supports more people choosing to use preferred modes of transportation.

#### **Goals, Objectives and Policies**

This report supports several policies from Whistler’s OCP:

5.6.3.20 Policy - Support transportation strategies and investment in the Whistler Village area that reduce automobile traffic and encourage preferred modes of transportation.

10.1.1.1 Policy - Lead a community wide effort to reduce total community GHG emissions to a level that is 33 per cent lower than 2007 levels by 2020, 80 per cent lower than 2007 levels by 2050 and 90 per cent lower than 2007 levels by 2060.

10.2.2.3 Policy - Increase year-round connections for active transportation modes through the community- especially in areas near convenience services.

#### **Other Relevant Policies**

The Community Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and the associated Big Moves targets support reducing vehicle trips and increasing use of alternative forms of transportation.

Several of the goals in Whistler’s Traffic Calming Policy (adopted in 2004) are supported by the recommendations in this report. These goals include safety, livability, minimizing conflicts, and reducing vehicle speeds.

## **BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS**

Based on work completed in 2020, purchase and installation of the new speed limit signs is estimated to cost approximately \$230/sign.

- Phase 1 - ‘Gateway’ signage will require 41 signs = \$9,430
- Phase 2 – 82 signs will be required = \$18,860

The 2021 T001 Annual Road Reconstruction budget can accommodate the costs required to implement both Phases of this program. Implementation of Phase 2 will also begin in 2021 and may extend into the spring of 2022.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

The concept of community-wide speed reduction was discussed at a Committee of the Whole presentation in May 2021, with subsequent media coverage in the Pique, and discussion in the community.

As noted, this change to the standard speed limit on Whistler’s municipal roads has been discussed with members of the local RCMP detachment and they are supportive of this change.

If Council approves the recommendations in this report, a news release will be prepared and will start the process of informing the Community about when this change will happen. Media ads and new social media messaging will reach out to locals and visitors to let them know that most municipal roads in Whistler will have a reduced speed limit. These communications strategies will be in addition to the new signage entering each subdivision to advise drivers of the speed reduction change.

## **SUMMARY**

Pursuant to Section 146(7) of the Motor Vehicle Act of British Columbia, a municipality may, by bylaw, direct the rate of speed at which a person may drive or operate a motor vehicle on a highway in the municipality.

Residents and visitors of all ages and abilities are increasingly choosing preferred modes of transportation over single occupancy vehicle trips to get where they need to be. Reducing speeds along local roadways will reduce the risk of conflict between these active road users and vehicles travelling along the same path. Reducing the risk will help provide the comfort needed to get more people out of their vehicles improving the well-being of the community and moving Whistler towards its Climate Big Moves targets.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Tucker  
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