

**To:** SPECIAL COUNCIL

**Meeting Date:** 6/28/2021

**Subject:** Enhanced School Zones

**Submitted By:** Kevin De Leebeeck, Director of Engineering

**Prepared By:** Lisa Chominiec, Sustainable Transportation Coordinator

**Report No.:** 22-079-CD

**File No.:** C1101

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

THAT Report 22-079-CD Enhanced School Zones be received;

AND THAT Council supports the implementation of an expanded Enhanced School Zone Program throughout the City as outlined in this report.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

#### **Purpose:**

This report provides an update on grant funding that was secured by Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) in 2020, from the Ontario Active School Travel (OAST) fund. The funding supported the implementation of Enhanced School Zones at select schools in Cambridge as a pilot.

#### **Key Findings:**

- STSWR and Transportation staff partnered to create an Enhanced School Zone (ESZ) program that includes various interventions for implementation at schools;
- STSWR was successful in receiving \$30,000 in 2020 to implement the Enhanced School Zones as a pilot project for schools in Cambridge;
- Interventions from the ESZ toolkit were applied at 4 elementary schools in the City: St. Peter, Avenue Road, Clemens Mill and St Margaret; and,
- Based on the positive feedback and data, it is intended to expand the ESZ program to 6-8 more elementary schools this summer, with the goal to expand to all schools in the City, subject to certain criteria.

## **Financial Implications:**

There are no financial implications related to the recommendation of this report.

Of the \$30,000 in grant funding received, \$23,000 was allocated to materials and contract services for the implementation of ESZ's while the other \$7,000 was allocated towards studies, communications and engagement. Only \$9,138 of the \$23,000 allocation was spent implementing the ESZ pilot, leaving close to \$14,000 in unspent funding. OAST has given consent to use the unspent funds to expand the ESZ program across the City.

Any costs incurred beyond the remaining grant funding would be funded through the Transportation Operating budget.

## **STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:**

- ☒ Strategic Action; or
- ☐ Core Service

**Objective(s):** GETTING AROUND - Emphasize connectivity and active transportation choices to help people travel in and beyond the city without a car

**Strategic Action:** Promote and develop more transportation options

**Program:** Transportation Management

**Core Service:** Not Applicable

Enhancing school zones with infrastructure interventions, paired with School Travel Planning (STP) support may encourage families to make the shift to active transportation.

By creating safer environments around school zones, students and parents should feel more confident in making active transportation commutes.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In Spring 2020, Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) applied for a grant funding opportunity for a Cambridge specific project from the Ontario Active School Travel Fund. The project included a pilot of 'Enhanced School Zones' (ESZ) interventions at four elementary schools across the City. The application was successful and STSWR received \$30,000 to use towards enhancing school zones within the City of Cambridge.

## **Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region**

STSWR has a School Travel Planning (STP) division that brings communities together

to create better school commutes. The two main goals of STP are to reduce traffic at schools and to encourage more families to use active transportation modes like walking, cycling, and scootering, for their school journey.

The STP process is guided and supported by an STP facilitator who brings municipal, school, and community stakeholders together to identify and resolve issues with active school travel. The facilitators deliver hands-on STP services region-wide on a school-by-school basis. Currently, STP is actively working with 11 elementary schools across Cambridge.

### **Ontario Active School Travel Fund**

The Ontario Active School Travel Fund seeks to increase active school travel opportunities for elementary students in Ontario with the goal to have more students walk, cycle, scoot and skateboard for their daily school journeys.

One of the objectives of the Fund is to increase active school travel opportunities for elementary students in Ontario by improving safety. Active school travel helps to decrease traffic in school zones, thereby improving safety for all students, regardless of travel mode.

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Enhanced School Zones Pilot**

The Enhanced School Zones Program was made possible through STSWR and the OAST fund. A toolkit was developed by Transportation staff, with input from STP, that includes a variety of interventions that can be installed on school frontages or school zone areas, where pick-up and drop-off activity occur. The enhancements are intended to bring more visibility to the school zone areas.

Interventions within the toolkit include:

- Enhanced School Area/Zone Signs with solar powered flashing beacons;
- 'SCHOOL' stencil pavement markings on the road;
- Permanent Radar Message Boards;
- A "drive slowly" tab added to existing school zone sign posts;
- Flexible bollards (School Zone);
- Pavement and curb markings; and,
- Creative markings on the road.

The full Enhanced School Zone Toolkit can be viewed in Appendix A. Please note, the toolkit is meant to be a living document, where interventions can be updated (removed or added) as appropriate.

## **Pilot Schools**

For the OAST pilot, elementary schools were chosen primarily based on their involvement with the current School Travel Planning (STP) Program. This is following best practice advice in working with schools that are already engaged in some form, rather than starting from scratch to build momentum. The schools chosen for the OAST pilot included:

- Avenue Road Public School (on Gail St)
- St. Peter C.E.S. (on Avenue Rd)
- Clemens Mill (On Saginaw Parkway) and
- St Margaret C.E.S. (on Cowan Blvd).

It should be noted that St. Margaret C.E.S. was not a STP school, however, given its proximity to Clemens Mill and a shared school zone, interventions were deemed appropriate.

The following interventions were added during the pilot:

### **Avenue Road Public School**

- Enhanced school zone signs with flashing beacon
- Flexible bollards and painted islands

### **St. Peter Catholic Elementary School**

- Enhanced school zone signs with flashing beacon
- Pavement markings (to be installed Fall 2022/Spring 2023)\*

### **Clemens Mill Public School**

- Enhanced school zone signs with flashing beacon
- 'SCHOOL' stencils on the road

### **St. Margaret Catholic Elementary School**

- Enhanced school zone signs with flashing beacon
- 'SCHOOL' stencils on the road

\*The pavement markings at St. Peter are delayed due to Regional road works planned for this summer.



*Figure 1 Photo of ESZ sign and flashing beacon on Saginaw Parkway*



*Figure 2 Photo of ESZ 'SCHOOL' stencil pavement marking on Saginaw Parkway*

## Data Collection

The City and STSWR collected data at the sites to capture driving behaviours before and after the interventions. Data collected by STSWR, along with other reporting, is

included in the Ontario Active School Travel Fund – Final Progress Report prepared by STSWR and can be found in Appendix B.

Generally, the interventions decreased speeds in almost all locations, as shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Before and After Data Collection: Traffic Speeds & Volumes**

Street	Segment	Year (d/m/y)	ADT	Posted Speed (km/h)	Average Speed (km/h)	85th %	Change in 85th %
Saginaw Pkwy	Green Vista Dr to Longhurst Cr	06/12/2018	8148	40	54.0	62.51	0.79
		05/04/2022	6809	40	50.0	63.30	
Saginaw Pkwy	Cowan Blvd to Longhurst Cr	06/12/2018	6134	40	51.5	58.13	-1.13
		05/04/2022	5534	40	49.0	57.70	
Saginaw Pkwy	Light Dr to Chipcase Ct	06/12/2018	4805	40	51.0	58.79	-1.09
		05/04/2022	4407	40	49.0	57.70	
Saginaw Pkwy	Granite Hill Rd to Bird Crt	06/12/2018	4895	40	51.0	60.34	-4.74
		05/04/2022	5400	40	47.0	55.60	
Avenue Rd	Blaine Ave to Rosedale Ave	21/10/2020	4668	40	52.0	60.00	-4.00
		16/09/2020	5562	40	50.0	56.00	
Avenue Rd	Gail St to Elgin St N	21/10/2021	5480	40	52.0	59.00	-6.00
		16/09/2021	1873	40	47.0	53.00	
Gail St	Rouse Ave to Currie St	No before data available					n/a
		16/09/2021	1121	40	35.0	43.00	

### Enhanced School Zones – After the Pilot

In an effort to create interventions that can be widely installed, a lower-cost solar-powered flashing light was used as part of the toolkit instead of the larger, hard-wired, type that have higher costs for material and installation. The total for all materials and contract services was \$9,138, rather than the \$23,000 allocated, leaving close to \$14,000 of unspent grant funding. OAST has given consent to use the remaining funds to expand the Enhanced School Zones program across the City.

Staff have developed criteria and a toolkit to expand ESZ interventions to other schools. The criteria include:

- Schools actively working with School Travel Planning (STP) and/or;
- Schools identified though the City's Speed Management Program



Being an STP school means that staff, parents and students are receiving messaging, training and support in relation to road safety and encouraging active transportation. It also means that there is a stronger lens on the school in terms of understanding the needs, forming stronger stakeholder relationships and opening up discussions. Pairing ESZ interventions with programming, education and support through STP creates a holistic approach to the challenges surrounding the school commute and ensures that everyone is working on their part to make the commute to school safer and more enjoyable.

Through the City's Speed Management Program residents can request temporary speed awareness features, assessments for physical traffic calming, or launch their own neighbourhood improvement project. If traffic concerns are within a school zone, interventions from the ESZ may be an appropriate solution.

### **ESZ for Summer 2022**

The following is a list of elementary schools that are actively working with STP and would be eligible to receive Enhanced School Zones this summer:

- Central Public School
- Elgin Street Public School
- Hillcrest Public School
- \*Moffat Creek Public School
- Saginaw Public School
- St. Augustine C.E.S.
- St. Elizabeth C.E.S.
- St. Michael C.E.S.

\*Schools on Regional Roads, such as Moffat Creek Public School will require further consultation with the Region to determine if interventions could be implemented.

Staff will continue to work with the team at STSWR to determine appropriate interventions at the remaining schools for installation over the summer. Any new schools brought on through the STP program will have the opportunity to request ESZ at their school.

### **EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):**

Not Applicable

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There are no financial implications.

Grant funding secured through the Ontario Active School Fund is administered through STSWR. Following the implementation of the pilot project, there is close to \$14,000 of unspent funding. OAST has given consent to use the remaining funds to expand the ESZ program to additional schools in Cambridge.

Any costs incurred beyond the remaining grant funding would be subsidized through the Transportation Operating budget.

**PUBLIC VALUE:**

This project recognizes that we all have an active role to play in solving issues for the public good. The use of pilot projects displays leadership by taking innovative approaches to solving problems.

The project also actively collaborates with STSWR, school boards and the community to achieve common goals and ensure representation of community interests.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:**

Not Applicable

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

Posted publicly as part of the report process.

**INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:**

External consultation was completed through Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region, who also organized celebration events with the community, schools and the media.

**CONCLUSION:**

As part of its role and mandate to ensure that our residents and visitors can enjoy livable, sustainable, and accessible neighbourhoods, the City of Cambridge operates and supports a number of initiatives to promote road safety. Expanding Enhanced School Zones across the City adds another option to the existing toolbox of sustainable solutions for traffic safety. By creating safer environments around school zones, students and parents are able to feel more confident in making their active transportation commutes.

Building off the success of the pilot program, with Council's approval an additional 6-8 ESZ interventions will be implemented at STP schools over the summer.



**REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

**APPROVALS:**

**This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:**

**Director**

**Deputy City Manager**

**Chief Financial Officer**

**City Solicitor**

**City Manager**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 22-079-CD Appendix A – Enhanced School Zone Toolkit
2. 22-079-CD Appendix B – Ontario Active School Travel Fund – Final Progress Report