

Report TR-TAPS-80-15

To: Chair Barfoot and Members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee
From: M.J. Kelly, Director of Transportation Services
Meeting Date: October 22, 2015
Subject: Kimberley September 17, 2015 Signage Delegation
Status: Recommendation adopted by Committee as **amended** per Resolution TAPS141-15; Endorsed by County Council per Resolution CC148-15 November 3, 2015

Recommendation(s)

WHEREAS a delegation attended the Transportation and Public Safety Committee on September 17, 2015, regarding signage and traffic study being completed on Grey Road 13 within the community of Kimberley;

AND WHEREAS staff has reviewed the requests made from the delegation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Report TR-TAPS-80-15 regarding requests made from the Kimberley delegation on September 17, 2015 be received;

AND THAT:

- 1) County provide a copy of the data obtained from the traffic assessment completed in Kimberley in the summer of 2015 to the Municipality of Grey Highlands;
- 2) That the establishment of a committee be deferred until the Grey County Study has been completed and more information is gathered regarding traffic calming;
- 3) The County will permit the Municipality to install a radar speed detection sign, as per County requirements, on Grey Road 13 in the community of Kimberley with the completion of an Encroachment Permit;
- 4) Supplementary red and white speed limit signs not be installed.

Background

At the September 17, 2015 Transportation and Public Safety Committee, Joe Killoran and Askash Desai provided a presentation regarding their concerns and possible solutions regarding the vehicle speeds on Grey Road 13 in the community of Kimberley.

In particular, the delegation requested the following:

- 1) A copy of the raw traffic data that the County collected during the summer of 2015;
- 2) Permission to install supplementary white and red signs on Grey Road 31 encouraging drivers to reduce their speeds;
- 3) Permission for the Municipality of Grey Highlands to install speed radar signs;
- 4) Requested that a committee be formed to deal with the speed issue in Kimberley.

Existing Conditions

Kimberley is a community within the Municipality of Grey Highlands located on Grey Road 13. Most of the street development consists of residential properties; however, there are several roadside commercial establishments. Grey Road 13 is constructed to a semi-urban cross-section (mountable curb and gutter and a paved boulevard) throughout the community with rural cross-sections (gravel shoulders) at both the south and north ends.

There are regular sized speed limit signs (as per the Highway Traffic Act) identifying 50 kilometres per hour on Grey Road 13 at the north and south ends of the community. Northbound traffic enters the community on a slight incline grade with good visibility. At the speed limit sign, the road dips drivers cannot visualize the upcoming urban area. When southbound traffic approaches the speed limit, the road is straight and relatively flat; therefore, drivers can see that an urban center is ahead.

Existing Traffic By-Laws

The Grey County Traffic By-Law restricts vehicle speeds to 50 kilometres per hour on Grey Road 13 in the community of Kimberley. In addition, the 50 kilometres per hour speed limit is also under the Community Safety Zone designation.

Road Sign Principles

The following information was obtained from the Ontario Traffic Manual:

Traffic control and management relies on a system of traffic control devices for conveying messages to the road user. The objective of these messages is to advise motorists of traffic regulations in order to enable observance of the law, warn them of roadway characteristics and road hazards, and provide them with the information necessary for route selection. Meeting these objectives improves safety and convenience for the road user, and promotes the efficient movement of people and goods and the orderly flow of traffic. Simplification of the driving task through uniformity in the design and application of traffic control devices is necessary to accomplish these objectives.

If traffic control devices are not carefully designed and properly installed they can interfere with and distract from each other, become visually ineffective, and lose their authority through excessive use. Therefore, simplicity in design and care in placement are essential. An effective traffic control device will attract attention, be legible and comprehensible, and be appropriate to the motorist's needs.

A principle goal in the development of the Ontario Traffic Manual is the achievement of uniformity throughout the Province and compatibility throughout Canada and North America. Achievement of this goal requires that the Manual provide the user with the design and dimensions of devices, and with guidance on fabrication and installation.

Traffic control devices should be well chosen and located to assist the road user. Improper or excessive use, particularly of regulatory and warning signs, tends to cultivate disrespect for signs in general. As a result, signs tend to lose their authority.

The wide variation in roadway speeds and complexity requires that traffic control devices be readily recognizable and understandable at a glance. Uniformity and simplicity in design (including shape, colour, pattern, dimensions, symbols, wording, lettering and illumination or reflectorization), position and application are of great importance in aiding recognition. The majority of these designs, symbols and word messages have been approved by the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, after a thorough review of the varying designs used in Canada, supplemented by test studies.

Standardization of sign shapes advises the road user of the class of message contained. The task of driving can be simplified by enabling the road user to judge in advance the type of message to be expected. To meet the road user's requirements, a code of sign shapes has been established that applies to all signs.

Standardization of colours also assists the road user in a manner similar to the standardization of shapes. A code of sign colours has been established that applies to all signs.

Uniformity of application is important. Similar conditions should be treated in a similar manner, to accommodate driver expectation. Different types of information (and signs) should not be displayed on the same sign support.

Grey County Transportation Services utilizes the Ontario Traffic Act and the Ontario Traffic Manual when determining signage for Grey Roads.

Legal Signs

In accordance with the Highway Traffic Act, municipalities have the authority to pass By-Laws for the installation and enforcement of legal signs such as stop, speed limit, no parking, community safety zone and others. However, the signs must comply with the Highway Traffic Act. Legal signs normally have a white background.

Warning Signs

Warning signs are intended to provide advance notice to road users about unexpected and potentially dangerous conditions on or near the road.

The warning signs provide suggestions to the motorist, but the information provided is not enforceable. Typically, warning signs are yellow and black and most are in a diamond shape.

Speed Limit Principles

Speed limits should be set with consideration given to what reasonable drivers feel should be the running speed limit of the roadway, the speed at which the 85 percentile of drivers feel comfortable driving. If speed limits are set unreasonably low, drivers will tend to disregard the posted limits.

Grey County had developed speed limit evaluation criteria that consider a variety of factors when determining a reasonable speed limit.

Normally, when vehicle operators are exceeding the speed limit it is not because they did not observe the speed limit sign, it is because observed conditions do not justify a speed reduction.

As indicated in the Transportation Master Plan, traffic calming devices can be implemented that will modify the features of a road to encourage the drivers to feel the need to reduce their speeds. No decisions regarding the implementation on traffic calming initiatives have been made. It is important that all traffic calming techniques that are adopted be implemented consistently.

Study

At the January 22, 2015 Transportation and Public Safety Committee Meeting, staff were directed to complete a study on the speeds in Kimberley with obtaining vehicle data in the summer and winter.

The Transportation Services Department purchased a device that records the speeds of vehicles on a road while it is installed. This hardware was used in the summer of 2015 to obtain data. The same equipment will be used to obtain data in January/February of 2016. Once both tests are completed, all the data will be reviewed and assessments will be made.

It is anticipated that the study will be completed in the spring or summer of 2016.

Transportation Master Plan

On July 7, 2015 County Council provided direction for staff to develop options, principles and policies of assessing community calming measures, as well as determining appropriate speed zones. This was deemed a low priority and it is anticipated it will be completed in 2018.

Radar Signs

Radar signs that identify vehicle speeds, as well as other information, can be purchased. Research has determined that these signs do encourage vehicle operators to reduce their vehicle speeds when they are first introduced. However, within two weeks motorists become accustomed to the signs and they have little, if any, effect.

Additional Signs

When people are driving they often notice something that is new, such as a sign. As a result, the installation of new speed reduction sign is observed by motorists. However, very quickly the novelty wears off and the additional signs are no longer observed. In addition, the installation of additional signs distracts the road users' attention from other objects within the corridor, such as pedestrians or other signs.

Recommendations

The following are staff recommendations regarding the three requests from the delegation:

- 1) A copy of the raw traffic data that the County collected during the summer of 2015.

The County would be pleased to provide the data to the Municipality of Grey Highlands with the understanding that the County will not be assessing the information or completing the report until after the winter information is obtained.

- 2) Permission to install supplementary white and red signs on Grey Road 31 encouraging drivers to reduce their speeds.

The County staff does not recommend the installation of the white and red signs for consistency reasons.

- 3) Permission for the Municipality of Grey Highlands to install a speed radar signs.

The County staff would be pleased to have the Municipality of Grey Highlands supply and install radar signs that are acceptable to Grey County (size, colour, display, location, etc.) under an application for an encroachment permit.

The Municipality would be responsible for all costs associated with the sign.

Municipalities are exempt from the encroachment permit fee.

- 4) Committee Formed Regarding Speed Issue in Kimberley

The County will be completing a study to better understand the vehicle speeds in Kimberley. In addition, in accordance with the direction from County Council regarding the Transportation Master Plan, traffic calming will be investigated. As a result, it would be premature to develop a committee at this time.

Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

Considerations

For legal signs to be enforceable they must meet the requirements of the Highway Traffic Act. The installation of non-Highway Traffic Act signs may expose the County to legal risk.

The placement and information provided on signs have an effect on the overall safety of roads. Therefore, it is highly recommended to maintain consistent road signs throughout the County.

If modifications are made to the current signage practices, there may be significant costs associated with the upgrade of all of the other signs throughout the County.

Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

Not Applicable.

Attachments

None.

Respectfully submitted by,

M.J. Kelly

Director of Transportation Services