



Report of the Public Works Department

Community Safety Zones

Report No.: TP-014-2024

Meeting Date: November 27, 2024

Executive Summary

The United Counties of Prescott and Russell's Public Works Department received Resolution 2024-79 dated August 14, 2024, from the City of Clarence-Rockland requesting the designation of certain Community Safety Zones (CSZ) on county roads in the City of Clarence-Rockland.

The Public Works reviewed each individual proposed designation from the City of Clarence-Rockland and many of the requested locations are already designated as community safety zones. As for a few locations, the Public Works are of the opinion that the roads do not suggest an immediate safety concern that warrants the designation of CSZ. The Public Works recommend establishing a Community Safety Zones policy to define criteria and warrants for CSZ designation, recognizing that Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) can now be implemented in these zones.

While safety is a priority, it is equally important to consider the road's function and context in making such decisions.

Options and Recommendation

Options

Option 1 (recommended):

- That the following road segments be designated as Community Safety Zones
 - County Road 2 (Laval Street) from 500 metres east of its intersection with Champlain Street to 500 metres west of its intersection with Champlain Street in Bourget;
 - County road 8 (Champlain Street) from Laval Street to 1 km north of its intersection with Laval Street in Bourget.
- That the following road segments be designated as school speed zones with a speed limit of 40 km/h during school hours where children may be present.
 - County road 1 (St-Pascal Road) from 500 metres west of its intersection with Du Lac Road to Du Lac Road in St-Pascal-Baylon.
- That the Public Works prepares a community safety zones policy to establish criteria and warrants for CSZ designation and that once a policy is established, the Public Works Department shall reevaluate the existing CSZ locations under by-law 2024-19, as amended, and any new request from local municipalities including the current request from the City of Clarence-Rockland.

Option 2:

- Keep the status quo and do nothing.

Option 3 (City of Clarence-Rockland request):

- That all road segments requested by the City of Clarence-Rockland as per Resolution 2024-79 dated August 14, 2024, be designated as Community Safety Zones if not already designated under by-law 2014-19.

Recommendation

Whereas the Public Works Department has received Resolution 2024-79, dated August 14, 2024, from the City of Clarence-Rockland, about the designation of certain Community Safety Zones on county roads in the City of Clarence-Rockland.

Be it resolved that Council approve Option 1, as stated in Report TP-014-2024.

Background Information and Analysis

1. City of Clarence-Rockland Requests

As per resolution 2024-79 dated August 14, 2024, the City of Clarence-Rockland is requesting the UCPR to designate numerous sections of County roads as Community Safety Zones.

It is the Public Works Department responsibility to thoroughly evaluate such requests and offer recommendations that prioritize both safety and the effective management of the UCPR's road network. Community Safety Zones are sections of roadway where public safety is of special concern. Zones on County roads are established through by-law.

As stated in the Ontario Traffic Manual Book 5 ("OTM" Book 5): "The purpose of the Community Safety Zone is to inform the drivers that they are entering a zone that the community has designated as an area where the safety of its children/citizens is paramount."

The request from the City of Clarence-Rockland proposes that every beginning of hamlets, towns or villages would become CSZ within the City of Clarence-Rockland. While safety is of paramount importance, it is essential to assess the situation holistically, considering the guidelines of OTM Book 5.

Many locations requested by the City of Clarence-Rockland are already designated Community Safety Zones under by-law 2024-19. Only the request for Bourget, St-Pascal, Cheney and County Road 17 east and west of Rockland are not already designated as community safety zones.

For Bourget, the requested portion of roads could be considered an area of special concern being in an urban area with community centres, high pedestrian volumes, schools, senior centres, businesses and other areas of interest. The Department would support designating the CSZ as requested by the City of Clarence-Rockland.

For St-Pascal, the requested portion of the road should be designated as a school zone with reduce speed to 40 km/h. It is the Department's opinion that a CSZ is not necessary if a School Zone with speed reduction is designated.

For Cheney, the Department recommends that Community Safety Zones (CSZ) are to be used on "parts of a roadway" where public safety is of special concern to a community. While Cheney is not at that stage yet, it is expected to evolve over time. Currently, the area lacks sidewalks and remains a rural cross-section without schools, parks, community centres or

other features directly adjacent to the county road that would raise it to a level of special concern that is obvious to road users.

For County Road 17 east and west of Rockland, the Department recommends not designating those areas as Community Safety Zones (CSZ). These areas remain very rural without schools, parks, community centres or high pedestrian traffic locations which would not qualify as being an area of special concern that is obvious to road users. The Department would be more lenient in supporting a request for designating other portions of County Road 17 in Rockland such as near the intersection of De La Berge Street where institutional and residential lands are present.

There is no specific warrant provided in the Ontario Traffic Manual for Community Safety Zones. However, their effectiveness depends on selective and appropriate deployment. Drivers should not encounter a Community Safety Zone in such a wide variety of applications that they lose their special designation. Rather, as cited in OTM Book 5, Community Safety Zones are intended for: “roadways near schools, day care centres, playgrounds, parks, hospitals, seniors’ residences, and may also be used for collision prone locations within a community.” It is the Department’s opinion that having CSZ on County Road 17 east and west of Rockland will have no impact on driver behaviour.

The designation of a Community Safety Zone requires careful consideration and therefore a “blanket” Community Safety Zone designation is not recommended. It is important to acknowledge that once a CSZ is designated, it provides an opportunity to implement Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) in such zones. It is the Department's opinion that the designation of CSZ shall not be solely based on the purpose of installing ASE equipment.

Before designating other CSZ on County roads, the Department recommends implementing a community safety zones policy to establish criteria and warrants for CSZ designation. Once a policy is established, the Department recommends reevaluating the existing CSZ locations under by-law 2024-19 and any new request from local municipalities.

2. Automated Speed Enforcement

The province amended the *Highway Traffic Act*, allowing municipalities to permit the use of Automated Speed Enforcement in the following two areas:

- i. In a Community Safety Zone (CSZ) designated by a by-law passed by Council under subsection 214.1 (1) of the *Highway Traffic Act* where the prescribed rate of speed is less than 80 km/hr; or
- ii. In School Zones (SZ) designated by by-law passed by Council under clause 128(5)(a) of the *Highway Traffic Act*.

During the past decade, the UCPR and local municipalities have implemented several traffic calming measures within the UCPR limits with respect to the available budget/funding sources and road geometry including:

- Speed radar signs (implemented in most urban areas on UCPR roads in partnership with the local municipalities)

- Roundabouts (implemented on UCPR roads occasionally in partnership with local municipalities)
- Flexible traffic calming bollards (allowed to be installed on UCPR roads by local municipalities)
- Modifying streetscape and road geometry during capital projects to have narrower lanes and speed reduction features (implemented in some urban areas on UCPR roads in partnership with the local municipalities)
- Traffic calming pavement markings (mostly on lower-tier municipal roads)
- Speed humps at selected locations (mostly on lower-tier municipal roads)

Traffic safety usually consists of the following three elements:

- Engineering
- Education
- Enforcement

These three combined elements typically help reduce traffic speeds and enhances safety for all road users. However, the UCPR has faced challenges in implementing engineering and education initiatives due to budget constraints and lack of resources. Enforcement is also challenging for the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP).

Given that speed reduction has been a priority for Council, the Public Works Department has been exploring various options and technologies, including Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE), which has been on the UCPR Council’s radar for some time. Automated Speed Enforcement is a relatively new way of enforcing speed limits throughout Ontario. ASE could be an added measure to further enforce speed limits, assist the OPP and the UCPR, for continuous provision of a safe and efficient road network in the UCPR.

During the November 13, 2024, Special Council Meeting, Council agreed to enter into an agreement with the City of Clarence-Rockland to manage and operate the ASE program on County Roads in the City of Clarence-Rockland. This initiative is the first step to improve road safety and reduce the potential for injuries involving motor vehicle collisions, which means that ASE might be the next appropriate traffic safety measure. However, as stated above in this report, careful consideration should be given to designating CSZ. The Department recommends establishing a Community Safety Zones policy to support their implementation and ensure consistency across the counties.

Financial, Legal, and Operational Implications

If the recommendation is approved, minor operational budget expenses including staff time and the purchase of new signs will be required. All costs will be absorbed by the Public Works Department operational budget.

Local Municipal Implications

If the recommendation is approved, the City of Clarence-Rockland will be involved when implementing some designated areas.

Asset Management Implications

N/A

Communication Implications

N/A

Attachments

City of Clarence-Rockland Resolution 2024-79

Prepared by:

Jérémie Bouchard, Director, Public Works Department - November 20, 2024

Submitted by:

Jérémie Bouchard, Director, Public Works Department - November 20, 2024