



Subject: *Speed Awareness Community Signage*
To: Executive Committee
Date Prepared: October 2021
Related Motions: C21(246)
Prepared by: Jesse Hulsman, Director of Infrastructure & Operations
Approved by: Kim Ramsay, CAO

Summary

On the direction of Council, Staff have researched the potential for standardized speed awareness signage in order to provide a visual cue for road users, and with the intent of reducing speed across the municipality. While infrastructure additions with the same intent would ultimately come at a great cost and take significant alignment with the province, due to current road ownerships, it is Staff's opinion that the signage discussed in this report will be the most cost effective and tempered approach at this time.

The original motion, C21(246), was "to direct staff to look into generic speed signage for the Weir Road in Walton". Through discussion on this topic this was interpreted as a need for all of East Hants, including the current challenges on Weir Road which happened to be the example given to bring up a motion. There have been several comments and concerns during staff discussions with councilors and residents that highlight a that excessive and dangerous speed is an issue in East Hants.

Financial Impact Statement

\$5000 for year 1. Staff anticipate an ongoing annual operating cost that will be better understood and estimated after year 1.

This would be for an estimated initial batch of 150 signs and allow for an additional order of 50 signs should there be further demand in year 1.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the purchase of 150 lawn mounted signs, with the design as shown in this report, for the available use by East Hants residents. And to budget for an additional order of 50.

Recommended Motion

Move that the Infrastructure and Operations Committee recommend that Council approve the design, purchase and proposed distribution plan of the Community Speed Awareness Signage as detailed in the report title "Speed Awareness Community Signage" in the October 2021 meeting of Executive Committee. Funding to be included in the 2022/2023 draft operating budget.

Background

In July 2021, Council made a motion (C21(246)) to explore signage options to encourage speed reduction, with Wier Road in Walton as the example given for the need. Historically these signs have been politically funded by either a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA - Provincial) or a Municipal District Councilor. In addition, these signs typically include constituency or district contact information as well as a community message regarding speed.

Discussion

In East Hants, where there are part-time councilors that don't have direct staff support for district budgets or work, a modified approach is being proposed where there is a generic East Hants branded sign identifying the Municipality versus being district specific or having multiple purposes. This will allow for a purchase volume to supply all districts at a reduced cost versus having individualized signs.

Community yard signs ensure a topic is visible for road users in an area, and making it known that neighbors are concerned about the speed and safety. While the signs don't change the design of the road or the technical capability of speeding on a road, it is the fastest action option for an area that may see a spike in speeding issues or concerns. They are relatively low cost, and have the ability to compliment other programming that would require more detailed action plans, setup timelines and higher costs.

Other speed mitigation programming options

- Digital Speed Display Signs (Radar Signs)
 - The Municipality currently owns 2 DSDS and operates them in 2-week cycles per location. The first week the signs record speed, the second week the signs display and record the speeds. When the sign is showing the speed, it provides speed awareness in real time, which can provide short term benefits for speed reduction. The data collected is shared with the RCMP who can look for trends in peak speed and plan further site visits if the data warrants.
- RCMP Radar Setups;
 - This can provide enforcement with a punishment for those that are speeding, acting as an increased deterrent. These stop and action events, deters an individual from continuing with high-speed behavior through monetary penalties and risk of losing Driver's License points. This option is restricted by the availability of RCMP as they must balance all operational needs and can't be everywhere at once.
- Physical Changes to the Road setup;
 - Speed humps
 - Additional stops (going from 2-way stop intersections to 3-way or 4-way stops)
 - Rumble strips
 - Elevated crosswalks
 - Marked bike lanes
 - Crosswalk islands and bump outs
 - Speed limit changes - this is governed by the Motor Vehicle Act (Provincial). The criteria of the Province for allowing limits lower than 50 km/h requires a technical study and physical changes that lower the on-going capable speed. (essentially a need to prove that 85% of ongoing traffic would abide by the lower limit once established)
 - ***all of these require technical design and should be part of a technical study to meet Transportation of Canada Guidelines. The Municipality is also restricted by only having jurisdiction of Municipally owned roads, which consist of residential roads built after April 1, 1995.

To explore physical changes or the changes required to lower speed limits (on Municipally owned roads) a technical study is required that will take both time and monetary investment. That is beyond the intent of recommendations within this report.

Distribution of Signs

It is unrealistic to have staff dedicated to delivering signs all over the Municipality based on periodic inquiries. In other models with MLA or councilor funding they are delivered by the Politician or their assistant.

In an East Hants scenario, a reasonable distribution would be to have signs available at the front desk of the Municipal office (ideally booking in advance to ensure supply) and/or having signs distributed to councilors once or twice a month at the same time as Executive Committee or Council meetings, which they could hand out should they receive an inquiry from one of their constituents.

It will be hard to predict demand, which will likely peak after a specific event in a neighborhood. Therefore, a general offering option that doesn't commit to a level of service for delivery is a more sustainable option.

Proposed Sign



Pricing

Price for 150 up front - \$3000 to \$3500

Price for batches of 50 for on-going orders - \$1200 to \$1500

(estimates based on online pricing checks)

Alternatives

Create signage for specific districts with Councilor names

Similar to the approach used by MLAs or by individual councilors in HRM, in this scenario a budget could be allocated for a councilor to coordinate, order and distribute signs out of their own district with minimal staff involvement. This would not be cost effective and could lead to waste given municipal election cycles and minimum ordering quantities.

Study speed mitigation design options across East Hants subdivisions

This is a topic that could be explored as a next step after a community awareness initiative, and where an engineering design review could leverage the Transportation Association of Canada standards for identifying design options, with cost estimates. These could be installed over time to support speed mitigation through physical changes like; speed humps, elevated crosswalks, intersection islands, crosswalk islands, etc. The success of this approach will be limited to Municipal road implementation and any uptake from the Province whom may choose to participate to some extent, if their roads are included in a study.

Conclusion

Community Speed Awareness Signage is a reasonable cost and offering to the public to meet immediate concerns. Having a signage option is something versus nothing in the short term, as permanent mitigation takes significant time, cost and planning for changes in road structure.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the purchase of 150 lawn mounted signs, with the design as shown in this report, for the available use by East Hants residents. And to budget for an additional order of 50.