



Report to Council

Department: Infrastructure Services

Division: Operations

Date: January 16, 2023

Prepared by: Kevin Girard, P.Eng., MBA
Director of Infrastructure Services

Report Number: Operations-2022-08

Subject: South Talbot Road Community Safety Zone

Number of Pages: 5

Recommendation(s)

That Operations – 2022-08 entitled, “South Talbot Road Community Safety Zone” prepared by Kevin Girard, Director of Infrastructure Services, dated January 16th, 2023 be received.

Purpose

In accordance with Section 4.2.2 of the Town of Essex Policy Number 47 for Establishing Community Safety Zones, Council requested that South Talbot between Victoria Avenue and Maidstone Avenue be reviewed for designation of a Community Safety Zone. Therefore, this report is being prepared in accordance with Section 4.2.3 to provide a recommendation for this request.

Background

Community Safety Zones (CSZ) were introduced to Ontario in 1998 under the Highway Traffic Act. These are sections of roadway where public safety is of special concern and

are under the jurisdiction of the local municipality. CSZs are typically identified on roadways near school, daycares, playgrounds, parks, hospitals, senior citizen residences, and roadway sections with identified high collision or road speed violations rates.

The goal of setting a CSZ is to help modify driver behaviour and improve safety on municipally selected sections of road where public safety is of special concern. The behaviour modification is to be achieved through increased fines for traffic violations committed within the CSZ, therefore, it relies heavily on the enforcement of these posted sections of road.

In accordance with Section 4.3.2 of the Town's policy, CSZs should only be considered where one of the following apply:

- a) A school, daycare, playground, park, hospital, or senior citizen residences is located within the proposed CSZ; or
- b) Local police, at their discretion, determine and/or verify an unusually high road speed violation or high collision rate within the proposed CSZ; or
- c) A minimum of three of the following concerns to public safety are determined to be present in the proposed CSZ location:
 - a. Posted speed limit causes concern for collision risk;
 - b. Relatively high 85th percentile over speed limit;
 - c. High annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes (>2,000 vehicles/day)
 - d. Absence or limitations of sidewalks causes risks for pedestrians;
 - e. Relatively high truck volumes;
 - f. Relatively high number of intersection or accesses causing concern for increased collision risk; and
 - g. A high number of crashes per year on the proposed segment of road (> 1:900 crashes per year)

Discussion

To evaluate the need for a community safety zone along South Talbot from Victoria to Maidstone, each section of Section 4.3.2 was evaluated individually as follows:

Section 4.3.2 (a) - A school, daycare, playground, park, hospital, or senior citizen residences is located within the proposed CSZ

There is no school, daycare, playground, park, hospital, or senior citizen residence within the proposed CSZ.

Section 4.3.2 (b) - Local police, at their discretion, determine and/or verify an unusually high road speed violation or high collision rate within the proposed CSZ

Administration reached out to the local OPP to garner feedback on the proposed CSZ. In response to our request, the Town received the following response:

“This request for a Community Safety Zone seems premature given the status of the newly opened portion of this road, coupled with the incomplete construction of Highway #3 expansion. The residents in this area may be asking for a CSZ but a more calculated approach is necessary. It would be more advantageous to have the construction be completed and then evaluate the traffic volume at that time. The residents may be more aware to traffic as they have never experienced it due to the road being a cul-de-sac. I feel that traffic volume will lessen once Highway #3 is completed. At that point in time, we can set up better evaluations and assessments for the road and what demands there may be to the Municipality and the actual impacts. It is anticipated that the road will likely settle down once the construction, both residentially and Highway, in the area settles. The other piece is that traffic safety. Over regulation is a deterrent to the community too and leads to frustration.”

Section 4.3.2 (c) - A minimum of three of the following concerns to public safety are determined to be present in the proposed CSZ location: a) Posted speed limit causes concern for collision risk; b) Relatively high 85th percentile over speed limit; c) High annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes (>2,000 vehicles/day); d) Absence or limitations of sidewalks causes risks for pedestrians; e) Relatively high truck volumes; f) Relatively high number of intersection or accesses causing concern for increased collision risk; g) A high number of crashes per year on the proposed segment of road (> 1:900 crashes per year)

The completion of a traffic study to evaluate these criteria is premature given the construction of Highway 3 still being underway. In addition, the removal of the access to/from the Highway has not been fully realized at this time due to construction traffic impacts and detours. Therefore, the actual impact to South Talbot, from a traffic and pedestrian perspective, is yet to be fully realized. In addition, the completion of a traffic study today will likely not represent the long-term conditions of this road. Therefore, at this time, there is no accurate means to determine whether a CSZ is required in accordance with Section 4.3.2(c) of the Town's CSZ policy.

Conclusion

Based on the evaluation of the three criteria above, it is recommended that a CSZ not be implemented at this time. Should Council wish to investigate the need for a CSZ in the future, a thorough traffic study in accordance with the Town's CSZ policy, is recommended. However, for the reasons stated herein, the traffic study should occur at least one year following the completion of the Highway 3 widening project.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact as a result of this report.

Consultations

Link to Strategic Priorities

- ☒ Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure which meets current and future needs of the municipality and its citizens.
- ☐ Create a safe, friendly and inclusive community which encourages healthy, active living for people of all ages and abilities.
- ☐ Provide a fiscal stewardship and value for tax dollars to ensure long-term financial health to the municipality.
- ☐ Manage responsible and viable growth while preserving and enhancing the unique rural and small town character of the community.
- ☐ Improve the experiences of individuals, as both citizens and customers, in their interactions with the Town of Essex.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	South Talbot Road Community Safety Zone - Operations-2022-08.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jan 9, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doug Sweet', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Doug Sweet, Chief Administrative Officer - Jan 9, 2023 - 10:43 AM