



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council
From: City Manager (CAO)
Subject: Traffic Calming Guide and Policy Report

File No.: 5460-00
Date: October 23, 2024

PURPOSE:

To seek Council's endorsement of the proposed Traffic Calming Guide and establish policy guidance for its use and implementation across the City's transportation network.

BACKGROUND:

Annually, the City receives numerous inquiries and requests from residents concerning traffic safety, including speeding, noise, and traffic-related safety concerns in residential areas. In response, and through the development of the Council's Strategic Plan, Council prioritized walking, wheeling, cycling, and transit modes of transportation and the integration of them within land use and urban form. This strategic vision also extended to the development of traffic calming plans, related policies, and specific implementation for 'when and where', reduced speed limits, school zone improvements measures, and cycling education & awareness were all a part of the 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities Plan. The proposed Traffic Calming Guide aims to address these issues, by providing a clear and transparent application and review process, including tangible outcomes for implementation 'when and where' based on sound transportation engineering practices.

DISCUSSION:

Developing a comprehensive Traffic Calming Policy is essential to addressing various needs throughout our community while ensuring safety, accessibility, and service efficiency. The traffic calming guide outlines a framework for providing equitable evaluations, a prioritization matrix, and implementation plans for traffic calming measures across the City. The guide also provides a formal and structured framework for staff to systematically evaluate, prioritize, and respond to traffic calming requests, ensuring that decisions are based on impartial criteria, transportation engineering standards and best practices. This section outlines the key considerations in implementing traffic calming measures, including the perspectives of different stakeholders, public engagement processes, and the technical aspects of data collection and project scope. By addressing these factors, the policy aims to provide a clear framework for assessing and prioritizing traffic calming requests, ensuring equitable and practical solutions.

One of the key concerns raised during traffic calming projects is the impact on emergency services. Emergency response teams, including fire, police and ambulance services, have expressed concerns over vertical deflection devices, such as speed humps, which can delay their response times and reduce patient comfort during transit. As a result, it is critical to consult with emergency services early in the planning process to avoid implementing solutions that may hinder their operations. Stakeholder engagement extends

beyond emergency service and includes, goods and commerce, solid waste companies, agricultural groups, transit authorities, and other road users, who must be consulted during the design phase. This will ensure that any proposed solutions will not interfere with these vital and essential services. In some cases, during the 75% design stage, temporary markings may be used to simulate traffic calming devices and ensure that large vehicles, such as fire trucks or buses, can safely navigate these areas.

Public engagement also plays a significant role throughout the review process, including during the initial screening process and implementing neighbourhood-specific traffic calming measures. Given the potential for differing opinions within neighbourhoods, the guide recommends establishing a robust community engagement process from the onset of the review process and that any proposed traffic calming plans achieve at least a 51% majority approval from affected residents before moving forward. This ensures that the community is adequately involved and supportive of the changes being proposed. Public consultations, whether through in-person meetings or digital/paper feedback, provide opportunities for all residents to have their voices heard.

It's also important to note that traffic calming reviews are data-driven, requiring detailed assessments of traffic speed, volume, and any actual or potential safety issues. Understanding the root cause of the problem is essential, as requests for traffic calming may stem from issues like missing pedestrian amenities (e.g., crosswalks, sidewalks, etc.), which create discomfort for road users. Accurate data collection ensures that solutions address traffic concerns rather than perceived issues, leading to more effective outcomes. All projects are proposed to be evaluated using a point assessment system (TABLE 2 in Traffic Calming Guide and Policy Report) that prioritizes streets with the greatest need. Not all streets are eligible for traffic calming as the City's transportation network comprises different road classifications, each differing in their intended use and function. Therefore, only local and collector streets with two lanes and those that have a posted speed limit of 50 km/h or less can be considered for traffic calming measures. Each project must have a defined scope, including the specific road section, length, and surrounding geometries. The process will be terminated if a street does not meet the eligibility criteria, however, if it does meet the criteria, the project proceeds through a detailed analysis and design process.

Summary of Traffic Calming Process:

1. Initial Request:

- Requests for traffic calming are evaluated based on a standardized procedure to ensure fairness and thorough assessment.

2. Criteria for Traffic Calming:

- Only local and collector streets with a speed limit of 50 km/h or less and two-lane roadways are eligible.
- Understanding the underlying issues, such as missing amenities, is crucial in developing a point system for prioritizing projects.

3. Data Collection and Analysis:

- Detailed data collection and analysis are required to assess the need for traffic calming and prioritize projects.

4. Public Involvement:

- A majority (51%) of public acceptance is required before proceeding.
 - Public meetings and digital/paper feedback are used to gather community input.
5. **Stakeholder Engagement:**
 - Stakeholders, including emergency services, garbage companies, and transit authorities, are consulted to ensure their needs are met.
 6. **Design and Testing:**
 - Draft plans are developed and shared with the public for feedback.
 - At the 75% design stage, temporary markings are used to test turning movements and ensure feasibility.
 7. **Communication:**
 - Ongoing communication with the public through various channels, including the City's website, newspapers, group emails, and community centers.
 8. **Implementation and Review:**
 - After construction, a transition period of at least six months is observed before reviewing the effectiveness of the measures.
 - Post-project reviews inform future traffic calming strategies and tools.

Additional Considerations:

- **Emergency Services Feedback:** To avoid conflicts, ensure that emergency services' feedback is collected and thoroughly integrated into the design. Involve them in the early stages of planning to address their concerns proactively.
- **Impact on Residents:** In addition to the immediate feedback, consider implementing a survey or feedback mechanism to capture the long-term effects of the traffic calming measures on residents' quality of life.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement a structured post-implementation monitoring plan to evaluate traffic patterns, safety, and community satisfaction. This data can help refine future projects and address unforeseen issues.
- **Flexibility and Adaptation:** Be prepared to adjust the plans based on feedback and real-world performance. Flexibility can be crucial in addressing unforeseen challenges or stakeholder concerns.
- **Public Education:** Alongside implementing traffic calming measures, educate residents about the benefits and objectives of these changes. This can help garner support and ensure compliance.
- **Funding and Resources:** Consider establishing a clear budget and resource plan to manage the costs associated with data collection, public engagement, and implementation. This can prevent delays and ensure that the project remains on track.

By addressing these considerations, the Traffic Calming Policy ensures a comprehensive approach to managing requests, balancing residents' needs, while maintaining public safety. Once a traffic calming project has been implemented, there must be a transition period of at least six months before conducting any reviews. This allows time for traffic patterns to adjust. A post-project evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the traffic calming measures, providing valuable insights for future projects.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

The traffic calming guide advances a formal process for the application, review, and includes a logical framework that accesses which measures are considered acceptable and when they are applicable for installation on City streets. The guide also aims to clearly articulate the areas of staff control and or implementation of scaled measures, all based on the outcome and points afforded to each review. These point not only aid the deployment recommendations but they also serve to prioritize projects.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Each traffic calming request for review that proceeds, based on the warrant criteria as laid out in the guide, will require operational funding for data collection, analysis, and possibly design. The cost will vary widely depending on the length of the road segment or area defined by the project scope. The range for a traffic calming reviews is estimated to costs between \$24,000 - \$32,00 each with capital outcomes or recommended implementation measures ranging from a few thousand dollars i.e. items like speed signage, inclusion in the operational speed data collection program or a community awareness campaign. Extending beyond simple measures, larger projects or areas in need of engineered solutions, will require a capital implementation budget upwards of \$75, 000, where a complete redesign of a road network or the additions of engineered traffic calming measure are required to be designed and constructed to effectively impact the functional use of particular road or segment of road.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

In order to effectively implement a formal traffic calming policy at an operational level, it is recommended that a service level be established, budgeted and endorsed by Council. This service level will provide staff with clear direction and parameters on the number of reviews that will be completed in any one year as well as defining the amount of capital implementation that may be deployed year over year. It is understood that request for review may fluctuate year to year, however, understanding community demands alongside Councils direction to engage will set out a clear and attainable program from the onset. Currently, traffic calming request are typically direction of a resolution of Council for staff to investigate and ultimately proved a report back for Council with finding and a recommendation. As in past and in the future, staff time is required to process traffic calming requests, collect data, analyze the results, and manage the implementation of the projects. Depending on established service level, this may place additional demands on staff resources and, as such, could affect other ongoing initiatives.

To that end, throughout a review process, clear and consistent communication with the public is essential. Updates should be shared through various channels, including the City's website, group emails, and notices at community centres. Neighbourhood associations can also play a valuable role in disseminating information. The public should remain informed and engaged from the initial request to project completion.

All traffic calming outcomes or recommended implementation measures, based on the depth of the recommendation will require either operational planning relative to program inclusion or deployment, while any capital upgrades that require budget approval and future workplan inclusion, including prioritization, will be presented to Council for consideration and direction.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

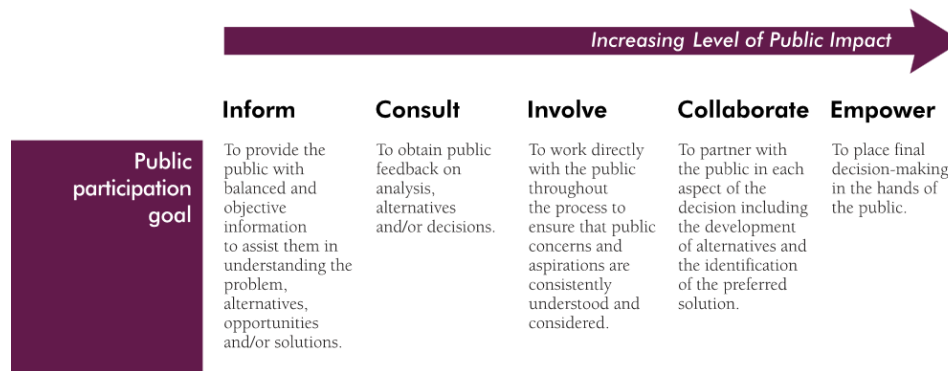
This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities: Under the Counsel Strategic Priorities 2023-2026, Streets and Transportation (Page 7);

- Streets and Transportation - Develop traffic calming plans, related policies, and specific implementation when and where, speed limits, school zones, cycling education/awareness
- Streets and Transportation - Implementation of traffic calming plans

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:

http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf



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OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council receive the traffic calming report and directs staff to implement the Traffic Calming Guide and Policy framework, and; THAT staff be directed to include operating budget implications in the 2025 financial plan for Council review and consideration.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.
3. THAT Council receive this report for information only.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2024-09-20 Traffic Calming Guide and Policy Report

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