



TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Jennifer Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 25, 2021

RE: **Highway 35 Speed Zone Review**

ISSUE:

Councillor Elphinstone has requested that consideration be given to reviewing the speed zones on Highway 35 to improve traffic safety on Main Street.

BACKGROUND:

Under the agreement the Town has with Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure (MHI) for the Urban Highway Connector Program, speed limit changes must be mutually agreed upon. In March 2018, Council authorized Administration to make a request to MHI to move back speed zones in all four entrances. In July 2019, MHI completed its review of the speed limits through Wadena following the Transportation Association of Canada's (TAC) guidelines for setting speed limits on provincial highways. MHI only recommended changes to the speed zones on the east. The Town came to an agreement with MHI on adjusting the east speed zones and the changes were implemented in 2020.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Committee of the Whole can do nothing.
2. Committee of the Whole can explore grant options for other traffic safety measures.
3. Committee of the Whole can recommend to Council that Administration be authorized to request that MHI review speed zones again.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications to maintain the status quo or to request that MHI review speed zones again. There may be costs to the Town if other traffic safety measures are implemented, even with grant funding.

ANALYSIS:

Sergeant Posnikoff with the RCMP was contacted in January by the CAO to provide his view of speed issues on Main St. Sergeant Posnikoff indicated that the RCMP had several complaints – primarily from one or two people that vehicles, mainly semi's were coming into Wadena from the north routinely entering the 70 km/hr zone at a high rate of speed. At the beginning of December, detachment RCMP members were assigned a task of strict enforcement in the 70 km/hr zone north of Wadena. In total, 70 hours of enforcement were completed in that area in December.

The results of the enforcement initiative:

- Vehicles travelling between 80 – 89 km/hr in the 70 km/hr zone = 9
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- Vehicles travelling between 70 – 79 km/hr in the 70 km/hr zone = 2
- All other vehicles recorded on radar were below the 70 km/hr limit.

The average speed of all semi's recorded on radar was 49.17 km/hr. During the entire enforcement period, zero semi's were recorded over the 70 km/hr speed limit. From the amount of time spent in that speed zone over the month of December, the RCMP concluded that there is no compulsive issue with speeding at all.

SGI has two programs available for traffic safety that are taking applications until March 31. The Provincial Traffic Safety Fund Grant has been used by municipalities for projects such as speed display signs, crosswalk lights and flashing stop signs. Wadena already has these along the highways to improve traffic safety. SGI also has a photo speed enforcement program, however, eligible locations listed are mainly cities with high-volume pedestrian locations and high-collision intersections. Given the evidence collected by MHI and the RCMP, it is unlikely that Wadena would meet the eligibility criteria.

Sergeant Posnikoff will be attending the Feb 1 committee of the whole meeting to discuss traffic safety and speed concerns.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION(S):

Administration requests direction from the committee on whether they wish to pursue any changes.