

DATE OF MEETING JUNE 22, 2020

AUTHORED BY BARBARA THOMAS, ASSISTANT MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

SUBJECT DEPARTURE BAY ROAD SUMMER TRAFFIC CALMING UPDATE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide Council with information about the planned design for the seasonal traffic calming on Departure Bay Road, near the beach.

BACKGROUND

The City of Nanaimo Traffic Calming Guideline (Attachment A) was created almost 20 years ago to address road safety concerns. The document focuses mainly on managing speed and/or volume concerns within neighbourhoods, however the process outlined within it, has the ability to adapt to the growing and changing needs of the community. The Traffic Calming Guideline has a clear reluctance to applying traffic calming on major roads, however through strategic thinking and careful application there are still ways to achieve the same desired outcome of reduced speeds and increased safety. The primary concern with applying traffic calming on major roads is the introduction of excessive delay to those that have no other choice but vehicle movement, such as transit, emergency services, or goods movement.

In a conventional sense, traffic calming includes signage, horizontal deflections, or vertical deflections. Features like crosswalks are not suitable for traffic calming as they create an expectation for drivers that pedestrians will be present. In high pedestrian areas (all year round) this is appropriate and can enhance road safety. However if crosswalks are installed in areas that do not have high pedestrian demand or only have seasonal pedestrian demand, drivers will become desensitized to the signage and road markings which will ultimately degrade road safety. If traffic calming is to be considered on a major road the preferred options are those that either shrink the travel lane or give the appearance of shrinking the travel lane. This is the least intrusive approach with the greatest impact. Vertical deflections or speed humps are not recommended on commuter roads as they tend to cause more problems than they solve.

In 2019, members of the Departure Bay Neighbourhood Association (DBNA) approached the City with a request to seek out a solution to their concerns with traffic patterns on Departure Bay Road. They felt that the speeds were excessive, particularly during the busy summer months with pedestrian and cyclist activity increases. In response to this, Staff proceeded with a trial speed reduction in the beach area. As noted in the December Staff report to Council, the results of this work were ineffective and staff reported that there would be a review and more aggressive approach proposed for the summer of 2020.

DISCUSSION

In May of 2020, another correspondence was submitted to the City on behalf of the DBNA reiterating concerns with traffic on Departure Bay Road (Attachment B). Within this letter there were a number of suggested action items. Some of the suggestions align with options staff were already considering while others were not appropriate and could not be supported by staff. By this time Staff were already in the process of preparing a plan which included modular traffic barriers which had already proven to be effective as trial or temporary traffic calming by the City of Calgary.

Staff are recommending to move forward with the installation of the Calgary style traffic calming curb because of its ease of use, effectiveness, and adaptability. A photo of the curb in use along the shoulder of a roadway is shown below in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Traffic Calming Curb in Use

The planned locations of the traffic calming curbs are at each of the crosswalks on this stretch of Departure Bay Road. The three crosswalks are shown below in Figure 2. Staff anticipate the use of three locations, closely spaced, will have the desired effect of slowing down traffic driving through the area.



Figure 2. Locations of Crosswalks on Departure Bay Road

The initial version of the design will include pairs of traffic calming curbs on the centreline at each crosswalk. This layout is shown schematically in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Layout of Crosswalk with Traffic Calming Curbs

The seasonal traffic calming is proposed to be installed after informing the neighbourhood and refining the design details. Once installed, it will be monitored for its effectiveness through the collection and comparison of traffic speed and volume data. Should the initial layout not achieve the desired outcome, the layout can be modified until traffic speeds are adequately managed. Modifications could include the addition of more traffic calming curbs and/or adding other features such as delineators epoxied to the asphalt or other in road signage. The traffic calming will remain in place until October 2020.

In addition to the speed concerns raised by the DBNA, there were also request for other enhancements to the pedestrian crossings. In road crosswalk signs will be included as part of this work, however staff have an existing process for prioritizing pedestrian activated beacons and would need to gather more information before making a recommendation as to whether or not they would be appropriate at the requested locations.

CONCLUSION

It is anticipated traffic calming curbs on approach to each crosswalk will provide the desired speed reduction in traffic. Traffic volume and speed data will be collected regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of the traffic calming layout. If necessary, further modifications may be installed to achieve the desired result. The traffic calming will remain in place until mid-October 2020. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- Summer traffic calming will be installed on Departure Bay Road after informing the neighbourhood.
- Vehicular speeds and volumes will be monitored and the traffic calming features will be adjusted as necessary to be effective.
- The traffic calming will be in place until mid-October 2020.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Letter from Departure Bay Neighbourhood Association

Submitted by:

Barbara Thomas
Assistant Manager, Transportation |

Concurrence by:

Poul Rosen
Director, Engineering |