

DATE OF MEETING MAY 3, 2021

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SUBJECT EXTENSION ROAD TRAFFIC CALMING

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide background on public requests for traffic calming and receive Council's direction on next steps for traffic calming on Extension Road.

Recommendation

That Council approve advancement of Extension Road traffic calming to the public consultation stage which will be used to inform the traffic calming design.

BACKGROUND

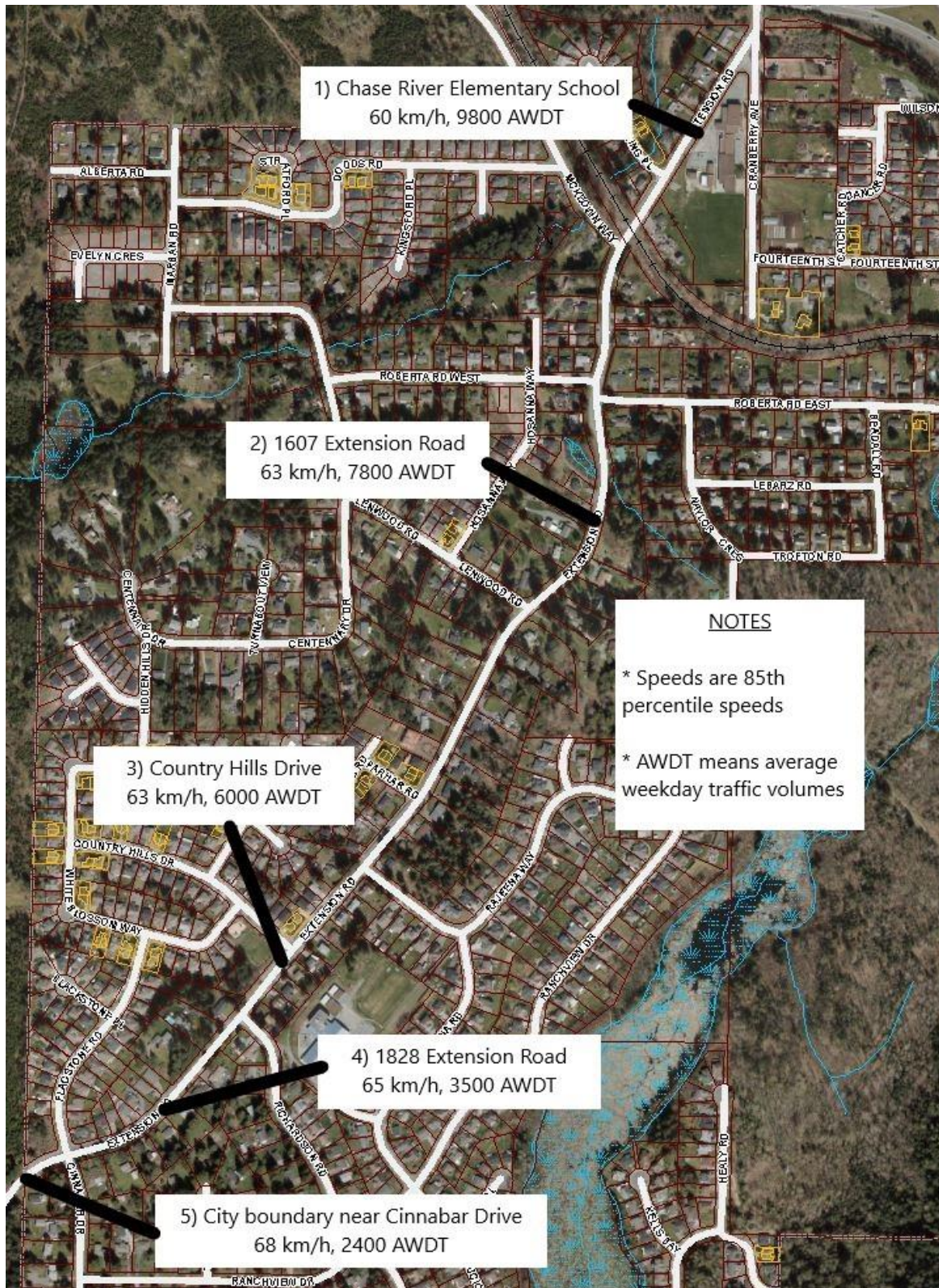
Extension Road runs north-south connecting the Trans-Canada Highway to areas south and outside the City limits. The road forms a spine from which side streets extend into residential areas. The long reach of the road, its rural character, and its adjacent land use give drivers the sense that speeding is acceptable. The area is densifying, and with the increase in homes, the traffic volumes are increasing but speeds are not diminishing. As a result, in 2020, Staff received several complaints about speeding and requests for traffic calming on Extension Road.

DISCUSSION

Currently, Extension Road is classified as a Major Road, and in the future, is proposed to be an Urban Collector. It is a meandering route, and on one stretch, it dips out of the City into Regional District of Nanaimo territory and then back into the City. The section of interest extends from Chase River Elementary School to Cinnabar Drive. This section is 1.7 kilometers long, one travel lane in each direction, with a posted speed limit of 50 km/h.

Staff collected data in July 2020 at a number of locations on Extension Road, shown below in Figure 1. This was done in order to quantify the problem and determine whether traffic calming is warranted.

FIGURE 1 - Locations of 2020 Data Collection



The location details, speed, and volume data summary are presented in tabular format below.

TABLE 1 - Speed and Volume Data Summary

Location	85 th Percentile Speed	Average Weekday Traffic (vehicles per day)
1) Chase River Elementary School	60 km/h	9800
2) 1607 Extension Road	63 km/h	7800
3) Country Hills Drive	63 km/h	6000
4) 1828 Extension Road	65 km/h	3500
5) City boundary near Cinnabar Drive	68 km/h	2400

The data show that speeding is prevalent throughout the study area. At the north end of the study area, traffic volumes were heaviest and speeds were lower than at the south end. At the south end of the study area, traffic volumes were lower by 75% and speeds were higher. Based on the data collected, traffic calming is warranted along this section of Extension Road.

The City of Nanaimo Traffic Calming Guidelines (the Guidelines) focus mainly on managing speed and/or volume concerns within neighbourhoods; however, the process can be adapted to the growing and changing needs of the community. The Guidelines are reluctant to apply traffic calming on major roads, due to risk of introducing excessive delay to vehicles which are critically important including transit, emergency services, and goods movement.

In a conventional sense, traffic calming includes signage, horizontal deflections, and/or vertical deflections. If traffic calming is to be considered on a major road, the preferred options are those that 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, such as speed bumps or speed humps are typically not applied on major roads as they tend to cause concerns regarding delay, rideability, and noise. Emergency Services and Transit will have significant input and influence on these type of interventions.

There are alternative approaches to managing speeds other than engineering modifications to the road environment. Education and awareness can be useful tools in combatting poor driver behaviour. Education could include a partnership with ICBC's road safety department to create educational ad campaigns about the risks of speeding. This may be especially needed near Chase River School. Additional SpeedWatch campaigns may improve driver awareness of their chosen speed which results in better compliance. Speed awareness features, like permanent speed reader boards, additional and/or enlarged speed signs could be installed to reinforce awareness of the posted speed limit. These efforts could be arranged at low cost to the City in partnership with member agencies on the Nanaimo Traffic Safety Committee.

If the decision is made to proceed with traffic calming along Extension Road, Staff propose to carry out fulsome consultation with the Chase River Neighbourhood Association (CRNA), as well as City Public Works and emergency services. Consultation would include garnering specific feedback on the use of speed humps, similar to the process that was used for Lost Lake Road. Feedback gathered on acceptable traffic calming measures and a cost estimate would be presented to Council for review and approval prior to installation.

Staff anticipate the following schedule is achievable:

- Consultation with CRNA and City services – summer 2021.

- Preparation of conceptual options and cost estimate – winter 2021.
- Presentation to Council for review and approval – spring 2022.
- Installation – summer 2022.

Should traffic calming ultimately be installed along this portion of Extension Road, it will reduce excessive speeds, eliminate unwanted driver behaviour, and improve safety and livability for the neighbourhood. |

OPTIONS

1. That Council approve advancement of Extension Road traffic calming to the public consultation stage which will be used to inform the traffic calming design.
 - The advantages of this option: Advancement of the traffic calming process will address citizen concerns about road safety in their neighbourhood and will show commitment to neighbourhood livability.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Exploration of traffic calming on major roads may be perceived as a disregard for the economic movement of goods, the provision of swift emergency service, and smooth transit operations.
 - Financial Implications: To be determined based on interventions.
2. That Council approve pursuit of educational and awareness campaigns to support driver compliance with the posted speed limit.
 - The advantages of this option: This option is low cost and does not require engineering modifications to the road. It can be enacted more quickly than road modifications, and it allows free flow for critical vehicular traffic.
 - The disadvantages of this option: It may have less impact on driver compliance with the speed limit, compared to engineered road modifications. Concerned citizens may feel it is not addressing the problem strongly enough.
 - Financial Implications: None.
3. That Council provide alternate direction to Staff. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- Speeding on Extension Road appears to be prolific and has generated requests for traffic calming.
- The City is considering options for traffic calming and is committed to improving safety and livability for citizens.

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