

5

AUTOMATED SPEED ENFORCEMENT PROPOSAL

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 20, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Chair send a letter to the Ministry of Transportation and Attorney General requesting the Province to enact legislation to allow provincial and municipal police services in Ontario to use automated speed enforcement, as outlined in this report.
2. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the local municipal clerks and the Chief of York Regional Police.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks Council's authorization to advocate for the use of digital camera technology for automated speed enforcement.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Automated Speed Enforcement

Ontario was the first Province in Canada to approve the use of automated speed enforcement in 1994. Automated speed enforcement was mostly used on the 400-series Highways by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) before its use in Ontario was discontinued in 1995.

In August 2004, the Premier of Ontario indicated that the resurrection of automated speed enforcement in Ontario could become a reality if cities, municipalities and local politicians ask for it.

Automated speed enforcement is permitted in the Province of Alberta. Strict guidelines were developed by Alberta Justice and Alberta Infrastructure in consultation with the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police. These guidelines established consistency among all jurisdictions using automated speed enforcement to ensure it is not used as a revenue generator, but to enforce speed limits and reduce traffic collisions.

Automated speed enforcement is also used extensively in Australia and European countries, such as the United Kingdom, Sweden, France and the Netherlands. In the state

of Victoria, Australia, a traffic safety program that included automated speed enforcement resulted in a 46% reduction in traffic collision fatalities and a 36% reduction in major injuries over a four-year period.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Speeding is one of the most frequent complaints received by Regional and local municipal Roads staff and remains one of the biggest factors contributing to collisions in York Region (see Figure 1). In 2005, York Region residents lodged more than 275 speeding complaints with York Regional Police and Roads staff.

Speeding in neighbourhoods and school zones compromises the liveability and safety of neighbourhoods. It makes playing outdoors hazardous to children, it increases background noise due to vehicles, and it makes walking, bicycling, and driving dangerous for all.

In response to customer service requests by residents and municipalities, during 2005, Traffic Engineering and Road Safety staff conducted a total of 98 speed studies. Figure 2 shows the degree of non-compliance to the posted speed limit by speed limit zone. On average, for all 98 speed studies, 62% of vehicles exceeded the posted speed limit.

Figure 1
Collision Factors: York Regional Roads

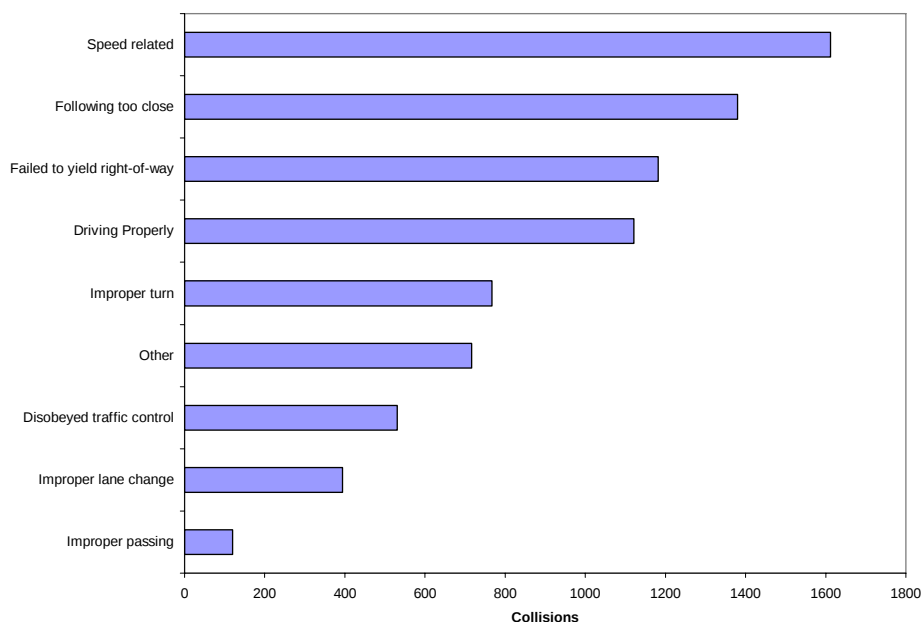
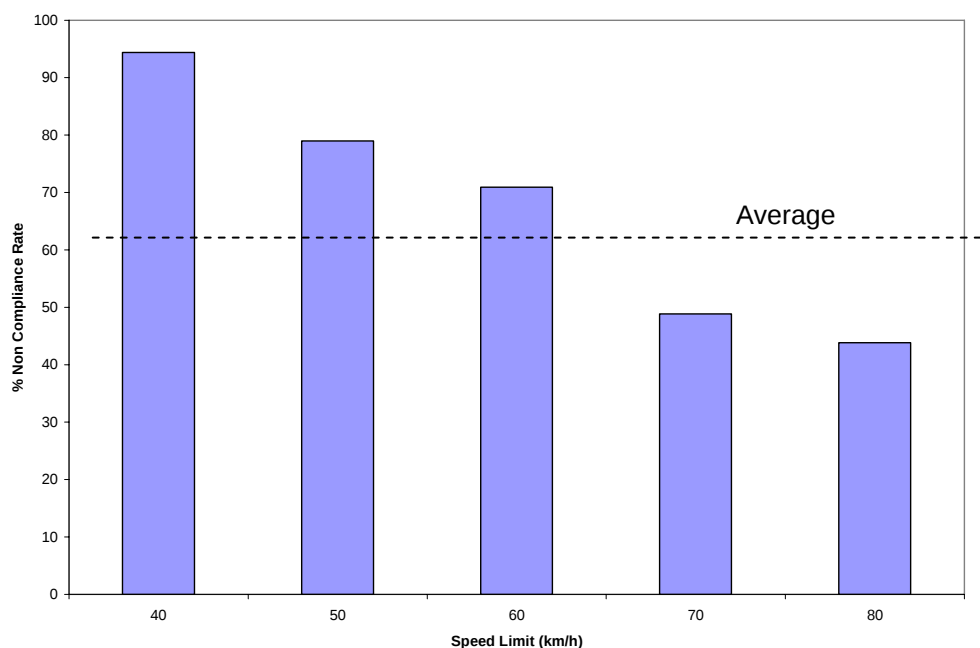


Figure 2
% of Drivers Not Complying to the Speed Limit



The high degree of non-compliance to the speed limit in 40 km-per hour speed zones (94%) is a significant concern as these speed limits are normally implemented in school zone areas to improve and ensure the safety of young children. Studies have shown that in a 40-km per hour speed zone, a 10-km per hour increase in the speed increases the risk of a pedestrian fatality by 100%.

In addition, the high degree of non-compliance in the higher speed limit zones is also a source of concern as collisions are more likely to result in fatalities and serious injuries - the faster the speed, the more serious the collision.

It is unlikely that a sustainable reduction in travel speeds can be attained with existing law enforcement resources using conventional law enforcement methods. Automated speed enforcement has been used successfully by a number of agencies in Canada, ie. the cities of Calgary and Edmonton in Alberta, and by agencies in countries like Australia and the United Kingdom to reduce travel speeds and to increase safety.

Automated speed enforcement allows police to better deploy limited resources to respond to community demands and complaints. It gives officers a safe, accurate way to enforce speed laws. It allows officers to ticket speeders in a non-discriminatory way and provides substantial evidence that strengthens officer-court testimony. Automated speed enforcement also increases the number of citations an

individual officer can issue, thus expanding the enforcement presence of each officer using automated speed enforcement.

As automated speed enforcement is often perceived by the public as yet another means of generating revenue, it is important that York Region follows a process similar to that in the Province of Alberta by establishing detailed site selection criteria and a public awareness strategy.

For example, in the Province of Alberta, the random deployment of automated speed enforcement is not permitted and may only be used at high-risk locations where the safety of citizens and police officers are at risk. These locations include:

- Where conventional enforcement is unsafe or ineffective.
- Areas with a history of collisions.
- Areas with a documented history of speeding problems.
- High speed, multi-lane arteries.
- School and playground zones.
- Construction zones.
- Areas where the public or a community has expressed concerns related to speeding and these problems are assessed and confirmed by the enforcement agency responding to the public concern.

Automated speed enforcement will generate revenue, depending on the speeding infraction, however, there is a cost to the courts for processing each infraction, similar to the costs for red light camera, estimated at \$60 per infraction. York Regional Police currently issue approximately 65,000 speeding tickets. With the implementation of automated speed enforcement, it might be expected that an additional 10,000 tickets would be issued at an estimated cost to the courts of \$600,000.

To reduce collisions due to speeding, especially in pedestrian and school zones, it is recommended that the Government of Ontario be requested to enact the required legislation to allow police services in Ontario to use automated speed enforcement as an aid to combat speeding, especially on municipal roads.

It is therefore recommended that the Regional Chair be authorized to send a letter to the Ministry of Transportation and Attorney General requesting the Province to enact legislation to allow provincial and municipal police services in Ontario to use automated speed enforcement. This can be used as an aid in controlling speeding at locations where conventional enforcement is unsafe or has proven to be ineffective to reduce speeds and/or collisions, especially in potentially high-risk areas such as school and playground zones, construction zones and high speed, multi-lane arterial roads.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At this early stage, the financial implications of an Automated Speed Enforcement Program in York Region are not known and require further investigation. The alternative is to recover program costs with fine revenue. Any surplus fine revenue could help address an overall deficit in the cost of maintaining provincial offences court.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

If permitted, automated speed enforcement technology could be used to control speeding. An Automated Speed Enforcement Program will likely be more effective than many traffic calming initiatives introduced to date, with no negative impacts to transit and emergency vehicles.

7. CONCLUSION

An analysis of speed studies conducted by staff during 2005 revealed that, on average, 62% of drivers exceed the posted speed limit. High speeds in school areas pose a significant safety risk to young children. Automated speed enforcement could allow for more efficient deployment of limited enforcement resources. It is, therefore, recommended that Regional Council request the Government of Ontario to enact legislation to permit police services to use automated speed enforcement as an aid to reduce speeds and safety in critical areas, such as school zones.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.