



Speed Limit, School Zone and Community Safety Zone Policies

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1 Purpose

The **Speed Limit Policy** is intended to aid the Township of Uxbridge in establishing consistent, enforceable, and safe speed limits on roads within the municipality where a deviation from the uniform posted speed limit is being contemplated. Separate guidance is provided for setting speed limits on urban and rural roads given their different characteristics and conditions.

The **School Zone and Community Safety Zone Policy** is intended to assist the Township of Uxbridge in effectively and consistently identifying locations on roads under its jurisdiction meriting heightened safety and enforcement emphasis.

2 Background

2.1 Speed Limits

Speed regulations aid motorists in selecting operating speeds that are safe for the prevailing conditions. The maximum safe speed at any location will vary as road geometry, traffic demands, and road environment change.

The selection of a posted speed limit for a specific location must take into consideration legislative regulations, public recognition and understanding, ease of implementation, capital and maintenance costs, and adherence to recognized engineering standards and practices. In Ontario, speed regulations are primarily defined in the *Highway Traffic Act* (HTA). Subsection 128.(1) of the HTA states:

No person shall drive a motor vehicle at a rate of speed greater than,

- (a) 50 kilometres per hour on a highway within a local municipality or within a built-up area;*
- (b) despite clause (a), 80 kilometres per hour on a highway, not within a built-up area, that is within a local municipality that had the status of a township on December 31, 2002 and, but for the enactment of the Municipal Act, 2001, would have had the status of a township on January 1, 2003, if the municipality is prescribed by regulation;*

These provisions are commonly known as the **urban and rural statutory speed limits**, respectively.

The HTA permits municipal councils to prescribe rates of speed on roads under their jurisdiction that differ from the statutory speed limits. The council can pass by-laws to set lower (or higher but not greater than 100 km/h) speed limits on select streets or portions thereof within the municipality per Subsection 128.(2).

The provincial government amended the HTA as part of the *Safer School Zones Act, 2017* to allow municipalities to designate an entire area with a posted speed limit lower than 50 km/h in built-up areas. Prior to this amendment, speed limit signs had to be posted for the complete length of each roadway with a reduced speed limit. But now, a municipality can post Gateway Speed Limit Signs at all entrance and exit points to the designated area and all streets that fall within the posted area assume the same speed limit. Per this provision under Subsection 128.(2.1) of the HTA, the Township may adopt a uniform speed limit lower than 50 km/h in the Uxbridge Urban Area and on roads within designated School Zones and Community Safety Zones, as defined under the HTA and prescribed by by-law.

Outside the built-up areas, the rural statutory speed limit of 80 km/h applies to roads without posted speed limits. The Township has previously implemented lower speed limits in select locations to address site specific concerns.

2.2 School Zones and Community Safety Zones

Under the HTA, the Township has the authority to designate two types of “zones” for heightened safety and enforcement emphasis using:

- The **SCHOOL ZONE** MAXIMUM SPEED sign, which indicates to motorists they should reduce their speeds at certain times because they are entering an area where school children are present and may be crossing the road; and
- **COMMUNITY SAFETY ZONE** signs, which inform drivers they are entering an area the community has deemed paramount to the safety of its children/citizens. These sections of roadway are typically near schools, day care centres, playgrounds, parks, hospitals, senior citizen residences and may also be used for collision-prone areas within a community. Traffic related offences committed within these zones are subject to increased fines (many set fines are doubled such as speeding and traffic signal related offences).

Both tools enable the Township to focus resources and attention on specific locations where safety risk to vulnerable road users is highest. However, experience from other communities suggests the signs can be ineffective and benefits not commensurate with the enforcement effort required. For this reason, the Township should use School Zones and Community Safety Zones selectively following the guidance provided in Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 5 – Regulatory Signs¹ when identifying locations.

2.3 Network and Other Considerations

The Township of Uxbridge Official Plan defines a road classification system consisting of arterial, collector and local roads. The classification criteria have been used to categorize the various types of roadways in the municipality by their function in terms of providing mobility and land access. Higher order arterial roads are planned to provide capacity and mobility (including higher operating speeds) to serve their primary function of traffic movement and thereby reduce the likelihood of traffic infiltration through lower order roads. Urban local and collector roads are expected to operate at lower speed as their role is less on traffic movement and more on providing access to adjacent lands compatible with their community surroundings.

Speed limits for municipal roads should be consistent with their classification per Official Plan policies.

¹ Ministry of Transportation Ontario. *Ontario Traffic Manual Book 5 – Regulatory Signs*. March 2000.

It should be recognized that implementing broad based, area-wide speed limit reductions have the potential to adversely impact Public Works vehicle response times and increase the time (and cost) of winter control and summer maintenance operations.

3 Speed Limit Policy

The Township will apply the methodology set out in the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) *Canadian Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits*² in setting speed limits on roads under its jurisdiction. The recommended practices contained in the guidebook should be applied with sound engineering judgment in determining appropriate posted speed limits.

The following guidance will also apply in setting speed limits on Township roads. **Appendix A** provides a checklist supporting the policy.

3.1 Urban Areas

The Township will establish a uniform 40 km/h speed limit on all roads within the Uxbridge Urban Area and rural Hamlets of the municipality shown on Schedule “A” (Land Use and Transportation Plan Uxbridge Urban Area) and “C” (Community Improvement Areas) of the Township of Uxbridge Official Plan. If justified by analysis pursuant to the *Canadian Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits*, reduced speed limits may be considered for road sections:

- Adjacent to a designated school zone. The speed limit should be no less than 30 km/h;
- With unfavourable geometric characteristics contributing to road elements with design speeds of 50 km/h or less (e.g., sight distance, horizontal or vertical curvature). The speed limit shall be set at or below the speed dictated by the geometric restriction, but no less than 30 km/h. Use of appropriate warning signs should be considered before changing the speed limit depending on length of the design feature;
- Within Heritage Conservation Districts, where speed limits should be compatible with the intent of the relevant Heritage Conservation District Plan, the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and should reflect the pedestrian focus. The speed limit should be no less than 30 km/h; and
- With unprotected shared use pathways or cycling route, where the Township may consider a speed limit no less than 30 km/h.

Transitions between one speed limit and another should be no less than 500 m apart for arterial roads and 250 m apart for local and collector roads.

² Transportation Association of Canada. *Canadian Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits*. December 2009.

3.2 Rural Areas

The Township will establish a 70 km/h speed limit on all roads outside the Uxbridge Urban Area and rural Hamlets of the municipality shown on Schedule “A” (Land Use and Transportation Plan Uxbridge Urban Area) and “C” (Community Improvement Areas) of the Township of Uxbridge Official Plan. If justified by analysis pursuant to the *Canadian Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits*, reduced speed limits may be considered for road sections:

- Adjacent to a designated school zone. The differential between speed limits should not exceed 20 km/h. For example, the speed limit may be reduced to 50 km/h in the vicinity of the school in a 70 km/h zone;
- With unfavourable geometric characteristics contributing to road elements with design speeds of 80 km/h or less (e.g., sight distance, horizontal or vertical curvature). The speed limit shall be set at or below the speed dictated by the geometric restriction, but no less than 50 km/h. Use of appropriate warning signs should be considered before changing the speed limit depending on length of design feature; and/or
- Where Township roads are within the area of influence (1.5 km) of a Durham Region road with lower or higher posted speeds. The Township may consider increasing or decreasing the speed limit by 10 km/h on the Township road, bringing the posted speed closer to the Regional road.

Transitions between one speed limit and another should be no less than 1.0 km apart for arterial roads and 500 m for local and collector roads. The differential between speed limits within the transition should be no greater than 20 km/h.

4 School Zones and Community Safety Zones Policy

The Township may consider the installation of School Zones and Community Safety Zones on a site-specific basis having regard for the guidance specified in this policy. The Township will not actively encourage the designation of new School Zones and Community Safety Zones on Township roads.

4.1 School Zones

The Township will rely on the School Zone Input Worksheet detailed in the TAC *School and Playground Areas and Zones: Guidelines for Application and Implementation*³ in identifying School Zones. Final determination of the School Zone limits will rely on sound engineering judgement.

If designating a School Zone, the speed limit should be set at no lower than 30 km/h on roads within the Uxbridge Urban Area and rural Hamlets of the municipality shown on Schedule “A” (Land Use and Transportation Plan Uxbridge Urban Area) and “C” (Community Improvement Areas) of the Township of Uxbridge Official Plan and 50 km/h on roads outside. The signs should be supplemented with the flashing signal indication and “When Flashing” tab.

Per OTM and TAC guidelines, the speed limit should be reduced by no more than 20 km/h in a single step. If further speed reductions are required, the extent of the School Zone should be reduced accordingly.

The reduced Speed Zone should be in effect uniformly across the Township between the hours of 7:00AM-9:30AM and 2:00PM-5:00PM on school days.

4.2 Community Safety Zones

The Township will rely on the following guidelines when considering implementing a Community Safety Zone:

- Community Safety Zones should only be designated for community-based facilities such as schools, community centres, parks, and retirement areas, or on roadway sections with continual high collision rates;

³ Transportation Association of Canada. *School and Playground Areas and Zones: Guidelines for Application and Implementation*. October 2006.

- Each by-law establishing a Community Safety Zone must indicate that the designation is in effect for 24 hours a day to assist the Durham Regional Police Service with enforcement; and
- Community Safety Zones must always be used in conjunction with other traffic safety and police enforcement measures.

Appendix A

Checklist for Setting Speed Limits

The following checklist is to be used in conjunction with the Speed Limit Modification Policy when considering changes to the speed limit of a road in Uxbridge.

Location of Road: _____

Date Inquiry Received: _____

Date Inquiry Completed: _____

Name of Reviewer: _____

Road Type: Urban ☐ Rural ☐

Urban Roads

The following table details the justifications for modifying speed limits on roads in urban areas. Please check the criteria that apply to the road section being examined:

Condition	Modification	Met?
Adjacent to a designated school zone	Consider reducing the speed limit to 30 km/h	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geometric characteristics that contribute to road elements with design speeds of 50 km/h or less (e.g., sight distance, horizontal or vertical curvature)	Consider reducing the speed limit to no less than 30 km/h. Apply the <i>Canadian Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits</i> to determine the appropriate limit.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within designated Heritage Conservation District	Consider reducing the speed limit to 30 km/h	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjacent to unprotected shared use pathway or cycling route	Consider reducing the speed limit to 30 km/h	<input type="checkbox"/>

Transitions between one speed limit and another should be no less than 500 m apart for arterial roads and 250 m apart for local and collector roads.

If a condition(s) is met, move to the Recommended Speed Limit section below. If no conditions are met, then no changes to the speed limit are justified.

Recommended Speed Limit

☐ 30 km/h ☐ 40 km/h

Rural Roads

The following table details the justifications for modifying speed limits on roads in rural areas. Please check the criteria that apply to the road section being examined:

Condition	Modification	Met?
Adjacent to a designated school zone	Consider reducing the speed limit by up to 20 km/h to no less than 50 km/h	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geometric characteristics that contribute to road elements with design speeds of 80 km/h or less (e.g., sight distance, horizontal or vertical curvature)	Consider reducing the speed limit to no less than 50 km/h. Apply the <i>Canadian Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits</i> to determine the appropriate limit.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where Township roads are within the area of influence (1.5 km) of a Durham Region road with lower or higher posted speeds	Consider increasing or reducing the speed limit by 10 km/h on the Township road, bringing the posted speed closer to the Regional road	<input type="checkbox"/>

Transitions between one speed limit and another should be no less than 1.0 km apart for arterial roads and 500 m for local and collector roads. The differential between speed limits within the transition should be no greater than 20 km/h.

If a condition(s) is met, move to the Recommended Speed Limit section below. If no conditions are met, then no changes to the speed limit are justified.

Recommended Speed Limit

☐ 40 km/h ☐ 50 km/h ☐ 60 km/h ☐ 70 km/h