

To: Community and Operations Services Committee

From: Kevin Alexander, Commissioner,
Community and Operations Services Department

Report Number: CO-24-29

Date of Report: May 8, 2024

Date of Meeting: May 13, 2024

Subject: Safe School Zone Pilot Program

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council Direction received December 11, 2023, specific to Item CNCL-23-122:

“Whereas at many Oshawa schools, during start and dismissal times, the non-compliance of school zone no parking locations has become a serious safety concern; and,

Whereas reducing traffic and parking congestion during start and dismissal times will improve safety;

Therefore that staff be directed to:

1. Consult with the Durham School Boards, Durham Area municipalities and Durham Regional Police Services and obtain written feedback on the City of Oshawa implementing policies that give consideration to:
 - a. Increase the fines for school zone parking offences;
 - b. Install signs identifying parking locations where fines are increased and where street parking is permitted;
 - c. Investigate on a case by case basis, right in/right out turns for designated school driveways; and,
2. Prepare a report based on the findings in Part 1 identifying the feasibility and process for developing a Safe School Zone Pilot Program in which Ward Councillors can agree to implement in up to two schools in their Ward for the 2024-2025 school year.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Community and Operations Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That based on Report CO-24-29 dated May 8, 2024, a Safe School Zone Pilot Program not be implemented.

3.0 Executive Summary

Not applicable

4.0 Input From Other Sources

- The Corporate Leadership Team
- Legal Services
- Legislative Services
- Municipal Law Enforcement & Licensing Services
- Municipalities: Ajax, Clarington, Uxbridge, Whitby
- Durham Regional Police Services
- Region of Durham
- Durham District School Board
- Durham Catholic District School Board
- Durham Student Transportation Services

5.0 Analysis

5.1 Safe School Zone Survey to Region of Durham Municipalities

Staff surveyed the local municipalities in the Region of Durham for feedback and information on Safe School Zone policies and programs as directed by City Council. Staff received feedback from the Town of Ajax, the Town of Whitby, the Township of Uxbridge, the Municipality of Clarington, and the Region of Durham Traffic Department; survey responses are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey to Region of Durham Municipalities

Survey Questions	Answer Summary
1. Does your municipality have a Safe School Zone Policy or Program?	None of the municipalities surveyed have a Safe School Zone Policy or Program.
2. Does your municipality have increased fines for school zone parking offences?	None of the municipalities surveyed have increased fines for school zone parking offences. Whitby is currently investigating implementing tiered fines for school zones pending City Council approval.
3. What is your municipality’s current signage practice within school zones, do you sign areas where parking is <u>not</u> permitted, or areas where parking is <u>is</u> permitted?	All municipalities responding to the survey currently sign where parking is <u>not</u> permitted. Clarington has a few isolated locations where they have signed permitted parking for clarification purposes.
4. Do you have a policy for implementing Turning Movement Restrictions (such as ‘Right-in/Right-out Only’ movements) at school driveways?	All municipalities responding to the survey consider Turning Movement Restrictions on a case-by-case basis in school zones.
5. Please share any additional comments or information on your Municipality’s Safe School Zone Policy or similar programs.	Some additional comments; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarington’s City Council recently approved lowering speed limits in school zones from 50 km/h to 30 km/h - Whitby reduces speed limits near elementary schools, and some schools are signed as Community Safety Zones. New PXO’s and Traffic Calming are typically focused on parks and school areas.

None of the municipalities surveyed have a formal “Safe School Zone” policy or program. In general, most of the municipalities responding to the survey have a similar approach and practice to school zone safety as Oshawa.

5.2 Safe School Zone Policy

Oshawa does not currently have a formal “Safe School Zone” policy, however, staff do comply with a number of existing best practices that prioritize safety in school zones.

5.3 Existing Traffic Safety Practices in Oshawa’s School Zones

Oshawa’s current practice, in addition to following industry best practice, is to review school zones as safety concerns arise, either identified through staff field observation, or on a complaint basis from the schools, the public or other stakeholders. Staff also conduct new school reviews, commenting on school site plans, and ensuring all appropriate traffic and parking signage are implemented by way of City By-law amendments and implemented prior to the opening of all new schools. Staff also review requests for school crossing guards on an as-needed basis and when requested by schools and the public. Staff typically deal directly with school principals for school-related safety issues, and will meet with other school board officials as needed at the Principal’s discretion. Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Services (“MLELS”) staff regularly conduct enforcement of the City’s Traffic and Parking By-law 79-99, as amended, (“Traffic and Parking By-law”) in school zones. Staff have reached out to Durham Regional Police Service (D.R.P.S.) who advised they could not provide feedback concerning the proposed safe school zone pilot program and our existing Oshawa school zone traffic safety practices. Staff also reached out to both school boards, however at the time of this report, feedback was not received.

5.3.1 School Zone Parking, Stopping and Standing Infractions

The City’s Traffic and Parking By-law incorporates a tiered and escalating penalty approach with escalating administrative penalties for repeat offences. The application of the By-law is applied City-wide including in school zones. [Schedule 24 Administrative Penalties](#) of the Traffic and Parking By-law lists the fine amounts for each of the three tiers.

Oshawa also has increased “No Stopping” fines for school zone infractions. Table 2 below provides a comparison of those fines charged for regular and school zone “No Stopping” infractions. Section 4.25 (top row) provides the fines for stopping in a school zone while Section 5.1 (bottom row) provides the fines for stopping in any other prohibited area.

Table 2: Traffic and Parking Bylaw - Schedule 24 Administrative Penalties – School Zone No Stopping Fines

Section	Description of Offence	Tier One (1)	Tier Two (2)	Tier Three (3)
4.25	Stopped where prohibited in a school zone	\$60.00	\$80.00	\$100.00
5.1	Stopped in a prohibited area (Schedule 1)	\$45.00	\$65.00	\$85.00

In addition, the City has fines for stopping too close to a school crossing, and stopping in a school bus loading zone (see Table 3):

Table 3: Traffic and Parking Bylaw - Schedule 24 Administrative Penalties – Additional School Zone Fines

Section	Description of Offence	Tier One (1)	Tier Two (2)	Tier Three (3)
4.26	Stopped within 30m in advance of or 15m beyond school crossing	\$45.00	\$65.00	\$85.00
21.5	Stopped in a school bus loading zone	\$45.00	\$65.00	\$85.00

Although increasing fines in school zones could potentially be a deterrent to illegal parking and stopping, it must be noted that parking and stopping restrictions are typically only effective when there is regular enforcement provided. M.L.E.L.S. staff conduct regular proactive enforcement in school zones however there is not enough resources to conduct exclusive daily enforcement at every school.

5.3.2 School Zone Parking and Stopping Restrictions

City of Oshawa’s current practice is to sign areas where parking and/or stopping is NOT permitted. Areas on-street that are not signed with a parking restriction allow for 3 hours maximum parking under the general conditions of the Traffic and Parking By-law 79-99. This approach provides consistency throughout the City and reduces the amount of signage required, and reduces “sign pollution” which can be overwhelming and confusing to motorists. The City signs school zones in a consistent manner using “No Parking/No Stopping” signage to improve traffic access and safety along roads, reduce pedestrian conflicts, maintain safe sight lines at school driveways and intersections, and to prevent student drop-offs/pick-ups in unsafe areas.

5.3.3 Turning Movement Restrictions at School Driveways

Currently, staff review turning movement restrictions at school driveways on a case-by-case basis when a traffic issue is identified by staff, schools or the public. Although a turning movement restriction can have benefits in certain situations, staff use careful consideration when implementing a turning movement restriction. Such restrictions can result in unexpected consequences such as increased U-Turns in the school area, increased number of parents turning around in residential driveways, or create increased traffic volumes and queuing in certain areas in front of a school, such as pedestrian crossing areas. Compliance with turning movement restrictions can be an issue. Turning movement restrictions are considered a moving violation in the Ontario Highway Traffic

Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8 (“Highway Traffic Act”), and are only enforceable by Durham Regional Police Service.

5.3.4 School Zone Speed Limits

City streets fronting schools in Oshawa have a reduced speed limit of 40 km/h. This reduced speed limit provides consistency for all school zones in Oshawa.

5.3.5 New School Sites

Prior to the opening of a new school, staff have the opportunity to review and comment on the school site plan. At this time, staff will provide comments to improve the traffic safety and parking operation at the proposed school site.

Prior to the school opening, staff will review and survey the site and implement all appropriate parking signage, 40 km/h speed limits, school bus loading zones, and school zone signage. Parking signage is installed to keep student pick-ups/drop-offs in safe areas, reduce pedestrian conflicts, maintain safe traffic access around the school site and maintain safe sight lines at school driveways and nearby intersections.

When necessary, staff will implement school crossing guards prior to the school opening, or conduct crossing studies after school opening to determine if crossing guards are warranted.

Staff will also consult with Durham Student Transportation Services if there are any concerns about the school bus operation at the school site.

Following the opening of the school, staff will conduct observations at morning bell and afternoon dismissal times during the first week of school to ensure that there are no safety issues. If necessary, staff will make adjustments to traffic and parking signage, and/or consult with the school Principal if there are any student or parent safety issues that could be addressed through education, things such as reminders through school newsletters on where parents can park or reminders on safe pedestrian crossing locations.

Staff will also make requests for M.L.E.L.S. Officers to attend the school after opening to provide education on parking and stopping enforcement within the school area prior to implementing an enforcement campaign.

When requested by the school, staff will also create maps of the school area showing existing parking restrictions and information on types of signage found in school zones.

5.4 Safe School Zone Pilot

In regards to Council Direction CNCL-23-122, it should be noted that staff already have practices in place to address the school zone policies requested in parts a, b and c of CNCL-23-122.

a. Increase the fines for school zone parking offences;

As previously noted in Section 5.3.1, Oshawa has an increased fine for school zone “No Stopping” infractions, and fines for stopping too close to a school crossing, and stopping in a school bus loading zone. The City also has a City wide tiered and escalating penalty system with escalating administrative penalties issued for repeat offences. In comparison to other Region of Durham municipalities surveyed, Oshawa currently has a more robust policy for fining on-street parking offences. Staff do not recommend making any changes to the current Traffic and Parking By-law penalty enforcement system.

b. Install signs identifying parking locations where fines are increased and where street parking is permitted;

As noted in Section 5.3.2, the current practice of Oshawa and Region of Durham municipalities surveyed is to only post signs in areas where parking is NOT permitted. This provides a consistent signing approach for motorists across Oshawa, and the Region of Durham. Staff do not recommend changing the current sign practice under the Traffic and Parking By-law, as it would increase sign pollution around school zones and could be confusing for motorists.

c. Investigate on a case by case basis, right in/right out turns for designated school driveways; and,

As noted in Section 5.3.3, Oshawa’s current practice is to review turning movement restrictions at school driveways on a case-by-case basis when a traffic issue is identified by staff, schools or the public. The other Region of Durham municipalities surveyed also review turning movement restrictions on a case-by-case basis.

As stated above, staff already have practices in place to address the school safety zone requests in Council Direction CNCL-23-122. It can be noted that in consultation with local area municipalities that Oshawa’s current practices are in alignment with the other municipalities in the Region of Durham.

It is staff’s recommendation that a “Safe School Zone” pilot program not be implemented as City staff are able to address these school zone concerns through current practices. Staff recommend continuing current practices of reviewing school zones as issues arise either through staff review, or concerns from schools and/or the public. Staff recommend that City Council members continue to report their school zone concerns as they arise for staff to review on a case-by-case basis as required.

6.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications related to the recommendation contained in this Report.

7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This report addresses the Oshawa Strategic Plan Goal of Social Equity.



Beth Mullen, Director,
Community Support Services



Kevin Alexander, Commissioner,
Community and Operations Services Department