

Clause 2 in Report No. 11 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on June 25, 2015.

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Annual Traffic Safety Report

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated May 21, 2015 from the Commissioner of Transportation Services:

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Staff evaluate the effectiveness of Community Safety Zones at reducing operating speeds in school areas and report back to Council in 2016.
2. Council approve (in principle) an increase in the 2017 Transportation Services operating budget of \$1,000,000 annually, beginning in 2017 (to be offset through recovery of fine revenue by Court Services), for expansion of the Red Light Camera Program to add up to 20 new locations, subject to the 2016 budget process.
3. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the local municipalities and to York Regional Police.

2. Purpose

This report provides information on the safety performance of Regional roads, including updates on Community Safety Zones and the Red Light Camera Program.

3. Background

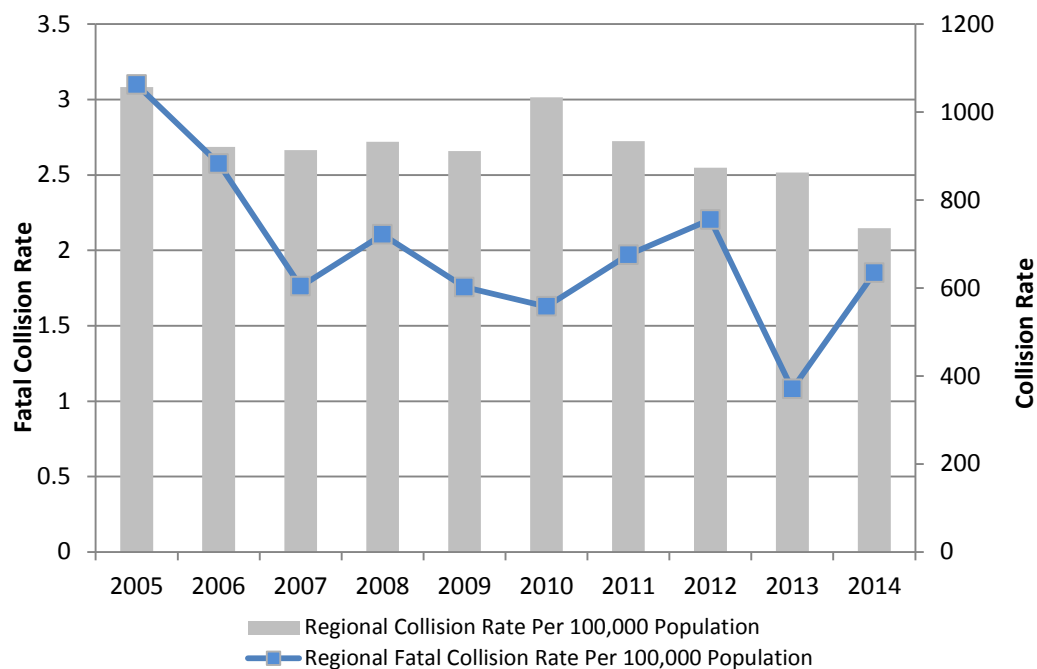
The Region continues to enhance safety performance monitoring on Regional roads

Transportation Services works in partnership with York Regional Police to collect and assess data related to motor vehicle collisions on Regional roads. Collision data is the primary source of information analyzed along with other data such as traffic volume, weather and population. In the last few years, the Region has been refining data collection tools and processes in addition to reporting the data in the Traffic Safety Status Report. First published in 2014, the Traffic Safety Status Report provides a detailed breakdown of the safety performance of Regional roads, based on collision statistics (Attachment 1).

Over the past decade, the collision rate has been steadily decreasing in the Region

A review of the Region’s collision statistics shows a 10-year low in the collision rate in 2014, however, the number of fatal collisions has increased from 12 to 21 when compared to 2013 (see Figure 1). In looking at the ten year data, the 2014 fatality rate, although increased from 2013, has generally decreased since 2005. The total collision rates have been generally decreasing since 2010.

Figure 1
Regional Collision Rate Statistics



There are a number of safety initiatives which have been implemented to improve safety performance

The collision rate in any community is influenced by many factors including advancements in vehicle safety, weather conditions, number and type of road users, level of driver skill and road network design factors. Traffic safety performance is also influenced by initiatives which have been implemented to target behaviours that have negative impacts. These initiatives include:

- Revising speed limits on Regional roads
- Introducing Community Safety Zones to reduce speeds in school areas
- Installing red light cameras at 20 intersections
- Reviewing signal timing plans and providing additional pedestrian crossing time at signalized intersections
- Implementing safety campaigns to enhance awareness for issues affecting pedestrian safety and to raise awareness on the impacts of distracted driving
- Increasing awareness of pedestrians at intersections by installing zebra markings
- Installing reflective backboards on traffic signals to improve visibility at night and during power outages

These initiatives assist in lower operating speeds and increasing road user awareness on Regional roads. This can reduce the number and severity of collisions.

4. Analysis and Options

Initial studies indicate that Community Safety Zones may not be effective in reducing operating speeds in school areas

Council designated Community Safety Zones on Regional roads adjacent to all schools in 2012, which increased the number of Community Safety Zones beyond the original number, which met the proposed warrant criteria. Since that time, 57 Community Safety Zones have been established, covering approximately 50 kilometres of Regional roads. Currently, all schools on a Regional road are eligible for a Community Safety Zone, including elementary, secondary and private schools, regardless of size or whether students walk or are driven to school. Community Safety Zones are reviewed annually to ensure any new or relocated schools are included.

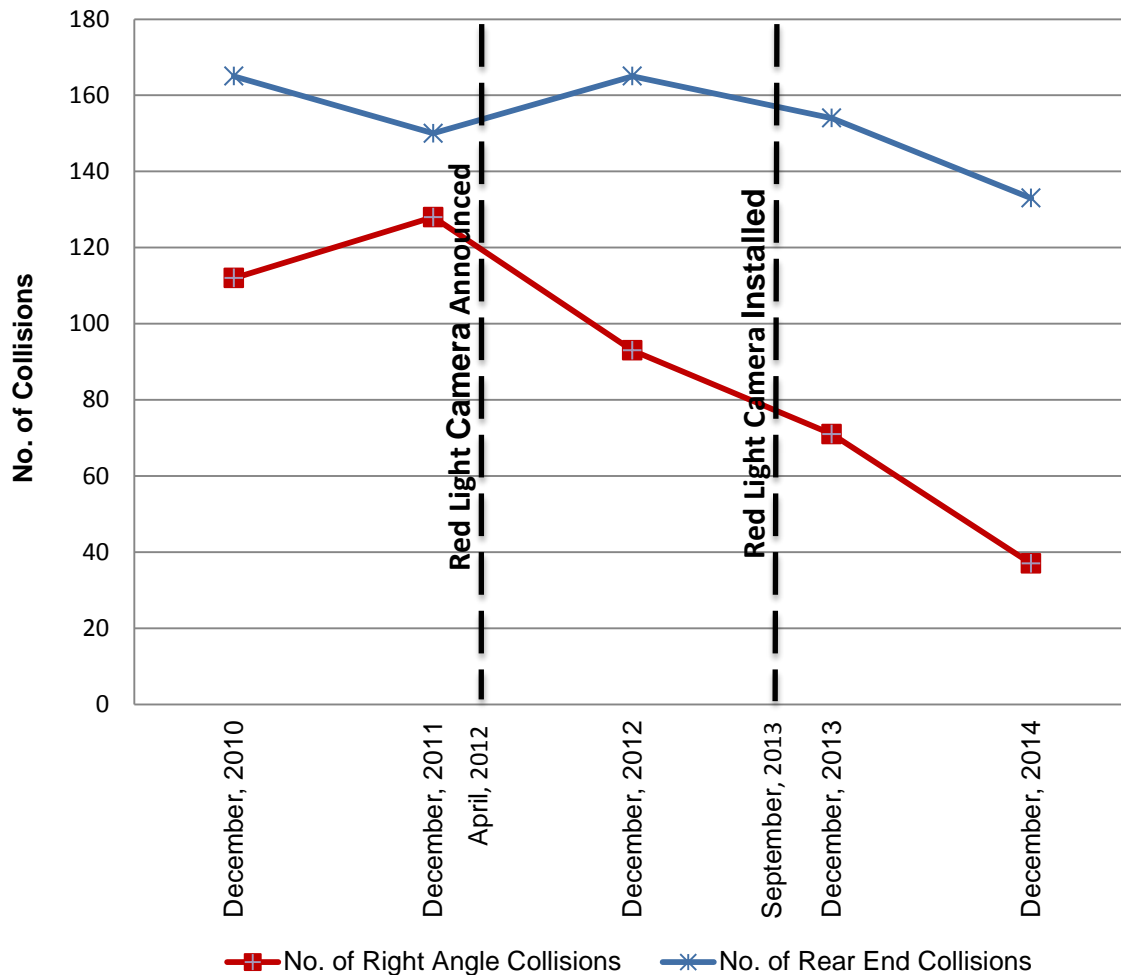
Further studies will be undertaken for Community Safety Zones with results and recommendations reported to Council in 2016

Speed surveys were completed for nine different Community Safety Zones in 2014. The results show nominal reductions in operating speeds compared to pre-Community Safety Zone conditions. Based on preliminary results, local Municipal and Regional staff are concerned that motorists are disregarding Community Safety Zones due to the use in school areas that have minimal school activity. The original implementation plan included a number of criteria to determine whether a school warranted a Community Safety Zone, such as pedestrian volumes and the size of the school. As such, there is a need to further evaluate the effectiveness of the Community Safety Zones. Staff will report back to Council in 2016 with recommendations for the Community Safety Zone Policy.

Red light cameras have proven to be successful in reducing right angle collisions

Since the fall of 2013, red light cameras have been operational at 20 intersections on Regional roads. The results indicate that right angle collisions were reduced by 48 per cent over a year since implementation. Experience in other jurisdictions suggests that over time, a right angle collision reduction of 25 to 30 per cent is more likely. A 25 to 30 per cent reduction is still significant and meets the objectives of the program. Figure 2 illustrates collision statistics before and after activation of red light cameras at 20 intersections.

Figure 2
Collision Statistics at Red Light Camera Locations



Given the success of the Red Light Camera Program to date, adding up to 20 new locations is recommended for 2017

As a requirement to establish the Red Light Camera Program, York Region executed agreements with the Province, City of Toronto and the red light camera contractor (Traffipax) for supply, installation, operation and maintenance of the red light camera systems. The current operating contract expires at the end of 2016. The Province, City of Toronto, and all other municipalities, including the Region, that have the Red Light Camera Program, are working together to award a new contract through a tender process by September 2015. The new contractor should be in place by the end of 2015 to ensure the successful proponent has sufficient time to implement new camera locations to be operational for the start of 2017.

Staff recommend the Region expand the Program due to its success in reducing right angle collisions. With over 800 signalized intersections on Regional roads, Staff recommend the Region install red light cameras at up to 20 additional locations in 2017. The total number of red light camera sites (40) starting in 2017 will represent approximately five per cent of all signalized intersections on Regional roads. This is in line with ratios in other municipalities and regions that participate in the Red Light Camera Program in Ontario.

Link to key Council-approved plans

This report aligns with the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan priority area to provide responsible and efficient public service.

5. Financial Implications

The Red Light Camera Program is cost recoverable

In 2014, 8,600 tickets were issued in York Region. As a result, Court Services collected over \$1.5 million in fine revenue. Although less than initially anticipated, fine revenue covered the costs for Transportation Services to administer the program and Court Services to manage enforcement. The 2014 Transportation Services costs to administer the Red Light Camera Program were \$800,000.

The Red Light Camera Program appears as an operating cost under Transportation Services with no revenue offset. Fine revenue is recorded under Court Services.

Expansion of the Red Light Camera Program requires an increase in the Transportation Services operating budget

The additional cost to Transportation Services to expand the Red Light Camera Program starting in 2017 is \$1 million per year. It is anticipated that this additional cost will continue to be offset by an increase in fine revenue under Court Services; however, the current financial model requires an increase to the 2017 Roads operating budget. This funding commitment needs to be made now to be included in the joint tender process.

There are options to augment the Red Light Camera Program without significantly increasing operating costs

Although the Red Light Camera Program has thus far shown to be successful, the current financial model requires an increase to the Transportation Services Roads operating budget. Since fine revenues are currently allocated to Court Services budget, the Roads operating budget must shoulder the financial burden to deliver the program. If an increase to the Roads operating budget is not approved, one option is to continue to increase the benefits of the Program by relocating 10 of the existing 20 cameras from lower collision intersections to higher risk intersections. This option would require some additional costs. Another option is to leave the cameras in their current locations. This option would maintain the current collision reductions but likely won't derive any additional reductions in red light running.

6. Local Municipal Impact

Staff will continue to work with local municipalities and York Regional Police to promote traffic safety. In addition, Regional staff will engage our partners in the review of Community Safety Zones in school areas.

7. Conclusion

In collaboration with York Regional Police and local municipal partners, the Region will continue to identify trends and implement initiatives to improve safety on the Regional road network. Traffic safety performance data for the Region is summarized in the Traffic Safety Status Report. Overall collision rates in 2014 represented a 10-year low. Regional safety programs including Community Safety Zones and the Red Light Camera Program help increase road user awareness on Regional roads and reduce the number and severity of collisions.

For more information on this report, please contact Brian Titherington, Director, Roads and Traffic Operations Branch at ext. 75901.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

May 21, 2015

Attachments (1)

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request