



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: December 6, 2023

Report Number: SRIES.23.005

Department: Infrastructure and Engineering Services

Division: Infrastructure Planning and Development Engineering

Subject: **SRIES.23.005 Traffic Safety and Operations Strategy**

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present the 2023 Traffic Safety and Operations Strategy (TSOS) to Council for adoption, and to respond to the members motion (Item 15.1.7) brought forward at the September 13, 2023 Council Meeting regarding Prioritizing Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Measures.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That Council adopt the 2023 Traffic Operations and Safety Strategy.

Contact Person:

Dan Terzieski, Director, Infrastructure Planning and Development Engineering, extension 6358

Hubert Ng, Manager, Transportation and Traffic, extension 6501

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Paolo Masaro, Executive Director of Infrastructure and Engineering Services

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

Traffic Safety is a top priority in the City of Richmond Hill

Traffic Safety in Richmond Hill has been a growing priority in the City of Richmond Hill for a number of years. This priority was reconfirmed through public consultation surveys completed as part of the 2023 Transportation Master Plan Update. These surveys received over 1500 responses, and as indicated in Figure 1, traffic safety was identified as the top priority for City residents, next to road maintenance. As such, one of the TMP's recommendations is to develop a TSOS for the City of Richmond Hill.

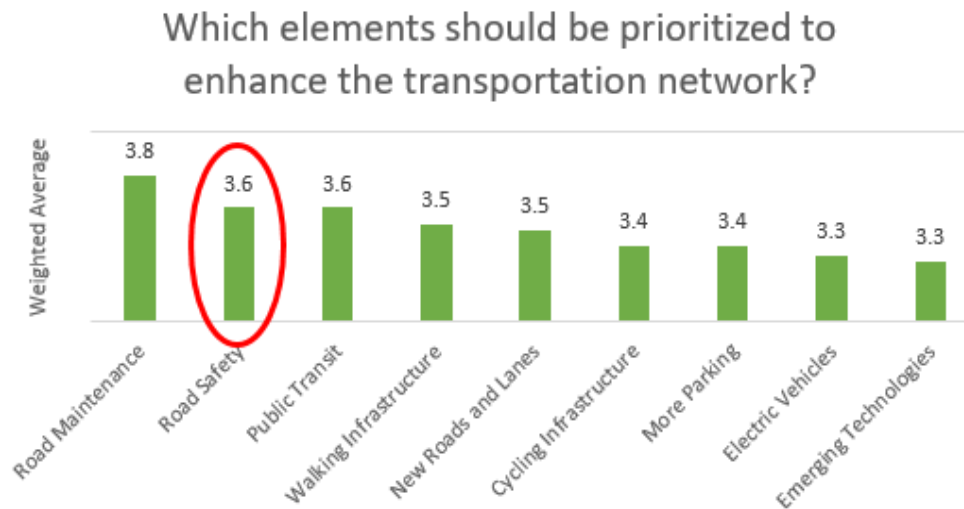


Figure 1: Results from Transportation Master Plan Surveys

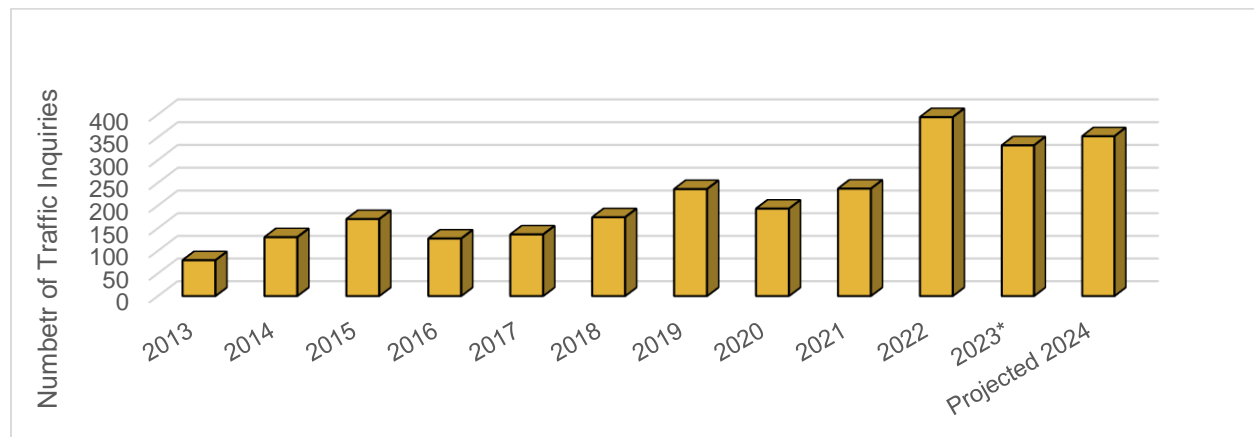
This priority further confirmed through several Council members' motions that were passed, one in 2020 and the most recent at the September 13, 2023 Council Meeting 2023 Council (Item 15.1.7). This most recent Council motion is included for reference as **Attachment 1** to this report.

The volume and complexity of traffic safety issues has increased over the past decade

As the City of Richmond Hill continues to grow and intensify, traffic volumes have also continued to increase on City streets resulting, amongst other things, in increasing conflicts between motorists and other road users, increasing traffic infiltration through neighbourhoods, and more aggressive driver behaviour as a result of increased congestion. In turn, the number of traffic inquiries received by the City over the last decade has steadily increased, as illustrated in **Figure 2**. In addition to receiving more traffic inquires, the complexity of the inquiries has also increased over the last several years

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Figure 2: Annual Traffic Inquiries Received



The current approach to traffic safety in the City of Richmond Hill is reactive in nature

The increase in volume and complexity of traffic inquiries has resulted in challenges for staff.

In the period between January 1, 2021 to October 1, 2023 Staff received 891 inquiries relating to traffic safety and operations. Of the 891 inquiries received, 185 of them required remedial measures to address safety and operational concerns.

While staff endeavor to address traffic safety issues in a consistent manner across the City by applying sound engineering principles, these efforts are largely reactive in nature due to the volume and level of effort required. Each inquiry requires on average 5.5 hours of staff time, and this significantly increases when issues are complicated or require remedial measures.

To further contribute to staff's challenges, a number of the City policies, procedures, practices, and tools are outdated and require modernization to allow them to be applied in a pro-active and consistent manner and aligned with current engineering and industry practices.

In recognition of the importance of traffic safety as a top priority for the City and in response to the challenges facing staff, the City initiated the development of the Traffic Safety and Operations Strategy (TSOS) in 2022. This Strategy also responds to one of the key recommendations from the 2023 Transportation Master Plan. The TSOS is presented in **Attachment 2** of this report.

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Approach:

The Traffic Safety and Operations Strategy will provide staff with necessary policies, programs, and tools to plan and proactively address the growing traffic safety needs across the city in a consistent manner

Recognizing that there is a need for a planned and proactive approach to improve traffic safety in the City of Richmond Hill, the TSOS has been developed as a strategic guiding document and action plan that creates the framework to maximize safety, efficiency and capacity of the existing road system in a consistent and systematic manner. From this perspective, TSOS:

- Reviews and evaluates the Cities of current policies, programs and practices to identify and address gaps and areas for improvement;
- Provides direction to update and/or create new policies that are transparent, clearly understood, easily implementable, and supported by Council;
- Provides a new toolbox of traffic safety applications to better address traffic safety issues across the City.
- Identifies programs that can be applied Citywide or on an area specific basis that will:
 - Proactively identify and address traffic safety across the City
 - Prioritize areas using evidence-based approach
 - Monitor the success of traffic safety initiatives.

As a strategy, the TSOS also provides a road map for the implementation of the strategy recommendations including timing, costs and resource needs.

The TSOS is intended to be a continuous and evolving process

The TSOS is not intended to be a one-time exercise, but rather a living document that will be updated on a regular basis (approximately every 5 years) and that will allow staff to monitor and adapt to the evolving traffic safety and operations needs of the City and features a feedback loop for the City to continuously improve and monitor the strategy. This involves a five step process, as outlined in **Figure 3**.

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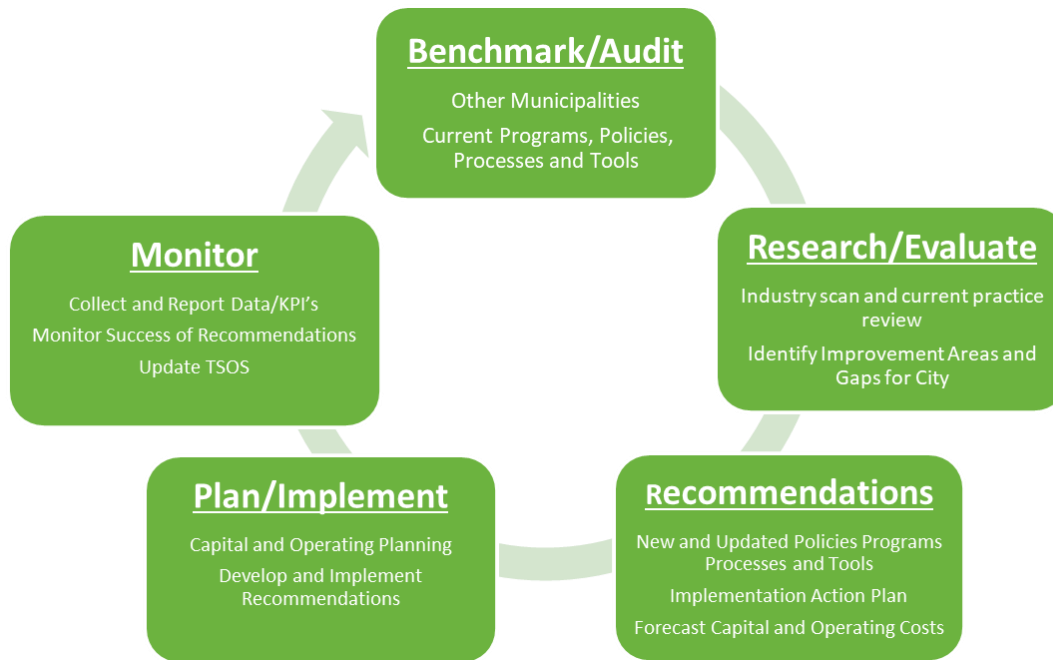


Figure 3: TSOS Process Cycle

Key Findings and Recommendations:

The TSOS recommends enhanced traffic safety and operations policies, programs, and processes that will allow for an improved proactive approach to traffic safety and operations in the City

The TSOS recommends updates and enhancements to existing City policies and the creation of new policies to support the strategy objectives and promote a safer road network. As noted, these policies will be transparent, clearly understood, easily implementable, and most importantly, supported by Council. The key policy areas are listed below. A summary of policy changes and recommendations can be found in **Attachment 3** of this report.

- Traffic Calming Policy and Traffic Calming Toolbox
- Speed Limit Policy
- Pedestrian Crossovers Policy
- Community Safety Zone Policy
- Crossing Guard Procedure and Policy
- All Way Stop Control Policy (AWSC)

Work on these policies is currently underway, and they will be brought forward to Council for adoption through a separate staff report once they are completed.

The TSOS also recommends a number of enhanced traffic safety and operations programs and processes that can be applied Citywide or on an area specific basis to allow city staff to proactively identify and address traffic safety across the City, prioritize

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improvement using evidence-based approach, and monitor the success of traffic safety initiatives. Some of the key programs and processes are outlined below, and detailed in the summary found in **Attachment 3** of this report:

- Enhanced Traffic Data Collection and Monitoring Program
- Road Safety Public Awareness and Education Programs
- 'Slow Down' Lawn Signs Program
- Automated Speed Enforcement Program
- Annual Network Screening and Prioritization Process
- Road Safety Improvement Capital Planning Process
- Improved Inquiry Intake and Review Process
- Annual Performance Report Process and Templates

The policies and programs recommended through the TSOS will be augmented with a comprehensive communication plan and a collaborative multi-platform education campaign which will include:

- Enhancing presence on the City's website;
- Initiating a multi-platform social media campaign;
- Create educational videos on key traffic safety topics;
- Develop a traffic safety calendar of events;
- Leveraging the City's Road Watch Committee for additional communication and public event campaigns;
- Further leveraging partnerships with York Region, York Regional Police, School Boards; and
- Conducting regular public education sessions on key traffic safety initiatives, and to receive resident feedback regarding local and City wide traffic safety and operations issues.

Staff plan to commence public education sessions in each ward in early 2024, as part of the initial roll out of the TSOS recommendations.

The TSOS provides a road map for the implementation of actions over the next 10 years

As part of the TSOS, an implementation road map was also developed, which outlines the short term, medium term, and long term TSOS actions, as well as the capital investments and resourcing needs required to successfully deliver on these actions.

The key actions identified in TSOS for implementation in the short term (2024-2025) include:

- Conducting initial network screening;
- Completing a community safety zone audit;
- Completing the development of key policies, including any required updates to existing policies;

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- Implementing a ‘Slow Down’ lawn sign program;
- Expanding the pole-mounted radar board program;
- Implementing Traffic Engineering Software (TES) cloud in partnership with York Region;
- Completing updates to the City’s website;
- Commencing the public education sessions and social media campaigns; and
- Implementing initial traffic calming measures at several priority locations per ward

Several short term action plan items directly responds to the Member’s Motion (Item 15.1.7) brought forward to the September 13, 2023 Council Meeting

These action plan items include completing the initial network screening and implementing traffic calming measures at priority locations per ward. Specifically, staff plan to report to back to Council in March of 2024 with selected locations, selection criteria, and type of traffic calming to be implemented in each ward for 2024.

It should be noted that the completion of these short-term action items is dependent on securing the necessary staff resources and funding. Requests for the funding and one additional staffing resources have been included in the 2024 Capital and Operating budgets, respectively.

Beyond the short term, a number of medium term action items have been identified in TSOS for implementation between 2025 and 2029. These include:

- Implementation of an enhanced inquiry intake and tracking system;
- Implementation of the base speed Limit program;
- Implementation of an Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) program;
- Implementation of an enhanced data collection and KPI program;
- Annual monitoring of traffic safety improvements;
- Enhanced annual network screening
- Annual prioritization and capital budgeting of traffic safety improvements
- Annual reporting on traffic safety
- Continuing with public education campaigns and partnership development; and
- LEAN review of processes

The medium term action items build on the foundation from the short-term action items and further improve the delivery of traffic safety and operations initiatives in the City.

The long-term action items identified beyond 2029 include:

- Continuing with Implemented Programs
- Completing an update of TSOS Strategy
- Reviewing and Refining Programs as Required
- Reviewing and Updating Policies
- Review and Updating Toolbox
- Expanding the ASE Program

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- Commencing speed Limit Monitoring for Base Speed Limits

Many of the long-term action items relate back to the continuous cycle intended for the TSOS, and ensure that the policies and programs and tools initiated through the TSOS remain effective and up to date.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

The TSOS provides an estimate of the capital and human resource investments needed to successfully implement the key short, medium and long term recommendations of this strategy. The funding includes allocations for additional engineering studies, network screening, enhanced data collection and installation of the traffic calming devices. These are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Forecasted Capital and Resource Needs for TSOS Implementation

	Short Term 2024-2025	Medium Term 2025-2029	Long Term 2029-2033	Total
Capital Needs	\$0.5M	\$2.5M	\$0.9M	\$3.9M
Operating Needs	1 FTE	2 FTE's	1 FTE	4 FTE's

The funding for capital and resources needs will come from a number of sources including Development Charges, Community Benefits Charge, the Canada Community-Building Fund, and tax levy, depending on the nature of the program or initiative to be implemented. These financial strategies will be considered through the 2024 Capital Sustainability Steering Committee, with the aim to minimize impacts to the tax rate and ensure long term financial sustainability for the City.

The 2024 capital and operating budgets will be bringing forward requests for the short term capital needs (\$0.5M) to implement the proactive traffic safety recommendations and one new senior traffic analyst position. The City also has an existing annual traffic safety improvements provision to address the ongoing traffic safety inquiries in a reactive approach and will be considered through the annual capital budget process.

Medium (\$2.5M) and long term (\$0.9M) capital expenditures have also been identified through the TSOS, along with additional staff resource support needs. These expenditures and needs will be included as part of the City's future capital and operating budgets and forecasts once Council has adopted the TSOS.

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Relationship to Council’s Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

The TSOS is identified as a Council Strategic Priority under “Getting around the City” that prioritizes the east of movement around the city. The TSOS also aligns with other key priorities such as "Balancing Growth & Green," "Strong Sense of Belonging," and "Fiscal Responsibility." The TSOS is committed to improving safety and efficiency for multi-modal traffic by implementing enhancements on existing and future transportation infrastructure based on industry best practices.

Climate Change Considerations:

The TSOS identifies traffic safety and operational improvements, policies and programs to improve safety and efficiency for multiple modes of transportation, including walking and cycling. This will contribute to climate change mitigation by enabling safer, more efficient travel through Richmond Hill helping to lower GHG emissions in Richmond Hill. The reduced vehicle speeds from increased traffic calming are expected to help reduce overall travel speeds on the roads where they are implemented and to promote safe pedestrian activity, which can contribute to climate change mitigation by reducing fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Conclusion:

The TSOS is a strategic document and action plan that provides staff with necessary policies, programs and tools to plan, prioritize and proactively address the growing traffic safety needs across the city in a consistent manner.

The TSOS recommends updates and enhancements to existing City policies and the creation of new policies to support the strategy objectives and promote a safer road network. The policies will be transparent, clearly understood, easily implementable, and most importantly, supported by Council.

The funding for TSOS implementation projects will consist of various funding sources including development charges, community benefits charges, gas tax, and tax, depending of the nature of the program or initiative to be implemented.

Overall, the TSOS aligns with Council’s Strategic Priorities and provides a comprehensive framework for staff to improve traffic safety and operations within the City of Richmond Hill.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Attachment 1 – Member Motion – Prioritizing Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Measures, September 6, 2023

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- Attachment 2 – Traffic Safety and Operations Strategy
- Attachment 3 – Summary of Traffic Safety Policies and Programs

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRIES.23.005 Traffic Safety and Operations Strategy.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Member Motion – Prioritizing Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Measures, September 6, 2023.pdf - Attachment 3 - Summary of Traffic Safety Policies and Programs.docx - Attachment 2 - Traffic Safety and Operations Strategy.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 16, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Dan Terzievski - Nov 15, 2023 - 4:31 PM

Paolo Masaro - Nov 15, 2023 - 4:47 PM

Darlene Joslin - Nov 16, 2023 - 8:31 AM