

COMMON COUNCIL REPORT

M&C No.	2025-151
Report Date	May 26, 2025
Meeting Date	June 02, 2025
Service Area	Public Works and Transportation Services

Her Worship Mayor Donna Noade Reardon and Members of Common Council

SUBJECT: Traffic Safety and Accessibility Improvement Plan 2025

AUTHORIZATION

Primary Author	Commissioner/Dept. Head	Chief Administrative Officer
<i>Tim O'Reilly</i>	<i>Michael Hugenholtz</i>	<i>J. Brent McGovern</i>

RECOMMENDATION

Your Chief Administrative Officer recommends Common Council receive and file this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MoveSJ's vision of creating safe and accessible transportation choices continues to become reality. Plans continue to slow vehicle speeds, create or improve crosswalks, improve accessibility of the transportation network, implement cycling facilities, make changes to how and where trucks operate, work with stakeholders to improve safety at rail crossing improvements, etc. This report highlights a series of traffic safety improvement projects planned for 2025 that demonstrate the City's response to community concerns in a way that aligns with organizational goals and strategies.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The initiatives described in this report align with several City priorities and strategies. Specifically, the City's Transportation Plan (MoveSJ) is supported as the initiatives are focused on citizens having a choice of a variety of transportation modes.

The City's 10-Year Strategic Plan envisions growth to 20% of trips being accomplished with sustainable transportation modes and development of safety programs.

ActSJ envisions a reduced carbon footprint that is supported, in part, by greater use of sustainable and active transportation modes.

The City's 2025 Initiatives Plan includes a goal of continuing to implement traffic calming projects towards the 10-Year Strategic Plan's goal of 20 completed projects as well as improve the accessibility of at least 5 on-street parking spaces.

This report is being presented on Day 1 of Sustainable Transportation Week, as recognized through the Fundy Region.

REPORT

Each year the City receives on average over 100 community requests for traffic safety and flow improvements. These include requests to slow vehicle speeds (traffic calming), adjust on-street parking rules, manage how large trucks can operate, improve safety and quality of life at rail crossings, enhance the accessibility of our transportation network, and improve safety for motorists such as warning signage, for pedestrians such as new or enhanced crosswalks, and for cyclists such as new or enhanced bike lanes.

Some requests simply can't be acted upon. In some cases, requests don't align with municipal or provincial regulations, will not result in a net safety improvement for road users, or don't align with nationally-accepted best practices. In other cases solutions may be too costly to implement.

Incorporating asset management practices into decisions related to these traffic requests are also becoming more and more important. Whether it be a new sign or electronics associated with a signalized crosswalk, all added traffic infrastructure not only generates costs at the time of construction, but also creates ongoing operating, maintenance, and eventual replacement responsibilities that need to be funded. Operating budgets must be adjusted on a regular basis to include the necessary resources to maintain this additional infrastructure, which will require the continued support of Council.

The City is continuing to incorporate a broader risk management and systematic approach to planning where and when traffic improvements are made. Initiatives that align with MoveSJ, a future overall Road Safety Strategy, or results from a City-wide review such as the recent federally-funded crosswalk and sidewalk prioritization projects (presented at the last Public Safety Committee meeting) are all examples. This broad approach ensures investments are being made that objectively address the highest priority issues. This represents a shift from the City's historical approach which was much more 'complaints-driven'. While citizen requests will continue to be tracked and will be considered as part of the process, in more and more cases existing plans and strategies will drive the work. Operations staff will work closely with the Integrated Customer Service Centre to ensure the messaging for these types of requests is in alignment with our strategies.

Again in 2025, City staff have assessed community and stakeholder requests in light of these broader considerations to develop another annual Traffic Safety Improvement Plan. Following is a brief summary of each project planned for 2025:

Speed Cushion Installations

The City has increased its response to the growth in requests for traffic calming over the last few years. The Expedited Traffic Calming Program, commenced as a pilot project in 2023, moving to an endorsed annual program in 2024, focuses on the rapid installation of Speed Cushions as the primary means of slowing vehicles on existing city streets. Speed Cushions are similar to speed bumps or humps but with gaps for wheel paths of select community and emergency vehicles. Speed cushions have proven to slow the average speed of vehicles on Saint John streets and in other jurisdictions. Common Council increased resources as part of the 2025 budget process, that is allowing more than triple (from 4 to 13) the number of streets to receive Speed Cushions this year. Through a combination of own forces and contracted resources, Speed Cushions are planned for the following 13 streets in 2025:

1. Champlain Drive
2. Prince Street
3. Wellesley Avenue
4. Boars Head Road
5. Green Head Road
6. Mountain View Drive
7. Churchill Boulevard
8. Gault Road
9. Hawthorne Avenue
10. Ragged Point Road
11. Brookview Crescent
12. Milford Road
13. Mount Pleasant Avenue East (temporary speed cushions)

City staff note that the City's Traffic Calming Policy requires evidence of speeding through collected and analyzed data before a community request for traffic calming will be implemented. This part of the policy remains with the Expedited Traffic Calming Program. Less than 50% of community requests are substantiated through collected speed data; those requests that are not substantiated through data do not receive traffic calming solutions. It remains important that limited City resources are invested where there is an opportunity for measurable results in performance, such as a traffic calming plan being implemented on a street that results in average speeds reducing back to within posted speed limits.

As previously reported, the intent of the temporary (rubber) Speed Cushions on Mount Pleasant Avenue East is to continue to incrementally install these on busier streets each year until it becomes clear a “ceiling” is reached with community support. Speed Cushions are typically not recommended on very busy streets.

Accessibility Improvements to On-Street Uptown Parking Spaces

Staff have heard concerns expressed by the disability community about the number of accessible on-street parking spaces in the Uptown Central Business District (CBD). Based on staff’s review, the overall current supply exceeds current regulations, although those regulations are largely focused on parking lots and parking garages. Due to the linear nature of on-street parking it is not possible to meet some of the proximity requirements laid out for parking lots without significant negative impacts to businesses. The primary focus is therefore on improving the quality of the current stock of CBD on-street parking spaces. This is reflected in the city’s 2025 Work Plan with a goal of improving the accessibility of at least 5 on-street parking spaces.

With support of the Saint John Ability Advisory Committee (SJAAC) and Abilities New Brunswick, city staff developed two variations from the regulations. These include:

1. On-street accessible parking spaces do not need to be on perfectly level ground. It is recognized that some cross slope or hills will be present on streets, with a goal of not surpassing grades of 2% where possible, and
2. Access ramps required behind accessible parallel parking spaces will be incorporated into existing access ramps at crosswalks wherever possible. This will reduce infrastructure installation costs, provide space for more on-street parallel parking spaces, and decrease confusion for pedestrians that additional access ramps for accessible spaces are not crosswalk locations.

Between ongoing consultation with the Saint John Ability Advisory Committee and Abilities NB, five current on-street accessible parking spaces will be identified and upgraded to current best practices with these two variations.

Accessible Signalized Crosswalk Installations or Upgrades

Similar to prior years, a number of crosswalks will be either installed or upgraded with both side-mounted wireless, solar-powered lights and audible features for accessibility. The locations and brief details as to what led to the need are provided:

1. Mount Pleasant Avenue East at Belmont Street – to improve access for a new satellite location for Key Industries

2. Somerset Street at Technology Drive – to improve access to a busy Transit stop, including as a result of nearby residential growth
3. Kennebecasis Drive – to improve access between Greenslade Park and the sidewalk on the opposite side of Kennebecasis Drive
4. Lancaster Avenue at Dunn – to improve pedestrian crossing safety at the complicated Tilton’s Corner
5. Loch Lomond Road at Bon Accord – to improve pedestrian crossing safety in a growing area of residential development. One of the area developers is contributing \$1000 to the project as part of the development’s approval process
6. Broad Street at Sydney Street - Funded through the Capital Program, this project was recommended by the Saint John Ability Advisory Committee and will support the new South End School
7. Broad Street at Charlotte Street – Funded through the Capital Program, this upgraded crosswalk will support the new South End School
8. Main Street at Douglas Avenue – Funded through the Capital Program, this upgraded crosswalk is recommended by the 2022 crosswalk prioritization project that was funded by the Federal Active Transportation Fund
9. Union Street at Chipman Hill – Funded through the Capital Program, this upgraded crosswalk is recommended by the 2022 crosswalk prioritization project that was funded by the Federal Active Transportation Fund
10. King Street at Chipman Hill – Funded through the Capital Program, this upgraded crosswalk is recommended by the 2022 crosswalk prioritization project that was funded by the Federal Active Transportation Fund
11. Loch Lomond Road at Crescent – Funded through the Capital Program, this upgraded crosswalk is recommended by the 2022 crosswalk prioritization project that was funded by the Federal Active Transportation Fund

The existing crosswalk with overhead pedestrian lights on Lansdowne Avenue at Wellesley will be upgraded with audible features for accessibility in 2025, funded through the Capital Program.

The existing signalized intersections of McAllister/Westmorland, Main/Metcalf, and Rothesay Avenue/Retail Drive will be upgraded to become fully accessible, all funded through the Capital Program in 2025.

Bike Lane Installation on City Road and Station Street portion of Trans Canada Trail

City Road and Station Street form an important connection for active transportation modes between Harbour Passage near Long Wharf and the Highway 1 Stanley Street bridge towards Rockwood Park. This current section of a four-lane road also forms a component of the city’s portion of the Trans Canada Trail (TCT). When the TCT across the city was finished in time for

Canada's 150th birthday in 2017, shared cycling/vehicle lanes were established. Upgrades to the City/Station/Garden intersection were needed before bike lanes could be installed. Now that the intersection upgrades were complete as incorporated into the 2024 Capital project Garden Street, a previously planned "Road Diet" to reduce from 4 to 3 lanes on these portions of City Road and Station Street, with the remaining road for two dedicated bike lanes, can and will be implemented in 2025. In addition to the addition of safer cycling infrastructure, the Road Diet is expected to act as a traffic calming measure and improve safety at two mid-block crosswalks.

A traffic study was completed in 2015, when the "Road Diet" concept was first contemplated, to identify any impact to motorists by the loss of one of four vehicle lanes on Station Street and City Road. The study concluded movements at all three major intersections along the proposed project would function acceptably, including following a Sea Dogs game. Even with traffic volumes growing by 20% overtime, the only issue would be afternoon rush hour traffic trying to leave the Harbour Station parking lot. With this project being completed with traffic paint and signs, adjustments could be made inexpensively if needed in the future.

Loch Lomond Road at Airport Arterial All-Way Stop

Ahead of a future Roundabout in collaboration with the Province of New Brunswick, this intersection on a Provincial Highway will be converted temporarily to an All-Way Stop intersection, likely in 2025, with early development on the Saint John Airport property near this intersection. The project will include larger Stop signs with solar-powered LEDs and other features to promote compliance with the changed intersection.

SERVICE AND FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

Funds are available for the projects described in this report, including utilizing an additional \$75,000 approved as part of the 2024 General Fund Operating Budget, that carried forward into 2025, as well as dedicated funding to triple the number of traffic calming projects.

INPUT FROM OTHER SERVICE AREAS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Input from the general public, the Saint John Ability Advisory Committee, and Abilities NB have been incorporated into this report.

ATTACHMENTS

- Staff presentation .