

Slowing Down for Safety's Sake

City of Edmonton launches residential speed reduction pilot in May

Speeding in residential areas has been identified as major concern in many Edmonton communities.

Following a detailed analysis, the City of Edmonton has selected six communities in which to base its upcoming residential speed reduction pilot project.

“The information we hope to collect over the course of this project may be used to determine if in fact a reduction of speed has had a positive impact on the level of safety for our citizens.” says Dan Jones, senior speed management coordinator with the Office of Traffic Safety.

Input was sought from the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, both Edmonton school boards and the Edmonton Police Service. The input received was taken into account during the evaluation and selection process, which was organized by Dr. Khandker M. Nurul Habib, Assistant Professor, Transportation Engineering & Planning, University of Alberta. After examining the data and feedback provided, it was determined that six communities would take part in the pilot: Woodcroft, Beverley Heights, Ottewell, King Edward Park, Westridge/Wolf Willow and Twin Brooks. The selection of participants was based upon:

- the extent of the speeding problem (speeding complaints, the difference between posted and observed speeds) within the neighbourhood
- the number and type of collisions occurring on the neighbourhood streets
- the traffic volume (in comparison to the capacities of the streets with speeding issues)
- the nature of each neighbourhood based on the number of playgrounds and schools, proximity to highways and community consciousness (reflected by the number of impaired driving reports)

“We want safe streets in our communities...for our kids, our seniors and everyone else who shares the roads,” says Allan Bolstad, executive director with the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues. “Maybe if people have to slow down when going through residential areas, they’ll give a little extra thought to the way they drive and keep a better watch out for pedestrians, cyclists and other motorists.”

The pilot project is slated to begin in May 2010 and will run for a six-month period. During that time, there will be signs posted in each of the communities displaying the new 40 km/h speed limits. A variety of speed reduction initiatives will be utilized over this six month period to see what, if any, effect they have on drivers. Information will be gathered on an ongoing basis to measure the impact of those activities within each designated community.

Even with the new pilot program, Jones advises that it will take more than just a few signs to change behaviours. “Speeding is a shared responsibility; drivers must take personal responsibility for the safety of all those who share the roads including pedestrians, cyclists and other motorists. Residents should be able to use the streets in their communities with a reasonable expectation of safety, and we need to work together to make that happen.”