

**DATE:** September 16, 2022

**TO:** MAYOR AND COUNCIL

**NAME AND TITLE:** Blake McIntosh, Director, Civic Operations

**SUBJECT:** Pedestrian Accommodation in Work Zones

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated September 16, 2022 from the Director of Civic Operations titled "Pedestrian Accommodation in Work Zones."

**PURPOSE:**

The Pedestrian Accommodation in Work Zones report describes existing City policies, procedures, and permitting processes for works within the road dedication, and how it relates to pedestrian accessibility and safety.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

As outlined in the City of Prince George Strategic Priorities, the City's goal is to work with stakeholders to continue the implementation and promotion of initiatives that enhance community safety and the perception of community safety.

**BACKGROUND:**

On August 16, 2021, Council directed Administration to review existing City policies, procedures, and permitting processes regarding accessibility of safe pedestrian access to the pedestrian network in work zones to ensure the City aligns with best practices in promoting pedestrian safety and accommodation in work zones.

The City of Prince George requires that all works occurring in the municipal road dedication, including City operational & maintenance works, City capital projects, and 3<sup>rd</sup> party works, meet the guidelines and standards of the Traffic Management Manual (TMM), and regulations of WorkSafeBC (WSBC).

Under the City of Prince George Highways Bylaw No. 8065 (Highways Bylaw), a permit is required for all 3<sup>rd</sup> party works within a municipal road dedication including roadway, sidewalk and boulevard. Works that disrupt traffic (vehicles, cyclists, or pedestrians) requires the submission of a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) appropriate for the scope of works, in accordance with WSBC and the TMM.

A Permittee must follow all conditions of an issued permit, as well as the guidelines and standards of the TMM, the requirements of City bylaws, and regulations of WSBC. The key guidelines and standards that are significant to pedestrian safety are as follows.

## Regulations, Guidelines & Standards, and Highways Bylaw

### WorkSafeBC: OHS Regulation Part 18: Traffic Control:

- [An employer must ensure that traffic control equipment, arrangements or layouts and procedures, to the extent practicable, meet the requirements of the TMM.]
- [Traffic control devices are positioned and used as specified in the traffic control plan]
- Temporary traffic control devices are positioned to allow traffic (including pedestrians) to move by or through the work zone in a safe manner,
- [The required traffic control devices and procedures are in place before the start of work and are removed when they are no longer required.]
- [All traffic control equipment and devices must be kept clean and in good working condition.]
- [The work zone is inspected at intervals appropriate to the risks]

### Traffic Management Manual (TMM):

- Provisions should be made to accommodate pedestrians through work zones, where alternative pedestrian infrastructure is not available. Temporary pedestrian facilities should include accessibility features consistent with those present in the existing facility.
- Mobility-assisted pedestrians, wheelchairs, walkers, or scooters require smooth and solid transition and running surfaces. Care should be taken to prevent tipping.
- Visually-impaired pedestrians may require some additional guidance. Barricades should be used to block off closed areas and a distinguishable “path” of tubular markers should be erected for the pedestrians to follow. Assistance may also be provided by a Traffic Control Persons or designate.
- [Traffic control devices shall be inspected and maintained during both active and inactive work to ensure that they are not missing, and that they are clean, properly positioned, and effective in all weather and light conditions. The frequency of inspection will be determined by the operational needs of the project.]

### Highways Bylaw & Permits:

- [The Permittee shall provide and place appropriate traffic control and safety devices required to protect the public in accordance with the TMM. The City may require a written Traffic Management Plan to be submitted for approval in advance of the work. The holder of the Permit shall ensure the traffic management conforms in every way to the approved plans. The supply and maintenance of all traffic control will be the responsibility of the Permittee.]
- [Public Notification is required. The Permittee is required to submit notification details in writing, and appropriate for the location and scope of works undertaken.]
- [The TMP shall be in accordance with the principles outlined in the TMM, and the level of detail will be appropriate for the location and the scope of work.]
- [Roadways and walkways must at all time be kept open to traffic, unless specific permission is granted to close such to traffic for the purpose of executing the works. Roadways and walkways must be completely opened to traffic as soon as possible.]
- [If the works are found to be causing loss, damage, or injury to any person(s) or property, or it is found that the works are not in the interests of the public, the Permit may be suspended or cancelled.]
- [The Permit may be canceled without recourse should the Applicant fail to comply with all the terms of the Permit.]
- [All works shall conform to the City Bylaws.]
- [All works shall conform to the current requirements of WorkSafeBC.]

A Highways Bylaw Permit is typically not issued for works conducted by the City or their Agent, or for operational and maintenance works conducted by Utility companies; however, the same regulations, guidelines, standards, and notices still apply.

## DISCUSSION:

### Inspections & Enforcement

Transportation Services processes an average of 380 Highways Bylaw permits per year for 3<sup>rd</sup> party works occurring in the road dedication. Once an application has been accepted, and a permit issued, Transportation Services schedules an initial site inspection for works that may include a significant traffic disruption. Subsequent periodic inspections may be needed for disruptions of significant duration or complexity. Additional inspections are conducted for sites that were non-compliant, and when Services Requests are received. The City relies on Service Requests to identify potential non-compliant or non-permitted works. The permittees/employers are responsible for ensuring their traffic control is regularly inspected by their Traffic Control Supervisor, and meets the requirements of the TMM and WSBC.

For City capital projects, operational and maintenance works, City staff or the City's Agent(s) are responsible for ensuring the related traffic control is regularly inspected, and implemented in accordance with the TMM and WSBC. The City's Health & Safety Division informs and audits the various City Departments to ensure they are compliant with WSBC.

WSBC is an independent provincial agency responsible for enforcing the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and the Workers Compensation Act. WSBC conducts work site inspections to help employers comply with health and safety regulations, including traffic control. The purpose of WSBC inspections is to safeguard the workers, and prevent workplace injury.

When 3<sup>rd</sup> party traffic control is found to be non-compliant, Transportation Services contacts the Permittee, or their Agent, and identifies any issues that must be addressed. When there is an immediate risk to public safety, or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party does not have a permit, Transportation Services will direct those on site to stop works, vacate the road dedication, and correct or remove any traffic control, so long as it is safe to do so. If a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party fails or refuses to comply with the bylaw or permit, Bylaw Services is contacted for support. Under the Highways Bylaw, the City has the power to refuse, suspend, amend, vary, or rescind Permits under this bylaw, after having advised the Applicant of the proposed decision.

### Notifications

Permittees, Utility companies, and City staff are expected to submit a Notice of Traffic Disruption (NoTD) at least two weekdays before each traffic disruption is implemented; and as soon as possible for emergency works. NoTDs are expected for all disruptions, including roadways, bike lanes, and walkways. The [NoTD form](#) can be found on the City website.

The NoTDs are summarized and posted on the City website in a [Daily Media Release](#). Significant traffic disruptions typically include additional public notification including static or changeable message signs, letters, radio announcements, etc. It has been noted that the existing NoTD media release is not efficient, as it requires reading the entire document daily to determine if there are any new disruptions on a user's route. Recommendations have been made to improve this notification process by introducing a map-based system similar to [DriveBC](#).

#### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:**

The Transportation Services Division works to be as diligent as it can be in ensuring that 3<sup>rd</sup> party construction in the City of Prince George follows the policies and procedures in place to safeguard all pedestrians in the roadway. Transportation Services also ensures that notifications are released to the public to make them aware of traffic disruptions, including sidewalks. Staff will work with the City's IT Services Division to introduce a map-based notification system to show traffic disruptions.

The City continues to train staff who have responsibility for planning and setting up work zones as a regular or occasional part of their work, including certification as Traffic Control Persons, as well as traffic control planning and layout for workers and supervisors in Civic Operations and safety roles. Over 100 Civic Operations staff, including managers, supervisors, project managers, foreman, and laborers, recently completed Traffic Control Planning & Layout training, provided by the British Columbia Municipal Safety Association (BCMSA).

Staff will further review the City's Highways Bylaw Permits and traffic disruption notifications with the City's Continuous Improvement Division, to ensure the processes and procedures are clear and concise.

#### **RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Blake McIntosh, Director, Civic Operations

**PREPARED BY:** Chris Vliegthart, Supervisor, Transportation Services

#### **APPROVED:**

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: October 3, 2022