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Item No. 13.1.1
Transportation Standing Committee
November 27, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

FROM: Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 15, 2025

SUBJECT: Mobile Speed Display Signs

ORIGIN

Item 14.1 of the February 27, 2025 meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee:

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Cuttell

THAT the Transportation Standing Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a report investigating a policy allowing Councillors to use district capital funds to purchase a limited number of mobile speed display signs (SDS) for use within their districts as traffic feedback, monitoring, and reporting devices, over and above the current SDS that are now in use within Traffic Management.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to a motion from the February 27, 2025 Transportation Standing Committee meeting, requesting an investigation into allowing Councillors to use district capital funds to purchase additional mobile Speed Display Signs (SDS).

SDS are part of the municipality's road safety program, aimed at reducing speeding by providing real-time feedback to drivers. Currently, two SDS units are allocated per district, deployed strategically on roads with high collision risk, visibility issues, or as part of traffic calming efforts. These units are rotated semi-annually to maintain effectiveness.

However, analysis of program data reveals that the average speed reduction achieved by SDS units is less than 1 km/h, indicating minimal impact on driver behavior despite positive public perception. The program also places a significant strain on staff resources due to installation and rotation logistics. Legal constraints prevent community groups from assisting with deployment, as SDS units are considered official traffic signs under the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act.

Given the limited effectiveness and resource demands, the report recommends maintaining the current SDS inventory without expansion. While an alternative to amend the District Funds Administrative Order to allow Councillor-funded SDS purchases was considered, it is not recommended due to insufficient program support capacity.

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to maintain the existing Speed Display Sign Program using the current inventory.

BACKGROUND

Speed display signs are part of the municipality's ongoing road safety initiatives. Also known as driver feedback signs, speed display signs are devices designed with the intent to reduce speeding by alerting drivers of their current speed. By displaying information in real time, the signs are intended to provide drivers with feedback to indicate when they are travelling above the posted speed limit and to encourage them to reduce their speed.

There are currently two signs allocated per district, excluding those associated with the Traffic Calming Program. Signs are deployed in strategic locations and primarily used on:

- Major collector and arterial roads in speed transition zones or where speeding is resulting in collisions;
- Local and minor collector roads as a supplemental tool supporting the Traffic Calming program; and
- Where road geometry, like sharp curves, may obstruct visibility to hazards.

Speed display signs are intended to be rotated on a semi-annual basis to ensure maximum effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

The current Speed Display Sign (SDS) Program has been in operation for several years as part of the municipality's broader road safety strategy. These signs are deployed strategically across the region to provide real-time speed feedback to drivers, encouraging compliance with posted speed limits. While the intent of the program is to reduce speeding and improve safety, program data indicates that the overall impact on driver behaviour is minimal.

From an analysis of available data, the average speed reduction over time is less than 1 km/h. See **Attachment 1** for a detailed list of location data. Despite positive public perception, the data indicates that the signs are largely ineffective in impacting driver behaviour. This discrepancy between perception and performance raises serious concerns about the cost-effectiveness and strategic value of expanding the program beyond its current scope.

Maintaining the existing SDS program creates a considerable strain on current staff resources. The semi-annual rotation schedule also requires significant logistical coordination. Resource constraints have already impacted the ability to adhere to this schedule, limiting the program's effectiveness. Staff are investigating opportunities that may be available to adjust how the program is currently administered, including improved scheduling for install / relocation and potentially leveraging other internal or external resources to minimize the impact of the program.

Staff has explored the potential for community groups or resident associations to assist with the deployment of SDS units as a means to address resourcing challenges. However, from a legal standpoint, this approach is not viable. SDS units are considered official traffic signs under the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act, and as such, only the Traffic Authority is legally permitted to install or manage traffic control devices, including SDS units.

Given the limited impact and high level of effort required to sustain the program, staff recommend maintaining the current SDS inventory without expansion at this time.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications at this time.

For budgeting purposes, the approximate cost of a speed display sign is \$4000.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The current inventory of speed display signs are powered by solar energy which limits the environmental impact. If additional signs were to be purchased, solar powered units would continue to be utilized.

ALTERNATIVES

Transportation Standing Committee could choose to recommend that Regional Council:

1. Direct the CAO to draft amendments to Administrative Order 2017-009-ADM, the [District Funds Administrative Order](#) to allow Councillors to use district capital funds to purchase a limited number of mobile speed display signs (SDS) for use within their districts as traffic feedback devices, over and above the current SDS that are now in use within Traffic & Parking Management; and return to Regional Council for consideration of these amendments. This alternative is not recommended at this time given the current lack of program resources to support the installation and maintenance of an expanded program.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39

321(8) The Traffic Authority for the Municipality has, with respect to highways in the Municipality, excluding those for which the Provincial Traffic Authority has authority, the powers conferred upon a traffic authority by or pursuant to the *Motor Vehicle Act*.

Motor Vehicle Act, R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 293

89(1) Subject to such authority as may be vested in the Minister, the Registrar or the Department, traffic authorities in regard to highways under their respective authority may cause appropriate signs to be erected and maintained designating business and residence districts and railway grade crossings and such other signs, markings, and traffic control signals as may be deemed necessary to direct and regulate traffic and to carry out the provisions of this Act.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Speed Display Sign Data

District	Locations	Installation Date (Ghost Mode)	Live Mode Start Date	School Zone	Posted Speed Limit	Ghost 85th SPD (km/h)	Live 85th SPD 1 Month	Live 85th SPD 3 Months	Live 85th SPD >6 Months	Change in Speed 1 month	Change in Speed 3 months	Change in Speed 6 months
1	Waverley Rd - Civic 959	27-Feb-23	3-Apr-23	No	50 km/h	67	66	64	65	-1	-3	-2
1	Highway 2 - Civic 3679	3-Apr-23	10-May-23	No	60 km/h	73	70	71	73	-3	-2	0
1	Hwy 277 Dutch Settlement Rd - Civic 950 NB	6-Mar-23	3-Apr-23	Yes	50 km/h	65	63	61	61	-2	-4	-4
1	Hwy 277 Dutch Settlement Rd - Civic 999 SB	6-Mar-23	3-Apr-23	Yes	50 km/h	59	57	56	58	-2	-3	-1
1	Waverley Rd - Civic 1070	17-Jan-25	27-Jan-25	No	50 km/h	63	60	62	60	-3	-1	-3
1	Highway 2 - Civic 3388	17-Jan-25	27-Jan-25	No	60 km/h	70	69	69	69	-1	-1	-1
2	North Preston Rd - Civic 845	3-Apr-23	10-May-23	No	50 km/h	69	69	67	68	0	-2	-1
2	Lawrencetown Rd - Civic 2467	28-Oct-24	4-Nov-24	No	70 km/h	75	74	72	74	-1	-3	-1
3	Cow Bay Rd - Civic 625	18-May-23	5-Jun-23	No	50 km/h	67	66	67	65	-1	0	-2
3	Main Rd - Civic 1377	6-Apr-23	10-May-23	No	60 km/h	67	66	65	66	-1	-2	-1
3	Shore Rd - At Oceanlea Dr	1-May-23	10-May-23	No	50 km/h	60	59	59	59	-1	-1	-1
3	Dorothea Dr - Civic 111	5-Apr-23	10-May-23	No	50 km/h	55	54	54	53	-1	-1	-2
3	Caldwell Rd - Civic 1567	17-Jan-25	27-Jan-25	No	50 km/h	63	61	61	60	-2	-2	-3
4	Highway 7 - Civic 875	5-Apr-23	6-Jun-23	No	60 km/h	70	70	70	70	0	0	0
4	Montague Rd - Civic 383	17-Jan-25	27-Jan-25	No	50 km/h	67	66	67	66	-1	0	-1
5	Prince Albert Rd -Near Sinclair Rd	2-Mar-23	3-Apr-23	No	50 km/h	60	59	57	57	-1	-3	-3
5	Windmill Rd - Civic 150	10-Feb-25	18-Feb-25	No	50 km/h	57	58	58	57	1	1	0
6	Main Street - Civic 132	27-Jun-23	4-Jul-23	No	50 km/h	57	56	56	56	-1	-1	-1
6	Spring Ave - Civic 57	17-Jul-23	16-Oct-23	No	50 km/h	56	55	55	55	-1	-1	-1
7	Oxford St - Civic 1459	2-Mar-23	3-Apr-23	Yes	50 km/h	52	52	51	50	0	-1	-2
7	Robie St - Civic 1134	7-Mar-23	10-May-23	Yes	50 km/h	53	52	51	51	-1	-2	-2
7	Robie St - Civic 1584	17-Jan-25	27-Jan-25	No	50 km/h	51	51	52	51	0	1	0
7	South St - Civic 5826	10-Feb-25	18-Feb-25	No	50 km/h	46	47	48	48	1	2	2
8	Barrington St - Civic 3833	25-May-23	7-Jun-23	No	70 km/h	72	71	71	73	-1	-1	1
8	Devonshire Ave- Near Young Street	25-Oct-23	5-Nov-23	No	50 km/h	51	53	51	52	2	0	1
8	Africville Rd - Civic 5795	27-Jan-25	3-Feb-25	No	50 km/h	56	58	58	55	2	2	-1
8	Lady Hammond Rd - Civic 6300	10-Feb-25	18-Feb-25	No	50 km/h	54	54	54	55	0	0	1
9	Joseph Howe Dr - Civic 2842	11-Jan-23	3-Apr-23	No	50 km/h	60	60	60	60	0	0	0
9	Connaught Ave - Civic 3390	25-May-23	31-May-23	No	50 km/h	60	60	59	61	0	-1	1
9	Quinpool Rd - At Horseshoe Island Park	3-May-23	10-May-23	No	50 km/h	68	66	65	65	-2	-3	-3
9	Connaught Ave - Civic 3030	27-Jan-25	3-Feb-25	No	50 km/h	54	55	55	54	1	1	0
10	Dunbrack St - Near Ross St	20-Jun-23	27-Jun-23	No	60 km/h	53	53	53	54	0	0	1
10	Bayview Rd - Civic 73	17-Feb-23	3-Apr-23	No	50 km/h	46	45	45	45	-1	-1	-1
10	Flamingo Dr - Civic 28	17-Feb-23	3-Apr-23	No	50 km/h	43	43	43	43	0	0	0
10	Bedford Highway - Civic 304	27-Jan-25	3-Feb-25	No	50 km/h	60	61	61	59	1	1	-1
10	Dunbrack St - North of Hwy 102	27-Jan-25	3-Feb-25	No	60 km/h	69	71	71	71	2	2	2
11	Leiblin Dr - Civic 112	1-Mar-23	3-Apr-23	No	50 km/h	63	63	62	60	0	-1	-3
11	Herring Cove Rd - Civic 280	24-Dec-24	13-Jan-25	No	50 km/h	55	54	54	54	-1	-1	-1
12	Washmill Lake Dr - between Bently Dr & Main Ave	9-Feb-23	3-Apr-23	No	50 km/h	62	62	61	61	0	-1	-1
12	St Margarets Bay Rd - Civic 3170	28-Feb-23	3-Apr-23	No	70 km/h	74	74	70	68	0	-4	-6
12	Parkland Dr - Civic 323	5-Feb-25	12-Feb-25	No	50 km/h	53	54	55	55	1	2	2
13	Hammonds Plains Rd - At Mushroom Rd	16-Jun-23	28-Jun-23	Yes	50 km/h	64	67	65	65	3	1	1
13	Hammonds Plains Rd - Civic 2290	23-Mar-23	3-Apr-23	No	60 km/h	77	77	73	75	0	-4	-2
13	Hammonds Plains Rd - Civic 3591	24-Dec-24	13-Jan-25	No	60 km/h	67	66	67	67	-1	0	0
13	St Margarets Bay Rd - Civic 5090	17-Jan-25	27-Jan-25	No	60 km/h	71	70	71	73	-1	0	2
15	Riverside Dr NB - Civic 1271	1-May-23	12-May-23	No	50 km/h	50	50	49	45	0	-1	-5
15	Riverside Dr SB - Civic 1196	1-May-23	12-May-23	No	50 km/h	57	57	56	55	0	-1	-2
16	Bedford Highway - Civic 1772	17-Jan-25	27-Jan-25	No	50 km/h	63	64	65	64	1	2	1

***Note that this list only includes locations where data has been captured through all phases of installation (ghost mode, 1-, 3- and 6-months post installation).**

le. locations requiring maintenance or replacement during an installation phase may be excluded due to a gap in data.