

Watson Street Traffic Calming Project

Phase 1 Community Engagement Summary

November 2022

Background

Watson Street was identified as a high-priority location for traffic calming measures through the City's Residential Area Traffic Calming Program.

On November 7, 2016, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works concurred with the recommendation of the Public Service that traffic calming measures should be considered on Watson Street.

Additional data collection was required prior to proceeding, which was collected on Watson Street between Leila Avenue and Jefferson Avenue in March, 2021:

- The 85th percentile speed, which is the speed at which 85 percent of motorists travel at or below, ranges between 52 and 53 km/h.
- The 95th percentile speed, which is the speed at which 95 percent of motorists travel at or below, ranges between 57 and 58 km/h.
- Up to 800 vehicles per day travel 55 km/h or higher on Watson Street, approximately 230 of which travel 60 km/h or higher.

Traffic calming measures will be installed on Watson Street to help slow speeds and create a safer space for all road users.

Engagement

In Spring 2022, we surveyed the community to understand how people who use the road feel about its current state as well as potential traffic calming measures. This was Phase 1 of engagement.

Opportunities to provide feedback included:

- An online survey – open from March 28 – April 19, 2022; 39 responses
- Stakeholder meetings with eight individuals representing five organizations – April 19, May 3, and May 13, 2022

Promotion

Public engagement opportunities were promoted using:

- Project webpage – winnipeg.ca/watsoncalming launched March 28, 2022
- Direct-mailed postcards to 454 nearby properties with an invitation to take the survey – March 28

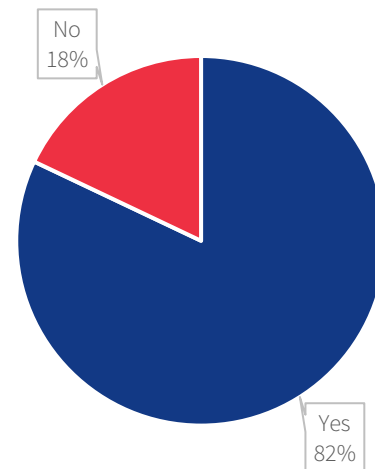
- Mailed registered letters to 90 nearby business owners an invitation to participate in a virtual stakeholder meeting – March 28, 2022
- On-street signage notifying residents that traffic calming measures are coming – installed March 28, 2022

Key Findings

39 area residents responded to the online survey.

The majority of respondents (82 percent or 32 of 39 respondents) experience traffic issues on the route in question.

Do you currently see or experience traffic issues on the stretch of road in question?



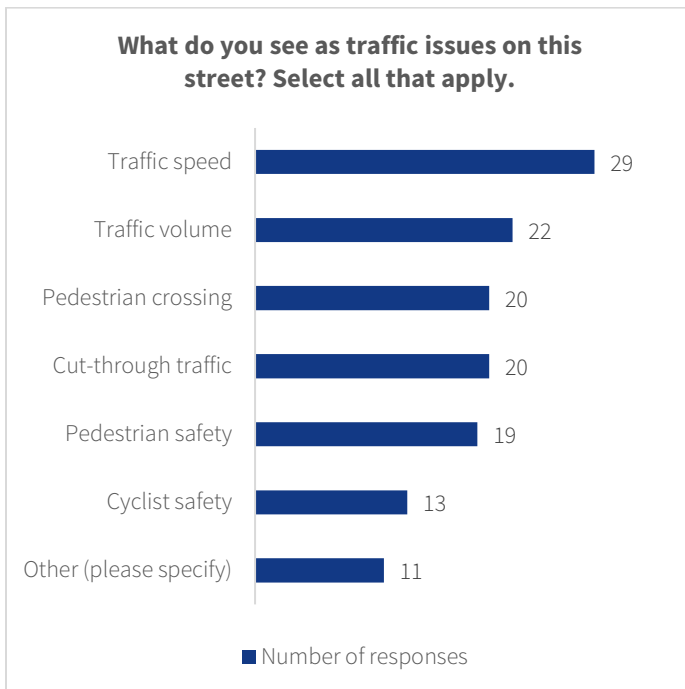
Traffic speed (29 of 31 responses), traffic volume (22 of 31 responses), and pedestrian crossing and cut-through traffic (20 of 31 responses each) were identified most often as the main traffic issues.

To learn more about the Watson Street Traffic Calming project please visit winnipeg.ca/watsoncalming

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Survey respondents were asked to share any additional thoughts about the way the street is used.

These comments were grouped into the following common themes.

- **Traffic speed** (six of 14 speed-related comments): survey respondents identified traffic speed is a concern on this portion of the road. Included in this are concerns about drag racing.
- **Crosswalk at Superstore** (seven comments): survey respondents noted that the crosswalk to Superstore is dangerous, particularly for people who use wheelchairs, and vehicles often fail to stop.
- **Safety of people who use mobility aids** (six comments): there are two housing Co-ops on Watson Street that are designed for people who use mobility aids, particularly wheelchairs. High speeds, blind corners, poor visibility of the crosswalk at Superstore, and sidewalk conditions all contribute to safety concerns. Often, people who use wheelchairs are unable to use the sidewalk due to poor maintenance or snow clearing and must share the road with motor vehicles.
- **Cut-through traffic** (six comments): many people use Watson street as a shortcut to avoid traffic on McPhillips Street and Leila Avenue.
- **Noise** (six comments): area residents noted there is a lot of noise generated by the traffic that uses Watson Street.

Write-in issues noted by respondents included:

- Safety of people who use wheelchairs (five comments)
- Safety of the Superstore entrance/exit (three comments)
- Sidewalk conditions (two comments)
- Rush hour traffic (two comments)

What We Heard	How It Was Considered
Traffic speed on this portion of the road is a concern for the majority of survey respondents.	Feedback supports the need for this project. Proposed traffic calming measures will help slow vehicle speeds.
There are two housing Co-ops on Watson Street that are designed for people who use wheelchairs. The current conditions on Watson Street make for dangerous crossing and commuting in the area.	The proposed solution is designed to slow vehicle speeds. Pedestrian crossing improvements are also proposed at several locations along Watson Street.
The crosswalk at Superstore is not effective and is dangerous. Many vehicles do not stop for people waiting to cross. Pedestrians have to look for oncoming traffic around a curve and also look at motorists exiting the Superstore parking lot. Motorists exiting the Superstore parking lot often do not see pedestrians trying to cross.	The proposed design relocates the existing signed and marked crosswalk by Superstore approximately 75 metres north of its current location. This location has better sightlines and has fewer conflicts with vehicles that may be accessing private driveways. Several enhancements are proposed at the new crossing location, including providing a raised crosswalk, a curb extension, and upgrading the treatment to a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) crossing.

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Cut-through traffic is a concern for the community. Motorists use Watson Street to avoid traffic on McPhillips Street and Leila Avenue.	Traffic volumes are in line with typical collector streets in Winnipeg and are what can be expected given the surrounding mix of commercial, residential and institutional land use. The focus of this study is to install traffic calming measures that will help slow vehicle speeds. Reducing traffic volumes is not an objective of this study.
The volume and speed of traffic on Watson Street contribute to noise levels in the community.	Traffic calming measures, such as those included in the proposed design, slow vehicle speeds and can also reduce road-related noise.
The four-way stop on Kingsbury Avenue is a concern. Motorists try to use the curb lane to speed past other vehicles, endangering pedestrians.	Improvements are proposed for the intersection of Kingsbury Avenue and Watson Street. Curb extensions will narrow the pavement so that only one northbound lane can pass through the intersection. The curb extensions also enhance pedestrian safety by reducing crossing distance and improving visibility.
The sidewalk on Watson Street needs to be repaired and maintained, which is of particular concern for people who use wheelchairs.	Concerns related to sidewalk maintenance have been passed onto the City's Streets Maintenance Division.
Snow clearing on the sidewalk is a concern. When snow hasn't been cleared, people who use wheelchairs have to use the street and share the road with motorists. Snowbanks at the crosswalk are a concern for visibility.	Concerns related to snow clearing have been passed onto the City's Streets Maintenance Division.
Better lighting is needed to improve visibility of pedestrians, particularly at Kingsbury Avenue and at the crosswalk near Superstore.	The crosswalk near Superstore is proposed to be relocated further north and will be directly under a streetlight. A lighting assessment along Watson Street identified improvements are required between Leila Avenue and Kingsbury Avenue. Lighting levels will be increased along this segment to meet current standards.
Watson Street is used by trucks to access area businesses. Truck accommodation needs to be considered when designing traffic calming solutions.	The proposed traffic calming measures will not negatively impact primary truck access to businesses. The design also limits interactions between pedestrians and vulnerable road users by relocating the existing crosswalk further away from Superstore.

Next Steps

What we heard in this survey helped us develop potential solutions for the area, which we are bringing to the community in fall 2022 for Phase 2 engagement. Following Phase 2 we will present a final design for information and implementation in 2023.

Appendices

Appendix A – Postcard notification

Appendix B – On-street signage

Appendix C – Online survey results

Appendix D – Stakeholder meeting notes

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