

**Highway 26 – Collingwood to Thornbury
Speed Limits
Town of The Blue Mountains, County of Grey**

Questions and Answers:

1. Why did the Ministry of Transportation amend the regulatory speed limits on Highway 26?

As a result of increased traffic volumes and pedestrian activities in the area, the speed limit has been reduced to increase safety to both drivers and pedestrians in the area. The change is a result of a speed limit review that has been done over the past year and builds on the temporary speed limit change that was enacted on Highway 26 in 2020 where a portion of the highway in Craigeith area was reduced to 50 km/h. The temporary change was in place from July until after Thanksgiving weekend.

2. What was considered as part of the speed limit review for this section of Highway 26?

The review of the posted speed limits on Highway 26 considered:

- Ministry of Transportation (MTO) data from 48 spot speed studies between August 2008 and October 30, 2020 (32 of the 48 spot speed studies were completed in 2020);
- Speed data collected by The Town of The Blue Mountains at two locations in 2020;
- The Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits was used to assess the speed limit based on the classification, function and physical characteristics of the highway;
- Reported collision experience from 2015 to 2020;
- Comments from the local OPP; and
- Consideration of public concerns/comments received related to speed limits on this corridor.

3. Did the ministry discuss the regulatory speed limit amendments with interested stakeholders including local town and county staff and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)?

Yes, ministry staff met with the staff from the Town of The Blue Mountains, Grey County, Town of Collingwood, County of Simcoe and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) about the speed limit changes that were being considered earlier this spring.

4. What are the amendments to the regulatory speed limits on Highway 26?

From the intersection of Grey Road 21/Long Point Road travelling westerly the changes include:

- 70 km/h from Fraser Crescent East Junction to east of Grey Road 19 (reduced from 80 km/h);
- 60 km/h from east of Grey Road 19 to east of Arrowhead Road (reduced from 80 km/h);

5. Where are the limits of the proposed changes?

The 70 km/h speed zone is from 30 metres east of Fraser Crescent East Junction to 195 metres east of Grey Road 19.

The proposed 60 km/h speed zone through the built-up area of the community of Craigleith will be from 195 metres east of Grey Road 19 to 730 metres east of Arrowhead Road.

6. Why wasn't the 60 km/h speed limit extended to Craigleith Provincial Park?

The ministry evaluated the spot speed study data and analyzed the function and physical characteristics of the highway based on TAC Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits. The section of Highway 26 west of the built-up area of the community of Craigleith has sparse development and limited access points all of which support an 80 km/h posted speed limit. In addition, the provision of a dedicated eastbound left-turn lane and a westbound right-turn lane at the entrance to Craigleith Provincial Park provides dedicated space for motorists to wait and/or turn right into the park. This minimizes queues and allows drivers to maintain a consistent speed on Highway 26.

7. Are there any plans for future speed limit changes along Highway 26?

The ministry is continuously reviewing the provincial highway network to determine when potential speed limit changes may be advisable. There are currently two areas where further review is being considered.

The first location is between Grey Road 21/Long Point Road and Fraser Crescent East Junction. This section of Highway 26 is currently posted at 60 km/h. The posted speed limit will be evaluated as development related improvements and changes are made to this section of highway.

The second location being monitored is between Indian Brook Bridge and Grey Street in Thornbury. This section of Highway 26 is currently posted at 70 km/h. The ministry made a commitment in 2010 to “review the posted speed limit in the future if the Georgian Trail Crossing is relocated and/or the intersection of Grey Road 2 becomes signalized.”

8. How were the new speed limits determined?

The new 60 and 70 km/h speed zones along Highway 26 were determined based the results from the speed studies, TAC Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits and providing a minimum distance of 1 km.

The existing 60 km/h speed zone from Grey Road 21/Long Point Road to Fraser Crescent East Junction measures approximately 1.4 km.

The 70 km/h speed zone from Fraser Crescent East Junction to east of Grey Road 19 measures approximately 1.3 km.

The ministry is monitoring development and changes along Highway 26 from Grey Road 21/Long Point Road to Fraser Crescent East Junction and is committed to reviewing the posted speed limit in the future if the Georgian Trail Crossing is relocated and/or the intersection of Grey Road 2 becomes signalized.

The 60 km/h speed zone from east of Grey Road 19 to east of Arrowhead Road, through the built-up area of the community of Craigeith, measures approximately 1.5 km.

The 80 km/h speed zone from east of Arrowhead Road to Indian Brook Bridge measures approximately 7.5 km.

The 70 km/h speed zone from Indian Brook Bridge to east of Grey Street, Thornbury measures approximately 1.6 km.

9. Will the changes to the posted speed limit impact commuter and delivery times?

The previous travel time from Grey Road 21/Long Point Road to Grey Street in Thornbury was ~10.26 minutes. The travel time with the recent speed limit change is anticipated to be 10.76 minutes, improving driver and pedestrian safety while adding less than one minute to the travel time between Thornbury and Collingwood.

10. When do the speed limit amendments come into effect?

June 21, 2021.

11. How will the ministry let drivers know that there are new speed limits?

There will be “NEW” tabs on top of the “60 km/h Begins” and “70 km/h Begins” signs. The “NEW” tabs will remain in place for 30 days.

12. Is the ministry doing anything about pedestrian traffic crossing Highway 26?

The ministry recently changed the two warning signs for the Georgian Trail Crossing on Highway 26 east of Thornbury. The warning signs were changed from a “hiker” symbol to “pedestrian and cyclist” symbols with a “CROSSING” tab. The symbols were changed to better reflect what a motorist might encounter crossing Highway 26. The ministry has also planned to install a flashing amber beacon on top of “pedestrian and cyclist” warning signs to enhance their visibility.

The ministry will also be completing a study to determine if there is a benefit to installing a pedestrian crossing. The study will be based on the guidelines provided in Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 15 – Pedestrian Crossing Treatments.

The study is planned for this summer.

13. Does the ministry anticipate that there will be more collisions as a result of the new speed limit?

Based on a review of the historical collision rates in the area, staff do not anticipate a change to the number of collisions.

Staff reviewed the collision statistics for the period when the temporary 50 km/h speed limit was in place from Fraser Crescent to west of Wards Road between July 14 and October 13, 2020 and the same time period for 2015 to 2019.

From 2015 to 2019, there were between two and six collisions annually. In 2020, there were three collisions reported.

Ministry staff will continue to monitor speed and traffic operations along Highway 26.

14. Is there a ministry contact person for future enquiries?

Any questions or comments related to the speed limits on Highway 26 can be forwarded to Robert Bakalarczyk, Head, Traffic Engineering West
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