

DATE: June 17, 2024

TO: District of Squamish Engineering Department

SUBJECT: Summary of Community Input (Round 1) - Speed Limit Reduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The District sought feedback from residents of all ages, neighbourhoods and transportation preferences to understand the areas of safety concern related to traffic speeds throughout the District. This was the first input opportunity available to the public for this project. The input provided will be used to help inform the speed reduction options analysis that is part of this project as it will be used as a criteria for informing the preferred approach to speed reduction for Squamish.

1.2 COMMUNITY INPUT #1 – MAPPING EXERCISE

Between March 15th and April 8th, 2024 the District hosted an online mapping exercise on a dedicated *Let's Talk Squamish* project page with the prompt: "Please share your locations of concerns related to traffic speeds." Participants were invited to place a pin on the online map of Squamish and share comments to provide context about why these locations were of safety concern. These "pins" could be selected to indicate which mode the perception of safety concern was attributed to (walking, cycling, or operating a motor vehicle).

During the engagement period, the map received **1,014 comments** from **275 different contributors**. All comments were reviewed and grouped into common themes about road safety in Squamish. In many cases, participant comments contained multiple themes. As an example, comments may mention concerns related to travelled speeds, poor lighting, and lack of sidewalk infrastructure. In cases like this, speed-specific comments were extracted to ensure speed reduction concerns were the focus of this specific evaluation and could therefore be used to help inform a preferred approach to speed reduction. The themes are further outlined below. All input documented through this process is based on individual perceptions of the noted concerns.

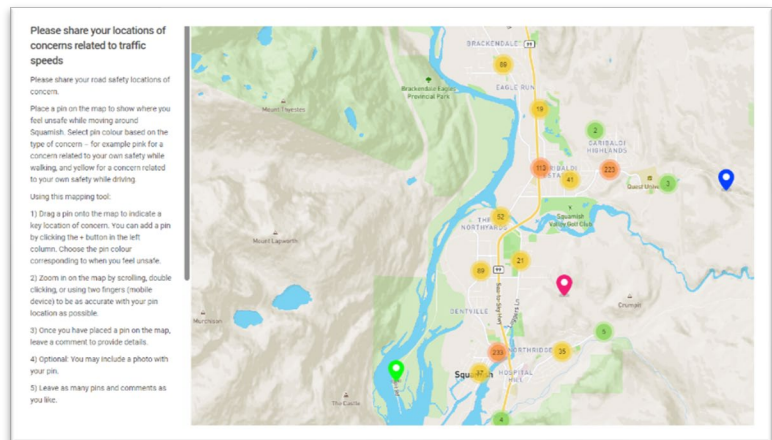


Figure 1: Visual Example of Let's Talk Squamish Mapping Opportunity (results)

The main themes that emerged from the mapping input exercise, along with number of mentions, are listed below.

Table 1. Speed Themes

Theme	# of Mentions	%
Speed (the focus of this study)	461	45%
Infrastructure	353	35%
Road User Visibility	173	17%
Turning Safety	160	16%
Driver Behaviour	159	16%
Other	82	8%

Speed: Any mention of excessive vehicle speeds, vehicles travelling over the posted speed limit, locations where speed limits should be reduced, speeding around corners, any feelings of discomfort and/or proximity to fast moving cars were grouped under this theme.

Infrastructure: Any comments related to lack of infrastructure or identifying gaps in infrastructure such as sidewalks, speedhumps, road design, traffic lights, pedestrian/bike barriers, etc.)

Visibility: Visibility issues between cars and other road users impacting safety (blind corners, parked cars near intersections, hidden driveways, visible crosswalks, rainy/nighttime conditions)

Turning (Intersection) Safety: Comments about unsafe turning at intersections, particularly left turns into moving traffic. Includes illegal turning, risk of 't-bones', turning into crosswalks, or poor light timing.

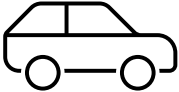
Unsafe Driver Behaviour: Any mention of unsafe driving behaviour (that isn't speeding): cars not stopping at stop signs, distracted driving, not stopping/slowng for pedestrians in crosswalks, cutting corners, U-turns, running red lights, etc.

Other: Any other comments not applicable to the above 5. Traffic noise, traffic issues, anti-speed reduction comments, and non-specific this area is "dangerous/scary/a nightmare" without explaining why.

1.2.1 Speed Related Comments

A sample of representative comments about traffic speeds throughout Squamish are included below.:

Travel Mode	Comments
 People Walking	- Cars drive too fast along this curvy road that is used regularly by young children, families and pedestrians. Speed limit should be reduced and increased signage would be helpful. - This crosswalk is very hard for drivers to see pedestrians. It's also a straight section that drivers go fast in, which is fine but there needs to be better visibility for the pedestrians. - Another road that feels like an artery for excessive speed. There's a daycare right there. 50km/h is much too fast for this area. No sidewalks, poor lighting & lots of children & dogs. 30km/h would be much safer.

Travel Mode	Comments
 People Cycling	- Drivers don't respect the speed limit - Dangerous corner for cycling, drivers go very fast and no protection. - Very unsafe when riding a bike through this area. Speeding cars and cars parking along the street who are not checking to see if there are bikers on the bike path when they pull out. - Blind corner with cars driving quickly
 People Driving	- Dangerous to pull out on the road or walk across the road. Speeding cars a lot of the time. Need caution signs and speed bump. - Few drivers obey the 30km school zone. - Cars are often parked along the side of the road limiting visibility to safely exit the driveway. When cars travel at 50km per hour it does not allow us to exit the driveway safely. A speed limit of 30km/hr as well as speed bumps coming down the upper to mid portion of Skyline would help.

1.2.2 Areas of Safety Concern Related to Speed

Locations of concern were identified throughout the community. The locations are relevant to demonstrate where perceived safety concerns may be most readily addressed with reduced travel speeds.

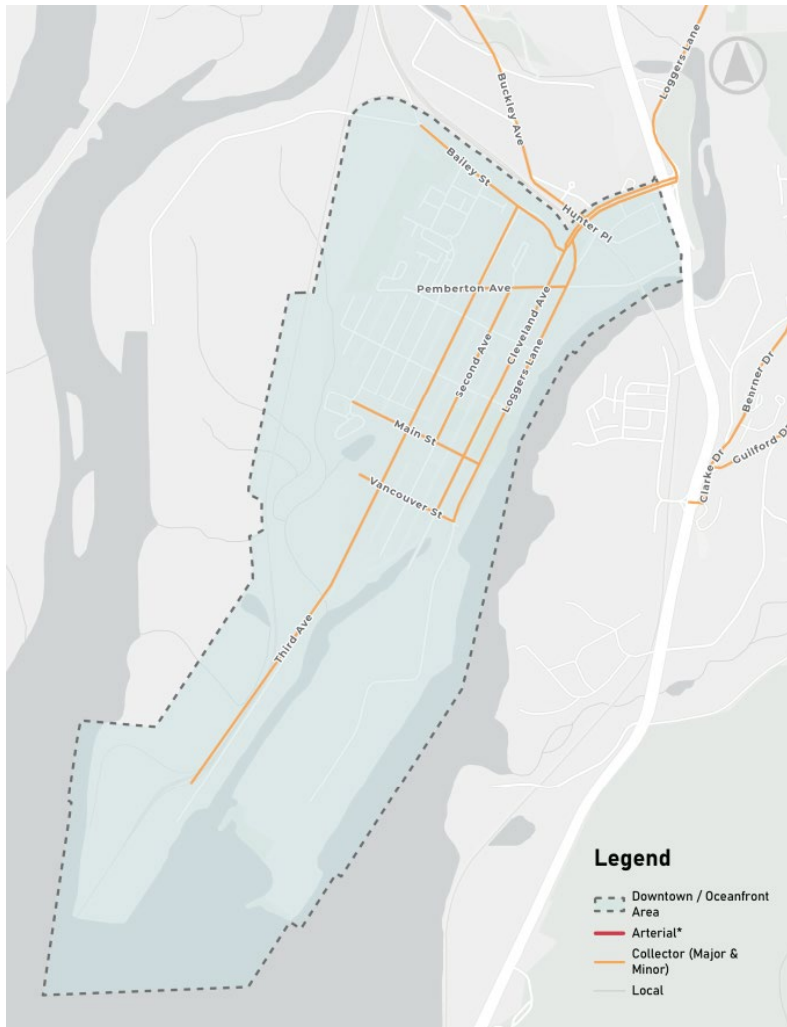
The locations of concern relative to road classifications identified are summarized below in **Table 2** and shown based on densities of concerns in **Figure 3**. The concerns were mostly spread over local and collector classified roads, with 40% more speed concern points found along collector roads.

Table 2. Perceptions of Safety Concerns Related to Speeds

Classification	Number of Mentions	Percent of Overall Comments
Collectors (within 10m / total)	236 / 266	73% / 67%
Locals (within 10m / total)	89 / 106	27% / 27%
Other (total)	23	6%

Highway 99, laneway, >100m from a roadway

Of the locations of concern identified within 10m of local or collector roads, 57% were found to be within residential neighborhoods (based on OCP land use designations) indicating a strong interest in reduced speeds in residential areas.



The Downtown / Oceanfront area was given further consideration because ICBC data identified it as a location with a higher number of reported accidents. 20% of the total locations of concern identified can be found within this area (see **Figure 2**). 19% of the Downtown / Oceanfront comments are along collector roads and just 1% along local roads within this area.

This indicates that while the area may present most reported accidents, it does not represent the largest perceptions of concern for residents. It does however represent an opportunity to improve safety by lowering posted speeds.

Figure 2: Reference Image of Downtown / Oceanfront Area as defined for this project

1.2.1 Locations of Perceived Concerns Related to Travelled Speeds

As outlined above, participants were invited to identify locations of concern related to vehicle travel speeds. Locations were identified and densities of locations have been shown throughout the community with the most locations being identified within Dentville and southern end of the Industrial Park, and other clusters along Depot Road in Brackendale, the Boulevard, Highlands Way North and Perth Drive, along Government Road, and within the Downtown Gateway Area. The density of perceived locations of concern are shown below in **Figure 3**.

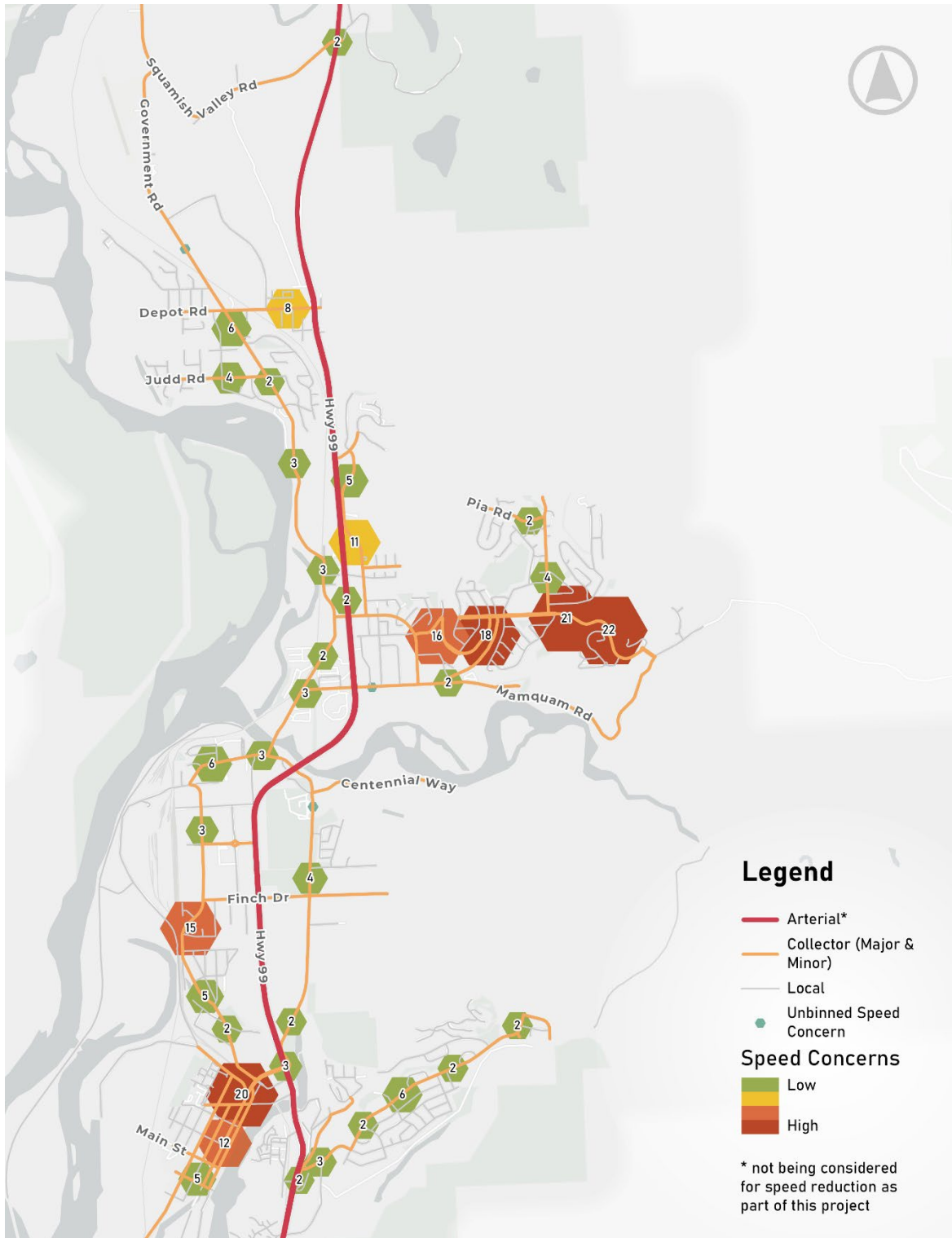


Figure 3: Locations of Identified Concerns along Collectors (Number of Speed Concerns)

1.3 IDEAS FEATURE

In addition to the mapping exercise, Let's Talk Squamish visitors could also ask open-ended questions about speed reduction using the "Ideas" feature (forum). A total of 9 comments were posted using this feature. Comments received were not always directly related to reducing speeds but are worth considering as a whole and may support or provide insights into other traffic-related challenges in the community.

They are shown below exactly as posted online (verbatim), with comments from the posts immediately following.

1. Feel free to calm/quieten/reduce all you like, but there's already plenty of impediment to flow as it is. Speed is being controlled "organically" by congestion. So if your aim is to reduce harmful speeds, then how about plan our roads today for the demands of... next week even. And maybe pay attention to the demon-throttlers at every intersection blasting their harley's, turbo-diesels, and aftermarket exhausts. Why can't we do something real and immediate, that has measurable safety and noise abuse consequences on our roads?
2. Not sure where the best place is for general feedback, but I feel very strongly that reducing speed limits is going to be ineffective, and would much prefer that effort is focused in other areas. I recognize that you plan to implement other solutions as well, but I believe the only result of changing speed limits will be frustration and more conflict between drivers.

So much of the speeding issue in Squamish is due to the common North American issue of wide straight roads designed with drivers in mind and not pedestrians. All roads have a speed range that feels natural to drivers - wide roads with few turns encourage faster speeds, tight and twisty ones induce slower driving. Queens Way between Aspen and Finch is a great example of a road which encourages speeds of over 50km/h. The wide road and lack of any pedestrian infrastructure makes it feel more like a highway than a municipal street. By contrast, roads like Wilson crescent encourage very slow speeds, with narrow lanes and sharp corners.

In the absence of any consistent enforcement, people will continue to drive at a speed that feels natural to them. The RCMP barely has the capacity to be out enforcing the speed limit within current school and playground zones, and those only cover a tiny portion of Squamish's road network. Those also tend to be in areas which already encourage lower speeds, and generally people care enough about to children to slow down for those short sections. I'm no big fan of speed cameras, but the only way speed limits across the rest of Squamish would be followed would be if they were accompanied by a large network of automatic cameras, and I don't think the district or public has any enthusiasm for that. Intermittent enforcement by police will only catch a very small minority of people and won't be enough to cause any real change. I also want to add that I hope the district is carrying out speed studies and not just relying on the perception of residents to influence any potential decisions.

- The only answer is improving roads to induce lower speeds and reduce the chance of collisions. This will involve:
 - Better lighting
 - Raised sidewalks to separate pedestrians from roadways
 - Button activated flashing lights on every crosswalk in Squamish

- Extending the sidewalk into the road at crosswalks to reduce the distance pedestrians have to cross and make them more visible before they enter the road.
- Safety islands in the middle of large junctions

I'm glad to see that the district is working on some of these - please keep your focus on them and don't waste time on speed limits!

3. I'd like to see more enforcement of the existing speed limits on residential streets before any reduction is considered. Regarding school zone, it would be great to have speed signs with flashing lights that are activated when the school zone speed is in effect.
4. Why No Survey?
5. I'm in Valley Cliff so this is particularly poignant here but there is several other spots in Squamish district that do not have sidewalks and pedestrians. If there is no sidewalk the speed limit should be 30 km an hour in residential areas.....
6. While I am weary that this is a very nuanced subject, and that my lone online comment cannot cover all aspects of the subject, I do want to voice my opinion on the matter and identify some questions that come to mind.
 - I am genuinely interested to see more information about the current situation in Squamish relating to road safety, specifically relating to vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. How many incidents are occurring? Where and When are they occurring? How severe or significant are these incidents? Basically, how big is this problem for our town in reality?
 - The data in the map being provided in this project is somewhat useful, but only really shows reactions and opinions from people who have a negative opinion on an area. Asking for people to share their 'complaints' should be a data collection point, rather than pushing a cause to lower the speed limit. I hope this data is treated fairly in this process.
 - The Banner/Header, and Project outline for this Project states the safety difference between 30kph and 50kph, is already leading readers into adopting a significantly lower speed limit, despite vehicle safety standards improving continuously.
 - The reality is still that the vast majority of our population use Vehicles for their transportation, Cars and trucks primarily, and this will remain the same for years to come. Distances, Elevation and the Weather all make it challenging to use bikes or public transport as a viable option (let alone walking) for most people, let alone the need to transport children, families or belongings - the very reason we need to be travelling.
 - I hope that this Project maintains sight on what the majority of the population use for transportation, and that an extreme or unfair focus on 'safety' does not unfairly disadvantage the heaviest users of our transportation network (cars and trucks). I do

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find it odd that there is no mention in the Project outline of improving or even maintaining the experience and safety for vehicles, but perhaps that is a focus of the District in another Project?

- Personally, I believe that Driver Attention is a more significant factor than Driver Speed. If a driver is paying attention, then their speed adjusts to the conditions and different scenarios as they approach. If they see a narrowing road, or pedestrians, then their speed should be decreasing to a safe level, no matter what the speed limit says.
- What I have experienced elsewhere is also that if speed limits are reduced too far, drivers do struggle to maintain attention while driving, on top of being conditioned that driving slower is safer. By driving below practical speeds, drivers will lose attention, will get bored, and will get distracted, all while being told that they're actually being safe because they're travelling slowly. This will lead to more accidents, albeit at lower speeds.
- The ideal is for drivers to stay attentive, while also courteous. If all drivers pay attention to the the world around them, noticing the conditions and hazards as they approach, while also being courteous to other drivers, pedestrians and cyclists, then there shouldn't be any issues for them on their journey.
- That being said, I am sure there are intersections and road/pathways that do need to be reviewed and upgraded from time to time. I would hope that the District of Squamish has budget allocated to this each year as part of road management anyway, and that this whole Project or exercise is simply an enquiry to the community on where they feel those existing funds are best spent.

So for the good of the community, let's find out more about how big this issue is - let's see some data on how many accidents are happening. That will help inform the populous of how big an issue it actually is, and how much budget should be allocated for solutions. Let's Not jump to "slower is always better/safer", because often it can lead to more accidents through less attentive drivers.

7. Love the school zone, mid road markers. Was driving in a town that doesn't have them recently and it made me realize how valuable they are to slow down folks in school zones.
8. Use photo radar both randomly throughout Squamish as well as concentrated at school zones and enforce the established speed limits
9. Establish a 30 km/hour speed limit throughout Squamish residential areas and enforce it.
10. I do not believe any changes are Required to reduce speed School zones and playgrounds should be enough Elec bikes ect are more of an issue

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1.4 NEXT STEPS

The project team has received this information from the early engagement opportunity and will apply it to the evaluation criteria to inform the technical component of this project. Upon completing the evaluation and including this criteria, options will be brought forth for the community to indicate their level of support for speed reduction changes within the community. This effort will be undertaken in early summer 2024 with the input informing the final recommendations to be brought forward to Council in Fall, 2024.

All engagement materials will be shared on the District's dedicated project page, and staff will engage during select community events such as Farmers Markets and other public events this summer. All engagement opportunities will be promoted through the District's various communication tools and on the project's dedicated Let's Talk project page.