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STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

VALUE-FOR-MONEY AUDIT: HIGHWAY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

(2022 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF
ONTARIO)

1st Session, 43rd Parliament
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The Honourable Ted Arnott, MPP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Sir,

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts has the honour to present its Report and commends it to the House.

Tom Rakocevic, MPP
Chair of the Committee

Queen's Park
October 2024

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INTRODUCTION

On March 27, 2023, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts held public hearings on the value-for-money audit of Highway Planning and Management (*2022 Annual Report* of the Auditor General of Ontario), overseen by the Ministry of Transportation (Ministry).

The Committee thanks the Auditor for the audit. In this report, the Committee presents its own findings, views, and recommendations. The Committee requests that the Ministry provide the Clerk of the Committee with written responses to the recommendations within 120 calendar days of the tabling of this report with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, unless otherwise specified.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Ministry of Transportation. The Committee also acknowledges the assistance provided by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee, and Legislative Research.

BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Transportation (Ministry) manages Ontario's network of over 40,000 kilometers of highway lanes covering a distance of almost 17,000 kilometers. Under the *Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act*, the Ministry has the authority to construct, and the responsibility to maintain and repair the province's highways. The Ministry publishes the Ontario Highway Program document on an annual basis, with the document outlining all funded expansion projects and planned rehabilitation projects in the next four years in each of Ontario's five regions (Central, East, Northeast, Northwest, and West).

Highway Expansion Projects

The Ministry uses two travel demand forecasting models to conduct a needs assessment on each potential highway expansion project. To prioritize projects identified through the needs assessment, the Ministry developed the Expansion Prioritization Framework (EPF), used by the Ministry's technical and engineering staff to score projects based on nine criteria. The Ministry also considers several subjective qualitative factors to which it does not assign a score, and, after considering all factors, prepares a Short List of recommended projects for Treasury Board/Management Board of Cabinet (Board) approval.

Highway Rehabilitation Projects

The Ministry aims to rehabilitate a third of the province's highway network every five years and uses a needs assessment and prioritization process that is unique to rehabilitation projects. The Ministry performs an annual assessment of highway conditions using automatic road analyzers (ARANs). ARANs are installed on three vehicles driven by Ministry staff that analyze road texture, categorize defects, and identify excessive wear to determine overall road conditions on a given highway section. ARAN scan results are uploaded to the

Ministry's Asset Management System (AMS), which uses them to generate its recommended rehabilitation plan. The Ministry's five regional offices are also required to perform manual pavement inspections for the entire highway network at least once every two years.

Each year, the Ministry uses AMS to generate system-driven rehabilitation plans for each region. Following a technical and engineering staff review and refinement of the plans in each regional office, the plans are sent back to the Ministry to be included in the overall Ministry Rehabilitation Plan.

Tolls

The Ontario government began charging tolls on three highways in 2017, with the tolls put in place to help cover the costs of highway expansion. Toll revenues from provincially owned highways (407 East, 412, and 418) are provided to the provincial treasury to be used for government priorities. Currently, tolls are no longer charged on Highways 412 and 418.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

According to the Auditor General, the objective of the audit was to assess "whether the Ministry of Transportation has effective processes and systems in place to:

- plan and prioritize highway projects based on provincial infrastructure needs;
- maintain, repair, and renew existing provincial highway assets in accordance with sound asset management principles; and
- measure and publicly report on the performance of highway planning and management."

The audit was conducted between January and September of 2022.

ISSUES RAISED IN THE AUDIT AND BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

Transportation Planning and Operations

The Committee was interested in the status of the Ministry's transportation plans. The Ministry shared that, as of March 2023, the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) plan has been finalized, there were three plans in draft form (for the southwestern, northern, and eastern regions), and another, Ontario-wide plan that the Province has committed to producing. The Ministry added that the plans are iterative and are constantly updated with the latest demographic projections. When asked about the timelines and costs associated with the plans, the Ministry said that only formative, preliminary work had been done. The Ministry is currently starting more detailed work on the implementation of the finalized Greater Golden Horseshoe plan, including the timelines and costing. The Ministry clarified that the long-term costing only includes categories such as roads, bridges and highway lanes, and not auxiliary elements like weigh station facilities, which have a separate budget.

The Committee was also interested in the ways the Ministry adjusts and updates its transportation demand models when new information becomes available. The Ministry explained that transportation demand management relies on significant internal expertise on the subject, with both models used by the Ministry requiring substantial inputs. The models incorporate data from the Transportation Tomorrow Survey (a survey on urban travel in southern Ontario), as well as the Statistics Canada census, among other sources.

The topic of automatic and manual pavement inspections was also discussed. In the audit report. The Auditor noted that “[t]he Ministry continues to perform manual road assessments that are less efficient and that duplicate assessments completed using its automatic road analyzers.” The Committee heard that manual pavement assessments are performed to supplement the data collected by the ARANs and are useful in establishing and addressing root causes of pavement failure. When asked whether the same inspectors could visually inspect the road condition while driving the vehicles equipped with the ARAN sensors, the Ministry said that would be unsafe, as the ARAN-equipped vehicles are driven on a highway at high speeds.

Committee members were also interested in the reasons behind the delivery of expansion projects on highways 3 and 17 through a Public Private Partnership (P3) model, as opposed to the traditional delivery model. The Ministry explained that it works closely with Infrastructure Ontario to determine the best delivery option for a given project. Projects with a cost of over \$100 million are considered for P3 delivery. When the expansion projects on highways 3 and 17 went through the initial delivery option analysis, it appeared that the best delivery option for those projects was a Design-Build-Finance (DBF) P3 model.

Committee Recommendations

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

1. The Ministry of Transportation consider redefining the Province’s regional boundaries, including sub-dividing the “central” region into smaller geographical areas, and designating the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area as a separate region.
2. The Ministry of Transportation ensure that manual pavement assessments are used to support or confirm, as needed, and not to duplicate the assessment work done using ARAN-equipped vehicles.

Expansion Project Prioritization and Highway Safety

The Committee was interested in several topics related to highway planning and safety features. The topic of highway expansion project prioritization was mentioned, and the Committee heard that the Ministry’s Expansion Prioritization Framework (EPF) includes nine criteria, including those related to economic growth and development, such as the impact on the movement of goods, congestion impacts, and connection to other transportation modes.

The topic of road safety in winter conditions was also discussed, with Committee members asking the Ministry about intersections and pavement markings on roads subject to frequent whiteout conditions. The Ministry said that it monitors

real-time road weather conditions through a publicly-accessible online camera system, which informs both commuters and maintenance crews. As for intersections and interchanges, the Ministry said that it continuously monitors the operation of the intersections, and makes repairs and upgrades as needed. Regarding the reasons behind using white paint to mark highway lanes, the Ministry said that white lane markings are typically used on four-lane highways where all traffic travels in the same direction, with other marking colours including yellow and pink (currently in a pilot stage). The Committee heard that lane markings contain paint with embedded reflective beads that get degraded as the road is salted and cleared of ice and snow. The Ministry is involved in continuous research and testing of lane marking improvements, and is looking at initiatives like recessed lane markings and the use of different types of materials for the markings. The Ministry is aware of the need to align the lane markings with sensor-based automated car technology.

When asked why inspectors are not present at certain times at truck inspection stations, the Ministry said that transportation enforcement officers who perform the inspections have other duties and occupy truck inspection stations based on traffic volumes.

Highway Expansion Project Updates

Committee members were interested in issues related to specific highway projects, namely the commute time impact of the proposed highway 413, and progress on the highway 6 and 69 expansion projects.

The Ministry said that a study found that there would be a 30-minute commute time saving as a result of building the proposed highway 413, and clarified that a 2017 report comment about the project saving only 30 seconds of commute time was made in the context of the average commute time saved across the wider Golden Horseshoe area, including trips not using the new proposed highway. As for the widening of highway 6 around the Hamilton airport, the Committee heard that the project is part of the Ministry's GGH transportation plan, and is being prioritized. The Ministry said that, with regard to the widening of highway 69 in Northern Ontario, the most important aspect of continuing the expansion is securing the lands needed for the project. The Ministry added that 84 kilometers of the highway had already been widened.

Northern Ontario Highways

Some of the Committee members' questions focused on Northern Ontario. Specifically, members raised concerns around the safety of Northern Ontario roads, the lack of parking facilities for trucks along the highways, and the feasibility of electric vehicle adoption in the northern part of the province.

The Committee heard that the Province is investing in a two-plus-one highway option (a three-lane highway with a centre lane that changes direction approximately every two to five kilometers) on Highway 11 in Northern Ontario to address some of the safety concerns. The Ministry also mentioned that it shortened the timeframe for snow removal on Highway 11 from 16 hours down to 12 hours.

With regard to parking infrastructure for trucks along Northern Ontario highways, the Ministry said that it has a five-year plan to improve the rest area network by building 10 new sites and rehabilitating 14 others. The Committee also heard that eight rest areas recently underwent major rehabilitation.

Questions were also raised about the inconsistent quality of the winter road maintenance services on highway 144, with some sections maintained better than others. The Committee heard that the Ministry looks at a number of key performance indicators in each maintenance contract, with financial penalties imposed in some cases when contractors do not perform according to the contract standards.

Committee members were concerned about the prospect of electric vehicle adoption in Northern Ontario given the apparent lack of charging infrastructure. The Ministry said that both government and the private sector play a role in expanding charging infrastructure. The Ministry is also looking at different technologies (electric, hydrogen, increased battery capacity) to find the appropriate solutions to the circumstances present in the north, namely longer commutes and colder weather.

Another topic of discussion was the Northern Task Force, a body made up of local community leaders, and tasked with identifying transportation needs and opportunities in Northern Ontario. The Committee was told that the taskforce is broadly represented and is expected to deliver its next report in May 2023. In response to questions about the taskforce's input into a long-term plan, the Ministry said the taskforce's recommendations, when published, will feed into the Province's Northern Ontario Transportation Plan.

Committee Recommendations

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

3. The Ministry of Transportation consider leveraging other entities, such as public utility companies and independent agencies, in expanding the electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Ontario.
4. The Ministry of Transportation take into consideration recurring instances of provincial highway closures when prioritizing highway expansion and rehabilitation projects.
5. The Ministry of Transportation consider the complaints against winter road maintenance operators when renewing the operators' contracts.
6. The Ministry of Transportation utilize the combined data of the distance between rest stops, availability and quality of cellular coverage, and the conditions of roadside shoulder (including thickness of the line, length and depth of the shoulder, and whether or not it is paved) on Highways 11 and 17 in order to identify locations which could cause the highest likelihood of incidents, and provide a plan on addressing the concerns.

Tolls

Another topic of discussion was the province's tolling strategy. The audit report noted that "Highways 412 and 418 cost \$1.3 billion to construct and toll operations were estimated to recover about \$850 million of those costs within 30 years." However, at the time the Ministry proposed removing the tolls, only 5% of the \$850 million had been recovered. When asked how the missing revenue is expected to be accounted for, the Ministry said that decisions related to revenue are taken by the Ministry of Finance.

The Committee also heard that, while Highway 407 is owned and operated by a private consortium, the Ministry of Transportation oversees the operation, collects usage data, and analyzes the congestion impact on adjacent highways.

Transportation Trends and Pilot Project Updates

The Committee was interested in recent traffic trends in the province, the condition of provincial highways compared to municipal roads, and asked for updates on a few pilot projects.

The Ministry told the Committee that transit usage is still below its pre-pandemic levels, both provincially and municipally. The main reason behind the trend seems to be related to changes in commuter behaviour during the pandemic. The Ministry shared that, anecdotally, some individuals who come into their offices for only a portion of the week are now opting to drive instead of taking public transit.

The Ministry was asked about the seemingly superior condition of provincial highways compared to municipal roads, and the prevalence of potholes on the latter. The Committee heard that Ontario has been recognized as having the third-best highway infrastructure in Canada as a result of significant investment. The Ministry added that potholes in municipalities can be caused many ways, including by freeze-thaw cycles while there is water on the road.

Committee members were also interested in an update on the speed limit increase pilots on highways. The Ministry said that pilots are currently being evaluated, with results to be made public once available.

Committee Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

7. The Ministry of Transportation make the raised speed limit pilot results public, and share them with the Committee.

Accountability and Transparency

Committee members were interested in the implementation status of the recommendations made by the Auditor in the 2022 Value-for-Money audit. The Ministry referred the Committee to the Ministry's recommendation status update document, which states that the Ministry has conducted some work on addressing four of the 12 recommendations made in the audit report. The work done to date was in the areas of transportation planning, consultant performance appraisals, contract management, and tolling strategy. The Ministry reassured the Committee that more recommendations will be addressed in the short- and medium-term.

The Committee also inquired about the steps the Ministry would take in case of a misalignment of direction provided by the Minister and internal subject-matter experts. The Committee heard that the Ministry is going to build out the planning process to provide more transparency on how project prioritization decisions are made. The Ministry further explained that some projects are delayed purposely to better align with budgetary considerations, stakeholder consultation needs, and timelines of adjacent municipal construction projects.

Committee Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

8. The Ministry of Transportation continue its work on providing more transparency in project prioritization decision-making.

CONSOLIDATED LIST OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that:

1. The Ministry of Transportation consider redefining the Province's regional boundaries, including sub-dividing the "central" region into smaller geographical areas, and designating the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area as a separate region.
2. The Ministry of Transportation ensure that manual pavement assessments are used to support or confirm, as needed, and not to duplicate the assessment work done using ARAN-equipped vehicles.
3. The Ministry of Transportation consider leveraging other entities, such as public utility companies and independent agencies, in expanding the electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Ontario.
4. The Ministry of Transportation take into consideration recurring instances of provincial highway closures when prioritizing highway expansion and rehabilitation projects.
5. The Ministry of Transportation consider the complaints against winter road maintenance operators when renewing the operators' contracts.
6. The Ministry of Transportation utilize the combined data of the distance between rest stops, availability and quality of cell coverage, and the conditions of roadside shoulder (including thickness of the line, length and depth of the shoulder, and whether or not it is paved) on Highways 11 and 17 in order to identify locations which could cause the highest likelihood of incidents, and provide a plan on addressing the concerns.
7. The Ministry of Transportation make the raised speed limit pilot results public, and share them with the Committee.
8. The Ministry of Transportation continue its work on providing more transparency in project prioritization decision-making.

**APPENDIX A – RAISED SPEED LIMIT TRAFFIC MONITORING
SUMMARY**



Raised Speed Limit Pilot Traffic Monitoring Summary

Traffic Office
Highway Operations Management Branch
Operations Division
Ontario Ministry of Transportation
December 2023

Introduction

In 2022, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts held a public hearing on the audit of Highway Planning and Management (Value-for-Money Audit, *2022 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario*).

During the hearing, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) advised that results from the speed limit increase pilot on Ontario highways were available to assist the Committee with its report-writing deliberations. The Committee subsequently requested that MTO provide the Clerk of the Committee with a written response.

The following are results from the speed limit increase pilot monitoring on Ontario highways. This document covers the time period of September 26, 2019, until September 25, 2021, with latest available collision, traffic volume and speed data as of December 31, 2021.

General Disclaimers

Data collected during this pilot, while considered accurate at the time of reporting, is subject to change.

Several variables can influence driver behaviour (e.g., driver's experience, traffic volumes, enforcement activities, weather and road conditions, vehicle safety technology, fuel costs etc.). The period between March 2020 and December 2021 was unprecedented, as COVID-19 related restrictions had major impacts on traffic volumes and driver behaviour on the provincial highway network. Data collected during this period may not reflect "normal" traffic operations.

Additionally, collision information is routinely updated as information is received, which may result in variances between datasets extracted at different times. Collision information is accurate at the time of reporting. Long-term trends (over several years) are generally more stable and reliable, while short-term trends (over several months) or data for short sections (less than a few kilometres) can be volatile and may have low reliability.

Traffic volume, composition, and speed information are measured quantities. These are generally discrete measurements and are usually not gathered continuously; therefore, representative estimates are typically developed using engineering judgement and standardized processes.

Background

On May 1, 2019, the Minister of Transportation stated that the province would be reviewing speed limits by launching a pilot and initiating consultations.

The ministry reviews Ontario's speed limits periodically to make sure they are appropriate, taking into account factors such as road design, traffic volumes, average operating speeds, and collision trends.

The objectives of the proposal were to align Ontario with other provinces that have increased speed limits over 100 km/h on selected roads that were engineered and constructed to safely support higher posted speed limits.

Average operating speeds on 400-series highways range from 96 to 114 km/h and 85th percentile speeds range from 110 to 124 km/h. (based on data available June 2019). 85th percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85 percent of the drivers travel on a road segment and is an indicator of the current operating speed of the road segment at the time of measurement.

Monitoring

The pilot raised posted speed limits from 100 km/h to 110 km/h on select sections of 400-series highways.

Three pilot locations were chosen based on their designed capability to safely accommodate increased speed limits:

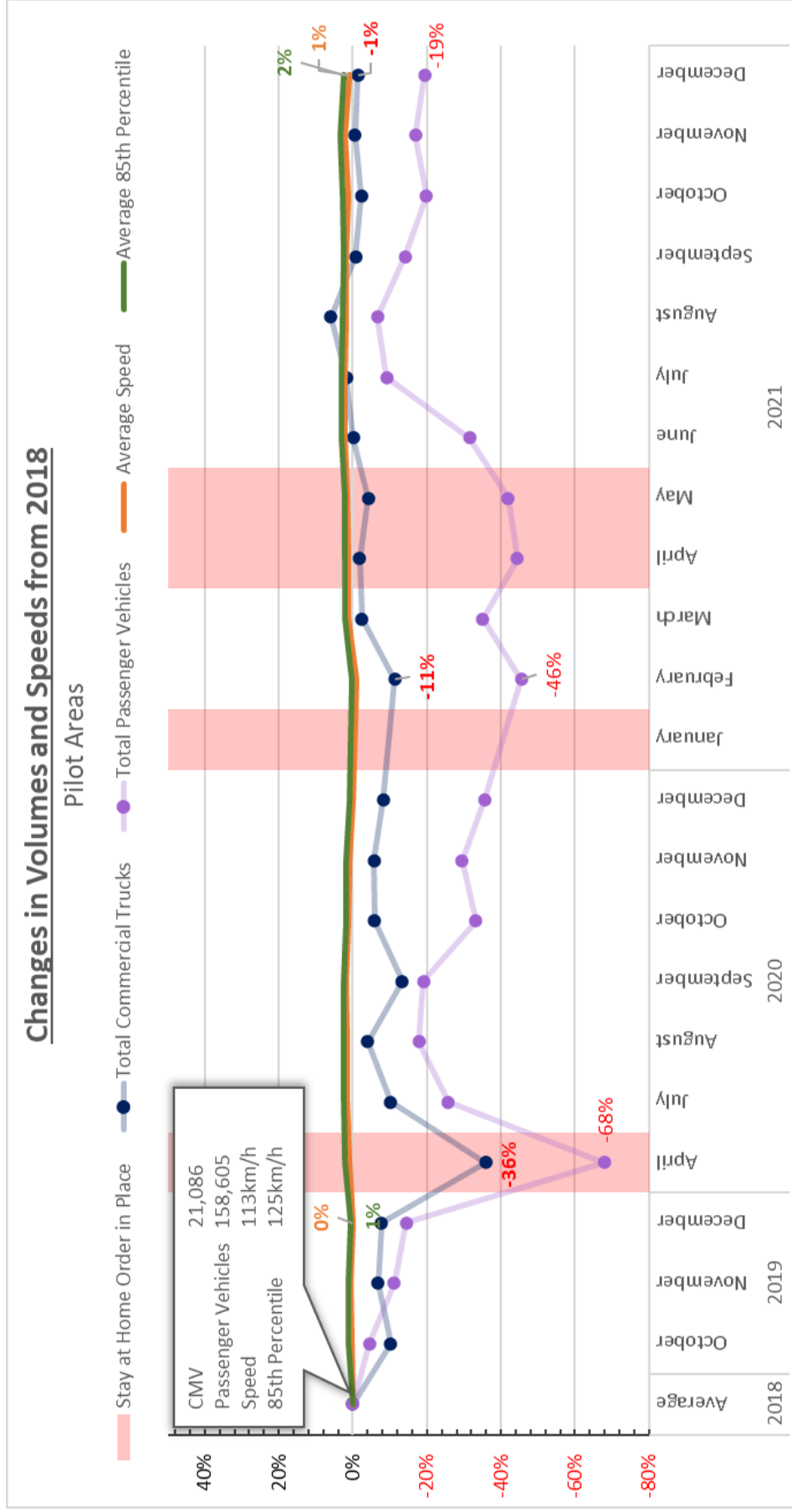
1. The Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) from 2 kilometres east of Jordan Road in Lincoln / St. Catharines to 300 metres east of Millen Road in Hamilton (32 km)
2. Highway 402 from 200 metres west of White Oak Road in London to 2.5 kilometres east of Airport Road in Sarnia (90 km)
3. Highway 417 from 1 kilometre east of Anderson Road in Ottawa/Gloucester to 1 kilometre west of the Ontario / Quebec boundary (102 km)



Over the course of the pilot, and beyond, MTO has been monitoring changes in average speed, traffic volumes, and other factors such as collision trends. These factors are being monitored in the pilot areas and other locations being used as control locations. Control locations have similar characteristics as the pilot locations, but speed limits were not raised in these areas.

This document covers the time period of September 26, 2019, until September 25, 2021, with latest available traffic volume and speed data as of December 31, 2021.

Findings from the two-year monitoring period are summarized below:



Traffic Volumes and Speeds:

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March/April 2020, significantly impacted traffic volumes on Ontario's provincial highways.

- September 2019 to March 2020 (pre-pandemic):
 - The average speeds of the three locations collectively remained the same. The 85th percentile speeds initially increased by 2 km/h to 127 km/h, but subsequently decreased by 1 km/h to 126 km/h.
 - A slight decrease in traffic volumes was observed. It is difficult to determine if the slight increase in speeds is attributed to the speed limit increase or the lower traffic volumes, as lower traffic volumes are also conducive to higher operating speeds.
- April 2020:
 - There was a substantial decrease in traffic volumes in April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic first wave restrictions.
 - Speeds did not change by a significant amount and were roughly in line with pre-speed limit pilot levels. The average speeds of the three locations collectively increased by 1 km/h to 114 km/h, and 85th percentile speeds increased by 2 km/h to 128 km/h.
- May 2020 to April 2021:
 - After the first wave related restrictions were relaxed, traffic volumes appeared to be returning to pre-pandemic levels, but restrictions during the second and third waves of the pandemic resulted in further fluctuations in traffic volumes, and traffic volumes did not return to pre-pandemic levels during this time period, except for commercial truck volumes at the Highway 417 location.

- April 2021 to June 2021:
 - Another round of restrictions related to COVID-19 were implemented. These however resulted in differing trends for passenger vehicles and commercial trucks. Passenger vehicle volumes generally decreased once again, while commercial truck volumes generally continued to increase towards pre-pandemic levels.
- June 2021 to December 2021:
 - Traffic volumes once again saw subsequent fluctuations, generally reaching maximums in August 2021 around pre-pandemic levels.
 - As of December 2021, traffic volumes were again generally lower than pre-pandemic levels, with the difference being more substantial for passenger vehicles.
- Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to September 2021, speed trends at all pilot locations have varied, fluctuating between small increases and small decreases between 1 km/h to 3 km/h. In all cases, speeds have not changed by a significant amount.

Collisions:

- The safety performance (total number of collisions) of all pilot locations was observed to improve with the exception of the QEW location which saw a minor increase in collisions during the first six months of the pilot.
- The safety performance (total number of collisions) of the control locations combined and of all Ontario freeways combined improved except during the first six months of the pilot, when it worsened. This disparity may be due to the Year-1 winter season being more severe than previous years.
- The safety performance (total number of collisions) of all pilot locations, control locations combined, and all Ontario freeways combined improved during the second year of the pilot as compared to the first year.
- The winter season during Year-2 was observed to be less severe than the winter season during the first year.

The pilot sections generally performed as expected with no notable safety issues identified.

Synopsis Summary - Percentage Changes from Four-Year Average															
Time Period	All Pilot Locations				All Control Locations				All Ontario Freeways						
	Total Collisions	Fatal	Non-Fatal Injury	PDO	Other	Total Collisions	Fatal	Non-Fatal Injury	PDO	Other	Total Collisions	Fatal	Non-Fatal Injury	PDO	Other
1st Year – Full Year	-28.5	-46.7	-48.5	-24.5	-100	-15.7	+88.2	-41.1	-11.1	-100	-19.3	-3.0	-32.3	-17.0	-80.0
2nd Year – Full Year	-41.0	-100	-58.8	-37.2	-100	-28.0	+135.3	-42.3	-25.7	-100	-29.9	-1.0	-47.4	-26.8	-70.0

It should be noted that winter weather and COVID traffic impacts vary throughout the province and may have affected the collision trends in any or all locations. Further to the trends above, it is highlighted that highway collisions are random by nature and can fluctuate from year-to-year based on a variety of factors, referred to as “regression to the mean”.

The monitoring data for the pilot period from September 2019 to September 2021 has not identified any notable operational or safety issues related to the raised speed limit sections. Considering the variables involved and the impact of COVID-19 related restrictions on traffic volumes, the ministry continues to gather additional relevant data and monitor the operational and safety performance of all raised speed limit sections.

**APPENDIX B – RESPONSE FROM THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION
ON THE RAISED SPEED LIMIT PILOT TRAFFIC MONITORING SUMMARY**

March 15, 2024

Tom Rakocevic
Chair of the Committee
Standing Committee on Public Accounts
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A2

Dear Mr. Rakocevic:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts following their review of the *Raised Speed Limit Pilot Traffic Monitoring Summary*. The ministry is pleased to provide the following in response to your questions:

1. When are the pilot results expected to be made public?

- The report is technical in nature and is not planned to be published.
 - Upon request, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has previously provided a summary of the pilot (refer to Attachment 1).
- In 2022, the province implemented the Speed Limit Initiative that leveraged the work of the pilot, to raise speed limits to 110 km/h, permanently on selected provincial freeway sections in southern Ontario and on trial basis at two sections in Northern Ontario.
 - MTO continues to monitor all sections where the speed limit has been raised to 110 km/h, both permanently and on trial basis.
 - For future requests, MTO plans to provide information based on the most current dataset available at that time.

2. Regarding the table on page 7,

a. what was the methodology used to calculate the figures?

- The four-year before pilot average (either full year or approximately six months, as the case may be) was compared with the number of collisions occurring after the pilot implementation by the four time periods (about six months, one year, etc.). The number/percentage represents the change (increase or decrease) in the number of collisions occurring during the pilot time periods at the pilot locations, control locations, and all freeway locations. All freeway locations also include the pilot and control sections.

b. what is the “four-year average” reference period?

- It is the four years before the pilot commenced (September 26, 2015 to September 25, 2019). This period enabled the comparison of collision and volume statistics during the pilot for the time period before COVID-19 travel restrictions were implemented (September 26, 2019 to March 15, 2020) and subsequently when traffic volumes returned to normal in late-summer 2021.

c. what are the actual underlying values behind the percentage changes (i.e., the actual number of accidents in each category)?

- Please refer to Attachment 1.

3. Given the significantly lower traffic volumes during the majority of the pilot due to the COVID-19 pandemic, how does the Ministry see the usefulness of the pilot results? Is another similar pilot project planned in the future?

- MTO has collected and analysed data that reflects normal traffic operations during the initial 6-months of the pilot and from late-summer 2021 onwards as part of the pilot monitoring and subsequently as part of the Speed Limit Initiative monitoring.
 - This data combined with comparative data from the control sections and all freeway locations has allowed MTO to assess that the 110 km/h sections were operating satisfactorily.
- In order to assess the new Northern Ontario sections where the speed limit was raised to 110 km/h, MTO implemented a two-year Northern Ontario trial until Spring 2024. Thus far, the operational performance of these sections has been satisfactory.
- Based on the data collected and analysed since 2019, MTO has assessed that additional pilot projects may not be necessary.
- MTO will continue to monitor the operational performance of all provincial highway sections where the speed limit is raised to 110 km/h zones.

Please advise if the Committee has any other questions.

Sincerely,



Doug Jones
Deputy Minister of Transportation

Attachments

Cc: Jasan Boparai, Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations Division
Sheri Graham, Director, Highway Operations Management Branch

Attachments

1. Four Year Reference Period

Shown below is a summary of the number of collisions and percentage changes in collision frequencies for the first and second years of the pilot when compared to the four-year averages leading up to the commencement of the pilot. This is shown for the pilot locations combined, the control locations combined, and for all Ontario freeways combined.

Avg= is the four-year average number of collisions for the time period, Act= is the number of actual collisions for the time period, and Dif= is the number of collisions under or above the four-year average.

Synopsis Summary – Collision Differences and Percentage Changes from Four-Year Average (Sept 26, 2015 to Sept 25, 2019)															
Time Period	All Pilot Locations					All Control Locations					All Ontario Freeways				
	Total Collisions	Fatal	Non-Fatal Injury	PDO	Other	Total Collisions	Fatal	Non-Fatal Injury	PDO	Other	Total Collisions	Fatal	Non-Fatal Injury	PDO	Other
1st Year – 1st 6 Months	Avg=4 53.5 Act=41 3 Dif=- 40.5 -8.9%	Avg=1.8 Act=2 Dif=+ 0.3 +14.3%	Avg=6 4.5 Act=42 9 Dif=- 22.5 -	Avg=3 86.8 Act=36 9 Dif=- 17.8 -4.6%	Avg=0.5 Act=0 Dif=- 0.5 100%	Avg=8 16 Act=82 2 Dif=+6 .0 +0.7%	Avg=1.8 Act=3 Dif=+1 .3 +71.4%	Avg=1 21 Act=95 26 Dif=- -	Avg=6 93.3 Act=72 4 Dif=+3 0.8 +4.4%	N/A	Avg=135 18.5 Act=1435 9 Dif=+840.5 +6.2%	Avg=1 9.5 Act=27 7 Dif=+7 .5 +38.5%	Avg=20 07.3 Act=179 7 Dif=- 210.3 -10.5%	Avg=114 88 Act=1253 4 Dif=+104 6 +9.1%	Avg=3.8 Act=1 Dif=- 2.8 -73.3%
1st Year – Full Year	Avg=8 59 Act=61 4 Dif=- 245 -	Avg=3.8 Act=2 Dif=- 1.8 -	Avg=1 36 Act=70 2 Dif=- 66 -	Avg=7 18.3 Act=54 2 Dif=- 176.3 -	Avg=1 Act=0 Dif=- 1 -	Avg=1 503.5 Act=12 68 Dif=- 235.5 -	Avg=4.3 Act=8 Dif=+3 .8 +88.2%	Avg=2 41 Act=14 2 Dif=- 99 -	Avg=1 257.3 Act=11 18 Dif=- 139.3 -	Avg=1 Act=0 Dif=- -1 -	Avg=276 31.5 Act=2229 7 Dif=- 5334.5 -19.3%	Avg=4 9.5 Act=48 1.5 Dif=- -3.0%	Avg=42 23.3 Act=286 0 Dif=- 1363.3 -32.3%	Avg=233 48.8 Act=1938 7 Dif=- 3961.8 -17.0%	Avg=1 Act=2 Dif=-8 -80.0%
2nd Year – 1st 6 Months	Avg=4 53.5 Act=28 1 Dif=- 172.5 -	Avg=1.8 Act=0 Dif=- 1.8 -	Avg=6 4.5 Act=32 9 Dif=- 32.5 -	Avg=3 86.8 Act=24 9 Dif=- 137.8 -	Avg=0.5 Act=0 Dif=- 0.5 100%	Avg=8 16 Act=60 3 Dif=- 213 -	Avg=1.8 Act=1 Dif=- 0.8 -	Avg=1 21 Act=72 49 Dif=- -	Avg=6 93.3 Act=53 0 Dif=- 163.3 -23.5%	N/A	Avg=135 18.5 Act=8744 4 Dif=- 4767.5 -35.3%	Avg=1 9.5 Act=23 7 Dif=+3 .5 +17.9%	Avg=20 07.3 Act=989 9 Dif=- 1018.3 -50.7%	Avg=114 88 Act=7737 2 Dif=-3751 -32.7%	Avg=3.8 Act=2 Dif=-1.8 -46.7%
2nd Year – Full Year	Avg=8 59 Act=50 7 Dif=- 352 -	Avg=3.8 Act=0 Dif=- 3.8 -	Avg=1 36 Act=56 1 Dif=- 80 -	Avg=7 18.3 Act=45 1 Dif=- 267.3 -	Avg=1 Act=0 Dif=- 1 -	Avg=1 503.5 Act=10 83 Dif=- 420.5 -	Avg=4.3 Act=10 Dif=+5 .8 +135.3%	Avg=2 41 Act=13 9 Dif=- 102 -	Avg=1 257.3 Act=93 4 Dif=- 323.3 -25.7%	Avg=1 Act=0 Dif=- -1 -	Avg=276 31.5 Act=1935 4 Dif=- 8269.5 -29.9	Avg=4 9.5 Act=50 7 Dif=+0 .5 +1.0%	Avg=42 23.3 Act=221 9 Dif=- 2003.3 -47.4%	Avg=233 48.8 Act=1708 2 Dif=- 6259.8 -26.8%	Avg=1 Act=3 Dif=-7 -70.0%

2. Emailed report response as referenced in 1a.

- Refer to the separate document titled: **Raised Speed Limit Pilot Traffic Monitoring Summary**

APPENDIX C – HIGHWAY COLLISION DATA

QEW						
Year	Total Number of Collisions	Total Number of Fatalities	Total Number of Injuries	Injury Breakdown by Severity		
				Total Number of Major Injuries	Total Number of Minor Injuries	Total Number of Minimal Injuries
2015	289	1	71	2	32	37
2016	339	1	127	3	67	57
2017	392	0	108	1	44	63
2018	409	2	92	2	60	30
2019	399	1	74	0	46	28
2020	205	0	28	0	24	4
2021	215	1	35	2	22	11
2022	379	2	63	0	38	25
2023	418	3	64	2	35	27

Minimal Injury: Person did not go to hospital when leaving the scene of the collision. Includes minor abrasions, bruises and complaints of pain.
Minor Injury: Person went to hospital and was treated in the emergency room, but not admitted.
Major Injury: Person admitted to hospital. Includes person admitted for observation. This could be either life threatening or non-life threatening.
Fatal: Person killed immediately or within 30 days of the motor vehicle collision.

Highway 402						
Year	Total Number of Collisions	Total Number of Fatalities	Total Number of Injuries	Injury Breakdown by Severity		
				Total Number of Major Injuries	Total Number of Minor Injuries	Total Number of Minimal Injuries
2015	192	0	46	6	22	18
2016	175	2	45	2	17	26
2017	170	2	44	2	21	21
2018	203	0	35	1	28	6
2019	199	1	25	0	20	5
2020	171	0	15	0	9	6
2021	138	0	10	0	8	2
2022	202	1	31	0	26	5
2023	201	0	29	0	21	8

Minimal Injury: Person did not go to hospital when leaving the scene of the collision. Includes minor abrasions, bruises and complaints of pain.
Minor Injury: Person went to hospital and was treated in the emergency room, but not admitted.
Major Injury: Person admitted to hospital. Includes person admitted for observation. This could be either life threatening or non-life threatening.
Fatal: Person killed immediately or within 30 days of the motor vehicle collision.

Highway 417						
Year	Total Number of Collisions	Total Number of Fatalities	Total Number of Injuries	Injury Breakdown by Severity		
				Total Number of Major Injuries	Total Number of Minor Injuries	Total Number of Minimal Injuries
2015	277	1	43	2	18	23
2016	303	2	74	2	21	51
2017	271	2	74	4	36	34
2018	223	1	53	0	39	14
2019	209	1	37	0	17	20
2020	149	0	40	4	28	8
2021	155	1	24	0	19	5
2022	222	1	53	3	31	19
2023	239	1	71	2	53	16

Minimal Injury: Person did not go to hospital when leaving the scene of the collision. Includes minor abrasions, bruises and complaints of pain.
Minor Injury: Person went to hospital and was treated in the emergency room, but not admitted.
Major Injury: Person admitted to hospital. Includes person admitted for observation. This could be either life threatening or non-life threatening.
Fatal: Person killed immediately or within 30 days of the motor vehicle collision.