

King to establish automated speed enforcement

By Mark PavilonsEditor

King Township will be using technology to encourage drivers to slow down in the community. Councillors approved staff recommendations to establish an Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) program using portable cameras. The plan is to install two cameras on a rotating schedule in Community Safety Zones throughout King to reduce excess speeding and curb collisions. The units, along with the associated Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS), will allow Township staff to process offenders in-house and free up court time. AMPS is an alternate system to the lengthy and costly provincial courts process that is currently in place. AMPS provides an objective, and efficient process where penalty notices are issued, managed, and reviewed internally, staff reported. The ASE, staff noted, offers many benefits to communities and are proven to reduce speeding and decrease collisions. During a presentation to council by Shaquille Cousins, he pointed out a citizen survey noted that traffic congestion is a top priority in King. He also noted in York, more than 18,000 speeding charges were laid in 2023. Roughly 30% of fatal collisions are speed-related. The ASE is a highly effective road safety tool, Cousins noted and the program averages a 53% reduction in speeding. The automated cameras will be placed in established Community Safety Zones and the program will include training, maintenance, signage and public education. King currently has 12 such zones throughout the municipality. They can be found on Dufferin Street, Greenside Drive, Hill Farm Road, Nicort Road, Spring Hill Drive, King Boulevard, 15th Sideroad, Tatton Court, Main Street and Western Ave. The camera captures and records images of vehicles and their licence plates. It details the time and date of the offence and exact location. Registered vehicle owners will receive a letter in the mail with payment or court instructions. With automated cameras, no demerit points are applied. Newmarket has a Joint Processing Centre for ASE with its partner municipalities. King will join this initiative and acquire the necessary equipment. King staff have entered into a MOU with Newmarket to review financial information. Automated enforcement is not new, as the Province allowed it back in 2022 when it amended the Highway Traffic Act. Recent legislative changes give municipalities greater flexibility when adopting these programs. King will likely use cameras supplier Traffipax, located in Mississauga. They have led Canada's red light camera program in Ontario for the past 15 years. King will have to sign agreements with both MTO and the Ministry of the Attorney General to launch the program. Signage will be placed one or two light poles ahead of the camera location, on both sides of the roadway. Staff stressed King will develop a robust communications plan to actively engage with the community and ensure the community is well-informed of the new Automated Speed Enforcement Program. Start-up costs for leasing two cameras and installing signage is estimated at \$35,755. Funds generated by tickets will be reinvested in traffic safety initiatives throughout King. Cousins noted that near total cost recovery is pegged at two years. Mayor Steve Pellegrini provided an interesting fact on speeding. He noted when involved in a collision at 50 km/h, a person has a 15% survival rate. When the speed drops to 40 km/h that rate goes up to 70%. So yes, speeding is a huge factor and this program will not only make communities safer, it will save lives. Hopes are the program will be implemented in early 2025.